

The Story of **SNEAKERS**



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Words in **bold** appear in the glossary.

The World of Sneakers

Trainers. Runners. Kicks. What's another name for them? Sneakers! Lace them up. Run around. Show off your style!

People all around the world wear sneakers. They are worn on playgrounds and on sports fields. They are even seen on the red carpet! Sneakers are a part of everyday life. But how did they become so popular?



Sneakers Through Time

Sneakers have been around since the 1800s. In 1832, Wait Webster **patented** plimsolls. These shoes were made of cloth. Their soles were made of rubber. They had no right or left foot!



An early version of plimsolls cut in half to show the rubber sole.

Things started changing in 1839. An inventor named Charles Goodyear discovered a new process. It was called **vulcanization**. It turned rubber into a flexible material. This made shoes more comfortable. It was also one step toward inventing the sneaker.



Charles Goodyear



A pair of Keds

In 1916, the United States Rubber Company created another kind of sneaker. They were called Keds. At first, they were named Peds. This came from the Latin word for feet. But another company already had that name. Eventually the name Keds stuck!

Keds were designed for sports. The tops were made from thick **canvas**. The soles were made from sturdy rubber. Rubber soles gave the shoes a much better grip. In 1917, Keds became the first sneakers to be **mass-produced**.





The Converse Rubber Shoe Company factory

The real game changer was Marquis Converse. He worked at the U.S. Rubber Company. But in 1908 he started the Converse Rubber Shoe Company. In 1917, he created the Converse All Star.