

History of Cosmetology

History of Cosmetology – Study Notes

1. Introduction

Cosmetology = the art and science of beauty treatment, encompassing hair, skin, nails, and makeup. Its evolution reflects cultural values, technological advances, and economic changes across civilizations.

2. Ancient Foundations

Era / Region	Key Practices	Materials & Tools	Social Meaning
Pre-historic (c. 30,000 BC)	Body painting, tattooing, rudimentary hair styling	Charcoal, ochre, shells, bone combs	Ritual, tribal identity, protection from elements
Ancient Egypt (c. 3000–30 BC)	Eye makeup (kohl), hair wigs, perfumed oils, nail based eyeliners; honey, polishing	Malachite, galena, lead? olive oil; carmine for nails	Symbol of status, divine protection, gender roles
Mesopotamia & Persia	Cosmetic powders, scented balms, hair braiding	Ground minerals, rose water, animal fats	Indicated wealth; used in religious ceremonies
Ancient India (Vedic period)	Ayurvedic skin care, hair oils, henna tattoos	Turmeric, sandalwood, sesame oil, mehndi	Spiritual purification, marital rites
China (Shang-Zhou, 1600–1046 BC)	Face powders, hairpins, herbal skin treatments	Rice powder, pearl powder, jade combs	Sign of refinement, courtly etiquette

3. Classical Antiquity

Civilization	Innovations	Notable Figures / Texts

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Greece (5th–2nd? c.?BC)	Use of olive oil for skin, scented powders, early “beauty salons” in public baths	Hippocrates’ “De Medicina” mentions skin remedies
Rome (1st?c.?BC – 5th?c.?AD)	Elaborate hair wigs, bleaching with sulfur, cosmetics for both sexes	Pliny the Elder’s <i>Natural History</i> catalogs 200+ cosmetic substances

4. Middle Ages (5th–15th?c.)

- **Europe** – Cosmetic use restricted by the Church; pale skin prized ? lead?based “white lead” powders (dangerous).
 - **Islamic Golden Age** – Advances in perfumery, distillation of essential oils; *Al?Kindi* and *Al?Razi* wrote treatises on skin care.
 - **Asia** – Japanese *ohaguro* (teeth blackening) and Chinese foot binding influence beauty standards; elaborate hair ornaments develop.
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5. Renaissance & Early Modern Period (15th–18th?c.)

Development	Impact
Printing press (c.?1440)	Dissemination of beauty manuals (e.g., <i>The Book of the Courtier</i>).
Introduction of cosmetics from the New World	Cochineal red, cacao butter, and other pigments expand color palettes.
Rise of professional barbers	Barber?surgeons offer haircuts, shaves, and rudimentary skin treatments.
Women’s “beauty salons” in France & England	Early precursors to modern salons; services include hair pomades, powdering, and perfume blending.

6. 19th Century – Industrialization

1. Mass Production

- 1840s: First commercial face powder (Lily of the Valley).
- 1860s: Introduction of synthetic dyes (aniline)