

**SNEA
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**OBSE
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KIKIKICKZ

SNEA KER

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Acknowledgments

What

Is a

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The term “sneaker” comes from the verb “sneak.” The word’s invention is attributed to the author F. W. Robinson, in 1862, and to the American advertising executive Henry Nelson McKinney, in 1917. Both men used it to evoke the shoe’s capacity to allow the wearer to move around silently, thanks to the rubber soles, as opposed to the noisier leather shoe that was the norm at the time.

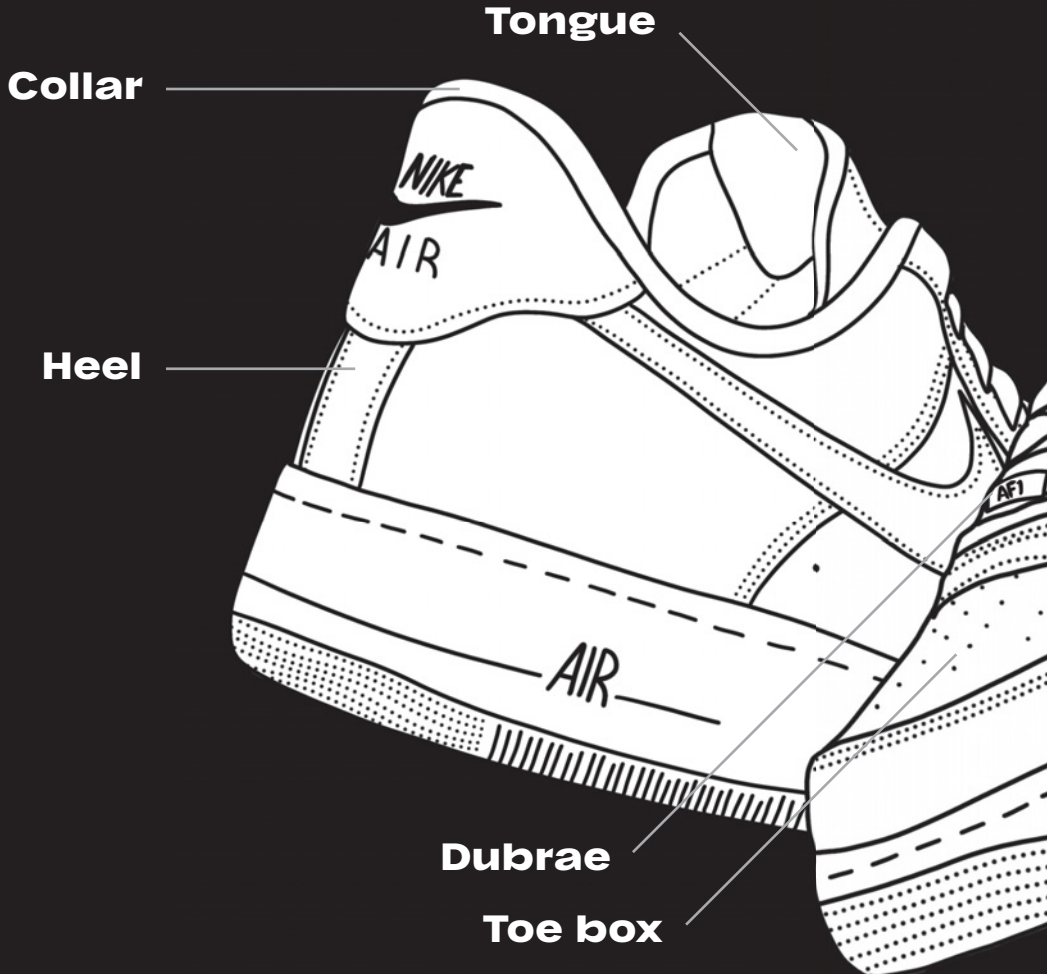
Sneaker

A sneaker, also known as a trainer or runner, is a type of shoe that was originally designed for playing sports. The top part of the shoe, called the upper, can be made from different materials, but the shoe is typically lined with a rubber sole. Originally, cotton canvas was the most widely used material, but it has since been replaced by harder-wearing leather and its variants—suede, nubuck, etc.—which are most popular today. Velvet, jersey, synthetics, and recycled or bio-sourced materials are also often used.

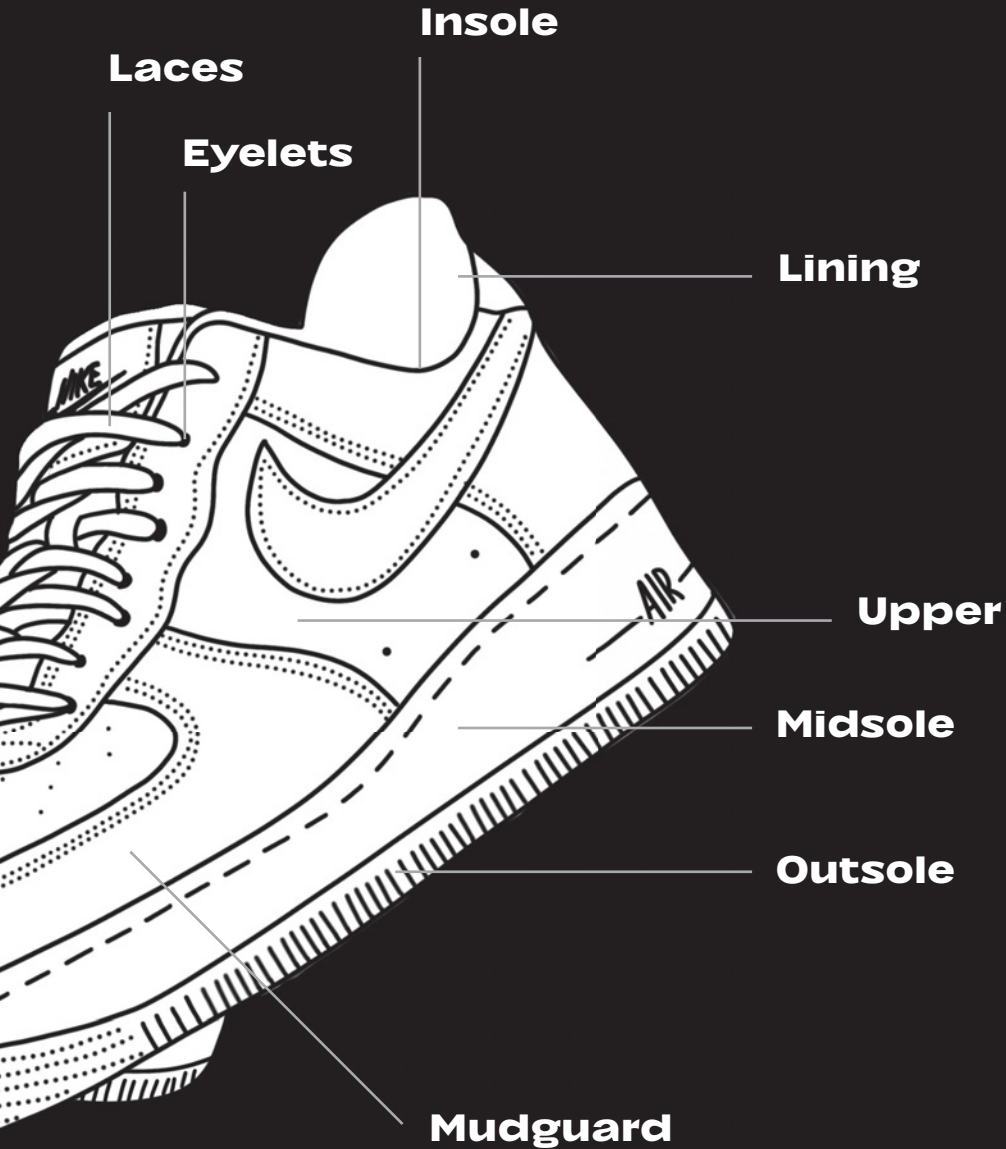
Sneakers can be low top or high top (when the collar covers part or all of the ankle), with round or elongated toes, and soles of varying thickness. These forms, as well as the materials, were originally chosen and developed to support athletic performance. Now they are also selected for purely aesthetic reasons.

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Anatom of a Sneaker



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Sneea Termin

The sneakerverse has its own vocabulary, rich with slang and abbreviations. These are the need-to-know terms.

BNIB

Stands for “brand new in box.” Refers to unworn sneakers sold in their original box with all tags and accessories.

Bred

An abbreviation of “black and red.” Although it originated with the Nike Air Jordan line, the term has come to refer to any black-and-red sneaker.

Campout

When fans wait outside a store overnight, sometimes for days, for a new sneaker release.

Cop

To buy a pair of sneakers.

CW

Stands for “colorway,” the sneaker’s box-listed colors.

Drop

The opposite of cop, i.e., not to buy a pair. Also refers more generally to a product release.

DS

Stands for “deadstock.” Originally, the term referred to sneakers that were no longer sold by retailers and were only available on the resale market. However, it has come to mean a pair that has never been tried on or worn.

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F&F

Stands for “friends & family,” a rare sneaker gifted only to friends and family of the brand’s employees.

Fufu

A slang term for “fake,” used to designate a counterfeit sneaker.

GR

Stands for “general release” and usually refers to sneakers that are widely available to the public, as opposed to limited-edition releases.

Grail (or holy grail)

A sneaker grail is a rare model that is extremely hard to obtain. It can also be used to describe a sneakerhead’s most desired, dream shoe. A holy grail is a pair that is almost impossible to cop.

L

Abbreviation of “lose” or “loss.” To “take an L” means to lose out on a raffle.

Legit check

A legit check is done to verify a sneaker’s authenticity.

OG

Initially stood for “Original Gangster,” but has come to mean “original.” Refers to the earliest release of a design, a classic colorway, or a faithful reissue.

Raffle

An online lottery for the opportunity to purchase a pair of sneakers—a marketing method frequently used by manufacturers and distributors.

Reseller

A person who buys sneakers to sell them on for a profit.

Restock

When a new batch of a previously sold-out sneaker is made and delivered to stores.

Sample

A prototype, created for testing or promotion, that is never mass-produced.

Sneakerhead

A person who collects sneakers as a hobby.

W

Abbreviation of “win,” the opposite of “L.” Refers to a winning raffle ticket.

The
Snea
Epic

ker's History

Sneakers have come a long way. Developed in the late nineteenth century, for decades they were simply sports equipment. They became symbols of style and objects of desire after an eventful history—one full of societal changes, technical advances, technological innovations, and cultural revolutions.

In the Beginning There Was

Insuring Comfort in Summer Footwear

*Shoes for outing, tennis and
everyday use*

ALL over the country men are wearing Keds this season. You will find them in town or at the seashore—on the street or at the tennis court—wherever you go for work or play.

Keds are the ideal footwear for warm weather. Their elastic rubber soles put new life in your step. Their soft, pliable fabric makes them always cool and comfortable.

Keds may include models made with regular welt soles and firmly boxed toes—just like leather shoes. This means a shoe of style and distinction the very shoe you have needed to wear with your white flannels or Palm Beach suit.

With these attributes, Keds are now a complete line of canvas summer shoes—ranging from the easy, less formal tennis shoe to the latest and most fashionable styles of footwear. Last year millions of pairs of Keds were worn by men, women, and children.

Good dealers every where carry Keds. Ask to see the various models—notice how wonderfully light and comfortable they are. Look for the name Keds on the sole.

For men and women, \$1.50—\$6.00
For children . . . 1.15—4.50

Keds



The standard shoes for tennis, walking and basketball games. Made of light canvas, in both men's and women's styles—rubber—with black, gray or red rubber soles.



One of the smart special types for summer wear. Made of the finest, white canvas in high or Oxford models, with welt sole construction, which gives it all the style of leather shoes.



Sturdy shoes for town and everyday wear—for boys and growing girls—with welt sole. Made of heavy canvas or brown duck. Heavy leather trimmings with elastic laces—red rubber soles and no laces.

United States Rubber Company

Born of a revolutionary invention, sneakers were initially used exclusively for sports, and for decades many designers confined them to this specific role.

The history of the sneaker begins in 1839, with the invention of rubber vulcanization. The process, developed by Charles Goodyear, made it possible to produce the kind of soles we are familiar with today, and by the end of the century it was being used by the first athletic shoe manufacturers. The first sneakers were produced during a time when the world of sport was undergoing a radical change. With the first Olympic Games held in 1896, sports were being structured into clubs and federations, and the practice of physical exercise was strongly encouraged by public authorities—although the focus was more on preparedness for war than on personal well-being.

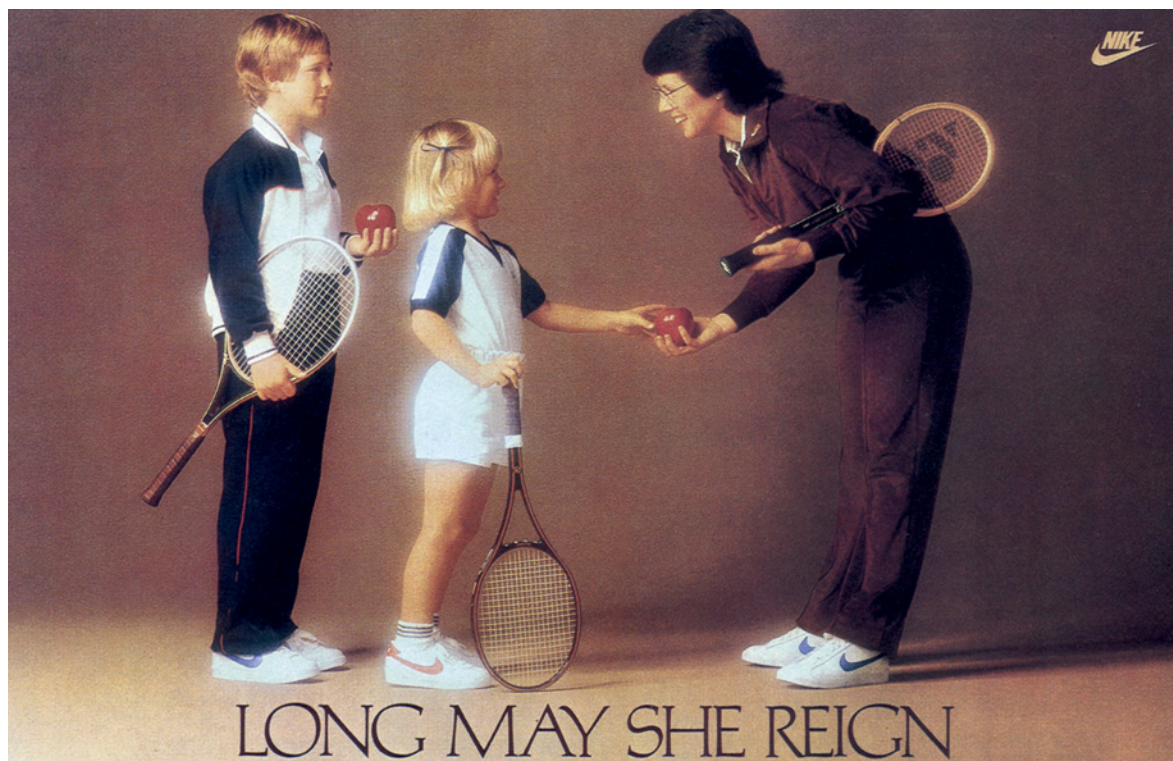
Left
A 1920s ad for Keds. Founded in 1916, the brand was a subsidiary of the United States Rubber Company, now Uniroyal.

Facing page
A Nike ad featuring the American tennis icon Billie Jean King, 1982.

Sport

A fledgling sports shoe industry took off in the early twentieth century: from leather cleats intended for track and field or football, to canvas basketball shoes made by the first large US manufacturers Keds and Converse. They garnered more fans after World War I, when societal advances

like shorter workweeks or paid vacation allowed more people to indulge in leisure activities—and sneakers were their footwear of choice. Although social progress slowed during World War II, it resumed with renewed intensity during the postwar boom.





New manufacturers such as Adidas, Puma, and Asics appeared on the scene, leading to fierce competition to offer the best-performing shoes in each sport and to sponsor the best athletes. This was especially true for major events like the Olympics and the soccer World Cup, which increased in popularity with the first televised broadcasts. Nike joined the lineup of major sporting goods suppliers in the 1970s, a pivotal moment in the industry. Well-being was now a widespread concept, and running experienced its first boom, followed by fitness and basketball.

As new practices gained in popularity, the race to make the ideal shoe resumed with greater intensity. Product lines multiplied, and brands began outsourcing production to Asia, creating innovation hubs to design sneakers featuring the latest technology, like the Nike Air, Adidas Torsion, Asics Gel, and Reebok Pump. The quest for innovation persisted, and manufacturers made it their focus until the 1990s, remaining curiously averse to the idea of seeing their creations used off the playing field. But everything comes to those who wait—and sneakers were no exception.

Hype? Collabs? Drops? Resellers? Raffles? Customizations?

Welcome to the sneakerverse! Discover the evolution of the sneaker, from its origins as a sports shoe to its skyrocketing rise as a cultural phenomenon. Adopted by rappers like Run-DMC and break-dancers, the sneaker transitioned from the athletic field to the street, becoming a must-have statement accessory. Now an essential emblem of streetwear, the sneaker has become a global sensation, a coveted collectible, and a multi-billion-dollar industry.

Showcasing the stories and iconic models behind the biggest brands—Nike, Jordan, Adidas, Puma, Reebok, Converse, New Balance, Asics, Vans, and more—this volume features the major collaborations and influential personalities who have sparked incredible hype, from Michael Jordan to Virgil Abloh to Travis Scott. Interviews with sneaker experts and highlights of how leading brands are incorporating sustainability, gender equality, and customization provide insight on the future of sneakers.

With a glossary of terms, a sneaker diagram, and an authentication checklist, this indispensable reference covers everything you need to know about sneaker culture and its history, codes, jargon, innovators, and trends.

