

# More Than a Shoe?

Stylish, futuristic, different—these are some of the words used to describe Manolo Blahnik's and Dave Graziopoli's shoes. What makes their shoes so special?

## The Shoe Designer

Born to a Spanish mother and a Czech father, Manolo Blahnik grew up in the Canary Islands near north Africa. In his twenties, he moved to New York City and began to design shoes for women. Today, his high heels (often called "Manolos") are known around the world. "Women love my shoes," says Blahnik. "Some never take them off."

Why are his shoes so popular? Yes, they're beautiful. On the other hand, his high heels aren't always particularly comfortable. They're also costly; prices range from hundreds to thousands of dollars. Maybe the best answer is this: each pair of Manolos is a work of art—like a painting by Picasso.

But aren't they just shoes? "Yes, only shoes," says Blahnik. "But, if they bring a bit of happiness to someone, then, perhaps, they are something more than shoes."

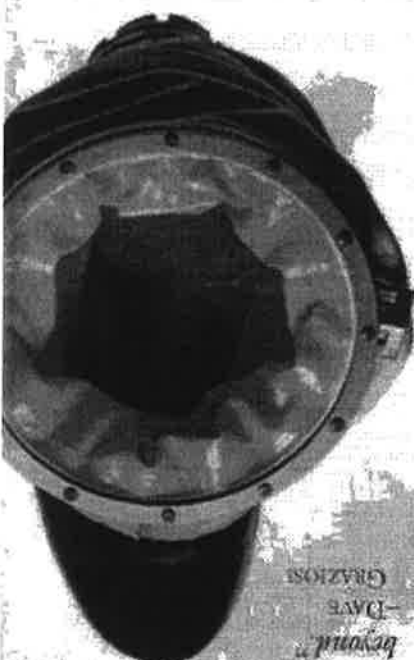
## The Shoe Engineer

At \$30,000 a pair, moon boots aren't cheap. But to walk in space, you need high-tech shoes—like those designed by Dave Graziopoli. He and his team are making space boots for NASA. "We're planning for the moon and beyond," he says.

The latest space boot is the M2 Trekker. These boots are smaller and weigh less than the ones Neil Armstrong wore to the moon. In them, astronauts can walk comfortably on the moon's rocky surface. M2 Trekkers also protect astronauts' feet from extreme cold and heat. They can be worn in temperatures ranging from  $-212^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-350^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) to  $+177^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $+350^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). They are truly more than just a shoe!

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is a U.S. organization responsible for space travel.

Neil Armstrong was the first astronaut to walk on the moon, in 1969.



"We're planning for the moon and beyond."  
—DAVE GRAZIOPOLI

"Women love my shoes. Some never take them off."  
—MANOLO BLAHNIK



## □ Reading Comprehension

**A. Multiple Choice.** Choose the best answer for each question.

**1.** Another title for this reading could be \_\_\_\_\_

a. Shoes from Around the World

b. A History of the High Heel

c. Two Important Shoemakers

d. Shoes of the Future

Detail

**2.** People often call Manolo Blahnik's shoes \_\_\_\_\_

a. Canaries b. Manolos c. Picassos d. Blahniks

Detail

**3.** Which sentence about the M2 Trekkers is NOT true?

a. They can be worn in very hot or cold temperatures.

b. Neil Armstrong wore them on the moon.

c. They cost a lot of money.

d. Astronauts wear them.

Vocabulary

**4.** In lines 11–12, we can change *On the other hand* to \_\_\_\_\_

a. And b. But c. So d. For

Reference

**5.** In line 25, *the ones* means \_\_\_\_\_

a. the space suits

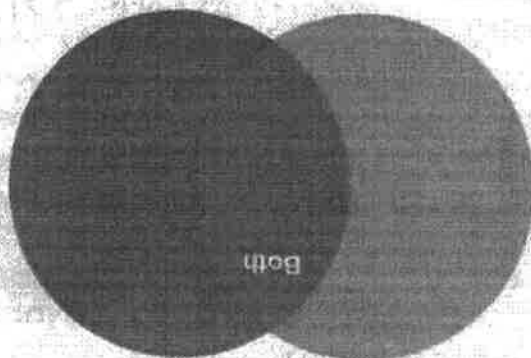
b. the temperatures

c. the M2 Trekkers

d. the boots

**B. Classification.** Match each answer (a–e) with the person it describes.

Manolo Blahnik Dave Graziosi



a. is designing a special boot  
b. needs his shoes to be comfortable

c. says his shoes are like art

d. makes shoes that cost a lot

e. says shoes can make

people happy

**Did You Know?**  
The boots Neil Armstrong wore to the moon in 1969 are still there. He had to leave his heavy boots behind so he could bring moon rocks back to Earth.

## Vocabulary Practice

**A. Matching.** Match each word in red with a definition.  
One word is extra.

**40,000 years ago:** People in the Middle East and Europe start to wear sandals made of plants or leather. These shoes protect their feet from rocky ground, and cold and heat.

**The 1700s:** In Europe, shoes called *chopines* are popular with women. These shoes are stylish and beautiful, but they are not easy or comfortable to walk in. Some are extremely high: they range from 25–50 cm (10–20 inches) or more! Chopines are also costly. Only people with a lot of money can buy them.

**Ancient Shoes:** This pair of sandals, now kept in a museum in Italy, dates from the 7th century B.C.



**B. Completion.** Complete the information using the correct form of words from the box. One word is extra.

beyond futuristic heat pair weigh

**The 20th century and 1.** In the 1960s, University of Oregon coach Bill Bowerman helps to start a new sports-shoe company. Later, it becomes known as Nike, Inc.

Within a few years, sneakers are popular around the world. Today, designers are trying to create 2. of sneakers that are very light. Soon, we may see more 3. sport shoes that 4. almost nothing!



Fast feet: a modern sneaker

## Word Link

We can add **-y** to nouns to form adjectives, e.g., rocky, dirty, sunny, smelly.