The idea of ‘teenagers’, with their own style of clothes and music, originated in the USA in the 1950s. Rock and Roll was born there, and Elvis Presley was the first global rock star. People all around the world are still interested in American music, films and celebrities. But in the 1960s, Britain, not the USA, was the centre of the world’s pop culture!

Music

The Beatles were the best-selling British band in history and their influence on modern music is enormous. They were international superstars in the 1960s and they had millions of fans. It was often impossible to hear the music at Beatles’ concerts because of the screaming! But there were lots of other very successful British pop groups in that decade and the trendiest place in the world was ‘Swinging’ London. The UK’s capital city was the home of the Rolling Stones and lots of other pop stars. The Beatles moved there from Liverpool in 1963 and worked at the famous recording studios on Abbey Road.

Glossary

screaming urla
swinging vivace, dinamica, alla moda
recording studios studi di registrazione

1 Where did the idea of ‘teenagers’ originate?
2 What was the name of the best-selling British band in history?
3 When did the Beatles move to London?
4 Where were their recording studios in London?
Fashion

The biggest fashion invention of the 1960s was the **miniskirt**. Girls in the 1950s wore long, wide skirts, but in 1964 everything changed. The British fashion designer Mary Quant designed a very short skirt – the miniskirt. It gave girls more freedom to move and dance. Lots of people thought the miniskirt was shocking, but it quickly became popular all over the world! Mary Quant had shops in Carnaby Street and the King’s Road in London. These streets became world-famous for their fashion designers and clothes shops. The most fashionable hairstyle was a short, geometric style by British hairdresser Vidal Sassoon.

**Glossary**

- wide: *ampie*
- fashion designer: *stilista*
- freedom: *libertà*
- hairstyle: *taglio (di capelli)"
- hairdresser: *parrucchiere*

5 Who invented the miniskirt?
Design

The 1960s was a creative decade in Britain for other types of design – for example, books, furniture and vehicles. The inventor of the Austin Mini was Alec Issigonis. Issigonis was born in Greece, but he took British nationality. He invented the Mini in 1959, when petrol was very expensive in Britain. The Mini was very economical. It was only 3 metres long, but it had space for four people. The Mini became the coolest car of the 1960s! Pop stars, models and members of the royal family all had a Mini – and guess where the miniskirt got its name from!

Production of the Mini stopped in the year 2000, but they are still very popular cars.

Glossary

petrol  benzina

6 Where did the miniskirt get its name from?
7 When did Issigonis invent the Mini car?
8 How long was it?
9 Why did he design a really small car?
10 When did production of the Mini stop?