



SUSTAINABLE FASHION



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
143J-C7NE-H9ZB

**1**

Key words

Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. a garment | a. an item of clothing |
| 2. synthetic | b. a person who buys things for personal use |
| 3. a consumer | c. a place where rubbish is buried |
| 4. exploit | d. made with chemicals, not natural |
| 5. a landfill site | e. not damaging to the environment, so able to continue for a long time |
| 6. the minimum wage | f. the smallest amount of money that an employer can legally pay you |
| 7. sustainable | g. use (someone) unfairly for your own advantage |

2

Before you read

choose the best answers below, then read about Britain's fashion industry to check them.

- How many items of clothing will consumers in Britain throw away this year?
a. around 60 million b. around 120 million c. around 680 million
- Which of the following sources is used to produce the fabric polyester?
a. oil b. rubber c. leaves
- How many garment workers died after the collapse of the Rana Plaza in Bangladesh in 2013?
a. around 400 b. around 1100 c. around 2100
- How much is the proposed tax (in the UK) to improve the recycling of clothes?
a. £0.01 per garment b. £0.50 per garment c. £1 per garment



THE CONVERSATION

Fixing our throwaway fashion culture will take far more than a tax

February 19, 2019

by Tim Cooper

1. Clothing in Britain is increasingly characterised by a high volume/low value approach to business. Based on past trends, consumers will throw away around 680 million items of clothing this year. Replacements are cheap: dresses can be bought online for as little as £5.
 2. Cheap prices provide wider access to consumers and fashion retailers argue that they are a sign of efficiency. But there is a dark side.
 3. A new report shows that consumers are benefiting from cheap clothes at considerable cost to the environment and through exploiting poor garment workers.
 4. The environmental impact of fashion is well known. Cotton production uses large amounts of pesticides and water, while synthetic fabrics such as polyester come from limited oil supplies. Bamboo, increasingly used as a cotton replacement, sounds pleasingly natural, but it is a semi-synthetic fabric. The production process involves the use of chemicals such as caustic soda. Consumers who care about the environment may feel less guilty as they take their unwanted garments to a charity store, but many of these clothes end up in landfill sites because they cannot attract buyers.
 5. The social impact of fashion also raises concern. Evidence suggests that fashion companies do not carefully monitor how their clothes are produced, so consumers can't be sure that their clothes were not made by exploiting workers. In Britain, many garment workers are apparently being paid less than the minimum wage. Abroad, slave labour, child labour and poor working conditions still exist, more than five years after the collapse of the Rana Plaza complex in Bangladesh killed around 1,100 garment workers.
 6. In recent years, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (known as WRAP), which works closely with the fashion industry, has done an excellent job in promoting longer-lasting clothing.
 7. But designing long-lasting garments is useless if they are thrown away early. Every garment that is produced has an impact on the environment. In a sustainable fashion culture, fewer garments would be produced and, when no longer wearable, the materials would either be recycled or reused – for example, through 'upcycling', where unwanted clothes are redesigned into new items:
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8. It is a vision that still seems very far away. However, a report by the UK's Environmental Audit Committee offers hope. It proposes a "producer responsibility" scheme in which producers would pay a 1p tax per garment to improve clothing collection and recycling in order to deal with clothing waste. This strategy attracted the most attention in the media.
 9. But the report proposes a few other solutions that could be even more significant. For example, it noted that Sweden has reduced VAT (value added tax) on clothing repair services. School lessons on designing, creating and repairing clothes is another proposition.
 10. Economic and educational solutions are needed because recycling does not fix the basic problem of unsustainable levels of production and consumption in the clothing sector. In short, companies produce too much and consumers buy too much.
 11. A target to halve consumption of clothes by 2030 would be an appropriate goal to focus people's minds.



3

Checking understanding

Look at the questions below and then read the text to find correct answers.

1. What are the advantages of cheap prices in the fashion sector?
2. What are the disadvantages?
3. Why can't consumers be sure that workers weren't exploited to make their clothes?
4. What four sustainable solutions are mentioned in the article?
5. What is the author's proposal for consumers?

4

Find the word

Find the words/phrases in the text which mean ...

1. things that can be used instead of other things (**plural noun, P1**) _____
2. shops or businesses that sell things to the public (**plural noun, P2**) _____
3. a negative and often hidden aspect something (**idiom, P2**) _____
4. causes people to worry (**phrase, P5**) _____
5. the use of children to do work that should be done by adults (**noun, P5**) _____
6. suitable for wearing (**adjective, P7**) _____
7. important or noticeable (**adjective, P9**) _____
8. reduce by 50% (**verb, P11**) _____

5

Talking point

Discuss any of the questions below.

1. How does the situation in Britain compare to your country's fashion culture?
2. Do you think people should buy fewer clothes?
3. Which of the solutions mentioned in the article do you think would be most/least effective?



Key

1. Key words

As a warm-up, encourage a short discussion by asking students: "How often do you throw away your clothes?"

Students work individually and check in pairs.

- | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. a | 2. d | 3. b | 4. g | 5. c | 6. f | 7. e |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

2. Before you read

Students work individually and check in pairs.

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1. c | 2. a | 3. b | 4. a |
|------|------|------|------|

3. Checking understanding

1. Cheap prices allow more consumers to buy clothes and producers argue they are more efficient.
2. Consumers are throwing away more clothes, and more clothes are being produced, which has a negative impact on the environment. Workers are being exploited.
3. Fashion companies do not carefully monitor how their clothes are produced.
4. recycling/upcycling, a 1p per garment tax, reduced VAT on clothing repair services, school lessons on designing, creating and repairing clothes
5. to halve their consumption of clothes by 2030

4. Find the word

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. replacements | 2. retailers | 3. a dark side | 4. raises concern |
| 5. child labour | 6. wearable | 7. significant | 8. halve |