

ThoughtBox Takeaway: What on earth are we wearing?

Where do your clothes come from? Who made them and what are they made from? What happens to your clothes when you give or throw them away? And who is it that decides what “looks good” - and why do we believe them?

Learning objectives

To start to unravel and explore in depth some of the unethical practices of the fashion industry.

Introduction

Understanding the choices that we have surrounding the clothes that we are wearing is important in helping us understand why we wear what we wear and who (or what) influences our behaviour. Clothing should be long-lasting and treasured, not thrown away after one occasion. The production of fast and cheap fashion is putting a worrying strain on the environment, with the Fashion Industry now the second biggest polluter in the world, only second to the oil industry. Shopping in charity shops is a great way to support positive causes, spend a little less and recycle and reuse clothing rather than throwing it away (because there is no such place as “away”)

Activity

Take a look at this short film from [Charity Fashion Live](#)

This campaign from Oxfam started shows how all of the new trends that came out of London Fashion Week can be replicated by buying clothes from local charity shops. The point is to show that pre-loved clothing can be just as fashionable and ‘on-trend’ as clothing bought brand new.

Buying clothes from charity shops sometimes has a negative stigma attached – with some people seeing wearing other people's clothes as somehow embarrassing. However, in an age of excessive consumption, waste and negative productivity, it is perhaps time we removed the stigma and started to see the possibilities of buying pre-worn or upcycling our old clothes.

Put together a design board of up-cycled fashion ideas using reclaimed garments or pre-loved clothes. Include sketches and instructions for upcycling clothing into new items as well as some information as to why we should be doing this.

Think about and include some of the benefits of pre-worn or upcycled clothing including:

- Cost-saving
- Waste-saving
- Creativity
- Altruism (by giving money to charity shops)

If time and resources allow, you may even like to upcycle a garment and show off your own creative and artistic talents.

Resources

- [Charity Fashion Live](#) (website /campaign)
- [Boutique preloved](#) (website)
- [Charity shop blues](#) (opinion piece)
- [Alternative to Black Friday consumerism](#) (article)
- [Upcycled clothing](#) (image gallery)
- [100 ways to upcycle](#) (blog)
- [Re-purpose old clothes](#) (video)

Environmental Engagement

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Related videos

- [The journey of your used clothes](#)
- [The ethics of clothes](#)
- [Cotton slavery](#)
- [Who made your clothes?](#)
- [Slave to Fashion](#)
- [Garment workers in Bangladesh](#)
- [Factory Kids](#)
- [Nike Sweatshops – Behind the Swoosh](#)
- [The Secret life of our Clothes](#)
- [History of Clothing](#)
- [Ethical tshirts](#)

Thought-provoking podcasts

- [The Seams](#)
- [The Secret Emotional Life of Clothes](#)
- [Slaves to our Fashion](#)
- [Spring Cleaning: Before you donate](#)
- [Behind the Thread](#)
- [Fear Fast Fashion](#)
- [The Fast World of Fast Fashion](#)
- [The Ethical and Environmental Cost of Fashion](#)

Interesting articles

- [What do the clothes in your wardrobe say about you?](#)
- [Other people's clothes](#)
- [Clothes from different cultures](#)
- [Slave to fashion](#)
- [Decluttering your wardrobe](#)
- [When H&M came to South Africa...and insulted everyone](#)
- [The SecondHand Personal Shopper](#)

- [The journey of your second hand clothes](#)
- [Billionaire – but shopping in charity shops](#)
- [Ethical shopping](#)
- [Why are our clothes so cheap?](#)
- [Ethical supermarket clothing](#)
- [Best ethical fashion](#)
- [Tortured to death...making our clothes](#)
- [The Ethical Shopping Guide](#)

Relevant organisations & Campaigns

- [Fashion Revolution](#)
- [Love your Clothes](#)
- [Wear your label](#)
- [Wrap](#)
- [People Tree](#)
- [Fair Trade](#)
- [Oxfam](#)
- [Wear it – love it – share it](#)
- [Walk Free](#)
- [Drying for Freedom](#)
- [Abolitionist Society](#)
- [Recycle Now](#)