

# Fast fashion



Ages: 10+



Time: 30 – 60 mins

## Purpose:

Begin to explore the impacts the fashion industry has on the environment and people around the world.

## Youth work outcomes:

**Outcome 5:** Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control

**Outcome 6:** Young people express their voice and demonstrate social commitment

**Outcome 7:** Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

## Sustainable development goals:



## How it works:

### In person:

Traditionally this activity is done by moving to areas of an open space designated 'agree' and 'disagree'.

### Online:

The statements can be used as a basis for a group discussion or using a digital function to indicate agree/disagree, for example the sticker function on Zoom.

### Description:

Use the statements below to explore young people's attitudes and relationships with fast fashion.

Firstly, explain how the activity will run in your setting (in person or online). Once each statement has been read out, participants should decide whether they agree or disagree. Each statement is an opportunity to discuss the societal, environmental and economic impacts of the fashion industry and consumer behaviour.

The conversation may prompt suggestions about individual behaviour change (e.g. not washing clothes as frequently, buying less, repairing rather than throwing away) but try not to single out individual actions.

# Fast fashion

The following information may be helpful for facilitators:

- 90% of our clothes contain nylon, polyester, spandex, and acrylic. These materials all come from oil.<sup>1</sup>
- 85% of our clothes are disposed of into landfills where it can take up to 40 years for them to decompose if they contain nylon or 200 years if they contain polyester.<sup>2</sup>
- The minimum wage for garment workers in Bangladesh is US\$0.32 cents per hour.
- Children work at all stages of the supply chain in the fashion industry: from the production of cotton seeds, the harvesting and yarn spinning, to clothing manufacturing. (Source: Fashion Revolution)
- The average consumer purchased 60 percent more items of clothing in 2014 compared to 2000, but each garment is kept half as long. (Source: World Resources Institute)
- 5 billion pounds of waste is created each year from clothing returns. This is mainly unworn and undamaged clothing. (Source: BBC Earth)
- It is estimated that more than half of fast fashion produced is disposed of in under a year. (Source: Ellen Macarthur Foundation)

## Agree/Disagree statements

- I regularly need new clothes to feel good about myself.
- I check clothes are made of natural materials before buying them.
- I don't think about the people who made my clothes.
- I give all my old clothes to charity or take time to repair them.
- I would never buy second-hand clothes.
- I feel lots of pressure to always have new clothes.
- I'd rather buy something cheap, even if I know it won't last long.
- I like to keep up with the latest trends.
- I buy lots of clothes online and then return the ones I don't like.
- Fashion brands have a responsibility to treat the people that make their clothes fairly.
- I have clothes that I have not worn in over a year.
- I have too many clothes.
- I would attend a clothes swap event
- I sell my second hand clothes online.
- I own clothes until they wear out.
- I could go a year without buying any new clothes.
- I would describe myself as fashionable.
- I think there is stigma with buying clothes from a charity shop.
- The opinions of my friends/family is an important factor in buying new clothes.

## Campaigns

Fashion Revolution is a global movement that aims to influence the fashion industry to put people and the environment first. They have free learning resources and campaign materials for working with children and young people ages 6-18+.

Fashion Revolution Scotland regularly hold online events like panel discussions, question times, and clothes swaps.

<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/get-involved/educator/education/resources/>

## Discussion questions

- Which statements were most difficult to answer?
- Did you change your mind about any statements during the activity? Why?
- What is fast fashion?
- Who benefits from fast fashion? What are the negative effects?
- What should we think about when buying clothes? Is the price to consumers the only consideration?
- Do you think this information would change people's minds about fast fashion? Has this activity made you reflect on your own habits and behaviours?
- How can we move away from fast fashion? What are the challenges of this?

## Actions/Next steps

There are lots of actions young people can take individually or as a group to tackle fast fashion.

- Pledge to buy no new clothes for a month or even a year.
- Plan a pre-loved clothes swap.
- Write to your favourite brands and ask them what they are doing to reduce their environmental impact and treat workers fairly.
- Run a clothes repair and revamp workshop.