

Fast Fashion

Why is this a Global Justice Issue (GJI)?

The fast fashion industry is implicated in a host of environmental, social and human rights issues. Environmental concerns include resource depletion, pollution and waste. The human rights issues, predominantly experienced by low paid female workers in the Global South, include unsafe, unhealthy and at times illegal labour practices, with instances of child labour and modern-day slavery also in practice. The fast fashion industry works consciously to exploit consumer behaviour and is a characteristic of an unequal capitalist society.



Connected Global Justice Issues

Waste (waste pickers), Ethical Consumption, Climate Justice, Child Labour, Labour Rights, Trade Justice, Colonialism/Neocolonialism.



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. 10: Reduced Inequalities. 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. 15: Life on Land.

Topic	Teaching and Learning Activity	Resource for Activity
Fashion Footprint Calculator	Students access the website and answer 10 questions on their shopping behaviours. The results include a fashion footprint and tips to transform behaviours. Students record their responses on a head (facts)-heart(emotional)-hands (practical/action) template.	THREDUP : Fashion Footprint Calculator 
Where do our Clothes Come From?	Research at least 3 well-known clothing brands. Create bullet point summaries based on ratings provided.	Use fashionchecker.org to explore how workers are paid and/or the Good on You for sustainability ratings. 
	Design and create clothing labels which describe the reality behind where the clothes come from. See the Little Black Book (lbbonline) for examples.	Little Black Book: lbbonline.com 

Topic	Teaching and Learning Activity	Resource for Activity
Focus on Human Rights	Brainstorm the human rights issues surrounding the fast fashion industry, use a Concentric Circles method for an active brainstorm.	Concentric Circles activity 
	Each-One-Teach-One: each student is given one human rights statement (from the Clean Clothes Campaign website). Students read their statement, then move around the room explaining it or ‘teaching’ it to as many others as possible. Close by compiling a whole class mind-map based on the human rights statements.	Clean Clothes Campaign website , presents bullet points relating to human rights issues. For more on Each-One-Teach-One, see here . 
Action on Fashion	Three 40-minute lessons , aligned with Junior Cycle, but adaptable for Senior Cycle. Lesson 1: Defining fast fashion & the Lifecycle of a Pair of Jeans Lesson 2: Role play the Rana Plaza disaster (Bangladesh, 2013) Lesson 3: Problems and Solutions Tree	Global Action Plan (GAP) website : (scroll down to Lesson Plans) PDF and PowerPoint available for download with all links videos etc included.  
The Cost of Fast Fashion	Watch the video and ask students to take notes on the ‘cost’ of fast fashion. Consider: who or what is driving the fast fashion industry? What are the environmental, social and human costs?	Video: The True Cost of Fast Fashion from the Economist , 2018, 6.50mins 
	Carry out a Jigsaw Activity on the true cost of fast fashion. Divide the class into 4 groups and give each group one of the 4 sections (the evidence and the 3 separate claims) from the article. Group members become experts on their topic, then swop groups and teach their topic to other students.	Is the cost of fast fashion unsustainable? (2023) by Colm Regan, available on developmenteducation.ie  For more on Jigsaw Strategy, see OIDE . 

Topic	Teaching and Learning Activity	Resource for Activity
Spotlight on Shein	This lesson plan , which is part of a Greenwashing series, explores the fast fashion company Shein through a range of student activities e.g. discussion, comprehension, moving debate, research task, with links to articles/posts, reports, videos, further reading, and more included.	The Greenwashing series from developmenteducation.ie: Part 3 Slow to Change, Quick to Greenwashing 
	Watch the video and record the human rights abuses.	BBC News Video: Inside Chinese factories (2025) 4mins YouTube 
	Students write a diary entry 'the day in the life of a Shein factory worker'. Use in 'Other Shoes' activity to scaffold and build empathy.	Other Peoples Shoes - in Teaching Controversial Issues p.68 
	Role play for and against Shein: European Shein consumer (for), Shein factory worker (against), Shein executive (for) and human rights reporter (against). Adapt a Fishbowl Discussion to structure the role play.	Fishbowl Discussion 
Clothes: End of Life	Explore the Clothing Cycle , read the short article and explore The Map, which tracked Irish discarded clothes, their journey and their fate. Design and document a circular model for a piece of clothing so that it has a long, non-linear life.	Website- Voice 
		Clothing Cycle 
		Article: Where do our clothes really go? (2025) and The Map (2025) 

Topic	Teaching and Learning Activity	Resource for Activity
Clothes: End of Life	Explore the local to global connections of clothing between its origin, use and disposal. Refer to WWGS Guiding Principle for GCE, Making Local to Global Links. Use a Consequence Wheel to document the connections.	WWGS Guiding Principle 4: Making Local to Global Links 
		Consequence Wheel 
Digging Deeper	Use the website and articles to research fast fashion as a global justice issue. Use the WWGS Digging Deeper Tool (also available as Gaeilge) to structure the research and add depth of questioning and understanding.	Royal Geographical Society : The Ethics of Fast Fashion , includes some critical questions with evidence-based answers. 
		Greenpeace: How Fast Fashion is using the Global South as a Dumping ground (2022) 5min read 
		Voice 2026 Waste Colonialism in the fashion industry 
Back to Basics Fast fashion	This student video lesson looks at the environmental and social impacts of the fast fashion industry. Through group discussions and critical thinking exercises, sustainable alternatives and potential actions are explored.	ISSN Video: Back to Basics Fast fashion by LK (2024) 25mins. 
		ISSN Global Citizenship and Environmental Education Resource Booklet 2025 
		Walking Debate 

Topic	Teaching and Learning Activity	Resource for Activity
Focus on Alternatives	Students research Forests4Fashion as an alternative to the fast fashion industry, emphasising the positives for climate and for people. Research can be presented as a poster/infographic, a PowerPoint, a blog, an interview etc.	WWGS Doing GCE in Wood Technology Guide has 2 relevant PowerPoint slides (13 and 14) on Forest4Fashion. These include background information, videos and websites for research. Explore the Imagine section of the Irish-based website Voice, which includes sections on policy making , leaders, systemic changes and more.

Workshop Facilitators

- [Change Clothes Crumlin](#), retail, education, workshops, production and redistribution, see the short [informative video](#)
- [Rediscovery Centre](#)- training, workshops available
- For more workshop facilitators on fast fashion and linked issues, see the [WWGS Directory of GCE facilitators](#)



- Student-led Swap-Shop and whole school event: see WWGS case studies for ideas and inspiration [Learner-led GCE Projects in West Wicklow Youth Reach](#) or [Unlearning and Reconstructing at Castletroy College](#)
- Explore the [Clean Clothes Campaign](#) for ideas and ongoing actions
- [Labour Behind the Label](#) campaigns actively for garment workers' rights worldwide and has ongoing campaigns and ways to take action
- [Relove Fashion](#): Ireland's sustainable fashion competition for young people
- [Fashion Revolution Week](#): an annual campaign for fashion activism
- Organise a film showing based on sustainable fashion, see the [Environmental Justice Foundation website](#) for some short films.
- Consult the [WWGS Teacher Handbook](#) p.16-18 for ideas on student action.