THE IMPACT OF FAST FASHION

LEARNING GOALS

- To think critically about the relationship between clothing production and the environment.
- To identify the costs and benefits of modern consumption habits
- To practice drawing connections between local challenges and global contexts and best practices.

ASSIGNMENT

Estimated Time: ~28 min

- Listen to "Wearing The World Out" (~26min)
- Watch "Make Fashion Circular" (2:02)

TERMINOLOGY

- Greenwashing - a deceitful form of advertising where a company or organization spends more time and money on marketing themselves as environmentally friendly than on actually minimizing their environmental impact.
- Linear economy - The current economy system which follows the "take-make-destroy" pattern where raw materials are collected, then transformed into products that are used until they are discarded as waste.
- Circular economy - A circular economy is an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use and reuse of resources. It is the proposed solution to the waste produced by a linear economy.

KAHOOT QUIZ

- Go to Kahoot.it or use the Kahoot mobile app and enter the pin 06696138
- Or, use this link

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is fast fashion and why is it so popular?
- What do you think about when buying clothes? On average, how many times do you think you wear your clothes before throwing them out? Where do our clothes go after we throw them out?
- How does globalization affect the fashion industry?
- Why is it so difficult to obtain statistics and trace the pollution caused in the apparel industry?
- What are the sources of pollution in the process of making a cotton shirt?
- How is France addressing the issue of waste and pollution caused by fashion?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (continued)

- In the podcast, Elizabeth Segran says, "we need governments to force companies to take responsibility for the pollution that they're producing and the impact that they're having because right now, it's citizens who are paying the price for all of this destruction." Do you agree with the need to increase regulation? What kinds of regulation would you promote and to what extent?
- Why do some clothing companies and manufacturers burn or destroy some of the clothes they make?
- What do you think of the circular fashion proposed by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation? How can we make the fashion industry more circular in Hawaii? What may be the challenges in implementing this and how can we overcome them?
- Does the idea of a circular economy have to be limited to fashion? What would a more circular economy look like in other industries?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Watch: "Fashion's toxic threads" (7 min)
  The Economist overviews the environmental impacts of the fashion industry with a focus on microplastic pollution. It features businesses working to reduce these effects with recycled fabric, recycled plastic bottles, and yarn technology.
- Watch: "Not a good look: How Fashion is Destroying Our World" (2 min)
  Huffpost UK created a fun video with statistics that are easy to visualize. The second half emphasizes ways to reduce your fashion footprint.
- Ellen MacArthur Foundation
  Learn more about this organization and what it is doing to promote a circular economy.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Easier

- Take stock of your clothing like the host does in the podcast. Identify the clothing you wear and the clothing you don't. Be conscientious when shopping for clothes. Try going to a thrift store or try to wear the clothes you have longer than you normally would.

Medium

- On social media or via email, ask your favorite companies about how transparent their supply chain is and make some tangible requests of them based on what you think should change or be improved.
- Save the next item of old clothing you were going to discard. Swap it with a friend, or find a thrift flip video on Youtube and try transforming it into a new piece. Organize a clothing revamp workshop and invite friends, family and classmates to spread awareness of apparel waste.
- Research thrift stores, clothing swap companies, and other sustainable clothing businesses in your area. Compile a list and share it with your classmates or in your school newspaper to inform them of the many readily available alternatives to fast fashion.

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IDEAS FOR ACTION (continued)

- As suggested in the podcast, ask your favorite companies via email or on twitter:
  - How transparent is your supply change?
  - Do you evaluate your suppliers for their environmental performance before you qualify them to make your stuff?
  - What are the consequences of egregious environmental behavior?
  - Have you benchmarked your suppliers for who has the lowest carbon footprint?
  - Make tangible requests of them, to try to pressure them to up their game and be real.

Hard

- Policy advocacy: research bills in the city council and state legislature related to the fashion industry or creating a more circular economy. Write and submit testimony.

HAWAII CORE STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES (HCSSS) LINKS

- Content Standard SS.WH.8.12.1
- Action Projects link to SS.PID.5.7.1

This lesson was created by Paige Lockwood.