

[Fashion High]

Understanding the Impact of your Clothing: An Introduction
-2 Hour Workshop-

Social Alterations

[An Education Lab for Socially Responsible Fashion Design]

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Introduction

This workshop was designed to introduce pre-16 students/participants the value of a responsible fashion industry, by understanding the impact our clothing has on both *people* and *planet*.

Through the course of this workshop, students/participants may at times feel slightly uncomfortable and confused; these issues are very serious, and some students may have never thought about where their clothing comes from, or how it's made. These feelings are perfectly normal.

We ask that educators please be sensitive to the needs of their students/participants when presenting the workshop; while the information itself can be confusing at times, this workshop strives to empower educators and learners by providing them with the resources and tools they need to take back control.

Objectives

- To *engage* students/participants on the impact their clothing has on garment workers working within the fashion industry.
- To *educate* students/participants on the impact their clothing has on the planet, specifically in terms of best practices in laundry habits.
- To *encourage* students/participants to 'talk back' to the industry, through a critical examination of fashion themes coming out of the industry, specifically surrounding beauty and wealth.
- To *empower* learners to take back control of the impact their clothing on both people and planet.

Equipment

This workshop is designed for a group size of between 20-30 learners. Before you begin, arrange for the students/participants to move their desks into groups no larger than **seven**. (NOTE: To keep within the timeline, you will need to have arranged the desks before they have arrived. If you are unable to do this before hand, please allow for extra time)

2 Hour Workshop: Activity and Equipment Overview	
Activity 1	2 signs: 1 that reads "I Agree" and 1 that reads "I Disagree"
Activity 2	20 sheets of A4 paper, 2 pairs of scissors, 4 rulers and 10 pencils for each group
Activity 3	1 map of the world and 1 handout for student
Activity 4	1 map of the world, 1 pack of tacks, and 1 long ribbon
Activity 5	3 magazines and 2 pairs of scissors per group, 1 poster board at the front of the class (alternatively, you can use the white/chalkboard), and one video projector.

[Table 1: Equipment required for each activity]

Please refer to the instructions within each activity for more details

[Fashion High]
-2 Hour Workshop-

Timetable/Schedule

[Fashion High] Understanding the Impact of your Clothing: An Introduction	
2 Hour Workshop	
Activity 1: I Agree/I Disagree	20 Minutes
Activity 2: Quiz	30 Minutes
Activity 3: All Together Now	15 Minutes
Activity 4: Understanding Impact— The Truth about Labels	30 Minutes
Activity 5: Talking Back	15 Minutes
Discussion Time (10 Minutes, or no limit)	
120 Minutes	

[Table 2: Workshop schedule and timeline]

Activity 1—*I Agree/ I Disagree: Exploring Attitudes to the Social and Environmental Impact of the Garment Industry*

“This activity enables participants to explore their own attitudes towards working conditions in the garment industry.” (Fashioning an Ethical Industry, 179)

Time	20 Minutes
Equipment	2 signs: 1 that reads “I Agree” and 1 that reads “I Disagree”

[Table 3: Required time and equipment for Activity 1]

The workshop starts with the activity “I Agree/ I Disagree: Exploring Attitudes to the Social and Environmental Impact of the Garment Industry” for a few of reasons:

- This activity is a great way for the course leader to get a quick feel of the attitudes and perceptions of the students/participants from the beginning. As the course leader, you may find that some participants are more comfortable with the subject matter than others.
- Starting with this activity will allow for students/participants to get a better idea of what the workshop is all about. In some cases, participants may have never considered the statements you will read aloud; this is an opportunity for them to begin to understand some of the workshop themes.
- Using this exercise as the introductory activity for the workshop allows students/participants a glimpse into the perceptions and attitudes of their fellow classmates. Having students move their body’s to express their opinions, allows them freedom to comfortably think for themselves while still being able to take a quick sneak peak at the views of their classmates, without the pressure to speak up and out on the issues.

“I Agree!” / “I Disagree!”

Through this activity, students/participants should feel they are in a safe space to think/feel/say what they truly believe, without being ostracized for their opinions. You may be surprised at the knowledge these participants already have under their belt!

[Click here](#) to download this activity by Fashioning an Ethical Industry from *Teaching Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators*, Edited by Liz Parker on behalf of Fashioning an Ethical Industry (UK) and Dr. Marsha A. Dickson on behalf of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business (USA).

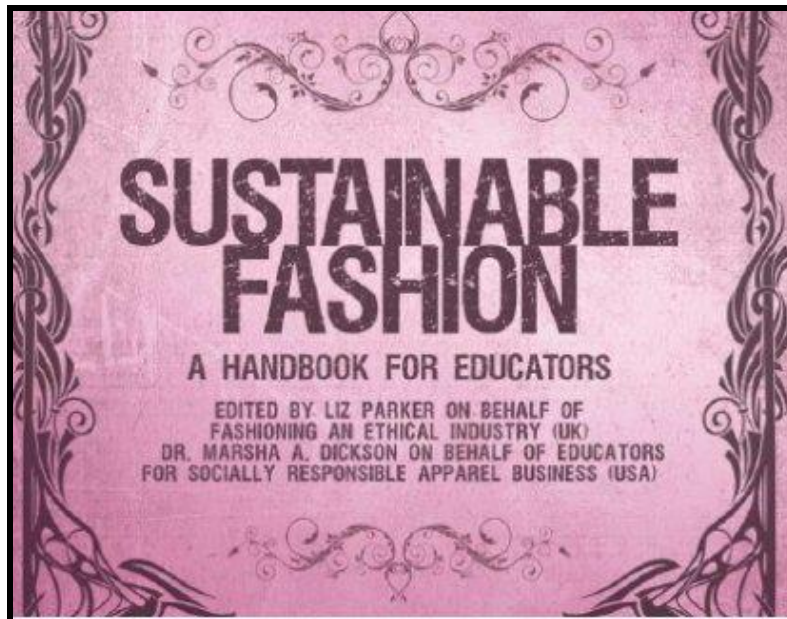
Activity 2—Quiz: *Introducing the Garment Industry*

This interactive quiz will introduce students/participants to the issues, and allow them “[t]o consider the negative and positive impacts the garment industry could be seen to have on garment workers.” (Interactive Activities, *Teaching Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators*, 176)

Time	30 minutes
Equipment	1 quiz handout for each group

[Table 4: Required time and equipment for Activity 2]

In this exercise, students/participants may critically apply some of the ideas and issues introduced through the first activity. This quiz is a wonderful follow-up activity coming out of the first exercise, because it moves away from general discussion and toward hard evidence; “[s]tudent evaluations have been extremely positive about this activity as it enables them to discuss the answers with partners and engages them. Students also appreciate the facts and figures element of the activity.” (176)



[Image Source: Front cover of *Teaching Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators*]

[Click here](#) to download this quiz developed by Fashioning an Ethical Industry, and taken from *Teaching Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators*, Edited by Liz Parker on behalf of Fashioning an Ethical Industry (UK) and Dr. Marsha A. Dickson on behalf of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business (USA).

Now that students/participants have had a chance to absorb some knowledge of the issues and concerns surrounding garment workers working within the fashion industry, it's time to dig a little deeper.

Activity 3—All Together Now: Piecework on an Assembly Line

The objective of this activity is “[f]or students to experience the monotony and pressure of piecework.” (Südwind Agentur, “All Together Now: Piecework on an Assembly Line,”152)

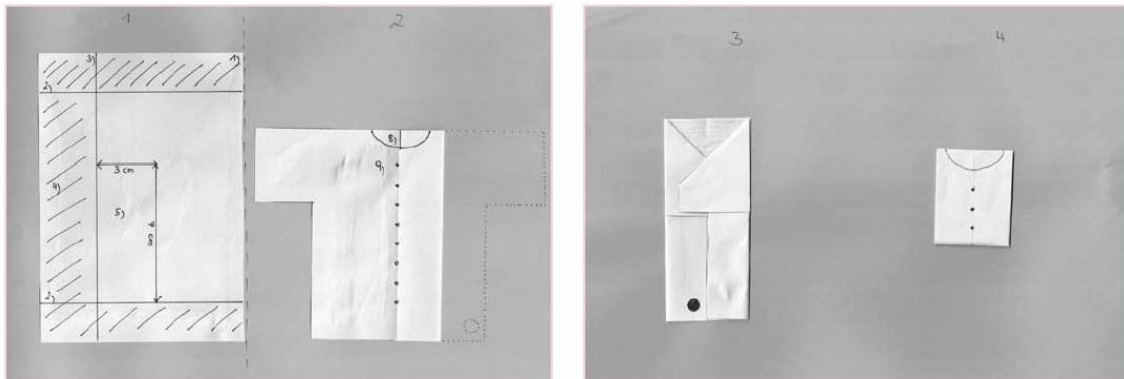


[Grade 10 students working on the activity “All Together Now: Piecework on an Assembly Line”]

Time	15 minutes
Equipment	20 sheets of A4 paper, 2 pairs of scissors, 4 rulers and 10 pencils per group

[Table 5: Required time and equipment for Activity 3]

This activity places students/participants in a simulated factory environment. With an unrealistic timeline and unclear instructions, students/participants are asked to make t-shirts in an assembly line.



[Sketches by Fashioning an Ethical Industry for the activity “All Together Now: Piecework on an Assembly Line,” in *Teaching Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators*, pg. 152]

Encourage students to give their “factory” a name! Once the clock starts ticking for production, walk around and listen to the conversations taking place. If you notice that some students/participants aren’t happy with the orders coming from their supervisor, you can advise them to strike and walk off the “factory floor”!

[Click here](#) to download this activity by Südwind Agentur from *Teaching Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators*, Edited by Liz Parker on behalf of Fashioning an Ethical Industry (UK) and Dr. Marsha A. Dickson on behalf of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business (USA).

Activity 4—Understanding Impact: The Truth about Labels

After completing Activity 3, students/participants have a good idea of the pressure of an assembly line, with a better understanding of *how* garments are most often made. Now is a perfect opportunity for students/participants to visualize *where* their garments are made. Activity 4 has 2 parts.

Time	30 minutes: Part 1, 20 Minutes; Part 2, 10 Minutes
Equipment	1 map of the world, 1 pack of tacks, and 1 long ribbon

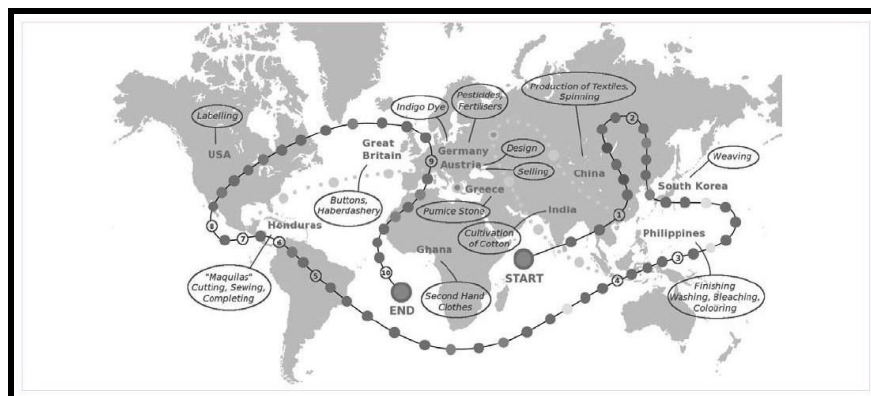
[Table 6: Required time and equipment for Activity 4]

Part 1 (20 Minutes)

For the first part of this activity, ask students to look at the labels on the back of their T-shirts/sweaters/jeans/pants, etc. Encourage them to help the students sitting next to them to locate their labels. As soon as they have a country name, ask them to shout it out! It is likely that you will hear all sorts of countries. Taking advantage of the world map, point to the countries on the map as they are shouted out!

On the map, place tacks on the countries being called out. Once all of the countries have been marked on the map, use the ribbon to illustrate to your students/participants the distance from production countries to the city in which the garment was purchased, by tacking the ribbon to some example countries.

Let's go further. This activity asks students to think past the "Made in [insert country name]" label on their garments, and to consider instead where all of the separate pieces and parts of that garment have come from. Using the illustrative map from the activity "Journalists' Journey through the World of Garments" (see below), explain to your students/participants that each of these separate pieces have in fact come from places outside of the country on their label, and that your simple ribbon, couldn't possibly outline the travel distance of all those pieces coming together.



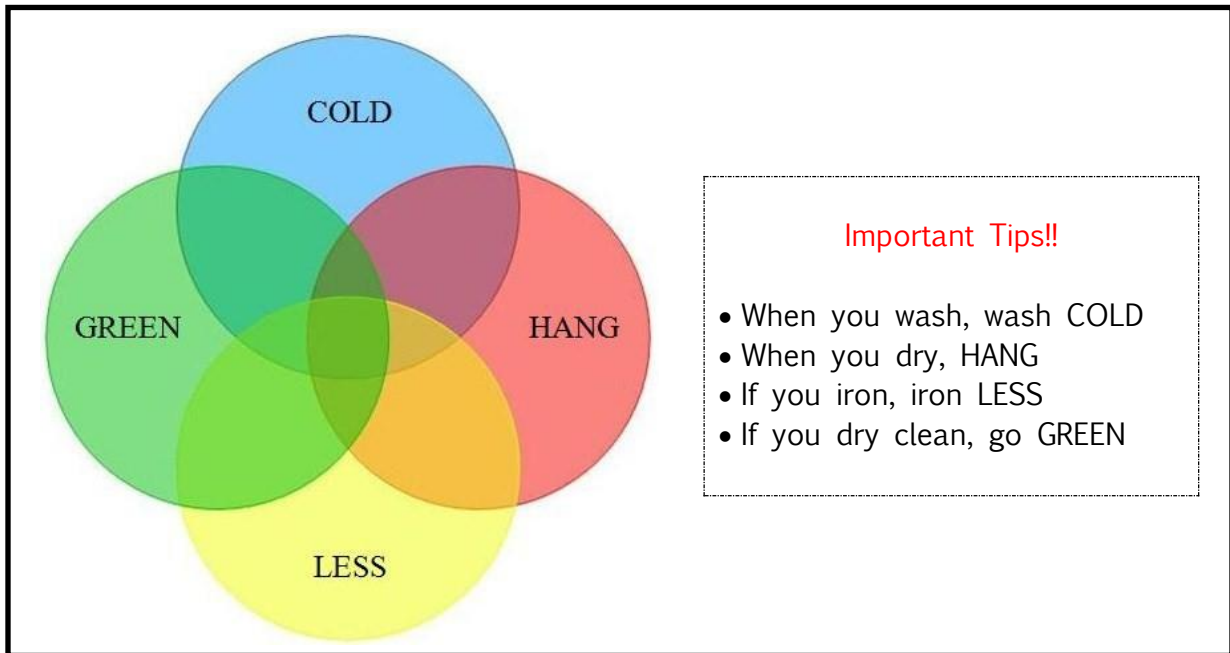
[Image from Südwind Agentur for the activity "Journalists' Journey through the World of Garments" in *Teaching Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators*, pg. 154]

Part 2 (10 Minutes)

In this section, students/participants will be asked to consider the environmental impact of their clothing, and given key information and tools to mitigate this impact.

Ask students/participants to close their eyes and try to imagine, or guess, what the environmental footprint of all of the processing, manufacturing and traveling might be. Likely, they will picture a huge impact. Now, Explain to your students/participants that 60% of the environmental impact of a single T-shirt (throughout its entire lifecycle) in fact comes from washing, drying and ironing them. (Allwood, Julian M. et al., 27)

Encourage learners to spread the word on the importance of cold water washing, hanging their clothes to dry, taking care to iron less often, and choosing a 'green' dry cleaning alternative to avoid all the nasty chemicals in conventional dry cleaning. These steps alone will help lessen the environmental impact of our garments exponentially.



[Diagram by Social Alterations to illustrate important tips for best practices in laundry care]

Once students/participants have learned that they (as the product user) are in fact responsible for the majority of this environmental impact, pass along the handout that will help them to curb this impact!

Activity 5—Talking Back

Now that students/participants have learned a little about some of the social and environmental issues surrounding the industry, it's time to ask questions and 'talkback' to the industry.

Time	15 Minutes: Part 1, 5 Minutes; Part 2, 10 Minutes
Equipment	3 magazines and 2 pairs of scissors per group, 1 poster board at the front of the class (alternatively, you can use the white/chalkboard), and one video projector.

[Table 6: Required time and equipment for Activity 4]

Part 1 (5 Minutes)

In the first section of this activity, students/participants will watch the video "Onslaught" by Dove, through "The Dove Self Esteem Fund." At the end of this short video, the viewer is told: "talk to your daughter before the beauty industry does" (Dove, *Onslaught*). Ask learners why they think it would be necessary for parents to talk to their children about certain messages seen in the video. Likely, students/participants will respond that the images seen in the clip portray an industry obsessed with outer beauty, without much attention being paid to inner beauty.



[Grade 10 students say "No thanks!" to this fashion theme in the activity "Talking Back"]

Part 2 (10 Minutes)

Part 2 of Activity 4 asks students/participants to look through popular fashion magazines. At the front of the class, create a space (either on a poster board or on the white/chalkboard) for students to "talkback" by dividing the board into two sections: one that reads "OK!" and one that reads "No thanks!" Instruct students/participants to cut out images/text that represent the fashion themes they see. Invite them to come to the front of the class and stick the image/text on the side for which they think it belongs.

While this activity is about empowering students/participants to speak up and talkback, it is more so aimed at supporting them on a new journey—one where they shouldn't feel shy to question the fashion industry on how it defines *real* beauty.

[Click here](#) to find the video “Onslaught” by Dove.

Conclusion

Delivered together, these activities challenge pre-16 students/participants to consider some of the social and environmental issues that surround the fashion industry. This workshop hopes to engage, educate, encourage and empower both educator and learner to get involved with the issues, as resources and tools are provided to help lessen the impact of the fashion industry on both *people* and *planet*.

Student Feedback

It is important that students/participants fill out feedback forms for this workshop, so that we may better understand their needs and concerns, moving forward with future workshops.

We have developed an online feedback form, [available here](#).

[Fashion High] Feedback Form: 2Hour Workshop

Understanding the Impact of your Clothing: An Introduction

Educator Feedback and Network

If you use this workshop, please [contact us](#) so that we may keep track of our programming.

You can share your adventures in teaching responsible fashion and consumption with our readers and network through our [Facebook page](#), as well as through our network on [Ning](#). Please feel free to share your experience, and post any questions or concerns—we would love to hear from you!

Works Cited

Allwood, Julian M., Nancy M P Bocken, Søren Ellebæk Laursen and Cecilia Malvido de Rodríguez. *Well dressed? The present and future sustainability of clothing and textiles in the United Kingdom*. Cambridge. University of Cambridge Institute for Manufacturing, 2006. On-line. Internet. Available http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/sustainability/projects/mass/UK_textiles.pdf. [Note that the final period marks the end of the citation and is *not* part of the electronic address.]

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Südwind Agentur. "Journalists' Journey through the World of Garments."

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