

Questions:

1. Are the transitions between our ideas smooth and effective?
2. Do we have a clear argument and is it being argued well?
3. Are our ideas in a useful order?

How Fast Fashion is Affecting Our Earth

Imagine the clothes you wear right now are the price of a bag of chips. Does it not sound too suspicious for it to be true? Sadly, it is. When it comes to fast fashion, the industry that is known for bringing cheap and trendy clothes to the public, has a corrupted side as well. From exploiting workers/animals to harming the environment, the fast fashion industry's unethical practices became one of the leading causes of animal abuse, environmental impact, labor abuse. In a [New York Times](#) article, the writer talks about Uyghurs people being imprisoned in fast fashion factories at XinJiang. In spite of the abuse of labor, the growing popularity of fast fashion has no indication of slowing down for anyone. Therefore, we the people, have the power to stop industries and the power to make ethical choices that do not harm people but also our environment. As we start purchasing durable clothing from companies that include ethical practices, we will have a huge impact that forces fast fashion industries to either change their ethical practices or shut down production. (Let's take a closer look at the inside of the industry and question why they are more than just an unethical bargain for your bucks.) (use later)

Before we discuss the detrimental effects on fast fashion, we first need to know what is fast fashion? Fast fashion is a term used to describe a fast production of cheap clothing that imitates the latest fashion trends. With social media being one of the leading influences on fashion trends, fast fashion has become a popular way for people to keep in touch with the latest trends without breaking the piggy bank. While it may seem like a convenient and affordable way to style your clothes, the hidden cost of what you may think is a bargain is much higher than its actual price tag.

In today's globalized world, it is nearly impossible not to come in contact with fast fashion brands. From department stores to online retailers, fast fashion brands are everywhere and have become a part of our everyday lives. Even on social media, popular style of videos is creators posting a haul of pieces they bought from fast fashion, promoting the brands and increasing its appeal to viewers. Their low prices, combined with the appeal of trendy clothing, have made them extremely popular among consumers of all ages. With purchases just being a click of a button away, it's now all the more easier to make a bad decision. Additionally, it can be

surprising to find out that some of the brands we love are part of the fast fashion industry. In many cases, fast fashion brands are disguised as trendy or fashionable clothing stores, making it challenging to distinguish between ethical and unsustainable brands. This is why it is essential to educate ourselves about the consequences of our consumer choices and to make a conscious effort to support ethical and sustainable fashion brands.

The labor practices within fast fashion have become intense scrutiny over the years. With details of poor working conditions on the workers, inadequate pay, and forced labor on women and children, the industry's pressure to always keep the product low has led to an unwell system that values the price of the product more than the lives of the workers. Including countries with little ethical labor regulations, these industries are bound to exploit the workers which are often women and children. The workers of fast fashion factories make an effort on creating these unethical products, but the price has more of a down side than we expect. From Exposed chemicals that emit the factory to low paying wages, fast fashion industries are basically killing their workers in trade of money. Author [Elizabeth Paton](#), Léontine Gallois and [Aurelien Breeden](#), talk about this very well in an [article on NYT](#) where a Uyghur woman got imprisoned and was forced into labor with no pay and harsh working conditions. Related to that, another [article](#) by [Peter S. Goodman](#), [Vivian Wang](#) and [Elizabeth Paton](#) talk more specifically about a company brand called, H&M. Faced with accusations of its connection with Xinjiang's cotton product that has forced Uyghur workers, H&M had a decision to choose the U.S as their market or choose China as their market. It can be very difficult for the workers to work alongside these conditions which is why as consumers, it's essential to be aware of the impact of our clothing choices. By supporting companies that prioritizes ethical labor practices and healthy environmental practices, we can help create a better environment and system for the workers.

At nearly every stage of the fast fashion production process, there is a negative environment correlated. Authors, Rachel Bick, Erika Halsey & Christine C. Ekenga, who were professors at Emory University teaching on the topic of environmental health, wrote [an article](#) about the environmental injustice of fast fashion. They state that "cotton requires large amounts of water and pesticides to grow." It requires a heavy amount of water to grow and the pesticides used end up in local water systems, affecting the wildlife there. Additionally, "polyester, a synthetic textile, is derived from oil" which, during production, emits non-biodegradable pollutants, leaving nearly 500,000 tons of microfibers in oceans. After the materials are produced, they're taken to be dyed in a factory. "Textile dyeing results in additional hazards as untreated wastewater from dyes are often discharged into local water systems, releasing heavy

metals and other toxicants that can adversely impact the health of animals in addition to nearby residents.”

Animal abuse is a critical issue that is often overlooked in the fast fashion industry. Every year, millions of animals are exploited and mistreated for the sake of producing cheap and trendy clothing. Peta is a non-profit organization with a mission statement to defend animal rights and ethical treatments. According to [an article](#), ducks and geese plucked live for their feathers, “yanked out so hard that their skin is often torn open, leaving gaping, bloody wounds.” Sheep also go through a process called muleses, which is lambs breech and tail being cut with the use of sharp shears in order to prevent parasites. With the poor living conditions these animals are provided for, this is a common, painful, process that these animals shouldn’t be suffering through. Aquatic wildlife is also indirectly being harmed from contaminated water (pesticides and textile dyes) merging with local water systems.

Despite all of this information being open-source, the fast fashion industry still manages to stay afloat. According to [an article](#) written by Isobel Grieve, a graduate from the University of Guelph with a B.A.H. in writing and producing, fast fashion brands have been able to cater to the demands of consumers who want trendy clothes at affordable prices, making it challenging for ethical and sustainable brands to compete. Moreover, the fast fashion industry operates on a massive scale, with production and distribution networks spanning across multiple countries, which allows for cost-cutting measures and the quick turnaround of new collections. Unfortunately, the low prices of fast fashion come at a high cost to the environment, workers, and animals, making it imperative for consumers to reconsider their buying habits and choose sustainable and ethical options instead.

Fast fashion has revolutionized the way us consumers interact with fashion trends. With its low-cost, trendy clothing items that are created to quickly be replaced, it is imperative for consumers to be aware of the harmful impacts of fast fashion and make a conscious effort to support ethical and sustainable fashion brands. As a result, the future of fast fashion remains uncertain unless we make change by our collective action. By choosing to shop sustainably, we can reduce our environmental impact, improve working conditions for factory workers, and put an end to animal cruelty. Fast fashion brands need to take accountability and promote transparency and sustainability in the fashion industry. Together, we can make a positive change and create a more ethical and sustainable future for fashion.