

READING

# Discussing the impact of fast fashion

**LEVEL**

Intermediate (B2)

**NUMBER**

EN\_B2\_3104R

**LANGUAGE**

English



## Learning outcomes

- I can describe my relationship with clothes and fashion.
- I can express my opinion on the topic of fast fashion.



# Warm-up

Which of these fashion facts are **true**? Complete with a partner **in breakout rooms**, or together as a class.

		true	false
1	Queen Victoria set the trend for the white wedding dress, following her nuptials to Albert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Fish eggs are a key ingredient in lipstick!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Dolls were the first fashion models, until Charles Frederick Worth, the father of haute couture, asked his wife to model his designs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	They might seem like more of a modern fashion statement, but trainers (or sneakers, in AmE) are in fact over 200 years old.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	The original 'little black dress' or LBD, created by designer Coco Chanel in 1926, was compared to the Ford Model T car.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# What's important to you?

**Describe** what's important to you when buying clothes, using some of the adjectives below.



practical

affordable

high-quality

unique

comfortable

designer

branded

sustainable

vintage



# Discuss



**It's said that people wear 20% of their wardrobe 80% of the time... which means that we probably don't wear most of the clothes we own.**

Why do you think this might be? Is this true for you?

Do you declutter your wardrobe often?

What do you do with unwanted or unworn clothes?







# Clothes and fashion

Read the example sentences. **Complete** the activity.



**Update your spring wardrobe with these new styles!**

**I bought a new wardrobe with lots more space.**

The word **wardrobe** has a slightly different meaning in sentence one than in sentence two. What is the difference?

*Check the answer key for the explanation!*



# Fast fashion

**Guess** the correct figure. Check your answers in the answer key.

## The figures



\_\_\_\_\_ billion items of clothing are produced every year.



The fashion industry is responsible for almost \_\_\_\_\_% of global emissions, more than shipping and aviation combined.



It is estimated that over \_\_\_\_\_ billion garments are discarded less than a year after they are made.

10

100

50

# More on fast fashion

1. **Skim** these paragraphs from a text (A-D). **Match** each paragraph to a corresponding heading.
2. **Order** the text.

**Cheap clothes at a high price**

**Clothing and the circular economy**

**Radical changes in the textile industry**

**Think twice before you buy**

**A** Many argue that the real challenge is overconsumption. A significant change in consumer behaviour and thinking is needed – people should simply buy less and consider more sustainable options such as second-hand stores.

**B** The appeal of so-called fast fashion brands lies in a vast variety of styles offered at affordable prices, for budget-conscious consumers. But their business model comes at a huge human and environmental cost.

**C** Fashion brands are producing twice as much clothing each year compared to 2000. New lines are now released weekly. The quick turnaround of new designs encourages an increasingly throwaway culture in which items are not made (or bought) to last.

**D** Pressure is mounting on the fashion industry to create higher-quality, more durable garments that can be reused, as well as to incorporate recycled textiles into the manufacturing process.



# Reading (1)

**Read** the text in order. **Answer** the questions.

## Radical changes in the textile industry

Fashion brands are producing twice as much clothing each year compared to 2000. New lines are now released weekly. The quick turnaround of new designs encourages an increasingly throwaway culture in which items are not made (or bought) to last.

## Cheap clothes at a high price

The appeal of so-called fast fashion brands lies in a vast variety of styles offered at affordable prices, for budget-conscious consumers. But their business model comes at a huge human and environmental cost.



1. How were things in the fashion industry different twenty years ago, according to the text?
2. What does the term **throwaway culture** refer to?
3. Who do fast fashion brands appeal to, according to the text?

## Reading (2)

**Read** the text in order. **Answer** the questions.

### **Clothing and the circular economy**

Pressure is mounting on the fashion industry to create higher-quality, more durable garments that can be reused, as well as to incorporate recycled textiles into the manufacturing process.

### **Think twice before you buy**

Many argue that the real challenge is overconsumption. A significant change in consumer behaviour and thinking is needed – people should simply buy less and consider more sustainable options such as second-hand stores.



1. How can the fashion industry change to reduce its negative impact?
2. Have you heard the term **circular economy** before? Do you know what it means?
3. What should consumers do, according to the text?

# Different perspectives



**It's been said that we live in an increasingly throwaway culture.**

**A circular economy is a model that aims to increase the life-cycle of products.**

Look at the picture to the left.

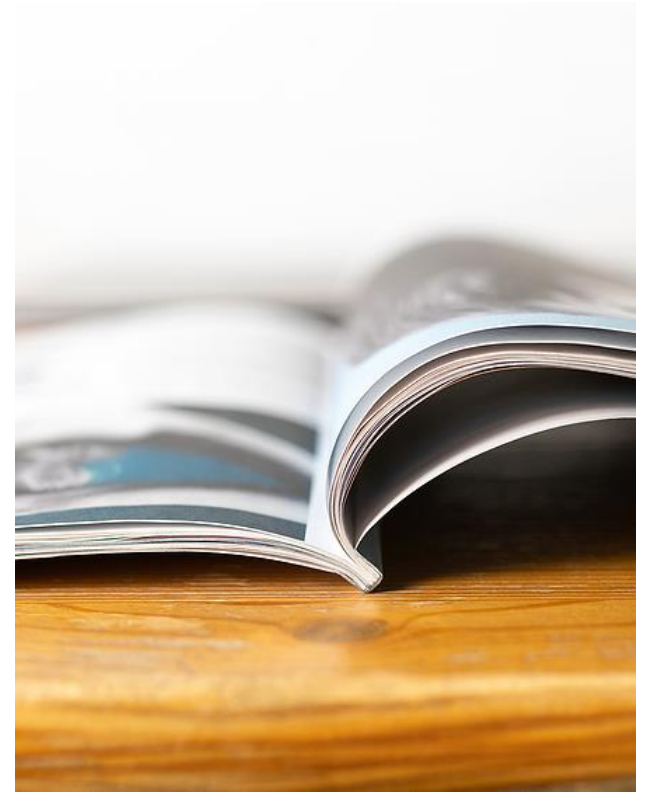
How might this kind of activity relate to the highlighted concepts above?



## Reflect on the text

**Were you surprised  
by anything you  
read in the text?**

**Were there any points that you  
would like to find out more  
about?**





# Discuss

**What's your opinion** on fast fashion, its impact and possible solutions?  
You can use some of the prompts below to **aid your discussion**.

***I think...***

Fashion industry

Charity and  
second-hand  
shops

Budget-conscious  
consumer

***One difficulty is that...***

Overconsumption

Throwaway culture

Clothes swap

***I hope...***

Social media

Education

Policy





# End of the lesson

Idiom

***After a fashion***

**Meaning:** to some extent, a little bit

**Example:**

Do you play any instruments?  
I can play guitar, after a fashion. Just a few simple songs.



# Additional practice



# Vocabulary match

**Match** the words and phrases from the lesson to the correct definition.

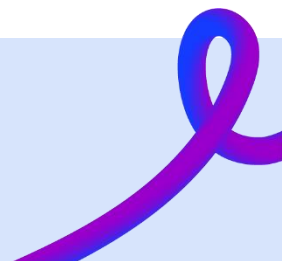
- |   |                                    |   |   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | <b>to set a trend</b>              | a | high fashion – expensive items that have been designed by a fashion designer            |
| 2 | <b>haute couture</b>               | b | to wear something that is distinctive and intended to draw attention or express a style |
| 3 | <b>to make a fashion statement</b> | c | to throw away   |
| 4 | <b>a garment</b>                   | d | a collection of clothes, often designed around a theme or for a particular purpose      |
| 5 | <b>to discard</b>                  | e | to popularise   |
| 6 | <b>a line (of clothing)</b>        | f | a piece of clothing   |



# Complete the sentences

**Complete** the sentences using vocabulary from the previous slide.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ is a term borrowed from the French and used to describe high fashion.
- 2 Fashion designers create styles that \_\_\_\_\_ for the upcoming season. These often trickle down into high street fashion, but are much cheaper than the original designs.
- 3 She wore a beautiful knitted \_\_\_\_\_ somewhere between a shawl and a scarf.
- 4 A lot of restaurants \_\_\_\_\_ food that is still perfectly good to eat.
- 5 My favourite brand has released a new \_\_\_\_\_ of handbags. I can't wait to get one.





# Discuss



Do you know of any sustainable clothing brands?

Have you ever tried making your own clothes?

Are there many charity or second-hand shops in your area?

Have you ever held a clothes swap with friends?

# Answer key

**P.3:** 1. true (though she wasn't the first person to wear white for their wedding) 2. false (but fish scales are used in some lipsticks to give them a shimmer) 3. true 4. false (the first pair were released in 1917) 5. true (like the Ford car, the dress was considered to be an affordable classic)

**P.6:** In the first example, *wardrobe* is used as a figure of speech, and refers to the clothes that you have. In the second example, *wardrobe* refers to the actual piece of furniture that is used to store clothes.

**P.7:** 1. 100 billion 2. 10% 3. 50 billion

**P.8:** Radical changes in the textile industry (C) Cheap clothes at a high price (B) Clothing and the circular economy (D) Think twice before you buy (A)





# Summary

## Fast fashion:

- Radical changes in the textile industry; Cheap clothes at a high price; Clothing and the circular economy; Think twice before you buy
- *The appeal of so-called fast fashion brands lies in a vast variety of styles offered at affordable prices, for budget-conscious consumers.*

## Perspectives on fashion:

- Wardrobe; fast fashion; throwaway culture; circular economy; overconsumption
- It's been said that we live in an increasingly **throwaway culture**.
- A **circular economy** is a model that aims to increase the life-cycle of products.



# Vocabulary

wardrobe

fast fashion

throwaway culture

circular economy

overconsumption

