

91279R



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## Level 2 Social Studies 2020

### 91279 Demonstrate understanding of conflict(s) arising from different cultural beliefs and ideas

2.00 p.m. Tuesday 8 December 2020

Credits: Four

## RESOURCE BOOKLET

Refer to this booklet to answer the questions for Social Studies 91279.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

**YOU MAY KEEP THIS BOOKLET AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

# THE NATURE AND CAUSE OF THE CONFLICT SURROUNDING FAST FASHION

## Relevant social studies perspectives

<b>Capitalist</b>	A person who focuses on making a profit by investing money and / or financing business ventures.
<b>Environmentalist</b>	A person who believes in looking after and protecting the environment.
<b>Social justice</b>	A branch of knowledge concerned with promoting the common good based on the principle that all people are created equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities.
<b>Activist</b>	A person who takes action in support of, or in opposition to, one side of a controversial issue.

## INTRODUCTION

Clothes shopping used to be an occasional event – something that happened a few times a year when the seasons changed, or when we outgrew what we had. But 20–30 years ago, something changed. Clothes became cheaper, trend cycles sped up, and shopping became a form of entertainment. Enter fast fashion.

Fast fashion can be defined as cheap, trendy clothing that samples ideas from the catwalk or celebrity culture, and turns them into garments in high street stores at breakneck speed. Nowadays, fast fashion brands produce about 52 “micro-seasons” a year. This means at least one new “collection” every week.

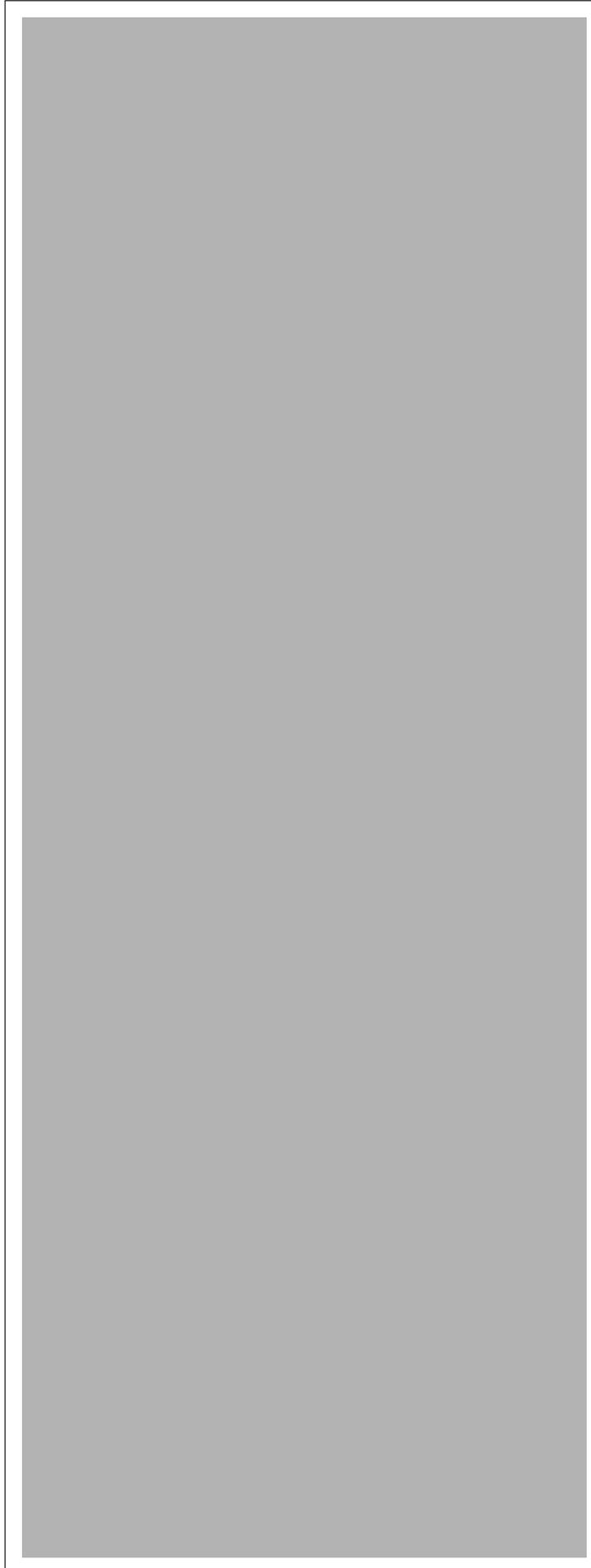
**RESOURCE A: How did fast fashion happen?**

Before the 1800s, fashion was slow. You had to source your own materials like wool or leather, prepare them, weave them, and then make the clothes. The Industrial Revolution introduced new technology – like the sewing machine. Clothes became easier, quicker, and cheaper to make. Dressmaking shops emerged to cater for the middle classes. A lot of these dressmaking shops used teams of garment workers or home workers. It was around this time that sweatshops emerged, along with some familiar safety issues. The first major garment factory disaster was when fire broke out in New York’s Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in 1911. It claimed the lives of 146 garment workers, many of whom were young, female immigrants.



Worldwide, the average consumer bought 60% more garments in 2014 than in 2000 but kept them for half as long.

**RESOURCE B: The big picture**



The fast fashion production cycle.

**RESOURCE C: Fast fashion is helping low-income fashionistas**

Clothing is a camouflage of social class, and fast fashion is making it easier to stay afloat socially. Fast fashion drowns consumers in trends, but such a large number of trends, at a reasonable price, allows low-income shoppers to cling to at least one of these trends.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Camouflage is important. Appearances, no matter how brutal it sounds, matter. In a world of injustice, fast fashion can help ease the fight for upward mobility.

## POINTS OF VIEW, VALUES AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT

### RESOURCE D: The impact of fast fashion

#### How fast fashion is destroying the planet

Dana Thomas, a veteran journalist who wrote *Fashionopolis: The Price of Fast Fashion and the Future of Clothes*, believes fast fashion – which is to say cheap, disposable clothing, made indiscriminately, imprudently, and often without consideration for environmental and labour conditions by companies – is a disease, and both the planet and its people are paying the price.

When asked what one of the most surprising things was that she learnt during her reporting for *Fashionopolis*, Thomas said: “I had read about what a dead river was like and seen pictures, but when I went to a factory where they had dumped denim chemical run-off straight into a river without treating it, and I saw and smelled that, I nearly vomited on the spot, it was so vile. It was one of the nastiest things I’ve encountered in my life. To see all these young people in a shoddy building, making blue jeans for brands you’ve heard of in this fire trap, just so we can buy 10 pairs of jeans instead of one pair, was shocking. As long as there are sweatshops and there isn’t serious regulation and inspection and they can’t guarantee the clothes are made in correct factories [with workers] getting paid a living wage, we have to pressure the industry through the power of the purse or wallet”.

The human cost of fast fashion.

“The worst river pollution examples I’ve seen in recent years have related to fashion. ... When you start to see toxins from an Asian textile mill showing up in the tissue of a North American polar bear, you start to realise that these are issues we should all care about”.

*Mark Angelo, a Canadian river activist*

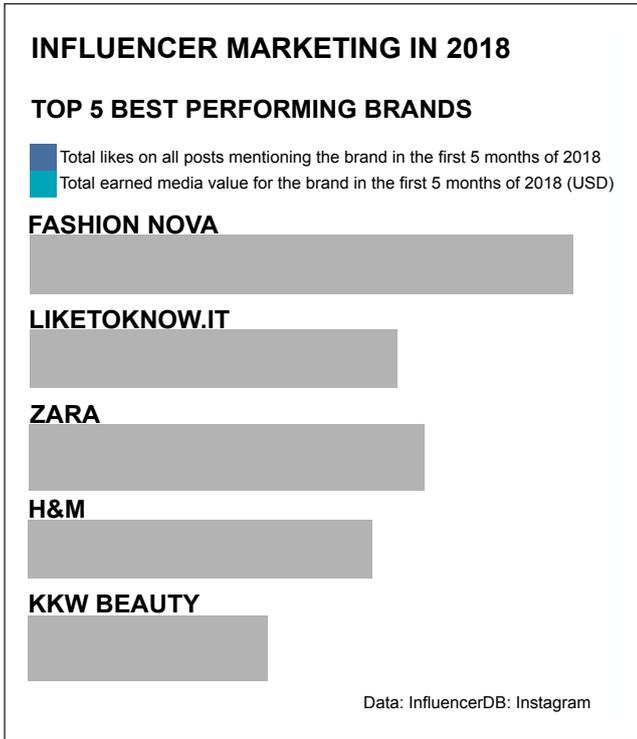
### **Fast fashion in a better light: Its benefits on the economy and across the world**

Emily Parrish, a reporter for *Bear Market Review*, suggests fast fashion is often viewed very negatively, but when seen in a different light and from various angles, there are many benefits that activists choose to overlook. The fashion industry is one of the strongest and highest wealth-producing industries in the world and especially in the US, particularly due to the fast fashion branch. Not only does fast fashion encourage consumers to buy more, boosting our economy, but it also presents many jobs in developing countries. Despite the popular notion to view the workers as being underpaid for their work, it is important to look at the specific country's economic state and to recognise how companies are aiming to improve wages, bettering workers' lives and the country.

Most fast fashion clothing is being made abroad, more specifically in developing Asian countries. Although it is widely felt that wages in these developing countries remain low by international standards (largely because of pressures to compete with other low-cost Asian production centres), it can be argued that the fashion industry is in fact helping boost the minimum wage for those workers. One fast fashion company, along with additional brands, came together to support the workers of a south-east Asian country to receive a higher wage, and in 2013, the minimum wage was raised to US\$80 a month. Fast-forward five years to 2018, and the minimum wage was raised to US\$170 a month, thanks to those companies. Despite the requirement for workers to meet high demands, fashion chains are beginning to align their pay more fairly and are purposely vouching for the workers, in turn helping the countries overall. For example, one south-east Asian country's garment sector is home to as many as half a million jobs and generates a third of the country's GDP.

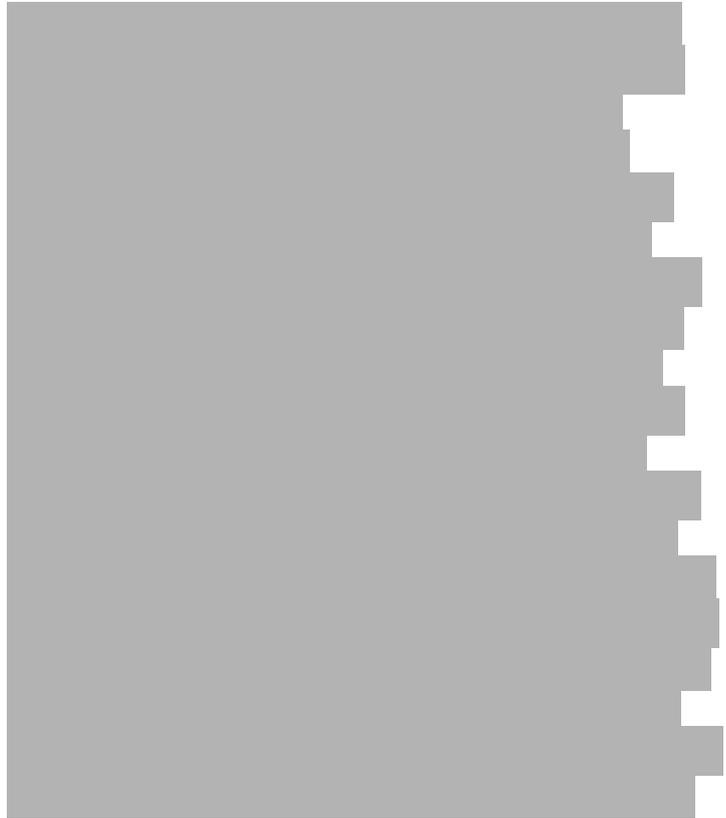
# SOCIAL FORCES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONFLICT, AND THEIR EFFECTS

## RESOURCE E: Social media influencers



Social media influencers are behind the rise, and, increasingly, the fall of fast fashion.

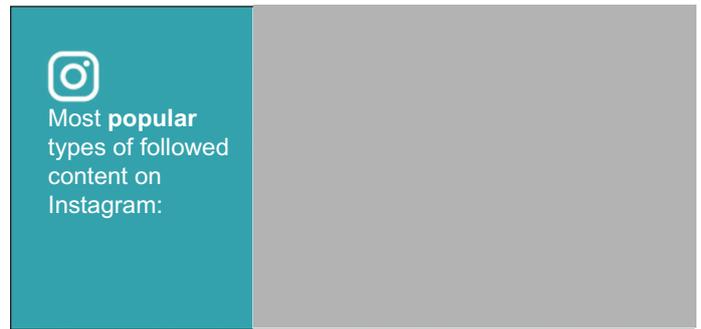
Best performing brands 2018 (based on the value of their media).



Cardi B at the Fashion Nova Launch in 2018.

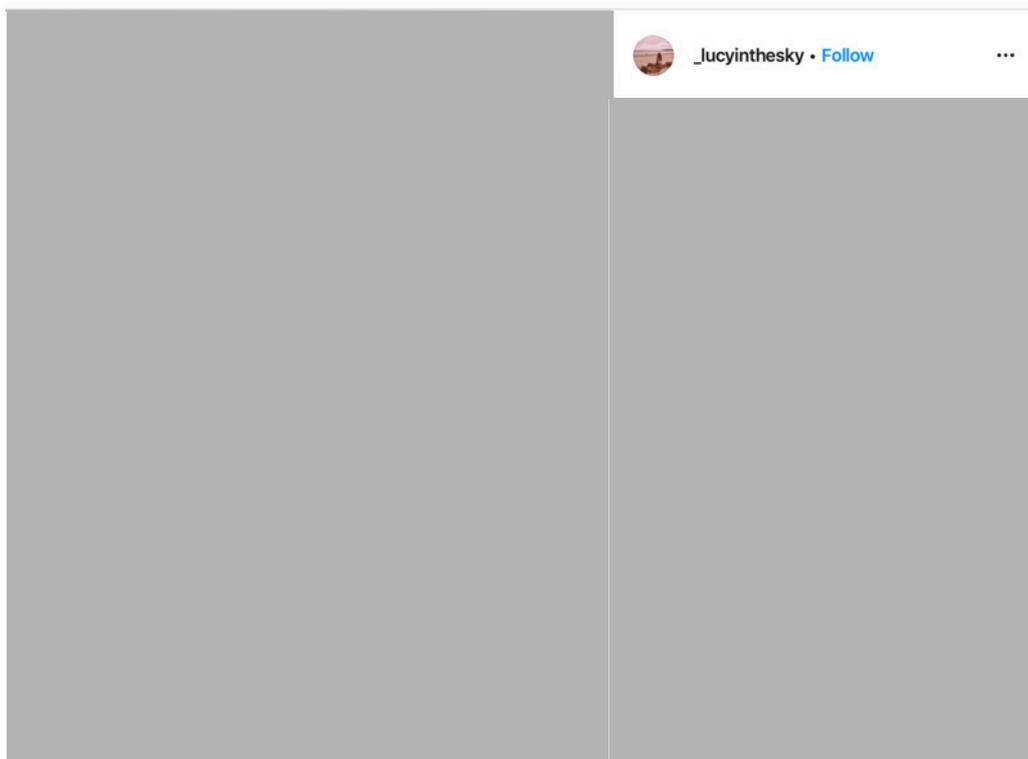
Another kind of influencer has grown out of the fast fashion movement. Social media and web users, in particular, Gen Z, want to know how they can shop consciously and ethically, and therefore turn to slow fashion influencers to help them understand what (and how) to buy. Slow fashion labels put the environment and social good first throughout their production and distribution process. Their motto is “look good while doing good”.

Many of the socially conscious labels blowing up right now can, in part, thank Instagram and influencers for their success. Lauren Bravo, who went a year without buying any clothes, said, “I’ve unfollowed every brand and influencer that might have led me into temptation, and let slow fashion advocates like Jade Doherty (@notbuyingnew) and Hannah Rochell (@EnBrogue) set a new pace on my feed. In a galaxy of single-wear wardrobes, their willingness to show off the same items again and again is [really influencing my choices now]”.



Content and platform preferences.

Fashion label Spell has almost one million followers and thousands of well-dressed, environmentally conscious supporters across the planet. The brand, which is not only produced ethically but also donates a percentage of proceeds to children’s charities and ocean conservation projects, also counts Miley Cyrus, Vanessa Hudgens, and Megan Fox among its high-profile customers. Isabella Briedis, the founder of Spell, said, “Social media is our business. Our biggest driver to sales is Instagram and Pinterest, and it is where we connect with and inspire our customers, where we connect to influencers who help spread the word about our brand. We simply wouldn’t exist without it.”



An influencer wearing Spell clothing.

## RESOURCE F: Social activism

“There is a joke in a certain area of the world. It is that you can tell the colour of the season by looking at the colour of the rivers”. Today’s consumer appetite for fast fashion is a cause of this environmental degradation. In one Asian country, it is estimated that 70% of the rivers and lakes are contaminated by the 2.5 billion gallons of wastewater produced by the textile industry. Hazardous chemicals restricted in the EU and US, such as alkylphenol ethoxylates (APEs), were routinely discharged in the fast fashion factories of some other countries.



Dye pollution from the fast fashion industry.



Some companies have come a long way. The detox challenge was taken up by around 80 brands and suppliers, from fashion and sportswear, to luxury, multiple retailers and the outdoor sector. Among the brands are C&A, Levi Strauss, Puma, Nike, Adidas, Burberry, G-Star, ManMango, Benetton, H&M, Zara, Primark, Valentino, Esprit, Limited Brands, and many more.



Comments from fashion brands about Greenpeace’s detox campaign.

“We have made great progress in phasing out hazardous chemicals that pollute our waterways and environment – there has been a major paradigm shift in the clothing industry triggered by the Detox campaign, which now takes responsibility for their production instead of just their products,” said Bunny McDiarmid, Executive Director of Greenpeace International.

[Redacted]

There are currently four “detox” groupings for companies:

1. ‘Avant-Garde’ companies are ahead of the curve and on track to meet their detox commitments. These companies have banned hazardous chemicals from their production, published wastewater data, and published lists of suppliers. These include Zara, H&M, and Benetton.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

4. ‘Toxic Addicts’ is the category referring to companies that continually refuse to make a commitment to detox. These companies say, “It’s not feasible what Greenpeace wants us to do. No global fashion company can make their supply chains fully transparent and ban all toxic chemicals from all steps of production”.

[Redacted]

Greenpeace has lobbied fashion retailers to detox their use of hazardous materials in production.

## Acknowledgements

Material from the following sources has been adapted for use in this examination (accessed 11 June 2020).

### Introduction

Text: <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-fast-fashion>

### Resource A

Text: <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-fast-fashion>

### Resource B

Image: Greenpeace, 'Destination Zero: Seven years of detoxing the clothing industry', <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/publication/17612/destination-zero/>.

### Resource C

Text: <https://studybreaks.com/culture/fast-fashion/>

### Resource D

Text: <https://www.vox.com/2019/9/12/20860620/fast-fashion-zara-hm-forever-21-boohoo-environment-cost>, <https://goodonyou.eco/what-is-fast-fashion/>, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/fashion/92004245/an-ethical-guide-to-fast-fashion>, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ceciashatzman/2019/10/04/fashionopolis-author-dana-thomas-on-how-fast-fashion-is-destroying-the-planet-and-what-you-can-do-about-it/#582d20853b97>, <https://www.burnabynow.com/news/burnaby-s-mark-angelo-releases-film-on-fashion-pollution-1.2349675>, and <https://bearmarketreview.wordpress.com/2018/06/23/fast-fashion-in-a-better-light-its-benefits-on-the-economy-and-across-the-world/>.

Image: <https://www.sarahbeekmans.com/key-issues-in-the-fast-fashion/>

### Resource E

Text: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/fast-fashion-influencers-instagram-fashion-nova-waste-climate-change\\_n\\_5c5ae8ffe4b0871047598750](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/fast-fashion-influencers-instagram-fashion-nova-waste-climate-change_n_5c5ae8ffe4b0871047598750), <https://www.euronews.com/living/2019/05/03/ethical-fashion-influencer-sustainable-man>, <https://businesschicks.com/spell-gypsy-collective-elizabeth-abegg/>, <https://www.agilitypr.com/pr-news/public-relations/psychology-following-social-influencers-impact-purchasing-behavior/>, and <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/news-bites/influencer-marketing-lessons-from-fashion-nova-and-zara>.

Images: <http://www.zimbio.com/pictures/IF9TKznTuBK/Fashion+Nova+x+Cardi+B+Collection+Launch+Party/FJxquqYkQBK>, <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/news-bites/influencer-marketing-lessons-from-fashion-nova-and-zara>, <https://www.agilitypr.com/pr-news/public-relations/psychology-following-social-influencers-impact-purchasing-behavior/>, and <https://stylecaster.com/slow-fashion-influencers/>.

### Resource F

Text: Greenpeace, 'Destination Zero: Seven years of detoxing the clothing industry', [https://storage.googleapis.com/planet4-international-stateless/2018/07/destination\\_zero\\_report\\_july\\_2018.pdf](https://storage.googleapis.com/planet4-international-stateless/2018/07/destination_zero_report_july_2018.pdf), <https://www.ecowatch.com/fast-fashion-riverblue-2318389169.html>, <https://buddhajeans.com/encyclopedia/greenpeace-detox-catwalk-campaign/>, <https://us.fashionnetwork.com/news/greenpeace-inditex-benetton-and-h-m-lead-2020-detox-program,710835.html>, <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2019-11-03/fast-fashion-sustainable>, <https://coombscrisiscommunication.wordpress.com/2017/05/05/greenpeace-helps-hm-to-detox-paracrises-and-social-media/>, and <https://www.treehugger.com/sustainable-fashion/which-fashion-companies-are-track-detox.html>.

Images: <https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/584738ff20099e6c2da92f74/1491990826537-VM2K9C9SQ9Y3T5WB0FOR/chinas-water-pollution.jpg?content-type=image%2Fjpeg>, Greenpeace, 'Dirty Laundry 2: Hung Out to Dry', <https://storage.googleapis.com/planet4-international-stateless/2018/01/f84f320c-dirty-laundry-report-2.pdf>, and <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44968561>.