

EPISODE ONE

FASHION

TEACHER'S NOTES



Age Suitability 8-12 years (2nd – 6th Class)

Focus:

In this resource, we learn about the impact that the fashion industry has on the environment and explore ways in which clothing can be made and consumed more sustainably.

We examine fast fashion, where clothes are produced quickly and sold cheaply, encouraging people to buy more. We learn that this type of clothing often harms the environment during its production and because it is not designed to last. We also explore solutions such as slow fashion, upcycling, and sustainable fabrics—like leather made from mushrooms!

In Episode 1, the Researchers and the Disruptors come up with innovative and exciting ideas for clothing that could provide an alternative to fast fashion.

Points for Discussion:

- Why do we need clothes?
- How often do you buy new clothes?
- What is meant by the terms “Fast Fashion” and “Slow Fashion”?
- Can you give examples of types of clothes that are fast fashion?
- Why do people buy clothes from fast fashion retailers?
- What are the ways in which fashion impacts on the environment?
- What happens to old clothes when we are finished using them?
- What materials are commonly used in fast fashion clothing, and how do they affect the planet?
- What are some of the ways in which we can reduce the environmental impact of clothing?
- If you were to design a clothing line, how would you make it sustainable?
- How do you think social media influences fashion trends and the way we buy clothes?
- Is there anything that we could do to reduce the impact of our clothing choices as a school community?

Teaching materials written by Claire Romito



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Suggested Activities:

- Clothing label investigation - Ask students to check the labels of clothes to determine where they were made, and the materials that were used. In groups, they can research the environmental impact of the various fabrics, and the impact that the fashion industry has had on the countries of origin of the clothing.
- Documenting the journey of an item of clothing – The students can create a simple flow chart showing the journey of an item of clothing such as a T-shirt (from cotton farming, to factory production, to shipping, to the retailer, to the consumer, and what happens to it when it is no longer wanted). They could undertake this activity for a fast-fashion item, and for a more sustainable clothing item and note the differences.
- Up-cycling workshop – The children could bring in old clothing that they are tired of wearing to redesign or upcycle it using buttons, patches, fabric markers that are provided.
- Clothing/ school uniform swap - The students can organise a "clothing swap shop" for their school where gently used clothes can be brought to be traded for others. This could take place at the end of the school year and could include a "school uniform swap shop" where school uniforms that children have outgrown can be exchanged for ones that fit.
- Compare the impact of natural vs synthetic fabrics – The students can collect samples of different fabrics (cotton, polyester, etc.) and bury them in soil. After a few weeks, they can check to see which fabrics have started to break down and which have not.
- Sustainable fashion pledge - Have each student create a personal pledge to reduce the impact of their fashion choices (e.g., buying less, upcycling, supporting sustainable brands).

Curriculum Links:

This programme and resource complement the teaching of Social, Environmental, and Scientific Education (SESE), as well as Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) from the Irish Primary School Curriculum (1999). Specifically, the "Environmental Awareness and Care" strand of both the Science and Geography curricula, and the "Environmental Care" sub-unit of the "Myself and the Wider World" strand from the SPHE curriculum are relevant.



All 6 episodes of What's Next?
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