



Adult | Teacher's Notes

## Am I Complicit?

**Age:** Adult

**Level:** B1–B1+

**Global Knowledge or Global Attitudes and Action:**

Global Attitudes and Action

**Standard for Learning Outcome:** Student encounters their complicity in negative global outcomes. This can include, as an extension of the self, national complicity too.

**Learning Outcome:** A.D2.S1.LO1 Identify and address personal complicity in negative global outcomes

**Standard for Global Skill:** Student acquires the skills to be a creative citizen.

**Global Skill:** A.D3.S3.LO3 Demonstrate an ability to self-evaluate

**Sustainable Development Goals:** 4: Quality Education, 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

### Part 1 (15 min)

Draw students' attention to the question *Am I complicit?* Ask students if they know the meaning of the word *complicit*. If needed, explain that it means that you know that something bad is happening, but you don't do or say anything to stop it. Elicit or provide examples, such as knowing that somebody is stealing or cheating but not reporting it.

**A.** Tell students that they are going to be looking at how some people's shopping habits make them complicit with some negative aspects of the fashion and clothing industry. Preview the task and check that students understand the terms in items 1–6. If needed, provide the following explanations or synonyms:

- **natural** (*adj*): made by nature, not by people
- **synthetic** (*adj*): made from artificial materials, not natural ones
- **fair-trade cooperative** (*n*): a group of people who work together to produce and sell a product in a way that is good for all members (e.g., fair salaries and similar prices for the same products); they also try to protect the environment
- **recycled** (*adj*): a recycled product is made from or uses old materials like cloth, plastic, or paper
- **second-hand** (*adj*): not new; used by someone else before

Have students match the types of clothes to the photos. Elicit answers from the class. If necessary, give examples of different natural materials (e.g., cotton, wool, silk, linen) and synthetic materials (e.g., nylon, polyester, spandex, rayon). When discussing the answers, allow for the fact that most clothes contain a mix of natural and synthetic materials and it is hard to know if clothes are made locally or internationally just by looking at them.

**Answer Key:** 1. c 2. f 3. d 4. b 5. a 6. e

**B.** Put students into small groups. Ask them to discuss the questions. If they need prompting on possible negative effects, ask them to consider how the clothes might affect the environment or the economy. Then ask volunteers to share their answers.

### Part 2 (20 min)

**A.** Draw students' attention to the images and elicit the meaning of the phrase *shop local* (to buy things in stores that people in the community own, products that local producers make, or that use local materials). Introduce the term *big-box store*, which means *a large store owned by global companies*. Often, they sell a lot of products that are made cheaply in developing countries. Give students a few minutes to read the text and complete the mind map. Have students compare mind maps. Then elicit answers from the class.

**Answer Key: Benefits for the economy:** keeps money in the community; creates jobs for local people; young people stay in the community; the economy grows  
**Benefits for customers:** bigger variety of products; lower prices; better customer service

**B.** Put students into small groups. Have them discuss the questions. Ask volunteers to share their answers.

### Part 3 (15 min)

**A.** Tell students they are going to listen to a college student's talk for a business class. Play the audio once and give students a few minutes to match the sentence parts. Point out that the complete sentences will form a summary of the talk. If needed, play the audio again so students can check their answers. Then elicit answers from the class.

**Answer Key:** 1. c 2. e 3. b 4. a 5. f 6. d



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### Audio script

**Narrator:** *Good morning. What are you wearing this morning? Where was it made? Where did you buy it? I never thought about those things before. But then I did some research, and I've changed my shopping habits.*

*Have you heard of "fast fashion?" Fast fashion is clothes that are produced very quickly and cheaply. The designs are similar to the latest designer fashions, but the clothes are not very well made. A lot of people, especially young people, love fast fashion. College students like us usually don't have much money. With fast fashion, we can buy a lot of trendy clothes cheaply.*

*The problem is that your cheap, trendy clothes actually have a high price. First, those clothes are made in developing countries. Some of those countries have very few laws to protect workers. The people who make the clothes get very little money. They often work very long hours in dangerous conditions. Sometimes the workers are even children!*

*The other big problem is the environmental impact of fast fashion. Many countries with fast-fashion factories have few laws to protect the environment. The clothing factories often put dangerous chemicals into the air and the water. It's a fact that the fashion industry produces almost as much pollution as the oil and gas industry!*

*Some people think they are saving money when they buy cheap clothes, but they're not. Cheap clothes are made from cheap materials, and they don't last very long. People throw them away and buy new ones, so they may spend a lot more money on clothes! If you buy one good-quality top instead of five cheap ones, it will look better and last longer. You can also buy clothes made from recycled materials. They look good, and they help the environment. Finally, many young people buy clothes at second-hand stores, where they can get great clothes for very little money. In summary, if we really want to help workers in developing countries, as well as helping the environment, we should all change how we shop.*

**B.** Explain to students that it is important to think about how people's actions may contribute to certain problems. Remind them that fast fashion has negative effects on both the environment and the economies of the countries where cheap clothes are made and the countries where they are sold. Ask students to read the quotes and rank the quotes from 1 (most complicit) to 5 (least complicit).

**C.** Have students compare their answers from Activity B in pairs. Answers will likely vary. Encourage students to give reasons for their choices. Then have them discuss the questions and reflect on their own shopping habits. Ask volunteers to share their answers with the class.

### Answer Key: Possible answers

1. 5 2. 2 3. 3 4. 4 5. 1

### Extension

**A.** Tell students that they are going to research one of the brands of clothing that they wear. Preview the chart to make sure they understand what information to look for. Explain that they can include any other information they think is important or interesting in the last row, such as *the company gives money to charity*. As a class, discuss different places where they can research this information. If helpful, complete one model chart as a class. Allow students time to do the research in class or for homework.

**B.** Have students prepare a report of their research. Depending on class size and time, have them either present their reports in groups or to the whole class. At the end of each report, ask students to assess the brand, keeping in mind criteria such as working conditions, and environmental protections.