

Buying Clothes

Time: 20 minutes

Group

Purpose

To understand that when we buy clothes we use a variety of criteria*, and we make choices based on these criteria. But what criteria do we have?

Background to the task

Why do we buy certain clothes and not others? We do not just go for the cheapest, or the most fashionable, or the most comfortable. We weigh up different things when coming to a decision.

Carrying out the task

Look at the cartoon in groups of 2 or 3, and discuss what is important for each of you.

Recording results

Individually order your criteria from 1 to 12, with 1 being the most important and 12 being the least important.

Plenary discussion

Whole class discussion on what are the top three most important criteria and the bottom three least important.

* See Teachers' notes for a way of introducing the concept of criteria

Teachers' notes

Materials needed

The cartoon picture and accompanying worksheet (pages 23 and 24 of Hands On)

Language

You may need to introduce the concept of criteria. This can be done by asking questions like:

- "What makes a good mid-field player in football?"
- "What makes a good evening out?"
- "What makes a good meal?"
- "What makes a good boyfriend / girlfriend?"

From the answers you can draw out the concept of a criterion to which a good X (whatever X is) should conform.

Extensions

1. For an older or more able group you may wish to introduce information about issues such as:

- fair traded products
- organically sourced materials
- environmental effects of using pesticides in cotton production

and then ask whether anyone might change his or her priorities. It is likely that they will not – but hopefully it will get them thinking.

2. The exercise on **Footprinting** (see the activity in the unit 'Reuse it') can be used with a textiles product to bring home to students that it is bad environmentally to ship clothes half way around the world, and that local production is usually preferable. At the same time it makes sense that (e.g.) cotton grown in a developing country should be processed there and garments made – value added – where it is most needed. This will help students to realise that it is not always easy to decide what is the right thing to do, and that the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability do not always point in the same direction.