

## #1: What's on a label?



### Summary

Every day we put on various garments – for school, work, clubs, special occasions, sporting activities, the list goes on. Each garment tells a story of how it was made, from what, who made it and what the impact on people and planet has been. However, it isn't always easy to see these stories. We might look at our clothing label to find out how to wash or iron our clothes, but what other information is on there and what can it tell us about our clothes – can it help us understand the journey our clothes have been on? Learners investigate an item of their clothing, add their results to surveys and plot where their clothes were made.

**This activity encourages learners to explore the stories that are hidden amongst the threads of their own clothing.**

### At the end of this learners will

- have investigated their own clothing to collect data from the care label.
- have collated this data into a survey document.
- have plotted locations of production on a world map.

### Time frame

30 minutes

### Lesson format

- Ask the question: What does your clothing label tell you?
- Learning about where clothes are made, what materials they are made from.

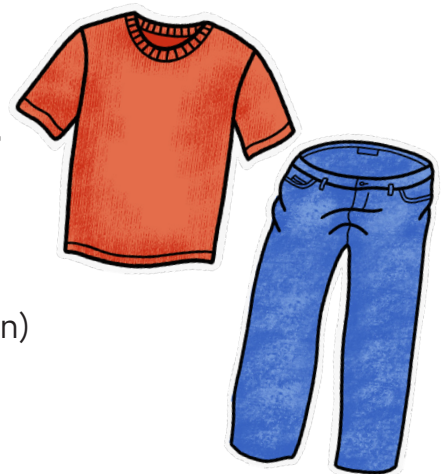


- Finding out more about one garment, and the impact of producing garments like this on the environment.
- Discussing how we feel about what we've learnt.
- Exploring ways to make a difference.

**Note:** This activity asks learners to investigate their clothing labels by turning a piece of clothing inside out. The aim of the activity is to encourage curiosity in a real-world context but we are aware there may be some sensitivities around this. Ideally learners would use something other than school uniform, in order to allow greater variety when doing the survey. You may like to ask learners to bring in a piece of clothing, so they are not using an item worn that day. You may like to bring in a selection of clothes yourself, perhaps sourced from lost property or charity shops. If you feel discussing particular brands or shops may cause some discomfort, you may choose to edit the survey to omit the 'Where was it bought?' column.

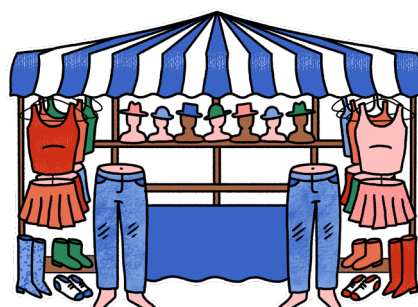
### Key resources

- Items of clothing (could be something that is brought in, or clothes worn on the day)
- 1 Whats on a label Presentation
- 1 Whats on a label Activity (print one per learner)
- Editable version of survey templates (within Presentation)
- Printable world map (within 1 Whats on a label Activity)



### What to do

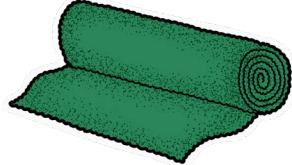
1. Ask the question. What does your clothing label tell you?
2. Without looking at their own labels yet, what do learners think will be included in the information on their clothing label?
3. Slide 2  
This might include:
  - how to wash garments
  - where it was purchased from
  - the size
  - and where it was made.
4. Ask each learner to turn a piece of clothing inside out and read the garment care labels. What information is on there?



5. Slide 3 **Task 1** Learners collect the information their labels tell them and complete survey A. Working in small groups learners share information and continue to complete survey A, adding the information about garments that others in their group are examining.

Whose clothing?	What is it?	Where was it bought?	Where was it made?	What is it made from?
e.g. Lily	White and grey t shirt	H&M	Turkey	41% Cotton 34% Polyester 25% Modal

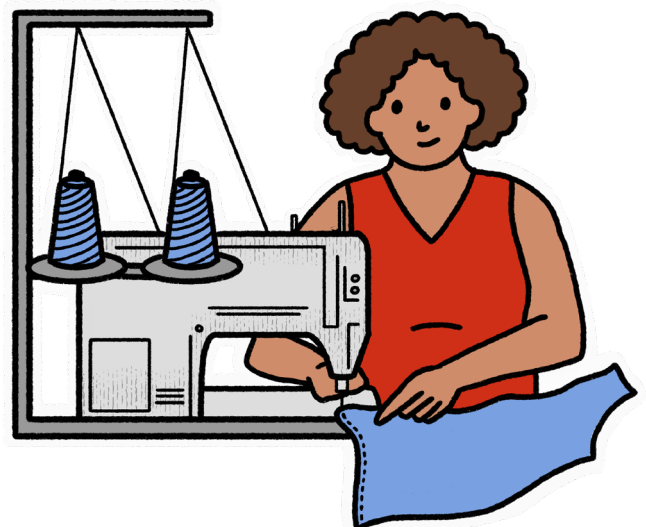
6. Slide 4 At this point it is useful to check understanding of certain materials and discuss what materials are and what their properties are that make them appropriate for garments.

Cotton	a fibre from the seed of a plant, mainly grown in India and the USA.
Polyester / nylon / acrylic / neoprene / spandex	all synthetic fabrics which are made in factories. They are mainly made from non-renewable coal and oil that have been refined. 
Viscose	a manufactured fibre made from wood pulp which is known to use a lot of chemicals in its production and pollute environments close to factories.
ECONYL	this uses recycled ocean plastic and waste fabrics to form new nylon fabrics.
Lyocell / TENCEL	made from the pulp of eucalyptus trees which don't need much water or pesticides.
Modal	made from the pulp of beach trees.

for more information on synthetic fibres check out [BBCBitesize](#)

7. Slide 5 **Task 2** Display Survey B and Survey C on the board. Learners work as a class to complete a version of surveys B and C. Learners contribute names of countries/materials to complete the left hand column. Ask for raised hands to see how many garments were made in which country/from which material, so that this information can be added to each survey. You might like to photograph, save or print your completed surveys for later.

8. Slide 6 **Task 3** Learners plot the country their garments were made in on the world map. This could be done using the Activity print out or done on a board/display. Individual garments could be plotted, or the total number made in each country could be plotted.



9. Slide 7 At this point it is useful to reflect on the journey the garments have been on and note that 10% of all global carbon emissions are linked with the fashion industry.

(**Note:** there is a potential issue with the comparison made by this source between the fashion industry and maritime shipping/ international flights, as one impacts on the other e.g. cargo transported by these methods includes fashion items.)

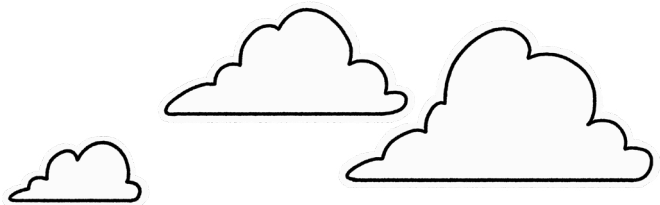
The raw material will have been grown / made in one place and transported to factories where it will be made into thread. This may well be a different factory to the place it is then made into cloth. This cloth will then be transported to the factory where it will be made into a garment. From here, the garment will be transported (by ship, train or truck) to warehouses where they will be sent on to shops, or sent directly to homes.

Ask learners to reflect on this journey – is it more complicated than they first thought?

10. Slide 8 **Task 4** Discussion points:
- Is there anything you are surprised by from the data collection?
  - What do you notice about where your clothes were made?
  - What do you think the impact of your clothing being made in these places and out of these materials might be?
  - How does that make you feel? How might we reduce the impact?
11. Slide 9 Start by taking suggestions from learners. We have included some suggestions and prompts to help learners think about potential solutions at this stage in their learning and in order to facilitate discussion. Sections 2, 5 and 8 also suggest further potential solutions and positive actions in more detail.

## Extension ideas

- Learners could decide on their format of survey as a class, instead of using the template provided.
- Learners could plot location of production onto a Padlet map, if you choose to create one.



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## Lesson 1: What's on a label?

Task 1: Turn a piece of clothing inside out and read the garment care labels.  
What information is on there? Collect the information using survey A.

Then, working in your group, share the information you have collected, and continue to complete survey A, adding the information about garments that others in your group have looked at.

### Survey A

Whose clothing?	What is it?	Where was it bought?	Where was it made?	What is it made from?
<i>e.g. Lily</i>	<i>White and grey t shirt</i>	<i>H&amp;M</i>	<i>Turkey</i>	<i>41% Cotton 34% Polyester 25% Modal</i>

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Task 3: Map where the clothes you looked at with your group were made.



Many of the clothes in our wardrobes are made in the countries named on the map. How do your findings compare?

