



THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 260
SURRY, MAINE 04684
207.667.1025
info@HumaneEducation.org
www.HumaneEducation.org

WHERE IN THE WORLD

Grades: 9 and up

Time: At least two days

Materials: A variety of T-shirts manufactured in different countries; papers labeled with A, B, C,...; pins; clothing racks; a world map; pins with large colored heads; a large easel with paper; markers; Where in the World worksheet (see below); videos and resources about sweatshop labor and fair-trade; Caring Consumer Cards (see below)

Relevant Subjects: Social Studies, History, Geography, and Language Arts

Preparation: Gather as many T-shirts as possible and hang them on a couple of racks in the room (make sure a few of the shirts were made by a sweatshop-free manufacturer). Post the world map on the wall with the pins with colored heads nearby.

1. Tell students that they are “shopping” for a T-shirt. Give them up to 10 minutes to look at what is available and to choose a T-shirt that they would consider buying. They should ignore sizes and only pay attention to the shirt itself: the color, style, etc. Have them write down the letter that has been pinned over the label of each T-shirt (i.e., A, B, C, etc.) on a piece of paper, write down their name, and then turn in the paper.
2. Divide students into groups of four. Hand out the Where in the World? worksheet (see below). Ask students to answer the first two questions.
3. In the full group have students name the clothing item or accessory they chose for worksheet question #1 and then share the country where it was made. Make a chart on a large sheet of paper, listing the clothing items they name (shirt, shoes, pants, purse, backpack, etc.), and then writing the countries they name under the appropriate clothing category. Simultaneously, have two student volunteers placing pins inside the named countries on the world map hanging on the wall.

When finished, hang the chart near the map and ask students to examine them both.

4. Ask students to share their responses to question #2 on the Where in the World worksheet. Most likely, there will be at least one student who mentions sweatshop labor; if not, share some relevant factual information about sweatshops (see our Resources section for ideas).

5. Review questions #3 and #4 from the worksheet with students to make sure they understand what they are to do. These questions are their homework.

6. Watch one or more video clips pertaining to sweatshops (see our Resources section) and hold a discussion about the message of the video(s). Ask students to share what they felt was important and anything they learned, etc.

After Students Have Completed Their Homework:

7. Have students group together according to the country that made the item they researched for worksheet question #3. Groups will have about 10 minutes to share their findings within their group. Individual students who are not in a group should be grouped together and share their findings among themselves.

8. Have each group share their findings with the entire class, including any differences they discovered between their answers to worksheet questions #2 and #3.

9. Give students five pins to represent the five clothing items they chose for worksheet question #4. Ask them to place those pins in the appropriate countries on the world map hanging on the wall. Once all the pins have been placed, have students share what they see on the map. (At this point there will probably be more than 100 pins on the map, possibly clustering in Central America and Southeast Asia.)

10. Give students an opportunity to share any further thoughts about the connections between what they wear and how it is made. You may want to discuss issues of fair trade products and provide examples of fair trade clothing, and/or share additional video clips.

11. Hand back to students their papers from the original T-shirt “shopping trip.” Have students repeat selecting a T-shirt, asking them to consider whether they would choose the same one, given what they now know. (The letters that were pinned over the clothing labels have now been pinned next to the labels, so that students can see in which country each T-shirt was made.) After giving students about 10 minutes to consider their choices, have them return to their seats and share whether or not they changed their minds, and explain why they did/didn’t.

12. Have them consider:

- How has what I’ve learned affected my future buying choices?
- How can I make clothing/accessory choices that fulfill my need to be clothed (and somewhat fashionable) and that also support fair treatment of others? (You may want to encourage them to brainstorm a list of ideas.)

13. Pass out copies of the Caring Consumer Card to everyone.

Extensions:

1. Have students respond to the following: Imagine you work in a sweatshop factory in Honduras -- Mondays through Saturdays -- and are keeping a journal. Please create a journal entry. You may choose any day of the week for this particular entry. Be sure to describe your working day so that anyone who reads this journal entry would feel like they know what it's like to work in a sweatshop factory. Start from the time you awaken in the morning until the time you go to sleep.
2. Invite a guest speaker from a sweatshop-free facility to talk to your class about how they operate and how the company is able to produce sweatshop-free clothing items. Ask students to make a list ahead of time of questions they might want to ask the speaker.

Where in the World?

1. Choose one piece of clothing or accessory that you are wearing today (shirt, sweater, shoes, etc.) and write down where it was made and the name of the company who made it. (You may need help from a group member to read the tag.)

2. Write a brief description of who you think made this item and what you think the person(s) had to do to make it, the conditions under which it was made, etc.

3. Do some internet research about the company who designed this item in order to find out the conditions under which it was made. Use a web search engine and type in *sweatshops your country name* (such as *sweatshops honduras*) to find some useful information. You may also want to search for information using the name of the company who made your item. On the back of this sheet write an explanation of what you discovered. Be sure to include the website addresses where you found your information.

4. Choose 5 pieces of clothing from your closet or dresser drawers at home and list the countries where these 5 items were made.

Caring Consumer Card

When you are out making purchases, pull the card out and pause long enough to mindfully read the questions on the card. Many of the choices we make may seem to give us short term satisfaction or pleasure, but do not serve us in the long run or the big picture.

<p><i>Caring Consumer Card</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a Want or a Need? • How many do I already have? • How much will I use it? How long will it last? • Could I borrow it from a friend or family member? • Will having this add meaning to my life? • Is purchasing this item the best way to care for myself and the planet? • What is the true cost of this item to: My own health? Other species? The environment? Other cultures? • Is it made of recycled materials, and is it recyclable? 	<p><i>Caring Consumer Card</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a Want or a Need? • How many do I already have? • How much will I use it? How long will it last? • Could I borrow it from a friend or family member? • Will having this add meaning to my life? • Is purchasing this item the best way to care for myself and the planet? • What is the true cost of this item to: My own health? Other species? The environment? Other cultures? • Is it made of recycled materials, and is it recyclable?
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Activity by Valerie Belt (HECP Graduate)