

Sourcing Our Stuff: Exploring Ethics in Clothing, Accessories and Food

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- define ethical consumption
- identify the impact of daily purchases
- assess their place in the global chain of consumption
- evaluate and define next steps for practicing ethical consumption

Warm-up:

Read the quote below and consider the questions that follow. Write a two to five sentence response to each of the questions.

"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality. Did you ever stop to think that you can't leave for your job in the morning without being dependent on most of the world? You get up in the morning and go to the bathroom and reach over for the sponge, and that's handed to you by a Pacific islander. You reach for a bar of soap, and that's given to you at the hands of a Frenchman. And then you go into the kitchen to drink your coffee for the morning, and that's poured into your cup by a South American. And maybe you want tea: that's poured into your cup by a Chinese. Or maybe you're desirous of having cocoa for breakfast, and that's poured into your cup by a West African. And then you reach over for your toast, and that's given to you at the hands of an English-speaking farmer, not to mention the baker. And before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half the world. This is the way our universe is structured, this is its interrelated quality. We aren't going to have peace on Earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of all reality." –**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

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| 1. What do you think Dr. King means by the following excerpted quote? " <i>We aren't going to have peace on Earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of all reality.</i> " | |
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| 2. What examples of the "interrelated quality" of the world can you identify in your own life? | |
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Introducing the Lesson:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. articulates how connected we are with people and places around the globe. His 1967 statement rings even truer today. For this project you will make his statement come alive by exploring how we are connected with people all around the world through our consumer choices. You will also take a deep dive into one specific item of your choice to research and explore an issue connected to it. Maybe the issue is a human rights issue or perhaps it's an environmental one.

Choose one of the two activities listed below

Activity 1: Daily Consumption as a 3-D Model

A. Assess daily consumption:

1. Assess everything you consume and touch in a single day, from the clothes you are wearing, to the items in your backpack, to the bed you slept in, to every morsel of food that you ate. Make a list of these items. Then, consider the many origins of each item and the number of people around the world that you may have connected with through that experience.
2. Review your list and choose something to focus on. Perhaps it's dinner, or your jeans, or your jacket, or your earrings, or the beverage you just drank.

B. Research global consumption connections:

3. Now conduct the research. What are all the materials or minerals or ingredients that comprise that item? Where did they come from? How did they get to you? Read the labels. Use credible sources on the Internet, read reports, reach out to companies. Make phone calls and send emails.
4. Upon completion of the research, create a 3-D model that illustrates the global connectedness of that item. Be creative! To ensure that you earn the full creativity/aesthetic points, create the map or globe from start to finish. Don't use a map/globe purchased at a store or found online.



Activity 2: Assessing Your Place in the Chain of Consumption Research and Present

1. Consider all of the “stuff” that you regularly consume as a possibility for in-depth research. You can choose something whole, like a pair of jeans, or a raw material, like the cotton used to make the jeans. Consider the whole supply chain before making your decision.
2. Research the current issues surrounding the item you've chosen. Is there a human rights issue or an environmental issue that is connected with it? How does this issue connect with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals? Why should we care about this issue? How can we ameliorate the situation? Are there consumption habits we should change? Are there political leaders or business leaders or consumer leaders that we should communicate with via social media, emails or phone calls?
3. Share your research. Be specific! Create a video, poster, Google slideshow, etc. to teach us about the issue and persuade us to take action. Share your responses with Pulitzer Center staff by emailing education@pulitzercenter.org or tagging **@pulitzercenter** on social media.

Extension Activities:

Explore one or more of the following Pulitzer Center reporting projects, and then complete one of the activities below.

Reporting Projects:

- [Climate Change and Human Trafficking in Indonesia](#) by Xyza Cruz Bacani
- [Ivory Coast: Where Does Chocolate Come From?](#) by Peter DiCampo
- [A Glimpse of the Workers Who Make Your Clothes](#) by Jošt Franko
- [The Race for Cobalt](#) by Vivienne Walt and Sebastian Meyer
- Find a story of your choice by exploring [Global Goods, Local Costs](#)

Activity Ideas:

Option 1. All of the suggested reporting projects contain both text and photography. After examining one or more stories, write a response to this question: How do the journalists use text and photo independently and together to tell the story, and to make us care?

Option 2. All of the suggested reporting projects focus on a product or raw material whose consumption is causing harm to some population. Do some research: is there a way to alleviate the harm the production pattern is causing, making the product/raw material's consumption a positive thing for all those involved? If not (or if not immediately), what alternative products / raw materials could you switch to in order to practice ethical consumption? Write your response.

Grading Rubric:

Review [this rubric](#) for grading criteria.