

Design a sustainable outfit

What fabrics should I avoid?

Cotton is considered one of the most polluting fabrics on the planet [1]. In order to grow **cotton**, a lot of **water** is needed. This **water** is therefore taken away from natural reservoirs and can lead to shortages for people around the world – this means they do not have access to water for basic tasks such as cleaning and drinking. These people often are not the people who benefit from wearing the clothes made by the cotton! **Cotton** is used to make some of our favourite clothes, including **denim jeans** [2].

Instead, **linen** is a less pollutive option. Less **water** is needed to grow the flax seeds that produce **linen** [3]. **Linen** also requires less **pesticides** than **cotton**. **Pesticides** are chemicals used to kill pests, including insects, rodents, fungi and weeds [3].

While they used to be popular and a sign of wealth, **animal fur** has a significant environmental impact. Often the furs are required to be bleached with dangerous chemicals before use. Animal fur also directly impacts species that already **endangered**. By not choosing fur, we instead choose to **conserve** animal species.



What about what goes on the fabric?

Good question! Often, people would like their clothes to be a specific colour. That means the fabric needs to be **dyed**. Dyeing fabrics can be a really dangerous process for individuals and the planet. In fact, dyeing

is currently responsible for **3% of global emissions** [4]. Dyeing also produces lots of **toxic gas** that can be incredibly dangerous if inhaled by workers [4]. The most sustainable clothing options are re-wearing clothes that you already own! Why not draw an outfit made out of clothes you already have?



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Where can I buy from?

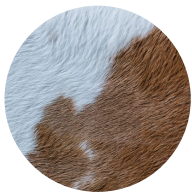
Instead of buying from fast-fashion retailers, consider buying second-hand from friends and family members. You could even visit a charity shop or go to a kilo sale. These opportunities allow for clothing consumption to be **circular**: that is, for clothes to remain in use forever!

Relatively new online retailers like H&M, Zara and Shein are examples of fast fashion. This means that while their clothes are often cheaper - the **environmental and social cost** of creating the clothes can be a lot!

Thinking about climate justice

We all deserve access to clothing. Sometimes, fast fashion is the only type of clothing some people can afford. We should therefore think before we judge anyone who purchases fast fashion and instead call for a **system change**: a world where clothing is affordable and made in an ethical way for people and the planet.

Materials to consider - how good (or bad) are these for the environment?



Animal fur



Cotton



**Clothes made
from left-over
fabrics**



Polyester



**Clothes from
family and
friends**



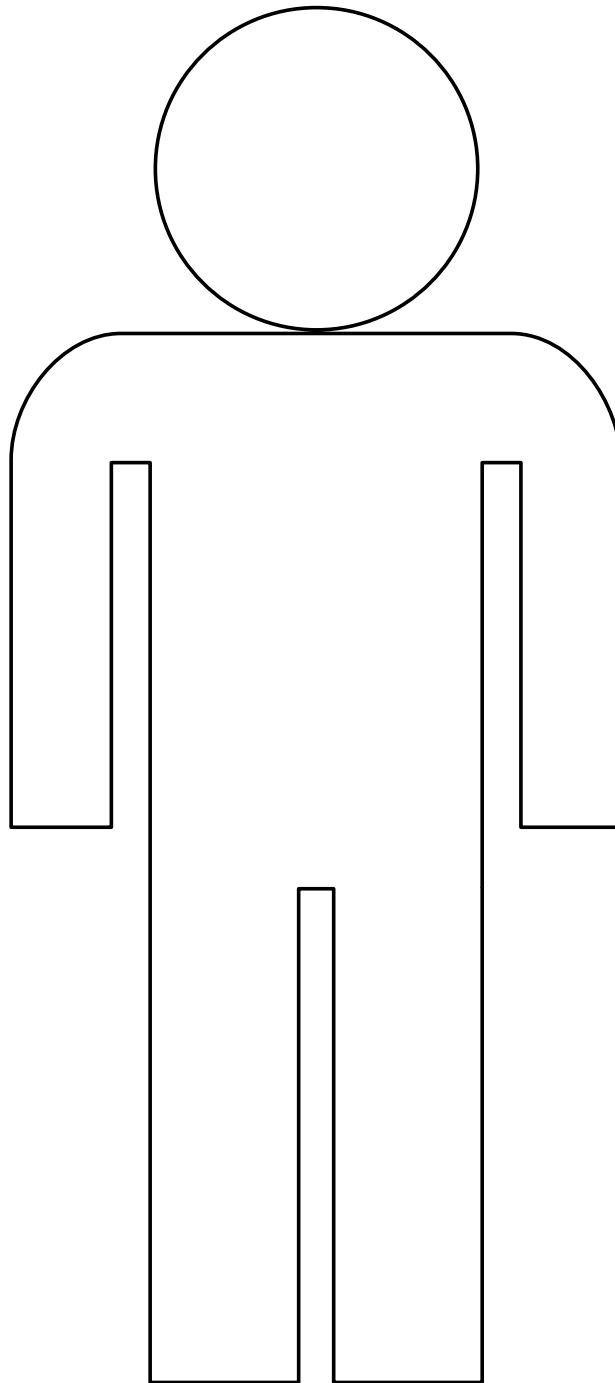
**Clothes made
with lots of dyes**



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You have been tasked with designing a sustainable outfit! When you have drawn on your outfit, annotate around the mannequin with what makes your outfit sustainable. What **fabrics** are the clothes made out of? Are they sourced **locally**? Who made the clothes, are they paid a **fair wage**? Are the clothes **second-hand**, or **brand new**?



Design a Sustainable Outfit References

[1] WWF, nd. 'Cotton' Available at: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/industries/cotton>
Accessed 05.08.22.

[2] Which?, 2021. 'Made to last? Popular jeans put to the test'
Available at: <https://www.which.co.uk/news/article/made-to-last-popular-jeans-put-to-the-test-aH0LX2N4HXuw> Accessed 05.08.22.

[3] Carlile, 2021. 'Choosing the most sustainable fabric' Available at:
<https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/fashion-clothing/choosing-most-sustainable-fabric> Accessed 05.08.22.

[4] Hudd, 2022. Euronews 'A Beginner's Guide to COP26' Available at:
<https://www.euronews.com/green/2022/02/26/dyeing-for-fashion-why-the-fashion-industry-is-causing-20-of-water-pollution> Accessed 05.08.22.

