

I Agree / I Disagree: Exploring Attitudes to the Social and Environmental Impact of the Garment Industry

Adapted by Fashioning an Ethical Industry, UK, for the garment industry from an existing activity. The author of the original idea for this type of activity is unknown.
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| 1. Level | Pre-16, FE, UG |
| 2. Pre-requisite knowledge required by educators | A. No background knowledge required |
| 3. Pre-requisite knowledge required by students | A. No background knowledge required |
| 4. Number of students | 5 to 20 |
| 5. Length of time required | 20 to 40 minutes |
| 6. Type of activity | Discussion and debate |
| 7. Discipline | Business, Cross-curricular, Design, Marketing, Interactive |
| 8. Topics covered | Student / educator defined |

OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

- This activity enables participants to explore their own attitudes towards working conditions in the garment industry.

SUMMARY

Students indicate their opinion about a particular statement by moving towards one side of the room or the other. The activity is useful for initiating discussion; engaging students with an issue from their own personal perspective; enabling students to recognise that there are a range of opinions about an issue; and for introducing complex arguments. The activity also gets participants moving around and encourages involvement in the debate.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Two signs: one saying 'I AGREE' and the other 'I DISAGREE' in large writing on A4 paper.
- A room in which people can move about freely.
- Statements.

METHOD

1. Clear space in the room so that participants can move from one side of the room to the other.
2. Stick a piece of paper on one wall saying 'I agree', and 'I disagree' on the opposite wall.
3. Read one of the statements. Statements vary in their complexity so choose ones that suit the group.
4. Ask participants to listen to the statements and then move towards one or other sides of the room depending on how strongly or not they agree with the statement. If they are very close to one wall, this is an indication they feel strongly about the statement. The further they move towards the middle of the room indicates they feel less strongly. Those who are undecided can stay in the middle of the room.
5. Draw out why participants either agree or disagree with the statements. Ask two or three participants why they are standing where they are. Try to ensure that all participants have a chance to share their opinions during this exercise. Participants can move towards one side of the room or the other as they listen to the arguments put forward by other participants. Enable a discussion to take place if you have time and want to explore a particular issue. It is important not to judge participants' responses but allow them to explore the issues.
6. Repeat with a different statement. Four or five statements are usually sufficient. Do adapt or add your own statements as appropriate for the group.

SUGGESTED STATEMENTS (YOU CAN ADD YOUR OWN OR ADAPT THESE)

- Workers in the garment industry should be grateful for the jobs fashion companies provide.
- I would pay more for my clothes if the workers got a better wage.
- Homeworking is better for women than working in a factory.
- Low pay is fine for workers in developing countries because the cost of living is lower there.
- If children are found working in a factory, the factory should be closed.
- Trade unions are a bad influence on workers and simply cause trouble.
- It is entirely companies' responsibility to make sure that the workers who make their clothes are treated fairly.
- It is better to buy clothes made in Britain because it protects British jobs.
- It is better to buy garments from China because it creates jobs for Chinese people.
- The workers who make clothes really do not worry me. My concern is that I look good and can afford to buy the latest fashion.
- It is better to buy clothes from independent retailers than from high street chains.

BACKGROUND READING

Fashioning an Ethical Industry have produced over twenty factsheets and frequently asked questions that may enable educators to stimulate discussions. Please visit:

Fashioning an Ethical Industry factsheets:

<http://fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/factsheets/>

Frequently Asked Questions:

<http://fashioninganethicalindustry.org/faq/>



This is an excerpt from:

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Edited by Liz Parker on behalf of Fashioning an Ethical Industry, UK, and Marsha A. Dickson on behalf of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business, USA.

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