

Teacher Guidance on Connected Learning exemplars

A lot of time has been lost through school closures due to COVID-19. We need to embrace a flexible approach to deliver the curriculum. Contextual teaching and learning is a concept that helps teachers relate subject content to real-world situations. It also motivates pupils to make connections between knowledge and its applications to their lives as family members, citizens, and workers.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum is designed to accommodate links across the subjects. There are many natural links although these may be under-exploited. Where these links are identified and planned for, they have the potential to make learning more meaningful, informed and purposeful. Opportunities to connect the learning can range from small and informal activities to whole school and formally planned activities.

Connected, contextualised learning does require a connected approach to teaching so there is no duplication of work for teachers and no repetition for pupils. This maximises teaching and learning time.

These exemplars link subjects to contemporary issues that may interest your pupils. A **contemporary issue** is an unresolved **issue** that is currently affecting people or places. Plenty of resources are available to support teaching controversial issues, including: [Teaching Controversial Issues at Key Stage 3](#)

There are three contemporary issue topics to explore.

Fast Fashion

Social Media

World
Sanitation

Each topic has:

- background information with sources listed;
- suggested themes related to subjects; and
- lesson plan themes highlighted in green.

Lessons plans may extend beyond one timetabled class and across other subjects.

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Fast Fashion – Key Stage 3

Background

Fast fashion is a contemporary term used for inexpensive clothing produced rapidly for mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends. It depends on low prices so that items can be purchased frequently and it relies on fast supply from design to the shop floor. Typically, fast fashion uses trend replication, rapid production and low-quality materials to bring inexpensive styles to the public. This has a large impact on the people involved in its production and on the environment.

Key facts

- Shoppers in Britain buy more clothes per person than any other country in Europe; amounting to some five times more than they bought in the 1980s.
- Nearly a third of clothes (worth over £1,000 per household: £30 billion in total) haven't been worn in the last year.
- The fashion industry employs over 75 million people worldwide, most of them women.
- Over 70 percent of the world's population uses second-hand clothes.
- The clothing and textile industry is the second largest polluter in the world.
- The fashion industry's textile production has a bigger carbon footprint than all international flights and shipping combined.

Theme: What is Fast Fashion?

Subject Links

English, Personal Development, Employability

Pupils will be able to:

- discuss the meaning of **Fast Fashion** and Slow Fashion; and
- explore the negative consequences of **Fast Fashion**.

Theme: The Fast Fashion Dilemma

Subject Links

English, Personal Development, Employability, Geography

Pupils will be able to:

- discuss the meaning of sustainable fashion;
- explore the alternatives to **Fast Fashion**; and
- explore the consequences of **Fast Fashion**.

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Theme: Upcycling Clothes

Subject Links

Home Economics, Art

Suggestion

Share this seven-minute video [A National Love Story](#) with your class and encourage your pupils to work on one piece of clothing to upcycle.

Theme: The History of Shopping from Shops to Online

Subject Links

History, IT, Employability

Suggestion

By 2040 it is estimated that [95 percent of purchases will be online](#). How has this come about? Explore the history of shopping. What are the implications for:

- the job market?
- the IT industry?

Theme: Is Fast Fashion a Controversial Issue?

Subject Links

RE, Citizenship, Drama

Suggestion

Fast Fashion has negative effects on the environment and communities and promotes consumerism in society. What about the jobs that it provides and the joy people get from wearing new clothes? Is **Fast Fashion** a controversial issue?

Plenty of resources are available to support teaching controversial issues, including:

[Teaching Controversial Issues at Key Stage 3](#)

[Teaching Controversial Issues Case Studies](#)

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Theme: Recycling

Subject Links

Employability, Citizenship

Suggestion

Share this three-minute video [Clothes mountains build as recycling breaks down](#)

Huge quantities of discarded clothes are building up during the COVID-19 pandemic as there is nowhere to recycle them.

What are the far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 pandemic? Who does this issue affect? What are the consequences? What could be a solution?

Waste360.com has an interesting article called [Where do all the Clothes Go?](#) about what happens to our textile waste.

Theme: Going Organic

Subject Links

Geography, Science

Suggestion

What is the cost of buying organic clothing? What is the cost of buying organic food?

Suggest reading this Huffpost article about [The Importance of Organic Cotton](#)

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Sources

Forbes magazine article about how the fashion industry contributes to climate change
[Making Climate Change Fashionable](#)

A WWF article about [sustainable cotton](#)

A video about the [Love Your Clothes](#) campaign

Global Fashion Agenda [infographic](#) breaking down the environmental effects of a garment

A World Wear Project article about the need to recycle [Why Recycle Shoes and Clothing?](#)

Greenpeace article about waste in the fashion industry
[Fast Fashion: This industry needs an urgent makeover](#)

Fashion United article [People Do Not Wear Fifty Percent of their Wardrobe](#)

Ecotricity news article [How to Live Greener by Ditching Fast Fashion](#)

Good Housekeeping magazine article [20 Best Sustainable Fashion Brands You Can Actually Trust](#)

Our World programme Bangladesh [The End of Fast Fashion?](#)

BBC Worklife article [Coronavirus: How the world of work may change forever](#)

Maxine Bédard's TEDx [The High Cost of Cheap Fashion](#) is related to the American market, but interesting for Grade 10 pupils.

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Social Media – Key Stage 3

Background

Social media has a profound effect on how people interact. It facilitates sharing ideas, thoughts and information by building virtual networks and communities that allow people to communicate, regardless of location, provided they have internet access and a computer or mobile phone.

New friendships can be created and nurtured, views and opinions expressed, and even new identities created through social media networks. Social networks provide whole new ways of learning. The COVID-19 pandemic gave us interesting opportunities to use social media for connections and connected learning. However, there are also great concerns that not all information shared is factually correct or even true. On a more personal level, sharing social media may promote negative experiences such as feelings of inadequacy about achievements or appearance, particularly in younger people.

Do the benefits of social media outweigh any potential concerns?

Key facts

- Research in 2019 showed 83 percent of 12–15-year olds have a smartphone.
- In December 2019, the total worldwide population was 7.8 billion and the internet had 4.54 billion users.
- There are 3.725 billion active social media users.
- On average, people have 7.6 social media accounts.
- The average daily time spent on social media is 142 minutes a day.

Theme: Social Media – Good or Bad?

Subject Links

English, Personal Development, IT

Pupils will be able to:

- discuss the positive and negative aspects of social media;
- explore the possible effects of social media on body image; and
- understand how to protect themselves online.

Theme: Fake News

Subject Links

English, Personal Development

Pupils will be able to:

- discuss the meaning of fake news, its sources and how to recognise it; and
- explore possible issues concerning fake news.

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Theme: The History of Social Media

Subject Links

History, IT

Suggestion

Explore the development of technology through the ages.

Encourage your pupils to read:

Interesting Engineering article about [The History of Social Media](#)

Sprout Social article about [The Most Important Social Media Trends in 2020](#)

Theme: Social Media and Mental Health

Subject Links

Personal Development

Suggestion

Social media and smartphone use is ubiquitous and can be positive. However, fear of missing out (FOMO) and nomophobia (no mobile phone phobia) are two negative consequences that promote anxiety in the user. Encourage your pupils to look at and discuss usage patterns. These resources may be useful:

The Cybersmile Foundation has produced a study on young people's understanding and perspective of [Digital Wellbeing](#) in the UK.

Interesting Engineering article [New Research Links Social Media Usage to Depression](#)

Young Minds article about [Social Media and Mental Health](#)

The Centre for Mental Health website article about [Anxiety, Loneliness and Fear of Missing Out: The impact of social media on young people's mental health](#)

King University Online article about the fear of missing out [Scared to Stay In: The Psychology of FOMO](#)

BBC Future article about [the complicated truth about social media and body image](#)

The Young Minds website gives insight into the effects of [bullying](#)

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Sources

Talkwalker blog about [Social Media Statistics in the UK](#)

Statista.com article on [Social media usage in the United Kingdom \(UK\) – statistics and facts](#)

Smartinsights website [Global social media research summary August 2020](#)

Brandwatch blog [126 Amazing Social Media Statistics and Facts](#)

Statista.com [Smartphone ownership penetration in the United Kingdom \(UK\) in 2012-2020, by age](#)

BBC news report [Half of UK 10-year-olds own a smartphone](#)

Bullying.co.uk article about [What to do if you're being Bullied on a Social Network](#)

BBC Newsround article [Retouching photos: Is it right or wrong?](#)

Independent newspaper report [59 percent of links shared on social media have never actually been clicked](#)

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World Sanitation – Key Stage 3

Background

Many countries do not have adequate sanitation. This puts the health of their populations at risk from poor water quality, sanitation and hygiene. An estimated 2.5 billion people (more than 35 percent of the world's population) don't have access to managed sanitation.

World Toilet Day is an official United Nations international observance day held on 19 November each year. It raises awareness of the 4.2 billion people who don't have access to a safe and functioning toilet. Everyone needs access to toilet facilities that are not shared, where the waste is safely disposed of and handwashing facilities with soap and water are available.

Sustainable sanitation, alongside clean water and handwashing facilities helps protect and maintain health security and stops the spread of deadly infectious diseases such as COVID-19, cholera and typhoid.

Wateraid is a charity that aims to make clean water available to all. It provides information about the global need for clean water, toilets and hygiene.

Theme: Promoting World Toilet Day

Subject Links

English, Personal Development

Pupils will be able to:

- understand the importance of sanitation; and
- understand why this is a global issue.

Theme: The History and Future of Sanitation

Subject Links

English, Personal Development, History, Geography, Employability

Pupils will be able to:

- understand the history of sanitation;
- explore how poor sanitation affects one particular geographical area; and
- explore job opportunities connected with water, sewage and charities.

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Theme: Building a Toilet

Subject Links

Science, Design and Technology

Suggestion

Share this six-minute video about [how to make a compost toilet in a wheelie bin](#).

Watch this four-minute Water Aid video [How to Build a Toilet](#).

Theme: Wash your Hands

Subject Links

Home Economics, Science

Suggestion

Explore how germs and bacteria spread. Why it is important to wash our hands and what is in soap that kills germs? Researchers say that one in every 12 bank cards has faecal bacteria on it.

WebMD article about [The Power of Hand-Washing to Prevent Coronavirus](#)

Health Essentials article about [How to Deal with Dirty Money and Hidden Credit Card Germs](#)

New York Times article [Why Soap Works](#)

Open University OpenLearn resource [Make Your Own Soap](#)

Live Science article [Why Do We Use Soap?](#)

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Sources

BBC Future article [The reason why some people don't wash their hands](#)

BBC Bitesize article about [Water pollution and deforestation](#)

Thirst Relief charity explains [What Is A Biosand Filter?](#)

Clean Safe services lists [10 ways the raw sewage can kill you](#)

Explain that stuff information [How Toilets Work](#)

WTE website provides [A Glossary of Sewage Terms](#)

National Center for Biotechnology Information article about [Religious and Cultural Aspects of Hand Hygiene](#)

BBC Future article about [The Peculiar Bathroom Habits of Westerners](#)

Short video about [World Toilet Day Puts Spotlight on Sanitation Crisis](#)

United Nations [World Toilet Day information](#)