

War on Waste – Clothes



Clothes rationing began on 1st June 1941 because there was a major shortage of cloth reaching Britain. Much of that was needed for military uniforms, tents, parachutes etc. Government restrictions meant that clothing was simple but of good quality and fairly priced.

- All pupils will: know that clothes were rationed
- Most pupils will: describe why clothes were rationed
- A few pupils will: Identify the link between cheap clothing and the environmental impact it has today

Pupil Activity	Learning outcome	Teacher input
Contribute to discussion	Understand that material is imported from India, wool from New Zealand etc and German bombing during war led to shortage.	Q where does cotton grow?
Design an outfit that uses the least amount of material possible, but is still good quality and versatile.	Think about how boring fashion would be, and how little clothing people owned.	Encourage pupils to think about what utility meant, no more than two pockets or 5 buttons were allowed. Embroidered design was illegal until the war ended.
Add up how many coupons it would take to get your school uniform. What other clothes would you be able to have with the maximum of 48 coupons for the year?	Begin to realise that most of us have far more clothes than we need. Think of ways we could adapt clothes rather than buying new eg dyeing or customising.	List on white board or give pupils the chart showing how many coupons were needed for different items of clothes.
Make a list of all the ways you could save energy at home and at school, such as turning off the classroom lights during break times.	Consider the environmental impact of clothes we buy, wash and tumble dry. Washing at 30 degrees centigrade saves 41% of the energy required to wash at 40 °C.	Q Thinking about clothes how can we help the environment? Introduce the Wash at 30 °C campaign used by Marks and Spencer, Asda and Ariel detergent.

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Extension Activity

In February 1942 soap rationing was introduced. Even scraps of soap were reused so that nothing went to waste. Below are instructions so that you can try reforming some of your own soap! Collect together scraps of soap that may otherwise be thrown away. Grate the soap and slowly add water to melt the soap. You can now include your own additives, such as flower petals, herbs, lavender, oatmeal, spices, soap colours and fragrance. Then you pour the mixture into soap moulds and leave to set. This can take between 24 hours and a week, for it to get really hard.

Further ideas on how to dye clothes from natural colours such as berries can be found on www.pioneerthinking.com/naturaldyes.html

Further ideas on how your school can take part in sustainable learning activities can be found on www.sustainablelearning.info

Girls: How many coupons would you need?

Raincoat or overcoat	11
Jacket, short coat	8
Dress, woollen	8
Dress, other material	5
Blouse, cardigan, jumper	3
Skirt	5
Apron, pinafore	4
Pyjamas	6
Night-dress	5
Petticoat	3
Underwear	2
Pair of socks	1
Scarf, gloves	1
Pair of boots or shoes	3

Boys: How many coupons would you need?

Raincoat or overcoat	11
Jacket, blazer	8
Pullover, jumper	3
Trousers	6
Shorts	3
Overalls, dungarees	4
Shirt, woollen	6
Shirt	4
Underwear	2
Pair of socks	1
Collar, tie	1
Pair of gloves	2
Pair of boots or shoes	3