

Economics

Reselling my wardrobe

RecyCOOL Lessons

Disclaimer

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Reselling my wardrobe

Description of the lesson:

In this lesson you will introduce yourself into clothing sales and determine the best way of selling clothes for you. Then you will consider what it takes to set up and own a second hand clothing business.

BEFORE YOU START

Before you start, make sure you talk to your parents, guardian or your teacher about the safety around working with money and make sure you discuss your plans for your clothes reselling with them first – what, how and when?

Objective

Objective of this lesson is to determine the steps of online and offline sales of unwanted clothing, naming their benefits and disadvantages – and considering if this kind of small business idea is something you would like to try.

After this lesson you will be able to

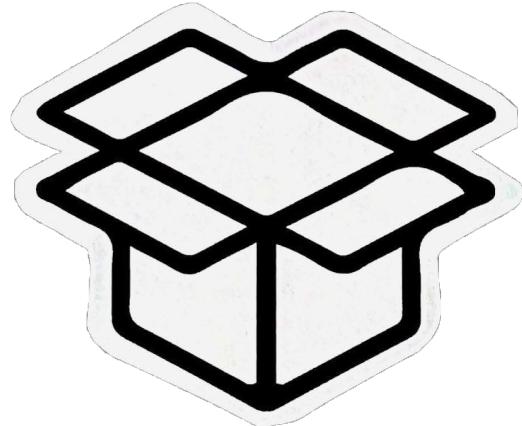
- determine the best ways to resell your own clothing online or offline
- name the benefits and disadvantages of selling clothes online and offline

Tools and materials

(depending on your possibilities) online access/access to the internet, a smart phone, a calculator, pen and paper

CLOTHING RESALE:

Selling used clothing, or second hand clothing. The garment can be sold in private sale (person to person sale) or in a commercial way (business to customer or business to business).



The market for reselling clothes, from private sellers rather than companies or businesses, is growing – and has especially grown during lockdown. Many of us realised that we actually have more clothing items than we can wear, and that we can be more economical with our clothing.

You probably were wearing the most comfortable clothes for most of your online studies and did not even use many in your wardrobe!

The circular economy is based on three principles, driven by design:

1 Eliminate waste and pollution

2 Circulate products and materials (at their highest value)

3 Regenerate nature

A circular economy is underpinned by a transition to renewable energy and materials. A circular economy decouples economic activity from the consumption of finite resources. It is a resilient system that is good for business, people and the environment.

RESALE

[noun]

The act of selling an item again.
In fashion, resale extends the life
of neglected clothing, shoes and
accessories in efforts to reduce
waste and build a circular economy.

@fash_rev
@zainab.slow.fashion

entry
level
activist

example:

“By working in the ‘landscape of less’, we confront questions about volume and growth in fashion production and consumption. How we move from a system of growth to one based on care is essential to the work of redefining fashion within planetary limits.”

@fash_rev
@earthlogic_plan

entry
level
activist

Photo credit: Fashion Revolution

Apart from the economical factor of resale, reselling also contributes to the “circularity” of the fashion industry, in two ways:

- Second hand clothing helps reduce production of new garments and helps reduce the negative impacts of the fashion industry on environment and human rights.
- Keeping our clothing from going to landfill reduces the amount of textile waste we are producing – the longer we use our clothes, the less waste there is!

According to research done by Oxfam as a part of [#SecondHandSeptember campaign](#), more than two tonnes of clothing are bought each minute in the UK, according to the 2019 study. It also goes on to say that buying one new white cotton shirt produces the same emissions as driving a car for 35 miles and that the emissions from all the new clothes bought in the UK are greater than those from flying a plane around the world 900 times!

However, it's hard to pinpoint the exact carbon emissions produced by the fashion industry. In fact, the impact is likely even greater but until brands are transparent about their emissions output, it's hard to quantify with certainty.

[Fashion Revolution's Global Transparency Index](#), an annual review and ranking of 250 of the world's largest brands and retailers ranked according to what information they disclose about their social and environmental policies, practices and impacts, in their operations and supply chain, found that just 34% of major brands and retailers disclose their carbon footprint at the textile production phase, where the most intense emissions lie. So, a white cotton t-shirt may well produce MORE emissions given that there is such a lack of transparency.

While in Europe Union in 2021:

In the European Union, each person is said to consume 26 kg of textiles each year, with a staggering 11 kg of this being discarded per person, per year.

And...

Presently, less than 1% of textile waste is recycled into new fibres for clothing and the non-reusable fraction is mostly downcycled into industrial rags, upholstery filling and insulation, or is incinerated or landfilled.

According to Fashion Revolution's Fashion Transparency Index, of the 250 largest brands and retailers reviewed:

33% disclose that they offer permanent, year-round take-back schemes/in-store recycling

26% disclose what happens to clothes received from take-back schemes

21% disclose that they offer new business models that support clothing longevity and slow down consumption of new clothing such as renting and reselling

4% disclose the percentage of products they make which are designed to enable closed loop or textile to textile recycling at end of life

Considering all these data, do you see a solution for the clothing that you don't want to keep? Do you think you would be able to sell it? If so, how?

Considering you would like to sell some of your clothing, you can do this activity with clothes you already cleared out from your wardrobe. Even if you don't actually want to sell any of your clothing, you can still do this exercise using one item from your wardrobe as an example.

So let's start. For this activity pick one item from your wardrobe and use it as a sample item for our selling activity. We won't sell it, we will only go together through the steps for successful selling, as a hypothetical scenario.

ONLINE

Online selling is great because you can sell your product anywhere in the world, by connecting with people from further afield! However, it is important to be aware of the downsides of the online world, such as scams or the unreliability of people in general.



How do we sell online?

1 Decide what platform you use for selling.

While you can sell from your own social media account, you can use marketplaces or platforms made for selling second hand clothing (e.g. eBay, Depop, Vinted, Reflaunt, Vestiaire Collective,...). What are their benefits?

People searching for them are already looking for second hand clothing, so finding your customer is very easy! Be aware of the possible fees - some platforms are free, some are charging per listing, some charge per sale. Read terms and conditions for sellers - even though they can be boring, it is worth knowing the rules of the game!

2 Pick garments in a condition that you would buy for yourself and describe them honestly.

Try to look at the garment as if you have seen it for the first time and describe it in as much detail as possible. It is important to describe the item's sizing in detail too if this is possible, by using a tape measure.

3 Good pictures are a must.

Use a good camera - or, make it simple and use a smartphone. Make sure that you take a photo of the whole garment, as well as the details.

4 Do the research and price items fairly.

How to give it the right price? Check how similar garments are priced and try to estimate the fairest price. Consider the condition of the garment when working out your pricing.

5 Be responsive to customers, treat them well.

We all like to have responses to our messages – so make sure you are on top of responding! Good customer service is priceless!

6 Ship the package.

Shipping parcels is the best – it means the sale is done! To save on packing, try to find boxes around your home or even old shopping bags you may have laying around. You can also check your neighbourhood for discarded cardboard boxes that aren't needed or ask for some in the local supermarket. You will not only save money, but it means another box is not going to landfill!

It is much safer to ship after you receive the payment. If you are selling through online platforms, as a seller you will have more safety, because most customers do not see your account details on these platforms. If you are receiving money directly to your account, maybe it would be wise to have a separate account for your little business just to make sure your savings on your personal account stay safe!

Another option is to talk to your parents or guardians about the ways they could help you out here in case you do not have your own account.



7 Be in touch with customers.

Sending a simple note about shipping when it has been dispatched will go a long way - people like to know what's happening with their order.

8 Make your own financial reporting.

Lastly, how do you find out whether your online selling is profitable and worth it? Make notes about all the money you have received from sales against all of your expenses, to keep a track of your profits!



Photo credit: Fashion Revolution/ ThredUp

OFFLINE

If you would like to sell offline, you have many options, they all depend on where you live.

Offline resale has similar steps to online selling:

1 Pick the best place for your sale:

LOCAL MARKETS: many places around the world organise markets for citizens and communities on a regular or occasional basis. These can be part of a Saturday market, farmers market or as part of an anniversary event (for example Queen's Day in The Netherlands, where citizens hold yard sales right in front of their houses)

SCHOOL EVENTS: what about organising your own market at school as part of some school events? Would your friends be interested in joining and would your school allow this? School markets could also be held for crafts your friends might be making.

2 Pick garments in a condition you would buy it yourself.

3 Display your items as well as possible.

4 Do the research and price items fairly.

5 Make connection with customer

6 Keep track of your sales.

7 If you are not interested in making a profit, you can also host a clothes swap where you can invite friends to bring their pre-loved and unwanted excess clothing to exchange with others.

Reflection

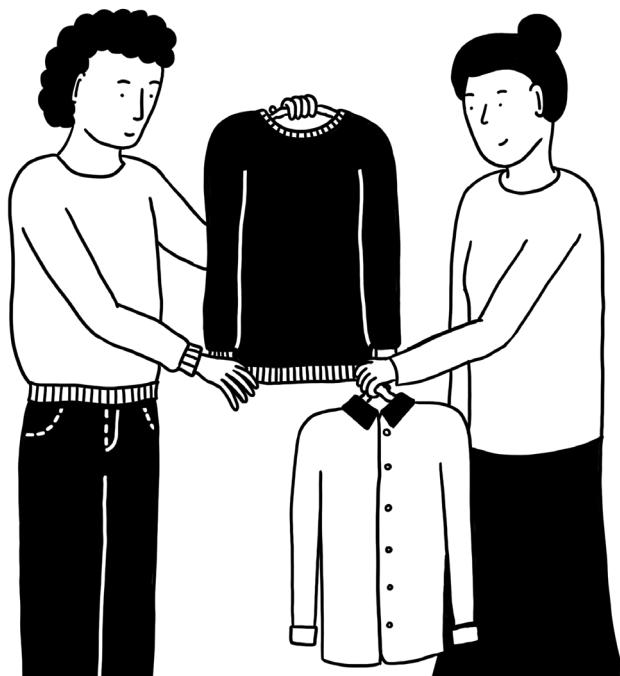
So how did you do with our sample garment from your wardrobe?
Was it easy or hard to price?

Which part did you most enjoy or find the easiest – taking photos of it? Describing it?

After this exercise, reflect on whether clothes reselling is something you would try? Before you start, make sure you talk to your parents, guardian or your teacher about the safety around working with money and make sure you discuss your plans for your clothes reselling with them first – what, how and when?

Write down on the list pros and cons for selling online and offline from your point of view.

Discuss these points with your parents, guardian, teacher or friends and take the decision even further, by planning possible online or offline selling of your own unwanted garments.



Resources

Mike Destefano. How to Make Money Reselling Clothes. 2021. Available at: <https://www.complex.com/style/how-to-make-money-reselling-clothes/>

Oxfam. FAST FASHION PRODUCES MORE CARBON EMISSIONS PER MINUTE THAN DRIVING A CAR AROUND THE WORLD SIX TIMES – OXFAM. 2019. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/media/press-releases/fast-fashion-produces-more-carbon-emissions-per-minute-than-driving-a-car-around-the-world-six-times-oxfam/>

Jessica Murray. Best places to sell clothes online. 2022. Available at: <https://www.savethestudent.org/make-money/best-places-to-sell-your-clothes-online.html>

Rachel LeWinter. Where to Sell Old Clothes to Get the Most for Your Money. 2022. Available at: <https://www.rd.com/article/best-place-to-sell-clothes-online/>

Attachments:

Watch more about reselling [here](#) - requires free login

Considering your own second hand clothing business?

[Check this report on resale](#)

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Partners



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