

# GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



**Hello!**

Welcome to the Geography department's newsletter where each half-term we will update and celebrate all things geography! 😊

**Geoggle Box**



## Sustainable Sewing!

This month saw the launch of the Sustainable Sewing club. The group have been learning how to sew on buttons and repair clothes in an effort to reduce waste. We have received donations of old clothes which have been sorted into house colours with the aim of reusing old materials (clothes, tablecloths, tea towels etc..) to make something new and exciting. Watch this space!



Sustainable Sewing Club takes place in  
**Art 2 on Friday lunch times.**  
**All welcome**

## Geography in the news...



What happened to the tree at Sycamore Gap?  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-66960442>

## Upcoming learning!

<b>YEAR 7</b>	Will practice OS map skills and conduct an enquiry based on our school environment.
<b>YEAR 8</b>	Study a variety of biomes and debate whose responsibility it is to save the tropical rainforest ecosystem.
<b>YEAR 9</b>	Develop skills in mapping, data analysis and enquiry by investigating crime in Blackpool and the Fylde.
<b>YEAR 10</b>	Conclude the Living World topic by studying hot deserts before moving on to Urban Issue and Challenges where we will study Rio de Janeiro and Liverpool.
<b>YEAR 11</b>	Revision and Issue Evaluation preparation New topic: Changing Economic World 17th November - Liverpool fieldtrip

## Postcards of praise

Well done to our top geographers who received a postcard this month in recognition of their excellent effort and enthusiasm in geography.

Jamie Nicholson  
Stanley Douglas  
Harry Blanche  
Kuba Dunajko  
Joss Hewitt



## Careers

lydiabolton\_ ✓

Lydia Bolton is a sustainability creator and slow fashion designer. She is a zero waste advocate and has collaborated with brands such as Nike, River Island and Manchester United. Find out more here:  
<https://www.lydiabolton.co.uk/>



**READ**  
*more*

This month's **read** highlights the issues surrounding 'fast fashion' and the importance of **sustainability**.  
**Discuss the article with your geography teacher to earn Class Charts rewards.**



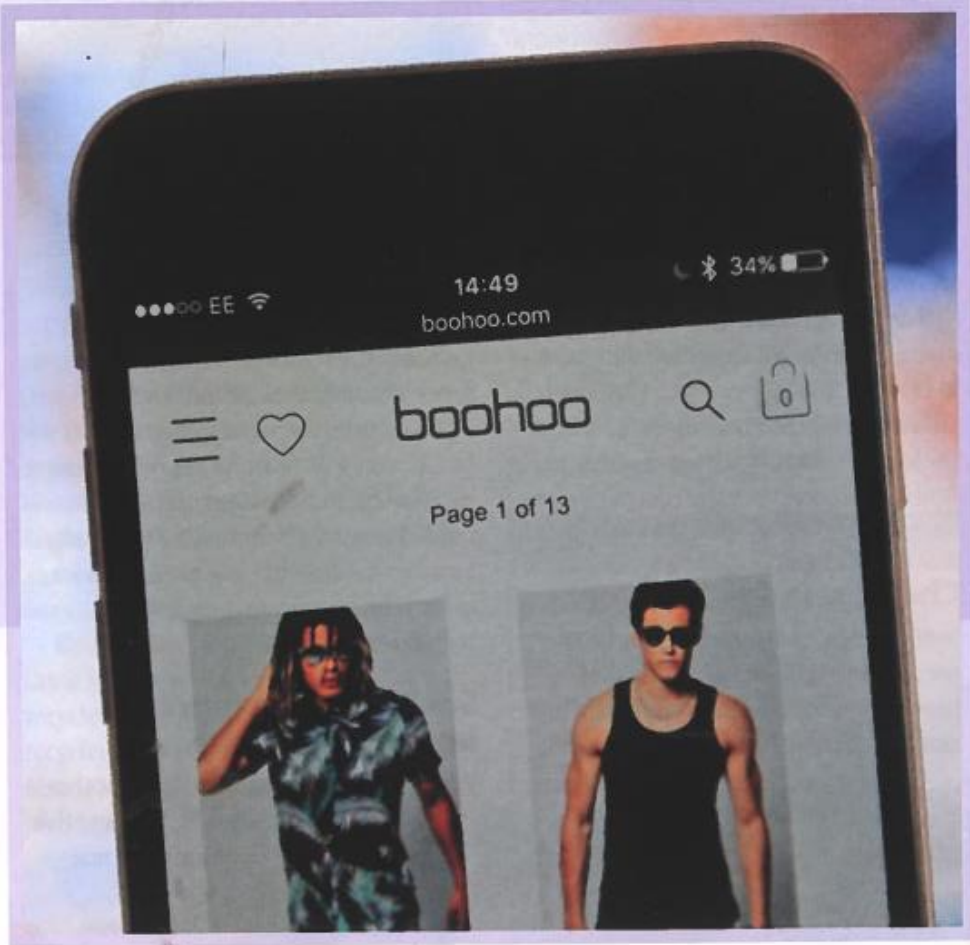
Alice Mollison

# Fast fashion in the UK

This case study considers online clothing giant Boohoo.com as an example of a UK industry that has increased its use of local producers, replacing overseas manufacturers. This **reshoring** of fast fashion has had positive and negative impacts in the UK. Both **changing industry in the UK** and the **impacts of globalisation** feature in most GCSE courses and it is important they are supported by named examples.

**B**oohoo.com is a British ultra-fast fashion business, set up in 2006. It specialises in own-brand fashion clothing, and has over 36,000 products that are only sold online. Boohoo uses other companies to manufacture their clothes, with 75% being made in the UK, and more than half of these are made in Leicester. It is estimated that profits would drop by 30% if Boohoo used manufacturers based overseas (offshore) because it wouldn't be able to respond to consumers' rapidly changing fashion demands.

The process from design to sale can be as little as 2 weeks, with a few hundred of each new style placed on the website. If the item is popular production is quickly increased. Sales boomed during the 2020–21 Covid-19 pandemic, as Boohoo



was able to rapidly switch production to clothes to wear at home instead of the office or party wear, resulting in sales rising by 41% with profits growing to £125 million that year.

## The decline of the UK's textiles industry

For 200 years, until the end of the twentieth century, the UK had a booming textiles industry and was the

world's largest producer of fabrics such as cotton and wool. Textile manufacturing was the country's biggest employer. In the twentieth century, however, there was huge competition from countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China, as their manufacturing and labour costs were much lower than those in the UK.

The movement of manufacturing abroad is known as off-shoring, and it enabled businesses to maximise their



## Glossary

**Fast fashion** Rapidly changing fashion trends, often created by celebrities or influencers, which are quickly recreated and sold cheaply in high volumes.

**Lean manufacturing** When organisations order smaller but more frequent quantities from factories, to reduce waste and delivery costs in order to speed up the time taken for finished products to be made. Sometimes known as just-in-time.

**Reshoring** The process of returning manufacture to the organisation's home country.

profits. Such off-shoring soon became popular with most British fashion brands. As a result, deindustrialisation occurred in many cities that previously relied on the textile industry, such as Huddersfield and Bradford.

The total number of jobs in UK textile manufacturing fell from 800,000 in 1980 to around 100,000 in 2000. However, UK consumers probably benefited from the shift in manufacturing made possible from globalisation as the cost of clothes became cheaper.

### Changes in fast fashion

In the 1980s, Spanish company Zara became a top-50 global brand, having been a pioneer in **lean manufacturing** and fast fashion. Alongside introducing new lines every month, rather than seasonally, it stopped manufacturing



Workers at this Leicester factory were discovered to be earning £3.50 per hour making clothes for Boohoo

offshore in countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh and started making 80% of its clothes in Spain or elsewhere in Europe. It used computers to help automate different stages of the process, and had 11 factories within a 16 km radius of its headquarters in La Curuna, all connected by a 200 km network of underground high-speed rail links. After this, other fast fashion businesses started to use local factories instead of manufacturing offshore, including Boohoo.

### Social and economic impacts in the UK

People in the UK buy more new clothes than in European countries. To meet this demand, working conditions in some factories have been compromised,

especially in Leicester. About one third of the workers here are migrants, and it has been suggested that they are more likely to be vulnerable to exploitation, as they may not feel confident making a complaint in English.

In 2017, an undercover report of Boohoo's suppliers showed workers were not paid for breaks, and were having pay cut disproportionately for being late and having body searches when going to the toilet. Despite promises by Boohoo that it would address these issues, a newspaper reported in 2020 that workers were being paid as little as £3.50 per hour, far below the minimum wage of £8.72 at the time, and they were not wearing face masks,







Microplastics. Boohoo has committed to using recycled or sustainable cotton and polyester by 2025

despite government guidelines in relation to Covid-19.

An independent review, set up by Boohoo, proved these allegations to be true. However, if workers' rights are respected, then the resurgence of the UK textile industry could provide a wide range of skills and highly paid secondary and tertiary sector jobs.

### Environmental impacts

On average each person in the UK throws away 3 kg of textiles each year. Although two thirds of this is either donated or recycled, around 336,000 tonnes of discarded textiles are incinerated or end up in landfill each year, with polyester taking 200 years to decompose.

When synthetic fabrics, such as polyester, are washed, microplastic fibres are released and over 30% of microplastics in rivers and oceans originate from textiles. It is estimated that over 9 trillion fibres may be released every week in the UK just through washing clothes. Recent research shows that rivers in northern England are polluted with microplastics and over 60% of shrimp in the North Sea contain them.

Boohoo has responded to some of these issues and committed to using recycled or sustainable cotton and recycled polyester by 2025. It has also joined Microfibre Release, an organisation working

to reduce the microfibre released when clothing is washed.

### Conclusion

Many people have a throwaway attitude towards clothes and this is adding to environmental problems worldwide. While we often associate poor working conditions with offshore factories in Asia, problems are also occurring in UK factories, despite the government having strict labour guidelines. However, manufacturing and selling clothes in the UK has the potential to reduce air miles and carbon dioxide emissions, and create skilled and well-paid employment opportunities. There are many things we can do as consumers to reduce our impact on the environment when buying clothes:

- reduce the number of items you buy
- research companies before you purchase
- reuse clothing — find clothes in vintage stores or charity shops and donate yours when you're ready for a change
- recycle clothes — drop used clothes off to textile recycling points

### Exam practice

- 1 Explain the decline in the UK's textile industry (6 marks)
- 2 Using a named example, evaluate the economic and environmental impacts of reshoring textile manufacture in the UK. (9 marks)



## Use Less Stuff day 16th November 2023

Use less stuff day was a campaign initiated towards making people realise how we often buy things that we don't use and how it leads to more waste and environmental pollution.

