A Shirt's Journey

Trace the benefits and costs of a global clothing trade.

WH.6.11 "Investigate current global issues, such as terrorism, genocide, environmental issues, and globalization."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two links between countries, circle two benefits, and number three costs or risks. Use your marks to track who gains and who bears costs.

Where Does a Shirt Go?

1. Picture a cotton shirt made with cotton grown in India, sewn in Bangladesh, and bought in Germany. This is one possible route, not the path of every shirt. Textile factories employ workers and earn export income, while shoppers gain access to low-cost clothing. But growing cotton can require large amounts of water, and fabric dyeing can pollute rivers if wastewater is not treated. Trucks and ships also burn fuel as goods move between countries. The shirt's price at a German store does not show all these costs, or who pays them.

2. After a few wears, the German buyer places the shirt in a donation bin. Some donated clothes are exported to Ghana, where traders at Accra's Kantamanto market sort and sell them. This trade can support local jobs and offer affordable clothes. Yet not every item can be resold. Torn or low-quality garments can become waste that local systems must collect or dispose of. A decision made by a buyer in one country can therefore create both income and cleanup costs in another. The condition of each shipment matters more than the word "donation" on the bin.

3. Suppose a retailer offers discounts to shoppers who return used shirts. The retailer might sort them for resale, but sending unusable items abroad would simply shift the waste. Paying for better sorting before export could reduce that burden, though it would raise costs for the company. A total ban on used-clothing imports might cut incoming waste, but it could also reduce the supply that Ghanaian traders sell. To judge any plan, investigators would need evidence on garment quality, traders' earnings, and how much waste actually reaches disposal sites. No single country's choices settle the issue alone.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the shirt's route connect income in Bangladesh with an environmental cost in India?

2. How can donated clothes from Germany bring both a benefit and a cost to Ghana?

3. Compare better sorting before export with a ban on used-clothing imports. What could each change, and what is one drawback of each?

4. Which two kinds of evidence would help judge whether an import ban helps Ghana overall? Explain what each would show.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence proposal to a clothing retailer for a new way to handle used shirts. Explain how your plan changes the shirts' path between countries, identify an environmental effect and an effect on people's work, and address one trade-off.

A Shirt's Journey

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two links between countries, circle two benefits, and number three costs or risks. Use your marks to track who gains and who bears costs. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the shirt's route connect income in Bangladesh with an environmental cost in India?	**Sewing shirts provides work and export income in Bangladesh, while growing the cotton in India can use large amounts of water.**
2	How can donated clothes from Germany bring both a benefit and a cost to Ghana?	**Traders can earn income by selling the clothes, but unsellable garments can create waste that local systems must handle.**
3	Compare better sorting before export with a ban on used-clothing imports. What could each change, and what is one drawback of each?	**Better sorting could reduce unusable clothes sent abroad, but it would raise company costs. A ban might cut incoming waste, but it could leave Ghanaian traders with fewer clothes to sell.**
4	Which two kinds of evidence would help judge whether an import ban helps Ghana overall? Explain what each would show.	**Traders' earnings would show the ban's effect on their income. The amount of waste reaching disposal sites would show whether it reduces the waste burden.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I propose that the retailer collect used shirts in Germany, repair those that need it, and export only wearable extras. This could reduce the unusable clothing shipped to Ghana and the waste local systems must handle. Repairs could create paid work in Germany, but fewer exports might leave Ghanaian traders with less to sell. The retailer should consult those traders before changing its shipments.

Accept other passage-supported links, benefits, costs, and evidence. For the proposal, look for a plausible cross-border plan that considers both environmental effects and people's livelihoods.