Day 22

*You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1–13**, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.*

The environmental impact of the clothing industry

On a Saturday afternoon, a group of teenage girls leaf through glossy fashion magazines at an American shopping mall. Their shopping bags are brimming with new purchases as they walk excitedly about what's in style this summer. Far away in Tanzania, a young man wears a T-shirt bearing the logo of an American basketball team while shopping at the local second-hand goods market. Although seemingly disparate, these two scenes are connected through the surprising life cycle of clothing. How does a T-shirt sold in a US shopping mall to promote an American sports team end up being worn by a teenager in Africa?

Globalisation, consumerism, and recycling all converge to connect these scenes. Globalisation has made it possible to produce clothing at increasingly lower prices, prices so low that many consumers consider this clothing to be disposable. Some call it 'fast fashion', the clothing equivalent of fast food. Fuelling the demand are fashion magazines that help create the desire for new 'must-have' for each season. 'Girls especially are insatiable when it comes to fashion. They have to have the latest thing,' says Mayra Diaz, mother of a 10-year-old girl.

Yet fast fashion leaves a pollution footprint, generating both environmental and occupational hazards. For example, polyester, the most widely used manufactured fibre, is made from petroleum. With the rise in production in the fashion industry, demand for man-made fibres has nearly doubled in the last 15 years. The manufacture of polyester and other synthetic fabrics is an energy-intensive process requiring large amounts of crude oil and releasing emissions which can cause or aggravate respiratory disease. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers many textile manufacturing facilities to be hazardous waste generators.

These issues do not apply only to the production of man-made fabrics. Cotton, one of the most popular fibres used in clothing manufacture, also has a significant environmental footprint. This crop accounts for a quarter of all the pesticides used in the United States. Much of the cotton produced in the United States is exported to China and other countries with low labour costs, where the material is woven into fabrics, cut and assembled according to the fashion industry's specifications. In her 2005 book *The Travels of a T-shirt in the Global Economy,* Pietra Rivoli, a professor at Georgetown University, writes that each year Americans purchase approximately one billion garments made in China, the equivalent of four pieces of clothing for every US citizen.

Once bought, an estimated 21% of annual clothing purchases stay in the home, increasing the stocks of clothing and other textiles held by consumers, according to *Recycling of Low Grade Clothing Waste,* by consultant Oakdene Hollins. The report

calls this stockpiling an increase in the 'national wardrobe', which is considered to represent a potentially large quantity of latent waste that will eventually enter the solid waste stream. According to the EPA Office of Solid Waste, Americans throw away more than 68 pounds of clothing and textiles per person per year, and this represents about 4% of the municipal solid waste. But this figure is rapidly growing.

In her book *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash,* Susan Strasser, a professor of history at the University of Delaware, traces the 'progressive obsolescence' of clothing and other consumer goods to the 1920s. Before then, and especially during World War I, most clothing was repaired, mended or tailored to fit other family members, or recycled within the home as rags or quilts. During that war, clothing manufacturers reduced the varieties, sizes and colours of their productions and even urged designers to create styles that would use less fabric and avoid needles decoration. The US government's conservation campaign used slogans such as 'Make economy fashionable lest it become obligatory' and resulted in an approximate 10% reduction in the production of trash.

However, the spirit of conservation did not last long; by the mid-1920s, consumerism was back in style. During World War II, consumption rose with increased employment as the United States mobilised for the war. Industrialisation brought consumerism with it as an integral part of the economy. When it comes to clothing, the rate of purchase and disposal has dramatically increased, so the path that a T-shirt travels from the sales floor to the landfill site has become shorter. Yet even today, the journey of a piece of clothing does not always end at the landfill site. A proportion of clothing purchases are recycled, mainly in three ways: clothing may be resold by the primary consumer to other consumers at a lower price, it may be exported in bulk for sale in developing countries, or it may be chemically or mechanically recycled into raw material that can be used to produce insulation.

Domestic resale has boomed in the era of the internet. Many people sell directly to other individuals through auction websites such as eBay. Another increasingly popular outlet is charity and thrift shops, though only about one-fifth of the clothing donated to charities is directly used or sold in their thrift shops. Says Rivoli, 'There are nowhere near enough people in America to absorb the mountains of cast-offs, even if they were given away.' So charities find another way to fund their programmes, using the clothing that they cannot sell. About 45% of these textiles continue their life as clothing, just not domestically. Certain brands and rare collectible items are imported by Japan. Clothing that is not considered vintage or high-end is baled for export to developing nations. For Tanzania, where used clothing is sold at the markets that dot the country, these items are the number one import from the United States. Observers such as Rivoli predict that the trend toward increasing exports of used clothing to developing countries will continue to accelerate because of the rise of consumerism in the United States and Europe and the falling prices of new clothing.

Questions 1–5

Look at the following statements and the list of people below.

*Match each statement with the correct person, **A–D**.*

*Write the correct letter, **A–D**, in boxes 1–5 on your answer sheet.*

NB *You may use any letter more than once.*

1   The amount of recycled clothing available in the US exceeds demand.

2   Countries like Tanzania will receive even more used clothing from North America in the future.

3   A change in manufacturers' attitudes helped decrease the amount of waste that was generated

4   Our gender has an influence on our increased desire to shop.

5   A future waste problem may occur because people add to the clothes, they already own each year.

List of people

A Mayra Diaz
B Pietra Rivoli
C Oakdene Hollins
D Susan Strasser

Questions 6–8

Choose **THREE** *of these letters,* **A–G***.*

Write the correct letters, **A–G***, in boxes 6–8 on your answer sheet.*

Which **THREE** possible consequences of the fashion industry are mentioned by the writer of the passage?

A	increased health problems
B	increases in petrol prices
C	increased use of chemicals
D	reduced wages for workers
E	lower profits for small local manufacturers
F	negative effects on other industries
G	production of unwanted dangerous materials

Questions 9–13

Answer the questions below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** *from the passage for each answer.*

Write your answers in boxes 9–13 on your answer sheet.

9   What is the name of one material that is not natural?

10 What percentage of household garbage is made up of clothes?

11 In what era did Americans stop reusing old clothes?

12 What has caused the selling of used clothing to increase in the US?

13 To which country does America export a lot of its good quality used clothing?