



National Certificate of Educational Achievement
TAUMATA MĀTAURANGA Ā-MOTU KUA TĀEA

Exemplar for Internal Achievement Standard Social Studies Level 1

This exemplar supports assessment against:

Achievement Standard 92048

Demonstrate understanding of findings of a Social Studies inquiry

An annotated exemplar is a sample of student evidence, with a commentary, to explain key aspects of the standard. It assists teachers to make assessment judgements at the grade.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

To support internal assessment

Grade: Achieved

For Achieved, the student needs to demonstrate understanding of the findings of a Social Studies inquiry.

This involves describing findings that relate to the focus of inquiry and including relevant evidence from primary and secondary sources in the description.

Fast fashion has been selected as the focus of this inquiry, and the inquiry questions relate to the themes outlined in Explanatory Note 3 of the Achievement Standard.

The response demonstrates an understanding of the inquiry focus, and the depth of description meets the expectations at curriculum level 6. One key finding has been presented in relation to each question. These are typically presented at the start of each paragraph. For example, "*consumerism is the main factor of fast fashion*" and "*the fast fashion industry abuses the human right of working conditions*". These findings have been supported with specific detail and by incorporating some evidence and examples.

Relevant evidence from primary and secondary sources have been used across the report. The student has provided quotes and photographs from a worker in a fast fashion factory, and referenced a range of different articles and websites both directly in the text and via footnotes.

For Merit, the student could have explained their findings in further depth. This would have included explaining the relevance of their selected primary and secondary source evidence by more thoroughly discussing how it supported their findings. For example, where the student discusses the treatment of women in fast fashion factories, they could have explicitly connected the human rights abuses described and how it reveals that "owners only care about making a profit".

Achieved

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Question 1: How has consumerism impacted the fast fashion industry.

Consumerism is the main factor of fast fashion. A consumer is a person who purchases and uses goods and services for personal use. Consumerism is the desire to want a new model of something you already have that still works perfectly fine. It is also the idea of buying and owning items to keep up with specific trends. According to an article written by masterclass, consumer spending is the key to individual wellbeing. However, there is such a thing as a negative consumer impact. This is where people believe they have to stay on top of trends which creates a cycle of buying and disposing products. Strategies like this that brands use, force you to realise that trends change often which then makes you unsatisfied with the wardrobe you have, making you want to purchase more to up your style. Fast fashion is low priced clothing that gets produced and retailed continuously at a fast rate. These items have been purposely designed to be produced incredibly cheap, and low quality so that consumers will dispose of them quickly and then right after, purchase new ones. Fast fashion industries aim to mass produce clothing, the rise of demand throughout the industry is caused by social media and influencers. An example is a celebrity posting a photo onto instagram showing off a new outfit, and their followers want one too, so fast fashion brands rush to be the first ones to provide it.

Question 2: How does the fast fashion industry abuse human rights?

The fast fashion industry abuses the human right of working conditions. Fast fashion industries are known for their poor working conditions, such as low wages, and terrible working environments. Workers in the fast fashion industry have to work 14-16 hours seven days a week. Many workers don't receive their pay, and many even work overtime, however, they do not get paid extra wages for the effort they put in. Poor work environment conditions include workers being exposed to harmful and toxic substances, and working in unhygienic stations. Accidents, fires and injuries are a common occurrence in fast fashion industries, making it even more unsafe for all of the workers. Fast fashion factories have very low maintenance, buildings



Image 1 showing fast fashion workers in their work environment.

which are falling to pieces. Women and other workers are exposed to health hazards such as loud noise right in their eardrums and high temperatures causing many of these workers to faint. The fast fashion industry treats their workers poorly, as seen in image 1 where they are working in a very cramped and messy environment. Many workers in the fast fashion industry have complained about the way they have been treated, they endure verbal and physical abuse daily. Fast fashion industry workers tend to be women, and not only do these women get

physically abused, but they also get sexually abused. Workers who fail to meet the daily target get verbally abused and even denied access to water. One worker gave a report which stated that when she had not reached her production target for that day, she was dragged out of her chair and pushed onto the floor where she was repeatedly hit and kicked. This shows that through the abuse the workers endure, the factories and owners only care about making a profit. Evidence of this was provided through the traid.org.uk website where the garment industry in china has been operating on huge profits, while the working conditions are still incredibly poor.

Question 3: What are the consequences fast fashion has on the environment?

Fast fashion has caused extreme air pollution. Due to fast fashion, clothing trends are increasing meaning consumers feel the need to purchase newer items and the items that have been barely worn get sent away to a landfill. Significant amounts of clothing tend to be thrown into a landfill rather than being donated. Clothes that end up in the landfill take longer to decompose as they are filled with tiny micro plastic fibres, some clothing decomposes faster however some take over 100 years. During the decomposition stage, chemicals from the clothing release into the air and soil which has a negative impact on the environment. As there is limited space many people burn the excess clothing which then releases these chemicals and micro plastics into the air, creating air pollution. Washing and wearing brand new clothing items also release these microfibrils into the air. Fast fashion is damaging the ecosystem. The synthetic fibres used in clothing not only pollute the air, but also the water.



Washing machines are one of the main reasons for these microplastics entering the waterways. Washing machines don't have filters to catch these specific particles and they end up travelling through the drain, where they then enter the waterways. Water pollution shown in image 2 caused by industries dumping clothing items. Another form of water pollution caused by fast fashion is the dye that they use to colour fabrics. Chemicals like pesticides which kill off

living organisms runoff into nearby water streams which can then be led into the use of irrigating crops, therefore also contaminating food supplies. Fast fashion industries use low-cost dyes which then require chemical treatments after the dye process to make sure the treatment won't fade. These dyes travel through waterways and stain the water, making it no longer safe to drink from. From this information, we can gather that not only do these fast fashion industries disregard their workers, but they also take advantage of the environment.

Throughout the sample, the student used basic footnoting to reference ideas, evidence and quotes from their primary and secondary sources.

Grade: Merit

For Merit, the student needs to explain the findings of a Social Studies inquiry.

This involves explaining findings that address the focus of the inquiry and using evidence from primary and secondary sources to support the explanation.

This student has selected social media as the focus of their inquiry, and has provided an inquiry question which relates to themes outlined in Explanatory Note 3. The creation of a single focus question (as opposed to two or three) has enabled the student to report on their inquiry findings with greater depth and meet the requirements of the standard.

Several different findings in relation to the inquiry focus have been identified. These are often used as topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph. The student has moved beyond a description (as required for Achieved) to an explanation, by considering how social media creates the opportunity for inclusive communities and activism, and then connecting this to the focus question.

Primary and secondary evidence has been used to support the findings. This includes referencing articles and research reports (secondary), as well quotes from an interview with a climate justice activist (primary). These have usually been used to support the explanation of the findings. Often these explanations of evidence begin with statements such as "*this shows us*" or "*this proves*".

To have further secured the Merit, more consistent use of both primary and secondary sources to support key ideas would have been beneficial. For example, the findings could have considered more than one example of an activist who has found support in online communities.

For Excellence, the student could demonstrate evaluation via making judgements and drawing conclusions. They have begun to connect some ideas, through their considerations of how younger people's familiarity with technology has made them more likely to be involved in online communities. However, this would need to be further developed to meet the requirements for Excellence. Other examples of making a judgement in this context could be demonstrating an understanding of the possible downsides of social media on young people's self-esteem and identity, and drawing a conclusion around how much the positives may or may not outweigh the negatives.

Focus question: Does social media provide a supportive place for young people in society?

Social media has a way of making young people feel included in society. It has designed platforms, features and contents that ensures that everyone, regardless of their background or abilities, can fully engage on social media. Social media creates a feeling of inclusion because it allows individuals to share stories, experiences, and information about their cultures and traditions. It allows people from diverse backgrounds to connect, collaborate and take part in conversations that encourage understanding and acceptance. Social media allows young individuals who are part of supportive online communities to be compassionate and empathetic towards others who are sharing similar experiences and thoughts. Years ago, young people who were struggling with things in their life often felt marginalised and alone. This is because not many people had access to social media or there were no online communities. Today, young people can connect with others through social media which can help them feel secure with who they are. They can find support online without leaving the house. This is especially helpful for young people living in small communities or rural areas where resources are limited.

Social media platforms have become a way for people to be inspired and involved in movements that fight for human rights. A BBC article about movements led by Gen Z, written in 2022, states that 'Technology has given young people a louder voice than ever before'. Generation Z are people born in the late 1990's or the early 21st century. This generation is noticed for being familiar with the use of digital technology, the internet and social media from a very young age. This means more young people are being involved in the online community. A study in 2022 found that 76% of internet users participate in an online community and 98% of those who belong to online communities feel the sense of belonging to the group.

The internet can spread social awareness and encourage supporters to take action about an issue. Social media has become the place for young people to share their negative experiences of marginalisation, discrimination, and racism, and turn their anger into something positive and impactful that will benefit themselves and others who are suffering. Being able to connect and relate with others around the world can benefit young people because it will teach them to have courage to stand up for the rights of others and try to change things that can affect their future. A 2020 study from the UK Safer Internet Centre showed 34% of 8-17 year olds say the internet has inspired them to take action about a cause and 43% say it makes them feel like their voices matter. Young people on social media platforms can share, discuss and raise funds about social injustices. Social media is an easy and great way for young people to look at and support social issues across the globe, like the Black Lives Matter Movement, #MeToo, etc. For example, a few days after George Floyd's death in 2020, over 8 million tweets on Twitter had been tagged with #BlackLivesMatter, according to The New York Times. This shows that social media allows people to quickly communicate with each other about important issues and express their opinions about it.

Young people who are a part of supportive social media communities may feel like they have gained more courage and confidence to stand up for themselves and others. Climate justice activist Elijah Mckenzie-jackson says "It's more of a community and family,

versus a workplace, which is probably why so many of us are involved in movements.” This tells us that he believes being part of movements through social media or in real life can give us a sense of belonging that can be similar to a family. Belonging in a family can make you feel loved, understood and cared for. It means that young people can share their experiences and worries, and in return, they can gain advice from others who have learnt to get through those situations. Inclusion will very likely result in a high self-esteem which helps young individuals know that they are a great additional value in the world.

Being digitally included in the social media society allows young people to quickly communicate and discuss social issues. It allows them to have important values like compassion and empathy. Young people can find happiness from connecting with others and enjoy participating in movements. Elijah says that “Once you’re involved, you can’t stop because you learn and understand more.” This proves that being part of a supportive society will definitely benefit the younger generation in a way that makes them feel like their life is more meaningful. Their participation and actions will not only benefit themselves but others as well.

I can conclude that, over the years, as social media has increased in usage and development, it has become more of a supportive place for young people. This is because recent statistics (from 2022) show that social media has positively impacted many young people by enhancing engagement through online communities. Online communities have allowed many young people to share experiences, discover new identities, participate, and support movements online or in real life, and much more.

A reference list was also provided.

Grade: Excellence

For Excellence, the student needs to evaluate the findings of a social inquiry.

This involves evaluating findings that examine the focus of the inquiry by drawing well-reasoned conclusions and making judgements that critically connect ideas. Primary and secondary source evidence should be used to develop the explanation.

This student has made judgements throughout their report by connecting their findings to bigger ideas and concepts. Through well-crafted inquiry questions, the concept of consumerism has been used to connect the findings at a deeper level.

Evaluative judgements have been made in the last few sentences of inquiry questions 2 and 3, where the student has considered both the positive and negative impacts of fast fashion for different groups, and by further connecting the findings and ideas of consumerism in fast fashion to globalisation. Having an overarching question tying together the three inquiry questions may have further supported the student to draw conclusions.

Primary and secondary evidence has been extensively used throughout. The evidence has been carefully selected to support the key findings and, in many instances, multiple pieces of evidence have been combined to support the finding that is being examined. These are usually well explained in relation to the inquiry question. For example, the first paragraph of inquiry question 3 uses two different sources (one on Vietnam and one on Bangladesh) to illustrate the treatment of workers in fast fashion environments.

What is the global flow of consumerism?

The global flow of consumerism is essentially the idea that increasing the consumption of goods and services being bought in the market is always the final goal and that people should depend on it to be happy. By increasing consumerism, it ensures a secure economy. It is a societal and cultural structure that enforces the idea of consuming the things we make in order to keep the world, economy, and people sustained. Although consumerism is meant to benefit people and the economy, there are many abuses that are a result of consumerism. Consumers purchase these goods and services from companies such as SHEIN, an online fashion retail store, who generated \$15.7 billion USD in 2021.³ SHEIN is a Chinese owned online business who manufacture and sell clothing items such as pants, swimwear, tops, shoes and accessories such as jewelry. They offer these at some of the cheapest prices on the market at the moment and that is what helps their business thrive in a world where consumers are looking for affordable products. SHEIN caters to trends that are popular in Gen Z. During an interview with a former MP of parliament, Belinda Vernon, she gave some insight on the issue. In terms of her consumption, she said “When I was earning a reasonable income, I would say yes. Now that I’m retired and on a pretty limited income and live in a small country town where there is not much to spend money on, I would say no. I basically only spend money on what I need.”

How does fast fashion impact society as a result of consumerism? (more choice and trend setting)

An example of the impact fast fashion has on society as a result of consumerism is changing and increasing trends. These trends cater to the ongoing demand in the consumerism industry and change almost every week to increase profit, which leads to implications. “[I look to] Pinterest and models like Gigi Hadid...” Derhartounian said This is an indication of an effective strategy where they exploit and manipulate consumers to buy items because a celebrity might promote/recommend it. This leads consumers to feeling out of fashion as celebrities and influencers keep promoting new clothing items. Major fast fashion companies such as Fashion Nova, have had collaborations with big, well known celebrities like Cardi B brought in almost \$1 million in the first 24 hours of its launch, becoming one of the most successful collaborations between a celebrity and a brand. This influences people to buy more from these unsustainable companies, giving in to consumerism. Although they may wear the trendiest clothing and “fit in”, this will further pollute and destroy the natural environment. Fast fashion contributes to 8-10% of global emissions. This will inevitably end up speeding up the process of the destruction of the human race.

More choices in fast fashion means that instead of having limited garments to choose from, there are much more choices for consumers to purchase from. Belinda Vernon mentioned the major impacts of fast fashion on society as a result of consumerism is that it helps inter-global economies thrive.⁸ Consumerism brought in \$30.58 billion global profit in 2021, in comparison to 2020, this is a 21.1% rise from \$25.09 billion. This helped recover almost all losses from COVID-19 related losses on a global scale. This is how in the past 2 years fast fashion has impacted society and increased the supply chain in the clothing industry. Because of the increase in interest in fast fashion, it has led to more choices being introduced to consumers in the fast fashion industry. This has a positive impact on society, as a consumer having more choice due to consumerism in fast fashion leads to happiness and fulfillment. For example, Shien, a Chinese online retail store, has approximately 10 thousand new items in their store per day. The impacts of more choice are however also negative as mass market retailers contribute to overproduction, unfair human labor, pollution, and damage to the environment.

What are the implications of consumerism in different societies? (human and health cost)

Although we all love trending clothes that come at a cheap cost, this has hidden implications on workers of these companies. Producers who supply the clothes to fast fashion companies, who later sell them to consumers have a history of treating their workers very very poorly. One major worry about these sweatshops is the environment they work in. Horrifyingly, statistics show that 43.1% of female clothing factory workers in Vietnam who have experienced and suffered from some form of sexual harassment and/or violence. The number of unsafe buildings used is not suitable for safe working conditions. In sweatshops in Bangladesh, methods known as “sandblasting” puts workers at risk of respiratory illnesses. When these methods contain crystalline silica, also known as quartz dust, it very likely will lead to major respiratory issues such as silicosis which is a lung disease caused by exposure over many years.

As we all know, the clothes in the fast fashion industry may sell for much cheaper, but this also means that the workers earn below living pay rates. This leaves them with low pay which can provide food, shelter, clean water, and clothes. On average in Bangladesh the rate per hour for sweatshop workers is \$1.48NZD, and in El Salvador it's only a measly \$1.11NZD. Because of these low wages sweatshop workers could be classed as slaves. Practically stripping their rights as not only workers but as humans. Asia has a ‘low wage’ economic model which has resulted in an inequity crisis with the most rich in society reaping the rewards of this system while the less fortunate are punished. Within the last two decades the richest 10% of the population in Indonesia, India, China, and Bangladesh have seen that their share incomes have increased by more than 15% whilst the poorest 10% have seen their share drop by more than 15%. This creates unfair advantages for the rich, and leaves the poor to work for the big fast fashion companies who produce the clothes we wear. Because of this we get stuck in a cycle of oppressing the poor and forcing them to produce the garments that will have irreversible effects on the environment. Belinda Vernon however pointed out that globalism does have a positive impact saying “If there were no globalization, there would be no trade or little trade, it would mean we would have no fast fashion...” This helps us to understand that although the fashion industry has its many many downsides, one being fast fashion, that we must find a balance and find social and environmental solutions for these problems to sustain globalism.

Throughout the sample, the student used basic footnoting to reference ideas, evidence and quotes from their primary and secondary sources.