



Shopping and Us (1)



Did you know . . . ?

Read the following statements. Mark each one as Positive (+), Negative (-) or Neutral (n). Then, circle the facts that surprised you. Compare your responses with your partner.

- 1. Eighty-four percent of all household waste can be recycled.
- 2. The energy that you save from recycling one aluminum can could keep your TV running for three hours.
- 3. Every day, the average American uses 168 gallons of water.
- 4. Percentages of people who would pay higher prices if it helped the environment: Denmark, 78 percent; Korea, 70 percent; England, 70 percent; US, 65 percent; India, 58 percent; Japan, 30 percent.
- 5. Eighty percent of the products we buy are thrown away after being used only once.
- 6. One-third of the material that goes into landfills and incinerators comes from packaging.
- 7. Amount of money needed per year to provide basic health and nutrition for everyone in the world who does not currently have access to them: \$11 billion. Amount spent per year on pet food in Europe and the US: \$17 billion.
- 8. Collecting and recycling paper provides five times as many jobs as harvesting virgin timber.

Reading One

○ **Before Reading**

Answer the following questions. Compare your answers with your partner.

1. Where do you usually buy your clothes? Why do you shop there?
2. Which is more important to you, a healthy product or an inexpensive product? Why?
3. Do you think the clothes you're wearing today are good for your health?
4. Which fabric do you prefer to wear: cotton, wool, polyester, rayon or linen?
5. Do you know any stores that sell organic clothes?

○ **First Reading**

Read the text below. Circle the words that seem connected to the environment or to the natural world.

Few people consider buying organic when it comes to clothing. It is just not something we think of when we're looking for our cotton underwear, shirts or a bedsheet. But if we knew a bit more about what had been absorbed into the fabrics that we all wear next to our skin, we might become more determined to look for alternatives.

The clothing industry is one of the top-10 polluting industries in the world. Eight thousand chemicals are regularly used in conventional textile production to change the fibers' natural characteristics. Even people who select so-called "natural" fabrics may be surprised to know that unless we are choosing organic, we're still buying a fabric that has been grown with the use of chemicals. Many of the pesticides used in growing the plants were originally developed as nerve agents—weapons of war. Not only is there evidence that their residue remains in our clothing, but pesticides are now regularly showing up in our drinking water, too. They also enter rivers, killing and poisoning wildlife. Further, during fiber and fabric production, bleaching agents, dyes and other poisonous substances may penetrate into the clothes we wear.

Most people don't know that the fibers they think of as "natural" are not really natural at all. For example, cotton is humanity's most popular fiber. A difficult crop to grow, it is raised on 4 percent of the world's arable soil, but consumes 12 percent of the pesticides and 26 percent of the insecticides used annually. In the USA, in 1998 over 600,000 tons of active chemicals were used just to grow cotton. Wool and linen are also popular fibers with people who prefer natural products. Yet today, formaldehyde, a known carcinogen, is often used in the finishing of linen, and sheep are dipped in organophosphates.

Such negative information can be overwhelming; however, there is

some good news. More and more companies are rejecting chemical processes and returning to organic methods. It is becoming increasingly possible to find ethical and environmentally friendly clothing and bedding. It is now possible to buy organic mattresses, cover them with organic, unbleached cotton sheets, pillows and pillow cases; to sleep in organic pajamas, use organic cotton towels and even carry baby around in an organic cotton baby-carrier.

Furthermore, pioneering fashion designers have brought eco-awareness into the world of high fashion without compromising design or modernity. Using the latest fabric technology, they create clothes from recycled fabric such as eco-fleece, made out of respun plastic drink bottles. They are also reviving traditional methods of color-growing cotton—so no polluting chemical dyes are needed. Cotton naturally grows in various shades of green and brown. As white cotton became more popular, these alternative shades almost disappeared. Other companies make sure that they use fabrics made in closed-loop factories, where the waste products of one company become the raw materials for others. For example, a company now turns scraps from making adult clothes into infants' clothes. One international company who converted all of their cotton production to organic found that planting "trap" crops, to trick pests, diverted harmful insects from the cotton crop—so no insecticides were needed.

People often feel overwhelmed by the scale of the environmental problems; however, we must never forget that each individual has enormous power. We have a choice. There are now a large number of environmental products to choose from. Even if we are only able to make our clothing 10 percent organic, together we will make an enormous impact on the health of our bodies and, ultimately, the health of our planet.



○Second Reading

Reread the text. Answer the questions below.

1. The amount of garbage has _____ since Japan became a developed country.
 - a) increased
 - b) decreased
 - c) not changed

2. A good title for this reading would be:
- The Hidden Cost of Clothing
 - The Dangers of Cotton Products
 - The Future is in Organic Fabrics
3. List items that are made of fabric that you wear or use at home. Then, write down what they are made from.

Item	Main fabric
Shirt	cotton
Blanket	wool

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with your partner.

- What is one of the top-10 polluting industries in the world?
- In addition to clothes, where else do pesticides regularly appear?
- What is probably the most popular fiber in the world?
- What are some of the organic products you can buy today?
- What is eco-fleece made from?
- What organic products are you interested in buying?
- Can you name any environmental products sold by Japanese companies?
- Are you buying any environmentally friendly products in your daily life?

Reading Two

Before Reading

Answer the following questions. Compare your answers with your partner.

- Fill in columns A and B in the table below.
- Ask and answer: "What are some things that you throw away?" and "What are some disposable items you regularly use?"
- Work with your partner. Find a nondisposable alternative for each item in column B. Write it down in column C.

A. Things commonly thrown away in the garbage	B. Disposable things (ex. cheap chopsticks, batteries)	C. Alternatives (ex. "my" chopsticks, rechargeable batteries)

○ **First Reading**

Read the text below. Circle the words that seem connected to the environment or to the natural world.

The most serious environmental problem in Japan today is the garbage problem. This problem comes in many forms: for example, people use too many disposable items; garbage looks ugly in dumps; and large electrical machines like PCs, and harmful chemicals like dioxin are dumped illegally.

5 But what I consider to be the most serious garbage problem is the waste caused by the present enormous production and consumption of products by Japanese society.

10 In recent years, Japan has become a developed country with a product-hungry, throwaway lifestyle. In the 1970s, only 22.6 percent of families owned cars and 27 percent owned TVs. But now, the average family owns 1.3 cars and 2.3 TVs. Along with this, industrial garbage has increased from 236 million tons to 405 million tons. Japanese tend to buy new products regularly, so as to upgrade to the latest models. Thus, they often throw away goods that are still usable. However, there is now nowhere left to dispose of all this garbage. It is clear that we need to change our lifestyle.

20 What can we do?



- 25 1. Produce no garbage: how about using returnable bottles or preparing own-use tumblers in place of buying PET bottles? Or we can buy gen-

30 uine quality goods, even if they cost more, and use them permanent-
ly. There are also many eco-products which we should buy. Old
clothes can be recycled, sent to overseas countries that need them, or
used as rags for polishing.

35 2. Use garbage as a resource: how about using heat from burning
garbage for heat generation or for boiling water? Also, we can make
compost from raw kitchen waste.

3. Dispose of garbage in the right way: follow disposal rules, and know
which things are burnable or not, reusable or not.

40 These three ways are the proposals of the Japanese government, and
some of us have already started applying them in our own lives. Yes! There is
consciousness about reducing garbage in the Japanese mind. Why shouldn't
we carry it out?

45 Germany is a world leader in facing their environmental problems, and
people there are very environmentally conscious. They also experienced diffi-
cult environmental problems in the past. Germans have a high level of aware-
ness about their lifestyle. For example, they put pressure on the government
as voters to stop constructing unnecessary new buildings. And some of their
houses have solar power and solar heating. Rooms are not kept so bright,
because they are always saving electricity. At the supermarket, meats are sold
by the gram, and we don't see the polystyrene containers and plastic wrap
that are so popular in Japan. They also have environmental classes in elemen-
50 tary school. So it's time we started doing something similar. I hope such
movements will become popular among Japanese, and become a normal part
of everyday life. We have to act NOW for our precious and priceless earth,
and for our future! (Chika Yamada)

○ **Second Reading**

Reread the text. Answer the following questions.

1. The viewpoint expressed in this article is _____.
 - a) mainly negative
 - b) mainly positive
 - c) both negative and positive
2. The main theme of the reading is :
 - a) Although there is a garbage problem in Japan, it is not so serious, so we don't need to do anything about it.
 - b) There is a serious garbage problem in Japan, but there is nothing we can really do about it.
 - c) The garbage problem in Japan is serious, but there are actions we can take to reduce our garbage.

3. Mark each statement as True (T) or False (F).

- ___ A. People in Japan use too many disposable products that are harmful to the environment.
- ___ B. Although car and TV ownership in Japan has increased since 1970, industrial waste has decreased.
- ___ C. Some Japanese are thinking about ways to reduce garbage.
- ___ D. Polystyrene containers and plastic wrapping are popular both in Japan and Germany.

4. Complete the following outline with information from the text and your own ideas.

i How to produce less garbage:

ii How to use garbage as a resource:

iii How to properly dispose of garbage:

iv Examples of environmental actions in Germany:

○ Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with your partner.

1. Who usually takes the garbage out where you live?
2. Do you produce more or less garbage than your neighbors? Why?
3. On which days is burnable garbage collected where you live?
4. Do you sometimes throw paper or other items on the sidewalks or streets? Why or why not?
5. Where is garbage taken after it is collected?

6. Do you have garbage separation in the area where you live? Give details.
7. How many TVs does your family have? How many cars?
8. Does your home use solar power or solar heating?
9. How often do you go to secondhand shops?
10. What will you do to help reduce the garbage problem in the area you live in?



Vocabulary

Complete the following sentences with the correct words from the two readings in this chapter. The first letter is provided to help you.

1. Many c_____ such as pesticides and i_____ are used to grow cotton and vegetables today.
2. Cotton and nylon are two examples of t_____ that are commonly used all over the world.
3. Farmers spray their crops to try to kill p_____ that can cause a lot of damage.
4. Pesticides often p_____ water supplies, and some are known to be c_____.
5. Instead of d_____ our kitchen waste in the garbage, we could turn it into c_____.
6. In Japan, there are too many d_____ products and p_____ containers, both of which add to the garbage problem.