

St. Joseph's Anglo-Chinese School

Form 6 English Language | Paper 4 Speaking - Exam Practice (CEP Set 1)

Lesson 2 - Ecological Waste (NSE) • Teacher's Version

TASK RECAP (for reference - students have this on their handout)

Part A: As members of your school's Environment Club, your group has been asked to make a presentation on how to reduce clothing waste among students, with a focus on protecting ecological security. You are meeting to discuss what to include in the presentation. Part B: The examiner will ask one or more follow-up questions; students respond individually for up to 1 minute.

LESSON AIMS

- Discuss clothing waste and fast fashion using real facts and recent news
- Practise Part A group interaction (build on each other's ideas) and Part B individual response (develop an answer in 1 minute)
- Use and recycle topic vocabulary: fast fashion, clothing/textile waste, ecological security, second-hand, upcycle, landfill, cost per wear
- **Key terms:** Ecological security - the health of our environment is essential for human well-being and a nation's stability (clean air, water, resources)
- **Key terms:** Clothing waste - any clothing, footwear or fabric items that are discarded and no longer used

1. Warm-up Questions (purpose: personalise the topic → elicit ideas + pre-teach vocabulary)

Q1. Do you like shopping for new clothes?

Teacher's notes

- **Listen for:** Elicit reasons and details, not just "yes/no": how often, where (online vs in-shop), budget, favourite brands.
- **Model:** Push for a personal example: "I like shopping for new clothes because it makes me feel good, but I only buy them when there is a sale."

Follow-up prompts

- How often do you buy new clothes?
- Do you prefer shopping online or in shops? Why?
- Have you ever bought second-hand clothes? Why / why not?
- What is the most recent item of clothing you bought - and do you still wear it?

Q2. What do you do with the new clothes you no longer want?

Teacher's notes

- **Teach:** Pre-teach the vocabulary of the clothing cycle: donate, charity shop, hand down / give away, sell online (e.g. Carousell), swap, repair, upcycle, throw away.
- **Listen for:** Check whether students know what happens to clothes that are thrown away (landfill / shipped overseas - link to Article 1 in Section 2).
- **Model:** "I usually give my old clothes to my younger cousin, and the ones I can't give away I donate to a charity shop or sell them on Carousell."

Follow-up prompts

- Why do you think many people throw clothes away instead of donating them?
- What happens to clothes we throw away in Hong Kong? (practical - 'green in, green out' recycling bins, charity collection points)

2. Two Recent News Articles for Elaboration Reference (students use these to add evidence)

Both articles are free to read online. Give students the key facts below, or set them as reading before the lesson – the numbers make useful evidence in the discussion.

Article 1 - UNEP (United Nations), 27 March 2025

“Unsustainable fashion and textiles in focus for International Day of Zero Waste 2025”

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/unsustainable-fashion-and-textiles-focus-international-day-zero>

- **Scale:** 92 million tonnes of textile waste is produced worldwide every year.
- **Overconsumption:** Production doubled between 2000 and 2015, yet the time we actually wear a garment fell by 36%.
- **Recycling gap:** Only 8% of textile fibres in 2023 came from recycled sources; 11% of all plastic waste comes from clothing and textiles.
- **Waste destination:** Discarded clothes are often dumped or burned in low-income countries, or sit in landfills for decades, releasing greenhouse gases.

How students can use it

Quote one statistic to sound well-informed and prove the problem is real: “As the UN reported, the world produces 92 million tonnes of textile waste every year – that’s why we need to act.”

Article 2 - European Parliament, updated for 2026

“Fast fashion: EU laws for sustainable textile consumption”

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20201208STO93327/fast-fashion-eu-laws-for-sustainable-textile-consumption>

- **New law:** From 2026, the EU bans companies from destroying unsold clothes, shoes and accessories; large companies must report what they discard and why.
- **Brands pay:** Since January 2025, EU countries must collect textiles separately; rules approved in September 2025 make fashion brands (extended producer responsibility) pay for collecting, sorting and recycling their products.
- **Water cost:** One cotton t-shirt requires about 2,700 litres of fresh water – enough for one person to drink for 2.5 years.
- **Pollution:** Textile production causes about 20% of global clean-water pollution; one wash of a polyester load can release up to 700,000 microplastic fibres.

How students can use it

Use it for the “how to reduce clothing waste” bullet – solutions are not only about consumers: “Governments are acting too – the EU has banned destroying unsold clothes from 2026 and makes fashion brands pay for recycling.”

3. Ideas for the Discussion Task (Part A - give out the relevant bank, or let students pick one idea each)

A. How fast fashion and wasteful shopping habits impact the environment

- “Wear-once” culture: cheap, trendy clothes are worn a few times, then thrown away – the world produces 92 million tonnes of textile waste a year (UNEP).
- Resource drain: one cotton t-shirt uses ~2,700 litres of water; production causes ~20% of global clean-water pollution and large carbon emissions.
- Microplastics: washing synthetic (polyester) clothes releases plastic fibres into rivers and oceans.

- Online shopping (very low prices, constant new drops, easy returns) encourages impulse buying and overconsumption.
- Fast fashion normalises throwing things away – we buy more, wear things less, and always want the next trend.

B. How to reduce clothing waste for enhanced ecological security

- “Buy less, choose well, make it last” – quality over quantity.
- Shop second-hand: charity shops, thrift shops and apps like Carousell; organise clothing swaps with friends instead of buying new.
- Repair and upcycle: fix zips, buttons and small tears; re-style old clothes instead of discarding them.
- Care for clothes properly – wash less often and at lower temperatures so they last longer.
- Donate or recycle at proper collection points (charity bins, store take-back schemes) so clothes never reach landfill.
- Link to ecological security: less waste = fewer resources extracted, cleaner air and water, a healthier, more stable community.

C. How to promote the idea of reducing clothing waste at school

- Awareness campaign: posters, morning-announcement facts, and a school social-media (IG) page sharing “wear it again” outfit photos.
- School clothing swap day / second-hand market – students bring old clothes and exchange them.
- Charity clothing drive: collect unwanted clothes and donate them to recycling or charity programmes.
- Workshops: learn to fix a torn hem, replace a button, or upcycle old uniforms/shirts.
- Invite green groups (e.g. Greenpeace, WWF) or a senior student to give a short talk with real facts.
- Make it visible: put a collection box at the school entrance and announce how much was collected.

D. Anything else you think is important

- Hidden human cost: cheap clothes are often made by low-paid workers in unsafe conditions – “fast” fashion is rarely “fair” fashion.
- Social-media pressure: constantly chasing trends makes us feel we never have enough – more clothes does not mean more happiness.
- Not just consumers: governments and brands must act too – e.g. the EU’s 2026 ban on destroying unsold clothes.
- “Cost per wear”: a well-made \$300 jacket worn 100 times is cheaper than a \$60 jacket worn five times.
- Small habits add up: buy less, wear more, repair, swap, donate – every piece of clothing kept in use matters.

4. Part B - Individual Response (up to 1 minute; skeleton: opinion → reasons → example → balanced conclusion)

Q1. What are some of the pros and cons of buying cheap clothes?

Pros (to concede first)

- Affordable – students with limited pocket money can buy new clothes.
- Trend-friendly – you can follow fashion and experiment with styles cheaply.
- More variety for the same budget; easy and cheap to replace worn-out items.

Cons (the stronger side - link to the topic)

- Low quality → clothes fall apart quickly → more clothing waste and landfill.
- Hidden environmental cost: ~2,700 litres of water per t-shirt, polluted water from dyeing, microplastics from washing (EU Parliament).
- Often made in factories with poor pay and unsafe conditions.
- “False economy”: replacing cheap clothes again and again can cost more over time.

Model closing line

“So yes, cheap clothes are convenient, but the real cost is not on the price tag – it is paid by the environment and by garment workers. I think we should buy fewer, better pieces instead.”

Q2. Do you think quality or quantity of clothes is more important?

For quality (recommended main position)

- Better materials and fit → more comfortable, better-looking, and they last longer → less clothing waste.
- “Cost per wear”: a durable \$300 shirt worn 100 times is better value than a \$60 shirt worn five times.
- Fewer, better pieces = simpler wardrobe, less clutter, less stress about what to wear.

For quantity (to show balance)

- More variety allows self-expression and lets you follow trends.
- Cheap clothes are practical for teenagers, who are still growing.
- Quantity is less harmful if clothes are reused – passed on, swapped or donated rather than thrown away.

Model balanced conclusion

“For the environment, quality is clearly more important – but we do not have to choose one or the other. The realistic answer is to buy fewer, better pieces and take care of them, so our clothes last.”

5. Teaching Notes - What to Listen For

- Aim for 3–4 connected ideas in 45–60 seconds: opinion → reason → example → link back to ecological security.
- Topic vocabulary: fast fashion, clothing/textile waste, ecological security, second-hand, upcycle, landfill, cost per wear.
- Reasons must be supported with concrete examples or evidence (encourage quoting ONE number from Section 2).
- Part A: listen for turn-taking – inviting others (“What do you think?”), building on ideas (“That’s a good point, and it also means...”) and not dominating.
- Part B: students must answer the question asked, not just deliver a memorised speech about the topic.
- Scaffold weaker students: give them a sentence starter, e.g. “One major problem is...”, “This matters because...”, “As a recent news article pointed out...”