

DAY 23: FASHION

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MY FAVORITE T-SHIRT:

BRAND NAME:

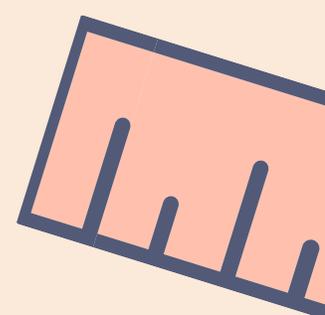
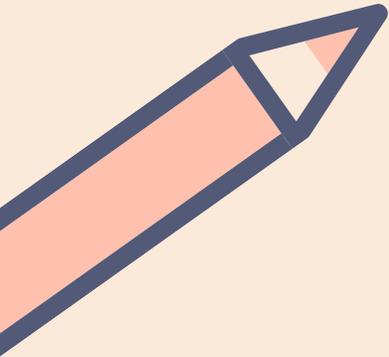
SOUTHPOLE

MATERIALS USED: 60%

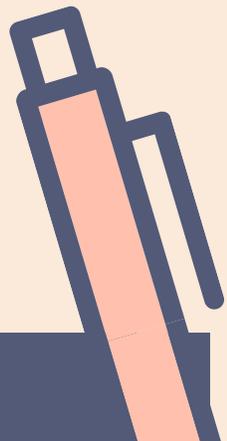
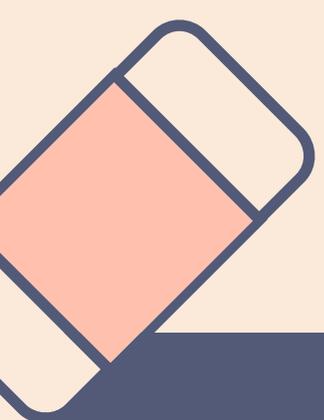
COTTON, 40% POLYESTER

WHERE IT WAS

PRODUCED: CHINA



MOST CLOTHING IS MADE WITH COTTON AND POLYESTER, AND IS MADE IN CHINA. HOWEVER, SHOULD WE AS CONSUMERS RECONSIDER WHAT IS NORMAL? AFTER ALL, THERE ARE A LOT OF PROBLEMS WITH THESE MATERIALS ON THE ENVIRONMENT, NOT TO MENTION THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE WORKERS...



PROBLEMS WITH COTTON

Conventionally grown cotton requires a large amount of synthetic chemicals and pesticides. Despite only around 2.4% of the world's cropland is being planted with cotton, it still accounts for 24% of global insecticide and 11% of pesticide sales. Seven of the most 15 carcinogenic chemicals are used to grow cotton. Many times, these runoff pesticides lead to the pollution of rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Moreover, cotton requires an enormous amount of water to grow!

PROBLEMS WITH POLYESTER

The production of polyester requires two times more energy than conventional cotton! It is not biodegradable either, so it sits in our landfills for many years. Furthermore, in order to produce polyester, harmful chemicals including carcinogens must be used in the manufacturing process.

PROBLEMS WITH WORK CONDITIONS

Most workers in the Chinese clothes factories are women earning extremely low wages - the average monthly salary including overtime is around 243 U.S. Dollars. Workers endure long working days, work seven days a week, many without an employment contract. Living conditions are poor, with up to six people sharing small cramped dormitories. These backwards work practices are commonly used in the textile industries that we buy from.

EFFECT OF THE CHINESE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Not only that, the Chinese textile industry was the third largest source of industrial wastewater in the country. In 2015, the industry produced 1.84 billion tons of wastewater, accounting for 10.1 percent of China's total industrial wastewater discharge. Clearly, the Chinese textile industry is not using responsible practices for their wastewater, which causes huge detriment to the ocean!



I wore my shirt inside out and explained to my parents about its impact on labor and environment. My parents, although are aware of the sweatshop situation and pollution problem in China, didn't know the clothing industry is such a big contributor to environmental issues. My mom went to her wardrobe immediately and looked at every tags on her clothes and we also did some online research together. There are a few steps we plan to take as a family:

Plan:

1. Try to buy clothes made with organic cotton or wool with high standards for both animal welfare and land management.
2. Microfibers from synthetic materials can cause pollution in rivers and oceans. We will select high quality and durable products when we buy, and try to avoid low-quality fleeces, which shed more microfibers.
3. Select brands which are fair trade certified. Support safe, fair and humane working conditions.
4. Keep environmental impact in mind before spending. Check tags before we buy.
5. Most importantly, buy less! As long as we have enough t-shirts, there's no reason for us to buy more!

Instagram:



the.nature.nerds This seems like another normal shirt at first. You've probably seen shirts like this before, a mix of cotton and polymer. However, did you know that 7 of the 15 most carcinogenic materials are used to make cotton, or that polyester uses harmful chemicals that runoff into the environment? As consumers, we should shop for responsible, eco-friendly solutions - the clothes you wear everyday represent your values and who you are.

@turninggreenorg #pgc2018
#whomademyclothes @truecostmovie
@greenamerica @fibershed