

Second-hand, vintage, sustainable – the clothes revolution

1 Warmer

a. Write the correct captions under the photos.

mall

online marketplace

thrift store



a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

b. Do you know any places like this in your city?

2 Lead in

a. Match these groups to their descriptions.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Baby boomer | a person who became an adult around the year 2000 |
| Millennial | the people born in the 1960s and 1970s |
| Generation X | someone who was born between 1946 and 1964 |

b. Do you belong to any of these groups? Which group do you think is most likely to buy second-hand clothing, and why?

3 Key words

a. Write the words from the boxes next to the definitions below.

Check your answers and your understanding of how the words are used by using the same word to complete the example sentence immediately after each definition. Then read the complete article to see how each of the key words is used in context.

backed frown on funded investor racks share take off

1. provide the money for something that costs a lot _____
My grandmother _____ my university semester at Harvard.
2. long bars and stands used for hanging and displaying clothes _____
She looked through the clothes on the _____ hoping to find something to wear to the interview.
3. disapprove of something _____
The company _____ employees making personal phone calls at work.
4. start to become successful _____
The business began to _____ when she moved it to Australia.
5. the part of something that is divided between several people or things _____
Britain's _____ of the global car industry has fallen in the past 30 years.
6. a person or company that tries to make money by putting money into other businesses _____
Nobody knew who the biggest _____ in the start-up really was.
7. supported something to help it succeed _____
Surprisingly, both political parties _____ the proposal.

apparel capitalise consolidating flaming out maturing revenue vouches for

8. money you make from business activities _____

Tourism is the island's main source of business _____

9. an American English word for clothes, used especially in stores or other businesses

People thought that self-cleaning fabrics would revolutionize the sport

_____ *industry.*

10. making the power, position, or achievements you already have stronger

The company is _____ its hold on technology.

11. growing to become a finished product; becoming or making better _____

We can easily spend 10 years _____ new software.

12. quickly using up all your fuel or resources after a period of high functioning or success

Their unique clothing line was very popular and sold out the initial release in hours, but they didn't

have any good ideas how to keep it going, so it ended up _____.

13. recommend or talk highly about something or someone based on your own knowledge and

experience with them _____

We not will invest in the company unless he personally _____ the safety of

its products.

14. use an event or a situation to help you to achieve something or to get an advantage

Hoping to _____ on his recent success, Simon opened a second restaurant

in a trendy part of the city.

Second-hand news: online clothing resale is here to stay

DESPITE A BUMPY 2021, FASHION AND LUXURY BRANDS SEE THE SECTOR'S SUSTAINABILITY ADVANTAGES

BROOKE MASTERS

- 1 Like many members of Gen Z, my children have soured on traditional clothing stores. For both sustainability and cost reasons, they now shop only at thrift stores.
- 2 Dragged along on a recent outing, I funded an update of my daughter's wardrobe and scored some Lucky jeans for myself while spending less than a new pair would have cost at the mall.
- 3 But Christmas presents are going to be a challenge. With the Omicron variant spreading, I have no desire to flip through the racks again, and the kids would frown on brand new items. That leaves the burgeoning online market.
- 4 Clothing resale sites were already starting to take off before the pandemic: consultants BCG said last year that one quarter of global shoppers bought a used item in 2019 and predicted that second-hand fashion's share of the global closet could grow from 21 to 27 per cent by 2023.
- 5 But global lockdowns really juiced investor interest in the sector's potential for growth. This year, US sites ThredUp and Poshmark joined the public markets. In Europe, Gucci owner Kering put money into Vestiaire Collective, crafting marketplace Etsy bought Depop, and private equity group EQT backed a big fundraising for Vinted at triple its prior valuation.
- 6 GlobalData study commissioned by ThredUp optimistically predicted that curated resellers (as opposed to traditional thrift stores) would grow 11 times faster than ordinary clothing retail and the total second-hand market would double in size to \$77bn by 2025. Younger consumers are powering the trend: 42 per cent of Gen Z and millennials shopped for second-hand apparel last year.
- 7 The bloom is now coming off the rose. ThredUp and Poshmark shares are down more than 80 per cent from their peaks earlier this year. Even RealReal, which has been listed for longer, has seen its share price fall by more than half since February.
- 8 Much of the scepticism is warranted. Online clothing resale is getting crowded. Bigger players are elbowing their way in, and the success stories are starting to bump into each other as they expand further. Poshmark, for example, reported slowing revenue growth in the third quarter as it swung to a loss.
- 9 Bricks and mortar competition is also rising now that stores have properly reopened. For shoppers who like the thrill of discovery, online browsing struggles to beat rifling through a thrift shop rack. And department stores such as Selfridges and Neiman Marcus are courting those who seek genuine brand names and vintage pieces.
- 10 Consumers who turn to second-hand for cost reasons also have other options. Fast fashion stores and websites from China's Shein to the UK's Primark are thriving. Sweden's H&M is a triple threat. It not only sells cheap new clothing but also collects old garments for recycling and several of its brands have entered the resale market.
- 11 Despite the challenges, the online resale market is consolidating and maturing rather than flaming out. As sustainability rises as a driver of consumer behaviour, fashion will feel the heat. It accounts for about 10 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions due to long supply chains and heavy use of petroleum-based synthetics.
- 12 That suggests second-hand sales will only become more attractive — to the original makers. There are few better ways to reduce total carbon emissions than to resell the same goods. Customers are also likely to pay more if the manufacturer vouches for their authenticity. Enthusiasts argue that artificial intelligence and blockchain will speed validation and draw in new buyers much as dealer-certified "pre-owned" cars widened the used vehicle market in the 1990s. The ultimate dream is to create a circular market, where loyal customers send back goods they have tired of and receive credit that they use towards buying more.

Continued on next page

13 Kate Fletcher, a professor of sustainability design at the London College of Fashion, doubts that clothing resale will solve the sustainability problem. "The industry is trying to maintain a fundamentally high-impact model by substituting second-hand goods," she says. "People's wardrobes are becoming engorged."

14 That hasn't stopped groups such as online luxury retailer Farfetch from trying to capitalise. Last week it acquired Luxclusif, a resale platform that provides technology to brands that want to get into online reselling.

15 Last year, 32 per cent of Gen Xers and 16 per cent of boomers bought second-hand clothing, according to GlobalData. If luxury and fashion companies can convince more of us to follow the kids, there is a lot of money to be made.

FT

Brooke Masters December 14 2021

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4 Understanding the article

a. Are these sentences True or False according to the information in the article? Tick (✓) the sentences that are correct and correct any that are false.

1. Brooke Masters' children buy their clothes in traditional clothing stores at the mall.
2. Brooke was happy to buy herself a pair of designer jeans in a second-hand shop.
3. The main reason people buy second-hand clothes is because they are cheaper.
4. The fashion industry is responsible for about 10 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions.
5. There are not many steps and people involved in making and selling clothes.
6. One well-known global clothing store from Sweden only sells cheap new clothing.
7. Older people are more likely to buy second-hand clothes than younger people.
8. Some high-end department stores now sell pre-owned items of quality and expensive clothing.

5 Business language

a. Complete the box with the missing words and add arrows to show whether they describe an upward trend (↑) or a downward trend (↓).

verb	noun	trend direction
To drop	A _____	
To _____	A growth	
To _____	A rise	
To fall	A _____	
To _____	An improvement	
To _____	A reduction	
To lose	A _____	
To _____	An increase	

b. Use the correct form of any of the fitting words above to complete the sentences.

1. _____ in the clothing resale market is slowing down. (↑)
2. Share prices _____ by more than 20 per cent last quarter. (↓)
3. Second-hand fashion's share of the clothes market could _____ from 21 to 27 per cent by 2023. (↑)
4. The online reselling site made a small _____ in its first year. (↓)
5. There was a large _____ in sales of second-hand clothes last year. (↑)
6. Sales of vintage clothes are still _____. (↑)

c. Write more example sentences of your own.

6 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

- What types of things are you *happy* to buy second-hand?
- What would you *never* buy second-hand? Why?
- How have your shopping habits changed in the past 2—3 years?
- What do you do with clothes that you no longer wear but that are still good?

7 Wider business theme – reselling online

Situation:

You spent a lot of money on clothes for a friend's wedding. The outfit* looked great, and you were very happy with it.

However, your friend posted and shared many photos of their wedding, and everyone you know has seen you wearing the outfit. Because of this, you feel that you can't really wear the same clothes to another friend's wedding and so you need to buy another outfit.

Clothes are expensive, and before you buy a second new outfit, you need to sell the first one.

* outfit = a set of clothes that are worn together

Task:

You want to sell the items on an online marketplace.

Write texts for each item to help you make the best sale.

a. Decide and write what the outfit consists of (at least 3 items):

e.g., a long red dress, a silver scarf, a red and silver bag

b. Before you write your texts, talk about what information a buyer needs to know and make notes.

description	<i>e.g., size, material, colour, ...</i>
how you will show the items	<i>e.g., 3 photos that show ...</i>
payment	<i>e.g., I can accept ..., but I prefer</i>
packaging, postage, and delivery	
returns, refunds, insurance.	
other information ...	

c. Display or share your adverts. Read all the texts.

Then discuss:

- which items give the best information
- what other information you would like to know before you buy
- which item you would most like to buy