

The Story of Stuff

You are about to watch an American made educational film about production and consumption. Please answer the following questions. Work with a partner.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorqroigqM>

0.00-4.20

1. Extraction, production, distribution, consumption are all part of what system?
2. Of the 100 largest economies in the world, how many of these economies are corporations?
3. What are some examples of natural resource exploitation (NB: In English, 'exploitation' is a negative quality)?
4. According to the speaker, what is the 'first limit'?
5. In the US, 30/40/50% of the waterways are undrinkable
6. What percentage of the world's forests is gone?

4.20-10.10

7. What does the speaker mean when she says, "Toxins in, toxins out"?
8. What does the speaker mean by "externalized costs"?
9. Give examples which costs can be externalized and how.

10.10-14.55

10. What is the 'golden arrow' of consumption?
11. What percentage of the products sold today will be in use in 6 months?
12. Planned obsolescence - to make stuff to be useless as *quickly/slowly* as possible
13. Perceived obsolescence – to throw away stuff when it is still perfectly *useful/useless*

14.55-16.45

14. In the USA, people see an average of how many advertisements per day?
15. According to the speaker, does buying products make us happy?
16. Who spends more time shopping – Americans or Europeans? How much more?

16.45-21.00

17. What happens to our waste?
18. Why is recycling an insufficient solution to our waste problem?
19. What solutions does the speaker suggest?

Questions for discussion:

1. Does buying products make you happy? Why (not)?
2. To what extent does advertising influence your shopping habits?
3. Do you throw away stuff when it is still perfectly useful? Why (not)?
4. When you buy a product, do you pay attention to any of the following factors? a) in which country it was made, b) ingredients or components (toxic? natural? sustainable?)
5. Do you sort and recycle your waste? What do you think of the recycling facilities where you live and work?
6. Having watched “The Story of Stuff”, do you think you will change your consumer habits in any way? If so, how? If not, why not?
7. What do you think of the film?