

LIFESTYLE TRENDS

FIDM's Just for Educators Classroom Projects & Activities



Objective:

To help students understand societal/lifestyle trends and how they affect us as consumers

Suggested for: *Home Economics, Social Studies, and Business Education*

Student Activities:

Students comment on current fashion trends they observe in the classroom. They participate in a general discussion of what defines a trend, how trends are researched, who establishes trends, and who are the major trendsetters in American culture. They discuss Faith Popcorn's *Lifestyle Trends* with the focus on the five key trends of cocooning, clanning, fantasy/adventure, small indulgences, and down-aging. Students break into groups of 3-4 and look through consumer magazines to find an example of each of the lifestyle trends outlined by Faith Popcorn and give an explanation of that trend. A spokesperson from each group presents their findings to the class.

Arizona State Standards:

• Marketing, Management, and Entrepreneurship

- 16.0 Demonstrate oral communication skills for the marketing field.
- 16.1 Conduct formal/informal research to collect appropriate topical information.
- 16.6 Prepare and deliver presentations.
- 32.0 Critique selling concepts.
- 32.5 Identify buying motives.

California State Standards:

• Fashion and Interior Design Industry Sector

- A7.0 Students understand how trends and color forecasting are used in the development of new lines.
- A7.3 Evaluate forecasting information for usefulness in the analysis of retail trends.

Washington State Standards:

• Essential Academic Learning Requirements: Communication

- 2 The student uses communication skills and strategies to interact/work effectively with others.

National Standards:

• Business Education: Marketing

- II Achievement Standard: Analyze the characteristics, motivations, and behaviors of consumers.
- 11.5.5 Analyze future design and development trends in architecture, interiors, furniture, and furnishings.
- 16.4.4 Analyze current technology and trends that facilitate design and production of textile, apparel, and fashion products.
- 16.5 Analyze current technology and trends that facilitate design and production of textile, apparel, and fashion products.
- 16.5.6 Apply research methods, including forecasting techniques, for marketing apparel and textile products.

Materials Needed:

- Copy of Faith Popcorn's book *Lifestyle Trends*
- Access to the Internet
- Current consumer magazines

Warm-Up Exercise:

Have students look around the room and note examples of trends, i.e. fashion trends worn by fellow students. Specific questions:

- What appear to be the styles, trends, or prevailing looks of what students are wearing today?
- Are there examples of students who go against the trend?
- Why might they choose to do so?

General discussion:

- What defines a trend?
- How are trends researched?
- Who establishes trends?
- Who are the major trendsetters in the American culture?

Project Guidelines:

1. Discuss Faith Popcorn's Lifestyle Trends with the focus on five key trends:

- **Cocooning** - Consumers are shielding themselves from the harsh, unpredictable realities of the outside world and retreating into safe, cozy "homelike" environments.
- **Clanning** - Consumers seek the comfort and reinforcement of those who share their values, beliefs, and their interests.
- **Fantasy/Adventure** - As an escape from stress and boredom, consumers crave excitement and stimulation in essentially risk-free adventures.
- **Small Indulgences** - Busy, stressed-out consumers seeking quick-hit gratification are rewarding themselves with affordable luxuries.
- **Down-Aging** - Nostalgic for the carefree days of childhood, consumers seek the symbols of youth to counterbalance the intensity of their adult lives.

2. Trends can affect everything from fashion design to barbecue grills. The current BBQ trend is extra large stainless - related to the “cocooning” trend, national pride, and family cookouts. Car design has gone retro (PT Cruiser, T-bird, VW Beetle), while only athletic shoes and computers/electronics are trying to look futuristic (Apple). In general, there are trends that tend to permeate all types of design.
3. Break up into groups of 3-4 students and distribute the consumer magazines. Each group should find an example of each of the lifestyle trends outlined by Faith Popcorn and give an explanation of that trend.
4. Students should select a spokesperson from each group to present the findings to the class.

Possible Follow-up:

Students are asked to think about how a company would use the information based on societal trends as they decide what products to manufacture. Students answer the question, how does the knowledge of societal trends affect the advertising of that product?