

# PRODUCT PAIRS

**This activity is a perfect introduction to sustainability for ages 7-18. It aims to help students think about their own values that lie behind their choices as consumers. It is suitable for all material areas within D&T.**

## Preparation

**In advance, buy a selection of product pairs that are relatively good or bad from a sustainability point of view.**

Find a list of product suggestions below to fit with different material areas. If you haven't time to source products, you can use pictures of products instead.

Place the product pairs on a table at the front of the class or at points around the classroom where everyone can see them. Ensure the price is with the products.

## Running the activity

**Tell the students to imagine they are going shopping. Ask them to choose one item from each pair of products and to write their choices on a piece of paper. Do not mention sustainability at this stage.**

After 5 minutes, ask students to report back on their reasons for their choices of products. Write them on a board and summarise the main criteria students used when making decisions as consumers, e.g. cost, brand, quality.

Raise the question of sustainability – were there any environmental, social, economic issues included in the reasons for product choice?

If you choose to do this activity before a piece of work on sustainability you could repeat it after the work has been completed to see whether students have shifted their thinking.

## Ideas for Product pairs

### Food

**Fruits and veg** – local vs imported

**Snack bars** – branded vs unbranded

**Milk** – glass bottle vs plastic, organic vs non-organic

**Tea/Coffee** – fair trade vs nonfair trade

**Sugar** – local vs fairtrade

**Fruit and veg** – loose vs packaged in shrink wrapped plastic

### Textiles

**T-Shirts** – organic vs non-organic

**Jeans** – branded vs unbranded

**Fleece** – made of standard material or material made from recycled products

**Trainers** – leather vs plastic

**Bags** – disposable vs reusable

**T-Shirts** – made in the UK locally vs imported

### Products

**Mouse mat** – standard vs recycled mouse mat

**Pens/pencils** – recycled vs non-recycled

**Toothbrushes** – standard vs electric

**Toys** – battery vs wind up

**Ruler** – recycled vs non-recycled

