

Debate

Divide the class into groups of four to six students.

Within each group, assign a role to each student, choosing (only one) from the following: Manufacturer; Factory Worker in Canada; Factory Worker in the Developing World; Garment Worker for another Company in Canada; Union; or Consumer.

Manufacturer:

Review the text about The Levi's Era www.royalalbertamuseum.ca/virtualExhibits/gwg/en/history/thelevisera.html

Search the web for newspaper articles and other information giving the company's perspective on the closure.

See Levi Strauss and Co. www.levistrauss.com for information about its code for product sourcing.

GWG/Levi's Factory Workers in Canada:

Watch the interviews in the section entitled Labour Force [link to Labour Force]

Identify some of the challenges these women faced when they came to Canada and what working for GWG/Levi Strauss has meant to them.

View the slide show that depicts the making of a pair of jeans at the Edmonton plant in 2004.

Factory Workers in the Developing World

Search the web for information about garment manufacturing in the developing world, for example: No Sweat www.nosweat.org, Coop America www.coopamerica.org and Global Exchange www.globalexchange.org provide information about Levi Strauss's outsourcing practices compared to those of other garment manufacturing companies. Stitch www.stitchonline.org is an organization of Central American and American women workers that exchange strategies on how to fight for economic justice in the workplace.

Garment Workers for another Company in Canada:

Interview someone who worked for a different garment manufacturing company. Click here for sample questions you could ask. [download pdf interview guidelines]

Union:

Review the text Edmonton's Garment Workers' Union www.royalalbertamuseum.ca/virtualExhibits/gwg/en/labourforce/local120.html

Search the web for newspaper articles about the union's response to the closure

See UFCW www.ufcw.ca and UNITE HERE www.unitehere.org for the union's perspective; at the time of the plant's closure, the Edmonton workers were part of UFCW and the Brantford plant was part of UNITE.

Consumers

Look at GWG catalogues from 1959, 1965, 1970 and 1981, and compare the images of GWG workers to those of the models in GWG catalogues. Was GWG marketing to its workforce? Why or why not?

Interview three different consumers (possibly your sibling, parent and grandparent) about what factors they consider when buying clothing. Do they think about where the clothing is made?

Visit The Consumerist consumerist.com, one of many websites that provide information to help consumers make informed purchasing decisions.

Globalization & Clothes, UN Platform for Action Committee Manitoba www.unpac.ca/economy/g_clothes.html
United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) www.studentsagainstssweatshops.org, a network of students in North America who have been organizing for workers' rights since 1998.

Ask students to:

- **record** information and think about different perspectives on the issue;
- **evaluate** information: consider the credibility of sources, and distinguish between facts and opinions; and
- **prepare** to debate the closure of the plant from the perspective of their character.

