The Story of Stuff worksheet

Watch the video download “The Story of Stuff” with Annie Leonard and answer the following questions to check your listening and understanding:

1. Copy the sketches of the 5 stages of the materials economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extraction</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
<th>Consumption</th>
<th>Disposal</th>
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2. How much of our natural resources have been trashed in the last few decades?
   One-third of the planet’s natural resources base have been consumed.

3. How many planets are needed to support current rates of consumption in the US and Australia?
   3-5

4. How many trees are being lost in the Amazon each minute?
   2000 trees a minute

5. What is being added to the production system that is created dangerous waste products?
   Energy

6. What food is at the top of the food chain and threatening the health of future generations?
   Human breast milk

7. What is meant by “externalising costs of production”?
   The real costs aren’t captured in the price. Production is moved overseas.

8. Who is paying for the real cost of cheap electronic equipment (i.e. the $4.99 radio)? List three groups at least.
   Miners, factory workers, store employees.

9a. How much material is still in the system after 6 months? 1%
9b. Where have the remaining materials gone?
   To waste.

10. When did the modern consumer economy come into being? Why?
    After WW2 in an attempt to ramp up the economy.
11. According to Annie Leonard, what are some of the social and community interests being neglected while we are busy consuming “stuff”?


12. What do these terms mean? Give an example of each.

- “planned obsolescence” Objects purposely designed to be discarded
  For example__Plastic cups, bags, dvds and computers.__

- “perceived obsolescence” Convinces the consumer to throw away things that are useful
  For example__Buying the newest model of a computer, even though your old one works just fine.__

13a. What is happening to the levels of measured happiness?

National happiness is declining.

13b. What reasons are given?

We have less leisure time, we spend our time working to buy unnecessary things to make ourselves feel better. consumer society

14. Draw or summarise the steps in the treadmill.

- One works to earn money
- Then sits at home watching ads
- Which convinces them to go to the mall and buy things to make themselves feel better
- Works to pay off what was bought
- Watches more adds

15. One solution which many countries use to deal with increasing waste is to burn it. What problem is associated with burning rubbish?

It pollutes the air, land, water and ultimately changes the climate through releasing toxic gases.

16. How does recycling help?

Reduces the garbage at the disposal end and it reduces the pressure to mine and harvest new stuff at the extraction end.

17. Why is recycling not enough? (Clue: How many rubbish bins are needed to produce one bin of recycled materials?)

70 rubbish bins are needed to produce one bin of recycled materials. Much of the garbage can’t be recycled.