Teacher's Key

How Fashion Trends Become Trends: Who Really Decides? (Level B2)

Vocabulary Matching

1 forecasts = **N**
2 imitation = **A**
3 elite = **H**
4 collective = **L**
5 subscription = **G**
6 lead time = **M**
7 self-fulfilling = **I**
8 curate = **E**
9 volatile = **D**
10 viral = **O**
11 microtrends = **J**
12 arbitrary = **K**
13 disclose = **B**
14 endorse = **C**
15 affiliate = **F**

Fill in the Blank

1 forecasts
2 imitation
3 elite
4 collective
5 subscription
6 lead time
7 self-fulfilling
8 curate
9 volatile
10 viral
11 arbitrary
12 disclose
13 endorse
14 affiliate

True or False

1 **True.** This is the trickle-down idea attributed to Simmel in 1904.
2 **False.** Blumer said designers try to identify what most people are ready to accept.
3 **True.** Subscriptions are how WGSN reaches its business customers.
4 **False.** Pantone is a color company that publishes color reports and a Color of the Year.
5 **True.** The reading cites this timeline from a book on color forecasting.
6 **False.** It says newer systems have shortened it, in some cases to three weeks.
7 **True.** The reading gives 94 percent, 90 percent for twelve months, and over 90 percent for two years.
8 **False.** The reading says no independent test was found.
9 **True.** The 2024 report said editors at magazines such as Vogue once dictated styles.
10 **False.** The reading names the United States only.

Language Focus: Passive Voice for Processes

Example answer: The collections **are shown** in February. To name the agent, add *by designers* at the end: The collections are shown by designers in February.

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1 It asks why shops in different countries sell similar colors and shapes in the same season. The lesson says it will describe how an industry that sells forecasts plans trends, and where the claims are uncertain.

2 Simmel argued that the upper classes create fashion, lower classes copy it through imitation, and the elite then move on to something new to stay distinct.

3 For Blumer, designers try to identify what most people are already ready to accept, rather than commanding taste. The reading says one reference work considers the historical evidence for an orderly trickle-down not very convincing.

4 WGSN says it consults about 2,800 outside data sources, that more than 250 experts add analysis, and that analysts check its forecasts (analyst in the loop). It earns money by selling subscription access to its reports to brands and retailers.

5 They reported that agencies look two, five, or even ten years ahead by searching for weak signals, meaning small early signs of social change.

6 It took about 18 months, according to a Leeds page. Newer manufacturing systems have shortened it, in some cases to as little as three weeks between manufacture and retail.

7 It is the company's own figure, and this lesson found no independent test. WGSN also claimed 90 percent for twelve months (2022 tool launch) and over 90 percent for two years (2022 blog), so the claims have varied.

8 It means a forecast that guides production can help make its own prediction come true, because if many companies choose the same colors, those colors are what shops sell. The Leeds page also mentions the opposing view that forecasting encourages waste and overconsumption.

9 Open answer. A strong answer names brands (want to sell clothes), forecasters (sell subscriptions), influencers (paid endorsements, which the FTC requires them to disclose), Pantone (whose choice was criticized as safe), and magazines (which may earn an affiliate commission).

10 Not Given. The reading says a forecast can be partly self-fulfilling and that no study measuring the effect was found. It does not say anyone has proved it.

11 No. The writer describes forecasting as a real industry with real customers and says only that its claims are uncertain and that most claimants have a business interest.

12 Best answer: to give a specific example of a business interest. The sentence states a fact from two publishers' pages. It does not accuse magazines of dishonesty, because the notice itself is a disclosure.

Notes on the Evidence

- Theory and history. Simmel (1904) and Veblen (1899) are the classic sources for trickle-down; Blumer (1969) is summarized from a review of fashion theory (Elsevier, Investigaciones de Historia Economica) and a Sociopedia entry. The claim that the historical evidence for orderly trickle-down is not very convincing comes from an encyclopedia entry on trickle-down (Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion, on encyclopedia.com). Harajuku is used as an example of trickle-up by an Iowa State University textbook, which cites the V&A.
- Forecasting industry. WGSN's own pages (opened by search snippet only; the About and AI and data pages) give the founding year 1998, 2,800 third-party data sources, and 250 plus experts. The 94 percent accuracy claim is on WGSN's fashion design page, footnoted to its TrendCurve AI model. Earlier WGSN statements differ: the April 2022 launch of TrendCurve+ reported 90 percent for up to 12 months (California Apparel News), and a WGSN blog from November 2022 said over 90 percent for up to two years. The 94 percent figure is repeated by third-party sites, but this lesson found no independent test. The Paris study is Laghmari and Hur (2025), Fashion Trends and Forecasting: The Fashion Futurists' Toolkit, Routledge.
- Timelines. The 18 to 24 month figure comes from a book description (Scully and Cobb, Color Forecasting for Fashion, 2012). The University of Leeds page (Institute of Textiles and Colour) gives the 18-month traditional supply chain, the three-week case, and the opposing view on waste. It has no named author on the page read. Bloomberg Businessweek (31 January 2024) was read as a search snippet and is not linked because the only address found was a Bloomberg mirror site; the Businessweek claims are limited to those in the snippet.
- Corrections to the source draft. The draft said forecasting companies may employ hundreds of analysts and track millions of product listings; WGSN's own pages support 250 plus experts and 2,800 data sources, and other figures came from unverified secondary pages, so they were dropped. The draft said runway collections are shown about six months ahead and that fast fashion works on lead times of weeks so that it can copy what is already selling; the copying claim had no source and was removed, and the three-week figure now comes from Leeds. The draft said some trends now travel from social media to the runway; no source read supports that direction specifically, so the reading uses the trickle-up idea. The claims that influencers make styles seem everywhere, that very few trend articles cite data, and that reports say to buy fewer, better pieces were unsourced or advice and were removed.
- Other checks. Pantone's Color of the Year 2026, Cloud Dancer, was announced on 4 December 2025 and was the first white in the program (Pantone materials as reported by several outlets). The criticism cited in the reading comes from news coverage and design commentary; one outlet listed a different Pantone code (17-1230 against 11-4201), so no code is given. The FTC requirement (Endorsement Guides, updated 2023) applies in the United States only. Affiliate commission notices were seen on the Marie Claire and Who What Wear pages fetched for the companion lesson. The claim that trend cycles used to last twenty years and are now weeks was found only in blogs and student articles and is presented as unverified. Sources in the draft not opened: CNN, Highsnobiety (not found by search), Raffles, and My Style Box.