**Global fashion retailers in China**

**A** Western fashions have become very common in Chinese wardrobes in the last few decades. Traditional outfits like the qipao have been replaced in everyday life with Western clothes, and jeans and T-shirts have become must-haves all over the country. More recently, China has attracted global fashion retailers because of its rapidly growing economy. In the last few years, a large number of fashion shops have been opened by these companies and there are plans to open many more. For example, the Spanish retailer Zara – which is currently the largest global fashion retailer in the world – has opened 131 shops in China since the first one was set up in 2006.

**B** Designer clothes with brand names are particularly popular in China, and an increasing number of people want to dress to impress. This trend is linked to the new wealth in the country. With the increase in the amount of money available to them, many Chinese people feel they are capable of becoming very wealthy. This increase in Chinese income and aspiration is reflected in the country’s clothing market, which was worth $243 billion in 2011. This is not far behind the clothing market in the USA, which was worth almost $331 billion in the same year.

**C** More recently, China has been affected by the global economic recession and, in 2012, its economy was expected to grow more slowly than in previous years. This has naturally made Chinese shoppers more anxious about spending large amounts of money on designer clothes. As a result, cheaper high-street fashion companies from Europe, such as Zara, H&M and Marks & Spencer, and the American retailer Gap, are using this dip to tap into the market.

**D** However, some of these companies are having more success than others. While H&M and Zara are doing very well, Chinese customers have not been so impressed by other retailers, due to their less trendy images. These retailers project a middle-class look, whereas many Chinese people prefer to give the impression of wealth through their appearance. They must also compete with local brands such as Metersbonwe and Belle International, which are continuing to grow within China and which are more familiar with the Chinese dress code. However, despite the local competition, global retailers are still choosing to focus their expansion on China, including the Japanese clothing chain Uniqlo, which plans to open 1,000 stores in the country over the next decade. It looks as if Chinese fashion will continue to be influenced by the rest of the world.

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**Reading**

1. **Choose the correct answers.**

   1. In China, jeans and T-shirts:
      A. have become more popular recently.
      B. have been replaced by the qipao.
      C. are only worn if they are from designer brands.

   2. Chinese people:
      A. aren’t as wealthy as they used to be.
      B. think that smart clothes are only for wealthy people.
      C. like wearing smart clothes to reflect their wealth.

   3. Global fashion retailers such as H&M and Zara:
      A. have recently closed shops in China.
      B. know that Chinese people are looking for cheaper clothes because of the recession.
      C. are selling fewer clothes in China due to the effects of the recession.

2. **Answer the questions using your own words.**

   1. Why do more Chinese people want to ‘dress to impress’?

   2. What makes some retailers less popular in China?

**Use of English**

3. **Rewrite sentences 1–2 as active and sentences 3–4 as passive.**

   1. The qipao is worn less often by Chinese women.
      - Chinese women are wearing the qipao less often.

   2. 131 shops have been opened by Zara since 2006.
      - Since 2006, Zara has opened 131 shops.

   3. The recession has affected Chinese shopping habits.
      - Chinese shopping habits have been affected by the recession.

   4. Designer clothes shops attract Chinese customers.
      - Chinese customers are being attracted by designer clothes shops.

4. **Find synonyms in the text for the following words.**

   1. quickly (paragraph A) __________
   2. growing (paragraph B) __________
   3. worried (paragraph C) __________
   4. concentrate (paragraph D) __________

**Writing**

5. **Write two short texts on the following topics. Write about 100 words for each.**

   1. A current fashion trend in your country.
   2. Your favourite clothes shop and why you like it.
Unit 4 Exam practice

Listening

1 Check you know the meaning of the words in the list.
   straightened = unique = pointed = aliens

2 4.12 Read questions 1–8. Then listen to the radio interview and choose the correct answers.

   1 The presenter says that the radio programme is about:
      A clothes and shoes.
      B body piercings.
      C trends in body modification.
      D Japanese fashions.

   2 Yaeba teeth are:
      A extra teeth.
      B teeth that are straighter than normal.
      C popular with women who have too many teeth.
      D thin covers put on some teeth to make them appear longer.

   3 Yaeba teeth are popular with:
      A children who've got crooked teeth.
      B teenagers who want to look older.
      C women who prefer straighter teeth.
      D women and teenage girls who want to look younger.

   4 Ear pointing:
      A can only be done in one way.
      B can be done in many different ways.
      C is performed on people who have lost the top part of their ear.
      D is banned in Arizona.

   5 Ear pointing is most popular among:
      A body modification artists.
      B people who want to look like aliens or science fiction characters.
      C people who want to look more normal.
      D people in Arizona.

   6 Eyeball jewellery:
      A first started in 2002.
      B involves a large piece of metal being placed in the eye.
      C is temporary and can be easily removed.
      D is banned in the Netherlands.

   7 Libby says that:
      A eyeball jewellery is completely safe.
      B eyeball jewellery is very dangerous.
      C nobody knows whether eyeball jewellery is safe.
      D eyeball jewellery is only safe in the Netherlands.

   8 At the end of the programme, the presenter says he will:
      A try yaeba teeth.
      B try eyeball jewellery.
      C try ear pointing.
      D avoid all forms of body modification.

Speaking

1 Look at the photo and answer the questions.

   1 Describe what you can see in the photo.

   2 Who would buy these clothes? How do they relate to high-street fashion?

   2 With a partner, prepare and practise a role-play in which you are both deciding what to wear to a fancy-dress party. Think about the theme of the fancy-dress party and plan the costume ideas before you begin your discussion. Use the language of persuasion below.

   Language of persuasion
   ■ What do you think about ... ?
   ■ Why don’t we ... ?
   ■ That’s a good idea, but what about ... ?
   ■ How about ... ?
   ■ I’m not sure about that. I would prefer to ...
   ■ That would be great. We could also ...

   3 Research a fashion designer that you like, and prepare a presentation on his or her work. Describe the materials the fashion designer uses and what inspires him or her. Give reasons for why you like this particular designer. Use the grammar and vocabulary you have practised in unit 4.