



Design and Make Products in an Ethical Way

KS4 DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

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What Does Ethical Design Mean?

When we talk about **ethical design**, we mean making products in a way that's fair, honest, and kind to people and the environment. Instead of just thinking about making things cheap and quick, ethical designers ask important questions: Who made this? Were they paid fairly? Will this hurt the planet? Can it be recycled?

Ethical design is about making choices that help everyone, not just making the most money possible.

Think of it like cooking a meal for your family. You could use cheap ingredients and shortcuts, or you could choose healthy, fairly-traded ingredients and cook with care. Both make a meal, but one shows you care about who eats it.

Thinking About Workers and Communities

One of the biggest parts of **ethical manufacturing** is making sure the people who make products are treated well. This means:

Fair wages: Workers should earn enough money to live comfortably. **Safe conditions:** Factories should be clean, safe places without dangerous machinery or long hours. **No child labour:** Children should be in school, not working in factories.

Many big clothing and electronics companies have faced criticism because their factories paid workers very little or had unsafe conditions. Ethical companies now publish reports showing where things are made and how workers are treated.

Think of it like your school hiring a cleaner. It would be wrong to pay them barely anything or make them work in dangerous conditions. Workers deserve respect and fair treatment, just like anyone else.

Protecting Our Planet

Ethical design also means thinking about the environment. Designers should:

Use sustainable materials: Choose materials that won't run out, like recycled plastic or responsibly-grown wood. **Reduce waste:** Design products that last longer so fewer things end up in landfills. **Lower carbon footprint:** Cut down on pollution from making, shipping, and using products. **Plan for recycling:** Make products easy to take apart and recycle when they're old.

For example, some phone companies now design phones that are easy to repair, so you don't have to buy a new one as soon. Others use recycled materials in their packaging instead of new plastic.

How You Can Support Ethical Design

You don't have to be a designer to help. Ask questions about the products you buy: Where was it made? What's it made from? Will it last? Can it be recycled? Choose companies that are honest about their practices. Support **fair trade** products—these guarantee that workers were paid fairly.

When you make ethical choices, you're voting with your money and saying that you care about people and the planet. That's powerful!