NEWS LESSON

The Company Keeping Old Skills Alive



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Can clothes tell a story without using words?
2. What makes you notice a new designer?
3. Would knowing who made an outfit change how you saw it?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**pattern**	☐	A	when an army enters another country to take control
2	**craftspeople**	☐	B	something very nice and expensive that you do not really need
3	**embroidery**	☐	C	plates, cups and pots made from baked clay
4	**weaving**	☐	D	a room or building where people make things
5	**workshop**	☐	E	making cloth by crossing threads over and under each other
6	**invasion**	☐	F	pictures or patterns sewn onto cloth with thread
7	**luxury**	☐	G	a design of lines, shapes or colours that repeats
8	**ceramics**	☐	H	people who make beautiful things with their hands

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

GUNIA Project in Kyiv works with more than 150 craftspeople. Their weaving, glass and embroidery now appear on modern plates and clothes.

1 A plate can be much more than a plate. It can show a flower, an old pattern or a picture that people in a country have used for hundreds of years. In Ukraine, some designers are using everyday objects to help keep their culture alive.

2 One example is GUNIA Project, a design company based in Kyiv. It makes clothes, jewellery, candles, plates and other objects. Take one of its plates: the pattern may come from traditional Ukrainian art, but the plate is made for a modern home. The company does not simply copy old objects. It works with artists to create new pieces that fit modern homes and lives, so a very old idea can turn up in a very new form.

3 Some skills are very difficult to pick up. Glassblowing, weaving, embroidery and making ceramics can take years of practice, and they are usually handed down from older workers to younger ones. GUNIA says it works with more than 150 craftspeople across Ukraine. Buying handmade products can help these workers carry on using and teaching their skills.

4 Since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, protecting Ukrainian culture has become especially important. War can damage museums, destroy buildings and force families to leave their homes. It can also make it much harder for small workshops to find materials or customers. Artists may have to move to a safer part of the country, far from the workshop where they trained. If a workshop closes, the skills inside it may slowly die out.

5 Not everyone can afford expensive handmade products, and a fashion brand cannot protect a whole country's history on its own. Ukraine has many regions and many crafts, so one company cannot speak for all of them. Some people also ask who really benefits when old traditions are sold as luxury goods. But a successful design company can introduce younger buyers to traditions they might otherwise never notice. A pattern that once appeared on a traditional coat might now show up on a modern cushion or cup.

6 Culture is not only something we find in museums or history books. It can be part of what we wear, use and give as gifts. Sometimes the most ordinary objects help people remember who they are.

Sources: Financial Times. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. GUNIA says it works with more than 150 craftspeople. T F NG
2. The company makes exact copies of museum objects. T F NG
3. The company exports most of its products to Europe. T F NG
4. GUNIA Project is based in Kyiv. T F NG
5. Glassblowing is a skill that most people can learn quickly. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

afford	damage	decorate	introduce	notice	protect	repair

1. A strong storm can _____ old buildings, and the repairs cost a lot.
2. Many students cannot _____ a new phone every year.
3. A teacher can _____ a new idea with a short story.
4. Most people do not _____ the small details on a plain cup.
5. Wearing a hat will _____ you from the sun.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. It _____ clothes, jewellery, candles and plates. (MAKE)
2. Yesterday, a young designer _____ her first plate at the market. (SELL)
3. Since 2022, protecting Ukrainian culture _____ especially important. (BECOME)
4. Artists may have _____ to a safer part of the country. (MOVE)
5. Buying handmade products can help workers carry on _____ their skills. (USE)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Some words go together naturally. Learn the pair, not just one word.

carry	do	hold	make	pay	play	take

1. It can _____ many years to learn glassblowing.
2. Young buyers often _____ attention to the pattern on a plate.
3. Many small workshops _____ a profit by selling cups and cushions.
4. A brand can _____ an important part in keeping a culture alive.
5. Small workshops cannot _____ business without customers.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What should a fashion story show beyond a dramatic photograph?
2. How can designers refer to difficult events without turning them into a selling point?
3. What would you want people abroad to notice about creativity where you live?

9 Role-play: is a handmade plate worth the price?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the shop owner

You sell handmade plates with traditional patterns. Each plate costs 80 pounds. Explain why it costs so much and who makes it. You can lower the price a little, but only if the customer asks a good question.

Student B · the customer

You like a handmade plate with a traditional pattern, but it's very expensive. Ask who makes it and where the money goes. Decide if you will buy it, buy a cheaper one, or leave.

Useful phrases

I'd love to buy it, but it's a bit expensive.

Who actually makes these plates?

That's what makes it special.

Where does the money go?

I can't lower the price much, but I'll add a free cup.

We're not rich, so could we meet in the middle?

Afterwards, tell the class: did the customer buy the plate, and was the price fair?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 G · 2 H · 3 F · 4 E · 5 D · 6 A · 7 B · 8 C

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 damage · 2 afford · 3 introduce · 4 notice · 5 protect

6 Verb forms

1 makes · 2 sold · 3 has become · 4 to move · 5 using

7 Language focus

1 take · 2 pay · 3 make · 4 play · 5 do

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