



FARMING FORTNIGHT

 A LEAF Education Initiative
LEAF Education



Notes For Primary Teachers

The Wonders of Wool
#WoollyWednesday



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Introduction

The aim of this session is to enable students to understand:

- Where wool comes from and why sheep grow wool;
- Wool's environmental credentials;
- Wool's useful qualities for designers and consumers;
- Useful information about sheep;
- Some fun facts about sheep

You could use the PowerPoint as a stand-alone resource and session or use it as a basis for further activities.

For further classroom resources, inspiration, and information on using food, farming and the countryside within education:

- [Manufacturing | Wool Products | British Wool](#) (Brilliant source for more in-depth information on wool and the wool industry.)
- <https://leafuk.org/education/leaf-education>
- [Home | Countryside Classroom](#)
- www.whyfarmingmatters.co.uk
- www.foodafactoflife.org.uk
- <https://leafuk.org/farmertime/home>
- Contact your local LEAF Regional Education Consultant (education@leafuk.org) and organise for your pupils to experience sheep farming themselves by visiting a local farm.

Introduction The introduction informs children of the day's topic: wool.

Wonderful Wool: Where does it come from? This section invites students to think about which animals provide us with wool, why they grow wool, and how we get it. Explain that wool is grown by sheep, goats (cashmere and mohair), llamas, camels and angora rabbits. It protects the animals from the harsh weather in winter, making them incredibly hardy animals suitable for grazing high on the hills in the depth of winter. We get the wool from the animal by giving it a haircut, and we call this haircut shearing. There is a short clip of shearing embedded in the video and lastly, a link to a YouTube video which demonstrates the problem if sheep are not shorn.



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Introduction

Wool: What makes it so wonderful? This part of the presentation provides students with information on the benefits of using wool as a material.

A simple diagram of wool fibre follows. This could be useful to show how the structure enables a degree of flexibility. Students could then compare to human hair fibres and/or artificial fibres to compare. Are there similar qualities? What are the differences? How might these differences comparatively affect the material's qualities?

Food for thought: How can we encourage more people to wear and to use wool? Invite students to consider the question. How might they, as young consumers and designers/ future designers use wool? Could they design a poster or campaign for wool?

Sheep: Fun Facts This section simply provides some 'fun facts' for students about sheep and their place as domesticated animals through history.

Sheep Trivia The next slide has a series of answers. Students need to guess the question asked.

Additional Activities

For additional activities, search 'wool' in Countryside Classroom to find a whole host of activities from science to art, such as weaving and felting.

Or you could try the experiment to test the thermal properties of wool against some other common materials. Ask students: Is wool a good insulator? How could you test how good wool is at keeping things warm? What other things could you test it against? How do you make it a fair test? Can the pupils come up with a way of testing the insulating properties of wool? Can the pupils make predictions? Suggested method; wrap 4 beakers in different materials (wool, paper, bubble wrap, foil). Put the same amount of hot water in each beaker. After 5 minutes and 10 minutes measure the temperature of the water with thermometers. Record and discuss the findings



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Try '**A Year in the Life of a Sheep**'. Go through the resource with the pupils
<https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1195>

- What is a female sheep called? Ewe
- What is a male sheep called? Ram
- When does mating take place? October / November
- What is a raddle? A paint marker that the ram wears so the shepherd knows which ewes have been mated
- How long are the ewes pregnant for? 145 days
- Why are the sheep sheared? Fleece and welfare
- What do we use the fleece for? Clothing, insulation, carpets
- Why are the ewes scanned? So the shepherd knows how many lambs the ewe is expecting and how much feed to give the ewe
- When are lambs born? December through to Spring

Or if you just want a bit of fun, give the sheep dog game a go!

<https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1196>

