



Literacy



Art

SWEATER WEATHER WEAVING

Grade Level

3-6

Length of Lesson

60 minutes

Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to demonstrate their ability to use a fiber material to “weave” a product.

Materials Needed

- Various colors of yarn (cut into 18 inch pieces)
- Tape
- Scissors

Standards

Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy:
RL.3.2-3; RI.4.4-5;
SL.5.1

Illinois Visual Arts

VA:Cr1.2.3; Cr1.1.4;
Cn10.1.4; Pr4.1.5

Lesson Summary

This lesson is a fun, hands-on, individual activity that provides students with an understanding of how wool from sheep, and other fibers, are used to create the clothes we wear.

Suggested Sequence of Events:

1. Set Up: Cut the various colors of yarn to pieces that are 18 inches long. Each student will need three colors of their choice.
2. Read “[Charlie Needs a Cloak](#)” by Tomie dePaola to capture student interest.
3. Read through AITC Sheep Reader to learn about sheep breeds and uses, available on our website.
4. Complete the activity following the procedures:
 - Let students pick yarn colors of their choice.
 - Have them line up the ends of one side and tie all three pieces of yarn together in a knot. Make sure there is 1/2-1 inch extra above the knot. (This will be used to tie the ends together to form a bracelet when they are finished)
 - Next, have them tape the yarn to their table. The tape should go above the knot, securing the extra yarn above the knot to the table.
 - Now, students will braid their yarn pieces into a bracelet! Have them demonstrate a basic braid, or for students with more braiding experience, have them use their preferred technique.
 - Have them continue their braid until the bracelet is at the desired length.
 - Once they have measured the length, by carefully testing around their wrist, have them tie a knot to secure the braid.
 - Have them place their bracelet around their wrist and use the extra yarn on both sides to tie a knot, securing their bracelet on their wrist.
 - Tell them to leave some slack so that the bracelet isn’t too tight.
 - Have them help each other to tie the bracelets.
5. Whole class discussion and reflection of activity. Pair students together and have them share their bracelets with each other! Have them share the significance of raising animals for fibers. Have them create a list of everything they can think of that we use fibers and various types of weaving for and then share as a class, writing their ideas on the board.

TEACHER RESOURCES

Extension Ideas:

- Have students create other types of braids if they know how. Students could even teach each other various types of braiding and/or knot tying.
- Watch a video of the process of clothes production starting from shearing a sheep, cleaning and combing the wool, to finally the making of the clothes.
 - How does the wool get from the farmers to the production plant?
 - Have students define the following terms: carded, drafting, homespun, lanolin, loom, plying, shearing, shed stick, warp, weft.
 - Have students demonstrate their understanding of wool production process by creating a timeline, drawing a cartoon or comic strip, creating a short video or skit, or writing a fictional story, making sure to include those defined terms from above and adding any more terms you come across.
- Watch a video from a farmer discussing what it takes to raise sheep.
- STEM: Have students use a wool [spinning kit](#) to weave their own textile after creating a small loom. The spinning kits can be found at <https://agclassroomstore.com/wool-spinning/>
 - Scientific Inquiry: Take this a step further and have students dye their wool. What products (natural or manmade) are better for dyeing wool? Cranberries? Beets? Smashed blueberries? Kool-aid? Have them make predictions and then test their chosen variables.
- Read "[Homespun Sarah](#)" by Verla Kay and discuss how many people in colonial times raised their own sheep to make their own clothes.
 - Discuss how wool played an important role in colonial America before the Revolutionary War.
 - What is the Wool Act of 1699 and why did the British Parliament issue this upon the colonists? *Why* do you think the colonists protested? *How* did they protest? (Colonists refused to purchase or wear any textiles imported from Great Britain and instead chose to raise sheep and make their own clothes; this became a patriotic act that symbolized their devotion to American independence and freedom.)
- What plants/animals do we get other fibers from?
 - Have students examine fibers under a hand lens.
 - Compare and contrast wool fibers to other fibers like cotton, cashmere, silk, synthetic, and various plant fibers used to make common products like rope and baskets, for example.
 - What are the differences in texture? Fiber size? Color? Smell?
 - Why are different fibers used for different things?
- Read "[George Washington Carver: His Life and Discoveries with 21 Activities](#)" by Peggy Thomas. Discuss the Civil War era and make connections to agriculture and science.
- Go to agintheclassroom.org to contact your County Literacy Coordinator for free classroom sets of our Ag Mags!