

Textiles in Texas

Pre-Visit Activities

1. Working with all of the students in a group, list the different types of material that make up the clothing they are wearing. Have students decide what the fabrics are made of and then discuss how the clothing is made. Ask how many of them have clothing that is made by hand rather than purchased at the store.
2. Read a book to the class, such as *Bobbin Girl* by Emily Arnold McCully or *Lyddie* by Katherine Paterson, which shows how children were involved in textile production in the past. The students can then write their own stories about life back then.
3. Bring in samples of woven products that we use today or that students can find. Some examples might be rugs, placemats or coverlets. Examine the different items and classify them in as many groups as possible (i.e. tightly woven, loosely woven, by pattern, by type of thread, etc.). Chart the information that is learned about woven materials.
4. Have students create a map showing where cotton is grown worldwide. Compare the geography of those places with the geography of Texas.
5. Vocabulary from the textile program:
 - a. Drop Spindle
 - b. Whorl
 - c. Ginning / Cotton Gin
 - d. Cards
 - e. Fiber
 - f. Cotton Boll
 - g. Wool Fleece
 - h. Rolag
 - i. Dowry
 - j. Spinster
 - k. Skein
 - l. Niddy Noddy
 - m. Spindle
 - n. Heddle
 - o. Treadle
 - p. Shuttle
 - q. Warp
 - r. Weft
 - s. Top
 - t. Batting
 - u. Backing
 - v. Quilt
 - w. Tie
 - x. Quilt Frame

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Post-Visit Activities

1. Have students write a how-to composition about making clothing in pioneer times. Be sure to include all the elements necessary for TAKS writing.
2. Have students investigate the following textile terms, tell what these terms mean in textile production and tell how these terms are used in every day language today.

Heckle	Flaxen-haired	Towheaded	Tow sacking
Shuttle	Table linens	Wool gathering	Fleece
True blue	Dyed in the wool	Black sheep	Shoddy stuff
Spinster	Run of the mill	Tenter hooks	Homespun
Distaff	side of the family		
3. Invite a special guest to come and talk to the class about textiles. Some good choices would be a cotton farmer, fabric shop owner, seamstress, quilter, or parent who sews for their family. Make up a list of questions with the class before the speaker arrives.
4. Bring in examples of many different kinds of threads. There are threads used for sewing, quilting, embroidery and knitting or crocheting. Have the students compare the threads and classify them in groups.
5. The most famous seamstress in history is Betsy Ross, the talented lady who made the first flag. Here in Texas we have two different stories about women who made flags, Sarah Bradley Dodson and Johanna Troutman. Research information about these ladies and the flags they made. The restoration of the flag that inspired Francis Scott Key has been in the news also. Find out about the techniques being used to ensure that the flag (and other textiles) is still around to show future generations.
6. Have students compare percentage of cotton farmers in Texas population today with percentage in early Texas (possible source: Handbook of Texas Online). Have students write a summary explaining why farming cotton was an economic motivation for settlement of Texas.
7. Research Joseph Marie Jacquard and find out what his weaving loom has to do with computers today.