



Lessons for Cotton Campus

Cotton Scavenger Hunt (Grades 4-6)

Objective: Students will learn about the versatility of cotton, which appears in many of the things we wear, use, and eat every day. Students will gain an understanding of how raw materials are transformed through various processes into finished products.

Directions: Begin by asking students to name a few items that are made out of cotton. Students may cite, for example, cotton T-shirts, blue jeans, and cotton balls. Explain that cotton appears in other surprising places, including food, sports equipment, home décor, and more.

Send students [here](#) to learn about the science of cotton and its many uses. Then challenge students to go on a cotton scavenger hunt at home. Encourage them to find and bring in photographs, illustrations, or actual objects from the following list:

1. A piece of sports equipment that uses 150 yards of cotton [baseball]
2. Something that is woven from 75 percent cotton and 25 percent linen [money]
3. A food product that contains cotton [ice cream, mayonnaise, salad dressing, margarine, potato chips, and more]
4. A common household object made of cotton [q-tips, diaper, towel, pillowcase, and more]
5. A piece of clothing or fabric made of cotton [T-shirt, jeans, and more]
6. An invention of Thomas Edison's that originally contained cotton [light bulb]
7. An item made from the linter, or fuzz of the cotton seed [plastics, mattresses, furniture]
8. Something used to decorate a home [wallpaper, curtains]
9. A powerful type of tape used around the home [duct tape]

Students can receive bonus points for finding additional items not on the list.

Have students take turns sharing the items they found. Invite the class to discuss and speculate on how different items from the scavenger hunt are made. For example, what part of the cotton plant do they suppose goes into ice cream? How might cotton fiber be transformed into a baseball, paper money, or a T-shirt?

Divide students into teams and assign each team one item made of cotton. Ask each team to conduct research into their chosen product and learn all about the process of manufacturing it, from seed to factory. Give students a suitable period of time to complete their research, such as one or two class periods. Then have teams return to class and showcase how their chosen product is made. Encourage students to be creative and to try out multimedia in their presentations, if desired. For example, student teams might:

- Perform a short skit called "From Dirt to Shirt"
- Illustrate a timeline that shows the process of making paper money
- Write a song or a poem about "the life of a baseball"
- Design a PowerPoint presentation that explains how ice cream is made with cottonseed oil
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Extension activity:

Have students participate in a Cotton Quiz Show, in which teams test each other on their knowledge of cotton's history and its uses. Direct students [here](#) and challenge them to take turns asking each other the questions in the various quizzes and games.