

# FLEECE AS WHITE AS SNOW?

**SUBJECT:** Reading

**GRADE:** 3-4

**AGRICULTURAL TOPIC:** Sheep

**CONCEPT:** I

## STUDENT SKILL

The student will expand vocabulary through word study, the reading of literature and class discussion.

## LEARNER OBJECTIVE

The students will become familiar with vocabulary words pertaining to the production of sheep.

## LESSON

### A. Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Hand out student worksheets. Review and discuss the meaning of the vocabulary words found at the top of the worksheet. Ask students for general definitions, then share the background material.
2. Direct students to read the information on the worksheet silently or read it together as a class. Then have students underline the vocabulary words found in the reading.
3. Using the background information, discuss the meaning of the wool symbol. Have students complete the question at the bottom of the student worksheet.
4. Ask individual class members to use their own words to repeat what they have learned about sheep, using as many of the vocabulary words as possible.

### B. Background

#### Vocabulary

***bale** – a large bundle of goods, closely pressed and bound together.*

***breeds** – a race or variety of animals similar in most characteristics*

***by-products** – Something produced in addition to the main product of a raw material.*

***Dorset** – an English breed of sheep that may have large horns or polled horns, close-textured fleece and wool of medium length.*

***ewe** – a female or mother sheep*

***fleece** – the wool coat worn by sheep.*

***flock** – a group of sheep.*

***gland** - an organ for secreting a substance to be used in or eliminated from the body.*

***Hampshire** – a breed of sheep which are large, thick-muscled and hornless.*

***lamb** – a young sheep, less than one year old, or the meat of a young sheep that is less than one year old.*

***lanolin** – oil that is in the fleece of sheep.*

***polled** – to cut off or cut short the horns of an animal.*

***ram** – a male or father sheep.*

***shearing** – cutting off the fleece of the sheep..***stearin** – a white solid found in many animal and vegetable fats.

***Suffolk** – a hornless English breed of sheep, producing excellent meat.*

***wool** – the hair of sheep that is cut off and made into cloth.*

***yarn** – spun wool that may be used in weaving, in knitting and in the manufacture of thread.*

*Oklahoma sheep growers sheared 118,000 sheep in 1991. From the fleece of these sheep, manufacturers produced about 780,000 pounds of wool. Wool can also be made from the hair or fur of goats, rabbits, llamas*

colors and textures, depending on which animal produced the fleece. To help consumers and spinners identify pure wool, the wool industry designed a trademark symbol. The wool symbol can only be used on products made from pure new wool. The wool symbol is used and recognized all over the world.

### **C. Resources**

#### **Books**

Carrier, Roch, *Hockey Sweater*, Tundra, 1984.

DePaola, Tomie, *Charlie Needs a Cloak*, Simon and Schuster, 1982.

Dixon, Annabelle, *Wool, Threads Series*, Garrett, 1990.

Emerson, Kathy, *Julia's Mending*, Avon, 1990.

Macaulay, David, *Baaa!*, Houghton Mifflin, 1985.

Mithutsch, Ali, *From Sheep to Scarf*, Carolrhoda, 1981.

### **D. Evaluation**

Were the students able to identify and underline the sheep-related vocabulary words in the reading?

### **E. Related activities**

1. Designate a "wool" day. Encourage students to wear something made of wool to school.
2. Invite a sheep producer to the classroom to explain sheep and wool production.
3. Invite a wool spinner to class to demonstrate spinning wool with a spinning wheel.
4. Acquire enough clean, combed wool to provide each student with a handful. Then show students how they can spin their own wool yarn, using only their fingers. Hold a clean piece of wool in your left hand. Pull out a strip of the wool about one inch wide and thin enough so you can see through the fibers. Roll the strip of wool between your thumb and index finger. Roll the strip only in one direction. Never roll it back and forth. Keep rolling the strip of wool until the fibers wind around each other and form a firm thread of yarn. Wind the yarn around the first two fingers of your right hand. Keep drawing out strips of wool, twisting them tight; then wind the yarn on your fingers. In no time there will be a small ball of "homespun" yarn.
5. Ask students to look for the wool symbol at home, and report where they found them and how many.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Fleece as White as Snow?

Read the story, and underline the **18** vocabulary words. Some words may appear more than once. Only underline that one that appears **first**.

Vocabulary Words					
ewe	wool	ram	Suffolk	flock	bales
breeds	fleece	Hampshire	lambs	shearing	lanolin
glands	yarns	Dorset	stearin	by-product	wool

## Mary's Pet

For thousands of years people have depended on sheep to provide them with milk, meat and clothing. Columbus was the first to bring sheep to the New World. Spanish settlers brought large flocks of sheep when they first made their homes in what is now our state of New Mexico.

A female sheep is called a ewe. The male is called a ram. Baby sheep are called lambs. Sheep grow fluffy wool all over their bodies. This coat is called a fleece. The fleece keeps the sheep warm and dry. Sheep need their hair cut about once a year. This is called shearing. It takes about five minutes to shear a sheep. A good sheep shearer can shear about 150 sheep in a day.

After the fleece is sheared, it is weighed and bundled up in bales. Then it is taken to a factory to be sorted and washed. The Mother Goose rhyme tells us Mary's lamb had "fleece as white as snow," but fleece is never that white. Oil in the fleece causes dirt to cling to the coat. For a lamb to look really clean, it would have to be bathed every day.

The oil in the fleece is called lanolin. Lanolin comes from small oil glands found under the sheep's skin. Lanolin glands are similar to the sweat glands you have in your body. Lanolin is used in makeup and lotions. It can also be used to water-proof shoes. We get many other by-products from sheep—leather, waxes for candles, medicines and stearin, which is used to make chewing gum and candy. The inside of a baseball is made by winding 150 yarns of wool into a tight ball.

There are 35 different breeds of sheep in the United States and about 914 different breeds of sheep in the world. Some of the more popular breeds of sheep are Suffolk, Hampshire and Dorset.

Complete this sentence: The wool symbol means \_\_\_\_\_

The  
Wool  
Symbol



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