

Farm To Market: Cotton

Assessment of Prior Knowledge:

- What is cotton and where does it come from?
- How many things do you use everyday that are made from cotton?
- How is cotton transformed from a puff growing in the field to a t-shirt or a pair of jeans?

Vocabulary:

Square: The bud of the cotton flower

Boll: The rounded seed pod of the cotton plant

Cotton Gin: A series of machines used for separating fibers of cotton from the cotton seeds

Textile: Any material that can be made into yarn or woven into fabric

Pattern: A model or guide for something to be made

Comprehension Questions:

Cotton Plant

1. What stages does the cotton plant go through as it grows?
2. How do farmers know when the cotton is ready to harvest?
3. How is cotton harvested now? How was cotton harvested in the past?

Cotton Gin

1. What does a cotton gin do?
2. How many seeds are in each cotton puff?
3. What are the cotton seeds used for once they are removed?

Fabric

1. How is cotton transformed from an enormous bale to a roll of fabric?

Clothing

1. What is the role of a pattern in the process of making clothes?

Discussion Questions:

1. How is growing cotton similar to growing other crops that you know about? How is it different?
2. What are all the different kinds of machines that help cotton become fabric? Imagine how it must have been before the invention of these machines, when people had to do all the work by hand.

Follow-up Activities:

- On a large piece of paper, have students create a "cotton timeline," illustrating the various processes that cotton goes through on its way from the farm to the market. Students can do individual illustrations and explanation for growing, harvesting, baling, ginning, carding, spinning, weaving, and sewing.
- Students can make a collage of all the products in their lives that are made of cotton. They can include the variety of products discussed in the program, and can also research additional cotton products. Who can come up with the most products that include cotton in some form or another? Perhaps students can also come up with their own, new uses for cotton.
- Research the invention of the cotton gin and investigate how this new invention impacted not only the cotton industry, but the economy of the United States, at the time.



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