

## Cotton



### Year 4 and up

Cotton has great potential as project work in Years 4 and above, though it is not a topic that is often used. And it is worth learning about, because millions of people are involved in growing cotton and in making clothes from cotton. It is an important economic factor on the world market, and a major export in many English-speaking countries, including India, the USA and Zimbabwe. From the pupils' perspective, we are surrounded by cotton in our daily lives, from our T-shirts to the curtains. What's more, many children are at this very moment picking cotton, or sewing clothes that we perhaps will wear later this year.

There are all sorts of possibilities for meeting *Kunnskapsløftet's* competence aims in the various subjects using cotton as the topic for a project. In natural science pupils are to learn about the life cycle of some plants. Social studies should stimulate knowledge about cultural diversity in the world. Art and craft requires children to make simple objects in various materials. In PE pupils are to explore and play with various rhythms and express them through movement. **Norwegian** offers many possibilities for talking about cotton, as well as writing and reading about cotton. Maths offers possibilities such as weighing clothes made of different materials, and then putting those clothes in water, and finding out how much water they hold, both in volume and weight.

## How to work with 'cotton' in English

Here are some activities involving English. You will notice that all of the activities involve learning something new about cotton, as well as something new about the English language.

### Wearing cotton

Draw yourself today .

Label everything made of cotton.

Here are some words to help you:

socks	tights	trousers	pants	vest
T-shirt	jumper	skirt	dress	jacket

### Cotton in my bedroom

Draw your bedroom

Label everything made of cotton.

Here are some words to help you:

curtain	clothes	towel
pillow case	duvet cover	sheet

These activities give children the chance to learn everyday words in a meaningful context. The pupils have to find out whether the clothes they are wearing are made of cotton or not. They should make a careful drawing that perhaps could go on the classroom wall – decorative, encouraging and reinforcing the language all at the same time!

### Guessing game

One of the competence aims in the plan for English for Year 4 is that pupils should be able to read and listen well enough to understand the gist of simple texts. So how can one find out what a text means? We have several strategies, whether we are aware of them or not.

Guessing what we are likely to hear or read is an important skill in real-life communication. It is a strategy that should be encouraged and practised. Guessing can also be fun, and has a strong element of play. The following guessing activity gives pupils training in working out the most probable answer. When children work with a partner they also have the chance to

talk – in English and Norwegian – about which answer to pick. Afterwards pupils can discuss what else they want to find out about cotton.

1. How do you say 'bomull' in English? *chicken /carrot /cotton*
2. Where does cotton come from *an animal /a bush /a tree*
3. Which is worth most per kilo? *gold /sugar /cotton*
4. What colour is the cotton seed that clothes are made from? *white /grey /black*
5. Where does cotton grow? *Norway /Asia, America and Africa /England*

### Pick a bale of cotton

In the music plan, one of the competence aims at the end of Year 4 is that pupils should be able to recognise folk music from other cultures. So why not try this simple, rhythmic and easy-to-learn spiritual? The text, combined with music and movement, gives pupils a chance to imagine what it might be like to pick cotton 'all day long'.

Rhythmically

You got - ta jump down, turn a-round, pick a bale of cot-ton; Got - ta  
Me an' my wife can pick a bale of cot-ton;

jump down turn a round, Pick a bale a day. Oh, Lor - dy,  
Me an' my wife can pick a bale a day.

pick a bale of cot-ton; Oh, Lor - dy, pick a bale a day!

(x= hand-clapping on the second and the fourth beats throughout the song)