

Wool in Schools

Activity sheet



Science: Match test

Is it really wool? Let's test different samples of fabric to see if they are actually wool.

Please make sure you have a teacher or parent to help you do this test.

What do you need to do?

1. Get your teacher or a parent to help you
2. Cut a selection of small pieces of fabric, about 5cm square each
3. Fill a glass bowl with water and take it outside onto a clear area
4. Using stainless steel cooking tongs, hold the fabric over the bowl of water
5. Using a match, light the fabric and see if it burns
6. Drop the fabric into the bowl of water to extinguish at the end of the test
7. You can also watch [this video](#) which shows how lots of different materials burn!

What happened?

Did the fabric burn? Did it burn quickly or slowly? Was it difficult to keep burning?

How do you tell if it is really wool?

- Wool will sometimes catch fire but it burns slowly (synthetics burn really fast!)
- Wool often stops burning, it is hard to keep going (synthetics keep burning and don't go out.)
- When burnt, wool fabric will look scorched and will smell like burning hair (synthetics are a goopy mess and smell like plastic.)

Why does wool do this?

In the middle of each strand of wool, there is a special part called the "matrix" which is fire resistant. This means wool doesn't burn easily. It also makes wool carpet, curtains and blankets much safer to have in your house.

