

# Sheep Crossing

Sheep and Wool Lesson Plan  
(based on the video *Sheep Crossing*)

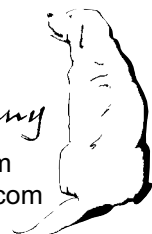
Packet includes:

1. Lesson Plan
2. Sheep Facts
3. Wool Facts
4. Fact Fill-in Activity Sheet
5. Resource page
  - a. Related Reading
  - b. Links to sites for information and fun
  - c. Resources for wool and equipment
6. *Maryland Ag-in-the-Classroom Educational Resource*



*The Great White Dog Picture Company*

[www.sheepvideo.com](http://www.sheepvideo.com)  
[www.greatwhitedog.com](http://www.greatwhitedog.com)



## Sheep Crossing Lesson Plan



**Subject:** Sheep and Wool (Animal Science)  
This can be used as a single lesson or as the beginning of a unit that could include wool processing and weaving.

**Grade Level:** Grades 1 to 4

**Purpose:** To acquaint students with sheep and the process of obtaining wool and turning the fleece into yarn.

**Objective:** Students will understand where wool comes from and the process of turning wool into yarn and clothing.

**Materials:**

1. *Sheep Crossing* video
2. Sheep fact sheet
3. Wool fact sheet
4. Fun Fact Fill-in sheet

Optional Materials (see resource sheet)

1. Raw wool
2. Wool Carding Brushes
3. Drop Spindle
4. Beginner Loom

**Procedures:**

1. When introducing the video, suggest to students they watch for the following things:
  - a. What are the four steps for making wool into a shawl?
  - b. In what season of the year are most sheep born?
  - c. How are sheepdogs used?
2. Show the video *Sheep Crossing*
3. Review with students the answers to the questions listed above.
4. Discussion questions:
  - a. What other kinds of clothing might be made of wool?
  - b. Did all the sheep in the video look the same? What made them look different? (See the Sheep Breeds handout in the *Maryland Ag-in-the-Classroom Educational Resource*)



- c. What was the Llama's job in the video?
  - d. What kinds of commands did the Sheepdogs understand?
5. Pass out Sheep and Wool fact sheets. Depending on age group, ask students to study these independently or read them aloud to the group.
  6. Hand out the Fact Fill-in sheets and ask students to answer the questions as a group activity or use it for a homework assignment.

### **Optional Activities:**

#### **Spinning Wool**

Using the *Maryland Ag-in-the-Classroom Educational Resource* materials, demonstrate how to twist the wool into yarn. Longer strands of yarn can be made by using the following technique:

From a coathanger cut a piece about 12 inches long. With pliers, make a hook on one end by turning about one-half inch of the hanger to form a u-shape. This can be used to twist carded wool. Attach a long strand of wool to the wire by looping it over the hook and twist it back on itself to hold it on the hook. Hold the wool in the left hand and twirl the wire by running between your hand and thigh. When the yarn is twisted, move your right hand up and pinch the yarn. Rotate the wire again to twist more yarn, move your right hand up the strand of untwisted wool and pinch. Continue until you have a piece of twisted yarn.

*Carded wool or roving can be obtained from the Woolery <http://www.woolery.com/fibers.html>. They also have a variety of drop spindles at <http://www.woolery.com/dropspinf.html>*



### **Sheep Stories**

Your students can find 9 real sheep stories on the web at <http://www.sheepstories.com>. After reading these stories or the story *Mary Had a Little Lamb* from in the *Maryland Ag-in-the-Classroom Educational Resource* material, children can write or tell a story about a special animal they know or one they have observed.

### **Sheep Breed Research (suggested for grades 3 or 4)**

Students can research the history and breeds of sheep throughout the world. This can be used as a web research project or as as the basis for a geography lesson.

A website that offers a brief history, description and photos of a number of breeds is:

<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/sheep>

Websites offering a look at Bighorn Sheep are <http://www.bighorn.org> and

<http://desertusa.com/big.html>

### **Weaving Projects**

If your students would like to try weaving, there is an instruction sheet in the *Maryland Ag-in-the-Classroom Educational Resource* material giving directions for constructing a simple loom.

If you would like a very simple way to demonstrate the weaving process there is a paper weaving project at <http://www.sheepusa.org/kids/weave.html>

## Sheep Fact Sheet



Sheep are **grazing animals** with a thick coat of hair on their bodies.

The hair on a sheep's body is called **wool**. All the wool on a sheep is called a **fleece**.

A male sheep is called a **RAM**. A female sheep is called a **EWE**. Sheep who are less than a year old are called **LAMBS**.

They are gregarious, meaning they **flock together in a group**. A group of sheep is called a **flock**.

Sheep **have only bottom teeth**. They have no upper teeth, just a thick pad on their upper jaw.

Sheep are defenseless. The natural **enemies** of sheep are coyotes, mountain lions and domestic dogs.

Animals used to guard sheep are **Sheepdogs, llamas or donkeys**.

Sheep give birth in the **spring** and will have one or two lambs at a time.

The wool is **sheared** from the sheep once a year in the **spring**. If sheep are not shorn, they can suffer overheating on hot summer days.

A sheep shearer will try to **shear** all the wool, or fleece, from a sheep in **one big piece** because it is easier to handle.

A fleece from a grown sheep weighs about **8 pounds**.

The state with the greatest number of sheep in the United States is **Texas**.

## Wool Fact Sheet



Wool is **comfortable** to wear **year round**.

Wool can absorb up to 30 percent of its weight in moisture without feeling damp.

By absorbing perspiration, wool **helps the body's own cooling system** and helps keep the skin dry.

Wool clothing is **safe** to wear because wool is **flame-resistant**. This means it will not catch on fire.

Different breeds of sheep grow different kinds of wool: **fine, medium and course wool**.

Fine wool is used for clothing, medium wool for blankets and coarse for rugs and carpet.

Wool is also used to make **baseballs** and **tennis balls**.

It takes **150 yards** of tightly-wound wool to make a baseball.

Because wool is absorbent it is used to **clean up oil spills**.

**Scouring** means to clean the wool to remove dirt, oil and grass.

**Carding** wool is the process of combing wool to straighten the fibers so they run parallel to each other so it can be spun.

## Fill-in Facts



*Directions: Fill in the blank or circle the correct answer.*

1. A male sheep is called a \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. A female sheep is called a \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. All the wool on a sheep is called a \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. A baseball contains how many yards of twisted wool? *Circle the correct answer.*  
50 yards      3 yards      150 yards
5. Most sheep are born in the \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. Sheep only have teeth on their \_\_\_\_\_ jaw.
7. Carding wool mean which of the following? *Circle the correct answer.*  
cutting      combing      coloring
8. Wool clothing is safe because it is what? *Circle the correct answer.*  
absorbent      comfortable      flame-resistant
9. Wool is used to clean which of the following? *Circle the correct answer.*  
mud      oil-spills      spilled milk
10. Name three things you can make from wool? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. A group of sheep is called a \_\_\_\_\_ .
12. Name one animal used to guard sheep. \_\_\_\_\_

## Sheep and Wool Resources



### Websites

<http://www.sheepusa.org/kids/learnwool.shtml>

A great site for kids with facts and activities about wool including downloadable pictures to color.

<http://www.kiddyhouse.com/farm/sheep>

A kid site with information on sheep and breeds.

<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/sheep>

A site for older students with extensive information on sheep breeds.

<http://www.sheepgame.co.uk>

A game of sheep herding.

<http://www.sheepales.com>

This site has 9 real stories about sheep and lambs.

<http://www.mylsmb.com>

A site for those students wanting information on raising and showing sheep.

<http://www.ewe.uk.com>

A source for high resolution downloadable pictures of sheep and lambs.

### Bibliography

*The Goat in the Rug* by Charles L. Blood and Martin Link. Illustrated by Nancy Winslow Parker. Simon and Schuster, New York, NY. The story of Geraldine the goat whose owner, a Navajo weaver, uses the goat's wool to spin, dye and weave a rug.

*Charlie Needs a Cloak* by Tomi De Paola. Simon and Schuster, New York, NY. The story of Charlie the shepherd as he cards, spins and weaves a new cloak for himself.

*The Mitten, A Ukrainian Folk Tale* adapted and illustrated by Jan Brett. G. P. Putman's Sons Publishers, New York, NY. The story of a lost mitten that become a warm place for a number woodland animals. Children will love the funny climax.



## Wool Project Supply Sources

<http://www.woolery.com>

A great source for spindles and fiber for spinning projects.

<http://www.harrisvilledesigns.com>

A complete source for wool yarn and simple weaving and felting kits, and simple looms.

<http://www.ewe.uk.com>

A source for high resolution downloadable pictures of sheep and lambs.

<http://www.sheepusa.org/kids/clrsheep.shtml>

A great site for kids with facts and activities about wool including downloadable pictures to color.