The WOOL DYE-it

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Intended Participants:

All age groups

Not all projects are for all ages - some of these procedures include heat or sharp objects

Keep in mind what is appropriate for your students and their abilities

Objective

To educate you, fellow art teachers, in the wonderful world of creating art with wool, we have assembled periodicals, tools, tricks, and techniques that we believe making working with this amazing resource fun, exciting, and different. Most students have never participated in an art experience with wool. Give them that chance!
Why is wool so great?

Wool has a property unlike most fibers; the **scales** on the surface of wool allow it to magically hook to itself like velcro. If it didn’t have this **surface texture**, we wouldn’t be able to **felt** (verb) it. When we **felt**, we use heat, friction, and/or chemicals to hook those scales together to create a fabric called **felt** (noun).
The Mad Hatter- a little history
A True Story...

In 18th and 19th century England, mercury was used in the production of felt, which was used in the manufacturing of hats common of the time. People who worked in these hat factories were exposed daily to trace amounts of the metal, which accumulated within their bodies over time, causing some workers to develop dementia caused by mercury poisoning. Thus the phrase “Mad as a Hatter” became popular as a way to refer to someone who was perceived as insane.

Archaeological evidence shows that far back in history, people discovered the tendency for fibers to mat together when warm and damp, even before they learned how to spin yarn. Some of the earliest evidence of using felt were in Turkey on wall paintings dated 3000 BC, and in a tomb in Siberia from the 5th century BC. Today Mongolian nomads live in felt tents called gers or yurts.
1st Process: Dyeing the Wool:

Materials
- Wool
- Kool-Aid
- Hot water
- Spoon or old paintbrush
- Heat source

Procedure:
- Smell!
- Color mixing!
- Oooh!
Heat water for jars and hot water bath

Assemble a jar with hot water, color choices of Kool-Aid, and wool

Insert jar into hot water bath

When dye has become exhausted, remove jar from hot water bath

Strain water from wool, and allow wool to cool

10 mins 10 mins 10 mins 5 mins 15 mins
Warning: for the remainder of the procedures, you will need to card the wool you have just dyed in order for felting to happen. We like dog brushes or a drum carder for this process. Please proceed to the carding station Immediately.

Okay, now you can Proceed with the regularly scheduled weirdness
2nd Process: Dry felting:

**Materials**
- Wool
- Felting needle
- Sponge or upholstery foam

**Procedure:**
Poke, Poke, Poke, Poke
- Roll wool in a clump with your fingers (5 mins)
- Place wool on the upholstery foam (1 min)
- Begin pushing needle through the wool and into the foam (15 mins)
- Turn the wool periodically to shape (10 mins)
- Use the felt you have made (lifetime)
3rd Process: Wet Felting:

Materials

Wool

warm (as you can stand it) water

soap (dish soap in a pinch, but Murphy’s oil soap is the best)

container, sushi mat, or form to felt around

 Procedure: It’s all about the friction, people.
card wool or start with carded wool

Add friction to hook those scales together

use the felt you have made

5 mins
Apply hot water and soap

1 min

15 mins
turn the wool periodically to shape

10 mins

lifetime

use the felt you have made
4th Process: Machine Felting:

Materials

- Wool
- Washing machine
- Soap (dish soap in a pinch, but Murphy’s oil soap is the best)
- Form to felt around (plastic containers, old CDs, wood, bones, legos etc.)
- Old nylon stocking or net material

Procedure:
Let the washer do the work
card wool or start with carded wool

5 min

wrap wool around form; use multiple batts in different directions

5 min

insert into a nylon stocking and tie closed

5 mins

put stocking in the washer on hottest setting with some Murphy's Oil Soap; cold rinse

35 mins

untie and allow felt to dry. Cut strategically to release form

24 hours
**Vocabulary**

**Card(ing)** - combing wool to make the fibers go in the same direction.

**Dye** - a natural or synthetic substance used to add a color to or change the color of something.

**Exhaust(ed)** - use up (resources or reserves) completely.

**Felt** - wool that has been worked in such a way that its scales have hooked tightly together.

**Friction** - the action of one surface or object rubbing against another.

**Surface texture** - how the outside part of something feels.

**Wool** - the fine soft hair forming the coat of a sheep, goat, or alpaca, especially when shorn and prepared for use in making cloth or yarn.

**Wool Batt** - wool that has been carded.
Resources

Courtney Woolen Mills-Wool
301 E Water St, Appleton, WI 54911
(920) 734-3447

Woodman’s Grocery- Best resource for Kool-Aid(lots of flavors and often on sale!)

The Biography of Wool by Carrie Gleason

Charlie Needs a Cloak by Tomie DePaola

Fibers by Irving and Ruth Adler
ISBN:978-0234771136

Woolbur by Leslie Helakoski
Extra Information

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https://www.pinterest.com/rishaeverson/felting/

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Felting music

Wooly Bully-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZJiGu6Gz8E

Love never Felt so Good-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oG08ukJPtR8

Last time I felt like this-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF4slaNK9aA

You can’t pull the Wool Over my eyes-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lVfvfeS7l4c

Felt Good on my Lips-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lDMh3PSBAk

Joan Jett- Wooly Bully
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YL7LdURzteI

Felt Like Love-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0h0acsEk50

Dyed in the Wool-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqssCc_uBQs