



British Wool LEARNING

Wool Processing Terms

1 What is **shearing**?

Once a year, usually in the warmer months, sheep are gathered for shearing. This means that their thick winter coats of wool are cut - like a hair cut! A specially trained person called a shearer carefully shears one sheep at a time. One sheep can be done in less than two minutes, which means 250 sheep can be done in one day. It does not harm the sheep.



2

What is **raw wool**?

Raw wool is the name we give to wool that has come straight from the sheep's back which still contains grease and dirt.



4

What is an **auction**?

An auction is a sale where people bid to buy something. The Wool Board holds regular auctions throughout the year at its Bradford headquarters.

3

What is **grading**?

Specially trained people look at the wool and feel each coat or fleece with their hands so they can sort them into groups of the same type and quality, ready to be sold at auction.

5

What is **scouring**?

Scouring means washing the wool to remove the grease and dirt.

6

What is **carding**?

Carding gets the tangles out of the wool and helps to clean and pull apart the fibres of the wool.

7

What is **combing**?

Combing wool is a bit like combing your hair. It helps to straighten long fibres and take out the shorter ones.



8

What is **spinning**?

Spinning pulls out the wool fibres and adds a twist to make one long, strong thread. Different types of wool yarns can be made by twisting the wool in different ways. After spinning, yarns can be used in many ways including making cloth.



9

What is **dyeing**?

Dyeing is when dye or colour is added to the wool. Colour can be added at many stages in the wool process.





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The Wool Process

It takes a year for a sheep to grow a complete fleece of wool. When the fleece is grown the method of turning the wool into finished products takes time and special skills and machinery need to be used.



1

Shearing

Cutting the fleece from the sheep



2

Grading

Sorting the wool into types



3

Auction

Buying and selling the wool



4

Scouring

Washing the dirty wool



5

Carding

Taking tangles out of the wool



6

Combing

Making the wool straighter



7

Spinning

Twisting the wool to make strong yarns



8

Weaving

Joining the wool together to make cloth or carpet



9

Dyeing

Making the wool different colours



Wool Facts

FACT: Wool is a natural product

Wool is a **natural** product, this means it comes from nature and is not man-made.



FACT: Wool is renewable

As long as sheep have grass to graze they will grow a new fleece every year. This means wool is a **renewable** material which means it can keep going (is **sustainable**) for future generations.

FACT: Wool is biodegradable

When a wool product is thrown away it can break down to become soil. Many man-made materials do not break down as well or as quickly which means wool is better for the **environment**.