Different Fabrics and When to Use Each One

KS2 DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY Ages 10-12 ⏰ 3 min read

What Are Fabrics?

Fabrics are materials made by weaving or knitting threads together. They're used to make clothes, bags, curtains, and hundreds of other things. But not every fabric is right for every job — designers have to choose carefully!

Think of it like choosing the right tool for a job. You wouldn't use a hammer to cut wood, just like you wouldn't use a thin summer fabric for a winter coat.

Cotton: The Everyday Favourite

Cotton is soft, breathable, and comfortable. It comes from the cotton plant and is perfect for t-shirts, underwear, and summer clothes. Cotton lets your skin breathe, so you don't get too hot. The downside? It wrinkles easily and can shrink if you're not careful when washing it.

Wool: The Warm Choice

Wool comes from sheep and is incredibly warm and insulating. It's brilliant for winter jumpers, coats, and scarves because it traps warm air inside the fibres. Wool is also naturally water-resistant, which means rain rolls off it. However, wool can feel scratchy and it needs special care when washing.

Polyester: The Practical Synthetic

Polyester is a human-made fabric created from plastic. It's durable, doesn't wrinkle easily, and dries quickly after washing. Polyester is cheap to make, so it's used in lots of sportswear and everyday clothes. The problem is that it's not as breathable as natural fabrics, so you might feel sweaty.

Silk: The Luxury Fabric

Silk is produced by silkworms and is the softest, smoothest fabric you can buy. It's used in fancy dresses, ties, and luxury items because it looks beautiful and feels wonderful on skin. The catch? Silk is expensive and needs delicate handling when you wash it.

Linen: The Summer Specialist

Linen comes from the flax plant and is perfect for hot weather. It's even more breathable than cotton and keeps you cool. Linen clothes look casual and relaxed, but linen wrinkles badly — which many people think looks nice and intentional!

Think of it like choosing the right clothes for a specific activity. You wouldn't wear a wool coat to the beach, just like you wouldn't wear a silk dress to play football.

How Designers Choose

When designers create clothes or products, they think about **what the item needs to do**. Will it need to be washed lots? Should it keep you warm or cool? Does it need to last a long time? The answer to these questions helps them pick the right fabric.

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