



### Trivia Facts

- Cotton provides absorbency in towels, yet provides water repellency in tents. It makes a soft, absorbent surgical dressing, yet also makes tough, durable canvas.
- United States cotton production stretches from California to Virginia, and normally covers more than 14 million acres or about 22,000 square miles.
- One 500-pound bale of cotton will produce enough oil to cook nearly 6,000 snack-size bags of potato chips.

### Cotton in History...

- ◇ One of the 1<sup>st</sup> important crops planted by the English settlers in Jamestown, Virginia around 1607 was cotton. This crop would provide settlers with clothes.
- ◇ In 1848 during the California gold rush, Levi Strauss opened a store that made cotton pants out of denim. He used rivets to hold pieces of the pants together and make them sturdy.
- ◇ In 1905, Wilbur and Orville Wright covered the wings of their 1<sup>st</sup> airplane with cotton.
- ◇ During World War II, fine cotton fibers were used to make a smokeless gunpowder.

### Cotton's Favorite States

Cotton is a major source of income in 14 states known as the cotton belt. Ninety-eight percent of cotton grown comes from Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

### The Cotton Plant

The cotton plant is unique in appearance since it forms flower buds called "squares". These buds open into dark yellow or cream colored flowers which turn pink and then dark red. After three days, they wither and fall, leaving green pods which are called cotton "bolls". Inside the boll, which is shaped like a tiny football, moist fibers grow and push out from the newly formed seeds. As the boll ripens, it turns brown. The fibers continue to expand under the warm sun. Finally, they split the boll apart and the fluffy cotton bursts open into 4 or 5 equal sections. These sections are called "locks" and each lock contains 8-10 seeds surrounded by cotton fibers. Ripe bolls look like white candy cotton.

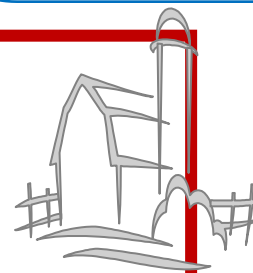


### Cotton, Cotton...Everywhere

While a very important uses for cotton are apparel, sheets, towels, tarpaulins and tents, two thirds of the harvested crop is composed of seeds. These seeds are crushed and separated into three products— oil, meal, and hulls. Cottonseed oil is a common component of many food items such as cooking oil, shortening, and salad dressing. Cottonseed oil is used in snack foods such as crackers, cookies, and chips. The meal and hulls are used as livestock, poultry, and fish feed, and as fertilizer.

### Farm Facts

- Cotton is environmentally friendly. Every part of the cotton plant is used and there is virtually no waste.
- Cotton is a leading cash crop in the U.S.
- Over the years, scientists have adapted the genetic makeup of cotton plants so that the plants are no longer appealing to harmful insects. Farmers now use fewer crop protection substances for cotton production.



"Amazing" cotton is the basis of *the* jeans and t-shirt you wear, the snack foods you eat, and even animal feed. But, there is one more absolutely amazing use for cotton - money! Yes, the paper money we use is not made from the kind of paper we write on which is made from wood pulp. Paper for our money is made from 75% cotton and 25% linen. This combination of these plant fibers makes a paper bill really strong and durable. The fiber from these plants is what prevents money from falling to pieces in the washing machine like regular paper does. **Cotton** a "*miracle of nature*" and an important part of our lives.

### What Do You Remember?



1. How many states make up the Cotton Belt?
2. What do you think is similar about these states?
3. What is a cotton "boll"?
4. What is a "lock"?
5. What three products are made from crushed cotton seeds?
6. How are paper money and cotton related?
7. List at least 10 things you use that are made from cotton?
8. Which of these would be the hardest for you to do without? Why?
9. How has your opinion of the "importance of cotton in my daily life" changed since reading the article? Give details to support your answer.
10. Look carefully at the picture of the t-shirt. Why do you think it was Named a t-shirt?

### Check Out Your t-shirts!

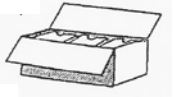
Everyday your t-shirt is pulled from a drawer and worn without a thought of how it was made. Take a minute to check out the sequence of what needs to happen to produce your favorite t-shirt.

**Match** each step with the correct picture **then** number the steps in the correct order.

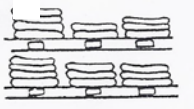
\_\_\_\_\_ Trucks deliver the boxes to retail stores.



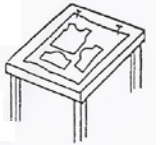
\_\_\_\_\_ A sewer sews the pieces together one shirt at a time and then hems the edges.



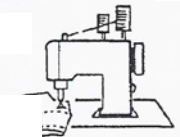
\_\_\_\_\_ The material is folded back and forth to make as many as 96 layers so many t-shirts can be cut out at one time.



\_\_\_\_\_ You, the customer, buy any style and color t-shirt you want.



\_\_\_\_\_ The shirts are packed in boxes to be shipped to stores.



\_\_\_\_\_ A fashion designer creates a pattern for the style and shape of the t-shirt.



\_\_\_\_\_ A cutter uses a vibrating knife to cut the fabric according to the pattern.

\_\_\_\_\_ Store clerks neatly stack the t-shirt on the shelves.

