Fibres

in Fashion

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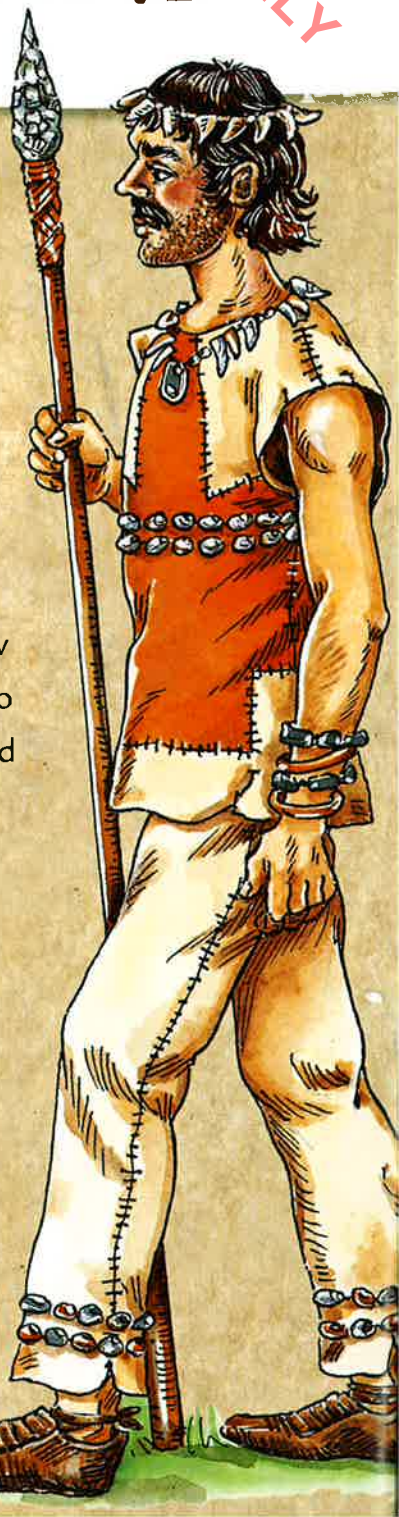
Contents

Chapter 1	Clothes from Fibres	4
Chapter 2	Natural Fibres	6
	Cotton	8
	Wool	12
	Silk	16
	Linen	20
Chapter 3	Synthetic Fibres	22
	How synthetic fibres are made	22
	Synthetic fibres in fashion	24
Chapter 4	Special Purpose Fibres	26
	Fibres for protection	27
Chapter 5	A Smart Future	30
	Glossary	32
	Further reading	33
	Index	33

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Chapter 1

Clothes from Fibres



Most clothes we wear are made from fibres. There are **natural** fibres, and **synthetic** fibres, which are made from chemicals.

Before people discovered natural fibres, they wore clothes made from grasses, leaves, animal furs and skins. They used fringing, shells and beads of ivory and bone to make their clothes more attractive. This was the start of **fashion**.

As civilisations developed, people learned new **technologies** for making clothes. They discovered how to take fibres from some plants and animals, and spin and weave them to make cloth.



This 4 000-year-old plaque from Mesopotamia shows a woman weaving.

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Today, fibres and fashion are huge industries. Factories make vast amounts of cloth from natural fibres to make our clothes. They also make cloth from synthetic fibres. Scientists invented these fibres to provide cheaper cloth for the growing population of the world. They also wanted to make substitutes for some of the more luxurious natural fibres that were expensive to produce.



A textile worker watches as a mechanical loom weaves fabric.

Synthetic fibre technology has become so advanced that there are now fibres for making clothes for special purposes, such as helping athletes to run or swim faster and keeping police officers safe.

New inventions in fibre technology continue to change the fashions we wear.



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Chapter 2

Natural Fibres

Natural fibres come from plants and animals. The most popular natural fibres are cotton, wool, silk and linen. They have been used to make clothes for centuries.



Natural fibres come from these plants and animals.

The fibres must be **processed** before they are turned into clothes. They are washed and put through special machines that separate any tangles. Then the fibres are twisted and spun together to form long, strong **yarn**. In the past, spinning was done by hand on a spinning wheel, but today large machines spin the yarn.



A spinning wheel

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The yarn can be woven or knitted to make cloth, which is also called fabric. Yarn is woven on large machines called looms, or knitted on knitting machines. The machines use the latest computer technology to make thousands of metres of fabric quickly and efficiently.



A large loom in a factory



A woman in Mexico weaving on a traditional loom

Did you know?

In some parts of the world, people still weave fabric on traditional handlooms.

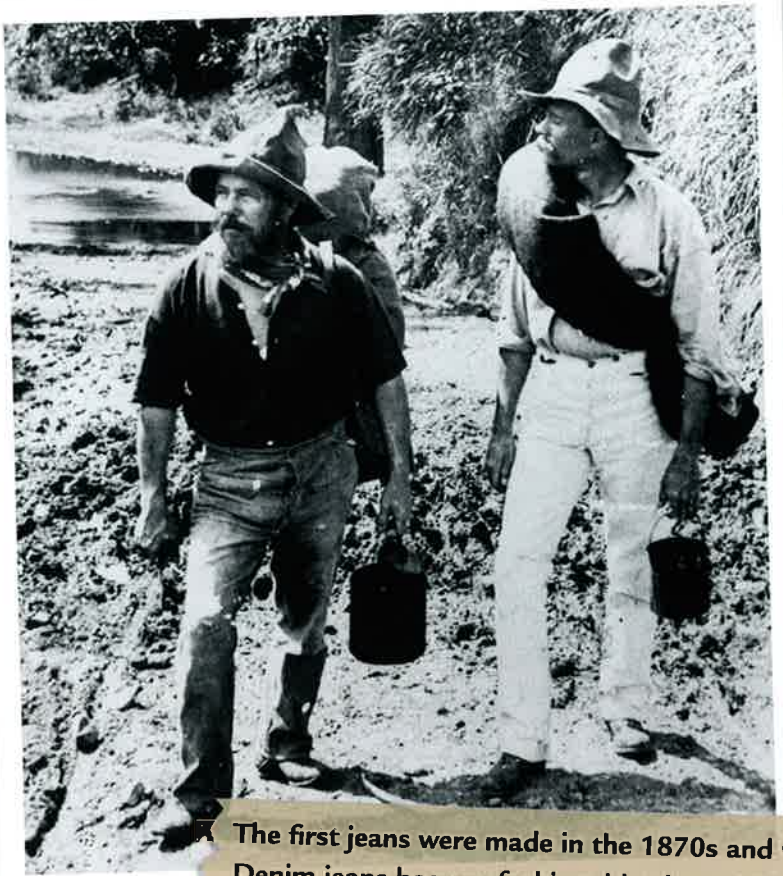
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Cotton



Cotton grows on plants. People like to wear cotton clothing because it 'breathes'. This means it does not hold heat close to the body, so it is cool to wear in hot weather.

Cotton fibres are made into many different fabrics and all sorts of fashion styles. What are you wearing today – jeans, shorts, a t-shirt, or button-front shirt? It is likely that something you are wearing is made of cotton.





Jeans are made from a strong cotton fabric called denim.

The first jeans were made in the 1870s and were hard-wearing pants for workers. Denim jeans became fashionable about 100 years later and are still popular today.