# Explain Events, Procedures, and Ideas

Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____

Read the text. Circle the answer to each Why question.

READ THIS FIRST

## From Fleece to Yarn

A warm wool sweater begins on the back of a sheep. Turning that wool into yarn takes several steps. Each step has a reason.

The first step is shearing. Once a year, usually in spring, a shearer clips the sheep's thick coat, called a fleece. Shearing does not hurt the sheep. It is a little like getting a haircut. In fact, it helps the sheep stay cool through the summer. A skilled shearer can remove a whole fleece in one piece in just a few minutes.

Next, the fleece is skirted. Workers spread it on a table and pull away the dirtiest edges. These parts are often full of burrs and bits of hay.

Then the wool must be washed. Raw wool is greasy because sheep make an oil called lanolin. Lanolin protects the sheep from rain, but it makes the wool sticky and hard to work with. Workers soak the wool in hot, soapy water to remove the grease and dirt. They must be careful not to stir it too much. Rubbing hot, wet wool makes the fibers tangle and mat together into felt.

After the wool dries, it is carded. Carding means brushing the wool between two boards covered with tiny wire teeth. This step pulls apart the clumps and lines the fibers up in the same direction. The result is a soft, fluffy roll.

Now the wool is ready for spinning. A spinner pulls out a few fibers at a time and twists them together. The twist is what makes yarn strong. A single wool fiber breaks easily, but hundreds of twisted fibers grip one another tightly. Long ago, people spun with a simple stick called a spindle. Later, spinning wheels made the work faster. Today, most yarn is spun by machines in factories.

Finally, the yarn may be dyed. Some dyes come from plants, such as onion skins or indigo leaves. The yarn is wound into balls, ready for knitting.

1. Why must raw wool be washed?

   Washing lines the fibers up in one direction.

   Water makes the wool fibers grow longer.

   Lanolin makes it greasy and hard to work with.

   Washing twists the wool into yarn.

2. Why must workers be careful not to stir the wool too much while washing it?

Rubbing hot, wet wool tangles the fibers into felt.

Stirring washes the color out of the wool.

Stirring adds more lanolin to the wool.

Stirring makes the water cool too quickly.

3. Why does twisting make yarn strong?

Twisting removes the last of the lanolin.

Twisting makes each single fiber thicker.

The twisted fibers grip one another tightly.

Twisting dries the wool more quickly.

4. Why are the dirtiest edges of the fleece pulled away?

They hold too much lanolin to be washed clean.

They would turn into felt if they were spun.

They are often full of burrs and bits of hay.

They are too thick and tangled to be carded.

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Answer Key - Grade 4 Reading Worksheet

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