

## ACTIVITY 1

# What Is Cotton?



REPRODUCIBLE MASTER

Cotton is a plant that produces a white, fluffy cotton boll. We use cotton to make clothes and paper money. We use the oil from cotton seeds to make food and skin creams. And we use the leftover seed parts to feed farm animals. No part of the cotton plant goes to waste!

Cotton plants need sunshine, healthy soil, and water. Farmers plant cotton seeds in the spring when the soil is warm and moist. And they check the weather forecast to be sure it

will stay warm while the seeds sprout. A cold rain can ruin a young cotton crop.

Cotton plants take about six months to produce cotton bolls. The first sign is a flower bud called a square. The buds grow into beautiful yellow cotton flowers that turn pink, then dark red just before the petals fall off. What's left is a seed pod that slowly grows into a cotton boll. When the boll splits open to let the cotton fibers dry in the sun, it is time to harvest!

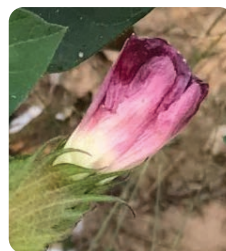


**Part 1:** These pictures show how a cotton plant grows. But the pictures are out of order. Number the pictures in the correct order to show the cotton growth cycle.

**boll**



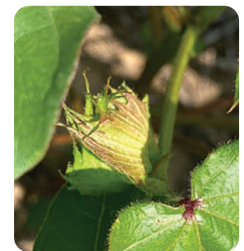
**flower**



**pod**



**square**



**Part 2:** This is a list of states where cotton is grown in the U.S. Look them up on a map. List two reasons why you think these states are best for growing cotton. **Hint:** Think about geography and weather!

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Alabama  
Arizona  
Arkansas  
California  
Florida  
Georgia  
Kansas  
Louisiana  
Mississippi

Missouri  
New Mexico  
North Carolina  
Oklahoma  
South Carolina  
Tennessee  
Texas  
Virginia



**Families!** How many products made from cotton do you have in your home? Is there anything in your home containing cotton that might surprise you? Learn more about cotton by watching the planting and harvesting segments of the "Cotton: From Dirt to Shirt" video field trip at [ymiclassroom.com/cotton](http://ymiclassroom.com/cotton).