

How the Anglo-Saxons dressed



What did women wear?

- A linen under-dress with long sleeves and a draw-string neck was put on first. Wealthier women fastened the sleeves with fancy clasps.
- Over this they wore a loose tube of wool or linen material we call a 'peplos' dress. A pair of brooches or clasps held it together at the shoulders.
- There were no pockets so accessories were hung from a belt, these might include girdle hangers, a purse, a latch lifter (like a key) and an ear scoop (which was used to scrape out ear wax).
- To keep warm a woollen shawl or cloak was worn over the shoulders.



Girdle hangers were only really worn by Anglian women in the Midlands. We believe they were symbolic keys worn by the most important lady of a household.

What did men wear?

- First they put on a hip-length linen undershirt with long sleeves.
- Woollen trousers held up with a belt threaded through loops went on next.
- A wool tunic that went down to the knees was worn over the undershirt. They were often decorated at the wrists, neck and hem.
- A belt was worn over the tunic, often with a decorated buckle and strap-end. Pouches, knives and other accessories might be hung from the belt.
- To protect the lower trouser legs, strips of fabric were wound around like bandages.



Our examples show clothes from the early Anglo-Saxon period (5th Century). They changed over time like most fashions do!

How the Anglo-Saxons made clothes

What were clothes made from?

The main fibres used by the Anglo-Saxons were linen and wool. They were both useful in different ways.

Which material would you make a cloak from? Hopefully wool to keep you warm, but which material would you make your underwear from? Hopefully linen so you can wash it!



Wool	Linen
From sheep	From flax plant
Warm	Cool
Itchy	Smooth
Cannot be washed	Washable

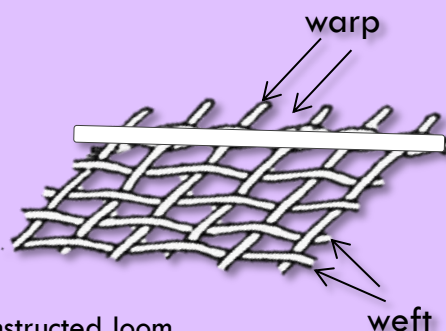
Clothes were dyed using plants, vegetables, fruits and minerals. To set the colour the material would be washed in **wee!**

How were they made?

Spinning: Wool and linen fibres easily pull apart so they must be spun first.

A drop spindle would be used to spin the fibres— it twists the fibres together to form a yarn (just like the ball of wool you might buy to do some knitting).

Weaving: On a large frame called a loom you first hang your yarn in an up-down direction (these are called the warp threads). Weights are added to the bottom to hold the warp threads straight. Then you begin to weave more yarn under and over the warp threads, moving across from left to right (this is called the weft thread). You alternate going under or over the warp threads to create a basket effect.



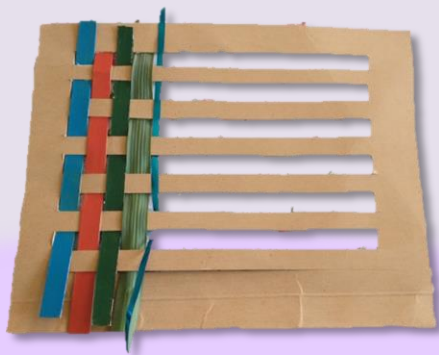
A loom weight



A reconstructed loom

weft

Activities to try at Home



Have a go at Weaving

Don't worry if you don't have an Anglo Saxon loom and a sheep handy. Have a go at weaving on a cardboard loom instead. We have used an old cereal box to make the loom but it can be made from any flat piece of cardboard. We painted the sections that we cut out of the loom to weave with. We also got experimental and used things we found around the house and garden like leaves and ribbons. Watch our video [here](#) to see how we did it!

Dress Up Challenge!



Using clothes and materials from around your house, see if you can recreate an Anglo-Saxon outfit. You could use a long sleeved top as your under shirt and an adult's top as your tunic or dress with a belt tied around your waist. Neive has used her mum's t-shirt and belt over her own top and leggings – we think she looks fab!

Share Your Creations!

We would love to see what you make so please share your pictures



The Collection Lincoln & Usher Gallery




CollectionUsher



CollectionUsher

#InvestigateLearning

Looking for our  quiz?
We've got more Anglo-Saxon facts coming next week, along with a new quiz!