

Cooperative Spinning With Cuphook Spindles

This simple tool enables students to spin a short piece of yarn and thus understand how spinning wheels operate. Students work in teams, with one Cuphook Spindle per team.

Note: It's a good idea to do this once with your child, husband, teacher in the lunchroom, etc. to get the feel of it before class. We explain it in words, but hands-on experience is best.

Materials:

Cuphook Spindles and some of the roving supplied in the kit. Don't use it all up—later you'll use it for dyeing and felting!

Procedure:

Before handing out the wool, demonstrate drafting. To spin wool into yarn, you pull it out while twisting it. Otherwise, the yarn would be too thick in some places. Drafting means to pull (as in draft horse!). Hold a length of roving in one hand, place the other hand underneath, and gently tug. The fibers slide past each other and the roving between your hands becomes thinner. Move your hands to a new place and repeat until the whole length of roving is as thin as you want it.

This is a good time to explain Roving. Roving is wool that has been washed and carded to straighten out the fibers.

1. Team up the children.
2. There are two jobs: Drafter and Spinner. Have them decide who's who for starters. They'll switch later.
3. Hand out one length of roving for each child, about as long as his outstretched hand.
4. Drafter thins out his roving till it's about as wide as his thumb is long.
5. Spinner holds the dowel while Drafter wraps a few top strands around the cuphook.
6. Drafter pinches the wool between thumb and forefinger just below the cuphook with his dominant hand, and holds the rest of the roving in his other hand.
7. Spinner slowly rotates the dowel, always in the same directions. She pulls back gently as the twist travels up the roving. Drafter lets the wool slide through his thumb and forefinger as it twists, gently drafting out the wool with his other hand to thin it.
8. When all the wool is twisted, Drafter holds the end in one hand and grasps the middle of the spun yarn with his other hand. He keeps tension on it by pulling against Spinner.
9. Spinner removes the yarn from the cuphook, maintaining tension by pulling against Drafter.
10. Drafter and Spinner bring their hands—and the two ends of the yarn—together—count to 3 and let go at the same time while Drafter holds the middle. The yarn twists back against itself (see photos, next page)

Voila! The kids have spun a strand of 2-ply yarn!

This is how spinning wheels work, just on a much bigger scale

Now switch jobs and repeat.

COOPERATIVE SPINNING WITH CUPHOOK SPINDLE



*Use a piece of roving as long as your hand...
thumb*



*and about as wide as your
thumb*



Hand position of Drafter



Just keep twisting!



Preparing to finish



*Bring hands together holding ends --
then let go at the same time!*