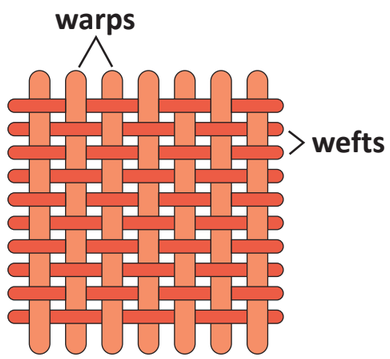
Warp and Weft

Weaving

Weaving is a way to make fabric using yarn. Threads of yarn are hung vertically. These are called warps. Then, threads of yarn are fed horizontally over and under each warp so that they cross at right angles. This is called the weft.

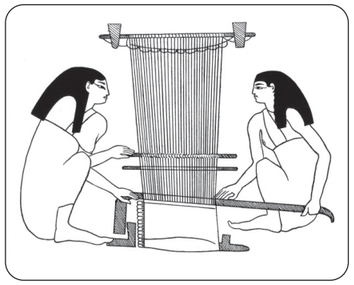


Loom

A loom is a frame that is used for weaving. The warp is threaded from the top to the bottom of the loom. The weft is woven over and under the warp threads.

Developments over time

The earliest evidence of weaving on a loom comes from ancient Egypt. The method of weaving has not changed, but innovations have made the process more efficient. Today, new synthetic fibres and dyes are used alongside the materials and designs from hundreds of years ago.



ancient Egyptian loom

modern electric loom

Anglo-Saxon and Viking patterns

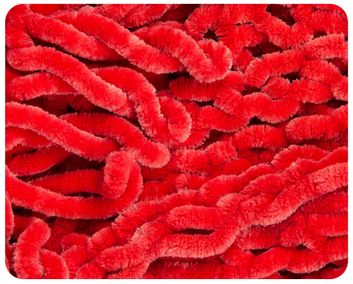
The Anglo-Saxons and Vikings wove detailed, symmetrical patterns onto braids. They used these to decorate their clothing.

Describing yarn

Yarn can be described by its appearance, colour, shape, texture, elasticity and type.

This merino yarn is plain, loosely twisted, soft and stretchy.

This bamboo yarn is multicoloured, light and delicate.



This polyester yarn is bright, thick, fluffy and elastic.

Wall hangings

Weaved wall hangings are used to decorate homes. Modern wall hangings have textured yarns and other decorations, such as tassels and loops.

Glossary

braid	A narrow piece of patterned fabric.
dye	A natural or synthetic substance used to add colour.
elasticity	Stretchiness.
fabric	Cloth produced by weaving threads.
loom	A piece of equipment used for weaving yarn into fabric.
synthetic	Something that is human-made.
texture	The way a surface or substance feels.
warp	A vertical thread.
weft	A thread passed horizontally across warp threads.
yarn	Thread used for making fabric or for knitting.

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