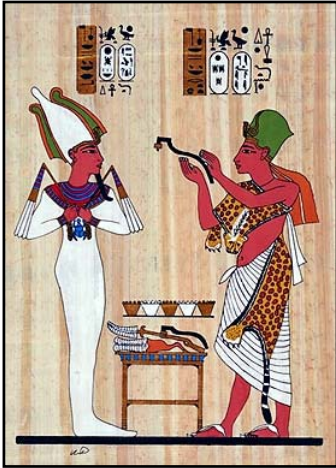


A Brief History of fiber & fabric

Definitions: Fiber is a long, thin strand or thread of material.

Fabric is a cloth material made by weaving or knitting threads together.



NATURAL FIBERS

For over five thousand years, the following four fibers – along with animal skins and a few woven grasses – were the only materials available for the manufacture of clothing. Depending on how they were processed, the resulting fabrics could be rough or smooth, colorful or drab. The more money you had to spend, the finer and more colorful your clothing would be.

FIBER	SOURCE	FIBER FACTOID
Flax	Plant	Thought to be the oldest natural textile fabric
Cotton	Plant	Like flax, cotton was worn by ancient Egyptians
Wool	Animal	Made primarily from sheep and goat hair
Silk	Silkworm	Created exclusively in China for 3,000 years

MAN-MADE FIBERS

The history of man-made fibers is less than a century old; until 1910, there were no synthetic or chemical fibers. Today, by mixing different components, manufacturers can take the basic fibers listed below and make them more waterproof or more absorbent, warmer or cooler, thicker or thinner, stiffer or more supple. Some, like polyester and spandex, combine well with natural fibers, making fabrics that wrinkle less or are more form-fitting.

FIBER	INTRODUCED	FIBER FACTOID
Rayon	1910	First man-made fabric; made from wood pulp
Acetate	1924	Used to build the first Lego blocks in 1949
Nylon	1939	First used in toothbrushes, later for stockings
Acrylic	1950	Sometimes used as a substitute for wool
Polyester	1953	Most-used man-made fiber in the world
Spandex	1959	More elastic (stretchy) than rubber



FABRIC CHOICES

Even before the arrival of man-made fibers, manufacturers could create hundreds of different kinds of fabrics, differing mainly by fiber content, weight, style of weave, or sheen. Here are just a few of these historic fabrics, along with the natural fiber from which they were originally made (nearly all can be made now with other fibers, either natural or synthetic). Circle the ones you've heard of.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Angora (wool) | Damask (silk) | Mohair (wool) | Serge (wool) |
| Broadcloth (wool) | Denim (cotton) | Muslin (cotton) | Shantung (silk) |
| Brocade (silk) | Flannel (wool) | Organdie (cotton) | Sharkskin (wool) |
| Calico (cotton) | Gabardine (wool) | Organza (silk) | Taffeta (silk) |
| Cashmere (wool) | Georgette (silk) | Oxford (cotton) | Tulle (silk) |
| Chiffon (silk) | Jacquard (silk) | Pongee (silk) | Tweed (wool) |
| Chino (cotton) | Kente (silk) | Sateen (cotton) | Velour (cotton) |
| Corduroy (cotton) | Lawn (flax/cotton) | Satin (silk) | Velvet (silk) |
| Crinoline (flax) | Linen (flax) | Seersucker (flax) | Worsted (wool) |