



## How to Dye Cloth

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Ever since clothes were developed people have found ways to enhance their own appearances and express beauty by adorning or decorating their garments. Painting, dyeing, stitching, and attaching ornaments are just some of the ways people have decorated clothes. Today many individuals still think of clothes as more than just body coverings. The clothes people wear show that they are concerned with appearance and the expression of beauty.

The techniques or methods for decorating clothes developed many centuries ago were hand methods. Some are still done by hand today, although many have been modified or changed to be done by machine. Other techniques once used to decorate clothes are no longer in use today. However, many museums have collections showing examples of these and other ways people have decorated clothes.

Painting with dyes made from natural materials made in the environment has been done for thousands of years. The Polynesians painted designs on tapa cloth, or bark cloth, made from the paper mulberry tree. Indians who lived in the plains regions in North America painted animal skins that they prepared for clothing. Today people still do hand painting on fabric, but machine methods of painting designs and colors are used for producing large quantities of fabrics.

(Recommended for Home Economics classes, grades 7-8)

### **Key Words**

*Art Instruction Dying Cloth Clothing Home Economics Cloth Dye Chemistry Science*

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