

SCIENCE + INDUSTRY MUSEUM

GALLERY GUIDE

TEXTILES GALLERY

INFORMATION



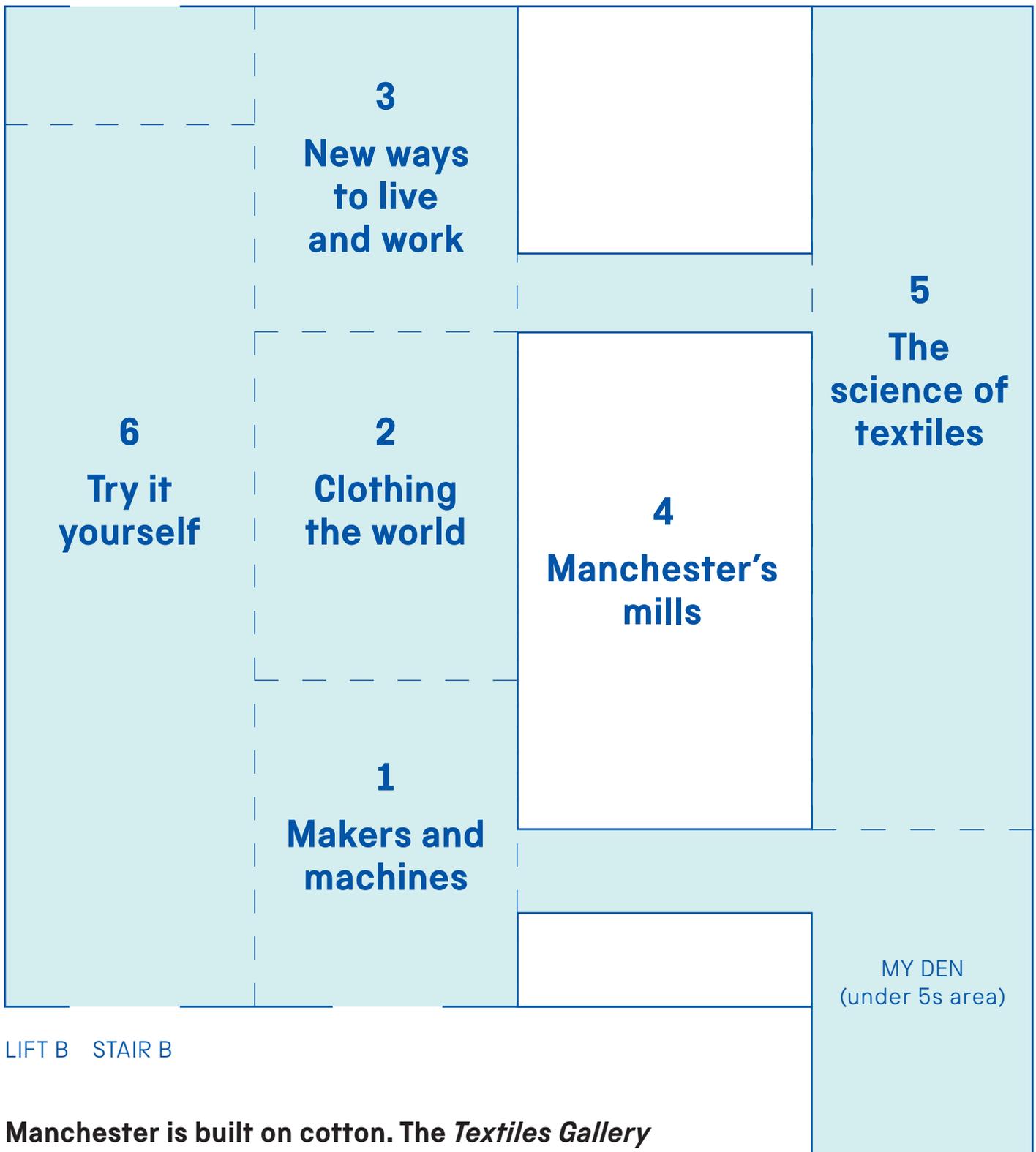
Age
7-11
11-14

Topic

TEXTILES, PROPERTIES OF MATERIALS,
HISTORY, MANCHESTER

Location

TEXTILES GALLERY, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY MUSEUM, MANCHESTER



Manchester is built on cotton. The *Textiles Gallery* tells the story of the people, products and pioneers that transformed Manchester into an urban metropolis. Follow the textiles story through innovations in manufacturing and design and meet the people and machines that made Manchester the first industrial city. Journey through life in industrial Manchester and find out how 'Cottonopolis' changed the world.

1 Makers and machines

Light, washable and easily printed with colourful designs, cotton cloth was extremely popular. To meet the increasing demand, skilled makers and creative thinkers developed powered machines that could spin and weave more cotton than ever before.

Don't miss: Richard Arkwright's water frame, around 1775

This world-changing invention, powered by water, was the first machine to spin multiple threads at once.



2 Clothing the world

Merchants traded Manchester-made cloth all over the world, generating huge profits. But as mill owners grew rich, others suffered. Enslaved people, forced to grow cotton on plantations in the southern states of America, met Manchester's demand for plentiful and affordable raw cotton.

Don't miss: Model of Watts' Warehouse, around 1850

This grand warehouse, once a hive of activity, still stands on Portland Street in Manchester today.



3 New ways to live and work

Nobody had seen anything like Manchester before. Its rapid growth created a new urban environment. Thousands of people lived side by side, whilst workers braved the sensory overload of Manchester's new cotton mills.

Don't miss: Coffee grinder, around 1850

Stalls selling hot coffee were popular with people waiting to start their working day.



4 Manchester's mills

From the spinning rooms to the weaving sheds of Manchester's mills, these working textile machines turned raw cotton into finished cloth. The thunderous, fast moving machines ran for hours on end, operated by a workforce which became a community.

Don't miss: Spinning mule, 1927

The spinning mule became the most common textile machine in Lancashire.



5 The science of textiles

Since the early days of the industrial revolution, scientists have looked for ways to make textiles do more. From woven heart valves to fabrics which can release drugs, we now use textiles in ways that Manchester's early industrialists could never have imagined.

Don't miss: Printing blocks, 1840+

Before the invention of printing machines, hand printing blocks like these were used to print patterns onto the cloth made in Manchester's mills.



6 Try it yourself

Today we use textiles everywhere. Explore the properties of different fibres and fabrics, see some ingenious textile-making machines and try out their processes for yourself.

Don't miss: The Conversation Space

Explore everyday life in industrial Manchester through our changing everyday programme of objects and hands-on activities.



Talk about...

As you explore the Textiles Gallery, think and talk about how the textiles industry has impacted everyday life, both in the past and today. Use these questions as a starting point to help you explore.

- How would you feel if you worked in a mill?
- Should people be made to do jobs they don't want to?
- What kind of fabrics and textiles do you use in your life?
- What links to other countries can you spot in the gallery? What links to other countries do you have in your life?

Make the most of your visit

Do you think you have what it takes to work in a 19th century mill? Make sure you catch the Weavers Wanted demonstration to find out what life was like for apprentices working in the mill.

Pick up an activity trail from the Conversation Space and guide yourself through the exhibition with lively team challenges, object hunts and fun drawing games.

You can find more details about the activity trail and our daily demonstrations by visiting the information desk at the entrance of the museum.

Explore more...

Discover the technology which helped power the mills in our Power Hall or visit the 1830 Station, the world's first intercity railway which connected Manchester's mills to the ports of Liverpool.

You can also continue your experience back at home and in the classroom. Visit [sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/resources](https://www.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/resources) for lots of different hands-on activities inspired by the science principles that are demonstrated throughout the museum.