

Preparation of a Dye Catcher

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INTRODUCTION

A dye catcher is a cloth that will attract dyes that bleed from clothing, especially new clothes, in the wash. It allows different colored clothes to be washed together.

The dye catcher is usually a felt or cotton cloth that has been impregnated with sodium carbonate, Na_2CO_3 , commonly called washing soda.

When added to the wash, sodium carbonate is a water softener. It combines with metal ions, particularly calcium and magnesium ions, in hard water to prevent them from interfering with the action of soaps and detergents. When added to a detergent, it is usually called a builder.



For tie-dyeing of clothes, the clothing should be rinsed with a solution of sodium carbonate before the dyeing process. The sodium carbonate allows the reactive dyes to adhere to the cloth.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Wear goggles or safety glasses at all times in the laboratory.

Sodium carbonate is a skin irritant. Avoid skin contact, particularly with the solution. The use of gloves is highly recommended. In the event of contact with your skin, wash the affected areas well with water. If redness occurs, consult qualified medical assistance.

DISPOSAL

Dispose of excess sodium carbonate solution in the proper waste container. In some areas, sodium carbonate solution can be disposed of down the drain with running water. Check with local regulations.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

Materials Needed

- Sodium carbonate, anhydrous, Na_2CO_3
- Beaker, 600 or 800-mL
- Stirring rod
- Felt or old cotton washcloth (The washcloth should be previously washed.)
- Scissors

Procedure

Weigh 30 g of solid sodium carbonate, Na_2CO_3 , into a clean 600 or 800-mL beaker.

Add 500 ml of water to the beaker. Stir to dissolve the sodium carbonate.

Cut the felt or washcloth into 6-in square pieces (about 15 cm square).

Soak the cloth pieces in the sodium carbonate solution for several minutes.

Remove the cloth pieces from the solution and wring out the excess solution in the sink.
Allow the cloth pieces to dry.

To use your dye catchers, add one to a load of wash.

Did the dye catcher absorb any dye colors from the wash?