

Clothing Construction Guidelines and Forms

General

1. Members should be enrolled in the project at the beginning of the project year, October 1. (Separate Guidelines for Buymanship and Fashion Revue are provided on the website or at the 4-H office.)
2. It is suggested that all Clothing Construction participants use the guidelines relative to their level – Beginner, Intermediate or Advanced.
3. Each member who signs up for a clothing/sewing or buymanship project should be given a copy of these guidelines (available for printing from the website) to share with their parents. This would be helpful when choosing an appropriate pattern and material. The ideas listed are just suggested techniques and learning experiences that could be learned at the various stages. It doesn't mean that the member has to learn all of the techniques during that time period. It depends on the individual and how much they can handle. Each member should have a new learning experience with each new project. It is vitally important not to let the member get overwhelmed with their project.
4. The project selected each year should be made with regard to the 4-H member's interest, length of attention span and ability, and be mutually agreed upon by the member and the project leader.
5. Members should attend at least 3 project meetings and evaluate projects with leaders throughout the year.
6. Project leaders should decide whether the member has fulfilled the project requirements before the evaluation and discuss with the Project Superintendent if necessary.
7. Members wishing to complete projects in buymanship and/or sewing should enroll in each project and fulfill requirements for each project. (Refer to completion guidelines.)
8. **Members must select projects each year in which they will develop new skills.** Each progressive year should show new skills, techniques, and fabric change.
9. **Project leaders should stress quality work, not quantity.**
10. Sewing members must make some type of garment or accessories. In buymanship, one or more articles should be purchased.
11. Fashion Revue – **members must model their own garment in order to be eligible for Fashion Revue awards.** A member may combine their buymanship and sewing projects and model as one outfit in the Fashion Revue style show. (Make part of the outfit and purchase part of the outfit.)

12. The Required Clothing Construction Project Sheet must accompany the clothing construction project when exhibiting at the Fair. Included on the sheet should be swatches of the fabrics used and a picture of the garment on the 4-H member.

13. Each 4-H member may want to create a loose-leaf sewing reference workbook from all the skills learned. Samples demonstration techniques learned could make up the workbook. This is a learning tool, not to be judged at the Fair, though it could be displayed. Following are some techniques that might be included in the workbook.

- Beginner Sewers: pattern selection and layout, seam finishes, fasteners, machine seam, gathers, hem finishes, etc.
- Intermediate Sewers: zipper, top stitching, pockets, buttonholes, etc.
- Advanced Sewers: bound buttonholes, seam finishes, collars, sleeves, etc.

14. Any questions can be answered by contacting the Personal Appearance Superintendent, Ricki Myer - 267-8764 or ricki.m.myers@gmail.com

Clothing Construction/Sewing

Basic Sewing skills should be stressed with all beginning members regardless of age division. Items requiring equal skill may be substituted in each division. These are minimum requirements for exhibit. Members may do more.

Age Divisions

Beginners: Young (9-11), Junior (12-14), and Senior (15-19)

Intermediate: Young (9-11), Junior (12-14), and Senior (15-19)

Advanced: Junior (12-14), Senior (15-19)

Suggested projects for age divisions:

Beginners: very simple and quick-to-do projects are recommended for the first-year member.

- ✚ The second-year member is required to sew with a pattern that has no less than 3 pieces (except formal eveningwear).
- ✚ Members should be encouraged to increase their knowledge and skills according to their age and ability.
- ✚ Likewise, members should be discouraged from undertaking too difficult a pattern or making numerous items.

Suggested projects (one item each year is sufficient for this age division):

- Apron
- Skirt or pant skirt
- Blouse
- Jumper
- Simple slacks or shorts without a zipper or buttonholes
- Simple dress
- Accessories such as: purse, school bag, shawl, scarf, hat.
- Simple vest

Suitable fabric suggestions for projects:

- Tightly woven
- Without nap
- Cotton or cotton/polyester blend
- Absolutely NO knit fabrics

Suggested skills to learn:

- Read the pattern book and select appropriate patterns
- Select material appropriate for garment and ability
- Simple use of sewing machine – threading, winding bobbin, stitching
- Care and use of basic sewing tools, shears, pins, etc.
- Prepare pattern to cut out garment
- Lay out pattern, cut out pattern, and follow pattern instructions.
- Correct way to sew on fastenings – snaps, hooks, etc.
- Simple seam finish
- Importance of pressing after each construction step
- Stay-stitching and why, darts and facing techniques
- Basting and why

Intermediate: as skills increase, members should use a fabric and pattern suitable to that skill level.

- ✚ Be sure to pick a new learning experience.
- ✚ Quality, NOT quantity, should be stressed!
 - Use color, line and design to compliment figure type or body-build.
 - Select a harder to handle fabric (blends, corduroy or other napped fabrics, NO velvets)
 - Learn the characteristics of several different types of fabrics – visit a Fabric Store.
 - Learn fabric selection coordination – color and types to go with present wardrobe.
 - Learn about fabric use and care.
 - Learn to fit your pattern and simple alterations if needed on pattern.

Note: first-year members: projects selected for beginning members should be based on their previous knowledge and not necessarily follow the suggestions listed below.

Reminder – stress basic skills. Leader’s decision will be accepted.

Suggested projects:

- Dress
- Blouse
- Jumper (with or without blouse)
- Skirt or slacks (with or without top)
- Sleepwear (P.J.’s, gown or robe)
- Simple suit (jacket with skirt, slacks or shorts)
- Sportswear (horseback riding pants, blouse or chaps, tennis outfits, jogging suits, jeans, casual pants, knit tops, etc.)
- Jacket
- Insulated vest (kits are acceptable)

Suitable fabric suggestions for projects:

- Tightly woven
- Cotton or cotton/polyester blend
- Absolutely NO knit fabrics

Suggested skills to learn:

- Darts, pleats
- Waistband and cuffs
- Pockets
- Facings, interfacings (know different varieties), and under-stitching
- Gathering and easing
- Collars
- Zippers
- Raglan and set in sleeves
- Top stitching
- Buttonholes and buttons
- Use of simple trims
- Tacking
- Belts
- Seam tape – plain, stretch, etc.
- Catch-stitch hem
- Seam finishes (French, flat-felled, bound, serged)

Advanced: members are expected to make a different type of outfit, try a new fabric or a new technique each year.

- ✚ Be sure to pick a new learning experience.
- ✚ Quality, NOT quantity, should be stressed!
- ✚ Leaders should encourage appropriate selection of accessories.
 - Continue to learn about fabric use and care.
 - Try new fabrics and different techniques each year to challenge skills
 - Learn new techniques – hems, buttonholes, bound buttonholes, fastenings, trims, tailoring, original creations, etc.
 - Learn to use more machine attachments.
 - Increase pressing skills.

Note: first-year members: projects selected for beginning members should be based on their previous knowledge and necessarily follow the suggestions listed below.

Reminder – stress basic skills. Leaders' decision will be accepted.

Suggested projects: (should be more challenging)

- Dress
- Suit (2 or 3-piece)
- Tailored jacket
- Formal
- Coat
- Sportswear (horseback riding pants, blouse or chaps, tennis outfits, jogging suits, jeans, casual

pants, knit tops, etc.)

- Insulated outer garment (kits are acceptable)
- Other (with leader's approval)

Suitable fabric suggestions for projects:

- Tightly woven
- With or without nap
- Cotton or cotton/polyester blend
- Knit fabrics
- Matching plaids
- One-way directional materials
- Quilted fabrics
- Sheer weight or loosely woven
- Wool and wool blends
- Formal materials (e.g., satin and crepes – NO velvets, may be to difficult to work with and frustrating)

Suggested skills to learn:

- Tailoring
- Lining jacket, skirt, slacks, coat, or vest
- Hand sewn stitches used with tailoring and sewing in linings
- Multiple interfacings for tailored jacket or coat
- Advanced pressing techniques
- Challenge skills by using better fabrics
- Creativity in designing an outfit to suit your personality
- Achieve a professional look to hand-crafted garments

Sewing Construction Suggestions

The following hints and suggestions are meant only to help and as a guide for leaders working in the Clothing Project. It is recognized that there are many ways to accomplish the end product and additional techniques may be used. These are **SUGGESTIONS, NOT RULES.**

- Important to keep in mind when choosing a project: do not let the member pick something that will overwhelm and eventually discourage them (or yourself).
- The project should have the leader's approval on both the pattern and the material. The member should be encouraged to choose something they will like and can enjoy constructing while creating new skills.
- Increase knowledge and use of the sewing machine each year – both use and care.

All leaders are strongly urged to obtain a reliable sewing book to use as a reference. Simplicity, Vogue, McCall's, Singer or comparable books will be excellent aids to leaders when they are in doubt as to methods or techniques.

The following suggestions are for 4-H projects which are “evaluated” at the Fair.

Sewing Guidelines

1. Sewing machine operation and safety.

2. Material Preparation – all material should be preshrunk or pretreated.

- Washables should be washed and dried like the garment will be cared for.
- Non-washable should be dry cleaned.
- Cutting – straighten grains of fabric.

3. Pattern reading skills

- Pattern pieces
- Pattern guide sheet and instructions
- Pattern envelope identification and charts (back side)

4. Basting – use and why baste

- Using pins
- Hand sewn
- Machine sewn

5. Seams

- Seam allowance width will vary according to fabric, pattern and seam finish.
- To reduce bulk – layer or grade seam allowances where appropriate (collars, cuffs, waist bands, facings, pockets, etc.)
- Tension should be even on both sides.
- Underarm and crotch seams should be reinforced.
- Finish seams.

6. Seam Finish

- A seam finish is important for the durability of the garment and/or stability of the seam.
- Seam finish should be appropriate for the type of fabric used.
- Acceptable seam finishes include:
 - serging
 - zigzag
 - straight stitched
 - turned under and straight stitched
 - flat-felled or fake flat-felled
 - French seams
 - overcast stitched
 - bound
 - sheer tricot seam tape
 - Pinked (use only if material will not ravel) Note: this is not the least desirable method but, in some instances, it is acceptable. When using this method, it is important to maintain the seam allowance called for in the pattern. A row of straight stitching next to the pinked edge makes the seam allowance more durable and/or stable.
- Seams appear neater if notches are trimmed off.

7. Collars

- Stitching
- Trimming
- Turning and pressing

8. Hems

- Depth of hem should be suitable to style of garment and fabric.
- Before hemming, prepare the raw edge of the hem by using one of the following:
 - serged
 - turn under ¼ inch and top stitch
 - straight stitch near edge
 - use some type of hem tape

hem binding

bias tape

stretch lace

decorative tape

sheer tricot seam tape

- Stitching of hem

- *Hand stitching should be close together so little fingers cannot be inserted between stitches. (This decreases chance of hem being snagged and ripped out.) Single thread recommended for hand hemming, however, fabric may dictate double thread for hem.*

- suggested hand hem stitches

Tailor

Blind

Whip or slip

Catch

Lock

- *Machine hems*

Blind hemming

Narrow top stitched hem

- Unacceptable methods include:
 - Iron-on or fusible (not durable for life of garment)
 - Overcast had method (usually loosens up)

9. Armholes

- Set-in sleeves
 - Double row of stitching 1/8 inch apart
 - Trim ¼ inch from second row of stitching
- Facings
 - Interface according to pattern
 - Under stitch
 - Trim seam allowance to ¼ inch or layer
 - Outer edge finished according to fabric used (edges can be serged)
 - Tack in place, at least at the seams

10. Zippers

- Type of zipper should be suitable for weight of fabric and use of garment.

- Method
- Lapped
- Centered
- Mock-fly
- Invisible
- Hook & eye or snaps are not necessary if zipper comes to the very top and stays closed.

11. Waistband

- Interface to prevent stretching and to minimize rolling
- Grade or layer seam allowance
- Buttons or skirt hooks are acceptable
- An elastic-cased waistband – stitch over waistband at seams to prevent elastic from turning. Zigzag through center of (stretched) waistband can also prevent turning.

12. Darts

- Backstitch or tie threads at dart ends
- Press darts
- Towards center
- Down
- Slash and press open, if bulky

13. Pleats

- Folding
- Stitching
- Creasing (on fold lines)
- Pressing (basting in crease first)

14. Gathers

- Machine basting and pulling threads
- Stay-stitching to hold

15. Crotch

- Use stretch stitch, if available – or use two rows of straight stitching 1/8 inch apart between notches.
- Trim seam ¼ inch along double stitched area. (Optional, but recommended: zigzag or serge these seam allowances together.)

16. Interfacing

- Refer to your sewing book or consult your fabric store to determine the type and weight of interfacing suitable for your garment and fabric.
- Areas to be interfaced:
 - Sleeveless armhole facings
 - Neck facings
 - Waistband
 - Collars and cuffs
 - Buttonhole facings
 - Others as indicated on pattern or a sewing reference book for tailored garments.

17. Under stitching

- Most facings call for under stitching
- Refer to a reliable sewing book for details.

18. Pressing – pressing makes the difference between a “homemade” and a “hand-crafted” garment.

- Press as you sew, press after each construction step
- Keep in mind the type of fabric being used and use appropriate pressing method.
 - Press on wrong side
 - Iron sole plate attachment
 - Plastic steam iron
 - Steam – steam iron or cloth
 - Special pressing methods to suit fabric
- For permanent crease, use press cloth moistened in white vinegar and water, ~ 1 teaspoon to 1 cup of water. (Pre-test on sample of fabric first.)
- Launder, if necessary and press completed garment.

19. Cleanliness – all garments must be clean and pressed. Launder or dry-clean, if necessary and press completed garment for evaluation.

20. Energy saving methods (Jiffy Knits, Quick-Sew, Stretch & Sew, etc. patterns)

- Age – Junior and Senior (basic sewing skills should be acquired before use of these methods.)
- The Quality of the workmanship will be considered.

Kalamazoo County 4-H Clothing Construction Self Evaluation Form

	Very Good	Good	Needs Improvement	Comments
General Appearance				
Cleanliness and Pressing				
Grain lines (cut on grain)				
Directional Design Fabrics (napped)				
Thread (match) and Stitching				
Seams				
Darts, Pleats, Tucks, and Gathers				
Facings				
Collars and Cuffs				
Sleeves				
Waistline Area Treatments				
Placket and/or Zipper				
Hems				
Linings, Interlinings, and Interfacings				
Choice of pattern				
Choice of material				
Buttons and Buttonholes				
Fasteners				
Elastics (if appropriate)				
Skills matching garment choice				

Self-evaluation to be completed by member and the leader together. Do evaluations as project progresses. Once project is completed, do evaluation again. May be time and opportunity to correct some imperfections.

Required Clothing Construction Project Sheet

Year (date): _____

Name: _____

Club: _____ Years in Clothing Project: _____

Beginner: _____ Intermediate: _____ Senior: _____

Place Fabric Swatch(s) Here:

Type(s) of Fabric: _____

Pattern Maker and Number: _____

Total Cost for Garment: _____

Garment Description:

How will your outfit be cared for?

Place color photo of yourself in your outfit here:



For what purpose will this outfit be worn?

Accessories selected to complete outfit:

4-H Clothing Exhibit Suggestions

Name: _____

Club: _____

Comments or Suggestions:

General Appearance:

Fit (Fashion Revue evaluations): _____

Cleanliness: _____

Pressing: _____

Selection:

Choice of pattern: _____

Choice of fabrics: _____

Construction:

Cut on grain: _____

Stitching: _____

Seams: _____

Darts, Pleats, Tucks, gathers _____

Facings: _____

Collars & cuffs: _____

Sleeves: _____

Hems: _____

Other: _____

Congratulations on completing your 4-H project. We hope you will use these suggestions in the construction of future 4-H projects.

Leader's Clothing Construction Lesson Plan Guide

1. Meet with members and guardians to discuss necessary sewing equipment members will need. Also discuss what members will make with suggestions for guiding them to a wise choice.

In doing this consider the following:

- Ability and previous sewing experience
- Time to be given to project and other activities member is involved in
- Wardrobe needs
- Members personal coloring and figure type with regard to selection of pattern and fabric
- Money available for project materials
- If possible have available pattern magazines to help member in their selection of their pattern.
- Discuss pattern sizes needed for each member, and take measurements of each member to determine which pattern size best fits the member with the least amount of alteration.
- Guide member in determining her figure type.
- Pattern books usually show charts with the various figure types. This will aid in purchasing the proper pattern.
- Plan for a shopping trip as a group if possible

2. Take the shopping trip with members and any chaperones that can go.

- The Leader can then guide in the selection of patterns and fabrics to be used. This is especially of value for beginners and younger members with little or no experience in sewing.
- Check fabric labels for fiber content so members will know how to care for fabric. Also check shrinkage.
- Check fabric for being "on grain", especially plaids.

3. Do lessons on operating sewing machine (especially beginners and younger members).

- This should include learning to thread the machine, stitching a straight seam, zigzag, and other utility stitching if the machine has the capabilities.
- Give each member a chance to do some stitching on sample materials or practice straight stitching on lined paper (with no thread in machine).
- Members should also practice some hand sewing on samples of fabric (e.g., sewing on a button, basting, simple hemstitch, etc.).

4. Give lesson on shrinking materials to be used if not already preshrunk.

- This shrinking of materials might be done at the meeting or instructions given at the meeting for the member to do at home, depending on member's ability and reliability.
- This includes fabric to be used for the garment.
- Shrinking interfacings to be used or other inner fabrics. (Exceptions would be fusible interfacings, check the labels for shrinkage, some are already preshrunk.)
- Check zippers, seam tapes, trims, etc. to be used. In today's world these are already preshrunk – but check package.

5. Do lessons on pattern study and alterations.

- Have each member initial each of their pattern pieces
- Sort out pattern pieces that will be needed for garment
- Discuss straight of grain, bias, and pattern markings
- Fit pattern to members and make necessary alterations, as pattern should be fitted before cutting out garment. This is best done on an individual basis, as this is very important to the finished garment.
- If necessary make a muslin mock up of the garment to test fitted pattern.

6. Meet with member to lay out pattern on fabric and cutting garment out.

- This requires very close supervision, especially for younger members.
- Avoid trying to help too many members at one session. Strongly suggest doing this step on a one-on-one basis.
- Be extra cautious with nap fabrics. Nap must go in one direction. Check the pattern instruction sheet for cutting out napped fabrics.
- Plaids and one-way designs need special attention as to how they will look on the finished garment and all pattern pieces must go the same direction and need to be matched. (Even plaids and uneven plaids are handled differently.)
- Vertical stripes require extra planning before cutting
- Straighten crosswise ends of the fabric by tearing the ends, pulling a thread from selvage to selvage, or cutting along a thread if the fabric has a prominent thread or rib or a woven pattern such as a plaid or check that can be used as a guide for cutting. Some fabrics can be unraveled on the crosswise edge until one thread can be drawn across the entire edge.
- Bonded and permanent press fabrics cannot be straightened thread-perfect because the grain is locked into position during their processing.
- Lay fabric on smooth flat surface for cutting out. Use a good cutting table if available.
- Allow extra length for hems, especially for younger members starting projects early.
- Cut notches outward or mark with tracing paper, marking pencils, or tailors chalk.
- Use bent-handled shears for cutting if possible. Never use pinking or scalloping shears for cutting garment out.

7. Show how to transfer pattern markings on to the fabric.

- If using tracing paper or marking pencils, test on a sample of the fabric to make sure markings do not show on right side of fabric.
- Some fabrics may require tailor-tacks

8. Do lesson on stay stitching and discuss why it is important to use.

- This is a regular machine stitching generally made a ½ inch from the cut edge to hold the fabric from stretching during construction.
- Stay stitching is usually indicated on the pattern guide sheet as to the direction to stitch.
- Neck edge is stay stitched on the seam line (5/8-inch).
- The seam allowance can then be clipped which makes it easier to apply a collar or facing, and also prevents the neck edge from stretching when trying on for fitting.
- Shoulder seams are stay stitched a ½ inch from the cut edge.
- Skirt waistline edge should be stay stitched starting at the side seam and stitching to the center.
- Skirt side seams are stay-stitched from the notch in the side seam to the waistline.

9. Proceed with construction of the garment generally following the order as indicated by the instructions and pattern guide sheet.

- Sometimes a method different than shown on the pattern instructions may be used if it is applicable to the particular garment and fabric used.
- Some sewing may be done at home if the leader feels the member is capable of working without supervision.
- For more detailed information on construction techniques, consult commercial sewing books published such as ones by Simplicity, McCalls and Vogue.