Sew Much Fun

You will learn to:
- Thread a sewing machine
- Use basic sewing equipment
- Select a pattern and fabric
- Follow a pattern guide sheet
- Make a casing
- Apply elastic, cording, or trim
- Sew straight and curved seams
- Finish seams and hem
- Press

You will need:
- Sewing machine
- Pattern
- Fabric
- Thread
- Shears or sewing scissors
- Silk pins
- Measuring tape
- Notions
- Parent or leader to help you

Sew!
Choose one or more of these items:
- Pants, shorts, skirt, or apron with an elastic or drawstring waistband
- Shirt, blouse, costume, night clothes, or dress with casing or simple closure
- “Instant” top, skirt, or dress using a preshrirred fabric or cut-out

4-H Textile Science
Beginner Project

Penn State
College of Agricultural Sciences
Cooperative Extension
1. Take Your Measurements
Ask your leader or parent to help you take your measurements.
Your measurements will help you select a pattern the right size.

2. Choose a Pattern
A leader or parent can also help you choose a pattern. Look at your pattern envelope carefully. The envelope will give you:
- Suggested styles to make (called “views”)
- Pictures of the front and a sketch of the back of the garment
- Description of the garment
- Amount of fabric needed
- Suggested fabrics
- List of notions
- Body measurements for each size

The pattern guide sheet will give you lots of information, too. Read it carefully. You’ll find a chart of all the pattern pieces, a layout for different types and widths of fabric, and directions for sewing.

3. Choose Fabric
Choose a firmly woven fabric that is easy to care for. (Do not use knit fabric for this project.) Check your pattern envelope for fabric suggestions. Select a fabric that does not require matching, such as a plaid, stripe, and some prints. Matching takes more time and fabric. It is also harder to do. Check to see if your fabric is printed on the grain before you buy it.

4. Be a Label Reader
Look for the fiber content and care instructions on the end of the bolt or on the hang tag. Write down information about fibers, shrinkage, color fastness, finishes, width, cost, and the name and address of the manufacturer. Ask for a care label when you buy your fabric, and save it to sew in your garment.

Buy pattern, fabric, and notions at the same time. Notions are extras you need to complete
5. Preshrink Fabric and Notions
Preshrink your fabric, following the care instructions on the bolt. Trims and zippers need to be preshrunk, too.

7. Make Seam Finishes
Woven fabrics that ravel need a seam finish. Use one of these easy methods:
- Zigzag raw edges by machine or overcast them by hand.
- Sew a straight line of stitching 1/8 inch from the raw edge.
- Turn under and stitch seam allowances.
- Pink the edges with a pinking shears.

Don't forget to ask your leader to show you how to press seams open.
Remember: Each seam should be pressed before it is crossed by another seam.

6. Cut Out the Fabric
Ask your leader or parent to help you place your pattern on the fabric according to the pattern guide sheet. Place the pattern on the grain, measuring from the arrow on the pattern to the selvage of the fabric. Pin the pattern to the fabric and cut the fabric in long, even strokes with a sewing scissors or shears.

8. Hems
Hems should be neat and even, and hand stitches should not show on the side people will see. Practice several hem stitches and use one you like best. To finish the top edge of a hem on lightweight wovens, edge stitch or zigzag the edge, or press under 1/4 inch and stitch down. Hems with fullness need to be “eased” before they are hand stitched in place.

Some narrow hems may be machine stitched.

your garment, such as decorative trim, buttons, zipper, and elastic. See the pattern envelope to see what notions need. Choose silk pins and high-quality ster-wrapped cotton thread.
Chart Your Progress

Color in the progress you have made in learning to sew a garment.

- put in a hem
- make four different seam finishes
- cut out fabric on grain
- preshrink fabric
- straighten fabric
- locate care information on a store garment
- locate fabric information on a bolt
- choose a fabric printed on grain
- read a pattern envelope
- take measurements

start here

Adapted from a chart prepared by Nadine Hackler, professor and extension clothing specialist. October 1988.
Sew Much Fun Project Record

I made it!

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

It's . . .

What I made for my project

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______________________________

Age as of January 1 ____________

______________________________

______________________________

Club ____________________________

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Leader's signature ____________________________

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What I shared with others (show and tell, helping other members, community service)

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Be a cost counter . . .

Keep track of all your sales slips and add it all up

Fabric ................................................... $ _____

Pattern ................................................... $ _____

Notions ................................................... $ _____

Tax ................................................... $ _____

TOTAL ................................................... $ _____

Cost of similar garment ......................... $ _____

SAVINGS ................................................... $ _____

What I learned in this project

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Show and Tell
Share what you’ve learned with others! Give a talk on one of the following, or use an idea of your own:

- Information on a pattern envelope
- Information on a pattern guide sheet
- Information in the back of a pattern catalog or magazine
- Information on a care label
- Types of fabric grains: lengthwise, crosswise, and bias
- What you’ve learned in this project and hope to learn next year

Or demonstrate how to:

- Check if a fabric is printed on the grain
- Place a pattern on the grain
- Straighten fabric edges

- Make a sewing box
- Thread a sewing machine and wind the bobbin
- Make a casing
- Put elastic in a casing so that it doesn’t twist
- Cord a casing
- Change stitch widths and lengths
- Press open a seam
- Finish seams
- Care for your sewing machine and sewing tools
- Use three different sewing tools
- Put in a hem by hand or machine
- Preshrink fabric and trims
- Pin a pattern on fabric
- Fold a pattern for storage
- Prepare a garment for an exhibit
- Take measurements

Want to Know More?
Check your local library or bookstore for sewing books and ideas! In Pennsylvania, lists of helpful books may be found on PEnPages at your county extension office.

Exhibits and Fashion Revue
Ask your leader about exhibits and fashion revue guidelines. Garments to be exhibited should include a hand-stitched fabric label near the inside hem. The label should be printed with your name, age, 4-H club, and county.

Taking the Project Again
You may take this project again if you select a different garment and try different activities to help you learn new skills.