Sewing for Other Projects

- If you’re taking a 4-H home improvement project, you may want to make something for your home. Make organizers to speed up sewing, a typewriter or computer cover, or desk accessories for mom or dad. Perhaps your family is expecting a new baby and you want to prepare the nursery. Consider making pressing aids for your other sewing projects.

- How about club banners for an exhibit or parade? An altar cloth for your place of worship? You may want to make a soft sculpture model for a presentation or a special apron for a foods demonstration. A costume for a play or party is fun to make, too.

- If you’re involved in a horse project, you might make a cooling sheet, blanket, saddle pads, leg wraps, or curtains for a horse stall.

- If child care is your interest, why not make a stick horse, a card table tent or tepee, a puppet theatre, a growth chart, a felt board for a game, or other safe toys.

- Maybe your group is sponsoring an overnight and you want to make a sleeping bag or a fabric kite.

- Make new seatcovers for an old jalopy or organizers for storing tools, blankets, and first-aid supplies in the trunk. Why not recycle fabrics that have been used in other household items (such as sheets and placemats) to complete your project?

Sewing for Other Projects

Make a large item or several small ones for another 4-H project or for your friends and family. Think about the possibilities!

If you have beginner skills, start easy. Then build up your skills with more challenging projects.

If you are working from directions, you’ll want to make a layout on graph paper to show you how much fabric you’ll need for your project. Don’t forget to buy more fabric to allow for shrinkage and matching prints, especially in larger projects. Consider using an old garment as a pattern and try making your own directions. You’ll want to purchase a notebook with pockets to collect samples, swatches, and ideas for this project.

Many patterns are available to choose from. Check the resources in PENpages. Also, think about making a model to help teach others what you know.
Sewing for Other People

Before you make a garment or something else for other people, find out what they like and take their measurements. Different people have different measurements.

- **Something to try—** Look at clothing and pattern catalogs. What sizes are available for infants, children, boys and men, and women? Are measurements and sizes the same if you buy and make clothing? Do sizes vary from catalog to catalog (from store to store)?

- **Something else to try—** Ask a friend or an adult if all the shirts (slacks, dresses, suits) he or she wears are the same size.

- **Another something to try—** Other than size, what differences are there between men’s and women’s clothing? (Hints: What side are buttons placed on shirts? Which way does the front overlap on both men’s and women’s clothing? What about zipper closures? Which type of clothing is made better?)

- **Questions to think about—** What does it mean when a store clerk says a garment “runs big”?

  When buying a shirt for her brother, Sally sees a shirt marked 15 1/2-inch 32-33. What measurements would she have to know to determine if this is the correct size? Jimmy wants to buy a shirt for a friend in Canada who wears a 40 in metric. What size would Jimmy need to buy in the United States?

  What does the expression “one size fits all” mean?

  Sewing for other people may mean learning how to alter garments—for example, how to adjust for a high hip or a sloped shoulder—and how to measure for a hem while the person is in the garment. If you have never made a garment for someone other than yourself, you may want to choose an inexpensive fabric, such as muslin or gingham, and make a test garment.

Sewing Toys

Sewing a small toy for a friend or family member is fun. Be sure the toy is well sewn. You may, for example, need to sew all seams twice.

Preshrink fabrics to make sure the finish and excess dye are removed. Sew on buttons and other trims securely. Buttons should be larger than can fit into a pill bottle to prevent them from being swallowed if they do come off. Also, make sure the toy you are making is right for the developmental level of the child.

Making Garments from Household Items

Our ancestors made clothes from flour sacks! You too can make garments out of blankets, pillowcases, and sheets. It’s also possible to make robes and cover-ups from towels.

Towels vary in size, and you’ll need to preshrink them before you start. Sheets are more standard. Below is a chart giving approximate dimensions. You can use fitted sheets, too, but they are more difficult to work with and have less usable yardage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flat sheets</th>
<th>Approx. finished size</th>
<th>Approx. yardage for 44-inch-wide fabric</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twin</td>
<td>66&quot; x 96&quot;</td>
<td>4 yards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Double</td>
<td>81&quot; x 96&quot;</td>
<td>5 yards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queen</td>
<td>90&quot; x 102&quot;</td>
<td>6 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>108&quot; x 102&quot;</td>
<td>7 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillowcase</td>
<td>20&quot; x 30&quot;</td>
<td>1 1/3 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillowcase, King</td>
<td>20&quot; x 40&quot;</td>
<td>1 yard</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: This does not take into account large-scale prints or one-way designs for matching stripes or prints.*

Choose sheets with a 180- to 200-thread count, if possible, since these are the strongest fabrics and will not pill. Sheets can be used for projects that need width. Sometimes you can save money by using sheets you find on sale.
Sewing for the Home

Sewing for any part of the home can be challenging and exciting. Many items can also be made for other people as gifts or for community service projects.

Look through your home. What fabric items do you see that are not clothing? Try to list at least nine. Then look on the back page of the record sheet to find items you might have missed. Look up words you don’t know in the dictionary!

1. _____________________________
2. _____________________________
3. _____________________________
4. _____________________________
5. _____________________________
6. _____________________________
7. _____________________________
8. _____________________________
9. _____________________________

Before starting your home improvement project, begin with a plan about how you want the room or space to look. Think about how you want the room to feel—what are its qualities? You might make a swatch chart that shows the relationships among fabrics, trim, wallpaper, or paint. See the example at right.

While some fabrics for the home have 60- or 90-, even 120-inch widths, most items will need to be pieced. Piecing is usually done on the side, rather than in the direct center of the project, where it is least noticeable.

If you piece, you’ll need to match patterns and repeats (which for some patterns may be as large as 30 inches). A repeat is the distance between the beginning of the print or pattern and the point at which it begins again.

Planning will help you order enough material to match patterns and repeats. Be sure to order extra for preshrinking, seaming, hems, and other details. Quilting often takes more fabric, too.

If you plan to make several large items from the same or designer-matched fabrics, it’s always a gamble whether you should buy all the fabric at once or buy for just one project at a time. It’s more expensive to buy everything at once, but this is sometimes necessary if you want the dye lot color to match.

Sometimes it’s hard to know how a particular pattern or design will look in a room. Because of the expense, it’s important to obtain large swatches to hang in your room for several weeks to see if this is really the color you want. Home and outside lighting can change how the color looks.

Vivid colors close together in a fabric can trick the eye and appear to blend. For example, small amounts of red and royal blue may look purple from a distance! Some small prints may seem to get lost on a large wall or bed. Huge prints may overwhelm small rooms. Dark fabrics may fade in strong sunlight.

Before you buy, notice the care instructions. Obtain a care label from the store owner or distributor and keep it on file. Fabrics, linings, and trim should have similar care instructions. Even if the fabric says it is preshrunk, preshrink all items, according to the care instructions, before you start sewing.

Think about how the fabric will be used. Is it sturdy enough if it needs to hold its shape? Is it “drapery” enough if it needs to flow from rod to rod? Does it need a lining to protect the fabric or prevent show-through in the light? Is it printed on grain? This is especially important if you want it to hang well.

Discover the new fabrics and new trims available to you. Try new sewing techniques and ways of organizing your sewing area to handle your projects. Study the many types of notions and equipment that will help you. Some of your projects may require power tools, stapling, or gluing, in addition to sewing skills. Look for resource people in your community who can help you build the skills you’ll need.
## What I learned in this project (new skills, new words)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic or Skill</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. of People Who Watched</th>
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## What I shared with others (presentations, helping other members, community service)

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## Project story

Use this space to write about your project. What did you do? What did you enjoy doing most? Least? Tell about the type of pattern and fabric you selected. What did you have the most difficult time sewing? Include a picture or make a sketch of your final outfit, complete with accessories.

Tell about the fiber content of your fabric(s) and attach sample swatches. Talk about the sewing resources you used, the resource people you met, and the activities you did at your group meetings.

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Here is a list of textile items found in a home, by room or area. If you don't know what some of these things are, look them up in a dictionary, a pattern catalog, or a book on home improvements.

- **Windows**
  - Cafe curtains
  - Tab curtains
  - Valances
  - Cornices
  - Roller shades
  - Balloon shades
  - Roman shades
  - Swags
  - Jabots
  - Blinds
  - Draperies
  - Window blankets
  - Window panels
  - Tiebacks

- **Kitchen and dining room**
  - Table runner
  - Folding chair

- **Living room**
  - TV pillow
  - Couch pillows
  - Lap quilt
  - Lampshade
  - Wall hanging
  - Decorations
  - Slipcovers
  - Floorcloth
  - Rocker cushions
  - Furniture
  - Quilt that folds

- **Bedroom**
  - Pillowcases
  - Sheets
  - Quilt
  - Comforter
  - Duvet
  - Canopy
  - Shams
  - Throw pillows
  - Neckroll pillows
  - Vanity skirt
  - Dust ruffle

- **Bathroom**
  - Shower curtain
  - Mirror frame

- **Picture frames**
  - Padded headboard
  - Dividers
  - Organizer
  - Upholstered walls
  - Bedspread
  - Blanket
  - Laundry or clothing storage items should be made in the Closet Connections project.

- **Nursery**
  - Diaper stacker
  - Crib sheet
  - Blanket
  - Quilt
  - Dust ruffle
  - Changing area

- **Other**
  - Desk accessories
  - First-aid kit
  - Window seat cushions
  - Sewing room organizers
  - Pressing aids (ham, mitt, cloth, roll)
  - Portfolios
  - Card table cover
  - Plant pot "pants"
Sewing for Other Projects and People Project Record

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

Age as of January 1 __________________________

Club ____________________________________________

Number of years in this project ____________________________

Number of years in Textile Science projects ____________________________

Leader’s signature ____________________________________________

What I made for my project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>FIBER CONTENT</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>HOURS TO MAKE</th>
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Total number of garments made this year____________.

People who helped me and resources I used for this project

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

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__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________
Sharing What You've Learned

Show someone how to do one of the following, or use an idea of your own:

- Measure (a horse, jalopy, or someone else!)
- Measure in metric
- Order fabric
- Match prints with a large repeat
- Recycle fabrics
- Piece fabrics
- Make simple pattern alterations
- Use sheets (or blankets or towels) in a project
- Sew a safe toy
- Enlarge (or reduce) a pattern
- Use color tricks

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Want to Know More?

Hundreds of books, magazines, and patterns are available to help you with the "how-to's." Find these at your library or at bookstores and fabric stores. Use other 4-H projects as a guide and look at home improvement magazines, mail-order flyers, and pattern catalogs to get ideas. In Pennsylvania, lists of resources for all the Textile Science projects are on PENpages.

Exhibit and Fashion Revue

Your exhibit may be a large project, such as a quilt, draperies, TV pillow, or at least two smaller items. Check with your county extension office for a current exhibits listing. Also be sure to label every part of your exhibit with your name, age, club, and county.

You may take this project and another (home improvement, horse, child care, etc.) at the same time, but you must exhibit something different for each. For this project, you must use fabrics (textiles) in some way.

Taking the Project Again

You may take this project more than one year. Be sure to make something different to learn new skills.

This project was not designed to be modeled in the fashion revue. But check with your county extension office, since rules vary from county to county.

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Prepared by Jan Scholl, assistant professor of agricultural and extension education.


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