Want to challenge your skills and make a beautifully fitted coat, suit, or jacket? Try tailoring! A tailored garment includes many of these details:

- rolled collar and lapel
- tape to stabilize the front edge and roll line
- bound or worked buttonholes
- welt pockets
- areas of the garment shaped by steam
- set-in sleeves with a shaped cap, shoulder pads, and sleeve heads
- interfaced hem
- vents at hem of sleeve and/or in the back or sides at the lower edge of the garment
- variety of interfacing applications
- lining

If this is your first tailoring project, you’ll want to start with only a few details. Then when you take the project again, choose a more challenging fabric or a pattern with many pieces.

For this project, you’ll need:

- Fabric, pattern, and notions
- Underlining, lining, and interfacings
- Fabric and thread for a test garment
- Tissue, tape, ruler and/or T-square, and pencil to mark fit and adjustments on pattern
- Dressmaker’s chalk, basting thread, or floss for tailor’s tacks
- Pressing aids
- Books on tailoring
- Leader or other adult to help you
**Tailoring Methods**

In tailoring you use hand and machine stitching to define a garment’s design and to give the garment a shape of its own. In traditional tailoring, much more attention is paid to inner construction and shaping using hand stitches, underlining, interfacing, stays (tape), and pressing. Contemporary tailoring may use fusibles and other techniques to save time yet produce similar results.

You may choose any tailoring method suited to the garment’s style and design, and to the fabric selected. Use the evaluation form in the project record to help you make decisions about techniques and materials. Keep in mind your personal skills and experience, and the time you have to put into your project, before you start.

You’re working with bulky and layered fabrics, so trimming and grading seams, pressing and steaming, and pounding seams and edges become more important. These skills are not difficult to learn, but they take time and patience.

**Making a Test Garment**

Fit is also an important part of a tailored garment, and it is helpful to make a test garment from muslin or gingham fabric. Using gingham makes it easier to see the grain lines and to spot any fitting problems. A test garment can also help you visualize the overall effect.

Remember that your test garment is not the same as the garment you’ll be making—it’s not constructed out of fashion fabric! For this reason, you’ll need to check the fit of any garment and make adjustments as you sew.

Don’t be discouraged if your test garment doesn’t fit you exactly—even if your pattern is the right size! Most people have to make some adjustments. Work with your leader. Study a book on fitting or alterations and make the needed changes on both your test garment and the pattern. Also make a list of any changes that can help you with fitting problems in future projects!

**Skills You’ll Learn**

While making your tailored garment, you’ll want to learn new skills and try new sewing and pressing tools. Practice making details, not only on your test garment, but also on scraps of the fabric you’ll be using. Keep your test scraps and practice pressing them. You may want to keep a scrapbook of these samples so that you can check back on a skill later.

**You’ll learn to:**
- Select and apply underlinings and linings
- Preshrink nonwashable fabrics
- Mark details with chalk and tailors’ tacks
- Practice padding and other hand stitches
- Lay out one-way designs or plaids
- Grade seams and reduce bulk
- Use pressing equipment, such as a steamer, sleeve roll, pressing mitt, pressing ham, ham holder, point presser, clapper, and sleeve board
Pressing Is Important
Pressing smooths or flattens fabrics using an “up and down” rather than a “side by side” motion (as in ironing). Press a seam or detail before crossing it with another line of stitching or before it gets covered up by another layer of fabric, such as a lining.

Take your time when pressing. Make sure you have the right temperature setting and adequate steam and pressure. Also allow the garment to remain in its pressed position until dry.

Check care instructions and practice on a sample. A see-through press cloth allows you to see what you’re doing and prevents shine and marks on the outside of the garment.

Pressing tools need not be expensive. You can make an adequate press cloth from a white handkerchief or a piece of self-fabric. You can also make your own pressing aids in the “Sewing for Other Projects and People” project.

Judging Your Own Work
Here are some general criteria for judging a tailored garment. These will also help you compare the quality of tailored garments sold in your area.

- Collar and lapels are firm and roll smoothly. They have sharp edges without the seam around the outer edge being obvious. They are the same on both sides.
- The lapel roll line is firm and stable, and does not gape or stand away from the body. The roll line is softer in women’s than in men’s garments. The front edge is firm, straight, and perpendicular to the floor.
- Buttonholes are identical, firm, and flat. They have straight edges and square corners (excluding keyhole buttonholes) and do not ravel.
- Pockets are firm and have crisp edges, straight lines, or smooth and even curved areas.
- Shoulders are firm enough to be smooth and to allow ease of movement without stress on the fabric. The sleeve hangs straight and the sleeve cap is smoothly rounded without wrinkles. Shoulder pads fit smoothly.
- The sleeve and bottom hems are invisible from the right side and are smooth, firm, and flat.
- The vents are straight, smooth, and firm and have no obvious seam ridges.
- The lining fits smoothly, conceals inner construction, slides on in dressing, and gives an attractive appearance to the inside of the garment.
- The garment fits well and is well pressed.
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**Did I participate in Fashion Revue?**

Where? ____________  When? ____________

**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 the fabrics you selected. Tell about the fiber content of your fabric(s) and attach sample swatches. What did you have the most difficult time making? How did you solve any problems? Include a photograph or sketch of your final outfit, complete with accessories.

Also talk about the sewing resources you used, the resource people who helped you, and group meeting activities.
Tailoring Project Record

Name

Address

Age as of January 1

Club

Number of years in Textile Science projects

Number of years in this project

Leader's signature

What I made for my project

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<th>FIBER CONTENT</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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What I learned in this project (new skills, new words)

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Sharing What You've Learned
Give a demonstration or talk on a skill you learned in your project. You might show someone how to:
• Use pressing tools
• Mark with tailor's tacks and chalk
• Use hair canvas
• Insert shoulder pads
• Tell the difference between interlinings and underlining

Pick something you're really interested in to share with others. You might also lead a group discussion, judge a series of tailoring samples, or set up a contest. Be creative and have fun!

Want to Know More?
Many books have been written on tailoring and fit. Check fabric stores, book stores, and the library for more information. You'll also find a list of tailoring resources on PENpages at your county extension office.

Exhibits and Fashion Revue
Check current fashion revue and fair or round-up premium listings for entry ideas. Every garment should have a hand-stitched label printed with your name, age, 4-H club, and county. Attach the label to the inside of the garment, close to the hem.

Taking the Project Again
Tailoring skills take practice. Think about taking this project again to master your abilities. Tackle another garment that will challenge your skills!