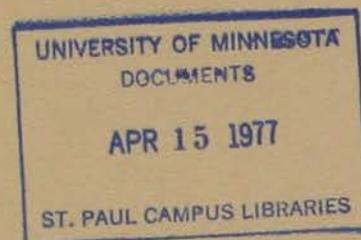


4-H M-10 Revised 1975

MN 2000  
FH M-10  
Rev. 75

# **The Clothes You Make**



***a guide for teens and adults***

Agricultural Extension Service  
University of Minnesota



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## THE CLOTHES YOU MAKE – A GUIDE FOR TEENS AND ADULTS

“The Clothes You Make” is the 4-H project for fellows and girls who want to learn to sew and to continue developing their sewing skills.

We want to learn to sew for many reasons. Your reasons for sewing may differ from those of an 8-year-old or a 13-year-old. However, the reasons are usually these:

- to experience the satisfaction of learning to sew.
- to have clothes that are popular with friends.
- to save money on clothes.
- to have more clothes.
- to give clothes your own individual look.

Can you remember how you learned to sew? Did you do it on your own? Or did someone sit down and show you how? Was it a pleasant experience? Or would you rather forget it? Did someone make you do it their way? Remember, the way you learned may not be the best way today. Our fabrics have changed, our sewing machines have changed, and also our attitudes toward sewing have changed. It is now considered a hobby more than a necessity.

### UNDERSTANDING THE PROJECTS

Your first role as a leader will be to help members select a project. “The Clothes You Make” is divided into three units.

“The Clothes You Make—I” lets a member make the kind of garment they want or need. A beginner may choose just one part, or those with sewing experience will want to make a variety of garments from:

Topshirtjumperkirt	Night Clothes
Many Dresses	Pants Plus

Within each you can help the member select a style of garment to make based on their sewing abilities. We suggest a member add at least one new learning on each garment sewed.

“Super Sewing” is the one in which members will have sewing experience with a variety of pattern designs and fabrics. If they want to tailor a garment, it is especially important that they have a varied sewing background and are ready for more difficult construction techniques.

In “Sew What’s New” and “Sharing Your Sewing,” garments can range from easy to difficult. The

learnings involve adapting your sewing skill to the new fabrics and to sewing for others. These two projects would make good special group projects.

In addition to the project material a member receives when enrolled in the project, there are other materials that can be obtained from the county extension office. For example, a member enrolling in The Clothes You Make – I may want to make a simple elastic-top pair of pants. All the information needed is in the project materials. Another member wants to make a fitted pair of plaid pants with a zipper. Publications on fitting pants, matching plaids, and putting in zippers are available. Refer to the guide in the back for additional helps available for each project.

The Funsheet on “Line, Color & Texture” should be completed by each younger member once. This can then be used as a reference. Refer to the section in this guide on “Line, Color & Texture” to use as an activity at a project meeting.

### YOUR MEMBERS AND YOU

The fellows and girls in “The Clothes You Make” will be of all ages. Their abilities will differ greatly, so you will want to help them in smaller groups of similar age.

If you are leader to a group of younger children who have never sewn before, be sure to use the guide “Helping Children Learn to Sew - Their First Experience.” It is very detailed and helpful, especially if you are a new leader.

**Younger children** (8 to 12 years) like to do things together in a group, although each will need individual attention. You will be most successful if your group is small, of similar age, and same sex. It is best to plan several short activities that they can get involved in doing rather than one long one.

Children this age are still learning to do physical skills. Sewing is an example. Larger hand movements such as sewing on the machine may come easier than small finger movements, such as hand sewing. Try to realize that some things, such as pinning two pieces of fabric together with the edges even, may be a very difficult task for small hands.

Asking “why” is a good way to learn. Encourage them to question why something is done a certain way. It will be more difficult for you to always explain, but their understanding will be better.

**Older fellows and girls** (13 years and older) can do more planning and directing of their own project activities. Small group activities will not be as important, unless it's getting together to learn a new idea on the clothing scene. For example, a new fabric or notion, a new construction technique, or a new direction in fitting.

Older members will need to know they are welcome to come to you with their individual problems. It might be a telephone call or stopping in to talk to you. Encourage them to explore different resource materials and resource people. There are many reference books available on sewing and clothing in general. Fabric, notion, and sewing machine companies have publications available, many free for the asking. Leaflets and books on current fabrics and styles are available at pattern and fabric counters. Refer to the guide in the back on "Reference Books and Materials on Sewing."

**Teen leaders** can easily take on the responsibility of teaching sewing skills to the younger members (many of you using this guide may be teen leaders). Give them your support, but also the freedom to develop their own plan of action.

Here is a flexible guide on matching learning activities to age of groups of members:

#### Younger

Small group activities using --

games	experiments
visuals	talk
demonstrations	show and tell
"doing"	variety
fun	

Field trips

#### Older

Small group meeting on a specific topic

Field trips

Outside resource speakers and printed references

Individual helps --  
telephone calls      home visits

Fashion shows

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Young people's interest and enthusiasm for learning to sew can easily be dampened if they have to produce a perfect garment. Try to help them understand how a mistake or poor workmanship will look. Then let **them** decide whether or not to "rip it out" (unless an armhole is sewed together -- then there's no choice). They may be very proud of a job you think poorly done.

Encourage 4-H'ers to try different methods and techniques of construction. Some may find another way of doing it that's easier for them. However, suggest easier methods to those beginning to sew, and point out the extra finishing touches or short cuts to the more experienced.

If you are interested in what a good construction detail should look like, these characteristics are listed in each of the folders on construction details.

## TEACHING IDEAS

The **flip chart** for 4-H clothing project leaders is an excellent teaching tool. The ideas presented can each be used by itself, but better yet, use it to support your own teaching ideas. Blank pages are provided so you can make illustrations, or mount samples of zippers, hems, seams, etc., or kinds of fabric.

Here are some short teaching ideas to make your project meetings interesting. Some are designed to be used along with the flip chart. Don't try to cover too much at one time. These ideas perhaps are most suitable for younger member groups.

- Members may need help in determining the **difficulty of patterns**. To do this, borrow pattern books from a store or county extension office. Talk about and pick out patterns that would be easy or difficult for them. Consider number of pattern pieces and number of different construction details such as zippers, sleeves, collar, buttonholes, waistline, pockets, belt.
- Getting the right **measurements** to select the right pattern size is important. The members will probably find it fun to measure each other. Ask them to bring their tape measures, or provide a couple if you have them. Divide into groups of two. Use the flip chart sections on measuring to show them where to measure for chest or bust, waist, hips, back waist, neck, and sleeve. Tying a string around each waist will help them find their natural waistlines. Be sure the measurements are recorded. Show

how they can determine their pattern type and size. Caution them against buying any other size, have them go to another store if one is out of the right size.

References to use are:

Extension F 238 "Pattern Figure Types & Sizes"

Pattern Books - ask stores for out-dated copies.

- **Take a field trip** to your local fabric store or fabric department. You might want to check with the manager or clerks beforehand to find out the best time. Have the members pick out the fabrics they like and tell why they would be good for the garments they are going to make. Show them where to find fabric information on the fabric bolt and talk about what it means. Look for: fiber content, care instructions, fabric width, pre-shrunk, manufacturer, price. Ask for the care label that can be sewn into the garment.
- **Grainline** should be checked before the fabric is purchased. The lengthwise and crosswise yarns should meet at right angles. To illustrate this, get ¼ yard of fabric that is on straight grain and ¼ yard that is off grainline. Lay a yardstick perpendicular to the selvage. Help the members find a yarn next to the straight edge and follow it with their eyes all the way across the fabric. On fabric that is grainline straight, the yarn will stay the same distance from the straight edge all the way across. On off-grain fabric, the yarn will angle away from the straight edge.

A garment made from off-grain fabric will not hang correctly. It is usually difficult to straighten, so members should look for this before they buy fabric.

Use the section "All About Fabric" from the flip chart to help you explain fabric and grainline.

- **Preshrink** fabric before cutting the way it will be washed and dried after the garment is made (check label). Preshrinking will prevent the garment from shrinking in size after it is made. To show the importance of this, cut two 5 inch squares of new fabric. Wash one and when it is dry compare the size with the other square. Try this with several types of fabrics, both woven and knit. Zippers and trims need to be preshrunk, too.
- **"With nap" fabrics** are those that have a raised napped surface of pile that runs in one direction. When sewing a napped fabric, the tops of all pattern pieces must be placed in the same direction. To show the important of this, make up a sample

of two pieces of corduroy sewn together with the pile direction different in each. There will be a notable difference in color. Mount the sample on one of the blank pages of the flip chart. Other examples of "with nap" fabric are fur and deep pile, suede cloth, velvet, and velveteen. One-way design fabrics have to be handled in this same way, too.

- A good way to show how to do a certain construction technique is to **demonstrate** it to your small group. First show a completed example of the technique. This could be in a garment you've made, one that was purchased, or an example especially made up. Try to relate it to the actual step-by-step procedure. Then have them do it on their own garments.
- Calling it a **"Clothes Clinic"** might make clothing repair more interesting. Have each one bring some article of clothing that needs repair - a button missing, a seam, a hem, or a jacket sleeve ripped out. Provide a few buttons and fabric scraps in case someone forgets. Show how to do repairs, and have each do his own.
- Use the sections from the flip chart on "To Thread a Needle", "To Tie a Knot", and "Sew on a Button" to help you explain. Extension publications are available on clothing repair.
- Go on a shopping tour to **compare the cost** of making garments to ready-to-wear garments. Have the members add up the costs of the garments they made - fabric, pattern, notions. Find garments of similar fabric and style in a store and compare the cost, quality of construction, and over-all appeal. Make arrangements ahead of time with the store manager or clerks.
- Have members plan and present a **style show** for their parents or club. They can model and show off garments made for their 4-H projects. A script could even be written. Stress what has been learned. Avoid judging at this type of activity as it is not possible to rate such things as personality, resources available, ability, or personal likes and dislikes.
- There are extension folders available on several **construction** details. They are:

Put It All Together (Darts and Seams)	Sleevery (Sleeves)
Edge Ways (Collars and Facings)	It's Hot Stuff (Press As You Sew)
Zip, Zip, Zip (Zippers)	Fasten Up (Buttonholes & Fastenings)
Ahem! (Hems)	Backings and Linings (by Coats & Clark)

Use these to develop teaching ideas on a construction detail. Again, you'll want to limit the amount of information covered — one construction detail per time.

## THE SEWING MACHINE

Learning to sew on the sewing machine is a big thrill. Some basic things like running the machine, threading it, and stitching need to be experienced before a project can be started. You could use these steps in showing the children how to sew on the machine.

### Step 1 - Running the Machine

Have them sit at the machine and practice running the foot controller (or knee controller). The presser foot can be up. They should learn to use the controller to start, slow down, and stop the machine, rather than the hand wheel.

Help them sit directly in front of the needle, with their bodies slightly forward. Feet should be flat on the floor.

To practice and develop confidence, have them stitch on lined paper. This could also be done at home between meetings. Practice sewing paper is available in quantity from Sears Roebuck & Co. It has straight lines, curved lines, and corners for practicing control. Write to: Sears Roebuck & Co., Sewing School Coordinator, Dept. 620, 925 South Homan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60607. Check with your county extension office to see if these are available before you order.

### Step 2 - Stitching With Thread

Thread the machine and have them stitch on fabric scraps. Because it helps develop confidence and gives a sense of achievement, this step comes before learning to thread the machine.

Attach a strip of masking tape 5/8 inch from the needle hole to each machine, if it has no seam guide.

Each child, when stitching on the machine, should try to get in the habit of doing it this way:

1. Pull the two threads back and to the right.
2. Place fabric under the presser foot.
3. Lower the needle into the fabric where you want to start stitching.
4. Lower the presser foot and stitch.

Show how to backstitch, and how to move the lever to make the machine stitch backward.

### Step 3 - Threading the Sewing Machine

Sewing machines must be threaded correctly in order to stitch. "It won't sew" is a common problem of beginning stitchers, and the reason is usually incorrect threading. Encourage them to refer to their sewing machine instruction books when threading their machines at home (if they have them).

Show and thread the common threading points - spool pin, thread guide, tension, take-up lever, more thread guides, and the needle. The needle is threaded from the side that has the long groove.

The bobbin may need to be wound on the bobbin winder, or it may be wound in the bobbin case with thread directly from the needle. Show how the bobbin thread can be raised through the needle hole by holding the upper thread and turning the hand wheel.

## FUN WITH LINE, COLOR, AND TEXTURE

The accompanying folder, "Fun With Line, Color, and Texture," helps the member become aware of the three parts that make up clothes design. It can be completed by the member alone, but is best as an activity with a small group at a project meeting. It is for younger members and needs to be completed only once. The member can then use it as a reference.

Plan at least two different meeting times for this activity, as it is too long for one. Line and color can be covered at one, and texture at the second. Read and become familiar with each part.

### LINE

#### SUPPLIES I WILL NEED

- Pencils
- Rulers
- Pattern books (optional)

Explain what horizontal and vertical each mean. Relate them to the structural lines or furnishings of the room you are in, or the sun setting on the "horizon."

- Help the members to draw the lines the same length and even at top and bottom.
- Explain that even though the lines are all the same length, some will appear shorter or longer because of the other lines added to them. To most

people the second, third, and fifth lines will appear shorter because a type of horizontal line has been added.

- Help the members to draw squares, with all sides the same.
- This second exercise will help them relate to the lines in the clothes. Horizontal lines make things appear shorter and wider, while vertical lines make things appear taller and thinner.
- Pattern selection for garments they are going to make can be discussed. What kind of lines should they look for in the pattern?

## COLOR

### SUPPLIES I WILL NEED

Pencils	Colored paper
Scissors	Fabric scraps
Glue	Hand mirrors
Magazines	

- The circle does not have to be exact. Try to find color samples for each color on the wheel as true as possible.
- Things in nature that remind us of warmth are fire, sun; coolness are sky, grass, water, lakes, ice. They will think of other examples for each.
- In the section on eye, hair, and skin color, help them to appreciate their own individual coloring. Have them work together in pairs using hand mirrors.
- Look back at their color wheels to decide from where such colors as blond (yellow), brown (orange), caramel (orange), and beige (yellow-orange) come.
- If large enough fabric scraps are available, have members "try on" some of the colors that are similar to their eyes, hair, and skin colorings.

## TEXTURE

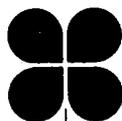
### SUPPLIES I WILL NEED

Pencils	Glue
Scissors	Fabric scraps

- Texture may be the most difficult part of design for a child to understand. Before they do the section on finding fabric textures, show them examples of each. Fabrics with a lot of texture could be corduroy, terry

cloth, fur-like; little texture could be satin, vinyl, tri-cot, percale. Have them touch each.

- Discuss which of their texture samples they might choose for pants or a skirt. Then which sample would they choose for a top to go with it. Try to disregard color or print of fabric.



## PROJECTS

*Additional Helps Available*

*(suggestions for each project but not limited to those)*

### The Clothes You Make—I TOPSHIRTJUMPERSKI RT

- 4-H M-29 Put It All Together (Darts and Seams)
- 4-H M-30 Edge Ways (Collars and Facings)
- 4-H M-31 Zip, Zip, Zip (Zippers)
- 4-H M-32 Ahem! (Hems)
- 4-H M-35 Fasten Up (Buttonholes and Fastenings)
- HC 10 Sewing with Double Knits
- Simplicity's What, Where, When, and How of Plaids
- 4-H M-16\* Fun with Line, Color, and Texture

### DRESSES

- 4-H M-29 Put It All Together (Darts and Seams)
- 4-H M-30 Edge Ways (Collars and Facings)
- 4-H M-31 Zip, Zip, Zip (Zippers)
- 4-H M-32 Ahem! (Hems)
- 4-H M-33 Sleevevery (Sleeves)
- 4-H M-35 Fasten Up (Buttonholes and Fastenings)
- HC 10 Sewing with Double Knits
- HC 45 Sewing the Newer Fabrics
- 4-H M-16\* Fun with Line, Color, and Texture

### NIGHT CLOTHES

- 4-H M-29 Put It All Together (Darts and Seams)
- 4-H M-30 Edge Ways (Collars and Facings)
- 4-H M-32 Ahem! (Hems)
- 4-H M-33 Sleevevery (Sleeves)
- 4-H M-35 Fasten Up (Buttonholes and Fastenings)
- HC 45 Sewing the Newer Fabrics
- 4-H M-16\* Fun with Line, Color, and Texture

\*This should be completed by every member once-not every time a project is taken.

## PANTS

4-H M-29 Put It All Together (Darts and Seams)  
4-H M-31 Zip, Zip, Zip (Zippers)  
4-H M-34 It's Hot Stuff (Press As You Sew)  
4-H M-35 Fasten Up (Buttonholes and Fastenings)  
HC 10 Sewing with Double Knits  
Ext. Bull. 382 Fits Sew Well—Pants  
Coats & Clark's Menswear I Pants  
4-H M-16\* Fun with Line, Color, and Texture  
Simplicity's What, Where, When, and How of Plaids

## SUPER SEWING

4-H M-31 Zip, Zip, Zip (Zippers)  
4-H M-32 Ahem! (Hems)  
4-H M-33 Sleeveary (Sleeves)  
4-H M-34 It's Hot Stuff (Press As You Sew)  
4-H M-35 Fasten Up (Buttonholes and Fastenings)  
Ext. Bull. 382 Fits Sew Well—Pants  
Coats & Clark's Backings and Linings  
Coats & Clark's Menswear I Pants  
Coats & Clark's Menswear II Jackets  
Simplicity's What, Where, When, and How of Plaids  
HC 45 Sewing the Newer Fabrics  
Ext. Folder 244 Testing the Pattern in Muslin  
Coats & Clark's Tailoring 1 and 2

## SEW WHAT'S NEW

HC 45 Sewing the Newer Fabrics  
EF 305 Sewing Today's Fabrics—Sweater Knits

There also are commercial bulletins on sewing newer fabrics.

## SHARING YOUR SEWING

Ext. Folder 262 New Garments From Old  
HC 28 Warm Mittens for Minnesota Winters  
HC 43 Warm Slippers for Minnesota Winters  
HC 67 Warm Caps for Minnesota Winters

## REFERENCE BOOKS AND MATERIALS ON SEWING

### GENERAL

Coats and Clark's Sewing Book — Newest Methods  
From A to Z Golden Press, Racine, Wisconsin

Everything About Sewing . . . by Vogue

Knits  
Trims

Lingerie and Loungewear  
Fitted Garments

Fur and Fur-like  
Fabrics

Ponchos, Capes, Scarves  
and Stoles

Leather and Leather-  
like Fabrics

Pantsuits and Jump-  
suits

Menswear

Swimwear

Special Fabrics

Easy Unlined

Jackets, Coats

Ready Set Sew by Butterick

Butterick Fashion Marketing Co., P.O. Box  
1914, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16603

Simplicity Sewing Book

Simplicity Pattern Co. Inc., 200 Madison  
Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

Singer Sewing Book

The Singer Company (at Singer stores)

Super Sewing

The New Bishop/Arch Book J.B. Lippincott  
Co., New York

The Answer Book

The McCall Pattern Co., 615 McCall Rd.,  
Manhattan, Kansas, 66502

## SPECIAL GARMENTS

All About Sewing for Children  
Simplicity Pattern Co.

Fashion Tailoring

The Singer Company (at Singer stores)

Sewing For Men and Boys

Simplicity Pattern Co.

Simply Tailoring

Simplicity Pattern Co.

## SPECIAL FABRICS

How To Sew Leather, Suede and Fur  
by Schwebke and Krohn

Sewing with Leather

Tandy Leather Company

## TEXTILES

"Guide to Man-Made Fibers"

Education Department, Man-Made Fiber Prod-  
ucts Association, Inc., 1150 17th Street,  
N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

Information on wool: The Wool Education Center  
American Wool Council, The Wool Bureau, Inc.  
200 Clayton St., Denver, Colorado 80206

Information on cotton: National Cotton Council  
1918 North Parkway, Memphis, Tennessee 38112

\*This should be completed by every member once-not every time a project is taken.

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Developed by Eileen G. Anderson, urban extension agent

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