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# EVALUATING A Constructed Garment



This list of criteria for evaluating a constructed garment is a guide and only a guide. It is not designed to tell how to construct a garment nor to tell what must be done to each garment to meet a supposed "4-H standard." There is no one 4-H way to construct a garment.

Many techniques may be used to judge whether a garment is well made. The evaluation, therefore, should be based on the final result rather than placing special emphasis on the specific techniques used to construct the garment.

Evaluate all construction details, their appearance, and the way they fit together. The criteria listed may be used by members, leaders, and judges to determine the improvements needed and to evaluate the quality of the garment. This publication can also be used by the member, leader, or judge to show garment-by-garment progress and learning.

Sometimes you may see new or different construction methods. Because of the variety of fabrics and finishes now available, everyone who sews is forced to experiment. Sometimes the results are not what we expect, but problems are solved successfully in a manner that is quite different from what we've been taught. Experimentation is encouraged because each fabric must be handled according to its own characteristics. When in

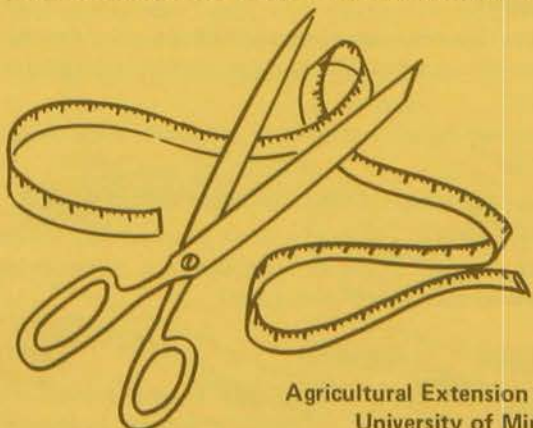
doubt about a method, ask yourself "Can it be done this way? Will it work?" Unless you can think of a reason why you can't use the method, go ahead and use it.

Examples of criteria for general garment construction are listed below. Remember that these are only a few examples and they contain words such as "may" and "generally."

## Did It Work?

### A. GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. Seam and hem finishes need to be more durable for clothing that gets much wear than for garments that receive little wear. Sport and school clothes receive harsher wear and care than a party dress.
2. Interfacing is used to reduce strain on fashion fabrics and to give body so the design looks right. Details that are to stand up or out will need more body than flatter, softer details.
3. Facing edges, seam allowances, and hem edges may be treated alike. If one ravel enough to need a finish the others probably need the same.
4. On really heavy fabrics you may want to use a lighter weight fabric for facings to reduce the bulk.
5. The hem width is determined by the fabric, the cut of the skirt, and the member's future plans. Generally, circular skirts have very narrow hems (1/4 to 3/4 inches). Sheer fabrics cut on grain sometimes have very wide hems (4 to 6 inches). If the member plans to lengthen a skirt or pants before the school year is over, it may have a wider than usual hem.
6. If the hem edge puckers when turned and stitched, it may be better to use a different type of edge finish.
7. For hems in bulky, heavy fabrics, you may want to use hem tape for the edge finish or treat it as the seam allowances were treated.



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8. Waistline closures (hooks and eyes, buttons and button-holes) should hold the placket or zipper folded edges in place—straight and on-grain.
9. Selvages may be used as a seam finish. If they shrank and puckered in pre-shrinking, you'll want to clip them. If they did not ripple or pucker, you do not need to clip them.
10. Special fabrics require special techniques (some a bit unusual for regular fabrics).

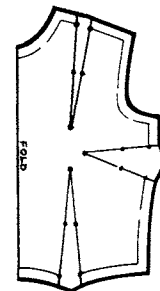
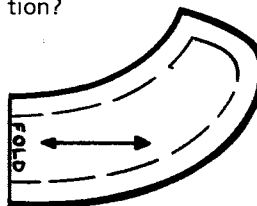
## B. EVALUATING THE GARMENT—OVERALL

1. Are checks and stripes either matched or used to make a design?
2. Are trims, designs, colors, or fabrics used well? Have you considered art principles?
3. Are the fabric and pattern style suitable for the occasion?
4. Does the trim add to the attractiveness of the garment?
5. Can the trim be cared for in the same manner as the fabric?
6. Has the garment been constructed so it can be used for the activities and places you plan to attend? Can it be cared for as you had planned?
7. Is the garment well pressed? This means no shiny iron marks or fused areas where the iron was too hot. Also be sure seam allowances haven't made ridges on the right side.
8. Is the garment made "on-grain?" Does it hang correctly—not crooked?
9. Is stitching correctly done? Are the stitches the right length for the fabric and the garment's use? Has the tension been adjusted properly? Was the needle the right size for the fabric and stitches?
10. Was the garment made in a logical order so seams can be pressed open, bulk eliminated, and raw edges encased?
11. Have the enclosed seams been beveled or graded (trimmed) and excess bulk removed? The firmness of the fabric and expected strain determine how much is trimmed away.



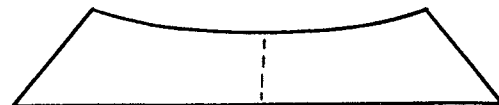
## C. DARTS, TUCKS, GATHERS, PLEATS

1. Are darts and tucks stitched with smooth, even stitches in straight lines and reinforced at the ends?
2. Do darts taper to a smooth point—no "pouches" or bubbles at the end?
3. Are darts and tucks pressed flat (trimmed if on heavy fabric) with no ridges or outline showing on the right side?
4. Are pleats spaced evenly? Do they hang perpendicular to the floor?
5. Have gathers been evenly distributed?
6. Are darts, tucks, and pleats pressed in the proper direction?



## D. FACINGS

1. Do fitted facings have the same shape and grainline as the garment edge to which they are sewn?
2. Does the facing fit smoothly with no puckers or tucks, and is the facing invisible from the right side?
3. Have the seams been graded and all excess bulk trimmed away?
4. If bias facings are used, are they on the true bias?
5. When bias facings are used, are the pieces joined together on-grain?
6. Are bias facings hemmed flat to the garment with stitches that don't show?
7. Do the facing seams match the garment seams at the shoulders, underarm, etc.?
8. Are facings understitched and tacked to the garment at seams and darts? Additional tacking is seldom required.

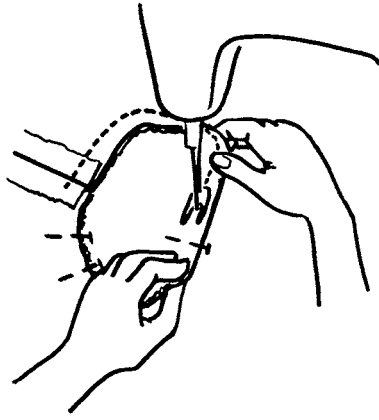


## E. COLLARS

1. Is the collar the same shape and length on both sides of the neck opening? Do points or curved corners look the same?
2. Does the collar lie smoothly? No under collar should show!
3. Have seams been graded and excess bulk removed?
4. If the collar is supposed to meet at center front or center back, does it? If it's not supposed to, is the space the same on each side of the center?

## F. SLEEVES

1. Look at the pattern design first! If set-in sleeves are supposed to be smooth, are there no puckers, gathers, pleats

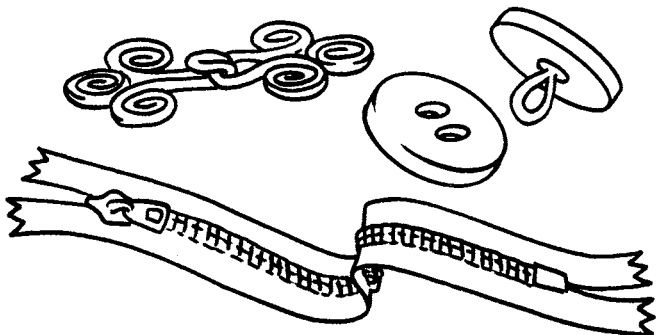


or tucks in the sleeve seam? Does the sleeve seam have a gentle rounded appearance? If the design shows gathers or pleats, are they evenly arranged over the top of the sleeve?

2. Do the sleeve seams show straight, even stitching and seam lines that match exactly?
3. Look at the grain line. Is the lengthwise grain perpendicular to the floor? Is crosswise grainline parallel to the floor?
4. If raglan sleeves are used, are the seams smooth with no puckers or pleats? Have the seams been trimmed and clipped so there are no ripples or drawing at the seams?
5. Have kimono sleeves been reinforced?
6. Are kimono sleeves free from ripples and drawing at the seams?
7. Has excess bulk been removed from cuff seams?
8. Are cuffs even in width?
9. Are sleeve plackets inconspicuous when cuff is fastened? If the plackets are meant to be decorative, they will obviously be visible on the top.

#### G. CLOSURES

1. Are buttons securely attached with a long enough shank so that the buttonhole can lie smooth and flat?
2. Are the buttons and buttonholes evenly spaced?
3. Do buttonholes begin and end in line with each other?
4. Is the buttonhole big enough to let button go through easily but not too big?
5. With heavier fabrics, have heavier buttons and wider buttonholes been used? With sheerer fabrics, have finer buttons and narrower buttonholes been used?
6. Are the welts of bound buttonholes even in width? Do the welts meet in the center of the hole?



7. Is the buttonhole on straight grain, unless the design calls for it to be done some other way?
8. Has interfacing been used? Is it of correct weight for the fabric? Will it hold up under the strain of buttoning?
9. If a placket is used, is it concealed? If a zipper is used, are the zipper teeth covered, hidden?
10. Does the zipper slide easily?
11. Is stitching straight and reasonably inconspicuous? Top stitching will show, of course.
12. Is the placket or zipper smooth, free from gaps, puckers, or pleats?
13. Do design lines (yokes, waistline) go straight across the zipper or placket as if the closure was not there?
14. If an invisible zipper was used, are the zipper teeth invisible with no pleat, tuck, or off-grain area at the lower end of the zipper?

#### H. WAISTLINE TREATMENTS

1. Has excess bulk been trimmed away from waistline?
2. Is the stitching line even and smooth?
3. Are band fasteners securely attached? Are they of a size and style appropriate for the garment, its use, and care?
4. Is the waistband or casing even in width?
5. If a belt was made, is the fabric cut and applied to the backing on the straight grain?
6. Are belt fasteners securely fastened and appropriate for the style, use, and care of the garment?
7. Has something been done to keep elastic from curling or rolling?

#### I. INTERFACINGS

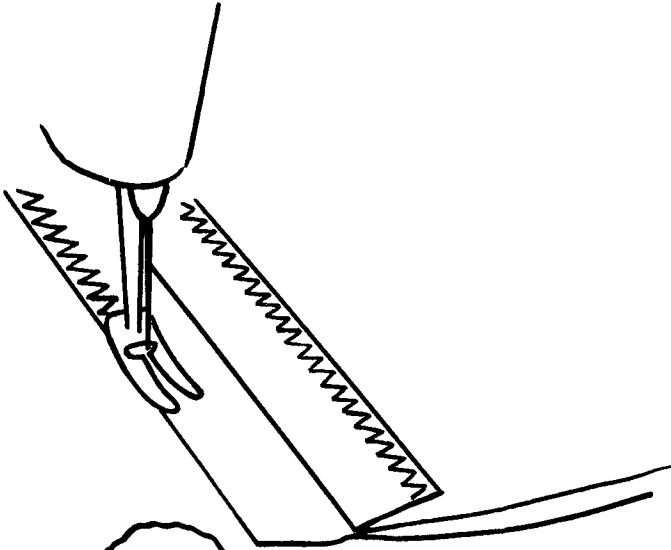
1. Can the interfacing be cleaned and pressed the same way as the garment fabric?
2. Are fused interfacings fused completely with no gaps?
3. Are fused interfacings free from a stiff or board-like look on the outside?
4. Have interfacings, fused and otherwise, been trimmed to eliminate bulk in seam allowances?
5. Have fused interfacings stayed soft and flexible rather than becoming heavy or stiff?
6. Have stretch and stability in two-dimensional interfacings been used to provide stability in the proper direction?
7. Does the interfacing, where needed, form a part of the garment and not appear obvious?
8. Is the interfacing and its placement appropriate to the flexibility of the fabric, the design of the garment, and the amount of strain?

#### J. LININGS

1. Is lining fabric firmly woven or knitted and lighter than the garment fabric?
2. Can lining fabric and garment fabric be cared for in the same way?
3. Are garment seams free from strain at points where lining is attached?

## K. SEAM FINISHES

1. If necessary, are seams finished to prevent raveling or rolling of edges? If fabric ravel, a seam finish more effective than pinking is needed. Pinking only makes a garment pretty. Don't pink knits.
2. Is the seam finish right for the weave of the fabric, the amount of wear expected, and the use and care of the garment?
3. Is seam finish invisible on the right side of the garment?



## L. HEMS

1. Is the hem invisible on the right side of the garment unless the pattern shows that it is supposed to be seen as a lettuce edge and other decorative hems?
2. Is the hem even in width and neat on the underside?
3. Is the hem securely attached, but not pulled tight?
4. Is the hem width appropriate for the style and fabric (item 5, general statements)?
5. Does hem lie flat and smooth with no ridge on right side?
6. Is fullness eased in with no pleats or tucks and evenly distributed?
7. Are stitches invisible on right side and evenly spaced?
8. Has excess bulk been removed from hem seam allowances?
9. If the hem is done by machine, are stitches even and invisible?
10. If the hem is fused, are there no sharp creases, ridges, or flat areas visible on the right side?
11. If a top-stitched shirt-tail hem is used, is the stitching line an even distance from edge of garment?

## M. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Is top stitching even with no skipped stitches?
2. Is "stitch in the ditch" done so stitches are in the ditch, not on the edge?
3. Are pockets securely attached? If lined, no lining should show on the right side.
4. Have pockets been reinforced?
5. Has excess bulk been removed from pocket seam lines?
6. Are the corners of square pockets mitered?

## N. KNITS

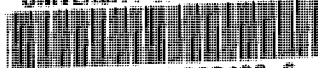
1. Was a man-made thread used for stretch and durability?
2. If a special stitch was used, does it provide stretch? Is it neatly done?
3. Single knits may need edge finishes and hems may be done by special techniques to control rolling or curling. Has this been done?
4. Does zipper lie flat and smooth and not appear bulky?
5. If exposed zipper is used, is stitching neat and even? Is bottom securely fastened?

Revised by Marilyn J. Olson, extension specialist, 4-H Youth Development, and Sherri Johnson, extension specialist, clothing and textiles.

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