

SEWING  
FOR  
FUN **3**

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service Extension Division  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

4-H Clothing Construction





## SEWING FOR FUN 3

Adapted by Beatrice Kalka, Extension Clothing and Textiles Specialist.

### WHAT YOU'LL DO IN THIS PROJECT

So far you have worked with the sewing machine, fabric, and patterns. You have made at least two different articles of clothing for yourself. Now it's time to learn other basic construction skills before you advance to a special interest project. In this project you will learn:

- How to take care of the sewing machine.
- About planning your wardrobe.
- About selecting a pattern and fabric with line, color, and design in mind.
- How to make simple pattern adjustments.
- New construction skills with:

set-in sleeves	pants
collars	knit fabrics
gathers and ruffles	belts
waistbands	topstitching
yokes	zippers
pockets	trims
- About shopping decisions for ready-to-wear clothes.
- More about grooming.
- More about clothing care and laundering.

Continue to keep 4-H records using the *Clothing Construction Record*, Pub. 346-002. Share what you are learning with others by giving a demonstration, exhibiting at the fair, and modeling in the fashion revue. Write down what you hope to learn and what you plan to make in your 4-H record book.

Use this booklet to guide you as you continue to develop new skills. Select the fabric and pattern for your project after you consider the information about wardrobe planning, color, line, and design. As you sew, continue to check the standards listed in sewing basics.

## PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

To complete *Sewing for Fun 3* you should:

- Be able to check off 50 of the 64 skills listed on the *4-H Clothing Construction Skills Checklist*, (see Inside Front Cover).
- Make at least two different garments for yourself. You may make something from the suggested list in *Sewing for Fun 2* or you may select a garment from this list:
  - Lounging and bedtime clothes such as pajamas, gowns, robes, caftans
  - Pants or shorts
  - Knit garments such as tops, shirts, jumpers, dresses

You can make anything that will help you learn and practice the listed skills. Remember to try something new.

### PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

#### What Clothes Do You Have Now?

Before you decide what to make, take a good look in your closet and drawers. See what you already have that fits and is in good wearing condition.

#### What Are Your Activities?

Some activities need special clothing. For example, football players and cheerleaders wear special uniforms. Think about your activities and what clothes you already have for:

- School.
- Relaxing or watching TV.
- Church.
- Parties or other dress-up occasions.
- Sports such as bike riding, swimming, playing tennis, baseball, etc.

#### Make a List of Your Needs

Now make a list of your clothing needs. Use it as

your guide when selecting a pattern or buying ready-to-wear clothing. This is the beginning step in **wardrobe planning**.

### Look at Yourself

Whether you are planning to make or buy clothing, you will want clothing that looks good on you. Look at yourself in the mirror. You will see some things you cannot change. They are:

- Height.
- Build or bone structure.
- Skin coloring.
- Other physical features.

It is possible to change other parts of your appearance:

- Weight.
- Hair style.
- Length of nails.
- Skin condition.

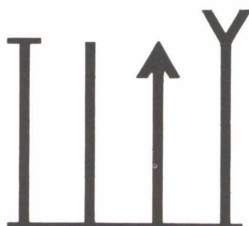
Know what your physical traits are. As you plan your clothing, select styles, designs, and colors that will accentuate your good features.

Now, let's find out more about those lines, designs, and colors.

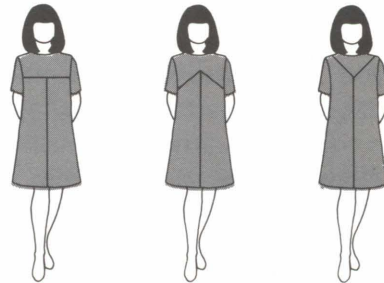
### LINES AND YOU

Lines can play tricks. These tricks are called optical illusions.

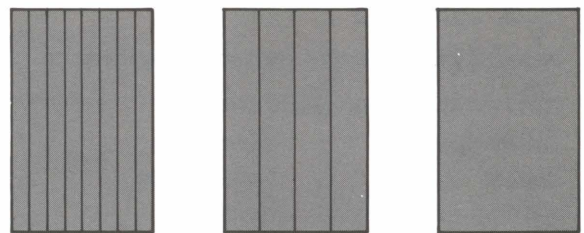
Vertical lines slenderize and lengthen. They carry the eye up and down. These vertical lines are all the same length; they appear to be different because of the lines that intersect them.



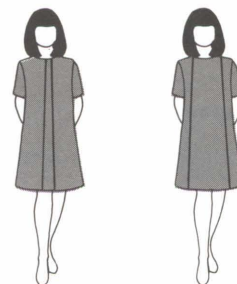
When vertical lines are used in clothing, the eye travels vertically over the figure giving the impression of greater height. In these dresses, the vertical lines give the impression of different heights because the horizontal line stops the eye, the arrow sends the eye down again, and the Y continues to draw the eye upward.



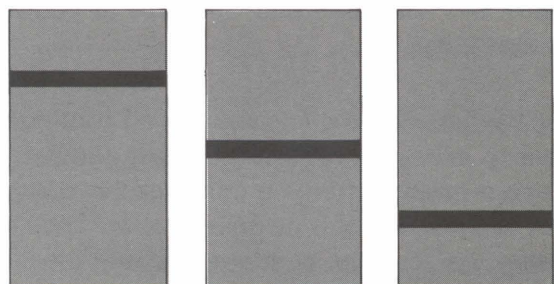
The three rectangles are the same size. The farther apart the vertical lines, the greater the feeling of width.



Compare the feeling of width in these dresses.

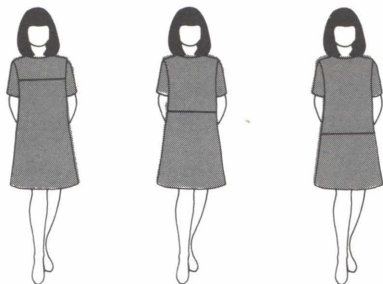


Horizontal spacing places emphasis on different parts of the body.

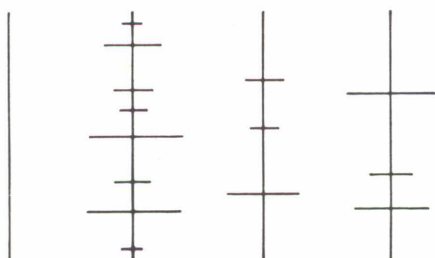




In these garments, the bust, waist, and hips are accented with the use of a horizontal seamline.



Vertical and horizontal lines combined create different effects. All these vertical lines are the same length. You will see that the unbroken lines look longer. Several horizontal lines reduce height. They also clutter the effect of a garment. Width at the hemline will reduce height.



Diagonal and curved lines can create more interest in the design.

All lines affect your figure and how your clothes look on you. Use the design lines to emphasize your best features and camouflage others. Both the **silhouette** of a garment and its **inner design lines** are important. The silhouette lines create an outline. The inner lines create the design. They include seamlines, necklines, belts, and other decorative details such as buttons or trim.

## COLOR AND YOU

Choosing colors to wear is fun and exciting. Begin by learning what these terms mean:

**Hue** is the name of a color, such as red or blue.

**Value** indicates lightness or darkness, such as light or dark green.

**Intensity or chroma** means how bright or dull a color is.

Colors are often classified as being **warm** or **cool**. Red and yellow are warm colors. Their brightness makes garments seem closer and therefore larger. Colors with blue in them are classed as cool. They appear further away and smaller. Learn how to use warm and cool colors to your advantage.

When you select colors for yourself, think about your hair, eyes, and skin. Some skin colors have a **pink or blue undertone**; some have a **yellow undertone**. Your leader can help you decide what your skin undertones are.

Most colors are a blend of several different hues. For example, there are many shades of green including blue-greens and yellow-greens. The green with a hint of blue may be attractive on a person with a pink or blue skin undertone; the yellow-green may complement the skin with a yellow undertone. Both skin color types can wear green, but the shade may be different.

One way to find your best colors is to hold them up to your face. Does your face disappear and fade away or does it seem to sparkle and stand out against the color? The best color for you is one that compliments and lets the real "you" shine through.

★ **ACTION IDEA.** Make a color aid to use when you shop. Match your skin, hair, and eyes with swatches of fabric or paper; mount them on a cardboard strip. As you shop, place the strip on the garment or fabric and you'll see how you might look in that color. Remember that different types of lighting change color.

## FABRIC FACTS

Each year as you progress in 4-H, you learn new things about fabrics. Fabrics are made from yarns and fibers that have been woven, knit, or made into a non-woven fabric. Different types of fibers are used to make fabrics.

## Natural Fibers

These grow in nature. Natural fibers from vegetable sources are cotton and linen. Natural fibers from animal sources are wool and silk. Some characteristics of natural fibers are:

- Dry slowly.
- May shrink or stretch during laundering.
- Absorbent, comfortable in warm weather.
- May wrinkle, but can be pressed with a hot iron.
- Easy to clean.

## Synthetic or Man-Made Fibers

These are developed by chemists. Rayon and acetate are man-made from plant cellulose. Chemicals are the base of other man-made fibers. Generic (family) names such as nylon, polyester, acrylic, and other names are used to classify synthetic fibers. Some characteristics of these fibers are:

- Dry quickly.
- Hold shape well, will not shrink or stretch during laundering.
- Not absorbent, may be uncomfortable during warm weather.
- Shed wrinkles, resist “wear” wrinkles.
- Can be damaged by heat.
- Strong.
- Resist moths and mildew.
- Easy to care for.

## Blended Fibers

A blend is a fabric made of two or more different fibers. The fabric can be woven or knit. Blends take advantage of the good characteristics of each fiber. For example, a blend of polyester and cotton combines the wrinkle and shrinkage resistance of polyester with the absorbency of cotton.

## Fabric Selection

Each fiber has advantages and drawbacks. There is no all-purpose fiber. You must decide what characteristics you want in the fabric and then look for the fiber content that will provide them. The fiber content will help you determine:

- Whether the fabric is a good choice for the intended use and style of the garment.
- What methods of construction to use.
- How to care for the finished garment.

**Textures** may vary with the weave of the fabric. The **plain weave** is flat and strong. **Twill weaves** make firm fabrics because they have more yarns per inch. Jeans usually have a twill weave for durability. The **satin weave** is weaker because it has long floating yarns that catch easily and break.

**Textures** may also be created by using yarns that have been crimped, stretched, or twisted to add bulk.

As you work with new fabrics in 4-H, refer to the publications available through Extension. They cover selection, construction tips, and care for specific fabrics. Your local fabric store and good commercial sewing books also have information about fabrics.

Now select a pattern and fabric, using what you learned about line, color, and fabric. Use the skills you learned in Unit 2 to decide on pattern type and size. Choose a fabric that will be easy to work with when you set in sleeves and put on a collar.

## CHECK THE FIT

A well-fitted garment feels comfortable and looks attractive when you wear it. As you move, it adjusts naturally without sagging or pulling.

There are five clues to good fitting. Learn to recognize them and then to find where the problem is.



**Grain.** Lengthwise grain should be perpendicular to the floor. Crosswise grain should be parallel to the floor. The grainline should be the same for both sides of the garment.

**Line.** Silhouette lines on the garment should follow the silhouette lines of the body. The shoulder seams should be on top of the shoulders. Vertical seams should be perpendicular to the floor. Neckline, waistline, and armhole seams should follow the body circumference. Darts should point toward and stop short of the fullest part of the area they shape. Hems should be parallel to the floor.

**Ease.** The garment should be neither too loose nor too tight. A tight fit with too little ease will cause wrinkles that pull and draw the fabric. Wrinkles that lie in folds indicate too much ease.

**Balance.** The garment should be balanced from right to left, top to bottom, and front to back.

**Overall smoothness.** The garment should be smooth on the body and free from wrinkles.

### **Fit as You Sew**

Compare your body measurements plus ease with the actual pattern measurements. Make needed adjustments in the pattern before you cut out the garment. Amount of ease needed will depend on the style of the garment and the fabric used. Commercial sewing books give directions for all types of pattern adjustments.

Try on the garment as you make it. Check fit, starting at the top. Fit of the shoulders and neck affects fit everywhere else on a shirt, jacket, or dress. Fit at the waistline affects all other fitting areas on skirts and pants.

Your leader or parents will help you with fitting. When you fit clothes:

- Wear undergarments and shoes you will wear with the garment.

- Stand in your natural posture. Bend your arms, sit, and walk to be sure there is room for movement.
- Wear the garment right side out. The left and right side of your body may not be exactly the same.

### **SEWING BASICS**

Pretreat fabric and notions before you begin. Staystitch wherever necessary. Remember to press as you sew. Use the sewing basics you learned before. New basics are listed below:

**Belts** should be flat and smooth. Interface if necessary to hold the shape. The closure should be durable and appropriate for garment and fabric.

**Collars** should be interfaced. Trim and grade inside seams and clip or notch if curved. To keep the undercollar from showing, understitch and learn how to build in a roll. Both left and right sides of the collar should be the same shape and size.

**Cuffs and plackets** should be flat and smooth. Cuffs should be interfaced. Trim and grade any inside seam. You may use any type of placket construction. The placket should be secure and durable. The cuff opening is usually on the outside of the arm with the front closing over the back. This location reduces wear on the cuff and places the buttons and opening where they do not interfere with arm movement.

**Gathers** should be uniform in width and evenly distributed.

**Handstitching** should be secure without pulling. Stitches should be even and appropriate for fabric and garment.

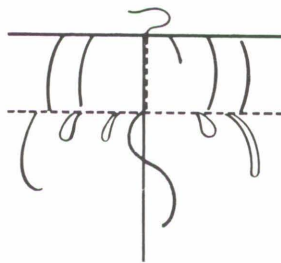
**Pockets** should be flat and smooth. Upper corners of patch pockets should be reinforced. Interface the pockets if a crisp shape is desired.

**Seams and seam finish** standards are listed in

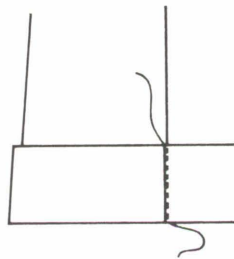
the Unit 2 project book. All seams, including new types such as flat fell, french, or stretch stitched should be flat, smooth, and even. The finish should be smooth and appropriate for the fabric. Always trim and grade enclosed seams. Curved seams need clipping or notching. Reinforce seams that get stress when you move.

**Set-in sleeves** should be smooth and without puckers. Fullness in gathered sleeves should be distributed evenly in the front and back. Underarm seams need to be reinforced and trimmed if bulky. The seams should be finished if the fabric ravel. Match seams that join. Sometimes the cap of the sleeve is too full to be eased in smoothly because of the pattern or fabric. You may need to remove some of the fullness in the pattern. Your leader will help you with this.

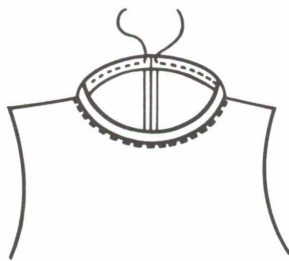
**Stitch in the ditch** is machine stitching from the right side of a garment, through all layers, in the "ditch" or groove formed by the seam. The stitches are almost hidden from view on the outside. This method can be used to anchor facings, casings, pant cuffs, tab fronts, bindings, waistbands, sleeve cuffs, or collars.



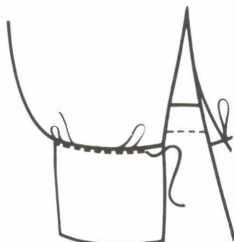
Casing



Pants Cuff



Binding



Sleeve Cuff

**Topstitching** should be even and done with a balanced tension.

**Trims** may be functional, decorative, or both. Fabric should support the weight of the trim. Use trim with the same care requirements as the fabric. Trim color and design should enhance fabric and style of garment. Pretreat all trims before you apply them to the garment. Sew trims on securely with hand or machine stitching that does not detract from trim.

**Waistbands** should be even in width, on grain, interfaced, and not bulky. The overlap should be flush with the placket; the underlap should extend beyond the placket and under the band. Use a fastener to hold the underlap in place.

## SEWING BASICS FOR PANTS

Select a **fabric** for pants that is firm enough to hold its shape. It may be knit or woven. Choose a pattern style that will compliment your body.

**Measuring** is very important. Wear the undergarments you usually wear with pants and have someone else take your measurements. Compare pattern measurements to your personal measurements plus ease. Full instructions for taking Boy's, Men's, Girl's, and Misses' measurements are given in commercial sewing books.

Make any major **adjustments** on the tissue paper pattern before cutting. Minor corrections can be made in the final fitting. Your leader or parents will help you with these adjustments.

Test the **fit** of the pants before they are completely finished. See that crotch depth is correct first. Then look at the waistline area. Watch for pulling or wrinkling in the crotch. Finally check the leg fullness and length.

The first pair of pants you make will show you what changes need to be made for better fit next time.

Things to watch for in **construction** include:

- Crotch reinforcement. Body motion puts great



stress on the crotch seam. Do not clip it. That weakens it. If the seam is bulky, trim after reinforcing.

- Seam construction and finishes should suit the fabric.
- Waistbands, zippers, plackets, and hems should all meet the same standards as listed previously.

## SEWING BASICS FOR KNITS

Sewing with knits does not require special skills or equipment. Knits generally fall into three categories, according to the amount of stretch:

- Limited stretch, such as double knits.
- Moderate stretch, such as single knits like jersey or tricot.
- Very stretchy, such as sweater knits or swimwear knits.

Your leader will help you decide what type of knit and pattern to use. Select a double knit to work with for your first knit project. Later on you may want to try a special interest project and work with single or sweater knits.

Always pretreat knit fabrics. The lengthwise rib in knits is comparable to the lengthwise grain of a woven fabric. Use pins with fine, sharp points or ballpoints to prevent snagging. A new, sharp machine needle or ballpoint needle will minimize snags and prevent skipped stitches.

Basic construction standards are the same for knits as they are for wovens. However, because the fabric stretches, it may be necessary to build extra stretch in some seams and stabilize others. See any commercial sewing book for these techniques.

## THE SEWING MACHINE

Your sewing machine can do many things that make sewing easier. You have already made buttonholes, used the zipper foot, and perhaps a zigzag stitch. Some machines have a blind hem-

ming stitch, multiple zigzag stitch, stretch stitches, or other decorative stitches. Find out about these stitches—what they look like and how they can be used.

The machine may need to be adjusted each time you sew. Decide what stitch length to use and set the control.

- Change the **pressure** of the presser foot if you are sewing on very lightweight or heavyweight fabric.
- Test thread **tension** on a small piece of your fabric before you begin. Learn how to adjust the upper tension to get a good machine stitch. A good stitch should look the same on both sides.

## Sewing Machine Needles

Needle size depends on the weight and type of fabric. The point of the needle should be straight and smooth, without any nicks or rough edges. Here is a chart to help you choose which needle to use:

TYPE OF FABRIC	EXAMPLE	SIZES	EUROPEAN SIZES
Light weight woven	Chiffon	9-11	70-80
Light weight knit	Tricot	9-11	70-80
Medium weight woven	Broadcloth	11-14	80-90
Medium weight knit	Jersey	11-14	80-90
Heavy weight woven	Denim	14-16	90-100
Heavy weight knit	Doubleknit	14-16	90-100

## Sewing Machine Care

Keep your machine clean. Wipe the upper parts of the machine with a soft, damp cloth. Use a lint brush to clean hard-to-reach parts like the bobbin case. Unless your machine is a new, self-oiling type, it must be oiled regularly. The machine manual has complete directions for this. After oiling, sew on small pieces of fabric to remove excess oil.

## BUYING CLOTHES

The kind of clothes people buy, as well as the

number of dollars spent, varies with families. Few people have an unlimited amount to spend. You can help spend the family clothing budget wisely.

Stores offer so many choices that even experienced shoppers find it hard to decide what to buy. Before you go shopping:

- Decide on the type of garment. Look at your wardrobe and distinguish between what you “need” and what you “want.”
- Know your approximate size.
- Think about style, color, and fabric.
- Decide on an acceptable price range.

As you shop, think about the following:

**Fit.** Does the garment fit? Will it need to be altered by the store or at home?

**Style.** Is the style right for the person who will wear it? Can it be worn for more than one occasion?

**Fabric.** Is the fabric a good choice for this type of garment?

**Labels and hang tags.** Do labels or hang tags tell you fiber content, fabric finishes, manufacturer’s name, and care requirements?

**Color.** Will the color go well with your other clothes at home?

**Workmanship.** Is the garment well made?

**Price.** Is the item within your price range? Spending more now may mean cutting back later.

Select accessories that will go with your clothing and your style of life. Accessories may serve a purpose as well as adding interest to your appearance. Consider style, color, texture, price, and purpose of the accessory as you shop.

★ **ACTION IDEA.** Compare costs of ready-to-wear garments with costs of garments you have sewn.

## YOU AND YOUR APPEARANCE

Clothing is only part of your total appearance. Grooming, posture, mannerisms, smiles, and frowns are also seen. Improve your image by:

- Taking a regular shower or bath.
- Keeping your hair, teeth, and nails clean and neat.
- Getting enough sleep each night.
- Getting exercise every day.
- Eating nourishing meals each day from a variety of food groups.
- Walking and sitting with good posture.

## CLOTHING CARE

Your clothes will look nicer and last longer if you learn how to take care of them.

**Storage.** Some garments should be hung in a closet. Sweaters and underwear should be folded in a drawer.

**Repair.** Mend broken seams and hems and replace missing buttons and fasteners before you wear the garment again. Iron-on patches, appliques, or embroidery can be used to cover a tear in your garment.

**Cleaning.** Put soiled clothes in the laundry. Know cleaning instructions for each item. The hang tag or care label will tell you whether to machine wash, hand wash, or dryclean; how to dry the item; and whether it needs to be ironed with a hot or warm iron.

Learn how to sort clothes for laundering. Wash white clothes separately so they don’t pick up other colors. Towels may take longer to dry so dry them separately. Pretreat spots and stains before laundering.

Learn how to use your washing machine and dryer. Follow directions in the use and care manual. Your leader or parents will help with:

- Load size.



- Washing time and temperature.
- Amount and type of detergent and other laundry supplies.
- Drying time and temperature.

## HOW DO YOU RATE?

When your garment is finished, show others what you have made. Model your outfit for your club, enter the fashion revue, or exhibit in the local fair. Before doing this, model for yourself with a critical eye. Put on the garment along with any accessories you will wear. Then check each of the items listed below. Your parents, leader, or friends can help.

### General Appearance

**Posture.** Do you stand tall in a flattering position with your weight balanced on both feet?

**Poise.** Are you at ease? Can you answer questions with confidence? Do you use too many gestures?

**Grooming.** Is your hair clean and neat? Are your nails well groomed? Is your footwear neat and clean? Is your garment clean and well pressed?

**Modeling.** Do you walk and turn smoothly and slowly so garment details can be seen? Do you smile?

**Fabric.** Is texture, weight, and design of the fabric a good choice for the design of the garment? Is the fabric a good choice for the intended use? Is it becoming to you?

**Style.** Is the style a good choice for the use you plan? Is the style becoming to you?

**Color.** Does the color suit your personal coloring and your body type? Have you used pleasing color combinations in the garment and accessories?

**Accessories.** Do your shoes, jewelry, and other accessories suit the outfit and the use you plan? Are style, color, and texture of the accessories becoming to you?

### Garment Construction and Appearance

**Fit.** Is there enough ease to permit body movement? Is the garment snug enough to stay in position on your body? Do garment design lines fall becomingly on your body?

**Construction methods.** Are construction methods a good choice for the fabric and the design of the garment?

**Construction quality.** Does quality of construction give a pleasing appearance to the garment?

**Details.** Are buttons, thread, zipper, linings, and interfacings a good choice for the fabric and the garment design?

**Pressing.** Was the correct pressing method used during construction?

### Clothing Knowledge

Do you know the characteristics of your **fabric** and how to take care of it? Do you know why you selected the **garment style** you chose? Do you know why you used various **construction techniques**?

### FOR MORE HELP WITH YOUR PROJECT

- Ask your leader or parents.
- Look at your sewing machine manual.
- Look at any commercial sewing book.

## **Project Notes**

Use this page for information you want to record about your project. Cost of project materials—Dates—Questions that you need to ask your leader—or other notations.





## CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION RECORD

CHECK PROJECT NAME:

- Sewing for Fun, Unit I
- Sewing for Fun, Unit II
- Sewing for Fun, Unit III

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF 4-H CLUB OR GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

### ARTICLES AND GARMENTS MADE THIS YEAR

Write a story about your Clothing Project. You can include some FACTS: Name and number of articles and garments, fabrics and supplies used, money spent and value if purchased; the FUN you had; the SKILLS that you are proud of and things you would CHANGE if the project could be done again.

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## **SHARING PROJECT EXPERIENCE**

Write a story telling how you shared the experience of this project with others. Did you tell someone how to do something that you learned to do? Did you plan and present a demonstration or exhibit your project? Were you presented an award — ribbon, medal, money, etc.?

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## **CARE OF CLOTHING**

Write a story telling what you learned about the care of clothing and how you cared for your clothes so that they would be ready to go when you were.

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**PLEASE NOTE: Additional copies of the record are available from the Extension Agent.**





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More boys and girls belong to 4-H than any other youth group.