Developed and produced by the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University, with partial development support from a grant by The McCall Pattern Company, through the Kansas 4-H Foundation, 1996.
This Clothing and Textiles notebook is the resulting work of hundreds of Kansas Extension professional and volunteer staff who have been a part of the design, development, review, pilot testing and implementation processes over a period of several years. The team of authors is noted at the end of each lesson.

Special acknowledgment goes to the initial Clothing and Textiles Design Team which created the vision for this dynamic new material:

Jean Clarkson-Frisbie, Pratt County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
Carla Dill, Extension Assistant and Geary County volunteer
Steven D. Fisher, Extension Specialist, 4-H and Youth Programs
Susan Krumm, former Republic County and now Douglas County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
Nicky Miller Vestweber, Republic County 4-H alumni
Dr. Deanna Munson, Extension Specialist, Textiles
Dr. Lucinda Schoenberger, former Extension Specialist, Clothing
Sandy Shields, Ottawa County volunteer
Joan Thayer, Dickinson County volunteer

And to the curriculum reviewers which included the addition of:

Trudy Rice, Douglas County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, as a member of the Design Team
Connie Bowman, Smith County volunteer
Heidi Niehues, Clothing, Textiles and Interior Design student assistant to Extension Home Economics
and the Family Living Curriculum Development Committee:
Diane Burnett, Miami County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
Carolyn Corwin, Reno County volunteer
Chris Hederstedt, Saline County volunteer
Amie Kersher, Johnson County teen volunteer
Shelly Laubhan, Saline County teen volunteer
Emily Mark, Extension Specialist, Family and Consumer Sciences, Northeast Area
Mari Mohr, Sedgwick County volunteer
Carla Morrical-Frederking, Ellis County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
Linda Walter, Finney County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
Jessica Wood, Leavenworth County teen volunteer

Special appreciation is given to Lisa Calvert, former Development Officer in the Kansas 4-H Foundation, for her assistance in securing the grant, Mr. John Kobiskie and Ms. Gail Hamilton of The McCall Pattern Company, and to Kansas Extension Administration and the College of Human Ecology for their confidence and support of this project.

Hours of production support was provided by:
Lori Gauntt, 4-H Department secretary
Anna Barrett, Assistant Editor, Department of Communications
Lori Cansler, Graphic Designer, Department of Communications
Deb Quinn, Printing Process Supervisor, Department of Communications
Sherri Auld, desktop publishing student assistant, Department of Communications
Nathan Howe, graphic design student assistant, Department of Communications
Jana Neufeld, Production Services student assistant, Department of Communications

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

Publications from Kansas State University are available on the World Wide Web at: http://www.oznet.ksu.edu

Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Kansas 4-H and Youth Programs, Clothing and Textiles Leader Notebook, Kansas State University, January 1996.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
S107 January 1996

It is the policy of Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service that all persons shall have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and materials without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability. Kansas State University is an equal opportunity organization. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Marc A. Johnson, Director.

File code: 4-H and Youth–2

2-Clothing & Textiles, Introduction
# Table of Contents

*Introduction*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Concepts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages and Stages</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth at Risk</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying the Experiential Learning Process</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format of Kansas 4-H Clothing &amp; Textiles Project</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the 4-H Project Leader</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching with Discussion</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Meeting</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of References</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Helps</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Member Enrollment Record</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Leader Meeting Record</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Members and their Goals</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Volunteer Support Form</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Meeting Checklist</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing &amp; Textiles Member Guide &amp; Annual Report</td>
<td>insert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication Resources</td>
<td>insert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*3-Clothing & Textiles, Introduction*
KANSAS 4-H LEADERS NOTEBOOK

Introduction
This notebook is designed to help you as a 4-H clothing & textiles leader do the best job that you can to make the clothing project a fun, interesting, and valuable experience for the 4-H youth that you teach. The Clothing & Textiles project is one of several projects within the Family Living 4-H Curriculum Division. It is important to 4-H, because several thousand members annually are attracted to the Clothing & Textiles project. The Clothing & Textiles project, then, becomes the vehicle through which we can teach appropriate consumer, textile science and clothing construction practices and necessary life skills to the youth who enroll. Other 4-H project areas such as marketing, computer, and health and safety are incorporated where appropriate.

OBJECTIVES
The objectives of the Clothing & Textiles project are as follows:
1. Build self-confidence and poise by developing a positive self concept and the ability to make the most of one’s personal attributes.
2. Gain consumer and business skills in selecting, producing, storing, and maintaining clothing, accessories, home textile products for self and others.
3. Gain business and consumer skills in purchasing and using equipment related to clothing production and care.
4. Develop decision-making skills and creativity to plan an holistic wardrobe that expresses their ethnic and individual lifestyle.
5. Acquire knowledge of fibers, yarns, fabrications and the finishing and dyeing of textiles.
6. Explore textile/clothing related careers and leisure therapy.
7. Acquire the ability to use fibers and fabrics to maximize their use life and minimize management problems through reducing, reusing and recycling.
8. Practice leadership, take part in community affairs and demonstrate environmental stewardship in a global community.
9. Learn to use accepted practices for mental, physical and emotional health, and to respect self and others.

MAJOR CONCEPTS
To help meet the above objectives, 5 general clothing and textile concepts were identified by the Design Team. Each of the specific lesson plans fall under one of these major 5 concepts--Me and My Body, Creating with Fabrics and Fibers, Textile Science, Care and Maintenance, and Wardrobe Planning.

This new Clothing and Textiles Curriculum includes much more than traditional clothing construction and purchased garment consumerism and presentation. The learning matrix is multidimensional, as seen in Figure A. The first dimension is age and skill appropriate learning, as presented through Levels I through IV, described in this section under “Ages and
Dimension I: Age and skill appropriate levels
Level I–ages 7, 8; Level II–ages 9, 10, 11; Level III–ages 12, 13, 14; Level IV–15 and older

Dimension II: Lifecycle issues
- Self
- Select
- Maintain
- Discard

Dimension III: Subject matter
- Me & My Body (building self-confidence)
- Textile Science
- Care & Maintenance
- Creating with Fabrics & Fibers
- Wardrobe Planning

Dimension IV: Social Issues
- Careers
- Ethics
- Economic/Financial
- Environmental
- Ethnic/Global

Dimension V: Experiential, small group learning using varied teaching strategies

5-Clothing & Textiles, Introduction
Stages.” The second dimension describes lifecycle issues of self-physical, mental and emotional health and safety—and the three components of the clothing and textile lifecycle—select, maintain, and discard. The third dimension includes the five general subject matter concepts outlined above. Dimension four incorporates national and societal issues such as ethnic/global, environmental, economic or financial, ethics, and career decisions. The fifth dimension focuses on the use of experiential, small group learning environments using varied teaching strategies of demonstration, discussion, video, computer assisted-learning, and member activity sheets and handouts. Not every lesson includes components from every dimension, yet over a period of time, participating youth using this material would receive a very integrated, holistic approach to clothing and textiles.

LIFE SKILLS
Kansas 4-H life skills have been articulated to help define the youth development outcomes of our 4-H program. It is the goal of 4-H to develop youth who are contributing, productive members of society. Youth may achieve this goal when these five life skills are developed and applied.

1. Positive self-concept
2. Sound decision-making
3. Positive interpersonal relationships
4. Desire for lifelong learning
5. Concern for community

These five life skills are incorporated throughout the lesson plans and in the educational design of the project meetings. The “Dialogue for Critical Thinking” Section leads the group through the experiential learning process.

AGES AND STAGES
Leaders can best achieve these desired outcomes with their members when they have well-prepared leader material and understand how to structure a stimulating learning environment for the age of youth they are leading. We know and believe that each child is unique, yet we also know that there are generalities about certain age groups that help us program more effectively.

These lesson plans have been developed to target four general age groups:
- Level I—ages 7 and 8
- Level II—ages 9, 10, 11
- Level III—ages 12, 13, 14
- Level IV—ages 15 and older

A review about the physical, mental, social and emotional characteristics of these age groups will prepare the leader for a successful project experience. It should be understood by the leader that the levels are also based on corresponding skill levels of youth. Thus, a 12-year-old youth enrolling
in Clothing & Textiles for the first time should probably begin with lessons in Level I, and not take Level III until the member has mastered some basic knowledge and skills.

**Ages 7 and 8**
Physical growth can be described as slow and steady. Mastering physical skills is important to self-concept. This includes everything from printing with a pencil to large muscle skills like catching a ball. Activities need to be just that—active! Provide opportunities to practice skills, but use projects that can be completed successfully and quickly by beginners.

Typical second or third graders think in concrete terms. If they have never seen it, heard it, felt it, tasted it, or smelled it, they have a hard time thinking of it. Leaders should show and tell, rather than giving instructions verbally. Early elementary children are learning to sort things into categories. This makes collecting things important and fun at this age. Most are more interested in the “process”—what? why? how?—than in the resulting product.

As children move away from dependence on parents at this age, they need to transfer that dependence to another adult, so the leader may become very important in their eyes. Building friendships occurs easily and generally by the end of this period, boys prefer playing with boys and girls with girls. Some of the leader notes will suggest when it is appropriate to separate boys and girls for some of the activities. Peer opinion now becomes very important. Small group activities are effective, but children still need an adult to share approval.

Seven and 8-year-olds need and seek the approval of adults, because they are not yet confident enough to set their own standards. Play or making believe is one way they increase their ability to imagine what other people think and feel. Rules and rituals are important, but it is very hard for children this age to lose. This is why success needs to be emphasized, even if it is small. Failures should be minimized. Cooperative games and activities are especially enjoyable. When an activity fails, the leader should help children interpret the reasons behind the failures, which teaches that failing is not always bad. Learning to cope with problems is a skill the 4-H leader can encourage for all members. **The usual practice of awarding competitive ribbons should be minimized or avoided for this age.** For this reason, younger members are encouraged to participate in the noncompetitive mini style show at the State Fair.

**Ages 9, 10, 11**
Physically, most children at this age are in a holding pattern, although puberty may be starting for some very early-maturing girls. Activities should encourage physical involvement, because 9- to 11-year-olds are anything but still and quiet.

Hands-on involvement with objects is helpful. Children this age like field trips, but only if they are not expected to stay confined or to do one thing for a long period of time. Upper elementary children need opportunities to
share their thoughts and reactions with others. They are still fairly concrete thinkers and will give more attention if they are seeing and doing things.

Children at this stage are beginning to think logically and symbolically and are beginning to understand abstract ideas. As they consider ideas, they think it is either right or wrong, great or disgusting, fun or boring. There is very little middle ground.

The role of the leader is most crucial at this stage, as these children look to the adult for approval and follow rules primarily out of respect for the adult. Individual evaluation by adults is preferable to group competition where only one can be the best. They want to know how much they have improved and what they should do to be better next time. Encouragement from an adult can have remarkable accomplishments.

This is the age of the “joiners.” They like to be in organized groups of others similar to themselves. If you have both boys and girls of this age in your project groups, you will do best if small group work is done in same-sex groups. This will be especially important for some of the measuring activities and lessons from the major concepts of Me & My Body. They generally are concerned with immediate self-reward; however, the satisfaction of completing a project comes from pleasing the leader or parent rather than from the value of the activity itself.

Toward the end of this age range, children are ready to take responsibility for their own actions. Giving these youth opportunities to make decisions should be encouraged. Leaders should move from dictating directions to giving reassurance and support for members’ decisions. In most cases, multiple patterns are given in lessons. This is an excellent time to allow youth to make their own individual or collective decision about what to make or do.

Nine, 10- and 11-year-olds have a strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile. School and other pressures become demanding. Successes should continue to be emphasized. Comparison with the success of others is difficult for these children. It erodes self-confidence. Instead of comparing children with each other, build positive self-concepts by comparing present to past performance for the individual.

**Ages 12, 13 and 14**

This is a time of developmental variety among peers. Growth spurts beginning with adolescence occur at a wide range of ages, with girls maturing before boys. These rapid changes in physical appearance may make teens uncomfortable. Slower developing teens may also be uneasy about the lack of changes. This characteristic may be most pronounced in the Clothing & Textile project, as changing body forms vary with physical maturity. The leader should be sensitive to these feelings.

Young teens move from concrete to more abstract thinking. Playing with ideas is as much fun as playing sports. Ready-made solutions from adults
often are rejected in favor of finding their own solutions. Leaders who provide supervision without interference will have a great influence on these youth.

Small groups provide the best opportunity for young teens to test ideas. Justice and equality become important issues. Judging of projects is now viewed in terms of what is fair, as well as a reflection of the self-worth of the individual.

These youth enjoy participating in activities away from home as they begin to develop independence. Opinions of peers become more important than opinions of parents or other adults. Close friendships begin to develop, and group experiences provide opportunity for social acceptance.

As puberty approaches, emotions begin a roller coaster ride. Young teens begin to test values and seek adults who are accepting and willing to talk about values and morals. This period seems to present the biggest challenge to a young person’s self-concept. These youngsters face so many changes that they hardly know who they are. Adults can help by providing self-knowledge and self-discovery activities such as the “dialogue for critical thinking” portion of these lesson plans.

Continue to avoid comparing young people with each other, being careful not to embarrass them. They want to be a part of something important that provides opportunity to develop responsibility.

**Ages 15, 16 and 17**

Most teens of this age know their own abilities and talents. In most cases, they have adjusted to the many body changes by now. Many develop athletic talent and devote hours to training and competition. Learning to drive a car further moves the teen from family into the community as independent people.

Mid-teens begin to think about their future and make realistic plans. Their vocational goals influence the activities they select. Teens set goals based on feelings of personal need and priorities. **Any goals set by others are generally rejected.** As they master abstract thinking, they can imagine new things in ways that sometimes challenge adults.

These teens can initiate and carry out their own tasks without supervision. A leader can be helpful by arranging new experiences in areas of interest to teens, but must be sure to allow for plenty of input from them. Leader-member relations should change from director/follower to that of advisor/independent worker.

Mid-teens tend to be wrapped up in themselves. Relationship skills are usually well-developed. Dating increases and acceptance by members of the opposite sex is now of high importance. Sports and clubs are important, but these teens now want to be recognized as unique individuals within that group.
Two important emotional goals of the middle-teen years are independence and identity. Time is precious. If activities are perceived as busywork, teens soon will lose patience and interest. Middle teens are learning to cooperate with others on an adult level. They will pride themselves on increased ability to be responsible in the eyes of themselves, peers, and adults.

**Ages 18 and 19**

These young adults are completing their 4-H careers and moving on to college, jobs, marriage, and other adult responsibilities. If continuing involvement at the local level, they will be self-directed learners or assume adult leadership roles.

This information on child development has been taken from the North Central Regional Extension Publication No. 292, *Ages and Stages of Child and Youth Development: A Guide for 4-H Leaders*, written by Jeanne Karns, graduate assistant and Judith Myers-Walls, Extension Specialist, Human Development, Purdue University.

**YOUTH AT RISK**

Some child development specialists and educators have noted every child of the ’90s is at “some risk” because of the complex social forces affecting our country since the early 1950s. In 1991, The National Commission on Children estimated that fully one-quarter of all children are “at severe risk” in relation to substance abuse, school failure, delinquency, etc., and another quarter are “moderately at risk.” H. Stephen Glenn and Jane Nelsen document these changes in their book, *Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World*. Four major factors necessary for the development of capable young people have been identified that are generally missing from our culture—networks, meaningful roles, on-the-job training, and parenting resources. 4-H project meetings can help restore these vital missing pieces.

Glenn’s definition of a network, in the simplest sense, defines the 4-H project meeting: “two or more individuals who engage in dialogue about the world and the life they are living and who occasionally collaborate to achieve some mutually desirable end.” The dialogue for critical thinking portion of these lesson plans directly address this definition.

Many youth today are growing up in families and communities without any significant role to play. They just don’t seem needed until they become an adult. Research indicates that a primary cause of decline in motivation, discipline, and achievement is this perceived lack of need or value. Glenn and Nelsen challenge us to deal with youth actively in ways that affirm their contributions. **We must treat youth as contributors and assets rather than passive objects to be done for or to.** As 4-H project leaders, when we listen to members, take them seriously and treat them as significant, we will begin to restore the dialogue and collaboration necessary to link youth with the larger society.
On-the-job training with “hands-on” involvement has been the cornerstone of 4-H project work. It is important for youth to have this opportunity because that is where they learn patience, personal initiative, hard work, and deferred gratification. If they don’t learn about real life in this way, they receive its impressions passively from the media, generally through five hours of television each day.

“Learning by doing” is one of the primary reasons why 4-H has been recognized in the field of informal education. If we, as parents or leaders, think we are helping when we do their work for them, we need to stop and consider that, “The best way to destroy self-esteem and a sense of worth in young people is to do too much for them. This robs them of a sense of personal capability. The greatest gift of all is to help them validate themselves as agents in their own lives.” (Glenn and Nelsen, pg. 47)

Today’s parents need all the help they can get. According to the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation report, *Reweaving the Tattered Web—Socializing and Enculturating our Children*, by Basil J. Whiting in June 1993, “Three generations and extended families in the same house are not so common. Grandparents and aunts and uncles live longer distances away, and often alone (only five percent of American children now see a grandparent regularly)…. Divorce is common. Half of those who remarry will experience a second divorce. Half of all children will spend some of their childhood with a divorced parent.” As a 4-H project leader, you become a parent resource, both to the child and the child’s parent.

Today’s parents are concerned and fearful for their children. Why? Dr. Bruce Baldwin, nationally known psychologist and author says, “They wonder if their kids have what it takes to succeed as they have. Parents know that in the future, even menial positions will require well-developed cognitive skills: reading, writing, math, computer literacy, and the ability to process information quickly and efficiently.” (*TEAM, The Early Adolescence Magazine*, Vol. IV, No. 5, May-June 1990)

The same magazine noted that a large metropolitan education trust reported the types of requirements for employees comparing the past with the future:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAST</th>
<th>FUTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doers</td>
<td>Thinkers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single repetitive functions</td>
<td>Quality circle approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual piecework</td>
<td>Team centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single job in lifetime</td>
<td>Flexible learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar with simple machines</td>
<td>Technology knowledgeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single task orientation</td>
<td>Information processors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The January 1990, issue of *Prevention Forum* magazine offers hope for today’s youth when it reports that research on youth who have become healthy adults in spite of adversity have had the opportunity, somewhere in their lives, to experience a caring, nurturing environment that encourages their active participation in problem-solving, decision-making, planning, goal-setting, and helping others in meaningful activities.

According to the Kauffman Foundation report, “child and youth development by natural osmosis is no longer an effective strategy. We can rely no longer on child development to occur as a natural by-product of family and community functioning because too many families and communities no longer function the way they used to.

This means reweaving the web to do what the family and community no longer do, and perhaps no longer can do adequately. It means constructing new institutions and new ways for children and youth to sustain relationships with a variety of caring adults…. Yet this must be supplementation, not replacement. We dare not leave out strands of parent-strengthening services in the many ways and places where traditional parenting is, at bottom, the still-to-be-preferred approach.”

The project lesson plans contained in this leader’s notebook have been designed to incorporate the components critical to the development of capable, contributing young people. By following these plans, leaders will help prepare their members to function and live productively in the world which they will soon inherit and direct. They are also designed to help you, as the leader, quickly and easily prepare for the lesson, conduct the activity, and facilitate the discussion and dialogue.
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL

1. **Experience**
   - the activity: perform, do it

2. **Share**
   - the results, reactions, observations publicly

3. **Process**
   - discuss, look at the experience; analyze, reflect

4. **Generalize**
   - to connect the experience to real-world examples

5. **Apply**
   - what was learned to a similar or different situation: practice

---

**Example questions used to complete the Eperiential Learning Model**

**A. Share**
1. What did you do?
2. What happened? What did you see? Hear? Touch? Taste?
3. How did you feel?
4. How did it feel to . . . ?
5. What was most difficult? Easiest?

**B. Process**
1. What problems or issues seemed to occur over and over?
2. What similar experiences have you had?
3. What was most important?
4. Why was that significant?
5. Why do you think it happened?
6. What caused you to feel that way?

**C. Generalize**
1. What did you learn about yourself through this activity?
2. What did you learn about a life skill?
3. How do the major themes or ideas relate to real life and not just the activity?
4. How did you go about making your decision?

**D. Apply**
1. How can you apply what you learned (life skill) to a new situation?
2. How will the issues raised by this activity be useful in the future?
3. How will you act differently in the future as a result of this activity?
4. How can you do it differently for different results?
APPLYING THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROCESS
Hands-on involvement (learning by doing) is the most effective method for learning this material. It helps youth learn personal initiative, hard work, patience and deferred gratification. By doing the work for the youth, parents, teachers and leaders may destroy the young person’s self-esteem and sense of worth. They may rob youth of learning by trial and error, practicing skills and becoming competent and capable. The greatest gift leaders can give is to help youth validate themselves as capable people. These lessons were designed using a model known as the *experiential learning process* which was adopted as the national curriculum development model for Extension Youth Development in 1992.

Experiential learning takes place when a person is involved in an activity, looks back and evaluates it, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses this information to perform another activity.

The Experiential Learning process encourages youth involvement through dialogue and strengthens adult-child relationships. To enhance the goal of learning an atmosphere of friendliness, trust, and unconditional acceptance is required.

In each lesson, the “Dialogue for Critical Thinking” questions help complete the experiential learning steps. Except for the content review questions, most of these leading questions do not have a “right” or “wrong” answer. In addition to providing feedback to the leader, their purpose is to affirm and validate the perceptions of the members.

Take time to begin to feel comfortable with this process. It may seem awkward at first, but remember, Latin for “to teach” means to draw forth through dialogue and understanding. When the Experiential Learning process is used to help youth share the process of discovery, leaders will be developing them as critical thinkers, concerned for others, with the wisdom to function successfully in their future world.

FORMAT OF KANSAS 4-H CLOTHING & TEXTILES PROJECT
Each lesson plan in this notebook follows the same general outline which includes:

**TITLE** generally descriptive of the clothing and textile skill to be learned.

**LEVEL** describes which age level it is written for.

**What Members Will Learn . . .**

- **ABOUT THE PROJECT** indicates what clothing and textile subject matter will be learned.
- **ABOUT THEMSELVES** indicates what personal or life skills will be learned. These specific objectives can be used to evaluate if the lesson was successful and learning goals accomplished by the members.
MATERIALS NEEDED tells the leader what equipment, supplies, visuals or handouts will be needed in preparation for the lesson.

ACTIVITY TIME NEEDED gives the approximate time needed to complete the activity. Most lessons can be completed in 45 to 60 minutes.

ACTIVITY information is what the leader needs to know to teach the activity. This portion can be used as a leader’s script for the leader if necessary.

LEADER NOTES give directions or instructions for the leader which go with the “Activity” information. Space is available for leaders to write their own notes also. Member activity sheets or handouts are provided for the leader to copy and give to members to work on at the meeting or take home so parents can reinforce the learning.

DIALOGUE FOR CRITICAL THINKING questions are provided for the leader to help enhance life skill development and generalize the subject information to the real world of the youth participant.

GOING FURTHER ideas such as tours, demonstrations, handouts, and things to do at home and in the community, are for the leader and members to consider if they want to learn more about this particular lesson content.

REFERENCES credit the source used to develop this lesson activity in addition to the author.

AUTHOR is the source of information plus names of Kansas State University faculty who reviewed and adapted this lesson including specific ideas from volunteers.

The use of this notebook represents a major change in the way that clothing and textile project materials have been designed and used. Leaders need to realize that members will no longer receive member resource books or materials through the County Extension Office. Members will receive a “Clothing & Textiles Member Guide and Annual Report” which outlines the skills to be learned, describes learning opportunities, lists awards and careers, suggests where they can find more information, provides space for beginning goals and ending evaluations, and a year-end summary record. All other printed materials for members will be given to them by their Clothing & Textiles project leader. There are many “Member Handouts” within the lessons. Leaders should encourage members to begin a Clothing & Textiles Notebook by placing these member handouts in a permanent binder or folder, thus creating their own member manual.

In order for members to have a successful project experience, it is imperative that a leader meet with members. These lessons work best with
an adult and/or teen leader working with a small group of members. Several youth in the group will stimulate the discussion and dialogue, which is so important to the success of this process. If members are unable to meet in a group, the parent may serve as a leader to his/her child by requesting copies of the appropriate lesson plans from the Extension office and completing them at home.

The Clothing & Textiles project has been restructured to feature a series of sequential learning experiences based on members’ age and skill level, which will challenge them with new skills each year they remain in the project. Our goal is to make them knowledgeable about a wide spectrum of the clothing and textile industry and related consumer issues, rather than to specialize in one type of project exhibit. In fact, members and leaders will be exposed to different kinds of fair exhibits, including, but not limited to traditional clothing construction of garments, textiles for the home, recycled and/or embellished articles, plus educational display and/or posters. The goal should be to provide opportunities to share or exhibit what was learned during the project experience.

The project exhibit should be decided by the member, parent and leader, based on member’s age, skill level, equipment and financial needs, and what local exhibit opportunities have been identified. Conference evaluation should be offered for county fair classes. State Fair exhibits offer static exhibits, plus noncompetitive participation in the mini style show, and one entry per county per class for the competitive senior Clothing and Textile Presentation Evaluation (fashion revue).

Ideally, members should progress through all levels in order, but it is not necessary. If project members vary in age and skill levels and the group is large enough, splitting into like age groups with additional leaders is recommended. Older members might be used as assistant leaders with beginning levels which then allows teens to be self-directed learners for advanced skills, or teens might meet together as a multi-club or county-wide group.

ROLE OF THE 4-H PROJECT LEADER
Your major roles are that of teacher, facilitator and encourager. Your Role as Teacher:

- Help members set goals.
- Share your knowledge of the project through meetings, tours and home visits. A minimum of four and a maximum of 10 meetings is recommended. Set meeting dates and times with the participants. Remind participants of upcoming meetings.
- Invite and involve parents and other leaders when appropriate.
- Keep your skills current through trainings, consultations, and reading. Ask for help or advice as needed.
Your Role as Facilitator:
- Use techniques to facilitate (assist) learning. See “Teaching with Discussion.”
- Be sensitive and respond to individuals’ needs, beliefs and family circumstances. Do not judge.
- Help members find additional learning opportunities and resources. (Using “Going Further” in the lessons.)
- Relate project to everyday life and career possibilities.

Your Role as Encourager:
- Recognize the personal growth of members and help them celebrate their successes.
- Lead (not push) participants into new skills and new ways of thinking. Encourage and challenge them to become better persons, yet always accept them and love them as they are now.

Your classroom is wherever the member must be in order to learn—in the home, meeting room, or on a field trip. Your subject matter, what you teach, is clothing and textiles and youth development.

TEACHING WITH DISCUSSION
Why Use Discussion?
Discussion is part of every lesson. Discussion questions appear in the “Dialogue for Critical Thinking” section. Discussion is most effective when you want to:
1. Give participants practice thinking in terms of the subject matter.
2. Help participants evaluate their beliefs.
3. Stimulate participants to apply principles.
4. Help participants learn to anticipate or solve problems.
5. Use the resources of the group members.
7. Develop motivation for further learning.
8. Get feedback on how well participants learned the material.

How Can I Get People to Talk?
Discussion can be difficult at first simply because few participate. Sometimes, all that is necessary to improve the situation is time, your smiles and encouragement, and practice. Many participants are used to being talked at, not with in educational situations. The fear of being embarrassed is another major factor. Not knowing the other participants, being unsure of one’s idea, being afraid of sounding silly—these make participants feel that the safest thing to do is remain silent.

How Can I Help Them Overcome Their Fear?
The first step is making sure participants become acquainted with each other and with you. Begin by having get-acquainted activities at the organizational meeting. Continue by providing games, refreshments, time to talk, and other opportunities for friendship building throughout the project meeting period. Get to know each participant personally. Take a special interest in them; they will come to trust you.
When asking a question, call on participants by name. This seems to promote freer communication.

Sitting in a circle also encourages exchange.

Eliminate the fear of being wrong. (This is a tremendous barrier to discussion.) Avoid questions where there is only one right answer. Do not judge participants’ answers about beliefs and preferences. Do not allow any participant to make unkind comments about another’s answer.

At times, give participants opportunities to talk in small groups to work out answers together. If your group seems to have difficulty responding to questions, allow them to write out their answers first. This seems to give them added confidence to share their thoughts with others. As much as possible, ask questions that can have no wrong answers: How do you feel about this? What do you think?

**What if Someone Talks Too Much?**

There are several effective ways to work with a person who monopolizes the discussion. You might ask this person and at least one other to observe the discussion and report their observations to the group; for example: Did we solve the problem? Did everyone get a chance to participate? Another option is to divide into smaller discussion groups. Ask one person from each group to report the results of the discussion. Do not choose the monopolizer to report. You also could talk to this person privately. Explain that you appreciate the participation and insights, but you believe other people also should be given the opportunity to learn how to talk in a group. Ask this participant to help the group by allowing others more time for discussion and perhaps saving personal insights for more difficult questions.

**Reference:** *Teaching Tips* by Wilbert J. McKeachie (1986)

When properly used, incentives can be an effective way to encourage good project work and enhance personal development of the members. One of the strongest human incentives is that inner feeling of accomplishment and achievement.

Public recognition in news articles or at meetings, a word of praise or pat on the back from leaders are also effective in encouraging desirable performance.

Group recognition should be used at the end of the project to recognize the accomplishments of each member who completed the project, attended a certain number of meetings, demonstrated certain acquired skills, etc. Recognize not only the member who might have won the top ribbon, but use your imagination to recognize the most improved hand stitcher, science fair participant, most unusual application of textile knowledge, best use of serger, best records, most active discussion participant, etc.
THE FIRST MEETING
The first meeting is usually an organizational one to plan for the project year. It is a good idea to have parents attend this first meeting with the members. Parents should be encouraged to take part in any or all activities.

As members arrive, plan something for them to do. Perhaps a teen leader can be prepared with a get-acquainted game or activity. Make sure every member knows everyone else. Do not assume this is the case. Taking time now to build group trust will have payoffs later in commitment, discipline and encouraging discussion. Share some of the broad objectives you have for this project. Set dates with members and parents for future meetings. Schedule any demonstrations with members and discuss other special activities for the entire year. Discuss your expectations for recovering costs of materials, copying, etc.

Young people deserve to be treated as contributors and assets instead of passive objects to be done for or to. Your job is to involve your participants and challenge them toward learning and personal growth. They should be involved in the planning and preparation of meetings. A map helps to give us direction, keep us on track and know when we’ve reached our destination. We’ve designed a MAP—Member Achievement Plan—to help you and your 4-H members plan, as a group and as individuals, what they want to learn, make and do in this project. This is called goal-setting. It also teaches decision making.

STEPS 1 of the MAP
Ask members to bring their Clothing & Textiles Member Guide and Annual Report to the first meeting along with pocket folder or binder to put it in. They will use it to begin to develop their “MAP” by completing Step 1. The leader and project group decide on four to six lessons they would like to learn about. Provide members a list of lesson titles from the appropriate level and let them choose. There should be plenty of choices to choose from different topics within the same Level if the same members enroll next year. As members get older, it is appropriate for them to choose less from a given list and become skilled at identifying and writing their own learning goals.

Goals may be divided into two groups: short-term and long-term. Short-term goals can be accomplished during the project year, while long-term goals take one or more years. Members will need to work with both types; however, a base for success and confidence will be established quickly with short-term goals.

**Short-term goals:**
- Must be specific and attainable
- Have a measurable outcome
- Specify time of completion
- Often related to long-term goals

**Examples:**
- A. By January 1, I will know how to run a sewing machine and serger
- B. By May 1, I will know how to properly sort and launder my own clothes

19-Clothing & Textiles, Introduction
Long-term goals:
- Must be believable
- Give direction and motivation
- Describe conditions one hopes to achieve

Examples:
- A. To qualify my textile display for the State Fair
- B. To use wise consumer decisions and purchase a summer wardrobe for less than $200

It is easy for a member to list long-term goals. If your members tend to think of only long-term goals, simply ask them, “What will you need to learn or do in order to accomplish this goal? How will you make this happen?” Answering these questions will provide many short-term goals. As a leader, you are aware of many of your member’s capabilities. You can help identify which goals are realistic for this year and which might have to become long-term goals.

After setting goals, review them periodically with members to see what progress is being made or what needs to be altered to reflect current situations. Hearing genuine praise or concern from interested adults is essential in helping members obtain their goals.

Explain other parts of the Member Guide and Annual Report as necessary. Discuss expectation of members and parents. Complete a short lesson activity from the appropriate level.

**STEPS 2 AND 3 of the MAP—Do, Measure**

At the project meeting, or at home with their family, members add their own personal goals to their MAP and add the date planned in the column on the right. As members complete their goals, they write the date completed in Step 3.

**STEPS 4 AND 5 of the MAP—Evaluate, Share and Celebrate**

At the end of the annual project experience, goals should be evaluated. How did the goals work? What was learned? What needs to be accomplished next? Members may not have accomplished what they set out to do, but they may have learned many things in the process. Setting a goal to reach a partial number of total goals isn’t a bad idea, since it enables the younger member to feel successful.

The member and the leader, or in the case of the parent leader, the member and the parent, should complete Step 5 of the MAP as soon as the member has completed his/her short-term plans. All members who complete this step should be given immediate recognition for their project goal-planning accomplishments. The recognition should be determined by the member as what is important to him/her. It may be going out to a movie with a friend, or as simple as personal satisfaction received from meeting the goal.
REFERENCES

Reweaving the Tattered Web—Socializing and Enculturating our Children, by Basil J. Whiting, is published by Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 4900 Oak, Kansas City, MO 64112-2776.

Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World, by H. Stephen Glenn and Jane Nelsen, Ed. D., is published by Prima Publishing and Communications, P.O. Box 1260SR, Rocklin, CA 95677, (916) 624-5718, and can be ordered from St. Martin’s Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010 (212) 674-5151.

A video presentation by Stephen Glenn, which summarizes much of Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World, can be requested through your county Extension office. Ask for the video, Developing Capable Young People, available from Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center.

Some members may wish to secure additional reading materials. The following references are suggested. Members may write to listed organizations or groups for ordering information, or check with their public library or local bookstore.

Videos:

Gone with the Wash, Maytag, One Dependability Square, Newton, Iowa, 50208, 515-791-8402, available for Kansas counties to check out through Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center

Clothing Care, The Learning Seed, 330 Telser Rd, Lake Zurich, IL 60047, 800-634-4941, available for Kansas counties to check out from area Extension offices and Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center

How Clothing is Made, The Learning Seed, available for Kansas counties to checkout from area Extension offices

Wardrobe Management: Dress Well for Less, The Learning Seed, available for Kansas counties to check out from area Extension offices

Stretching Your Clothing Dollar, Meridian Education Corporation, Department 9-92H, 236, E. Front St., Bloomington, IL 61701, 800-727-5507, available for Kansas counties to check out from area Extension offices

Bleach or Dye with Janet Pray, Islander School of Fashion Arts, Inc., P.O. Box 66, Grants Pass, OR 97526, 1-800-944-0213

Blue Sky Below My Feet, Fiber and Fabrics, produced by National 4-H Council, available through Kansas County Extension offices to purchase from Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center

The Spotlight is On You, 1995, The McCall Pattern Company, Educational Department, 615 McCall Rd., Manhattan, KS 66502, 800 255-2762 for ordering information, available for Kansas counties through area Extension offices or Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center
The Magic of Accessories, 1995, The McCall Pattern Company, available for Kansas counties to check out through area Extension offices or Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center

Clothing: An Intelligent Buyer’s Guide, The Learning Seed, available for Kansas counties to check out through area Extension offices or Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center

Men’s Wear Fit and Coordination, 1982, Missouri Extension, video available through Kansas county Extension offices to purchase from Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center

Clothing for People with Special Needs, Gret Atkin, Clothing and Textile Specialist, New York State College of Human Ecology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853

Garment Fitting Procedures: Bodice Alteration, Phyllis Bracklsberg, Iowa State University, available for loan from Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center

Garment Fitting Procedures: Lower Torso Alteration, Phyllis Bracklsberg, Iowa State University, available for loan from Kansas State University, Department of Communication’s Media Center

Computer Software:
Stain 2, Stain & Odor Removal for Washable Fabrics, available from all Kansas County Extension Offices, developed by Bette Jo Dedic, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky, Room 252 Ag Engineering Bldg., Lexington, Kentucky, 40546-0276

CloCare, Care and Maintenance of Clothing, 1990, Linda Heaton, Clothing and Textile Specialist, University of Kentucky, and Nadine Hackler, Clothing and Textile Specialist, University of Florida

Fabric Identification and Swatch Kit, The Learning Seed, 330 Telser Rd. Lake Zurich, Illinois, 60047, 1-800-634-4941

Fiber Basics, The Learning Seed, available from Kansas area Extension offices

Your Ideal Silhouette, Gail Florin, Meridian Education Corporation, available from Kansas Area Extension Offices

Printed materials:

Stitch ’N Wear, Ruth Gulbrandson, Clothing Specialist and Merry Green, McHenry County Home Economist, Cooperative Extension Service, North Dakota State University, Fargo. North Dakota 58105


4-H Clothing Construction Materials, Nadine Hackler, Extension Clothing Specialist, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611-0131

Reader’s Digest Complete Guide to Sewing, 1976, Reader’s Digest Association, Inc., Pleasantville, New York,

Start Sewing, Singer Education Department, 321 First St., Elizabeth, New Jersey 07207

Simply the Best Sewing Book, Simplicity Pattern Co., 200 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

4-H Clothing Construction File, available for checkout from each of the five Kansas Area Extension Offices

Spot and Stain Removal for Washable Fabrics, C-638, Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University

International Fabricare Institute, 12251 Tech Road, Silver Springs, MD 20904, 301-622-1900

Home Survival and Design, Kathy Vos, 4-H Youth Development Programs, University of Wisconsin, 328 Lowell Hall, Madison, Wisconsin, 53703

Enviroshopping: Shopping with Concern for the Environment, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Instructional Materials Service, 101 Rolsf Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611-0130

American Wool Council, 1200 Clayton Street, Denver, Colorado 80206

Sewing for Profit, NCR Extension Publication 208, Joyce Smith, Extension Clothing Specialist, The Ohio State University, reprinted in the reference section of this Introduction

Color Me Beautiful, Carol Jackson, Acropolis Books, Ltd., 2400 17th St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009

American Institute of Men’s and Boy’s Wear, Inc., 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10019

Singer Sewing Reference Library: Tailoring, 1988, Cy DeCosse Incorporated, 5900 Green Oak Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55343, 1-800-328 0590

The Textile UpDate ’93 Ring Binder Notebook 1 and Notebook 2, Deanna Munson, Extension Specialist, Textiles, Kansas State University, available from Kansas Area Extension offices

Consumer Advisory Committee for the American Apparel Manufacturers Association, 2500 Wilson Boulevard Suite 301, Arlington, Virginia, 22201

Additional Resources Suggested by Kansas Family and Consumer Sciences Agents and Specialists

The Reader’s Digest Complete Guide to Needlework

World Wide Web Home Page, Michigan State University Home Maintenance and Repair Page, address: http://lep.cl.msu.edu/msuimp/htdocs/mod02/master02.html; provides information on care and maintenance of many home products, including clothing and textiles. Can be searched by Keyword, or browsed by first letter of subject.

Unit Method of Clothing Construction (Women’s and Men’s Wear), by the Iowa Home Economics Association, The Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa 50010

23-Clothing & Textiles, Introduction
Sewing with Sergers (Book 1), 1985; Creative Serging, (Book 2), 1987; The Serger Idea Book, 1989; Palmer/Pletsch Associates, P.O.Box 12046, Portland, OR  97212-0046

ABC’s of Serging, Tammy Young and Lori Bottom, 1992, Chilton Book Company, Radnor, Penn  19089

Dictionary of Fiber and Textile Technology

10.20.30 Minutes to Sew, Nancy Zieman, Oxmoor House

Videos from Clotilde: 2 Sew Smart Way, B8031, Stevens Point, WI 54481-8031, 800-772-2891

Clotilde Demonstrates Notions, 1 hour
Clothing-Intelligent Buyers Guide
Sew Smart, Judy Lawrence and Clotilde Yurick; Professional methods for the Custom Look

Videos from Nancy Zieman:

Begin to Sew, 1 hour
Motivating Kids to Sew, 1 hour
Sewer/Overlock Sewing II, 1 hour

Simplicity has a series of idea/workbook projects with ideas for recycling household items, embellishment, etc. Ones used include, “Casual Cut-ups”, “Towel Treasures”, “The Bottle Bunch.”

Letter to Kansas Family and Consumer Sciences Agents from Deanna Munson, dated December 18, 1995, regarding materials from the Sewing Transition Workshop. This packet contains nearly 30 pages of resources, including a checklist for evaluating resource materials, lists of teacher resources, books, videos, and Internet Sewing and Textiles Sites.

American Home Sewing & Craft Association (Sew America), 1375 Broadway 4th Floor, New York, NY 10018

American Sewing Guild National Headquarters, P.O. Box 8476, Medford, OR, 97504-0476, 503-772-4059

Some suggested Sewing Kit Companies from What’s New in Home Economics

Big Sky, P.O. Box 7362, Missoula, MT  59807, 1-800-733-5300
Frostline, USA, 2525 River Rd., Grand Junction, CO  81505, 1-800-548-7872
LAMA P.O. Box 681, Mount Airy, MC 21771, 1-800-876-8870
Sew Kits by Lida, P.O. Box 500, Harleton, TX  75651
To Sew, P.O. Box 974, Malibu, CA  90265, 1-800-824-5278
PLANNING HELPS
The following forms may be used by the leader to help in planning for their Clothing & Textile project experience.
  - Project Member Enrollment Record
  - Project Leader Meeting Record
  - List of Members and Their Goals
  - Volunteer Support Form
  - Project Meeting Checklist
  - Clothing & Textile Member Guide and Annual Report

The final pages of this introduction section also contain some useful publication resources for the leader.
  • Selecting Overlock Sewing Machines
  • Sewing for Profit
  • Stitch 'N Wear, North Dakota State Extension Service (NOTE: Page 46, figure 10 of this publication, the hem has been turned to the outside of the garment but should be folded to the wrong side)
## PROJECT MEMBER ENROLLMENT RECORD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age Jan. 1</th>
<th>Yrs. in Project</th>
<th>Parents’ Name(s)</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PROJECT LEADER MEETING RECORD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name of project</th>
<th>phase(s)</th>
<th>project leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT MEMBERS</th>
<th>ATTENDANCE AT PROJECT MEETINGS</th>
<th>PRESENTATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF MEMBERS AND THEIR GOALS

1. NAME: ____________________________
   Plans or wants to do: ____________________________
   Assistance, resources, or materials needed: ____________________________

2. NAME: ____________________________
   Plans or wants to do: ____________________________
   Assistance, resources, or materials needed: ____________________________

3. NAME: ____________________________
   Plans or wants to do: ____________________________
   Assistance, resources, or materials needed: ____________________________

4. NAME: ____________________________
   Plans or wants to do: ____________________________
   Assistance, resources, or materials needed: ____________________________

5. NAME: ____________________________
   Plans or wants to do: ____________________________
   Assistance, resources, or materials needed: ____________________________

6. NAME: ____________________________
   Plans or wants to do: ____________________________
   Assistance, resources, or materials needed: ____________________________

7. NAME: ____________________________
   Plans or wants to do: ____________________________
   Assistance, resources, or materials needed: ____________________________
8. NAME:
   Plans or wants to do:
   Assistance, resources, or materials needed:

9. NAME:
   Plans or wants to do:
   Assistance, resources, or materials needed:

10. NAME:
    Plans or wants to do:
    Assistance, resources, or materials needed:

11. NAME:
    Plans or wants to do:
    Assistance, resources, or materials needed:

12. NAME:
    Plans or wants to do:
    Assistance, resources, or materials needed:

13. NAME:
    Plans or wants to do:
    Assistance, resources, or materials needed:

14. NAME:
    Plans or wants to do:
    Assistance, resources, or materials needed:
Volunteer I name

Volunteer II name

Address

City ____________________________ Home phone __________________________

Volunteer I occupation ____________________________ Business phone __________________________

Volunteer II occupation ____________________________ Business phone __________________________

Other volunteer obligations

I would be willing to assist the 4-H program by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer I</th>
<th>Volunteer II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
PROJECT MEETING CHECKLIST

A MEETING EVALUATION INSTRUMENT
After your project meeting, take a few minutes to consider each of the following questions. This checklist should also serve as a reminder of ideas to incorporate in future project meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETINGS HELD</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
<th>6th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Were the objectives of the meeting clear to members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did I give each member a chance to actively participate? (sharing ideas, assisting, presentations)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did I commend or encourage each youth in some way?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Did I plan for differences in ages, abilities, and interests of members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Did I observe progress of individual members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Did I involve other volunteers in some way? (planning, leadership assistance, transportation, refreshments)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Did I give members a chance to assume responsibility when it was appropriate?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Did I incorporate some fun activity or game into the project meeting?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Did I summarize the new information shared and skills learned at the close of the meeting?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Most of all, did I enjoy working with the young people involved?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Seven or more positive responses denotes an excellent meeting rating!"
Welcome to the 4-H Clothing and Textiles Project! It is one of several projects in the Family Living Division of Kansas 4-H projects. It is also one of the more popular projects and is important because everyone wears clothes and is surrounded by hundreds of textiles products. Kansas youth need to know how to be wise clothing and textile consumers, to understand the science of textiles, and how to construct and recycle garments or textile products.

Your 4-H Clothing and Textiles leader will be the key to helping you learn many things about the clothing and textiles industry that you may never have thought about. Selecting from more than 80 different lessons, if you remain in the Clothing and Textiles project, you will have the opportunity to explore and learn everything from how to read a label and care for clothing, to how to design or alter patterns when constructing a garment, to how fibers are made, and how you can reduce environmental waste in a global community. In addition, personal and public presentation skills such as modeling, grooming, and confidence in clothing and accessory decisions will be covered. Plenty of new topics are presented, so that you can remain in the same level for learning new and exciting things to make and do. The “Going Further” section of each lesson contains all kinds of fun activities to do in your community, or other ideas to continue learning. You’ll have fun with other clothing and textile members as you study about these five general concepts: Me and My Body; Textile Science; Care and Maintenance; Creating with Fabrics and Fibers; Wardrobe Planning.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
Besides attending project meetings with your friends, you can learn more about clothing and textiles and share what you’ve learned by giving clothing and textile presentations at your club, county 4-H Day, State Fair, school or civic clubs in your community. The State Fair Fashion Revue is a special opportunity for the top county winners 14 and older, and all members can participate in the State Fair Mini-Style show. Many 4-H’ers, both boys and girls, also participate in the local, district, and state Make It With Wool and Shepard’s Lead contests. Many members enjoy participating in club and county fashion revues held at county fair time and throughout the year for special occasions. Clothing and Textile classes in consumer judging clinics and contests help you learn to observe, evaluate, and make decisions. Your leader has other ideas for trips and tours related to this project that will make learning fun in your community.

You may exhibit at the county fair, and if 10 or older with a qualifying exhibit, advance to the State Fair. Be prepared to see traditional classes for constructed garments or articles, as well as new educational classes such as displays, posters, and notebooks offered so that you will be able to show or exhibit what you have learned from the wide array of project topics. One or more county project winners are generally recognized at County Achievement programs, based on year-end records, reports, or award applications. Each county may submit their top eligible Kansas Award Application (KAA) to Area KAA evaluations. The top two Clothing and Textiles KAA’s from each Extension Area will advance to State evaluation, where the state winner will be named and given the opportunity to represent Kansas at National 4-H Congress.

CAREERS
There are many career choices available to those interested in the Clothing and Textiles industry. College degrees generally require emphasis in chemistry, math, computers, marketing, and business. Several of the lessons are devoted to helping 4-H’ers explore these careers:

Textile Chemist  Sales Representative  Market Researcher  Educator  Seamstress
Textile Designer  Appliance Consultant  Apparel Designer  Costume Designer  Upholsterer
Research Specialist  Product Designer  Fashion Writer  Carpet Specialist  Buyers
Textile Physicist  Industrial Designer  Consumer Liason  Designing for Special Needs

WHERE TO GO FOR INFORMATION
If you do not have a Clothing and Textiles project leader for your club, there are several options. Check with your Extension office to see if you can be a part of a project group in a neighboring club, or check to see if you have a countywide group. If not, ask your parent or an adult friend to act as your leader. You may visit the Extension office and review the Clothing and Textiles Leader Notebook and copy the material you wish to use. It also contains a list of additional resource information if you want to write for it.
Member “MAP” Achievement Plan

Step 1—PLAN:
A. Decide at the beginning with your group and list 4-H project lessons you would like to learn about:

___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

B. Decide for yourself and list things you want to learn, make, or do . . .

___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

Step 2—DO:
As you are doing what you planned, make notes about your progress on your “Journal” page.

Step 3—MEASURE:
Write the date you’ve completed each part of your plan in the space provided.

Step 4—EVALUATE:
Tell about what you planned that worked. If some of your plans didn’t work, what would you do differently next time?

_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

Step 5—SHARE:
As soon as you have completed your short-term plans, discuss them with your leader using this guide.

We agree that ___________________________________________ has completed these goal planning steps and should be recognized for project achievement.

Date ______________________

4-H’ers Signature _________________________________________________

Leader’s Signature _________________________________________________
See instructions for Step 2, page 2 of this guide. You may want to include the date, what you did, what you learned, and how you felt, for the purpose of helping you remember your experiences.

_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
CLOTHING & TEXTILES PROJECT SUMMARY FOR _____________ YEAR

Name__________________________________  Age _________  Level _____________  years in project _____

Learning Activities in This Project
Indicate the number of times participated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Multi-County</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project meetings attended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trip/tours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks/demonstrations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of exhibits/displays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public presentations (modeling)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a separate page, you may attach a photo of you or someone else showing a favorite article or outfit you made or purchased, or display you created. If constructed, attach fabric samples.

Describe Leadership given in the Clothing and Textiles project this year:

Describe Community Service given in the Clothing and Textiles project this year:

Summarize important things you learned in each of the 5 Clothing & Textiles concepts:

1. Me & My Body

2. Creating with Fabrics and Fibers

3. Textile Science

4. Care & Maintenance

5. Wardrobe Planning

On a separate page, you may attach a photo of you or someone else showing a favorite article or outfit you made or purchased, or display you created. If constructed, attach fabric samples.

Member’s signature _______________________________ Parent, Guardian or Leader ____________________________

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

MG32 January 1996

It is the policy of Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service that all persons shall have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and materials without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability. Kansas State University is an equal opportunity organization. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Marc A. Johnson, Director.  File code: 4-H and Youth-2
Selecting Overlock Sewing Machines

SELECTION
Overlock sewing machines are special purpose machines that trim, stitch and overcast a seam in one operation. They are also called sergers because of the overcasting function. Overlock machines sew faster than conventional home sewing machines (approximately 1500 stitches per minute versus 900 stitches per minute and provide a professional looking seam.) These compact, lightweight machines (about 19 pounds) cost between $400 and $800.

Unlike conventional machines, overlocks have no bobbin. Instead, loopers interloop a 2 to 5 multiple thread system to form stitches. If not secured at both ends of stitching, threads or loops can pull out. A pair of very fine, sharp cutting blades to the right of the needle(s) trim seam allowances neatly as fabric is stitched. Overlocks are not designed to replace conventional home sewing machines, but to be used with them.

TYPES
There are several types of overlock sewing machines on the market. These are usually identified by the stitches they form and the number of threads the machines use at one time while stitching. For example, a three thread machine makes a 3 thread stitch and requires 3 separate spools of thread used together to form the stitch. The types of machines available at this time are:

- 2 thread
- 3 thread
- 2/3 thread
- 3/4 thread overlock stitch
- 4/2 thread safety stitch
- 3/4 thread mock safety
- 2/3/4/5 thread combination overlock and safety stitch.

Some of these machines can make a rolled hem stitch and a flatlock stitch. A rolled hem stitch is a very fine stitch (similar in appearance to a narrow satin stitch) and is used commercially to finish edges of ruffles, hems, napkins and other single layers of fabric. The width varies from 1.5 to 2.0 mm depending on the brand of machine. Some overlocks with 2 thread capabilities and most overlocks with 3 thread capabilities can do the rolled hem stitch.

Flatlock stitches are formed by stitching two layers of fabric together with tension settings that allow the stitch to be pulled apart. This causes the 2 layers of fabric to overlap, creating a very flat decorative seam. A loop stitch shows on one side (A) and a ladder (B) on the other. The fabric can be used with either side out. Flatlock stitches are possible on machines with either 2 thread or 3 thread capabilities.
Two thread overlocks can be identified by one needle and two threads. One thread is used in the needle and one in the looper. The stitch will not form a secure seam and, therefore, is normally used to overcast seam edges of garments sewn with a conventional sewing machine.

Flatlock stitches can be made on all 2 thread machines; rolled hem stitches on some 2 thread machines.

Three thread overlock machines use one needle and three threads for normal stitching. They make an overcasting stitch from 2.5 mm to 5.0 mm wide. The thread forms a row of stitches that lock at the seam line to form a secure seam combined with a seam finish. The seam allowance will be about \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch.

Three thread overlocks are versatile machines. They usually handle all weights and types of fabrics including single layers of lightweight silk-like fabrics. The stitch exhibits slight give for use with stretch fabrics and knits. Seams formed are moderately strong but should be reinforced with conventional machine stitching in stress areas. Both rolled hem and flatlock stitches can be made on three thread machines. A machine with 3 thread capabilities meets the needs of the majority of home sewers. (C)

Two/three thread overlock. These machines convert to using either 2 or 3 threads. They perform all functions described for the two thread and three thread machines mentioned above.

Three/four thread overlocks feature two needles and four threads. Two spools of thread are used for the two needles and two spools for the upper and lower loopers. These machines make a three thread stitch with an extra row of stitches (provided by the second needle) through the middle of the overlock stitch (D). As a result, the stitch is stronger and slightly wider than that formed by a 3 thread machine.

Three/four thread overlocks will form a standard 3 thread stitch using one needle in the machine. In fact, the way to change stitch width on 3/4 thread machines is by using either the left needle or the right needle. When both needles are used to complete a 4 thread overlock stitch, the width is preset and cannot be changed. Overlock stitch widths on 3/4 thread overlocks range from 3.5 mm to 6.5 mm depending on machine.

These machines perform all the functions of a standard 3 thread overlock. This includes rolled hem and flatlock stitches. Standard overlock seams on a 3/4 machine will be more secure than on a 3 thread machine because of the extra row of stitching provided by the second needle.
The finished seam from a 3/4 overlock has slight give, making it satisfactory for use with knit fabrics including high stretch materials used in swimwear.

Overlocks with 2 or 3 thread capabilities (including 3/4 thread machines) work well as companions to conventional home sewing machines. Seams can be sewn on the standard sewing machine to allow for fitting while sewing. Final seams can then be stitched on the serger either together or single layer to provide a seam finish.

A true four thread overlock (also called 2/4 or 4/2 overlocks) forms a stitch different from the 3/4 machine. Be certain to know the differences, advantages and limitations to each before making a decision to purchase.

A 4/2 overlock uses 2 needles and 2 loopers and requires four threads. These machines form a chain stitch seam with 2 threads, an overcast edge with 2 threads, and trim seams in one operation. The 4/2 thread overlock can sew three different stitches: chainsitch or safety stitch, 2 thread overedge stitch, or true four thread safety stitch by combining the chainsitch and overedge stitch. (E)

Because overlock machines have no bobbin, the seam on a 4/2 machine is formed with a chainstitch. If not secured, the thread will pull out by tugging on the appropriate thread end. Some ready-made clothing uses the chainstitch seam for ease in alterations. The crotch seam in men’s trousers is normally sewn with this stitch.

Four/two machines handle all weights of fabric but are most successful on medium to heavy weights. The chainstitch gives a very stable, secure seam, but is not suitable for stretch seams in knits. The approximate width of finished true four thread seams is 6 mm to 7 mm.

The 2 thread overedge stitch can be made without the chainstitch and is similar to the stitch described on the 2 thread machine above. Used alone, it will not make a secure seam, but can form a flatlock stitch. Rolled hems are not usually possible on 4/2 machines, although some companies have provided special attachments for this.

Four/two overlocks are less versatile and less suitable for most home sewers. They are the choice of many professional dressmakers and alterationists as they provide a neat, secure seam rapidly. Overlocks generally are a cost effective investment for individuals involved in businesses that involve sewing activities.

3—Clothing & Textiles, Publication Resource
Three/four Mock Safety Stitch is another type of 3/4 thread overlock machine that features a mock safety stitch. A few companies market this machine that has the appearance of a 4/2 safety stitch from the right side and the appearance of the standard 3/4 overlock stitch from the wrong side. Otherwise, the machine functions similarly to the standard 3/4 overlock. It uses 2 needles, 4 threads, converts to 3 threads, flatlocks, does a rolled hem, and gives a seam with slight stretch. These machines feature seam width adjustments beyond that of using left or right needle—a limitation of most other 3/4 machines.

The 2/3/4/5 overlock is the most recent addition to the market. It features 2 needles and 3 loopers. The machine has all the capabilities of a 2 thread, 3 thread, and a 4/2 machine. It can make a chain stitch like that on the true 4/2 thread overlock, but with either a 2 thread overedge stitch or a 3 thread overlock stitch. A 2 thread overedge and a 3 thread overlock are possible without the chain stitch, as well as flatlock and rolled hem stitches.

Another type of 5 thread machine produces a stitch much like the 3/4 thread machine. To produce the stitch, two threads are threaded through the left needle. A true 4 thread safety stitch is not possible on this machine. However, a durable, yet stretchable seam results. Rolled hem and flatlock stitches can be made on this machine. When buying a 5 thread machine, be aware of which type is being purchased and its advantages and limitations.

The 2/3/4/5 overlock is obviously the most versatile machine because of the many variations possible. Some people might find it more complicated to understand and operate. Determine how easily the machine converts from one type of stitch to another. A complex procedure might reduce frequent use of all stitch variations.

FEATURES
There are some points to consider or questions to ask about overlock machine features.

Threading: The overlock has a separate set of thread guides for each spool or cone of thread used on the machine. The threading process must be done carefully and repeated for each of the two to five threads. Note the presence of color coded thread guides and a visual threading diagram on the machine. Some machines feature “lay in” threading, which eliminates wrapping thread around tension disks. Most machines require thread to be caught on or inserted through thread guides. Practice threading a machine before you buy to determine ease or complexity of the process. Do not allow the salesperson to get by with showing only pull through threading.

Thread: Most machines handle a variety of threads from standard sewing thread to decorative threads, such as pearl cotton. Most sewers use special thread designed for overlock machines. It comes on cones, is quite fine, and may have a special finish to accommodate high speed sewing. The finer thread reduces bulk and stiffness in seams. Overlock machines use more thread to complete stitches than conventional sewing machines. Cone thread, less expensive than regular sewing threads, is a more economical choice. If not available in your area, investigate mail order sources before purchasing an overlock machine.

When shopping for an overlock, take along pearl cotton, fingering yarn, or crochet thread and ask the salesperson to demonstrate with it. Note the quality of stitch and ease with which the machine handles decorative threads.

Overlock machines require even feeding of thread from the spool. Devices that adapt different types of thread spools accompany most machines.
Needles: Some overlock machines require special industrial needles; other machines use conventional sewing machine needles. Industrial needles are stronger and will probably not have to be replaced as often as regular needles. The greater thickness of industrial needles can make a larger hole in fabrics. Industrial needles should never be substituted for conventional machine needles and vice versa. Consider availability of industrial needles. Individuals in outlying areas may need to investigate mail order sources.

In two needle machines, note the number of screws holding needles in place. Some machines use one screw to anchor both needles; others feature a separate screw for each needle. Operation of the machine will not be affected, but changing needles is more cumbersome when one screw anchors both.

Stitch Adjustments: Consider ease and range of stitch adjustments for length and width of stitches as well as type of stitch. Most stitch length settings are achieved by sliding of turning a knob or dial. Some machines require the use of a screwdriver to make this adjustment. If a screwdriver is necessary, does the correct size come with the machine? Are settings accessible, clearly marked, and easy to read and manipulate?

Width adjustments are achieved by using either the left or right needle in some 2 needle machines or actually moving the position of the throat plate or knife or changing the throatplate in other machines. Again, note the ease of the operation and range of widths possible.

Determine the procedure for actually changing stitches such as from overlock to rolled hem or four thread overlock to two or three thread overlock. How complex is the procedure? Are the stitches built-in or are special adaptors needed? Do they come with the machine or require a separate purchase, and what is the additional cost? If the procedure is complex, decide how often you will use different stitches.

Tension: Tension adjustment is more often needed when changing stitch type or thread than when changing fabric. Note accessibility and ease of operating tension dials. Are they color coded, numbered, or use a + and - system? Those with numbers should be easier to reset for normal stitching conditions. Tension disks that make one revolution are usually numbered 0 to 9.

Tension dials capable of making several revolutions are usually not numbered but do allow a greater range of tension settings. Some companies using this tension arrangement feature a number system on the barrel of the tension disk to indicate which revolution the disk is on, i.e., 2, 3 or 4. Decide on the system with which you are most comfortable.

Knife Replacement: Cutting knives retain sharpness over extended sewing periods but do dull and must be replaced eventually. Overlock machines operate with two knives—one stationary and one movable. Under normal sewing conditions, the movable knife usually needs to be replaced once for every six stationary blades that are replaced. One extra stationary knife is included in the purchase of most machines. Remember to replace the spare once it is used. Replacement stationary blades cost about $5; movable blades are more expensive, about $20.

On most overlocks, the cutting mechanism can be disengaged. This allows stitching without automatic trimming of fabric. If the knife cannot be disengaged, care is needed when stitching circles or using techniques where trimming is not desired.
**Power and Light Switch:** A separate on/off switch for electric power is featured on some machines. It is often connected to a light over the stitching area. Separate power switches may be more critical when young children are in the home. The machine can be turned off without unplugging. This is primarily a safety feature.

Most overlocks feature a built-in light over the sewing area. Note how well the work area is lighted, presence of glare and ease of bulb replacement. If the machine does not have a built-in light, an auxiliary light source may be needed.

**Presser Feet:** Presser feet options affect ease of operation and versatility of the overlock. Snap-on feet as well as conventional screw-on feet are available. Some brands feature a swing out presser foot, which makes threading easier. Note availability of special feet such as rolled hem, blind hem, elastic or tape guide presser foot. Some come with the machine; others must be purchased separately. The control to raise or lower the presser foot may be located in different places. Note the location and convenience.

Generally, presser feet options don’t affect the overall operation and quality of stitch but should be considered as special features for versatility and sewing ease.

**Special Features:** Note any special features such as free arm models, special tables, availability of dust covers, travel cases, carrying handles, trays for trimmed seam allowance fabric and the accessory case contents. Some machines feature built-in storage for basic accessories such as tweezers, cleaning brush and needles on the machine.

Also note ease of cleaning and oiling, position of thread cutter for easy use, smoothness and quietness of operation, presence of suction cups, if needed, to stabilize machine, and service and warranty arrangements. Often, such details make a big difference in your sewing pleasure. Many companies offer special features to improve quality, versatility or sewing convenience. Differential feeding action ensures even feeding of fabric. These machines have two sets of feed dogs or teeth—one set in front of the needle and one in back. Each set can be adjusted to feed at different rates to gather automatically while stitching or eliminate puckering in difficult fabrics.

Note also seam allowance markings on the machine, direction of hand wheel rotation and ease and comfort of foot control use. Review instruction booklets carefully. Are supplemental books available for more complete use of the machine and is there an extra cost?

**Conventional Machines With Overlock Adaptations**
 Currently, a few companies market conventional sewing machines that overcast and automatically trim seam allowances in one operation. Two machines use an attachment which connects to the stitching mechanism like an automatic buttonholer does. This allows the seam allowance to be trimmed away automatically during stitching.

Any stitch on the machine including stretch stitch, zig-zag, blind hem or decorative stitches can be used with the trimming attachment. A true overlock is not possible on these machines. Another company offers a sewing machine with two distinctly separate stitching mechanisms—one is a conventional sewing stitch, the other overcasts and trims. This machine operates without a bobbin in the overcast mechanism. It is available with either two thread or three thread capabilities. The machine has a built-in turntable to swivel the machine to the overcast mechanism on the reverse side of the machine.
Shopping For Your Overlock Machine
Don't hurry when shopping for an overlock machine. Investigate several brands and consider your needs. Try not to allow special offers or sales to influence you. The machine is a long term investment and should be selected with thought and without pressure.

Note how many functions the machine does and the ease of conversion. If the process is cumbersome, you may seldom use some functions. To what extent is convenience sacrificed for versatility?

Collect several fabrics that you normally sew with. These might include bathing suit or actionwear fabrics, or heavyweight crepe de chine, quilted fabrics, or heavyweight functional denims or poplins. Cut them into seam lengths and try each stitch the machine makes on each fabric. This lets you determine how well each machine sews each fabric, and the ease of changing stitches or adjustments. Be sure to try threading the machine by yourself.

Be aware of service. Always buy from a reputable dealer who stands behind the merchandise. A machine that costs a few dollars more from a reputable dealer, may be less expensive in the long run, should problems occur with the machine.

Some dealers offer special instruction classes or regular sessions, sometimes called “clubs,” to help owners learn to use their overlocks more confidently. Take advantage of these if available. Consider your needs and sewing habits. Remember, too, that your viewpoint as the buyer is just as important as the seller’s. Take your time and make a selection that will satisfy you.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>3/4</th>
<th>3/4 Mock Safety</th>
<th>4/2</th>
<th>2/3/4/5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stitch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Combination of stitches shown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>2 thread overedge</td>
<td>3 thread overedge</td>
<td>Overlock with extra row of stitching</td>
<td>Mock safety chain</td>
<td>Chainstitch with 2 thread overedge</td>
<td>Chainstitch with 2 or 3 thread overedge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of needles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of loopers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretch in seam</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately secure seam</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very secure seam</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolled hem</td>
<td>possible on some machines</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>generally no x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatlock stitch</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Selecting Overlocking Machine Buyer’s Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Brand and Model Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of Threads: 2, 3, 4, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Number of Needles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Type of Needle: Industrial or Conventional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Types of Stitches:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain/Safety Stitch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolled Hem: Built in/Cost of Separate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment/Ease of Conversion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ease of Converting to Different Stitches, i.e., 3 to 4 Thread Overlock to Chain, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Stitch Quality on Various Fabrics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Stitch Quality with Decorative Threads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ease of Changing Stitch Width and Length</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ease of Threading Loopers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Color Coded Thread Guides and Diagrams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Tension Dials: Numbered, Color Coded, + or - Ease of Adjusting Tension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Knife Blades: Can Be Disengaged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Location of Presser Foot Lever</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Power Switch: Yes or No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Location of Light</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Operates Quietly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Machine Stability when Stitching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Easy Cleaning and Oiling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Instruction Manual: Easy to Understand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Selecting Overlocking Machine Buyer’s Checklist, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. Special Features:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differential Feed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing Out Presser Foot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snap On Presser Feet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Presser Feet Available, i.e.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind Hem (Cost?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tray for Catching Trimmed Fabric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Features or Attachments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Additional Features:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying Handle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built in Accessory Case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessory Case Contents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dust Cover</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Store and Salesperson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Availability of Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Warranty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Lessons/Classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from material developed by Ruth Gulbrandson, North Dakota Cooperative Extension Service
# Summary of Machine Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type (as described by # of loopers)</th>
<th>2 thread overedge</th>
<th>3 thread overedge</th>
<th>overlock w/ extra row of stitching</th>
<th>mock safety stitch</th>
<th>chainstitch with 2 thread overedge</th>
<th>thread overlock</th>
<th>2/3/4/5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stitch</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combination</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>2 thread overedge</td>
<td>3 thread overedge</td>
<td>overlock w/ extra row of stitching</td>
<td>mock safety stitch</td>
<td>chainstitch with 2 thread overedge</td>
<td>thread overlock</td>
<td>2/3/4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of needles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of loopers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stretchin seam</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderately secure seam</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very secure seam</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rolled hem</td>
<td>possible on some</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>generally not</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flatlock stitch</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sewing For Profit

“I really need a new suit, but with my long arms, sleeves in ready-to-wear are always too short.”
“When I cleaned the closet, I found three skirts that are too snug. I wish I knew someone who could alter them.”
“There must be a dozen shades of blue bedspreads but not one really matches the new bedroom wallpaper. If only...”
“What a darling teddy bear! Would you make one for me? My grandson would love it!”

Remarks like these reflect a need for sewing services. If a time for custom sewers exists, it is now. But before you jump into business as a dressmaker, reupholsterer, drapery-maker or quilter, ask yourself, “Is sewing for profit for me?”

A custom sewing business in the home offers many advantages—a flexible time schedule; being your own boss; and low initial investment in equipment, workspace and updating skills. If you have small children, work in the home saves costly day care services. Most families can use additional income from a home business. Custom sewing often begins as an income supplement, but it can develop into a business that makes a substantial contribution to the family’s income. Other benefits are enjoyment and self satisfaction. If you like to sew, other jobs might not provide as much creative challenge as sewing lovely fabrics and working with interesting patterns.

Custom sewing isn’t for every skilled sewer, but it holds potential for many. This publication will help you decide if custom sewing is for you and will show you how to make it a successful business.

If you are sewing for profit already, this publication will suggest ways to make your business more profitable and enjoyable.

Personal Traits
Do you have the qualities to be successful at and enjoy a custom sewing business in the home? Think about these important qualities:

- physical energy
- ambition
- initiative
- resourcefulness
- self esteem
- nerve—a risk taker
- tact and diplomacy
- organizational ability
- self-discipline

Let’s see why these personal traits influence your success. A business places many demands on an individual, especially when combining the activity with a home and family. Physical energy is needed, particularly in busy periods. You must be able to meet a variety of demands. Ambition to do something special and to have a goal worth working for is important. Initiative means reaching out to new opportunities rather than waiting for them to come to you. Do you like to try new challenges or are you fearful? Being resourceful and enjoying new challenges, even seeking them out, are important traits for any self-employed business person. Learning is often a reward of trying the unfamiliar and figuring out creative solutions.

What is your attitude toward yourself and your abilities—your self esteem? A business person must have a thick skin. Customers may be critical of your work, but you can’t let one negative comment destroy you. Know your abilities, believe in them, and don’t let difficult customers bother you regardless of whether they are right or wrong. If warranted, make requested changes and forget about the situation. You will never please everyone. On the other hand, don’t let customers take advantage of you.
When working with the public, tact is necessary. Some customers are difficult to please regardless of the quality of work offered them. The dressmaker has a special challenge. When customers look in the mirror, they usually see what they want to see, not the actual image reflected. You may need to help customers save face, but they will usually appreciate your kindness.

Analyze your management abilities. Be honest about your self-discipline. A home business is not for the procrastinator because there’s no one around to make you do the work. Being your own boss may not be easy. Can you schedule time easily? Can you coordinate home, family, and social and work interests with little difficulty? Customers expect work to be done thoroughly and on time. Work that is late or of poor quality because it was done hurriedly will harm your business. Being a good manager, planning a schedule and sticking to it are critical to a successful home business.

Perhaps you don’t have all of these traits. Some can be learned or developed. Often, people have special abilities that don’t surface until needed. Think carefully about your capabilities, actual or hidden. Your potential may be greater than you think.

Family Considerations
In any home business, family support is vital. It’s so important that starting a business in the home should be a family decision because it is your family’s home, too. Your family can’t help but become involved with the business and must cooperate. Family members will have to take phone messages, greet customers and assume some household tasks. Members must accept the fact that clients will take some of the attention formerly devoted to them. Be sure to plan quality time with your family. Don’t forget to sew for them, too.

Home Arrangement
A separate sewing room is desirable but not necessary. Many successful custom sewers have used dining rooms and corners of kitchens and living rooms. If you are waiting for a child to leave home so you can claim the bedroom or for a quiet summer to build a sewing room, you are just procrastinating. Start a custom sewing business and earn enough money to build the extra room.

If a section of a room is your sewing area, a screen helps to hide your work activities. If possible, select a place where equipment and partially completed garments don’t have to be put away. Setting up a machine whenever you sew wastes time. In the custom sewing business, time is money, so use it carefully.

For dressmaking, consider a location that will provide privacy for customers during fittings. Be certain a full-length mirror is available. A nearby bedroom may work well. Special work areas for making window treatments and reupholstering are recommended. Perhaps a basement or garage would be suitable, especially with messy activities such as reupholstering. Existing lighting in these areas may be inadequate but is easily improved. You will need long tables for cutting and sewing window treatments as well as a good sized workspace.

Locate the sewing area in relation to other activities. You may want to combine sewing with kitchen and laundry chores, or supervision of children’s play activities. Be careful to keep your hands, clothing and work surfaces clean and free from items that will damage or soil fabric when sewing is combined with other activities.

Basement or second floor sewing areas result in extra steps but provide more privacy and freedom from interruption. With a separate sewing room or area, a telephone extension saves time and steps.
A desk or table with chairs where you can confer with customers gives an appearance of organization and professionalism. So does a display of fashion or interior magazines, pattern books or related materials. An attractive work area will be pleasing to both you and your customer.

Your Business Organization
Although most at-home businesses are formed as sole proprietorships, it is wise to know the different forms of business organizations and their advantages and disadvantages. A business may be operated as an individual or sole proprietorship, partnership or corporation.

A sole proprietorship is the simplest type of business organization and can be set up at little or no cost. You and the business are considered as one. Assets and liabilities of the business are considered the same as personal assets and liabilities. For example, a creditor can collect from your personal assets if the business has insufficient funds to cover debts.

As a sole proprietor, no separate tax returns are filed. Details of business income and expense are reported on IRS Form 1040 SE (self employment) and on Schedule C of the individual 1040 tax form. Income or loss from the business is added to the individual’s other income or losses and taxed at individual income tax rates. Most custom sewing businesses use the sole proprietor form of organization. It is simple and inexpensive, and requires less complex record-keeping methods than other forms of ownership.

In a partnership, the business is co-owned by two or more people who share both profits and losses. A custom sewer may decide to expand the business by adding a partner. Partners have joint control over the management of the business and its assets. Advantages of a partnership are that it is simple to organize and operate, the ability to obtain capital or credit and expand services is increased, and government controls and special taxation are limited. Business income and expenses are reported in a manner Similar to a sole proprietorship.

One disadvantage of a partnership may be the sharing of business responsibilities so that each partner receives profits equal to input. It may be difficult to measure if each partner does an equal share of the work. If the partnership breaks up, dividing assets may be difficult. The biggest disadvantage, however, is liability. Each member of the partnership is liable for any debts incurred by any member of the partnership. This liability extends to personal property of the partners. For example, you might have a reupholstery business with a partner who buys a van in the name of the business to deliver furniture. If the partner leaves town without paying for the van, you are liable for the debt. Your personal property, such as a car, could be sold to pay for the business debt incurred by the partner.

If you plan on forming a partnership, seek a lawyer’s advice. Simple agreements can be drawn up that provide for and protect each partner. A lawyer can explain potential problems in detail.

Custom sewers probably will not be involved in corporations unless the business expands greatly and leads to more opportunities. Forming a corporation is expensive and involves increased government regulation and taxation. If your business grows to this point, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of forming a corporation with your accountant or lawyer.

Custom sewers may also work on a contract basis with stores or other businesses. In contract work, a custom sewer agrees to make certain items or perform certain services, usually in quantity, for an organization, group or retail outlet. The organization or retail outlet becomes the consumer for the custom sewn work, and it sells or distributes the work to its members or clientele. Contract work can be done by sole proprietors, partners or corporations and involves no legal fees.
The United States Small Business Administration (SBA) has offices throughout the country that offer management assistance. Make an appointment with this agency to discuss your business idea, form of organization, financing and general business operation. The SBA offers many excellent publications and business counseling at no charge. To contact the nearest SBA office, look in your telephone book under U.S. Government, Small Business Administration.

**Should You Specialize?**
Once you have decided to start a custom sewing business, the next decision involves specializing. Specializing is focusing your business on a particular service, product or clientele. It offers definite advantages and disadvantages.

**Advantages**
Specializing lets you develop speed and skill in producing a particular item. For example, if you specialize in making draperies, you can develop your own timesaving system. Your skill increases so you produce a better product. When specializing, consider assembly line production. Make 25 to 50 items at one time. If you are sewing appliqued baby bibs, sew the applique on all 25 bibs, then bind the edges on all 25 bibs, then attach the ties to all 25 bibs. Concentrate on eliminating wasted motion.

Specializing lets you direct advertising to certain audiences and narrows the area in which you must keep up-to-date. More importantly, you can concentrate on what you do best and enjoy most. For example, if you are not good at fitting, perhaps drapery construction is an area where you can specialize.

**Disadvantages**
Concentrating on one kind of sewing and repeating the same steps could become monotonous.

Specializing means you must be aware of market trends and shifts in consumer demand. Your business may be in trouble if you have 50 outdoor chef’s aprons made and suddenly find that consumers want feminine Victorian apron styles. Specializing can also mean “feast or famine” very busy or very slow periods. For example, if you specialize in bridal wear, you may be very busy during the spring and summer but have little or no business during winter. Would such uneven income present problems for you?

Consider carefully the many possibilities for specializing. These include alterations, bridal wear, western wear (including square dance outfits), skating or dance costumes, monogramming, vestments for clergy, window treatments, reupholstery, slip covers, decorator pillows, quilts, patchwork designs, colonial curtain designs, tailored suits for the professional woman, covers for musical instrument cases, dolls, antique doll clothes, and repairs of school band or athletic uniforms.

**Government Licenses and Regulations**
Each state has some licenses, regulations and other rules that apply to individuals doing custom sewing in the home. Specific regulations for your state are given on the separate insert sheet accompanying this publication. If the insert sheet is missing, contact your county Extension home economist for a copy.

Here are some general regulations you may need to investigate:
A vendor’s license provides the state with a mechanism for collecting sales tax on work subject to sales tax in your state. A vendor’s license allows you to purchase supplies for your business without paying sales tax on them. Some suppliers give a small discount to vendor’s license holders.

Sales tax is collected on custom sewn items in some states. If you operate your business in one of these states and do not charge or report sales tax, you are breaking the law.
Mail order merchandise is subject to sales tax only if it is normally charged in your state and the merchandise is shipped to another address within the state. If the merchandise is shipped to another state, do not charge sales tax regardless of the sales tax laws in your state or the state of destination. The merchandise must be shipped by common carrier. If a customer from another state comes to your place of business, purchases a taxable product and wants to take it with him, sales tax must be charged. To avoid sales tax, the item must be transported to the other state by common carrier.

Registering a business name is required in some states, particularly if you operate under a fictitious name or if you use a trade name. An example of a fictitious name would be “Designer Dressmaking Boutique.” If your name was used, such as “Designer Dressmaking by Suzy Parker,” registration of the business name would not be required. This regulation provides for the owner’s name to be on file should customers have complaints about the business. Also, it prohibits another business in the state from operating under the same name.

Licenses for stuffed items, required in most states, apply to merchandise that uses stuffing products such as polyester fiberfill, cotton batting, urethane foam or straw. Items affected include stuffed toys, quilted items, reupholstered furniture, pillows and infant accessories. The regulation usually involves submitting a sample of stuffing for approval and applying for a license to obtain a label indicating the fiber content of stuffing used.

Flammability legislation in some states may regulate the materials or stuffing used in certain consumer products such as furniture, stuffed toys or children’s clothing. Children’s sleepwear sold across state lines must meet federal standards for flammability. Be aware of regulations in your state concerning manufacture, testing and sale of children’s sleepwear. Contact your county Extension home economist for current textile flammability regulations.

Zoning regulations are local. Contact your township, city or county zoning board for information about your location. Zoning complaints about custom sewing businesses in the home seldom occur unless they cause unnecessary disruption in the neighborhood. For example, complaints may occur if your business creates a parking problem, excess traffic on the street or excess noise, or affects the appearance of your property or the neighborhood. Zoning is seldom a problem in residential areas, especially if there is no business sign in the yard and no neighborhood disruption occurs. In some residential neighborhoods, it may be possible to have the area spot zoned for your home business.

Other legislation may apply in your state. Review the insert accompanying this publication. The local U. S. Small Business Administration office provides information about business regulations in your state at no charge.

It is important to understand and comply with some other government regulations:

Income tax—As a business, income tax on net earnings must be reported and paid to the Internal Revenue Service. A sole proprietorship or partnership reports business earnings and expenses on IRS Form 1040 SE (self-employed) and Schedule C and submits the standard IRS 1040 form. If the business grows to the point where a sizable tax payment is required for the yearly personal income tax, an estimated quarterly tax return should be investigated. Contact an accountant or the local IRS office for the recommended procedure.

Social Security—As a self-employed individual, custom sewers pay Social Security Tax (FICA) on net incomes. The rate changes yearly, so contact your nearest Social Security office for current figures. The tax is reported on the IRS 1040 SE (self-employed) tax form at the end of the year. Consult your local IRS or Social Security office for other information concerning this topic.

Retirement—Self-employed persons may want to consider additional retirement programs. Programs are available through insurance companies and brokerage houses. Two plans specifically designed for self-
employed individuals and available through commercial banks are the Keough Plan and the Individual Retirement Account (IRA). Each plan allows a contribution of income to an account without paying taxes on contribution until it is withdrawn. The difference in the two plans is the amount of money that can be contributed each year. The Keough plan maximum is $7,500 and the IRA is $2,000. Money in these accounts cannot be withdrawn before retirement without substantial penalties.

**Insurance**

Any business, including one in your home, involves certain liabilities. Many types of insurance are available. Investigate basic types of insurance such as liability for personal injury, personal property and business personal property.

Homeowners’ insurance will not cover claims related to business in your home. For example, if a customer comes to your home and falls on the steps, homeowners’ insurance may not cover any legal action because the customer was in your home on business. Homeowners’ insurance may not apply if a customer’s property or your own equipment used for your business, such as a sewing machine, is lost or damaged by fire or theft. Consult your insurance agent to determine insurance coverage. Some companies can add a rider or endorsement to a homeowners’ policy to cover home businesses. Other companies must write a separate policy, which costs more than adding a rider.

Determine how much coverage you need. Do you need to insure against loss of customers’ goods through fire or theft? If you seldom have more than $200 to $300 of customers’ property in your home, your liability is small. If you alter clothing for clients who buy expensive designer garments, the liability is much higher. Three garments that need hems could be worth $2,000.

Consider insurance for completed products. Suppose you make a dress and leave a pin in by mistake. The pin could scratch a customer’s eye as the completed garment is put on.

If your business involves delivering completed goods, your automobile insurance may not cover business trips. Check with your insurance agent. An endorsement or rider for business operation of a personal automobile may be written for a small increase in premium.

Finally, determine how important your custom sewing income is to your family. Initially income may be small, but it could become a substantial amount that the family depends on. If you break an arm and could not sew for several months, could your family do without the income from the custom sewing business? Disability insurance for this type of situation is available.

These are a few of the many types of insurance available. You can be overinsured, so consider your situation carefully. What are the greatest risks? What is the cost of different types of insurance? Discuss the situation with a reputable insurance agent. Shop around for a variety of policies and viewpoints before making a decision. Always be certain to have something in writing that states what your business coverage is. This is especially important if your business liability is being insured under a personal homeowners’ or automobile policy.

**The Pricing Problem**

Perhaps the most difficult problem for the custom sewer, experienced or inexperienced, is pricing. The problem and the service itself are very individual. For example, a beautician provides a service. In the same town the price range for a basic shampoo and set may differ by as much as $10. The differences in haircuts, coloring and permanents may be even greater. The customer selects and pays for the service that pleases him or her most.
Here are some factors that affect custom sewing pricing:

**Location**—The area in which someone lives and works will affect the price a custom sewer can charge. Locations where higher rates will be more acceptable include urban, suburban and high income areas as well as those with a high percentage of employed women, especially professionals. Rates in rural areas tend to be lower.

**Skill**—The experienced sewer can often command a higher rate depending on the particular skills offered and whether the clientele appreciates and values the skill. A dressmaker especially adept at fitting or redesigning garments has special skills. Some customers might be willing to pay very well for this expertise.

**Speed**—Time is money. A dressmaker who sews fast, and well, has a competitive edge. This sewer can complete more items in the time available and earn more per hour.

**Customer**—Some customers have special needs or different standards for fit and quality of workmanship. They will pay higher rates to someone who meets these. All higher standards or provides the special skill.

**Fabric**—The fabric affects the price charged. Fabrics requiring a special knowledge or special techniques can be sewn at higher rates. For example, the custom sewer cutting into an imitation suede fabric at $50 per yard takes a bigger risk than when cutting into a $7 per yard polyester crepe. Expense increases if the custom sewer makes an error with the expensive fabric and must compensate the customer. Also, sewing on imitation suede demands special knowledge and techniques for which the custom sewer should be compensated.

**Competition in the area**—The local competition affects rate setting. Services should not be overpriced or underpriced. This is not good business, both individually or within the community of competitors. A custom sewer should investigate local rates. Drycleaners and department stores often publish rates—ask about them.

Establishing rates can be done in several ways. Basic to any approach is the value of your time. What price is required to make time spent in custom sewing worthwhile? Some sewers want a minimum of $4 per hour, others $5 per hour, and others $8 to $10 per hour or higher. Here are four ways you might use to determine rates.

**By item**—Rates are often quoted on an item basis. Most customers prefer to have a cost estimate or price range before they agree to the work. As a custom sewer, determine a price range for certain basic garments and alterations such as hems or zipper replacement. Keep records on how long it takes to complete certain tasks. Multiply time by the hourly rate desired. For example, it takes four or five hours to complete a basic blouse with collar, cuffs and front opening. If you want a minimum of $5 per hour and a blouse takes five hours to complete, the labor charge would be $25. Use a price range of $25 to $30 depending on the complexity of the garment and fitting problems.

**By hourly rates**—Complexity of a garment is a method by which charges depend on the sewing operations required to complete a garment. The chart on page 22 lists construction techniques that might be used on a garment, then gives a charge according to hourly rates desired by the custom sewer. The custom sewer would itemize the various operations in a garment, then total them for a cost estimate. This approach is time consuming and may be awkward, but it can provide some guidelines for determining rates and help customers understand the skills and, time required to produce a custom sewn garment. To personalize the chart, check each detail and compare the amount of time you spend on a procedure in relation to that given on the chart. Adjust the chart to better reflect your pace.
By comparing custom-made with ready-to-wear—When the cost of raw materials is included, custom sewn garments cannot be made for less than the price of a comparable ready-to-wear garment, excluding designer garments. A customer can buy off-the-rack in a store for less money. Customers come to the custom sewer because they can’t find what they want or cannot get a satisfactory fit. In either case, special or custom service is desired and should be compensated appropriately.

The total cost of the garment should be comparable to similar ready made clothing, including material and labor. Some custom sewers try to price slightly under comparable ready-to-wear. This pricing procedure gives them a competitive edge and may attract the business of individuals who normally buy ready-to-wear. Only the sewer who works quickly, yet produces a quality product, can afford this approach.

By comparing rates in your location—Department stores and drycleaning establishments often publish rates for repairs and alterations. A custom sewer can usually price competitively with those businesses because of the low overhead possible in home situations. Realize that not all custom sewers or businesses are in competition with you. Your service or skills may merit a higher rate. Be competitive, but do not undercharge for quality work.

Once you decide on a pricing system, use the same approach for all customers. This will avoid confusion in setting rates and avoid problems with pricing differences that could occur. Whatever system is used, give customers a price or estimate regardless of whether they request it. This will avoid possible misunderstandings later.

Although you have determined basic rates and developed ranges, never give a final quote over the phone. Always see the pattern, fabric and the person or piece of furniture or window area before establishing the individual price. A garment for a person with difficult fitting problems takes considerably longer to complete even with a simple pattern. An unbalanced up/down and left/right plaid takes more time to lay out and construct than a balanced plaid or solid color fabric both for a garment or an interior design article. The extra time and knowledge required to complete such an item should be charged for.

Always charge for any special services. These may include preshrinking the fabric, shopping for fabric or other supplies, or delivery to the customer. Customers requesting last minute jobs should pay for the extra service.

Consider overhead in determining rates. Servicing the sewing machine and replacing needles, straight pins and ironing board covers are examples of overhead expenses. At the end of the year, total these expenses and divide by the number of garments made. This cost may be small per item, but it is a business expense that should be reflected in rates.

More precise rates can often be established for some home furnishings and craft items. Check around in your area to determine what is being charged. Do not underprice or overprice your work in relation to other similar services. Some guidelines for interior design projects include the following:
- $7 to $9 per foot of drapery rod. If the measurement of the drapery rod is 10 feet, the labor charge should be $70 to $90 regardless of length (up to 8 feet).
- $8 to $10 labor per panel or width of fabric used regardless of length.
- Reupholstering — $200 to $300 per sofa for labor. If you sell fabric, there may be different rates for labor depending on whether the customers buy their own fabric or buy from you. Also, if the sofa requires detail work such as tufting with many covered buttons, charge appropriately.

One guideline used for crafts is a selling price of two to four times the cost of materials. For items in which the cost of materials is negligible, but labor is intensive, another pricing method should be used. Charge more
for special orders- be sure to get a deposit on them. This is especially important if the order is unique and might be difficult to resell, such as a monogrammed item. See references on pages 28 and 29 for additional information on pricing crafts.

Some customers may question rates and indicate that they can buy a clothing item in a store for the same or less money. If they can, maybe they should! Help them understand that they are coming to you for something special that cannot be found in a store. Also, they should compare the quality of your work with similar store quality. Perhaps they can buy less expensive items in discount stores, but you are not sewing discount store quality.

Itemizing your bill may help customers understand the amount of time involved in making and fitting a custom garment or home furnishing. Include the cost of materials, special services such as shopping or preshrinking fabric, and hours to complete the garment. People who do not sew often do not realize the number of hours required to redesign, fit or actually sew a garment or home furnishing. Record the number of hours and hourly rate to determine labor charge.

Establishing rates when sewing for friends or relatives can present problems. You may decide not to sew for them at all or use the same rate structure as you do for other customers. An alternate approach is trading skills or services. You may sew for them if they baby-sit for you, mow the lawn or paint a room. Both parties will value and respect the service and skills involved with this approach. Whatever your approach, decide before you start your business.

Be careful to never undervalue work. A custom sewer who undervalues his or her own skill and ability can’t expect clients to value and respect that skill and ability. If you undervalue your talents, you do a disservice to yourself, your family and your clients because your talent will never be appreciated.
## Sewing for Profit—Hourly Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction Technique</th>
<th>$4/hour</th>
<th>$5/hour</th>
<th>$8/hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alteration</td>
<td>4—8</td>
<td>5—10</td>
<td>8—16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout, cutting &amp; marking</td>
<td>2—4</td>
<td>2.50—5</td>
<td>4—8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match plaids, extra</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seams &amp; darts</td>
<td>2—4</td>
<td>5—10</td>
<td>4—8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collars</td>
<td>2—4</td>
<td>2.50—5</td>
<td>4—8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck facing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeve (set—in)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two-piece</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gathers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuffs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armhole facings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zipper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapped or centered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand picked</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invisible</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fly front</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front opening band</td>
<td>2—4</td>
<td>2.50—5</td>
<td>4—8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pockets</td>
<td>2—4</td>
<td>2.50—5</td>
<td>4—8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waistband</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elastic casings</td>
<td>1—2</td>
<td>1.25—2</td>
<td>2—4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttonholes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine</td>
<td>.40 ea</td>
<td>.50 ea</td>
<td>.80 ea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bound</td>
<td>1 ea</td>
<td>1.25 ea</td>
<td>2 ea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sew on buttons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By hand</td>
<td>.30 ea</td>
<td>.40 ea</td>
<td>.65 ea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By machine</td>
<td>.15 ea</td>
<td>.15 ea</td>
<td>.25 ea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tie</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topstitching</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleats</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlining</td>
<td>4—10</td>
<td>5—12.50</td>
<td>8—20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple dress</td>
<td>6—12</td>
<td>7.50—15</td>
<td>12—24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coat &amp; jacket</td>
<td>8—16</td>
<td>10—20</td>
<td>16—32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skirt &amp; pants</td>
<td>4—8</td>
<td>5—10</td>
<td>8—16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover buttons</td>
<td>.20 ea</td>
<td>.25 ea</td>
<td>.40 ea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with pattern &amp; fabric selection</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.50+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No edge finish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge finish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from material by Jacquelyn Orlando, Extension Specialist in Textiles and Clothing, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. October 1974

Advertising
To be successful in the custom sewing business, you must do quality work and let customers know that you are in business. Some custom sewers never advertise and others do only initially. Others advertise on a regular basis. Most people associate advertising with placing ads in a newspaper or weekly shopping publication. Advertising, however, can be formal or informal, and you should think about both approaches.

Formal advertising includes placing commercial advertisements. Newspapers and telephone book yellow pages are among the most common, but they are expensive. Local shopping newspapers are less expensive and widely read. Church bulletins and apartment complex newsletters are other places to advertise.

Let local fabric stores, department stores and dry cleaners know about your business. Take examples of your work, especially when dealing with fabric stores. If you have a specialty such as tailored suits, imitation or natural suedes, or fitting, let the store know about it. Provide some price guidelines, too. Give fabric store managers plenty of information to provide to customers who request names of custom sewers.

Contact the Veterans Administration, nursing or convalescent homes, or associations for the handicapped. These agencies often seek custom-made garments with special adaptations for physical handicaps.

If you have special skills, capitalize on them. If you specialize in alterations, contact weight reduction clubs. If tailored suits for women are your specialty, contact organizations of business and professional women.

Although an added expense, printed business cards to distribute or leave with prospective customers are a good idea. Business cards or simple notices can also be posted in laundromats or on community bulletin boards located in libraries or supermarkets. If zoning regulations permit, display a sign in your yard.

Informal advertising methods usually bring as much, if not more, business than formal approaches. Word-of-mouth is often the best and the least expensive advertisement. Try to get your work before the public eye. Items such as choir robes, cheerleading or band uniforms, square dance costumes, gowns for community choral or fraternal groups, theatre costumes or window treatments for public places are examples. If done well, the quality shows, and word-of-mouth advertising begins.

Another type of informal advertising is making display garments for fabric stores. Well-made garments will be noticed by both sewers and non-sewers. Today, many sewers employed outside the home have little time to make their own clothing, yet they appreciate the quality, fit and distinctive nature of custom-sewn clothing and are willing to pay for it. Perhaps the store will allow you to include your name or business card on the display garments as advertisement.

Make contacts in the community. A good business person is involved in community activities. Whether you choose the PTA, church, 4-H, firemen’s auxiliary or other local service organization, these contacts are useful.

When participating in community activities, look your best. You and your family should be walking examples of your work. Try to make unique items that really illustrate your skill. That’s good advertisement, and you and your family members will enjoy the special treatment.

Mail order—If you specialize in gift or other specialty items such as dolls, patchwork, decorative pillows or western shirts, consider selling nationally by mail order. Advertise in trade or craft publications. Check the library for names and addresses as well as the classified ad section of the back of sewing and needlework magazines.
A word about consignment selling of custom-sewn items, especially crafts—determine the consignment outlet’s policy on sale of display items. Good advertising results from display of your work; however, items shown in sunny windows may become faded and those placed in the showroom may become soiled or shop-worn. Are you willing to sacrifice the income from one item used for such advertisement? Would you prefer your work not to be exposed to this treatment? Consider the alternatives.

Finally, the best advertisement is a job well done. It’s the least expensive, too. Satisfied customers are your best salespeople, so always take pride in your work and provide the highest quality possible.

**Keeping Records**
Accurate records help you know your business and give your customers better service. Two types of records should be kept: financial and customer.

Good financial records help show how profitable your business is, identify areas where profitability can be improved, revise price lists, remember clients, and prepare complete and accurate tax returns. Financial records need not be complicated. Basically they should be easy to use and retrieve, simple to understand, accurate and up-to-date.

You may or may not want to check with an accountant initially to help you prepare a record keeping system or your income tax forms. If you do, call an accountant and check on the cost of these services. Internal Revenue Service Publication 583, “Record Keeping for a Small Business,” is a helpful reference. Copies are available at no charge by calling or writing your nearest IRS office.

As a small business, you will need to record how much money comes in and from what source, and how much money is paid out and to whom. Your income will generally be from customers paying for products and services. Record income in a notebook, ledger or even file cards, including date, amount paid, sales tax, customer’s name, form of payment such as cash or check, and other pertinent comments such as down payment and type of service.

A business may deduct costs of operation when reporting income tax. You should know how much it costs you to operate the business. Accurate records show if you are losing money, operating inefficiently or under-charging for services. Expenses to record include purchase and maintenance of equipment, sewing supplies, office supplies (business cards, record keeping supplies, postage, envelopes, work agreements), insurance, regulatory fees and licenses, advertising, mileage if you use your automobile for business, professional update expenses (books, magazines, costs to attend workshops or classes), professional services (lawyer or accountant), and gifts or entertainment expenses (Christmas cards to customers).

When you operate a business in your home, additional expenses for the home may be deducted. To claim deductions, Internal Revenue Service guidelines indicate that an area of your home, such as a room or section of a room, must be used solely and exclusively for your business. For example, if you live in a five room house and use one room solely for your sewing business, one-fifth of household expenses can be deducted from income for tax purposes. These household expenses include gas and electric, telephone and additional services related to the home upkeep such as lawn mowing and housepainting.

To keep business expenses separate from personal expenses, consider opening a checking account for your business. If possible, pay all bills by check so you will have a record of and receipt for payments. If you write more than five checks per month, the cost of a separate checking account, which is deductible as a business expense, will be worthwhile.
Customer records will help you save time and energy, serve your customers better and present a more profes-
sional image. Some records you may want to keep include customer measurements, pattern alterations, references, copies of work agreements, and special notes or problems about serving the customer. Records may be kept alphabetically in large envelopes or file folders, or on file cards. Use a box or small file cabinet to keep records together. See the end of this for suggested customer record forms.

**Work Agreements**

A work agreement can be a help in your custom sewing business. It doesn’t have to be formal with many legal terms, but it is binding and protects you and your customer. It gives a businesslike image.

A work agreement simply states the terms under which the work will be done and paid for. It can be on a special printed form, handwritten or written on a sales ticket. Use carbon paper so that both you and the customer will have a copy. You’ll want to include some of the following items on the work agreement:

1. Business name, address and phone number.
2. Date of agreement.
3. Customer’s name, address and phone number.
4. Description of work to be done (include pattern number, view, changes, special details, fabric).
5. Materials supplied by customer.
6. Materials and services supplied by custom sewer (thread, interfacing, preshrinking, shopping, cost of materials).
7. Labor charge.
8. Methods of payment (cash, check, credit card) and timetable for payment. If the dressmaker supplies materials, the cost should be collected in a down payment. If the customer provides materials, they serve as the customer’s investment in the work rather than as a down payment. Never allow work to leave your home without full payment.
9. Final fitting and completion date.
10. Return clause. You may want to state a time limit when work may be returned for changes (such as 48 hours or one week).
11. A clause providing for sale of unclaimed work may be included.
12. You may want to add a disclaimer for loss or damage due to theft or fire unless covered by insurance.

A work agreement is designed to protect both you and your customer and should be signed by both of you. If using a printed form, prepare a small quantity to begin with as you may want to make changes after using the form. If you have specific legal questions about a work agreement, consult an attorney. See the end of this resource for an example of a work agreement.

**Customer Relations**

Working with the public can be enjoyable and challenging. Tact and patience are critical qualities to develop. Deal with clients in a manner that neither offends them nor allows them to take advantage of you. Establish business policies at the beginning. Try to anticipate problems or special situations that may come up and decide how you want to deal with them. Some policies that you may want to consider are as follows:

- Alterations or repairs will be done only on clean items.
- Fabric and notions should be preshrunk by customer.
- Customers must wear same foundation garment and shoes for measurement and fitting sessions.
- Customers should be told your business hours so they will know the best and most convenient times to reach you. If you have many clients employed outside the home, allow at least one evening or time on Saturday when they might contact you.
- No garment will leave the premises until paid for in full.
- Establish a time limit, such as three days or one week, for unsatisfied clients to return work for changes. Thus, you will not be held responsible for free alterations when a customer gains or loses weight.
These practices will give you control over your business. Good customer relations cover a vast area. Always be tactful, sympathetic and attentive to clients. Convince clients that you are genuinely interested in giving them a good product or helping them look their best. If you specialize in clothing, a client may ask you to alter or make a garment in a way that might be unattractive. If you specialize in home furnishings, a client may want draperies made in a fabric that will not wear well or is inappropriate. Do not antagonize or insult clients, but try to convince them that they might not be pleased with the result. Work that fails to satisfy you or the customer is a poor advertisement for your business.

When working on an item, you might decide that to changes from those originally agreed on should be made. Be certain to call your client and discuss any change so the work will not be questioned or unsatisfactory when completed.

Keep appointments with customers. Maintain a date book and check it daily. Help customers realize that it’s important for them to be on time for appointments. They would not be a half hour late for their lawyer or doctor.

Occasionally you will be asked to perform work that you have little or no experience with. Don’t practice on your customers unless they have agreed to it. Indicate that you are unfamiliar with a fabric or technique and help them find another resource. You could inform the customer that you are not as familiar with that technique as you would like to be, but that you would take the time to learn about it. After practicing you could do a job both you and the customer will be pleased with. It is better to say “no” than do a poor job. Realize that you have a responsibility to correct mistakes. In the long run, you will feel better about making corrections and customer respect and goodwill will increase.

Sometimes it is necessary to protect yourself from difficult customers. A work agreement and good customer measurement charts will help. For example, you may want to mark down the hem length agreed on at the final fitting. If the customer changes her mind when the garment is completed, you should not have to change the hem without charge if it matches the agreed on length. Each situation must be evaluated individually, but remember to protect yourself as a business person.

Clients may question rates that you charge. Only you can evaluate whether your rates are fair and in line with local competition, and whether they reflect the special abilities for services you offer. If a client insists that items you make can be purchased for less in a store, then suggest that he or she do so. If you produce quality work, most clients will be willing to pay for the service.

To improve your business, consider asking customers to evaluate your work. This helps with future business, and most customers will believe your sincerity in serving them. Use a form they can complete (sample at end of this resource section) when the work is finished. Include a self addressed, stamped envelope. Or customers may simply discuss their likes and dislikes with you.

Managing Your Time
A major challenge for many custom sewers is managing time. Sewing as a hobby is done off and on or when time is available. Sewing as a business is done on a regular basis. The successful custom sewer must possess or develop self-discipline. If you truly enjoy your work, you should look forward to it.

Establish work hours or days that fit your needs and those of your clients. You may work daily from 8 a.m. to noon or 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. when children are at school. You may be a night owl who is most productive from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Perhaps Tuesday through Thursday might be your work days, with Monday and Friday left for family responsibilities or other activities. Determine how many hours a week you want to work and accept only that amount of work from clients. Whatever your schedule, stick to it. You must go to work even though you don’t leave your home.

26—Clothing & Textiles, Publication Resource
Time is money to a custom sewer! Develop a system to use time efficiently. Here are a few pointers:

- Cut out several garments at one time, including interfacings and linings for each. You will need a good supply of pins.
- Whenever possible, stitch as many parts of a garment as possible before going to the ironing board to press.
- Always have a basket ready with handwork such as buttons to sew on and hems to complete.
- Keep work area relatively neat and put equipment back where it belongs. Hunting for a special notion can waste time and break concentration.
- Keep equipment in good working order and become adept at servicing it yourself regularly. Good equipment that works properly is a time saver and makes your job easier.
- Have a box, plastic bag or container for each customer’s materials, fabrics, notions and patterns.

Work with customers by appointment. If possible, schedule appointments, fittings or home visits for price quotations of interior design work on the same day or during the same part of the day. This practice reduces wasted time and interruptions, which break concentration and work pace.

A major problem for individuals with a home business is friends who telephone or drop by. They often do not realize that you have time commitments. If friends call, ask them to call back or offer to call them at a later time, explaining that you work steadily between certain hours. Before long, friends will realize which days or hours are convenient for you.

**The Professional Approach**

Sewing as a hobby and sewing as a business are two different things. When you sew as a business, you are a professional with standards to maintain. First, consider yourself and your personal appearance. Whatever your work interests—clothing, home furnishings or crafts—be neat and well-groomed when clients call at your home. That includes your clothing, hair and makeup. As a dressmaker, your clothes should look professional and set an example. Wear clothing you have made. Sew distinctive clothing for yourself and family members. Attractive, well-made and well-fitted clothing is constant advertising as you interact with people in your community and clients in your home.

If your interests are in home furnishings such as window treatments, slipcovers or reupholstery, your home should be an example of your work. Keep the room designs in your home current, attractive and distinctive. Whatever kind of sewing you do, keep rooms that customers view in order. Ten minutes a day spent tidying up will give rooms a neat look and customers a positive impression. Cluttered areas not only look bad but can be hazardous.

Visit supply houses such as fabric shops, interior fabric centers and craft shops. Get to know the managers. They can help you learn about trends and send business to you. Shop in better clothing and furniture stores to see the very best merchandise. Shopping is free, so choose expensive stores. What are the trends in fabrics, designs and techniques? With clothing, look to see how garments are made. What kinds of buttons and buttonholes are used? Are buttons self-covered, small, large, simple or decorative? Are bound, machine, loop or no buttonholes the trend? Are hems done by machine or hand? Are linings attached to seams with thread chains?

With furniture, is cording being used on cushions? Are solids or prints popular? Are stripes being used in interesting ways? Are cushions made of one fabric, or is the trend toward solid colors on the back and designs on front? When you know how the best merchandise is treated, you can incorporate the same ideas into your own work.
Subscribe to professional and trade publications to keep up-to-date. A few possibilities are listed on this page. Build a small reference library. A good basic sewing reference is necessary. Consider some books on special topics such as sewing with imitation suedes, sewing with natural suede or leather, or energy-saving window treatments. A reference on wardrobe planning, personal color selection or interior design will broaden your own background and help you provide more service to clients.

Enroll in update classes or attend fashion shows to learn what’s new. Always be aware of new opportunities. You will feel more confident and competent and offer a better service to clients. Being a custom sewer is not just sitting at home and sewing. It is also knowing what is fresh and new in the areas that relate to your special Business.

Publications

*Craft’s Digest.* Extension Specialist, Related Art, Pennsylvania State University, 208 Armsby Building, University Park, Pennsylvania 16902.

- Newsletter focuses on problems related to marketing crafts. A different topic is explored in each issue.

*Dressmakers Dialogue.* Published by Leiters Designer Fabrics, Box 978, Kansas City, Missouri 64141.

- Newsletter designed for custom dressmakers with articles relating to techniques used in the trade, special custom techniques or details and aids for conducting a business.

*Home Sewing Trade News,* P.O. Box 287, 330 Sunrise Highway, Rockville Center, New York 11571.

- Newspaper designed for fabric store owners/managers and focuses on what’s new as well as trends and success stories in retailing. Leiters Sewing News.

*Leiters Designer Fabrics,* Box 978, Kansas City, Missouri 64141.

- Contains construction tips and pattern ideas for sewing enthusiasts.

*Making It,* P.O. Box 286, 330 Sunrise Highway, Rockville Center, New York 11571.

- Newspaper designed for home sewer/consumer market focusing on new products, fabrics and trends.

*Mind Your Own Business at Home,* 2520 N. Lincoln Ave., #60, Chicago, Illinois 60614.

- Newsletter about home business-related resources, information, organization, needs.

*Sew Business,* 2100 N. Central Road, P.O. Box 1331, Ft. Lee, New Jersey 07024.

- Magazine is designed for fabric stores and focuses on merchandising trends, new products and fabrics.

*Sew News,* P.O. Box 1790, Peoria, Illinois 61656. Newspaper designed for home sewer/consumer market focusing on new products, fabrics and trends.

*Silver Thimble,* 311 Valley Brook Road, McMurray, Pennsylvania 15317.

- Publication includes many creative construction ideas including tips about sewing specific patterns.


- Newsletter has strong construction technique orientation, often with detailed “how-to” instructions; also focuses on fashion and selecting compatible patterns, fabrics and techniques.

*The Needle People News,* P.O. Box 115, Syosset, New York 11791.

- Newsletter has tips, ideas and sources of products and information.

Books


Leiter, James C. and Joan Stanley. *Discover Dressmaking as a Professional Career.* Leiters Designer Fabrics, P.O. Box 978, Dept. DD, Kansas City, Missouri 64141.

**Bulletins**


*Recordkeeping for a Small Business*, IRS Publication 583. Available at no charge from IRS office.

*Small Business Administration Publications*. A list of publications can be obtained by writing Small Business Administration in your area. Most publications are free or carry a small charge.


#175—How and Where to Sell
#176—How to Price and Protect Your Work
#177—How to Keep Records
#178—How to Promote Your Product and Yourself

**Organizations**

Custom Clothing Guild, 6705 147th Court N.E., Redmond, Washington 98052. Professional association that provides service and support for professional custom sewers who work at home; publishes newsletter.

National Alliance of Homebased Businesswomen, P.O. Box 95, Norwood, New Jersey 07648. Professional association for women with home businesses; publishes newsletter; holds annual meeting and meetings by mail.

National Association for the Cottage Industry, P.O. Box 14460, Chicago, Illinois 60614.

A nonprofit professional organization designed to help and promote the at-home business person.


Philanthropic organization that provides sale outlets for hand work and foods made by women in the home. Publishes monthly magazine—Exchange Review. The organization takes items on consignment for sale to public Write for affiliated outlets in your state.

SCORE—Service Corps of Retired Executives

An organization of retired executives who volunteer services to assist small businesspersons. The service is provided at no charge. SCORE can be contacted through the Small Business Administration. Ask for the location of a local chapter.

U.S. Small Business Administration—Write or call office in your area.

**Reaching Your Potential**

You, like most people, have potential you don’t know exists. Sometimes situations occur in life that present challenges. When individuals meet these challenges, they are often surprised at themselves. Starting a home business has helped many people experience that same feeling. You will never realize your potential, you will never know what you can accomplish, unless you try. A hobby-based home business allows you to grow with the business. As it expands, so does your knowledge and experience. As the business expands, so does your ability to deal with it. If possible, use the earnings from a home business as supplemental income in the beginning. It is much easier to begin if another regular income already exists. Often businesses grow and provide a substantial income. Gradual growth is usually desirable both for the business as well as for the new business person.

Look at your situation, personal traits and the potential for your business idea. Be honest with yourself but don’t let fear of failure deter you. A homebased business isn’t for everyone, but it may be for you.

**The following pages are examples of invoices for use in sewing service.**