



Evaluation of Textiles and Clothing Exhibits

Constructed Garment

Evaluate construction details, their appearance and relationship to each other in relation to the 4-H'er's goal. The criteria listed in the member manuals may be used by 4-H'ers, volunteers and judges in determining application of learning, the improvements needed, discovering the progress that has been made, and in evaluating the workmanship of the garment.

As to "new," "different" techniques, you may see some construction methods that are unusual. Because of the variety of fabrics and finishes now available, everyone who sews has been forced to experiment to some extent. Sometimes the results are not what was expected, but many times problems are solved successfully and in a manner that is quite different from the "book." This experimentation is encouraged because each fabric must be handled according to its own characteristics. When in doubt about a method, ask yourself, "Why can't it be done this way?" Any method used generally is acceptable if it does not detract from the appearance or durability of this item.

Keep in Mind Techniques May Vary

When judging items constructed by the 4-H'er, keep in mind Iowa supports the paragraph found on the inside cover of all three "Sewing Expressions" 4-H manuals as well as the Helper/Leader guide:

"Many techniques used in sewing are appropriate for this project. There is **NOT** a 4-H way of construction. Youth need to be able to communicate why an application was used and to understand that other techniques may also be appropriate depending on the fabric, pattern, and equipment."

1. Seam and hem finishes need to be more durable for clothing that gets much wear than for garments that receive little wear. Sport and school clothes receive harsher wear and care than a party dress.
2. Interfacing is used to reduce strain on fashion fabrics and to give body so the design looks right. Details that are to stand up or out will need more body than flatter, softer details.
3. Facing edges, seam allowances and hem edges may be treated alike. If one ravel enough to need a finish, the others probably need the same.
4. On really heavy fabrics, you may want to use a lighter weight fabric for facings to reduce the bulk.
5. The hem width is determined by the fabric, the cut of the skirt, and the member's future plans. Generally, circular skirts have very narrow hems (1/4" to 3/4"). Sheer fabrics cut on grain sometimes have wider hems (1 1/2" to 3"). If the member plans to lengthen a skirt or pants before the school year is over, it may have a wider-than-usual hem.
6. If the hem edge puckers when turned and stitched, it may be better to use a different type of edge finish.
7. For hems in bulky, heavy fabrics, you may want to use hem tape for the edge finish or treat it as the seam allowances were treated.
8. Machine-stitched hems are acceptable. That's a fashionable treatment often used in ready-made clothes.
9. Waistline closures (hooks and eyes, buttons and buttonholes) should hold the placket or zipper folded edges in place--straight and on-grain.
10. Selvages may be used as a seam finish. If they shrank and puckered in preshrinking, you will want to clip them. If they did not ripple or pucker, you do not need to clip them.
11. Special fabrics require special techniques (some a bit unorthodox on regular fabrics).

12. It's acceptable to use a serger for 4-H projects. Evaluate serger stitching the same way you evaluate other machine and hand sewing:
- a. it should be done neatly,
 - b. it should be durable enough for the wear and care it will receive, and
 - c. it should not detract from the garment's appearance from the outside.

The 4-H member manuals include helpful information for the 4-H'ers to do self evaluation. The following material list suggested standards that might be used in the evaluation process. The beginner's manual guidelines are:

	Very Good	Average	Needs Improvement
How Is The Construction?			
Garment is cut on grain			
Seams are straight and even.			
Threads have been clipped.			
Gathers are even (if any).			
Darts (if any) are straight.			
Stitching is straight around the zipper. Zipper doesn't show.			
Facings are smooth. Facings don't show from the outside.			
Hem is even in width.			
Hand stitching doesn't show on the outside of the garment.			

Does It Fit Your Needs? If you made (or purchased) a garment, try it on and look at yourself in the mirror. Check the following questions about how you look.	Yes	Not Sure	No
Do you like the way the garment looks on you?			
Do you like the color?			
How does the garment fit you?			
How does the style look on you?			
Can you wear the garment many places?			
Can you wear this garment with many other clothes you have?			
Can the garment be easily cleaned (laundered)?			
Is the garment comfortable?			
Did you learn new skills from making this garment?			

The advanced member manual includes more detailed standards to consider. The following chart can be used to evaluate constructed or purchased garments. Rate each detail using (1) = can improve, (2) = average, (3) = very good.

How Is The Construction?		Ratings
Cutting	Is everything cut on grain? Do all plaids, stripes, and designs match?	
Machine Stitching	Is the tension good? Is the stitch length appropriate for the fabric and strain on the seam? Is the stitching even, without skipped stitches?	
Seams	Are seams even in width? Have "high stress seams", i.e. crotch, armseye, been double stitched?	
Seam Finishes	Were seams finished if necessary to prevent raveling or curling up? Was the finish appropriate for the fabric, amount of friction on the seam, and the amount of wear expected?	
Darts	Is the stitching straight and even? Do darts taper gradually to a smooth point? At the point, is the thread fastened securely?	
Gathers	Are gathers evenly distributed?	
Pleats	Are pleats spaced appropriately?	
Facings	Do facings fit smoothly? Can they be seen from the right side? Are seam allowances graded? If necessary to make the facing lie flat, has the facing been understitched? Are facings tacked to seam allowances and darts so they don't show very much?	
Collar	Are both collar ends the same size and shape? Does the collar lie smoothly? Has bulk been reduced?	
Interfacing	Has interfacing been used where needed? Is the weight and crispness appropriate for the fabric and garment style? Does it not show from the right side?	
Set-in Sleeves	Are sleeve caps rounded with no puckers or pleats? Are gathers on a gathered sleeve even?	
Kimono Sleeves	Have underarm seams been reinforced? Are underarm seams smooth, pucker-free?	
Hand Stitching	Are hand stitches secure, even, and neat so they aren't noticeable from the outside?	
Zipper	Does the zipper detract from appearance? Is the stitching around the zipper straight? Do seams such as waist and yoke seams match at the zipper? Is the area smooth, without gaps, puckers, or ripples?	

How Is The Construction?		Ratings
Buttons and Buttonholes	Are buttons sewn securely? Is the shank long enough? Is the spacing even? Are buttonholes even in length? Are buttonholes in line with one another? Are buttonholes the right size for buttons?	
Other Fasteners (snaps, hooks, eyes, etc.)	Are they securely attached? Are they hidden unless meant to be decorative?	
Lining and Underlining	Is weight appropriate for the garment fabric? Is care the same as the garment fabric? Does it show from the right side when the garment is worn?	
Waistband	Is the stitching even? Is the waistband width even? Has excess bulk been reduced?	
Belt	Is the stitching straight? Does it have appropriate interfacing or stiffening? Does the buckle add to the attractiveness of the outfit.	
Trim	Does it add to the appearance of the outfit? Is care the same as the garment? Is it attached neatly?	
Hem	Is the width even? Is the width appropriate for fabric and design? Is it smooth and flat? Has fullness been eased in evenly? Has bulk in the seam allowances been reduced? Is it invisible or nearly so from the outside?	
Pressing	Are appropriate seams pressed open? Has the garment been pressed carefully so there are no shiny, fused, spotted, or stretched areas? Are edges smooth, flat, and crisp?	

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