Looking Good

Clothes come in many styles and colors. A certain style may look nice on one person but not on another. To look your best you want to find clothes that look good on you. First, you may want to find out more about color.

Fun with Color

The light from the sun is made up of several different colors—violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. These colors, or rays, blend together to make the clear, bright sunlight. When you look at a rainbow, you see the different colors of light. This happens because the sunlight hits the raindrops, and each color reflects in a different way.

When colors are mixed, they change and form new colors. Try some experimenting to see how color works.

You will need:
• Red, blue, and yellow food coloring;
• Seven clear glasses or small jars;
• White paper to work on;
• Water; and
• Spoons for stirring.

Place three glasses or jars of clean water on white paper. Add three drops of red food coloring to the first glass, three drops of blue coloring to the second glass, and three drops of yellow coloring to the third glass. Stir each glass. The colors red, yellow, and blue are called primary colors.

Look at the chart on page 3. The circles are the primary colors. Finish this chart to find out how colors are related by doing the following exercise.

1. Pour half the yellow water and half the blue water into an empty glass. Stir. The result should be green water, made by mixing yellow and blue. Write “green” in the triangle that joins the yellow and blue circles.

2. Pour half the red water into the rest of the yellow water. Stir. Write the name of the new color in the triangle that joins the red and yellow circles.

3. Pour the blue water into the red water remaining. Stir. Write the name of the new color in the triangle that joins the red and blue circles.

Now you have made the secondary colors, which are green, orange, and purple. They are made by mixing the primary colors. Keep these new colors and mix them in the following ways:

Sunlight is a blend of all the colors of the rainbow.

Mix colors to make new ones.
1. With three more glasses of clean, clear water, use the food coloring to make another glass each of red, yellow, and blue water.
2. Pour half the yellow water and half the green water into a clean, empty glass. Write the name of the new color in the square that joins the two colors that you mixed.
3. Pour half the orange water into the yellow water that remains. Write the color name in the square connecting yellow and orange.
4. Pour half the red water into the rest of the orange water. Write the new color in the square that joins red and orange.
5. Pour half the purple water into the red water that is left. Write the name of the new color in the proper place in the chart.
6. Pour half the blue water into the purple water that remains. Write in the name of the new color.
7. Mix the green and blue water that remains. Write in the new color.

The new colors you have made are called intermediate colors. They are made by mixing a primary color with a secondary color.

Beginning with only three colors—red, yellow, and blue—you have made many other colors. By changing the amounts of color used, you could create many other colors. Another name for the colors you create is hue. Try mixing some new color combinations to see what happens. A color wheel is included in this book on page 5 to help you understand color better.

Use felt tip pen to color the color wheel.
Feeling about Color

Colors can affect the way you feel. Colors also may remind you of different things. Everyone has ideas and feelings about color. This is because of things that have happened to them in the past. For example, red might remind you of fire and give you an excited feeling. Your friend might think of an apple and feel hungry. Another person might see red and think of the 4th of July fireworks and feel happy.

You may be able to lift your spirits on a dull or rainy day by wearing colors that give you good feelings.

Using Color in Clothes

Is there a color you like but you think it does not look good on you? Maybe it will look good on you if you use another value of the color. Value means the lightness or darkness of a hue, or color. For example, red can range in value from light pink to dark maroon. A light value of a color is called a tint and is made by adding white to the color. Pink is a tint of red. A dark value is called a shade and is made by adding black to a color. Maroon is a shade of red. So, if you do not like bright red, try a pink or maroon.

Color also can change in intensity, which means brightness or dullness. Red can be bright, cardinal red or a dull, brick red. To make a color dull, add some of its complementary color, which is the color on the opposite side of the color wheel.

Clothing Color Schemes

In planning what to wear, you can combine clothes according to color schemes. Some color schemes you might like to try are: monochromatic—different values of the same color; analogous—colors next to each other on the color wheel; and complementary—colors opposite each other on the color wheel.

Special Color Effects

Light and bright colors, such as light yellow or bright orange, usually make your body look larger. Dark colors, such as navy blue, or neutral colors, such as brown or gray, usually make your body look smaller.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Makes me feel...</th>
<th>Reminds me of...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What does red remind you of?
The color wheel can help you choose attractive color combinations for your clothes.
Design Lines
The lines of clothing come from the way a garment is designed. The outline of an outfit makes the silhouette, or shape. There are just two kinds of lines—straight and curved. Lines that run straight up and down from the floor are vertical lines. They cause the eyes to travel up and down. Lines that run straight across are horizontal lines. They cause the eyes to travel back and forth. Lines that slant are diagonal. The eyes will travel up and down or back and forth, depending on how much the line slants.

Curved lines are simply straight lines that have been bent. They cause the eye to travel outward or around, depending on how much they are bent. Curved lines add variety to the shape of clothes.

Use of Lines
Many clothes have a combination of lines formed in several of these ways. Some of the lines stand out more than others. Your challenge is to pick the lines that are best for you. If you want to look taller, thinner, or de fatter, lines that go up and down usually help. If you want to look shorter, wider, or both, horizontal lines are usually the best. Diagonal lines at a more vertical angle can make the shape seem taller and slimmer. Diagonal lines made at a more horizontal angle can create a wider and fuller image.

Curved lines tend to increase the width of the body, especially if they are in more of a horizontal direction. Most vertical curves can make the figure seem taller and slimmer.

It is not too soon for you to begin studying and thinking about clothing design. The next activity will help you see how you look to others. Then you can practice choosing design lines in clothes that will bring out your best features and hide those you don’t like as much.
Adventures in Clothing

Vertical | Horizontal | Diagonal | Curved
---|---|---|---

Necklines

Sleeves

Openings

Pockets

Trim
Getting to Know Yourself
How would you describe yourself?

1. Height:
   - Tall
   - Short
   - In between

2. Weight in comparison to height:
   - Above average
   - Average
   - Below average

3. Legs:
   - Long
   - Short
   - In between

4. Arms:
   - Long
   - Short
   - In between

5. Is your figure more like A, B, C, or D?

   A
   B
   C
   D

Are you happy with the way you are built? Remember that you are growing and changing and it will be several years before you are the shape you will be as an adult. However, you can use design lines to make visual changes in the way you look right now.

Design for You
Look at the clothes in your closet or dresser. Find examples of lines like those in the drawings you’ve seen in this project book. Decide if the lines create the look that you want.

Collect pictures from catalogs or magazines of clothes you would enjoy wearing. Look for lines that create the look you want. Mount the pictures on separate sheets of paper and keep them in a folder. Write why you think these outfits would look nice on you. Tell how they draw attention to your best features or hide those you don’t like as well.

This activity is a good one to share with your 4-H leader and others in your 4-H group. You can help each other by discussing your body build and choices of clothing.

Think about your own body build.

Design for Others
Think about someone in your family or another favorite person. Describe his or her body build.

Select one picture of an outfit for a person in your family. Write the reasons for your choice. Would this special person like to hear about clothes you think would look good? If so, why not share your ideas with them?

Activity Ideas
Learning about color and line is much more fun if you look for ways to share your new knowledge with others. Think about presentations, posters, or exhibits you could do. You can use information in this project book to prepare posters, exhibits, or talks. Try these topics:

- How are different colors formed? What are the primary, secondary, and intermediate colors?
- How do colors make you feel? Find out how other 4-Hers feel about different colors. Create a color wheel to help you talk about colors.
- How do colors make you look larger or smaller?
- How do lines change how you look? Show how lines are found in clothes.

Another way you can practice what you are learning is to share with friends and family. For example, talk with older people about their favorite colors. Find out what the colors remind them of. Look for cards, pictures, flowers, or other colorful items to share with them.
Looking Good

Have you ever thought of yourself as an artist? When you choose clothes and accessories to wear, you use the same guidelines that artists use to create paintings, clay pots, or wood carvings. These guidelines are the elements and principles of design. In this chapter you will concentrate on learning more about the elements of design—color, line, texture, and form.

Color in Clothing

Good color choices in clothes help to improve your personal appearance. However, clothes are available in so many colors that it is hard to know what to choose. One guide to color selection is as near as your mirror. Your own personal color scheme is created by your skin, lips, hair, and eyes. You can use the colors of these features as a basis for your own personal wardrobe plan. Sometimes people pay color consultants to help them choose colors, but you can learn to do it yourself.

First, consider your skin and lips. Your skin is your largest area of color, so it is important to wear colors that harmonize with its tones. No matter how dark or light your skin is, it will have either warm tones (yellow, red, orange) or cool tones (blue). People with cool skin tones may find cool colors such as blue, blue-green, green, and blue-violet more becoming. People with warm tones may find warm colors such as red, red-orange, orange, yellow, and brown best for them. A becoming color makes your skin look as healthy as possible. Lip color may help you decide between cool (rose, plum, magenta) and warm reds (coral, rust, red-orange).

Next, consider your hair and eyes. Clothing colors that contrast with or are the same as your hair enhance its color and sheen. Clothing that repeats the color of your eyes emphasizes their sparkle and makes their color more noticeable.

Make a Color Aid Card

Color consultants provide an array of colors that are specially selected to suit the customer’s personal coloring. You can make a similar set of colors for yourself. Here’s how.

1. Hunt through magazines and scrap bags to collect a lot of different colors. Get as many different values and intensities of each hue as you can. For example, find lots of different reds. They should range from dark brick red to light pale pink. Some could be red-orange, some could be red-violet. Do the same thing for several colors—blue, green, yellow, brown, purple, and orange.

2. Next, from the colors you have found, try to select colors that match your hair, eyes, skin, and lips. Doing this may be easier if you work with a friend and make a "mask" with two windows (holes) like the one below.

The mask can be made of white paper or an index card. To use it, hold the color sample behind one window, then hold the mask against your forehead or skin. When the two colors look the same, you have done a good job of matching. Your friend can help you decide if the colors look the same.
3. Repeat this until you have identified your four personal colors—skin, eyes, hair, lips.

4. Mount these colors on a strip of cardboard with glue or paste. If you have used fabric, back it with masking tape.

5. Carry your color aid card with you when you shop. Place it on garments or fabrics to see how you’ll look in colors you are thinking about buying. (Remember that lighting conditions affect the way colors look to you. They may look different outside the store. Try to use daylight rather than artificial light, if possible.)

6. To take this a step further, select a set of colors that seem most becoming from all those you collected in the beginning. Put them on cards and take them along as you shop.
Challenges in Clothing

**Color Illusions**
The next time you choose an outfit, think about the color combination. How do the colors look together? How do they make you look? Colors affect each other, creating illusions, and you can learn to create the illusion you want with color.

To create illusions, select colors that are good for your own personal coloring and your body build.

Light and bright colors such as light yellow, bright orange, or white usually make your shape look larger. Dark shades of colors such as navy blue, or neutral shades such as brown or gray usually make your body look smaller.

However, black does not always make a large person look smaller. This happens because black gives a solid looking form that is emphasized as it contrasts with the background. Backgrounds such as rooms or the outdoors tend to be medium to light in value.

**Activity Ideas**
Try these experiments to see the ways colors affect each other.

**Color and Size**
1. Use scraps of fabric or paper in plain colors. Trace around a coin, then cut out a circle in a light or bright color.
2. Cut another circle the same size in a dark or neutral shade.
3. Glue them in the space below. You know they are the same size, but does one look larger?

**Color Combinations**
Some color combinations show differences in size better than others. Some color combinations make you notice one color more than another. Here is a way to compare the differences.

1. Take any one color in a plain fabric or paper and cut four pieces, each 1-inch (2.5 cm) square.
2. Choose one of each of the four types of colors listed below in a plain fabric or paper and cut one 2-inch (5 cm) square of each. Don’t use the same color you chose for the 1-inch (2.5 cm) square.

- Light color such as pink, light blue, or light yellow;
- Bright color such as red, orange, or bright yellow;
- Dark color such as deep blue, dark green, or dark purple; and
- Neutral color such as brown, beige, or gray.

Now you should have four 1-inch (2.5 cm) squares of the same color, and four 2-inch (5 cm) squares of four different colors.
3. Glue the four 2-inch (5 cm) squares in the spaces at the right. Then, glue a 1-inch square in the center of each.

4. Answer these questions using the letters from one or more of the examples.

   ___ Which combination makes the center look larger than it really is?

   ___ Which combination makes the center seem smallest?

   ___ Which combination do you like best?

   ___ Which combinations attract more attention?

   ___ Which combinations would look best on you if you were thin?

   ___ Which combinations would look best on you if you were heavy?

**Changes with Color**

If a favorite or becoming color makes you look larger or smaller than you want to look, try some of these ideas.

- Use the color in a small amount—a scarf, tie, or shirt worn under a jacket or sweater, or in small amounts in a print.

- Use it in one of its darker shades.

- Use it in a duller or less intense form.

- Use it for clothes you wear for your own enjoyment—sleepwear, undies, grubbies.
**Color Quiz**

Here is a short quiz on what colors do. If the colors make you look larger, write "L" in the blank. If the colors make you look smaller, write "S" in the blank. Answers are on page 14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colors</th>
<th>Make me look</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Warm colors (red, yellow, orange)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cool colors (blue, green, purple)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Light colors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dark colors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bright or intense colors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dull or grayed colors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Prints or stripes with strong contrast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Prints or stripes with weak contrast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Line and Form**

Lines in clothes can do a lot to help you get that look you want. Lines may be within the garment, as in seams, collars, pleats, and trims. Or the lines may outline the shape or form of the dress or pants. Some lines stand out more than others. When you look at a garment, squint your eyes to see which lines stand out the most. How can you make those lines work for you?

In *Adventures in Clothing*, you learned about straight, curved, horizontal, and vertical lines. Lines can also play tricks with our eyes. Which line looks longest?

If you think all three lines are the same length, you’re right. However, some lines appear longer, while others seem shorter. We can see these same lines in clothes. Which of these T-shirts looks longer?
Did you find that when you looked at T-shirt A, your eyes stopped when you got to the horizontal line? When you looked at T-shirt B, you looked up until you reached the point of the arrow and then followed the lines of the arrow down again. The Y in T-shirt C, carries the eye up further. All three lines add height because of the vertical line. The Y line adds the most height. Where do you find these lines in clothes?

Yokes, horizontal bands of trim, boat necklines.

Raglan sleeves, closed shirt collars.

V necklines, open necklines on a shirt, yoke or other design lines in V shape.
Challenges in Clothing

The rectangles at the right are all the same size, but lines create different illusions. The further apart the lines are placed, the wider the rectangle looks. Your eyes have further to jump. Which rectangle looks widest? Which looks narrowest?

Remember these illusions when you select coats, jackets, and other clothes with vertical seam lines. Two lines set wide apart will make you look wider.

How do lines affect the look of width?
Horizontal lines make you appear shorter and broader. Horizontal lines can be a part of a garment, such as the yoke in a shirt. Or they can be formed where a sweater ends and pants begin. A belt can make a horizontal line, too.

The horizontal line calls special attention to the area where it is located. The emphasis created by the line depends on how plain the fabric is and the amount of contrast in color or texture. If a sweater and pants are the same color, the horizontal line between them won’t be as noticeable as if the sweater were one color and the pants another. When you are choosing clothes or accessories with horizontal lines, think about what you like about your shape and what you would rather people didn’t notice.

Does the shape of clothing make a difference in how you look? Yes! The lines that create the shape, silhouette, or outline of a garment also create optical effects. The effect is slimming, as in the vest on the left below, if the silhouette is more vertical. It creates width if the silhouette is more horizontal, as in the vest on the right below.

**Texture in Clothing**

Fabrics have many different looks and feels. Texture means:

- The appearance of the fabric;
- The “hand” of the fabric—how it feels when you touch it; and
- The apparent weight of the fabric—how thick or thin it looks.

Fabric texture in a garment can affect how large or small you look. For instance, a heavy or bulky fabric can add bulk to your shape. A very shiny fabric also can add the illusion of weight.
Selecting an Outfit

When the various items of clothes you wear all go well together, you have a well-coordinated outfit. The outfit combines all the elements—color, line, form, and texture—so the whole outfit looks pleasing.

Accessories are important in creating an outfit. They can be functional (such as shoes), express your personality (such as a bright scarf), or just add pizzazz and interest (such as a fancy belt). Accessories can add the perfect touch or create confusion. Ties, scarves, vests, glasses, combs, belts, shoes, jewelry, and hair ornaments should be considered important parts of your whole fashion picture and not just be worn because you happen to have them.

When you coordinate an outfit, major lines of the clothes should be repeated in the accessories. For example, if you have tailored, straight line clothes, the accessories should not be soft and curvy.

In coordinating color, remember that brightly colored accents are more successful when they are used in small areas and concentrated near the face. Color contrast creates exciting interest. Use it where you want emphasis—such as a black belt with a white outfit if you want to draw attention to your waist.

Textures in an outfit should harmonize. For example, a rough, nubby texture can set a casual, sporty tone. Shiny, soft textures give a more formal feeling. Sometimes contrasts in textures are interesting, but too many differences create confusion and detract from the whole.

A distinct difference in form can make an accessory seem completely unrelated to the rest of the outfit. A square, tailored necklace would not be consistent with a softly gathered dress.

The answers to these questions may help you learn to coordinate outfits successfully.

1. Do you prefer clothes with soft and curvy or straight and tailored lines?

2. What about your size in comparison to the size of accessories you choose? Will a large bag or backpack dominate you?
3. What colors do you enjoy most? Do you feel better in neutrals or bright contrasting color combinations?

4. Do smooth, plain textures suit you best? Or do you prefer patterned fabrics or nubby textures?

5. Do you like to stand out and be different? Or do you want clothes that do not call attention to you?

### Make Design Elements Work for You

Are you happy with the way your body looks? Lots of people are satisfied with their size and shape, but others would like to look a little different. You can use color, line, form, and texture to emphasize good points and take attention away from others. The chart below shows how to make yourself look taller or shorter, wider or narrower.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To add height choose</th>
<th>To subtract height choose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vertical lines</td>
<td>Horizontal lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical details</td>
<td>Horizontal details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain colors</td>
<td>Large prints and plaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small to medium prints and plaids</td>
<td>Parts of outfit in contrasting colors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little color contrast in parts of outfit</td>
<td>Contrast color in belts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V necklines</td>
<td>Wide belts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long sleeves (not too full)</td>
<td>Large details such as pockets, collars, yokes, sleeve cuffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow belts in same color as outfit</td>
<td>Yokes in skirts, pants, and shirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple, uncluttered silhouettes</td>
<td>Cuffs on pants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curved to bell-shaped silhouettes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To add width choose</th>
<th>To subtract width choose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal lines</td>
<td>Vertical lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large prints or plaids with strong color contrast</td>
<td>Medium prints and plaids with little color contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulky or textured fabrics</td>
<td>Flat fabrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belts of contrasting color</td>
<td>Minimum of clothing layers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pockets</td>
<td>Contrasting colors to emphasize face and neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarves tied to emphasize horizontal lines</td>
<td>V necklines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft, full sleeves</td>
<td>Scarves tied to emphasize vertical lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft pleats, gathers, ruffles</td>
<td>Just slight fullness in sleeves and body of skirts and blouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxey jacket shapes</td>
<td>Smooth fit at waist and hips of pants and skirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft, rounded silhouettes</td>
<td>Semi-fitted silhouettes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why is the necklace a poor choice for this dress?
Activity Ideas

• Find pictures of outfits you would like to wear that show coordination in color, line, texture, form, or shape.

• Put on a favorite outfit. Experiment with accessories until you find attractive combinations. Think about how you used color, line, form, and texture.

• Look for magazine pictures that illustrate current fashion and fads in accessories. Identify ones appropriate to wear in your community. Select the ones that would look good on you. Tell why.

• Participate in your local or county 4-H Clothing Selection Event.

• Plan an exhibit on coordination of clothes and accessories, using the design elements of color, texture, line, and form.

Answers to quiz on page 8. 1—L, 2—S, 3—L, 4—S, 5—L, 6—S, 7—L, 8—S
Looking Good

Have you thought about why your favorite outfit looks terrific? Being able to combine colors, textures, lines, and shapes in a striking outfit, involves more than just luck. You can create that "all together" look with the help of the following guidelines.

Creating the "All-together" Look

These guidelines are called the principles of design. They are proportion, balance, rhythm, emphasis, and unity. The principles help arrange the elements—color, texture, line, and shape—into pleasing, well-organized design. You can think of the elements as the tools and supplies for a do-it-yourself project. The principles are the instructions for putting everything together.

Spend some time identifying the elements and principles of design in clothes. Then you'll know why an outfit looks great instead of looking at it and thinking, "I just like it that way, that's all." With experience you will develop an eye for good design. Putting together a terrific outfit can become second nature to you.
Principles of Design

Proportion
Proportion is the relationship of the size of spaces to each other. Blocks of color or texture form spaces. Spaces also are formed by the way lines connect to outline a shape. Varying the sizes of the spaces creates interest. For example, when a skirt is a bigger shape than the blouse you have good proportion. But a skirt and blouse of equal size are less interesting. In addition, that division of space will tend to cut the figure in half.

When you have different colors in an outfit, vary the amount of the colors instead of using equal amounts of each color. Use lots of one color, less of a second color, and small amounts of the others. Or use one color throughout the outfit, with just a dash of another color in the accessories. Treat the proportion of textures the same way you treat colors.

Another aspect of proportion has to do with scale. Good scale means that all parts of an outfit, including accessories, are consistent in size with each other and with the person. A jacket with a large plaid is best for a large person but may overpower a small person. Keep the size of your accessories and the details of your clothes in proportion to your body. Larger accessories (big bags, wide belts, large jewelry, wide ties, big hats) and details (large-scale collars, wide lapels, pockets, prints) are best on larger people. Small accessories (delicate chain necklaces, narrow belts, handbags) and details are better for small people, though some small accessories look fine on almost everyone.

Suspect problems with proportion when:

- A fabric print is too big for the person wearing it.
- An accessory, such as shoes, jewelry, or belt, is too large or too small for the person.
- The length of a jacket is too long or short for the pants or skirt, or for the person wearing it.

Remember, when the parts of an outfit vary in size, but fit each other and you, you have good proportion.
**Balance**

Balance is a feeling of steadiness. It gives a feel of equal attraction on both sides of a central line. Everything on the garment or outfit looks as though it belongs where it is. No part seems too heavy for the rest. When we look at something, an arrangement of pictures on a wall, a person, a grouping of plants, we need to feel a sense of equilibrium. When you find that balance is lacking, you may feel uneasy.

Two types of balance are formal and informal. Formal balance uses the same lines, colors, or textures on each side of a central line. A shirt with two pockets, one on each side, has formal balance; it is symmetrical or the same on both sides. Formal balance is used effectively in clothing, but it can become monotonous because it lacks variety.

![Diagram of formal and informal balance](image-url)
Informal balance is created when one side of a garment is not exactly the same as the other, yet the two sides seem to weigh the same. This is often more interesting than formal balance because it adds variety. If you have ever made a mobile and tried to get several parts of varying sizes and shapes to balance, you have had an experience with informal balance. In that case you were dealing with balancing the weights of the parts. When you are creating a balanced outfit you are judging the impact of various parts of the outfit, rather than their weights.

Balance can be created many ways. Very often classic clothes like shirts and jackets have formal balance. A small attention-getting area can balance a large area that doesn’t attract much attention. So, a large plain area can be balanced with a small decorated area. Or a bright tie can balance a neutral jacket and pants.

Problems with balance exist when:

- A design is not placed well.
- Too much decorative design is on one side, as below.
- Part of an outfit has formal balance and another part has informal balance. Something must provide a pleasing transition between the two different parts.

When your outfit is balanced it doesn’t seem lopsided, but instead, looks as if everything is where it belongs.

Design placement gives a balanced feeling.

Design placement gives unbalanced feeling.

A balance problem exists because too much decorative design is on one side.
**Rhythm**

Rhythm helps your eyes move easily from one part of an outfit to another. This path is formed by the arrangement of lines, shapes, colors, or texture. Often repetition of these elements helps create rhythm. Stripes are one example of repetition. So is a row of buttons. You also have repetition when a dress has a round collar, curved pockets, and puffed sleeves. In that case you are repeating a main theme in different parts of an outfit.

If a gradual change occurs in some element, that gives a sense of motion, too. A gradual change in the shade of a color, width of tiers in a skirt, or graduated tucks are examples of that kind of rhythm.

Problems with rhythm exist when:

- Different unrelated lines are used together; for example, a curvy line in the midst of straight lines.

- Plaids or stripes aren’t matched, as below.

- Several accessories that are the same color are used with a contrasting outfit. The accessories will look spotty. They break up the rhythm because they are usually so far from one another that they don’t form a path. One way to solve this problem is to select one accessory that contrasts strongly with the outfit and use somewhat varying shades and textures of a neutral color for the other accessories.

When your outfit has rhythm, you look easily from one part of the outfit to another. Nothing looks out of place.
Emphasis

Emphasis is a center of interest. Emphasis causes your attention to be drawn repeatedly to one area. The line, shape, space, texture, or color of the area may be just different enough from the rest of the outfit to catch your interest. The other parts of the outfit are a background for the center of interest. Without emphasis an outfit might seem cluttered or busy. Or, at the other extreme, it might seem uninteresting and boring.

Decide on a center of interest, and then let the rest of the outfit compliment the center of interest. If the print or design of the clothing is the center of interest, keep the accessories at a minimum. Or if an accessory provides the emphasis, keep the other accessories simple and quiet. So if a necklace is the center of interest, the bracelet and shoes shouldn’t distract or compete for attention. If a colorful vest is the emphasis, the shirt and pants can be subdued.

Plan where you place the center of interest. You can use emphasis to bring attention to a feature you like. A scarf draws attention to your face. A contrast yoke emphasizes shoulders. Contrast can also emphasize what you don’t want noticed.

Problems with emphasis exist when:
- Too many patterned fabrics are together.
- Only plain fabric is used without an accent.

- The center of interest draws attention to a feature that you don’t want to emphasize.

When an outfit makes good use of emphasis, it has one attention-getting center of interest. It is neither cluttered nor boring.
Unity

Unity exists when all parts of your outfit create a satisfying combination. Unity is your goal. It’s the result of good proportion, balance, rhythm, and emphasis.

When you have unity or harmony, all the clothes and accessories create a certain mood or theme—sporty, tailored, dramatic, casual, or any other mood you choose to create. The outfit also needs to be in harmony with you—your coloring, your build, your size.

Watch the amount of variety you have in an outfit. If your garment and accessories have lots of colors, keep the textures similar. Or if you would rather vary the textures, limit the colors to two or three. Combining different prints, plaids, and checks in one outfit requires great care. Be sure the colors, textures, and character of the patterns are all very similar.

Problems with unity exist when:

• The character of the fabric doesn’t fit the style of the garment or outfit.

• The character of the accessories doesn’t match the character of the outfit. An example of this is wearing heavy sport sandals with a dainty long gown as below.

When your outfit has unity, it seems organized. It looks as though it all belongs together. And it looks great on you.

Now that you’re acquainted with some ways for combining clothes and accessories, see if you can determine the problems with the combinations on the next page. What design principles are lacking?
Strategies for Clothing

Now that you know how the elements and principles of design affect the way your clothing is put together, you'll feel more confident about achieving an all-together look.

Design is everywhere. You can apply these design elements and principles to almost everything you make, do, or see.

A woodworking project should be well balanced with all the pieces in pleasing proportion to each other.

Setting an attractive table involves choosing a centerpiece for emphasis that unifies all the necessary utensils in the table setting. Take a long look at your posters and displays. Do they follow the design principles and elements? Has unity been achieved in each exhibit? What other uses of design do you see around you?

As you use good design principles in your projects you'll be teaching others about them.

Do these outfits lack proportion, balance, rhythm, emphasis, or unity?