



Textiles and Clothing

—Construction Technique Tips—

When judging items constructed by the 4-H'er, New York supports this concept found in the 4-H helper/leader and member manuals: ***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, sewing equipment and intended use of the garment.*** Descriptions of techniques and judging guidance are presented as teaching/judging aides, but are not intended to supersede common sense.

IMPORTANT – PLEASE NOTE

1. Notions should match the fabric *most of the time*. Judges may allow the use of contrasting thread, zippers, buttons etc. for creative designs or for economic reasons. For example, some youth may not have transportation or money to purchase notions and must use what is at hand. It is common practice to purchase a limited number of serging thread colors due to the size and cost of the cones.
2. Seam and hem finishes need to be more durable for clothing that gets much wear than for garments that receive little wear. For example, sports clothing receives harsher wear and care than a party dress.
3. Fleece does NOT ravel and so does NOT require a finish, although seam grading or sewn finishes may be used to reduce bulk or to create a pleasing appearance.
4. Ripstop nylon ravel so the edges MUST be finished. An easy way is to use a hot cutter to cut and seal the edges at the same time. In addition to searing (sealing the edges with heat), plain seams with stitched edges, flat-fell seams, and French seams are used.
5. Pinked seams are NOT RECOMMENDED as a seam finish. Pinking does not effectively prevent raveling with multiple washings and requires the purchase of pinking shears.
6. Selvages are NOT RECOMMENDED as a seam finish because they may pucker. If youth retain the selvedge, they should minimize puckering by preshrinking the fabric and clipping seam edges.
7. Interfacing is used to reduce strain on fashion fabrics and to provide integrity for some design elements. Details that are to stand up or out will need more support than flatter, softer details. Interfacing may not be mentioned on pattern guide sheets.
8. 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. On really heavy fabrics, you may want to use a lighter weight fabric for facings to reduce the bulk.
9. The hem width is determined by the fabric type, the cut of the garment, and the garment's future use. 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. If the hem edge puckers when turned and stitched, it may be better to use a different type of edge finish. 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. Machine-stitched hems are acceptable. That's a fashionable treatment often used in ready-made clothes.
10. Waistline closures (hooks and eyes, buttons and buttonholes) should hold the folded edges of the placket or zipper folded edges in place.
11. A hook and eye closure is needed at the neckline at the top of a zipper.
12. Evaluate serger stitching the same way you evaluate machine and hand sewing.