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Let's Make a Skirt and Blouse: Extension Circular 4-01-2

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LET'S MAKE A Skirt and Blouse
LET'S MAKE A SKIRT AND BLOUSE

Gerda Petersen

REQUIREMENTS

1. Make a skirt.

2. Make a blouse—with or without sleeves.

3. Make one other article:
   a. A peasant apron
   b. Another blouse
   c. Another skirt

4. Care for your own clothes.

5. Complete your record book.
Last year you made a kitchen outfit. This year you can do more advanced sewing. You will make a skirt and blouse and one other article.

Did you make the drawstring apron last year? If you did, you might like to make a peasant apron before you begin your blouse and skirt. It would give you more experience in sewing. The 4-H circular, "The Peasant Apron" E. C. 4-01-2A, will tell you how to make a peasant apron.

**LET'S TAKE A BACKWARD LOOK**

Last year you learned:

1. To choose good sewing tools and keep them in a suitable box.
2. How to use the sewing machine-
   a. To run the machine slowly so you can control it.
   b. To start with both bobbin and spool threads back and with the needle in the cloth.
   c. To stop with the needle up.
   d. To use a seam gauge for straight stitching.
   e. To keep the machine oiled.
   f. To guide the material but not to pull it.
3. To place pins at right angles.
4. To baste where necessary.
5. To press as you go.
6. To tack tie your threads and clip them.
7. To straighten your fabric before you begin.
Let's plan for both your skirt and blouse at the same time. When you have them finished, you will have a nice outfit to wear.

If you are slender, a peasant skirt will be becoming. If you are rather plump, a gored skirt may be a better choice.

Try to choose as simple a blouse pattern as you can. You may decide whether you wish to make a sleeveless blouse or one with short sleeves.

What Size?
Buy a pattern according to your size and not your age. Have someone take your measurements. Take an easy measure around the fullest part of the hips. Take a snug measure at your natural waist-line. List these on paper. Buy the skirt pattern that most nearly corresponds to your measurements.

Measure around the fullest part of the bust; measure high under the arms around the chest. If your bust measure is more than 4 inches larger than the chest measurement, buy the next size larger than the chest measurement for your blouse pattern. If your bust size is not 4 inches larger buy the pattern size according to the bust measurement.

Color and Design
Choose a color that is becoming to you. If your skirt has a printed design, or is to be plaid or stripe, your blouse should be made of a plain color. If your skirt is a plain color, your blouse may be either a plain color or a fabric with a design.

If you are quite tall, contrasting colors in your skirt and blouse will be becoming. You may also choose plaids, design with lines that go around your body, or large printed designs.

If you are a small, dainty girl, be careful to choose a fabric with a small design.

If you are a short, plump girl, you might choose up and down stripes or a small printed design. A strong contrast in the color of your skirt and blouse will make you appear shorter.

Fabric
Since this is the first outfit you will make, you will probably be most successful if you choose a cotton fabric. Look for a fabric that has a firm, even weave, that will be easy to handle and will not fray badly.

Some materials that would make nice skirts and blouses are printed percale, gingham, chambray, broadcloth, Indian head, or denim. There are probably others in your stores. A gored skirt may require a heavier material than a dirndl skirt.

Read the label that is on the bolt of the fabric. The label should tell you if the fabric is color fast to sun and washing; if it has been preshrunk so that the fabric will not shrink more than 1 or 2%. If it is labeled "Sanforized", you will not need to shrink your material before you cut and sew it.

Other Things You Will Need
1. Thread to match your fabric. Colored thread works in a little lighter when it is stitched, so choose a darker shade.
2. Hooks and eyes No. 3 to 5 for the peasant skirt.
3. Zipper for the gored skirt.
4. Neck zipper or buttons for the blouse.
You won't need a pattern for a peasant skirt. You will need to do some measuring to help you decide the amount of fabric you will need. Tie a tape around your waistline. Have someone measure down from your waistline to the point where you want your skirt to hang. This is the finished length of your skirt. You will need twice this length. Then add 4 inches for hems and seams and 6 inches for a waist band. If your skirt is 20 inches long, you will need 20 inches + 4 inches + 20 inches + 4 inches + 6 inches, or 54 inches of cloth. This is 1 1/2 yards.

If your material was not preshrunk you will need to shrink it before you begin. Start with straight, smooth material. If the material is stretched, straighten it by pulling, as you did in your first project. Measure, then tear or pull a thread and cut the three pieces shown in the diagram.

Lay the two right sides of the skirt together. Pin the seams together. Stitch one seam 5/8 inch wide and the other 1 1/4 inches wide. The wide seam is to be used for a placket. When finished, it will be on the left side.

When stitching the wide seam, start at the bottom and stitch to a point 5 inches from the top; then turn and stitch half way across the seam.

Turn the seam toward the front section and press. The seam on the right side may be pressed open as we generally do or it may be pressed forward, as on the left side.

Trim the wide seam to within 5/8 inch of the machine stitching up to the placket, so the two seams will be uniform. A pinking shears gives a nice finish.
Placket

Turn back the row edge of the back of the skirt, 1/4 inch. Make another turn so the fold of the hem is in a straight line with the seam edge. Press and stitch.

On the front of the skirt, turn half of the wide seam allowance to the wrong side. Fold again on the seam line. This should make a hem that is about 5/8 inch in width. Stitch this hem from the top to the bottom of the placket. Turn and stitch across the end to the seam line. This stitching across the end of the placket should also cross the hem on the back of the placket and should keep the seam turned toward the front.

Skirt Band

Measure your waist line on the 6 inch strip of material. Add 2 1/2 inches for seams and belt lap.

Press a 1/4 inch fold along one side. From the folded edge divide the rest into thirds. This will make three sections about 2 inches in width. Press.

Stitch criss-cross along the band through two thicknesses. Do not stitch through the part with the 1/2 inch seam allowance.

Stitch a 1/4 inch seam at the ends of the belt. Trim or grade the seam. Turn and press.

WHAT'S NEW? GATHERING!

Gathering Your Skirt

Lengthen the machine stitch as long as possible (on some machines it may also be necessary to loosen the upper tension--your mother may help you with this). Make two lines of stitching 1/8 to 1/4 inch apart, at the top of the skirt. The first line should be about 3/8 inch down from the top. The second line 1/2 to 5/8 inch down from the top.

It is easier to pull a thread over a small space, therefore do not stitch the whole top in one continuous line. Begin stitching at one side and stitch to center front or back. Stop and clip the thread, leaving an end of an inch or two. Start stitching again. The top of your skirt will be stitched in four sections.

Gathering the Fullness and Attaching the Band

To help you make the gathers even in your skirt, divide both your skirt and the band into 8 equal parts. Do not include the placket or 1/2 inch on each end of the band. Pin the pieces together, right side of skirt to right side of band. Match the marks you have made. Gently pull the two top gathering threads at the side seams, center front and center back. Pull the threads until they are the same length as the band. Adjust the gathers until they are even. Baste and stitch along the second row of gathering stitches.
Fold and baste the other edge of the band to the skirt so the line of machine stitching on the wrong side is covered. Press before you stitch, to flatten seam and make easier stitching. Stitch from the right side, as near the edge of the band as you can. Stitch around the entire belt.

A peasant skirt has a straight hem. This hem may be stitched on the machine or you may sew it by hand. In either case, you will need to practice.

**Machine Stitched Hem**

1. Turn under 1/4 inch at the bottom of the skirt. Press with a sharp crease. Then fold a 3 to 4 inch hem, depending on the affect desired. Press.

2. Fold hem back again right side of garment with hem extending about 1/16 inch beyond the fold.

3. Set the machine to make 10 - 12 stitches to the inch. Place the material with folded hem underneath on the machine. Stitch on the extending edge for 5 or 6 stitches then swing the material to the right and make one stitch in the fold of the garment, then pull the material back and make another 5 or 6 stitches in the hem, then another in the fold. Continue until completed.

**Hand Stitched Hems**

Turn under 1/4 inch at the bottom of the skirt. Press. Stitch near the edge. Since you allowed 4 inches for the hem, turn up 3 1/4 inches and press. Pin it carefully. Use a fine needle for hand hemming.

**Slip Stitch** - Fasten thread in fold of hem, take a tiny stitch in garment parallel to hem and right beside where thread comes out of fold. Insert the needle in fold of hem directly opposite end of this stitch. Slip needle along in fold for 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch. Pull needle through, then make the tiny stitch right beside it. Repeat. The long stitches are hidden in fold.

**Lock or Cross Stitch** - Start the hemming by taking a tiny stitch on under-side of fold of hem. Directly across from this stitch take a tiny stitch in the garment. Then put the needle into the fold of the hem just back of where the needle left the fold. Slip the needle along inside the fold 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch then bring out of edge of fold and repeat. This method makes tiny cross stitches at the top of hem about 1/2 inch apart. Long stitches are hidden in the fold.
Sewing on fasteners. Select 3 hooks and eyes between the sizes 3 and 5. One hook is placed near the top of the band, one near the bottom, and the third in the middle. Make several blanket stitches around each ring. Then make several plain stitches near the top of the hook to hold it in place. Slide the needle between the thickness of fabric to the next hook.

Place the eye so the band will lap one inch and the placket is smooth and even.

Final Pressing.

Give your skirt a final pressing. Press your hem upward from the bottom. Press with the straight of material, running the iron upward between the gathers to the band. Hang your skirt on a skirt hanger. Or pin it to the rod of a dress hanger.

Some of you may prefer to make a gored skirt. Buy as simple a pattern as you can.

Get Acquainted With Your Pattern

Write your name on the pattern envelope and on each piece as you take it out of the envelope.

Study your instruction sheet. Circle the style of view that you wish to make. Then, circle the layout plan for that style. Become familiar with the pattern pieces you will use. Some patterns have printed directions and markings; others are marked by perforations or holes in the pattern pieces. Your instruction sheet will tell you what your pattern markings mean and how to use them.

If your pattern is unprinted, mark the fold, straight of material, center front, seam lines, etc., with a heavy pencil or crayon.

Cutting the Skirt

Place your pattern according to the pattern layout you have circled. If the fabric is folded, be careful that cross-wise ends are perfectly straight and one selvedge is exactly on top of the other. Place pins along the selvedges and ends to hold the fabric in place. Anchor your pattern pieces with pins on "straight of material" line first. Lay all pattern pieces before you begin to cut. Measure with a ruler or tape measure from "straight of material" marking on pattern to selvedge to be sure all pieces are straight with the grain of the material.
Have your mother or leader check your pattern layout before you begin to cut. Cut carefully with long, even strokes. Cut with the grain of the material. Cut the notches outward, not in.

Marking Your Pattern
A pattern is easily marked with dressmaker's carbon paper and a tracing wheel. Marks should always be made on the wrong side of the fabric. A ruler will help you make straight lines.

WHAT'S NEW? STAY STITCHING!

STAY STITCHING
Stay stitching is a line of machine stitching placed just inside the seam line on curved or gored sides of the pattern. This will keep the fabric from stretching out of shape as you work with it. Stitch with the grainline; see the arrows.

TIPS ON ASSEMBLING YOUR SKIRT
1. Follow the directions on your instruction sheet.

2. Keep your fabric on a table. Handle it as little as possible to keep it from stretching.

3. Do all you can with one piece before starting on another. For example, when working with the skirt back, first stay-stitch, then pin darts and center back seam. You will probably be able to stitch these without basting if you pin carefully unless you have plaids that must be matched. Follow this same procedure with the skirt front.

4. Stitch your skirt seams from the bottom toward the top.

5. Press your seams open, pressing from the bottom toward the top. Press skirt darts to the center back.

6. You may need to baste the side seams so you can adjust the size of your skirt when you fit it.

DARTS
Darts are used to make cloth fit smoothly over curved parts of the body. Smooth fitting skirts usually have darts in the back. When stitching darts, begin at the wide part and stitch to a sharp point at the end. If darts are stitched back again about 1 inch, they will be stronger.

A dart can be pressed smoothly over a pressing mit or tailor's cushion. You might also use a turkish towel that is rolled up.
SEAMS FOR YOUR SKIRT

Most patterns allow 1/2 to 5/8 inch for a seam. Adjust the seam guide on your machine for this width. If your fabric does not fray a plain pinked seam will be satisfactory. If the fabric frays slightly, a line of machine stitching about 1/8 inch from the pinked edge might be desirable. If the fabric frays a great deal, press the edge under with an iron and machine stitch. This is a very durable seam finish.

WHAT'S NEW? ZIPPERS!

SKIRT ZIPPER

A zipper makes a smooth flat placket closing.

1. The skirt seam should be basted to the top and pressed open.
2. Work from the wrong side of the skirt. Lay the zipper face down on the seam with the bottom stop of the zipper chain at the lower end of the placket. The left side of the zipper chain should be placed against the closed seam line.

3. Pin, then stitch zipper tape to back seam allowance, stitching from bottom to top of placket.

4. Close the zipper. Turn zipper so the face is up. Smooth back the seam allowance at the edge of zipper.
5. Using a zipper or cording foot, stitch from the bottom to the top of the placket on the fold.
6. Spread skirt flat with zipper face down on the opened seam. Working from the wrong side, baste across the zipper tape just below the zipper stop and up to the waistline.

7. Turn skirt to the right side. Using your basting as a guide, stitch across the zipper tape and toward the waistline.

8. Pull your threads to the wrong side, tie and clip.

9. Remove the basting threads.

Your zipper should be completely concealed.

Waist band

The waist band may be finished as suggested for the peasant skirt, or you may follow the instructions that are given in your pattern guide.

Make a button and buttonholes closing if you like that better than hooks and eyes.

Hem

Fasten the skirt to a hanger. Let it hang for a day or two before you mark the hem. This will allow the fabric to stretch lengthwise. Put on the skirt. Wear the shoes that you plan to wear with it. Have someone measure the hemline for you.

With dress turned wrong side out and placed on a table, turn hem on marked line, using pins placed at right angles to the fold of the hem.

Baste turned hem near edge of fold. Remove pins.

Using a gauge to mark desired width of hem with pins or chalk. Trim away extra material.

Turn under about 1/4 inch at bottom of skirt. Press. Adjust your machine for long stitches. Stitch near the edge. Stop and clip your thread at the end of each gore. Pull the machine thread (as you did for gathering) until the hem lies flat. Adjust fullness evenly, keeping the grain of material straight.

Dampen and press the gathers as flat as you can.

If the fabric is very heavy a tape may be used on the hem. If a tape is used, do not turn up the bottom edge of the skirt but place the row of gathering about 1/4 inch from the edge. The tape is stitched on top of this row of gathering.

Use either the slip stitch, or cross stitch for hemming.

Press your skirt carefully and hang it on a hanger.
Making a Blouse!

You have learned to do these things:

1. Shrink your fabric, if it hasn't been preshrunk.
2. Straighten your fabric.
3. Write your name on the pieces of your pattern and circle the layout plan you will use.
4. Have your mother help you alter your pattern if it needs to be altered.
5. Fold your fabric carefully so selvages and ends are exactly even.
6. Pin your pattern carefully, observing "fold" and "straight of material" markings.
7. Cut with the grain, using long straight strokes of the shears. Cut the notches out.
8. Mark your seam allowances, darts, etc. on the wrong side of the cloth before you remove your pattern.
9. Stay stitch as shown in the picture.
10. Do all that you can with one piece before starting on another.
11. Handle your material as little as possible.
12. Press as you go.

DARTS IN THE BLOUSE

You will probably need to baste the darts in your blouse for fitting.

The point of the dart should point toward the fullest part of the bust. The underarm dart should be stitched and pressed downward before the side seams are stitched. Waist-line darts in the blouse are pressed toward center front and center back.

FINISHES FOR ARMSCYES OR ROUND NECKLINES

Fitted Facings are the easiest to do. Fitted Facings are seamed at the shoulder line and the seam pressed open. The outer edge of facing is turned under about 1/4 inch and stitched 1/16 inch from the edge. Pin the facing smoothly to the armseye line. Stitch. Press both edges of the seam toward the facing. Stitch the sides of the seam to the facing about 1/8 inch from first stitching. This will help to keep a sharper edge when the facing is turned back. Grade the seams and clip where necessary.

Turn the facing back carefully and press. Be sure the facing doesn't show on the right side. Slip stitch it in place. This is the same as the slip stitch used on hems. Be careful not to draw your thread too tightly, take too large stitches, or stitches that are too close together.

Bias For Finishing Necklines or Armseyes

Necklines or armseyes may be finished with a bias binding.

The first step is to cut a strip of true bias. Be sure the end of the fabric is straight. Make a diagonal fold as shown; with a ruler and pencil mark the diagonal stripes. Place 2 strips with right sides together as shown. Your stitching should be straight with the grain of the fabric. Press the seam open.
The strips of bias may be applied as facing, similar to the fitted facing. It may also be used as a binding, depending on the effect you desire.

ROUND COLLARS
(Sometimes Called Peter Pan)
You will want the ends of your round collar as true a curve as you can make it, with sharp, smooth edges. There are several things you will need to do to accomplish this:

1. Trim off about 1/16 of an inch all around the outside edge of the under collar. Be careful not to trim too much.
2. Place the right side of the under collar on the right side of the upper collar. Pin carefully, making outside edges meet.
3. Stitch the collar.
4. Grade the seam. By grading a seam we mean trimming one seam narrower than the other. Leave the widest seam allowance on your upper collar. Cut out notches to within 1/16 to 1/8 of an inch of the stitching line on the curved edge, as shown in the illustration.

5. Turn the collar right side out. Work the edge out smoothly with your fingers. Be careful that the under collar doesn't show.
6. You may have a smoother collar if you will baste along the edge of the collar then press.
7. The collar may be applied to the neckline with a bias facing.

NOTCHED COLLAR

The same rules apply to a notched collar as to the round one. Here is a little trick for making a sharp point on your collar. When stitching point A, take one diagonal stitch across the corner, instead of stitching to a point. Trim the collar point close to the stitching line.

Work the point out well when you turn the collar right side out.

Baste along the edge and press. Apply the collar to the blouse as shown.
BUTTONS AND BUTTONHOLES

Buttons and buttonholes make nice fasteners for your blouse.

A strip of cloth should be placed on the wrong side of the facings of the blouse about 1/4 inch from the fold. This is a reinforcement which makes buttonholes stronger. Buttons are not as apt to make holes in your blouse when a reinforcement piece is used. Batiste, organdy, marquisette, are good fabrics for this purpose. Be sure to shrink this fabric before you use it.

Buttonholes

It is an art to make fine worked buttonholes. It is also difficult.

If you have a button-hole attachment for your sewing machine, you may use it to make your buttonholes. You will need to practice on a scrap of cloth until you can make them nicely before stitching on your blouse.

If it is too hard for you to make buttonholes, ask someone to make them for you. But, be honest! When you exhibit your outfit...Write this on a slip of paper, "Someone made the buttonholes for me." Pin this slip of paper to your outfit.

Buttons

You can easily learn to sew on buttons. Buttons are usually sewed on the center front or back line of a blouse.

Thread the needle with a single or a double thread. Do not make a knot.

Take one or two small stitches right in the spot where the button is to be. This fastens the thread.

Run the needle through one hole in the button, then back through the other hole and through the cloth to the wrong side.

Next put a pin under the thread on the top of the button. Then bring the needle up in the first hole and down in the other one until there are enough stitches to hold the button securely.

The stitches go the same direction as the buttonhole. If the button hole goes crosswise, the stitches should go crosswise.

Now with the needle coming from the top of the button put it through the button only. Take out the pin and pull up the button. It has a neck of threads under it. Now wind the thread from the needle around this neck of threads. This is the shank. The shank gives room for buttoning. Buttons sewed too close pull the cloth and may even tear it.

Now, fasten the thread! Push the needle down to the wrong side close to the shank. Take two or three small stitches in the same place. Then snip the thread with your clipping scissors.
SLEEVES

Steps in Setting in Sleeves

1. Stay-stitch from underarm seam to the first notch. Change the machine to the longest stitch and continue over the cap of the sleeve to the next notch. Change the machine back to the regular stitch and staystitch to the edge of the sleeve.

2. Again adjust the machine for long stitches and stitch another row of stitches on the seam line from the first notch to the second notch.


4. Measure and press hem at the bottom of the sleeve. Use the same method of hemming the sleeve as you used on your skirt.

5. Turn your sleeve to the wrong side. Clip the first and last long stitch. Draw up the two rows of stitching (gathering) until the sleeve is the same size as the arm hole.

6. Shrink out the sleeve fullness. Even if you have a preshrunk fabric, you will have a smoother sleeve if you dampen your sleeve and press it before basting it into the armhole.

7. Pin, then baste the sleeve into the armhole. Be sure to match notches, underarm seams and shoulder seam with top of sleeve.

8. Put on the blouse to check the fit of the sleeve.

9. Machine stitch the sleeve in place. A second row of machine stitching about 1/16 inch from the first row will add extra strength.

Patch Pockets

Patch pockets may add to the attractiveness of your blouse, as well as being useful.

Raw seams at the corners can make patch pockets unattractive. You can make patch pockets with smooth, even corners.

Press the top edge of the pocket back 1/4 inch. Machine stitch. Press about a 1 inch hem to the right side of the pocket. Stitch as shown in the picture. Trim the seams at the corners and cut out some notches on the curved part of the pocket. Turn the pocket. The machine stitching will make it easier to turn back the seam. The machine stitching should not show on the right side. Press the pocket.

Be careful to place your pocket straight with the grain of material. Baste it in place on your blouse. Then stitch it and reinforce the corners to make them strong.

There are other types of patch pockets which are also suitable.

Finishing The Bottom Of Your Blouse

The neatest finish on the bottom of a blouse is a machine stitched hem about 1/4 inch in width.

You may feel this type of hem shows too plainly under your gored skirt. Another method is sometimes used. Pink the bottom edge of your blouse. Then turn it up about 5/8 inches to the wrong side. Press. Make two rows of machine stitching about 1/4 inch apart.
WHAT'S NEW?
"A SKIRT AND BLOUSE!
I MADE IT MYSELF."

LET'S LOOK IN THE MIRROR!

Do you see a 4-H girl:

who has a clean body?

whose hair is neatly combed?

who stands and walks straight and tall?

who smiles at the world?

Is that girl wearing an attractive outfit:

with colors that harmonize and are becoming to the girl?

that is clean and well-pressed?

that has a blouse tucked neatly into the skirt?

that has a skirt that hangs straight?

with shoes and socks that are neat and clean?
A good 4-H Club member should learn to care for her clothes as well as to make them.

Here are some things she should do:

1. Hang up her clothes on hangers as soon as she takes them off.

2. Put her soiled clothes in a laundry bag or hamper when she takes them off.

3. Keep her shoes clean and polished.

4. Air and brush her coat.

5. Sew on buttons when they come off.

Sometimes it is hard to remember to do these things. There is a chart in your record book to remind you. Keep a record for four weeks of the times you do the things above. If you forget, leave that day blank.

Finishing Your Project!

You have finished your project if you have:

1. Made a skirt.

2. Made a blouse.

3. Made one other article:
   a. A peasant apron.
   b. Another blouse.
   c. Another skirt.

4. Cared for your own clothes until it has become a habit.

5. Completed your record book.
DEMONSTRATIONS YOU MIGHT DO IN THIS PROJECT

1. Marking darts, seam allowances, etc. using a tracing wheel and dressmaker's carbon paper.
2. Laying a pattern and cutting it out.
3. How to mark, stitch and press darts.
4. How to measure to determine pattern sizes.
5. Straightening material.
6. How to get straight seams by using a seam guide.
7. Machine gathering and attaching a waist band.
9. Putting a zipper in a skirt.
11. How to cut bias and use it as a binding and a facing.
12. How to make fitted facings for necklines and armseyes.
15. How to sew on buttons.
16. Steps in setting a sleeve in a blouse.
17. Making patch pockets.

WHERE TO FIND

Requirements for the project
Planning and preparing for this project
Last year you learned these things
New tools for sewing
What size pattern
Color and design
Fabric
Other things you will need
The Peasant Skirt
Amount of material
Side seams
Placket
Skirt band
Gathering the skirt and attaching the band
Machine stitched hem
Hand stitched hem
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Lock or Cross stitch
Hooks and eyes
The Gored Skirt
Get acquainted with your pattern
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