

Fashion Design



Clothes play a number of roles, some more obvious than others. Of course, your clothes keep you warm and protect you from the elements, but did you know they also reveal aspects of your personality and your mood? Complete this interest project to gain an appreciation of how you can express yourself through clothes and how your design ideas can be brought into the "material" world.

Skill Builders

- 1 Create a fashion design for a specific population such as pregnant women, fire or police professionals, or people with physical disabilities. Be creative in your designs and try to address the special needs of the people in these groups.
- 2 Learn to knit or crochet a garment. Ask experts for help choosing materials or interpreting patterns or instructions. Your home economics or art teacher might be a good resource.
- 3 Ask someone how to create a pattern for a specific wardrobe item, or adapt one that you purchase from a store. Create the garment from the pattern.
- 4 Color is one of the most important aspects of fashion design. Not everyone looks good in every color. The colors you wear need to be suited to your skin, hair, and eye coloring, and even personality. With friends, collect pieces of fabrics about 20" x 40" in some pure basic colors—red, yellow, blue, purple, green, orange—and in black, white, and brown. Try to get some lighter, subdued tones of these colors as well: for example, pink, blue-green, beige, and gray. Have the group vote on which piece looks best on each person. Afterward, discuss why you think

certain colors look best on some people. How will this knowledge affect your choice of clothing? Keep your own color chart to refer to when designing for yourself.

5 Fashion is a personal choice, but most importantly, fashion should fit the wearer. Knowing your measurements will enable you to adapt or create flattering clothes designs. Find out about proportions by making a chart that includes the following measurements: length from neck to waist; neck circumference; arm circumference and length; and measurement of bust, waist, hips, thighs, legs. Use these measurements to analyze your figure type to purchase clothing and select patterns with the proper designation of Junior, Petite, Misses, Woman, or Half Size.

6 Follow fashion trends by reading fashion magazines and trade journals. (Your local library may have copies of these publications.) Evaluate which trends have become established and which are really "fads." Predict your own fashion trends for next season.

7 Design clothing for a special occasion, such as a bridesmaid's gown for a wedding. You might want to collaborate with a seamstress or dressmaker.

Technology

1 Choose three synthetic fibers. Find out how they are made and what their special

properties are. With this information, decide what types of clothes or accessories you would make out of each fiber.

2 Go to a computer store and review the types of software available to professionals in the fashion design industry. Ask the salespeople to explain the merits of the various packages.

3 Find out how technology has made a difference in fashion design and manufacturing. If possible, use design software to create a pattern or a new fashion design for a shirt, dress, pair of pants, or other wardrobe component.

4 Manufacturing sometimes causes pollutants to be released into the environment. Create a list of at least five ways in which clothing manufacturers can operate with the lowest impact on the natural environment.

Service Projects

1 Rummage through your closets and drawers for items—gloves, hats, sweaters, scarves, etc.—that are in good condition, but that you don't use anymore. Use felt, beads, yarn, thread, sequins, or fabric paint to add decorative touches to each item. Then donate them to a community clothes drive.

2 Host a fashion show for and by youngsters. Use decorations and music to liven up the event.

3 Teach a group of younger children a skill such as knitting, crocheting, or sewing. Have the group create an entire garment using a chosen technique.

4 Volunteer at a local theater or school to assist with costume design. Learn what you can about technical aspects of design while expressing your creativity.

Career Exploration

1 Participate in an organized job-shadowing experience. Choose a job such as fashion designer, costume designer, fashion consultant, fashion editor, or marketing merchandising director.

2 Go to a retail store in your area. Develop a list of potential careers simply by browsing. Compare your list to a list of careers in retail sales in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, available at the library.

3 Create the résumé of a fictitious person who works in the fashion industry. You might want to imagine what you will be

doing in 10 years and base your résumé on this projection. This activity has no right or wrong answers. See pages 101–103 in *A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts* for guidelines on preparing a résumé.

4 Find out how unions have changed the conditions of clothing manufacturing in the United States. Look at the child labor laws for the nation and for your state. Discuss with two others the effects of these laws and agreements.

5 Get a part-time job in a retail store.

And Beyond

ENHANCE YOUR ARTISTIC AND FASHION flair with these related interest projects:

- From Fitness to Fashion
- Home Improvement
- It's About Time
- Women Through Time
- Artistic Crafts
- Visual Arts
- Folk Arts
- Just Jewelry
- Paper Works
- Textile Arts