



# 2025-2026 Delaware 4-H Clothing & Textiles Skill-A-Thon Study Guide

Delaware 4-H Textiles and Clothing Skill-at-thon is designed to support the learning that is taking place in a project area. 4-H members learn to compare and become familiar with project equipment and terminology. Judging teaches critical thinking and decision-making skills. These skills are valuable to young people as well as adults as they must make decisions every day.

There are two divisions for this contest: Junior and Senior. Junior participants must be between the ages of 8-12 in 4-H age. Individuals 13 and older must complete the senior contest. If a junior chooses to participate in both divisions, they must complete the senior level contest first. The top ten senior participants from each county are eligible to participate in the state contest. Should ten seniors not be available, juniors may be asked to participate in the state event.

**If you need special accommodations to participate in this Skill-A-Thon, please notify your county 4-H office, two weeks in advance of the event.**

## **The Textiles and Clothing Skill-A-Thon will include:**

- **Tools of the Trade**-Junior and Senior
- **Parts of a sewing machine**-Junior and Senior
- **Symbols of a Pattern**-Seniors Only
- **Fabric Identification**-Seniors Only
- **Pattern Envelope Information**-Seniors Only
- **Quality Judging-Evaluation of Hand Sewn Items**-Junior and Senior
- **Demonstration of Textile and Clothing Activity**-Junior and Senior

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## References for this Skill-A-thon:

- 4-H project Books
  - Under Construction Level 1
  - Fashion Forward Level 2
  - Refine Design Level 3
  - Sewing Helper's Guide
- [Tools of the Trade \(Junior and Senior\)](#)
- [Parts of a Sewing Machine \(Junior and Senior\)](#)
- [Sewing Evaluation Standards \(Junior and Senior\)](#)
- [Pattern Envelope \(Senior\)](#)
- [Symbols of Patterns Sheet \(Senior\)](#)
- [Fabric Identification \(Senior\)](#)
- [Clothing Care Laundry Sorting Fact Sheet](#)
- [Oregon 4-H Clothing Construction Fact Sheets](#)
- [Oregon 4-H Pattern Skills Fact Sheet](#)
- [Oregon 4-H Hemming Skills Fact Sheet](#)
- [How to formulate a set of reasons for a judging class with Clothing-specific tips](#)

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## JUNIOR:

### Tools of the Trade: Sewing Equipment

4-Hers will identify the sewing tools to match the appropriate tool with its name using a word bank.

Identify the following tools:

- |                 |               |                  |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| • Pin cushion   | Seam ripper   | Hem (seam) gauge |
| • Tracing paper | Tracing wheel | Shears           |
| • Chalk         | Tape measure  | Pressing ham     |
| • Pins          | Scissors      | Press Cloth      |
| • Hand needles  | Marking pens  | Iron board       |
| • Thread        | Iron          |                  |

**Reference: Level 1 Under Construction project manual page 6 and page 35.**

#### **Training Idea:**

- Collect sewing tools and have a quiz bowl-**Sewing Helper's Guide page 12 and 13**
- Sewing Tool Matching Game-**Level 1 Under Construction page 6**
- Take a trip to the store to identify sewing tools.
- Make a sewing kit with the tools.
- Have members visit a website featuring sewing tools.

### Parts of a Sewing Machine

Participants will be asked to identify parts of a sewing machine. Juniors will identify 5 parts of the machine and will be provided with a word bank.

Identify the following parts:

- |                           |                         |                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| • Power Switch            | Presser foot            | Presser foot lifter |
| • Throat plate            | Feed dogs               | Needle              |
| • Throat take-up          | Upper Tension regulator | Thread guide        |
| • Spool pin               | Bobbin winder           | Balance Wheel       |
| • Stitch length regulator | Stitch width regulator  | Bobbin Case         |
| • Foot control            |                         |                     |

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Reference: Level 1 Under Construction project manual page 10 and page 35.

## Training ideas:

- Quiz the 4-H group in a Jeopardy style format. Give the definition of a part of the sewing machine and have a member name it. The member can then locate the same part on an actual machine and identify the function of the part. **Under Construction project manual page 8 and 9**

## Evaluation of Sewn Items – Quality Judging

Participants will be asked to rank one or more classes of sewn items.

The following standards should be considered when evaluating a sewn item:

1. Appropriate fabric and notions for garment
2. Accurate cutting and marking
3. Seams appropriately finished
4. Accurate hand stitching, stitch selected appropriate for situation
5. Accurate machine stitching and appropriate construction techniques
6. Construction detail appropriate to fabric and style of garment/item
7. Closures are appropriate for the situation and applied appropriately and neatly
8. Clean and well pressed

**Training Idea:** Think of the above list of 8 items as a scorecard used to evaluate a sewn item. These criteria should also be used in evaluating any project sewn by the 4-H member before submitting it for the Clothing Showcase or the State Fair. Areas that need improvement may be improved, redone, or practiced by sewing another garment/item.

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## Demonstration of Clothing Textile Activity

Participants should be prepared to identify the proper sewing tools that should be utilized in performing a specific sewing function, perform clothing textile tasks, or perform operations of a sewing machine. Below are some examples of activities that may be asked to perform:

- Operation of a sewing machine or various parts on a sewing machine.
- Choosing correct sewing equipment to use for the sewing function to be completed.

## SENIOR:

### Tools of the Trade- Sewing Equipment

4-Hers will identify the sewing tools and identify their functions.

Identify the following tools:

- |                 |               |                  |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| • Pin cushion   | Seam ripper   | Hem (seam) gauge |
| • Tracing paper | Tracing wheel | Shears           |
| • Chalk         | Tape measure  | Pressing ham     |
| • Pins          | Scissors      | Press Cloth      |
| • Hand needles  | Marking pens  | Pins             |
| • Thread        | Iron          | Iron board       |

**Reference: Level 1 Under Construction project manual page 6 and page 35.**

#### Training Ideas:

- Collect sewing tools and have a quiz bowl-**Sewing Helper's Guide page 12 and 13**
- Sewing Tool Matching Game-**Level 1 Under Construction page 6**
- Take a trip to the store to identify sewing tools.
- Make a sewing kit with the tools.
- Have members visit a website featuring sewing tools and look up the functions-**Tools of the Trade Functions Sheet**

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## Parts of the Sewing Machine

Participants will be asked to identify parts of a sewing machine and their functions. Seniors will identify 10 parts.

Identify the following parts:

- |                           |                         |                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| • Power Switch            | Presser foot            | Presser foot lifter |
| • Throat plate            | Feed dogs               | Needle              |
| • Throat take-up          | Upper Tension regulator | Thread guide        |
| • Spool pin               | Bobbin winder           | Balance Wheel       |
| • Stitch length regulator | Stitch width regulator  | Bobbin Case         |
| • Foot control            |                         |                     |

**Reference: Level 1 Under Construction project manual page 8 and 10 and page 35.**

**Training idea:** Quiz the 4-H group in a Jeopardy style format. Give the definition of a part of the sewing machine and have a member name it. The member can then locate the same part on an actual machine and identify the function of the part. **Under Construction project manual page 8 and 9**

## Symbols on the Pattern Pieces

In order to follow the instructions for your pattern, you must understand the pattern symbols for cutting and sewing. Some compare pattern symbols on a pattern to “landmarks” found on a map or “road signs” seen as you drive a car. A pattern helps you to turn a piece of fabric into a finished project.

Symbols include:

- |                             |                |                    |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| • Cutting line              | Stitching line | Grainline arrow    |
| • Place on fold line        | Notches        | Circles or squares |
| • Lengthen or shorten lines | Center front   | Fold line          |

**Reference: Symbol of Pattern Sheet**

**Training Idea:** Lay a large piece of pattern out on a table and review the symbols with the 4-H group. Test their knowledge by placing small slips of paper with the symbol names in a cup. Have each 4-H'er draw a slip of paper and then identify the symbol selected on the pattern and explain how they are used.

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## Evaluation of Sewn Items – Quality Judging

Participants will each be asked to rank one or more classes of sewn items and required to present written reasons for at least one class.

**The following standards should be considered when evaluating a sewn item:**

1. Appropriate fabric and notions for garment
2. Accurate cutting and marking
3. Seams appropriately finished
4. Accurate hand stitching, stitch selected appropriate for situation
5. Accurate machine stitching and appropriate construction techniques
6. Construction detail appropriate to fabric and style of garment/item
7. Closures are appropriate for the situation and applied appropriately and neatly
8. Clean and well pressed

**Guidelines for Developing Written Reasons:**

- Your reasons should be logical and easy to follow.
- Use accurate information.
- Use proper terms and expressions that relate to the items being judged and compared
- You should have an introduction and a conclusion where the class is identified completely and correctly.
- Introduction: I placed this class of skirts 3-2-1-4.
- Conclusion: For these reasons, I placed this class of skirts 3-2-1-4.
- Make comparisons of items in the class throughout. Use comparative terms such as “more” or “less” (i.e. more focused, less sturdy) or words ending in “er” (i.e. better, clearer).
  - o I placed 3 over 2 because.....
  - o I placed 2 over 1 because.....
  - o I placed 1 over 4 because.....

**Training Idea:** Think of the above list of 8 items as a scorecard used to evaluate a sewn item. These criteria should also be used in evaluating any project sewn by the 4-H member before submitting it for the Clothing Showcase or the State Fair. Areas that need improvement may be improved, redone or practiced by sewing another garment/item.

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Begin the judging process by introducing one garment to evaluate. After discussing the one garment, introduce a second garment of the same type for evaluation. Compare the two garments so the 4-H'ers understand the process of judging- comparing each to a standard and then to each other. Work up to comparing a class of four same type garments.

### Fabric Sample Identification

Participants will be asked to view and identify commonly used fabric samples based on the appearance and texture. Possible fabrics to identify include:

- |            |            |        |
|------------|------------|--------|
| • Fleece   | Cotton     | Denim  |
| • Satin    | Seersucker | Silk   |
| • Spandex  | Velvet     | Poplin |
| • Corduroy | Wool       |        |

**Training Idea:** Visit a fabric store as a club and lay out many different types of fabrics to view and touch. Discuss tips to help identify a variety of fabrics.

### Pattern Envelope Information

Participants will be provided a pattern envelope and will be asked questions related to the measurements, different views, type and amount of fabric, notions, and other information provided on the pattern envelope that provides instructions and guidelines on how to construct the garment being made.

#### **Reference: Oregon 4-H Clothing Construction Fact Sheets Pattern Skills**

**Training Idea:** Have 4-H'ers review various pattern envelopes to identify what type and amount of fabric is necessary to construct the garment, the notions required, different views offered on the pattern, and other information that is presented on the pattern that is provided to help sew the garment. Participants should also review the Instruction Sheet to identify what type of information and guidelines are provided to construct the garment.

### Demonstration of Clothing Textile Activity

Participants should be prepared to identify the proper sewing tools that should be utilized in performing a specific sewing function, perform clothing textile tasks, or perform operations of a sewing machine. Below are some examples of activities that may be asked to perform:



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- Operation of a sewing machine or various parts on a sewing machine
- Choosing correct sewing equipment to use for the function to be completed
- Pinning and cutting pattern piece
- Sewing on a button
- Rip out a seam
- Measuring and pinning hem
- Pick out the correct fabric that can be used with a pattern

### Training Ideas:

- Have 4-H members select various sewing equipment and review how and when to use each one properly.
- Work with a sewing machine to develop skills and knowledge of how various parts operate and are used when sewing items.
- Review the process of purchasing fabric, preparing it to be used with a pattern, and cutting out a pattern piece.
- Practice pinning on a button.
- Practice sewing tools, what they are used for, and how they are used.
- Clothing Care
- Laundry Sorting