



SEWING AND NEEDLE ARTS PROJECT AREA



Use your sewing skills and creativity to make clothes, pillowcases, horse blankets, or anything else that you can stitch, knit, or crochet!

Ideas for Project Area Learning

- Learn to use your sewing machine, its attachments, and other equipment like cutters and needles.
- Sew on a button by hand.
- Make a pillowcase or a tote bag for yourself.
- Select fabric and a pattern for a project.
- Learn to read care labels on fabric items.
- Practice sewing various types of seams.
- Learn to knit or crochet simple projects.
- Learn to use a Serger or sew French seams.
- Explore the properties and care techniques for different types of fabric.
- Install a zipper, add a pocket, or use embellishments.
- Die some fabric.
- Learn to sew specialty fabrics like heavy denim or a high-stretch fabric.
- Select yarn and create a knit or crocheted article of clothing.
- Design a sewing pattern, using design elements and art principles.
- Measure windows for curtains.
- Compare the cost of ready made vs. homemade items.
- Use a computer program to design a quilt.
- Learn about different needle art stitches and keep a collection of swatches.
- Learn what the needle gauges mean and how do they affect your stitches in crochet or knitting.
- Learn the names of all the different stitches.
- Learn about different cultures and how their beliefs and customs influence their needle art.
- Learn about different periods in history and how customs and historical events affected needle arts.

APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

Communication

- Design a poster identifying sewing machine parts and the proper care of a sewing machine.
- Interview a local business owner to find out how they select products.
- Teach others how to use a sewing machine.

Civic Engagement

- Make pillowcases to send overseas.
- Organize your group to knit mittens for a local shelter.
- Crochet or knit blankets for patients at your nearby hospital.

Leadership

- Lead a large-scale service project like a community-wide sewing event such as pillowcases for veterans.
- Do a working exhibit for your county fair on embellishing techniques.
- Organize a prom dress exchange service at your school.

Entrepreneurship

- Design and make a clothing accessory to sell, and market your product.
- Begin your own business, altering clothing for customers.
- Select an item you can knit or crochet to sell on an online marketplace.



Goal Setting and Record Keeping

Goal setting is an ongoing process that guides your project area learning. Having goals is like having a road map to show you how to get you to where you want to go. Record keeping is also an ongoing process and another important life skill. In 4-H, you are encouraged to select from a variety of record keeping formats to meet your own personal needs and your preferred learning style. Keeping records of your learning experiences helps you determine how well you met your goals. Goal setting and record keeping improve your skills in organization, communication, planning, and evaluating.

Iowa 4-H Event Opportunities

- Participate in **county and state fair** exhibit classes.
- Check with your local county 4-H youth development staff to see if there are special events or **workshops in your county** that you want to attend to learn more about your project areas.
- Iowa 4-H members in grades 9–12 can apply for **State Project Area Awards** at State Recognition Day. Applications are open December through January.
- Meet young people from around the state who have completed grades 8–12, and share your interests at the **Iowa 4-H Youth Conference** held at Iowa State University in late June.
- Participate in the sewing class of the **Iowa 4-H Awardrobe Clothing Event** called “fashion revue.” Participants are selected at their county clothing event.

Share Your Learning With an Exhibit

- Select a fabric and explain what it is, how it’s made, and how to care for it.
- Explain how woven fabrics differ from knit fabrics.
- What are some new fabrics, and why are they made?
- Describe the process of doing laundry.
- Explain how to make simple repairs using only needle and thread.
- Construct a soft furnishing like a pillow, quilt, or comforter.
- Develop a portfolio or notebook of your sewing leadership project.
- Show how yarn is created and the different properties of various fibers used in making it.

CAREER CONNECTIONS

- **Fashion designers** study fashion trends, draw designs for, and create clothing pieces.
- **Upholsterers** repair furniture using a variety of different fabrics.
- **Family and consumer science teachers** instruct students on how to cook, sew, budget, child care, and other life skills.
- **Costume designers** create and design costumes for characters in plays or movies.
- **Materials engineers** work to create materials for different products, like metals and plastics.

EDUCATION CONNECTIONS

- If you enjoy drawing and creating designs, working with fabrics, and researching new trends, you may enjoy studying **textiles!**
- If you enjoy working with new materials and products, study **materials engineering**.
- Students in **clothing** learn about fabric materials, sketching, construction, and more!
- **Family consumer sciences education studies** learn how to instruct classes, speak publicly, and how to teach essential life skills.
- Learn **history** if you enjoy studying the past, and how society and culture influence art.

Written Iowa 4-H Youth Development 2013. Revised in 2019 by the Iowa 4-H Communication and the Arts Program Priority Team, Bonnie Dalager, 4-H Product Development Specialist, and Payton Sash, 4-H Student Office Assistant, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.