

 **Complete these sentences.**

20. The larger the number, the _____ and _____ the needle.
21. A seamstress with eye problems could benefit by using a _____ needle for general sewing because of its longer eye.
22. Glovers and sailmakers have _____ points to keep them from causing tears in heavy fabric.

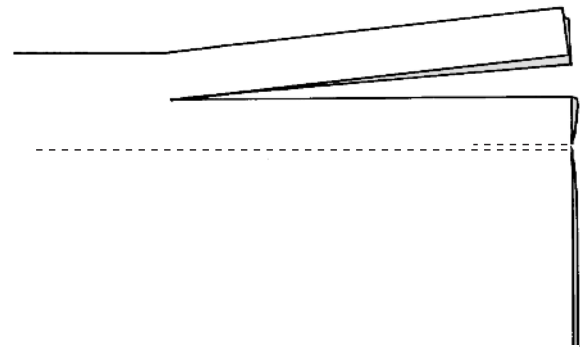
Lesson 3 Grading Seams; Clipping and Notching Curves

GRADING SEAMS

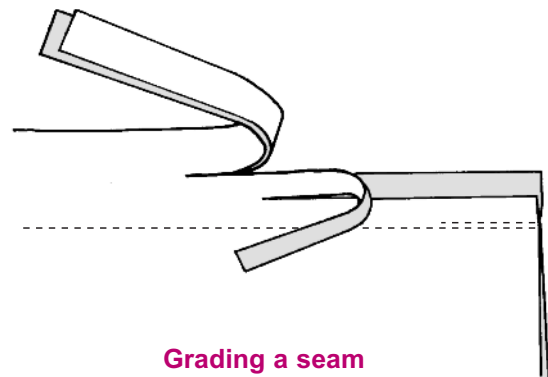
Sometimes a seam allowance causes a ridge on the outside of a garment. The heavier the fabric, the more likely this may happen. To prevent this, the enclosed seam allowances need to be trimmed to different widths. This is called grading the seam.

The seam allowance closest to the outside of the garment should be the longest one. This means that in a collar, the seam allowance of the upper collar would be the longest. Usually the shortest seam allowance is cut about $\frac{1}{4}$ " (0.6 cm) from the seam or as close as the scissors can be placed to the seam without weakening the strength of the seam. The longer seam allowance is cut about $\frac{3}{8}$ " (1 cm) from the seam.

You may be able to grade the seam allowances of some garments with a single cut. Position the seam so that the shortest seam allowance will be on top. Slant the scissors so they are almost parallel to the upper layer; trim through all seam allowances.



Trimming a seam



Grading a seam

 **Answer these questions.**

1. Why do seam allowances sometimes need to be graded? _____

Lesson 3

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2. When you grade seam allowances, which seam allowance should be left the longest?
-

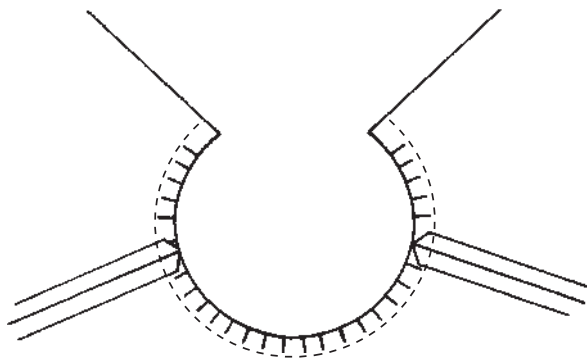
 **Do this activity.**

- 3. Sew two fabric scraps together. Grade the seams as shown in the illustration.

CLIPPING AND NOTCHING CURVES

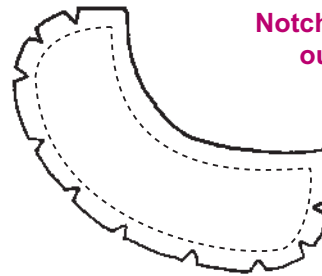
Most garments and many sewing projects include some curved seams. Necklines and armholes are curved seams. Pillow tops may have curved seams at the corners. When these seams are turned right side out, the seam allowance may bunch and appear bulky from the right side; or it may pucker and cause the fabric to gather around the seam rather than lie flat. To solve these problems, it is necessary to clip or notch curved seams.

Inward curves, such as necklines and armholes, need to have their seam allowances clipped. Make sure the scissors are positioned so that they clip only in the seam allowance. Do not snip through the



Clipping seam on an inward curve

seam. Clipping inward curves allows the seam allowance to spread when the garment is turned right side out.



Notching seam on an outward curve

Outward curves, such as a collar edge, should have the seam allowances notched. This means that a small amount of fabric in the shape of a triangle is clipped out of the seam allowance. Again, be careful to notch only in the seam allowance. Notching eliminates extra bulk in the seam allowance when the outward seam is turned inside.

Since clipping and notching tend to weaken a seam, sew curved seams twice to give them extra stability. Never try to hurry around a curved seam. Sew slowly to form a smooth, even curve. If you sew a second seam for strength, follow the first seam precisely.

 **Answer the questions and complete the sentences.**

4. Why do seams need to be clipped or notched at curves? _____
-

5. Inward curves such as _____ and _____ need to be clipped to allow the seam allowance to spread when the garment is turned right side out.
6. Outward seams need to be _____.
7. Why should curved seams be sewn twice? _____

Do these activities.

- 8. Pin two fabric scraps with right sides together. Use a marking pencil to mark a smooth outward curve as you might see in a round collar. Sew along this curved line. Trim the seam allowance to $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm). Notch the seam allowance, turn the curved seam right side out, and press.
- 9. Pin two more fabric scraps with right sides together. Use a marking pencil to draw a round inward curve as for a neckline. Trim the seam allowance to $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm), clip the seam allowance, and turn the seam right side out and press.

Ask your teacher for suggestions to make your sewing smoother and neater.

LOOKING BACK . . .

Write the letter of the correct answer.

10. Ballpoint needles have a point that is _____.
 - a. rounded
 - b. wedge shaped
 - c. blunt
11. Sharps have an eye that is _____.
 - a. long and oval
 - b. small and round
 - c. small and oval
12. _____ are especially designed for embroidery work.
 - a. Milliners
 - b. Tapestry needles
 - c. Crewels
13. Betweens are also known as _____ needles.
 - a. quilting
 - b. needlecraft
 - c. darning
14. _____ are designed to work in vinyl, plastic, and leather.
 - a. Darners
 - b. Chenilles
 - c. Glovers

Write the name of the stitch you would use—

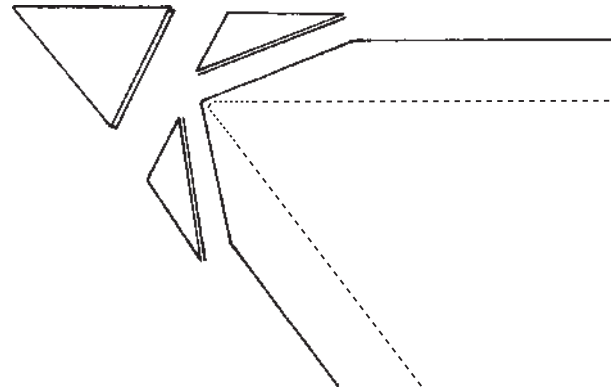
15. to hold two sections of a garment together until they are machine stitched: _____
16. to finish seam edges to keep them from raveling: _____
17. to reinforce points of strain such as the corners of a pocket: _____
18. to quickly hem a work dress: _____

SEAM CORNERS

Many sewing projects require sewing around corners. Learning to sew, trim, and form corners is essential. The appearance of corners makes a great difference in the final appearance of the garment or article you sew.

To sew a corner in a garment section such as a collar or in an article such as a place mat, sew a straight seam to the corner. With the needle down, raise the presser foot slightly and turn the fabric so that you can sew a stitch diagonally to the next seam. Raise the presser foot again and turn the fabric to continue sewing the next seam. Only one diagonal stitch is necessary for light- to medium-weight fabrics. Two diagonal stitches should be sewn across the corner in heavier fabrics such as double knits. In very heavy fabrics, such as fake fur or heavy blanket fabric, three or four diagonal stitches may be necessary.

The next step is to trim the seam allowance across the corner. This prevents a bulky, uneven corner from forming when you turn the seam inside. Be careful to allow at least a little fabric in the seam allowance,



Trimming a corner

especially if the fabric tends to fray. If the fabric is fairly lightweight, one trim across the corner may be all that is needed. In heavier fabrics, you may need to trim away additional fabric in the seam allowance as shown in the illustration. The sharper the point (as in a shirt collar), the more this trimming is necessary.

After the point is turned right side out, use a blunt-pointed object to push the point into the desired shape. Then press the point to help it hold its shape.



Follow the directions and answer the questions.

1. Write the three steps in sewing around a corner.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. What kinds of corners will need the most trimming?

3. What two things need to be done after the corner or point is turned right side out?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

Do this activity.

- 4. Sew two fabric scraps together so that the seam forms a corner. Trim the seam allowances and turn the corner right side out. Shape and press the corner.

PRESSING SKILLS

In LightUnit 5 you were introduced to the iron and ironing board as essential pieces of sewing equipment. You also followed instructions to press the comforter as you sewed it. You found that pressing makes a tremendous difference in the appearance of what you sew. Pressing is as important as stitching.

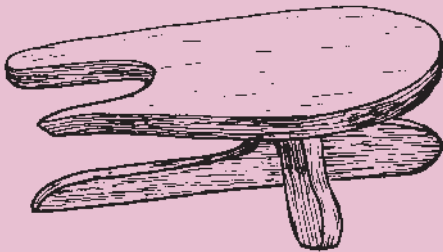
Pressing is different from ironing. It is a technique where the iron is raised and lowered in an up-and-down motion on fabric. Ironing is a back-and-forth sliding motion. Press, don't iron, as you sew. Sliding an iron over parts of a partially made garment can stretch and pull them out of shape. Press only as much as necessary to give a finished look to your sewing. Don't over-

press. Over-pressing is as bad as not pressing enough.

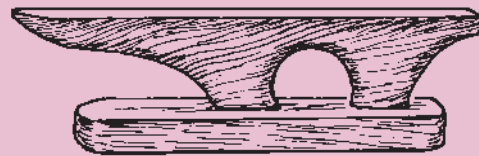
Pressing is a way to stretch, shrink, shape, mark, and fuse. It will save you time and make your sewing easier. As a general rule, press from the wrong side of a garment. Always do a pressing test on a scrap of fabric when you begin a project to learn how much heat and steam you need to make it smooth.

There are a number of pressing accessories on the market to aid in shaping curves and points. They are pictured here so that you will recognize them, but they are not essential for the type of sewing projects you will do in this course.

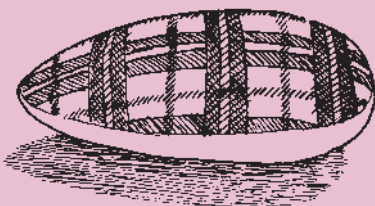
PRESSING ACCESSORIES



Tailor's board



Point Presser and Pounding Block



Tailor's Ham



Dressmaker's Clapper

General Sewing Tips

1. *Keep a wastebasket beside you while you sew.* You've already discovered that there are a lot of thread ends to discard in sewing. If you have a wastebasket handy, you can drop them in as you sew. This eliminates clean-up later. The same thing is true for grading seams and notching curves.

2. *Sew the small pieces first.* When you begin a sewing project, look at the big picture and plan how you will sew it together. Begin with the smallest pieces and sew them together into larger units until you have the project completed. No project looks as forbidding when it is

broken down into small sections. As you complete each section, you gain a small feeling of success that builds to the finished whole.

3. *Stitch from wide to narrow on garment sections.* It helps to preserve the grain line and it helps fabric edges match more exactly.

4. *Anchor your work with the machine needle down.* If you must stop before a seam is completed to rearrange fabric or if you must stop to turn fabric at a corner, you will save yourself much frustration if you make it a habit to lower the needle into the fabric before raising the presser foot.

Answer these questions.

5. What is the difference between pressing and ironing? _____

6. How much pressing should you do while making a garment? _____

7. How will you know how much heat and steam you will need to use on a garment you are making? _____

Write true or false.

8. _____ Keeping a trash can near your sewing machine is a good idea.
9. _____ It helps to sew the largest parts of a garment together first.
10. _____ To sew two wedge-shaped pieces together, you should begin at the point of the wedge and sew toward the wider part.
11. _____ When you need to stop sewing a seam before you are done with it, anchor the material by putting the needle down before raising the presser foot.

LOOKING BACK . . .



Finish these sentences.

12. One use of the blanket stitch is _____ .
13. A hemstitch that allows for some stretch is the _____ .
14. The _____ can be used to mend seams from the right side.
15. _____ are used to hold two pieces of fabric together during construction. They are removed after _____ .
16. The hand stitch for finishing raw seam edges is the _____ .
17. Two hemstitches that are almost totally invisible from either side of the garment are the _____ and the _____ .
18. To hold two finished edges together before topstitching, it would be best to use a _____ .
19. Seams that curve inward need to be _____—outward curved ones need to be _____ .
20. Trimming a seam allowance is called _____ .

Write the name of the hand stitch you would use—

21. to join a front facing to the fabric of a jacket: _____
22. to mend a seam it is impossible to reach with a machine: _____
23. to hem a skirt made of knit fabric: _____
24. to make a durable and invisible hem in a dress: _____