

Looking at What is in Your Wardrobe

4-H Clothing and Textiles Project

Part of the Family and Consumer Sciences 4-H Project Series



Selecting What's Right for Me

Project Outcome: Identify wardrobe needs versus wants.

Project Indicator: Inventory and shopping plan completed

We all have more clothes than we need. This lesson will help you determine the difference in a need and a want related to buying new clothes.

Start off by answering these questions:

1. Why do you wear what you wear? _____
2. How do you decide when you need more clothes? _____
3. Do you like to get new clothes? Why? _____
4. Have you ever heard your parents say they need to take you shopping because you need a new clothing item? _____
5. Why did you need this item, for school, special occasions, or what you have doesn't fit any more or it is worn out? _____

It's important to realize the difference in a need and a want in clothing. We can often accumulate lots of clothing items and still say "I have nothing to wear". A little planning can help you know what you have, what you need and then know when you go shopping that you are buying something you need or you are buying something just because you want something new.



Wearing something new can make us feel good, especially when we get compliments, but most of us don't have the money to buy what we want all the time. So careful planning can help us be able to buy something we want every once and a while but concentrate on buying things that we need (that fill a gap of a color or style or item that is missing from our wardrobe).



To do this takes planning and planning means looking at what you have now, thinking about what you will need, and taking steps to get those things.

Let's learn how to know when you need a new clothing item. It all begins with developing a wardrobe plan.

You need to know what is in your wardrobe (through a plan) in order to:

1. Know what you have
2. Coordinate (match) items, mixing and matching garments that you can change around to get more wear out of fewer garments
3. Know that when you have a special occasion, you will be aware of what is in your closet,
4. Not buy something similar to what you already have when you go shopping.

Developing a Wardrobe Plan

Step 1: Look at what you already have.

To do this you have to separate all your clothing items into two categories: 1. things that are **wearable** and 2. things that are **not wearable**.

For the things that are **wearable**, put separate pieces together to make outfits. You may want to use the “*scarecrowing*” technique. This is done by taking garments and laying complete outfits on your bed like you are making a scarecrow. This may also help you know specific garment pieces that you need to make more outfits.

Take the things that are **unwearable** and decide if they should be repaired to be wearable (and do it), given away, or used for some other purpose. Then remove these items from your wardrobe.

Step 2: Look at your wearables and categorize them.

To do this, you need to make an activity chart similar to the one below. This will tell you exactly what you need for the various activities in which you are involved.

1. Total the approximate number of hours you spend per week on each activity listed (you may add some not listed.) After you have totaled the number of hours you spend on each activity, then rearrange them from the highest number of hours to the least. This indicates the type of clothing for which you have the greatest need.



2. Complete the “Number of Outfits I Have for each Activity” portion of the chart by dividing your wearable clothes into categories/different piles (using your bed or similar surface) depending on your activities. You should have at least one garment to wear for each activity. Some can fit into more than one category. This is great because it really stretches your wardrobe.

3. Look at the results to decide if you have enough clothes for each category related to the amount of time spent in each category. You may find by doing this that you indeed have enough clothes for your various activities. So now when you go shopping you will be able to say, “I need this garment” for a specific activity as well as know when you simply want a new outfit.

Inventory of Clothing Based on Activities


How I Spend My Day (Activity)	1. Number of hours per week spent on this activity	2. Number of outfits I have for this type of activity	3. Do I have enough outfits for the amount of time I spend on this activity?	
School			YES	NO
At home (relaxing, studying, watching TV, etc.)			YES	NO
Recreation/Sports			YES	NO
Hanging out with friends			YES	NO
Other			YES	NO
Other			YES	NO

Creating a Shopping Plan

Now that you have determined your clothing needs, you are ready to create a shopping plan. Here are the basic steps:

1. Evaluate your clothing budget. How much money do you have to spend on clothing? If you don't know your clothing budget, ask your parents to give you a limit on how much you can spend on new clothes. This will help you know how much you can afford and how you can prioritize the items.
2. List your needs, considering the items that will give you the most mileage in combination with other clothing you already own. Consider the upcoming season and your needs.
3. Then consider your wants. Remember, it's okay to want something new. Make sure that it coordinates with something you already have so your purchase can go farther.
4. If possible go online or use catalogs, fashion magazines or other sources to get an idea of what is available, what styles are popular, and what you may have to pay for the items you want to buy.
5. As you shop for your planned wardrobe items, purchase coordinating items, not just one piece. This approach will reduce the chance of buying items if bought at different times that don't coordinate. The piece-meal approach to shopping (buying a few things now and a few things later) can be very expensive because garments you think will match may not. An example: there are a lot of different shades of red.



 Take photos of you separating your clothing items, or shopping for the clothes on your list and keep it for use in your portfolio, as part of a poster, or in teaching this to fellow 4-Hers.

Shopping Plan

Clothing Item	Description of What is to be Bought	Approximate Cost
Outerwear		
Jackets/Sweaters		
Tops		
Shirts		
Slacks/Shorts		
Jeans		
Skirts		
Dresses		
Athletic Wear		
Shoes		
Socks		
Accessories (jewelry, belts, ties, etc.)		
Other		

Now that you have completed this process, enjoy your well coordinated wardrobe!