

Sew Much Fun

Objective: To teach students the basics of sewing.

Materials:

- Fabric of choice (Two 12" x 12" pieces per child)
- Pieces of felt measuring (Two 14" x 12" pieces per child)
- Needles
- Thread (variety of colors)
- Stuffing (for a pillow)
- Ruler
- Fabric paint or markers
- Small scrap pieces of felt (variety of colors)

15 to 20 minutes; Fabric

Introduce the different kinds of fabrics available, as well as some of their history.

Natural Fibers: Flax, Cotton, Wool, Silk

Flax:

- Generally considered to be the oldest natural textile fiber.
- Fine linen was used as burial shrouds for the Egyptian pharaohs

Cotton:

- Earliest use estimated between 3,000 BC to 5,000 BC.
- Worn by Egyptians earlier than 2,500 BC.
- Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793 revolutionized the processing of cotton.

Wool:

- Used by people of the Late Stone Age.
- There are 40 different breeds of sheep, which produce approximately 200 types of wool of varying grades.

- Major producers include: Australia, New Zealand, Soviet States, China, South Africa, and Argentina.

Silk:

- Believed to be discovered by a Chinese princess.
- Silk is made from two continuous filaments cemented together and used to form the cocoon of the silkworm.
- Silk culture began about 1725 BC, sponsored by the wife of China's emperor.
- Secrets of cultivation and fabric manufacturing were closely guarded by the Chinese for about 3,000 years.
- There is a story that two monks smuggled seeds of the mulberry tree and silkworm eggs out of China by hiding them in their walking sticks.
- India learned of silk culture when a Chinese princess married an Indian prince.
- The major producer and exporter of silk is Japan.

Man-Made Fibers: Rayon, Acetate, Nylon, Acrylic, Polyester, Triacetate, Spandex, Micro Fibers/ Microdenier and Lyocell

Rayon:

- The first man-made fiber.
- The first commercial production of rayon fiber in the United States was in 1910 by the American Viscose Company.
- By using two different chemicals and manufacturing techniques, two basic types of rayon were developed. They were viscose rayon and cuprammonium rayon.
- Today, only viscose rayon is being produced in the U.S.

Acetate:

- The first commercial production of acetate fiber in the United States was in 1924 by the Celanese Corporation.

Nylon:

- The first commercial production of nylon in the United States was in 1939 by the E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, Inc. It is the second most used man-made fiber in this country, behind polyester.

Acrylic:

- The first commercial production of acrylic fiber in the United States was in 1950 by E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, Inc.

Polyester:

- The first commercial production of polyester fiber in the United States was in 1953 by E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, Inc.
- Polyester is the most used man-made fiber in the U.S.

Triacetate:

- The first commercial production of triacetate fiber in the United States was in 1954 by the Celanese Corporation.
- Domestic Triacetate production was discontinued in 1985.

Spandex:

- The first commercial production of spandex fiber in the United States was in 1959 by E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, Inc.
- It is an elastomeric man-made fiber (able to stretch at least 100% and snap back like natural rubber).

Micro Fibers/ Microdenier:

- The first commercial production of micro fiber in the U.S. was in 1989 by E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, Inc. Today micro fibers are produced in a variety of synthetic fibers (i.e. polyester, nylon, acrylic, etc.)
- The true definition of a micro fiber is a fiber that has less than one denier per filament. Micro Fiber is the thinnest, finest of all man-made fibers. It is finer than the most delicate silk.
- To relate it to something more familiar--A human hair is more than 100 times the size of some micro fibers.

Lyocell:

- The first commercial production of lyocell in the U.S. was in 1993 by Courtaulds Fibers, under the Tencel™ trade name.
- Environmentally friendly, lyocell is produced from the wood pulp of trees grown specifically for this purpose. It is specially processed, using a solvent spinning technique in which the dissolving agent is recycled, reducing environmental effluents.

15 minutes; Preparing to Sew

Show students how to measure and cut fabric.

- Choose appropriate fabrics for your project
- Remember to buy extra fabric to allow for shrinkage
- When learning, use easy-to-work-with fabrics such as cotton and cotton-poly mixes that do not have much stretch
- ALWAYS pre-wash your fabric (if it is washable)
- Choose a simple pattern when learning how to sew. Later, you can graduate to more advanced patterns

Demonstrate choosing thread, threading needles, pinning your pattern and basic stitches (found below).

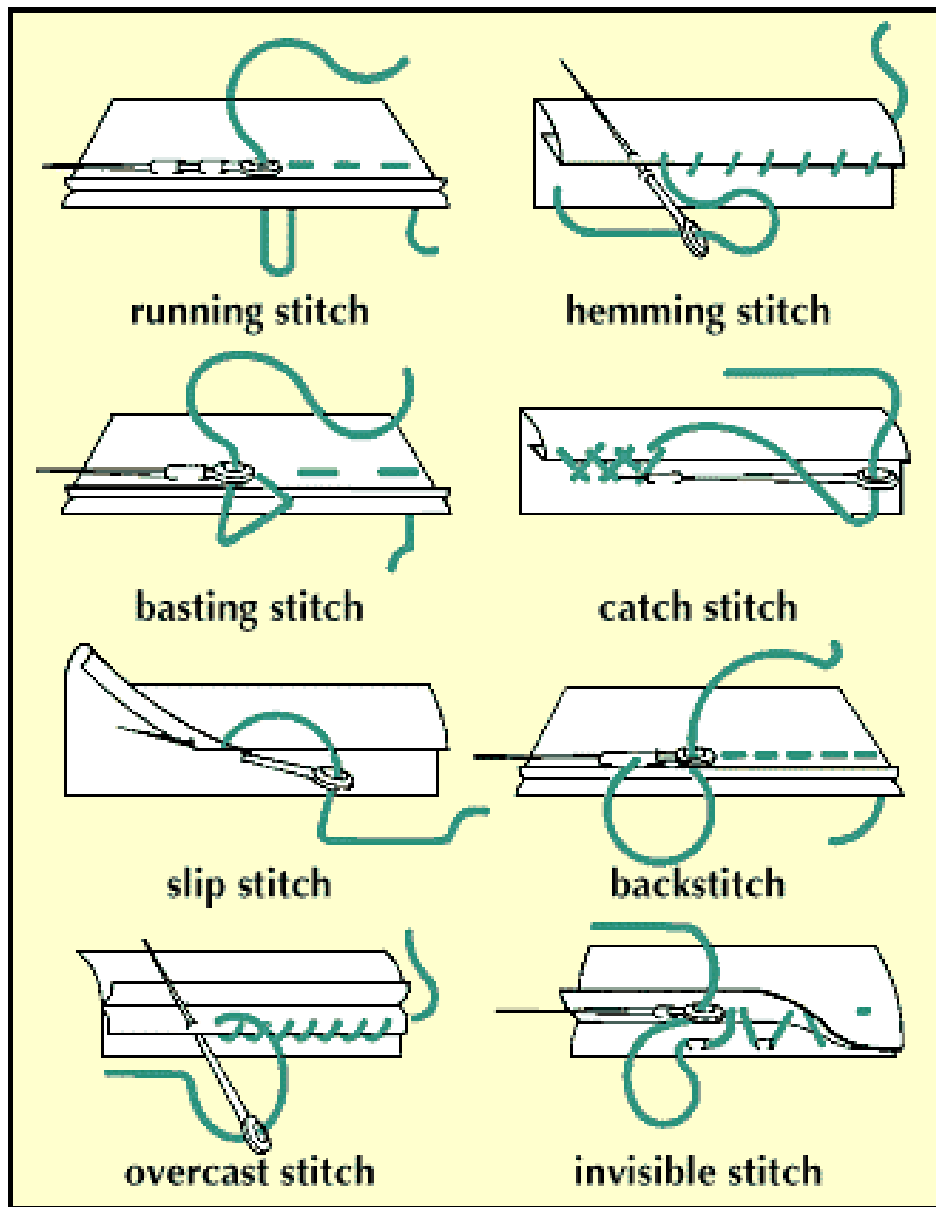
10 minutes; Practice, practice, practice

Have students choose scraps of fabric to practice their stitches before beginning their first project.

30-40 minutes; Make a pillow

- Ask students to choose the fabric they like most and cut two 12”x12” pieces.
- After cutting, choose a matching thread and thread the needle.
- Place the two pieces of fabric with patterns facing and begin stitching around the edges.
- When there is only about two inches of fabric left that is not yet sewn, flip the pillow right-side out and begin stuffing.
- Once the pillow is full, sew together the open and tie off the thread.

SOME BASIC SEWING STITCHES



<http://www.alternative-windows.com/stitches.htm>

Visit this website to learn how to do common sewing stitches

30 to 35 minutes; Felt Hand Puppet

- Allow students to choose one of the puppet templates (found below). Print copies of each template, giving one copy to each student.
- Have students pin the template to the first piece of felt and cut around the edges.
- Unpin the template and pin it onto the second piece of felt, cutting the felt around the edges
- Have students choose which piece of felt will be the front of the puppet. They will then cut out and sew on the facial features for that puppet using the small scrap pieces of felt.
 - The bear may have a muzzle, ears, nose, eyes, and paw pads
 - The frog will need eyes
 - The cat will need ears and a nose
- If they do not want to cut and sew on these facial features, they may use fabric paint or markers instead
- Once items are sewn on or paint has dried, pin the two pieces of felt together with the facial features not showing.
- Thread needle and sew around edges, excluding the flat edge (bottom of the puppet)
- Turn puppet right-side out

