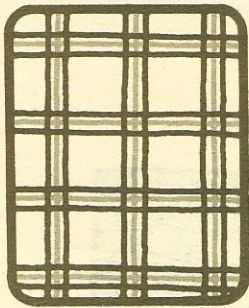


# Plaids

Exciting fashions can be created from attractively matched plaid fabrics, and that's why you'll find a panoply of plaids to sew today. From the classic tartans to the tailored windowpanes and the contemporary grid plaids, from the boldly-scaled blanket plaids to the fine tattersalls, you're bound to find favorites to add to your wardrobe.

Class Copy  
Please return



There are many pattern styles illustrated in plaid fabrics for your sewing inspiration. Often these are simple styles, with just a few main pattern pieces, but not always. These tips will help you select a good pattern for plaids:

- Avoid curved seams such as princess styles.
- Avoid shaped or long, French darts.
- Patterns with major sections cut on the bias grain form attractive diamonds or argyles (Fig. 1).
- Details such as ruffles, pocket flaps, applied bands, ties, and cuffs can be cut on the bias grain to accent a garment which is otherwise cut on the straight grain (Fig. 2).
- If you're using a large-scale plaid, avoid patterns with many seams and darts—the plaid design would be interrupted too many times to make an impact.
- Buy extra fabric to allow you to position the pattern pieces so the plaid matches at the important seams. How much extra? It depends upon the scale of the plaid (the larger the scale, the more extra fabric is needed), and the number of main pattern pieces (the more there are, the more matching, and therefore more fabric is required). One way of estimating the extra fabric is to figure one repeat (Fig. 3) per main pattern piece. You could also ask a salesperson to help you determine how much extra fabric is needed.

The way a plaid is handled for the pattern layout depends upon its identity—is the plaid balanced (even) or unbalanced (uneven)? To determine this, study your fabric:

- A balanced plaid has identical color bars on all sides of the dominant bar (Fig. 4).
- An unbalanced plaid does not have identical color bars on all sides of the dominant bar (Fig. 5).

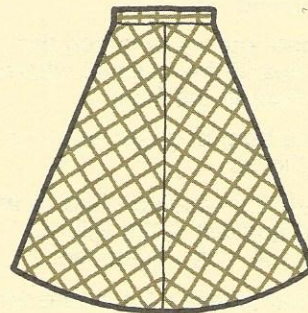


Fig. 1

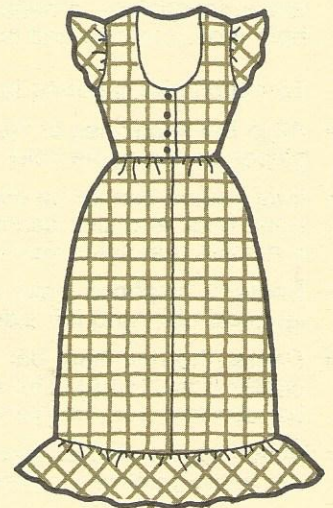


Fig. 2

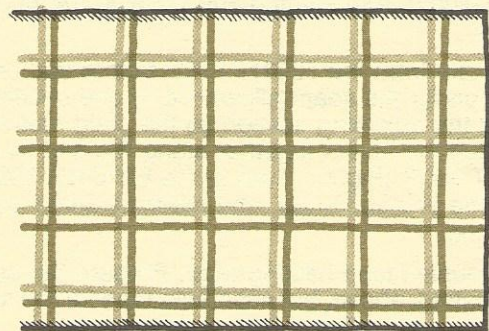


Fig. 3

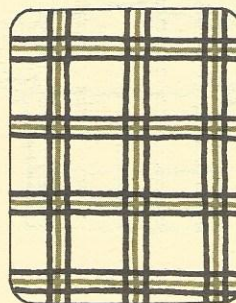


Fig. 4

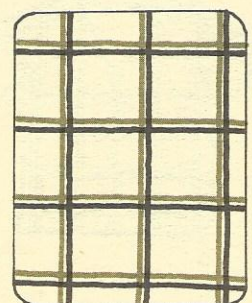


Fig. 5



- Unbalanced plaids take extra fabric beyond that needed for matching because they require a "with nap" layout, one in which all the pattern pieces head in the same direction. This gives you a garment with the plaid running around it in a single direction. For accuracy, layout on a single thickness of fabric (Fig. 1).
- Balanced plaids are easier to match. When the fabric is folded lengthwise, a balanced plaid should match at both the crosswise and lengthwise edges (Fig. 2).

To match plaids during layout:

- Align the seamlines at the notches of adjoining pattern pieces on the same color bars (Fig. 3).
- Every seam cannot be matched, but try to match the front, back and side seams, plus at the notches where armholes and set-in sleeves meet in the front.
- Center a balanced plaid so the front of a garment has identical right and left sides (Fig. 4).
- Center the dominant bar of an unbalanced plaid at the center front (Fig.5). The right and left sides will not be identical, but the garment will look "balanced".
- Match raglan sleeves (and other sleeves cut in one with the bodice) below the shoulder notches.
- Match seams with darts or eased areas below the dart or eased area.

As you sew, use either of these methods to prevent the fabric layers from shifting and causing the plaid to mismatch:

- Slip-baste from the RIGHT SIDE before you sew. Just press under the seam allowance of one section and lap it over the adjoining section so the plaid matches; slipstitch the layers together along the fold on the RIGHT SIDE (Fig.6). Turn to the WRONG SIDE, fold back the pressed edge, and machine-stitch along the seamline.
- Use double-faced basting tape. Prepare the seam as for slip-basting, above, but substitute tape for the slipstitches.

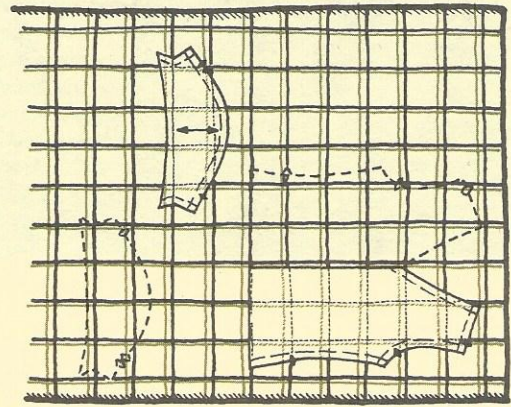


Fig. 1

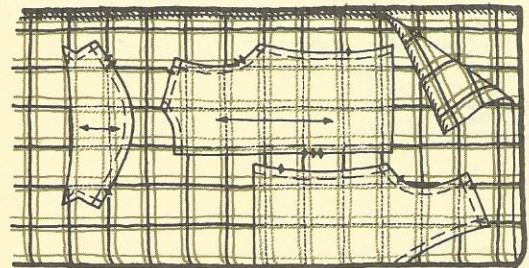


Fig. 2

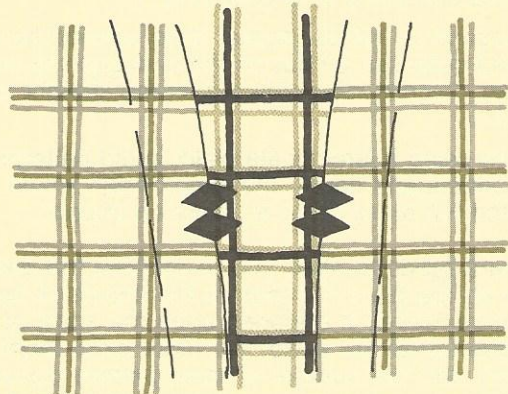


Fig. 3

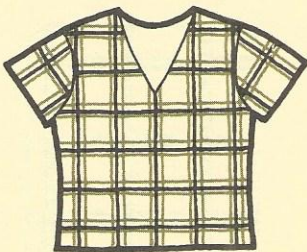


Fig. 4

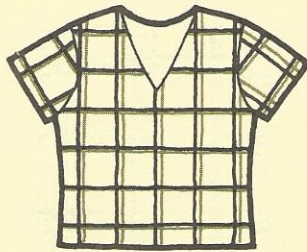


Fig. 5

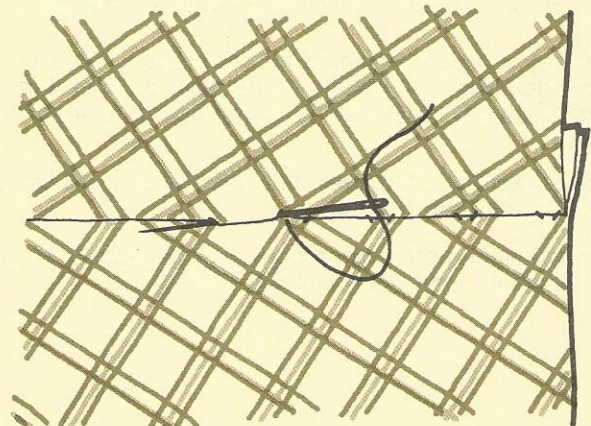


Fig. 6