

# Stripe Smarts

BY LINDA TURNER GRIEPENTROG

Colorful stripes are all the rage for spring and summer fashions, but there are some nuances that require extra attention to work with them.

## WHAT'S A STRIPE?

Stripes can go vertically, horizontally or diagonally on the fabric surface. They can be woven in so the fabric appears the same on both the right and wrong side, they can be printed, or they can be knitted into the fabric. On both printed and knitted stripes, there is a definite right and wrong side to the fabric.

Extra caution is needed with printed horizontal stripes to ensure they're on the fabric grain. If not, the garment may not hang properly if you opt to follow the stripe patterning instead of the fabric grainline.

## FASHION DIRECTIONS

Consider the common concern that large and boldly contrasting stripes emphasize width if they are placed horizontally on the body, whereas lengthwise stripes tend to add height. This isn't necessarily fact, as the perception can vary by the width, color and repeat of the stripe patterning. If the stripes are chevroned, the angle and direction can also change the perception of body size. Hold the fabric up to your body and look in the mirror to see the effect of the patterning.

## PATTERN PICKS

Not all patterns are suitable for use with stripes. It's best to avoid designs with curved princess seaming, eased seams, long darts and an abundance of pieces that will break up the visual impact of the stripes. Matching stripes

is much easier on straight vertical or horizontal seams.

Some patterns actually caution "not suitable for stripes" on the envelope.

Patterns that offer sectional piecing are ideal for showcasing stripes as a design feature. These include sufficient yardage for working with the stripe since the original design is shown that way. See the new V9337 on page tk.

If you want to use a stripe fabric with a pattern that doesn't call for it, you may need to purchase extra yardage for fabric matching. To figure out how much you'll need first measure the repeat of the stripe and then multiply by the number of major pattern pieces. For example, if there are four major pattern pieces and the stripe you've selected has a repeat of 3", then purchase an extra 12" of fabric to allow for matching. It's important to be sure the pattern fits you before cutting, as seams may not match if you make alterations later.

## STRIPE TYPES

There are two types of stripes—even and uneven (sometimes called bal-

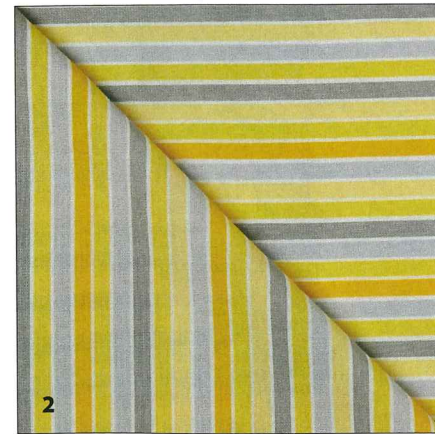
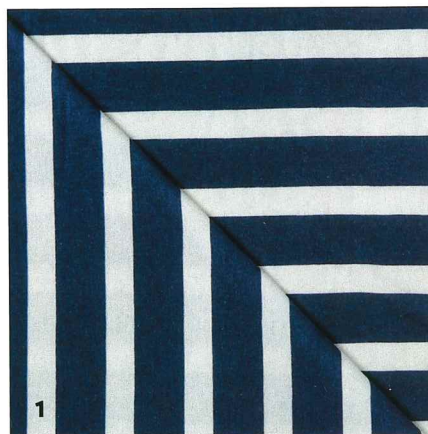
anced and unbalanced)—and both can be horizontal or vertical, and occasionally diagonal. Either can also be woven or knitted into the fabric or printed onto the surface.

An even stripe is symmetrical to the left and right of any stripe line; and an uneven stripe is not. To determine if a stripe is even, fold the fabric in half along the most prominent stripe line and turn back the corner at a right angle. If every line matches, it's an even stripe. (1) If the lines don't match up, it's an uneven stripe. (2)

Matching even stripes is easier than working with uneven varieties. Use the "without nap" layout for even stripes. When using uneven stripes, use the "with nap" layout. Since they're not symmetrical, uneven stripes need to be cut in a single layer.

## MATCH GAME

When you lay out even horizontal or vertical striped fabric in a double layer for cutting, pin identical stripes together, across the width, through both layers. The pins hold the layers in place and prevent shifting as you pin







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## TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

the pattern pieces. Alternatively, cut the pieces on a single layer of fabric.

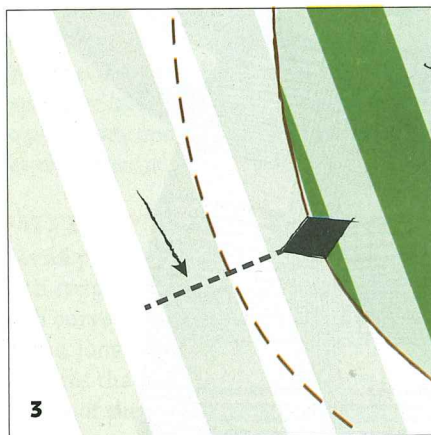
When laying out the pattern, always match stripes at the seamline, not at the cutting line. To make this easier, draw a short line from the notch center, just across the seamline, if there's no dot already printed on the pattern. This is the match point for adjacent garment pieces. (3)

Another option is to draw the stripe patterning onto the pattern pieces and match the marks to the fabric. (4)

Where should the stripes match?

Ideally horizontal stripes should match on all adjacent pattern pieces, but sometimes, depending on the garment design and the stripe, perfection isn't always possible. It's important to pay attention to the following stripe points:

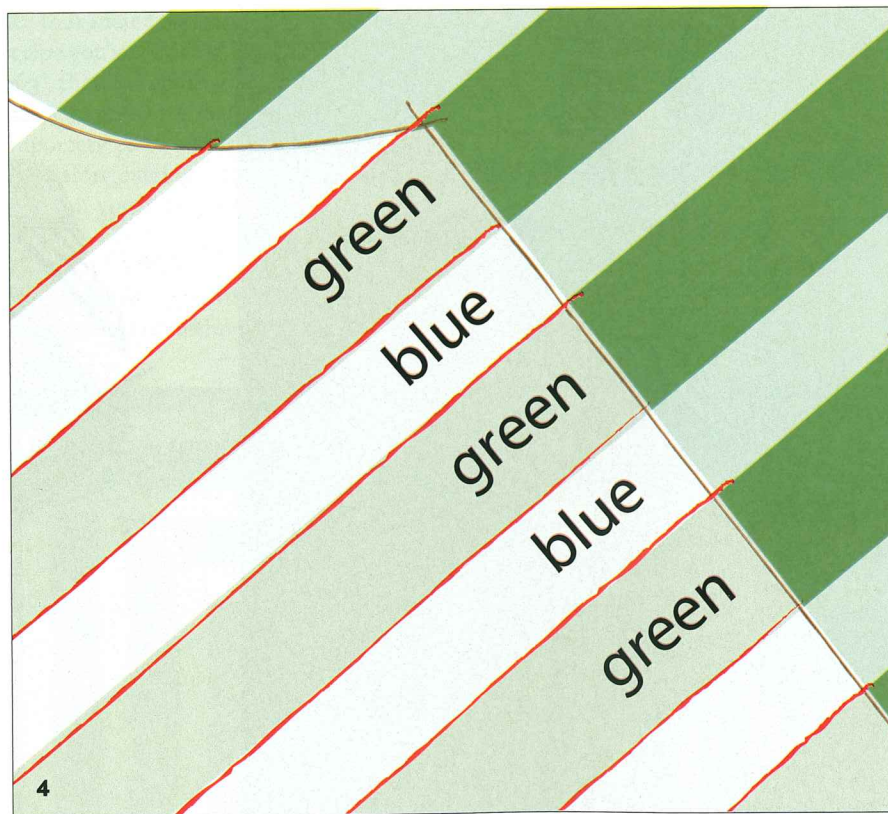
- Match the stripes at the most visible areas—center front and back, side seams and the front armhole of set-in sleeves. Stripes might not match at the shoulder seams or back armholes. Horizontal stripes should appear to be continuous around the body without any mismatches at the seamlines.
- Sleeve seams should be matched if possible, but sometimes ease or darts prevent matching the entire underarm length.
- If a horizontal stripe has a dominant color bar (either wider or brighter than the rest), try not to position that



at the bustline or hipline, but rather at the hem and/or sleeve lower edge.

- Some design details are perfect for using stripes on the bias or in the opposite direction from the main garment—consider this option for collars, pockets, cuffs, flaps, yokes or facings. If the pattern doesn't call for bias cutting, simply fold the existing grainline at a right angle to itself and draw a new bias grainline on the fold. (5 & 6) If matching is preferred, draw the stripe lines onto the pattern piece for easier cutting.

Even lengthwise stripes can be cut double-layer. Fold the fabric down the middle of a dominant stripe line to use as the center front/back. Match at the shoulder and waistline seams. Garment details, like pockets, collars, yokes, etc. are often cut on the opposite grain, but if not, they should be matched as well, especially patch pockets.



Uneven lengthwise stripes require the most attention when cutting. The stripe sequence normally repeats itself around the body, so cutting in one direction and on a single fabric layer is required. Select one stripe as the dominant one (if the width of the stripe varies, use the largest and most prominent for this), and use it as the center front, center back and sleeve center. (7, 8, 9, 10)

### CHEVRONING

Another technique for working with stripes is to create a chevron at the center front and/or center back seam. This can be done on a skirt and/or bodice of a garment with a waistline seam, or on a full front/back for garments without a horizontal seam.

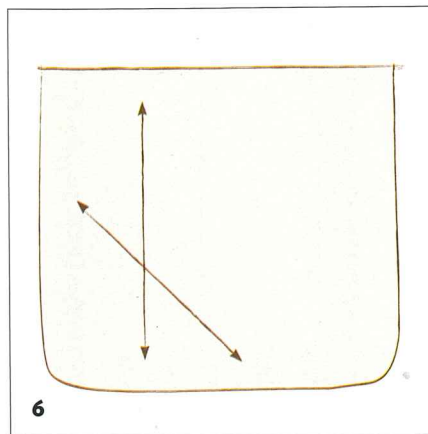
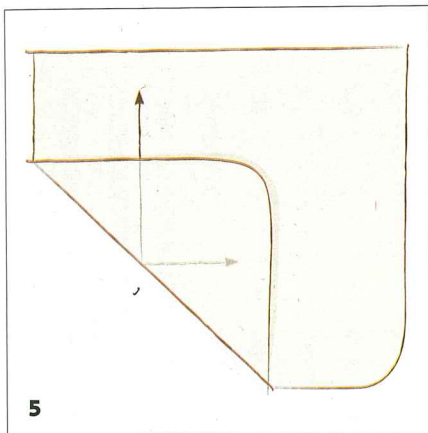
The "V" line created by this technique can go upward or downward depending on preference, but it's



good to remember that a V pointing downward is usually considered more flattering and slimming than one that points up. Although both directions can be used on garments with waistline seaming—one on the bodice (downward) and the opposite on the skirt (upward) to give the illusion of a slim waist.

To create a chevron, convert the grainline on the pattern piece to a bias grainline. Note: This custom detailing requires additional fabric with the grainline conversion, so do a trial layout before purchasing. (11)

It's imperative that one of the pattern pieces is reversed (cut print side down) so cutting single-layer is the best option to ensure stripes match at the highly visible design seams. Note



### WHEN IS A STRIPE NOT REALLY A STRIPE?

If the edges of the patterning aren't clearly defined, or the "stripe" design of the fabric is wavy or uneven, the fabric may not need to be handled as a true stripe for cutting and matching.

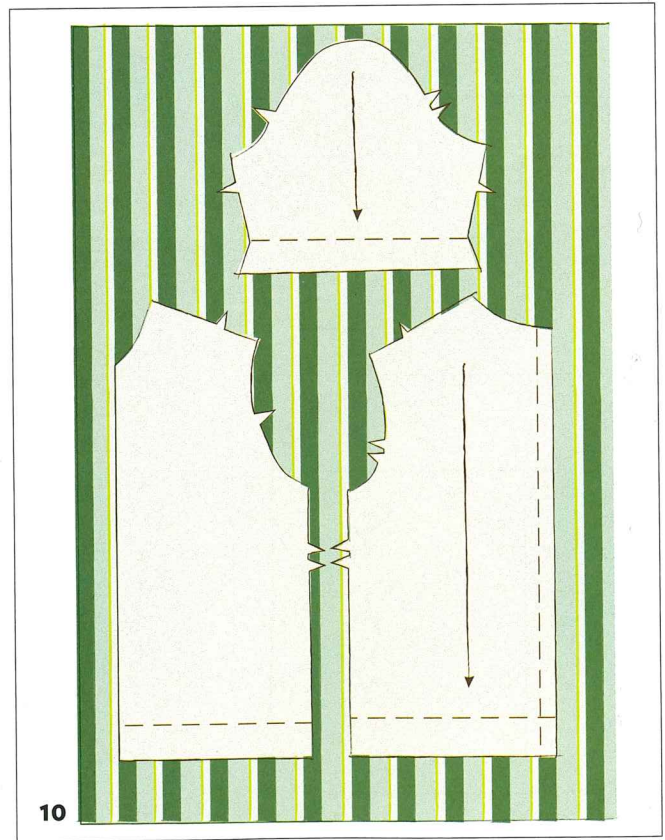
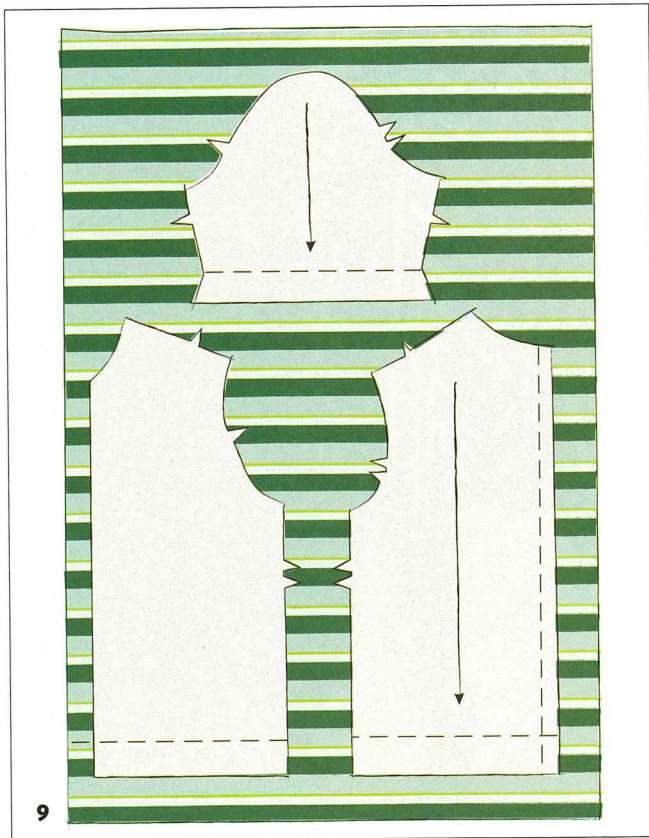
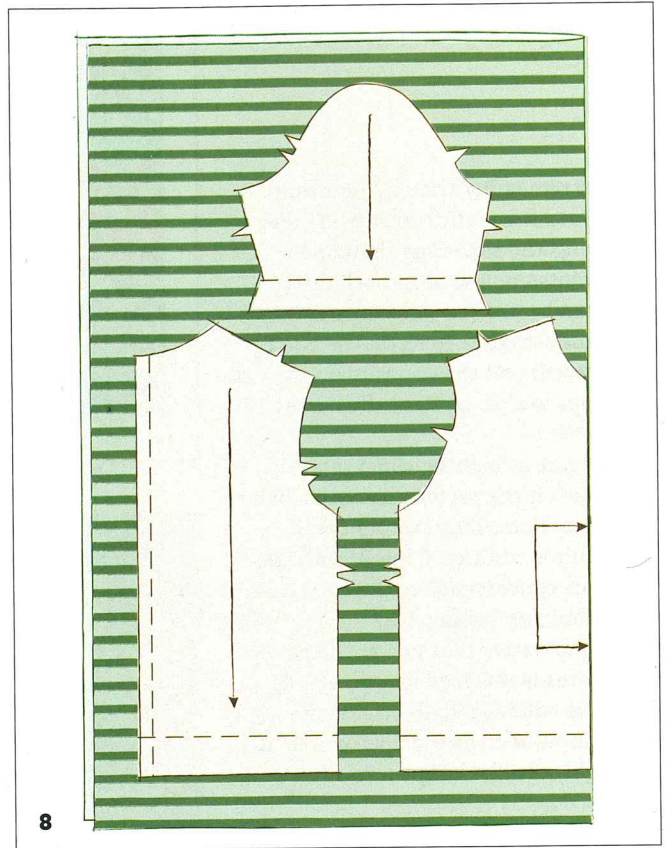
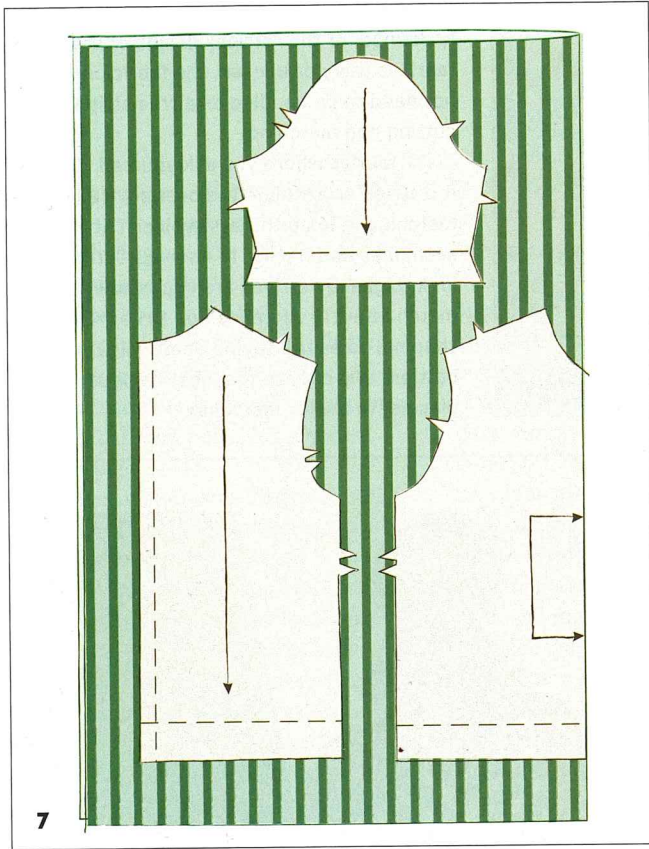
For fabrics where you ask yourself, "Is it a stripe or isn't it?" the best advice for matching is to do the best you can at the seamlines and try not to have a fractured look. Zigzaggy stripes are impossible to match at every seamline due to garment shaping, so as the saying goes, "pick your battles" and choose the most obvious place(s) to try for matching.

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TIPS AND TECHNIQUES





that the stripe angle will be opposite on the second half so that when they're joined, the seam creates the desired stripe angle. Be sure to double check the stripe placement at the seamline (not the cutting line) before cutting to ensure a perfect match.

If your pattern doesn't have a center front and/or center back seam, add  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to the center fold line to allow for the conversion to a chevroned seam.

In addition to the garment center front/back chevroning, juxtapositioned stripes can also be used on a sleeve. If it's already a two-piece sleeve, simply convert the grainlines and cut as noted above. If it's a single piece sleeve, cut the pattern piece in half and add  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to each cut edge.

On a garment like a gored skirt, individual chevrons can also be created at each seamline.

Most chevrons are cut with the stripes on a 45° angle, but other angles are possible as well, depending on your

preference—just adjust the grainline slant on the pattern pieces.

### DIAGONAL STRIPES

Diagonal stripes work best for patterns without many seams and straight line styling. The slant of the stripes should be the same direction on both the garment front and back, though unless the stripe is bold, matching at the side seams may not be necessary or possible.

### SEAMING

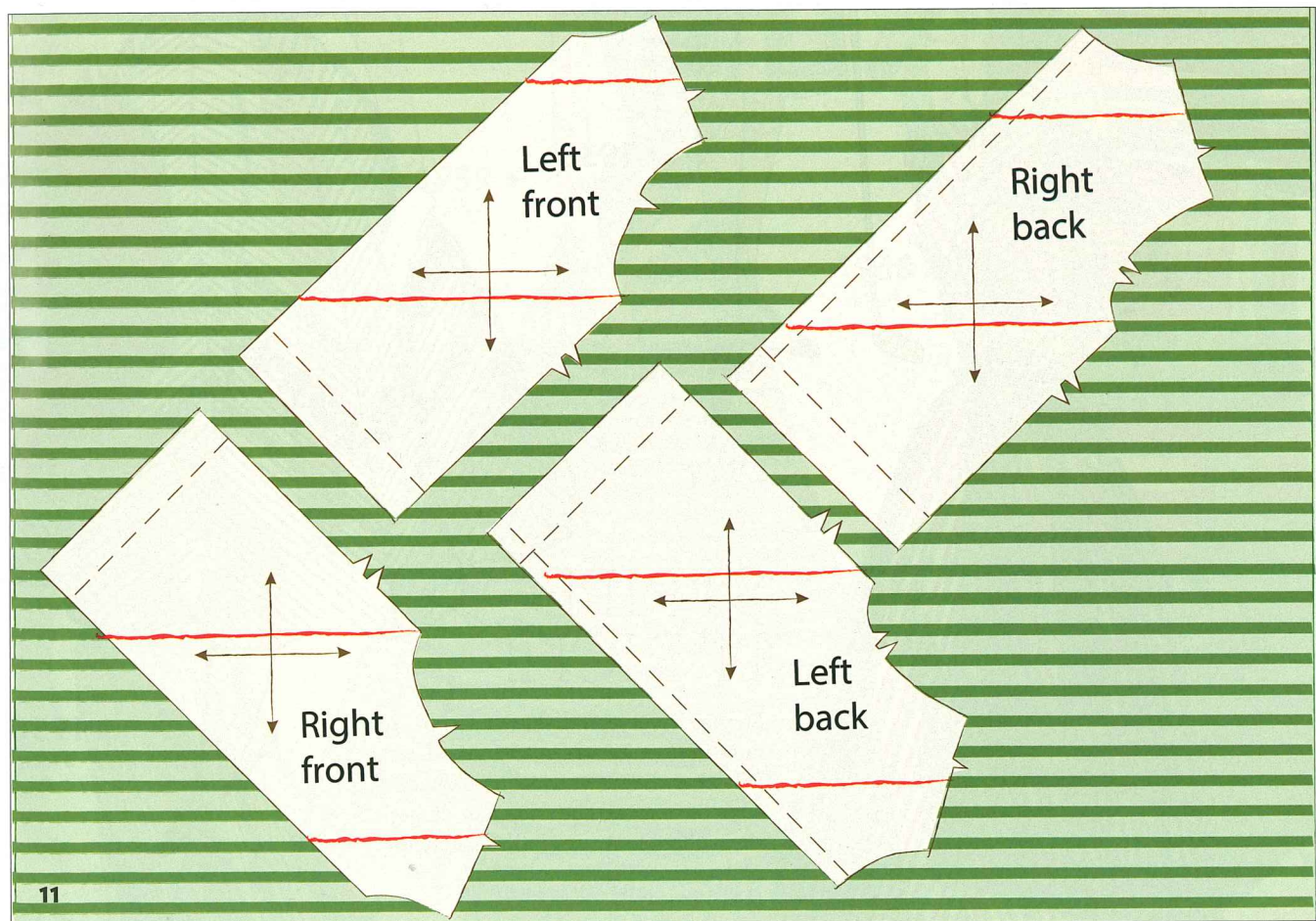
Although cutting is the most time-consuming task in working with stripes, sewing the seams properly is also critical for matching. When joining adjacent pattern pieces, pin through both layers along the seamline so that the stripes match. Sew the seam and pull out pins as you come to them.

If you have a walking foot or dual feed function, use it when sewing seams in stripes, especially on knits, as it helps with even feeding both layers at once.

Another option for matching is to fold under the fabric along one seamline and lap it over the adjacent seam. Pin-baste it in place, or for a more secure hold, place a line of fusible thread between the layers and fuse them together with a perfect match; then stitch the seam normally. The tiny bit of fusible holds the layers in place while you stitch. Water-soluble basting tape can be used for this purpose as well, as can hand basting. The goal of any of these methods is a no-slip seam that matches perfectly.

### DETAILS, DETAILS...

Stripes are perfect for piping—you can cut the covering fabric crossgrain on vertical stripes (if the piping doesn't have to go onto a curved edge), or on the bias to get diagonally striped piping. Be sure to match the stripe repeat when seaming pieces together to avoid visual discord. ☞



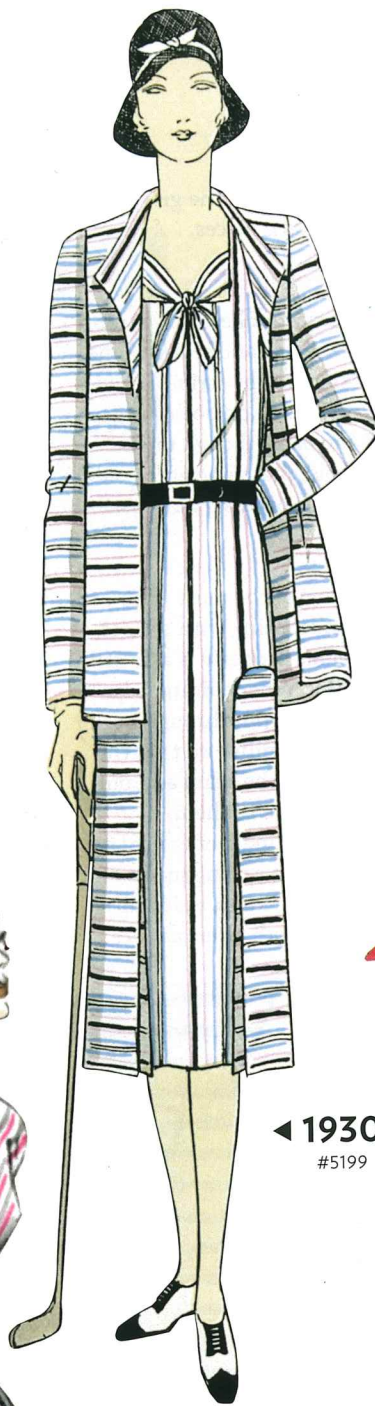


# VOGUE ARCHIVES

Welcome to the Vogue Patterns archives, home to over 100 years of pattern history. Join us as we take a peek into the past to gather inspiration from the timeless styles of bygone eras.



1953 ▶  
#7422



◀ 1930  
#5199



◀ 1984  
#8673

◀ 1958  
#9464

## STRIPE IT RICH!

Stripes have been making an appearance in Vogue Patterns for decades! Whether they're vertical or horizontal, even or uneven, chevroned or diagonal, these lined looks are still influencing our pattern designs today!



1942 ▶  
#9119



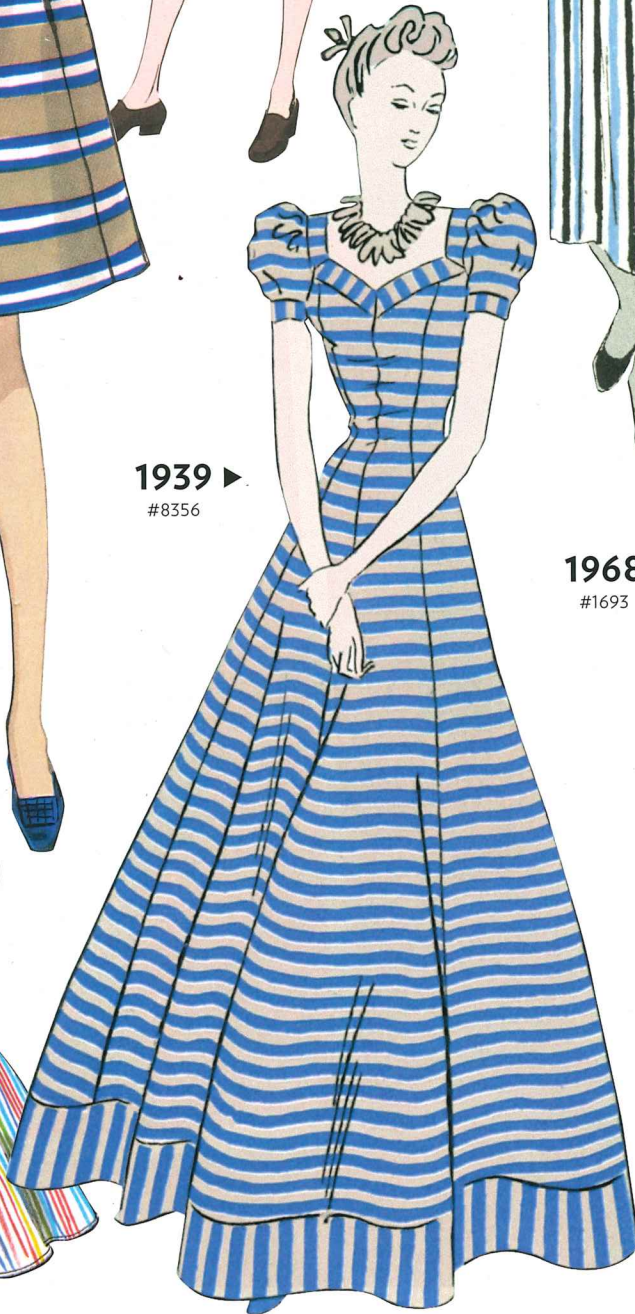
1935 ▶  
#6887



◀ 1968  
#7215



1939 ▶  
#8356



1968 ▶  
#1693



1977 ▶  
#9505

