



BUTTON, BUTTON—WHAT KIND OF BUTTON?

Button History:

When the primitives grew modest, they wanted something to keep their animal hide clothes together. The deep forest was the only "notions counter" they knew, and there they found thorns and sinews that did the trick. They fastened these items of nature to their clothes, and then together, and that's how the principle of the button began. It was not until thousands of years later that buttons began to be used as a decorative item as well.

Since buttons are a fashion accessory and add a finishing touch to a garment, it is important to select a button with great care so that it will enhance the appearance of the garment. There are several factors which should be considered when shopping for buttons.

◆ Garment Style

Take a good look at your pattern. Is it soft and fluid or is it very tailored? Does it use a lot of buttons or only a few?

- If the garment requires many buttons, then a simply styled button is the best bet.
- If the garment is simple in design, then an unusual button can be used to add interest.
- Garments with loop closures look best with shank buttons that are ball or half-ball shaped, or toggle closures.

◆ Fabric Weight

- For lightweight fabrics, a lightweight button is always best. Buttons that are too heavy tend to pull down on the fabric and detract from the appearance of the garment.
- For heavyweight fabrics, either use a heavyweight button or a larger lightweight button that gives a heavier appearance.

◆ Fabric Color

- For solid color fabrics, either of two routes may be taken:
 1. You may wish to select a button that is as close as possible in color to your fabric and doesn't draw attention.
 2. You may wish to use contrasting buttons so that they accent your fabric and draw attention.
- For printed fabrics, there are also two choices:
 1. You may wish to pick up one of the colors in the print for accent and use that color for your buttons.
 2. You may wish to tie into the theme of the design as you select your buttons. For example, if your fabric is a nautical print, you may want to use buttons with an anchor or a star motif.



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◆ **Garment care**

- If your fabric is washable, be sure the buttons you choose are washable, too.
- If your fabric is dry cleanable, make sure the buttons can be dry cleaned safely. Otherwise, the buttons must be removed and re sewn for each dry cleaning.
- To find out if the button is washable or dry cleanable, check the back of the button card.

◆ **Button Size**

Most patterns give the recommended sizes for buttons on the back of the pattern envelope. However, some general guidelines are:

- 1/2 inch for children's wear, shirts, and delicate blouses.
- 5/8 inch for blouses, shirtdresses, vests, and jacket cuffs.
- 3/4 inch for men's suits and jackets.
- 7/8 inch for blazers and jackets.
- 1 inch for raincoats.
- 1 1/8 inches for outerwear, jackets, and coats.

◆ **Button Shopping**

When shopping for buttons, always carry a piece of your fabric with you. Make a slit in the swatch so that you can slip the fabric over the button and get the full picture of how it looks. Taking your pattern envelope with you can also aid in your selection.





Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

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Directions: There are six different articles of clothing that need buttons. From the button box, choose the correct button for each article. On the button cards are numbers. Use that number to identify the buttons chosen.

Article I: Description of article: _____
Button chosen: _____
Three reasons I chose this button: _____

Article II: Description of article: _____
Button chosen: _____
Three reasons I chose this button: _____

Article III: Description of article: _____
Button chosen: _____
Three reasons I chose this button: _____

Article IV: Description of article: _____
Button chosen: _____
Three reasons I chose this button: _____

Article V: Description of article: _____
Button chosen: _____
Three reasons I chose this button: _____

Article VI: Description of article: _____
Button chosen: _____
Three reasons I chose this button: _____
