



Dressmakers, Tailors, Hatters, and Cobblers

5

✓ Lesson Objectives

Core Content Objectives

Students will:

- ✓ Describe dressmakers, tailors, hatters, and cobblers in a colonial town
- ✓ Identify, and associate with the appropriate trade, the tools used by dressmakers, tailors, hatters, and cobblers
- ✓ Explain how the tradespeople in colonial towns saved farming families time and effort
- ✓ Explain that ready-made clothing was not available for sale in colonial shops; clothing was made to order according to the exact measurements of each person

Language Arts Objectives

The following language arts objectives are addressed in this lesson. Objectives aligning with the Common Core State Standards are noted with the corresponding standard in parentheses. Refer to the Alignment Chart for additional standards that are addressed in all lessons in this domain.

Students will:

- ✓ With prompting and support, discuss the spinners and weavers from the previous read-aloud and connect them to the tradespeople in “Dressmakers, Tailors, Hatters, and Cobblers” (RI.K.3)
- ✓ Orally compare and contrast the six tradespeople in the read-aloud (spinners, weavers, dressmakers, tailors, hatters, and cobblers) (RI.K.9)

- ✓ With assistance, categorize and organize facts and information comparing the people who sold clothing long ago to those who sell clothes today in a Venn diagram (W.K.8)
- ✓ Distinguish the read-aloud “Dressmakers, Tailors, Hatters, and Cobblers,” which describes events that happened long ago, from one that describes contemporary or current events
- ✓ Discuss personal experiences shopping today and connect those with shopping for clothes long ago

Core Vocabulary

breeches, n. A type of men’s pants that came down to just below the knee

Example: When men wore breeches in the winter, they needed to wear long socks to keep their calves warm.

Variation(s): none

fabric, n. Cloth woven from different fibers, often dyed different colors

Example: I chose a black fabric for my costume.

Variation(s): fabrics

fastened, v. Attached or joined (two things) together

Example: I fastened my rain coat buckles to keep my sweater underneath dry.

Variation(s): fasten, fastens, fastening

measure, v. To figure out the size of something by comparing it to another object or by using a special tool


Example: I used a ruler to measure the length of my pencils.

Variation(s): measures, measured, measuring

patterns, n. Plans or diagrams on paper to be followed when making something

Example: The dressmaker let the farmer’s wife borrow one of her dress patterns so she could make a dress for her daughter.

Variation(s): pattern

<i>At a Glance</i>	Exercise	Materials	Minutes
<i>Introducing the Read-Aloud</i>	What Have We Already Learned?	“Now and Then” Venn diagram	10
	What Do We Know?		
	Purpose for Listening		
<i>Presenting the Read-Aloud</i>	Dressmakers, Tailors, Hatters, and Cobblers	sewing pattern	10
<i>Discussing the Read-Aloud</i>	Comprehension Questions		10
	Word Work: Measure		5
 Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day			
<i>Extensions</i>	Know-Wonder-Learn Chart	Know-Wonder-Learn Chart	15
	On Stage		



Dressmakers, Tailors, Hatters, and Cobblers

5^A

Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

What Have We Already Learned?

Review the previous read-aloud about spinners and weavers. Remind students that spinners made thread out of cotton, flax, or wool, and that weavers took this thread or yarn and wove cloth out of it. Explain that there was still an important step left to make specific pieces of clothing, such as dresses or shirts. This last step involved cutting out pieces of cloth and then sewing them together. Tell students that today they will learn about tradespeople who sewed clothes out of cloth.

What Do We Know?

Discuss what it is like to go shopping for clothes today. Today's stores have a lot of clothes in a variety of sizes and styles ready to buy when customers come to the store. Most stores have clothes for boys and girls, in addition to shoes, hats, and any other garments you might need. Customers in a clothing store can choose what they want. If they prefer, they can go into a fitting room and try it on before they pay for it so they can decide if they like it. Ask students how they get their clothes. Do they go to a store and try it on, or does someone shop for their clothes for them? Most of today's garments are made in factories where people use machines to make many garments very quickly.

But long ago, making even just one dress or shirt took a lot of time and effort, even for an expert tradesperson. Tradespeople didn't have the time or money to make a lot of clothes in advance and hang them up in their shops, hoping customers would come in and buy them. Instead, they had to make sure that they had a customer first, and then they would make what the customer wanted. This is called *made-to-order* or a *custom* order, because it is made in a specific way for a specific customer. It usually took

many days, even weeks, between the time the customer first came into the shop and ordered a garment and when he or she actually took home the completed clothing.

Ask students to imagine what it would be like to buy clothes without even seeing a sample first. In the old days, people had to trust the tradesperson who was sewing the garment, because they couldn't just try it on or bring it back to the store if they didn't like it. Most children's clothes were made at home.

And making a pair of pants was very different from making a dress, or shoes or hats, so you had to go to a different tradesperson who was a specialist in the type of clothing you needed.

On the "Now and Then" Venn diagram, make note of the similarities and differences that you have just discussed between shopping for clothes today and long ago.

Purpose for Listening

Tell students to listen carefully to today's read-aloud to find out about four different tradespeople during colonial times who made different types of clothing.



Dressmakers, Tailors, Hatters, and Cobblers

◀ Show image 5A-1: Group of people walking to church

In Colonial America, most people made their own clothing. This was especially true for farmers, who had everything they needed to make clothes on their farms. Because making clothes was hard work, most people had only two outfits: one set of work clothes and one set of fancier clothes to wear on Sunday—that was it! People did not get new clothes until their old clothes were worn out.

Some farmers and their families had the money to buy clothing, instead of making it themselves, so they would take a trip to town when they needed new clothing. There, they would find several different people who specialized in making different things: the dressmaker, the tailor, the hatter, and the cobbler.¹

1 Think how much time farmers' wives could save if they bought dresses instead of making them!



◀ Show image 5A-2: Dressmakers

In the old days, there were no racks full of dresses for women to try on. It took a lot of time for a dressmaker to make a dress, so she wanted to make sure someone would buy every dress made. And it cost a lot of money to buy a dress, so a farmer's wife wanted to choose the exact color and style she wanted. The dressmaker might display one or two dresses in the shop window, but most dresses had to be made-to-order.² If a woman was very wealthy, she might even order a dress from England.

2 What does *made-to-order* mean?



◀ Show image 5A-3: Sewing notions

When a woman came in looking for a new dress, the dressmaker might show her some **patterns**, designed according to the latest fashions.³ The woman could choose the pattern and **fabric** she liked best.⁴

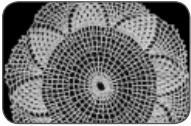
3 [Show students the sewing pattern you brought to class.] Patterns were made of paper and showed what pieces would need to be sewed together to make a dress.

4 Fabric is cloth that comes in a variety of colors and materials.

5 The measuring tape would help the dressmaker figure out a woman's size.

The dressmaker would then use a measuring tape to **measure** the woman's arms and legs, as well as her chest, neck, and **waist**.⁵

The measurements told the dressmaker how much cloth would be needed for the dress. The dressmaker would then cut the cloth into pieces according to the shape of the patterns. After all the pieces were cut, the dressmaker would hand stitch or sew the pieces together using a fine needle and thread. Remember, back then there were no electric sewing machines like we have today, so this was slow, careful work.



← **Show image 5A-4: Crocheted lace**

Finally, the dressmaker might add fancy finishing touches, like hand-knitted lace or embroidery around the collar or hem of the dress. It would sometimes take several weeks to make a new dress!



← **Show image 5A-5: Tailor**

Tailors did the same kind of work as dressmakers, but they made clothing for both men and women. People who wanted new clothes could visit a tailor and have their measurements taken. The tailor would then make a shirt or a pair of **breeches**, to order. Breeches were the knee-length pants that men wore in colonial times along with long, woolen stockings.



← **Show image 5A-6: Colonial hats**

Almost everyone in early America wore a hat. In fact, it was considered strange or rude to walk around bareheaded. Men wore hats with brims, and women wore soft bonnets. People wore hats to keep their heads warm and dry, to keep the sun out of their eyes, and to protect the expensive wigs they frequently wore.

People who made men's hats were called hatmakers or hatters. Men's hats were made out of beaver skin, wool, or camel fur, and were **fastened**⁶ together with glue that the hatter mixed himself. As with clothing, people could not simply walk into a hat shop

6 *Fastened* means held together, or attached.

and walk out with a hat on the same day. Instead, a customer chose the particular style of hat, had his or her head measured by the hatter, and came back days or weeks later, when the hat was done.



← **Show image 5A-7: Shoemaker**

Of all their clothing, shoes were the hardest for farmers to make themselves. So when a farmer needed a new pair of shoes, he would visit the cobbler or shoemaker. The cobbler would make shoes to order, just as was done with the dressmaker, tailor, and hatter.

Most people had only one or two pairs of shoes. Plenty of people had no shoes at all! Poor farmers and their families didn't wear shoes for most of the year. If a farmer did have shoes, he might wear the same pair of shoes every day for months. As a result, shoes wore out quickly. Most farmers could not afford to buy a new pair of shoes very often. So, instead of buying new shoes, they would take their old shoes to the cobbler to have them patched, or repaired. Cobblers spent as much time fixing old shoes as they did making new ones.



← **Show image 5A-8: Antique cobbler's tools**

The shoemaker used many specialized tools for his trade. In early America, most shoes were made out of leather, which comes from the dried hide or skin of a cow. There were two parts to a shoe: the sole and the upper, both made from leather. The sole was the bottom of the shoe, and the upper was the top part of the shoe. Just like a dressmaker or tailor, the shoemaker would take measurements, cut the leather, and then use a needle and thread to sew the pieces together.



← **Show image 5A-9: Modern department store**

Making clothes, hats, and shoes was hard work. Farmers who could afford it were very happy to pay others—dressmakers, tailors, hatters, and cobblers—to do that work for them! Today it's much easier to purchase clothes. We can choose from a variety

of styles that are already sewn, rather than getting measured and waiting for weeks to get our new clothes. And we don't even have to go to four different tradespeople to get the clothes, hats, and shoes we wear. We can just go to one department store!

Discussing the Read-Aloud

15 minutes

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

If students have difficulty responding to questions, reread pertinent passages of the read-aloud and/or refer to specific images. If students give one-word answers and/or fail to use read-aloud or domain vocabulary in their responses, acknowledge correct responses by expanding students' responses using richer and more complex language. Ask students to answer in complete sentences by having them restate the question in their responses.

1. *Literal* Which tradespeople made clothes for women? (dressmaker and tailor) For men? (tailor)
2. *Literal* Which tradesperson made hats? (hatter)
3. *Literal* Which tradesperson made or fixed shoes? (cobbler)
4. *Inferential* Describe what a dressmaker did when a customer came to her shop and ordered a dress. (took measurements, offered a choice of fabrics and patterns, cut and sewed pieces together)
5. *Inferential* What was a dress pattern used for? (to show customers choice of styles; to cut the right shapes and sizes out of fabric)
6. *Inferential* Why was a measuring tape an important tool in making clothing? (to make sure that clothes would fit)
7. *Literal* What materials did a hatter use to make hats? (beaver skin, wool, camel fur, glue)
8. *Inferential* Why did cobblers often fix old shoes instead of making new shoes? (New shoes were expensive.)
9. *Literal* What material were shoes made out of? (leather)

[Please continue to model the *Think Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

I am going to ask a question. I will give you a minute to think about the question, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the question. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

10. *Evaluative Think Pair Share:* We learned that paying someone else to make new clothes was expensive. We also learned that because new shoes were expensive, people brought their old shoes to the cobbler to get them patched, or repaired. But people didn't usually bring their old clothes to the dressmaker or tailor to have them patched. Why not? (They could patch them at home because they knew how to sew clothes, but they didn't have the special tools to sew leather.)
11. After hearing today's read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these remaining questions.]

Word Work: Measure

5 minutes

1. In the read-aloud you heard, "The dressmaker would use a measuring tape to *measure* [a] woman's arms and legs, as well as her chest, neck, and waist [before cutting the fabric to make her dress]."
2. Say the word *measure* with me.
3. To measure means to figure out the size (the length, height, or weight) of something by comparing it to another object or by using a special tool.
4. I like to measure my height and my brother's to see who is taller.
5. Tell me an example of something you might like to measure. Use the word *measure* when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase students' responses: "I think I would like to measure _____."]
6. What is the word we've been talking about?

Use a *Making Choices* activity for follow-up. Directions: I am going to say some sentences. If you think the sentence describes a way to measure, say, “That is a way to measure.” If you think the sentence does not describe a way to measure, say, “That is not a way to measure.”

1. Joe looks at himself in a mirror and thinks he looks bigger than he did the day before. (That is not a way to measure.)
2. Mary uses a ruler to see how long her desk is. (That is a way to measure.)
3. My dad counts how many steps it takes for him to get from one end of the room to the other. (That is a way to measure.)
4. The baby puts the measuring tape in her mouth. (That is not a way to measure.)
5. Mom puts the apples on a scale at the grocery store to see how many pounds of apples she has. (That is a way to measure.)



Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day



Dressmakers, Tailors, Hatters, and Cobblers

5_B

Extensions

15 minutes

Know-Wonder-Learn Chart

Tell students that you will finish the Know-Wonder-Learn Chart with the information they have learned about spinners and weavers, as well as about the dressmaker, the tailor, the hatter, and the cobbler from today's read-aloud. Encourage students to share what each tradesperson does and what materials and tools they use. To review the process by which clothing was made in towns long ago, reread the information that students knew, wondered about, and learned.

On Stage

Tell students that they have now learned about six different tradespeople involved in making clothing. In order to review these six trades, tell students that they will sing a song and act out the work of each of these tradespeople.

Sing the following verse about the spinner to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell," modeling the hand movements noted in parentheses. Have students join you in singing the verse again, imitating your hand movements as well.

The spinner twists the thread, [Twist fingers, rubbing thumb against first two fingers.]

The spinner twists the thread,

Hi ho, who makes the clothes?

The spinner twists the thread.

Repeat with the following verses about the weaver, the dressmaker, the tailor, the hatter, and the cobbler. You may want to show the students the hand motions and have them practice before singing each verse together:

The weaver weaves the cloth . . . [Move left hand from left to right, and then right hand from right to left, as if throwing a shuttle across a loom.]

The dressmaker fits a dress . . . [Start with fingers of both hands together and pull apart to indicate imaginary measuring tape.]

The tailor sews the breeches . . . [Make sewing motion; laying one hand flat and holding imaginary needle in other, “poke” the palm with the needle.]

The hatter glues the brims . . . [Grab the front of an imaginary brim of a hat with both hands.]

The cobbler nails the shoes . . . [Hold imaginary nail in one hand and imaginary hammer in other, tapping the “nail.”]