



# *4-H Fabrics & Fashions*

## Consumer Education

Advanced Level (15-19 Years)

### **Catalog Shopping**

Before ordering any clothing from a catalog for the first time, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the company offer a complete garment description, including fiber content, country of origin, and care?
- Is there an 800 number you can call for additional information?
- What is the return policy?
- Does the catalog include information on sizing and how to measure?
- What are the shipping costs?
- Is there a detailed explanation of how to return an item?
- Is there a detailed explanation of the company's credit policy?
- What will be the shipping date?

#### ***Advantages of Shopping by Mail***

- Convenience of shopping at home at any hour.
- More control over amount of money spent.
- Can order garments not available in local market.
- Wide variety of garment styles and colors.
- Wide range of prices. When you become familiar with the catalog company and its sizes, you can shop with confidence.
- Can comparison shop in more than one catalog.

- Don't have to contend with bad weather, transportation, parking, crowded stores, and limited shopping hours.
- Many will accept orders on a toll free number and allow you to use a credit card.

#### ***Disadvantages to Catalog Shopping***

- Difficult to judge quality of fabric and workmanship.
- Fit may be a problem, since apparel sizes, especially for women, are not standardized.
- Can't see or feel the merchandise.
- Can't have the merchandise immediately.
- Merchandise may be out of stock or discontinued.
- Addition of postage and handling adds to advertised cost of the garment.
- You pay for returning unsatisfactory garment.

Since you are unable to handle and try on garments you order through the mail, it is important that you use other methods to evaluate garments before ordering them.

- Compare several catalogs and clothing ads for styles, color and cost.
- Carefully read the information about the garment.

- Study the photograph of the garment in the catalog. Do the plaids match? Check lengths and placement of details, such as buttons and pockets.
- Follow sizing information to determine what size to order.
- If no sizing information is offered, and you do not recognize the brand, use this general rule: Order the smaller size if the garment is more expensive, the larger size if it is less expensive.
- Check to see if there is a money back guarantee in case you are not satisfied with the garment.
- Be sure there is information on care, fiber content, and country of origin. (All of these are required by law.)
- Check fiber content and care to see if convenient for you.
- Understand the policy concerning payment and how to return.
- Beware of extremely low prices.

### ***Ordering***

When you have made the decision to place an order for clothing, be sure you keep a copy of the:

- Ad or page from the catalog with merchandise you are ordering circled.
- Order blank (which should include catalog address and telephone number).
- Check or money order, if used.

Never send cash. Always carefully double check to be sure you are ordering the garment in the desired size, style number, and color. Read the small print.

The Federal Trade Commission has established rulings related to ordering merchandise by mail.

- Merchandise must be sent by a specific date (within 30 days, if no date is given). Most companies offer to refund your

money if you don't receive merchandise by the specific date. Or you can choose to wait an additional 30 days.

- The company must refund your money within seven business days of cancellation.
- If the merchandise is charged to a credit card the charge must be removed within one billing cycle from the time you request the refund or cancellation.
- None of the above three rulings apply to telephone orders.
- If you receive unordered merchandise, you may consider it a gift.

### ***Returning***

If it is necessary to return a clothing item, follow directions and be sure to keep a return receipt. Inform the company if you want another garment or your money refunded. If the merchandise is damaged in shipping, contact the company about what to do.

### ***You're Responsibility***

When ordering clothing by mail or phone it is your responsibility to:

- Read information on how to place the order very carefully.
- Find out the policy on refunds/exchanges.
- Fill out the order form clearly and completely.
- State if you do not want a substitute.
- Keep a copy of the order.
- Examine the merchandise carefully after you receive it.
- Return the merchandise if you are not satisfied.