

Writing A Fashion Commentary

Purpose: To give information about the model and the outfit while making both sound great.

Ideas on developing a commentary

The commentary should give information about the member: interests, where from, other 4-H projects, years in 4-H, future plans, etc. Keep sentences short and easy to read, penmanship legible. Type or use the computer. Use questions and exclamations to give more variety to tone of voice. Read descriptions of clothes in magazines, as they are great for fun words and current style descriptions.

Give the inspiration, reason or occasion for which the outfit was planned. This could be the theme for the commentary. (Terry had the first football game of the fall in mind when she chose this autumn plaid. She'll be cheering!)

Use alliterations (words beginning with the same sound), such as a "flirty flounce" for a ruffle. Create an appealing mental picture with descriptive words. (Icy creamy tones of raspberry and lime...) Avoid the obvious or make it more interesting. Rather than saying "yellow dress," make it "summery" or "lemon". Rather than "It buttons up the front," say "buttons brighten the front," etc.

Use ACTION words as much as possible. (Buttons march, belts circle a waistline, a flaring hem swings, etc.) Tell the biggest problem you encountered in sewing the outfit, what new sewing technique you learned. Saying you put the sleeve in six times can encourage some of the audience who are less skilled. Add some humor, something amusing that happened while sewing. (In her rush to finish the dress, Sue put the zipper in upside down.)

If there are two parts to your outfit, such as a coat and dress, mention the outer layer first. As you complete your commentary, go over it to see where it could be made more cheerful, complimentary, or brighter. Read it aloud when completed. Does it flow smoothly?

Is your commentary too short, or too long for the allotted modeling time? 30 seconds, or approx. 75 words, is about right.

Suggestions for Practice

Go over the above suggestions at a project or club meeting, then break up in groups of two or three. Pick one person's outfit, even if it's jeans and a T-shirt, and write a fashion commentary that makes the outfit and model appealing. Model and commentator should take a few minutes to coordinate the commentary with the modeling. Read the commentary aloud while the person models.

Which is Better and Why?

"And here is Mary Jane Smith modeling a red, white and blue suit.

The cardigan jacket has a round collar, long sleeves and buttons down the front. The blue dress underneath has red pockets, a back zipper and features the ever-so-popular A-line silhouette. Mary Jane accessorized her outfit with navy shoes and purse. Thank you."

OR

"It's the 4th of July for Mary Jane Smith every time she wears this patriotic suit. She has a right to celebrate!

The Jaunty jacket sports shiny star buttons on the roaring red wool. What a great idea! The scraps from that jacket turn into patch pockets on the military blue dress. Mary Jane has 6 years of 4-H sewing and goods projects, but always finds a new challenges. She made this suit during a thunderstorm, finishing just before the electricity went off. Can you imagine how great this outfit will be at UCLA, where Mary Jane will be a freshman in the fall?"