Essential Terminology
For the Entertainment
Technician

Costume
A

Accessory
Object not essential in itself but adding to the appearance or effectiveness of the costume

Alter
Modify a pattern or garment to suit individual sizing or design preference

Alteration
Changes made to the fit of a garment or mockup

Applique
Pieces of fabric or trim attached to a background fabric in a decorative design

Arm Hole
See also: Armseye

Armseye
Opening in the body of a garment to accommodate an arm
Synonym: Arm Hole

Assistant Costume Designer
Person who assists the Costume Designer

B

Backing
Generally a quilting term that defines the fabric used as the back layer of the quilt. Can also be used to describe the layer of fabric used inside a piece of wearable-art

Ballpoint Needle
Rounded-point needle designed to penetrate knit fabrics without nicking or damaging the fabric

Basting
Large or long temporary stitch holding a hem or seam in place
Synonym: Tacking
Batting
Unspun cotton, wool or other fiber that has volume used to create loft between two pieces of fabric

Belt Pack
See also: Mic Pack

Bias
Stretchiest part on the fabric that runs diagonally to the straight grain of the fabric

Bias Tape
Strips of fabric cut on the bias

Binding
Strips of fabric that finish the edge of the seam

Blind Hem Stitch
Hand or machine stitch that is not meant to be seen on the right side of the garment

Block
Block is the individual unit used in a quilt top or wearable art

Blocking
Technique for stretching, easing, and redistributing stitches in a finished piece of knitting, crochet, or felt

Bobbin
1) Cylinder on which thread is wound; 2) Part of the sewing machine that holds the lower thread

Bobbin Case
Part of the sewing machine into which the bobbin is inserted

Bodice
Part of a garment which covers the upper part of the body

Body Block
See also: Dress Form

eSET: Costume
Bolt
Fabric sold or stored on a tubular roll or a rectangular form

Bonding
Fusing of two fabrics
Synonym: Fuse, Heat Sealing

Bone
See also: Stay

Boning
Stays inserted into stitched channels inside a garment creating stiffness

Button
Object sewn onto fabric that fits through a hole or loop or may be used as ornamentation

Buttonhole
Bound slit in the fabric to allow the passage of a button for closure

C

Casing
Fabric envelope for encasing elastic, a drawstring, or similar material, usually along a waistline, cuff, hem

Changing Booth
Space for quick changes of costume, usually temporary in nature
Synonym: Quick Change Booth

Closure
Anything that is used to close up a costume, such as hooks & bars, zippers, buttons or snaps

Clothes Pin
Wooden or plastic clamp with a spring or fork
Synonym: C47

Construction Stitching
Sewing, such as seams and darts, that shapes and holds a garment together
Cording
Twisted or woven "rope" or "string" that is used in piping or to act as a drawstring

Corset
Woman's close-fitting boned supporting undergarment that extends from above or beneath the bust to the waist or below the hips

Costume
Clothing that is worn by anyone on the stage

Costume Construction
Building of a costume

Costume Craftsperson
Person who works with the costume designer to create custom jewelry, masks, armor, purses, shoes and hats

Costume Designer
Person who creates the designs for the costumes in a production

Costume Parade
Review of costumes onstage

Costume Plot
Paperwork to track the placement and movement of costumes during a production

Costume Shop
Department responsible for the construction or acquisition and fitting of costumes, also the location where this work takes place

Costume Shop Manager
Person who is responsible for the costume shop, including budgets and schedules, and supervises all costume employees Synonym: Head of Shop

Cotton
Natural plant fiber material

Covered Button
Button covered with coordinating or same fabric as the garment for which it is being made
Cross Grain
See also: Weft

Cross of Grain
See also: Weft

Cross-stitch
Hand stitches that cross to form an X

Cutter
Person that cuts pieces of fabric from a pattern

Cutting Line
Line upon which pattern pieces are cut

D

Darn
Mending a piece of fabric or garment with an interconnecting series of stitches

Dart
V shaped, tapered adjustment to a pattern to allow for more fullness in the bust area or less fullness

Decorative Patch
Embroidered design with a finished edge
Synonym: Emblem

Decorative Trim
Trim is any decorative item, ribbon, lace that is put on a garment or craft item that is being sewn
Synonym: Embellishment, Frou Frou, Trim

Double-stitch
See also: Reinforced Seam

Drape
Manner in which fabric hangs and falls from the body

Draper
Person who creates patterns for costumes based on designer's renderings, and performer's measurements

**eSET: Costume**
Dress Dummy
See also: Dress Form

Dress Form
Body shaped mannequin on which a garment or pattern can be draped or fitted
Synonym: Body Block, Dress Dummy, Mannequin

Dress Shield
Crescent shaped pad located in the armseye

Dresser
Person who assists the performer with costumes

Dust Mask
Protective filtering facepiece to prevent breathing air born particles
Synonym: Filtering Facepiece, Particle Mask

Dye Room
Ventilated facility for dyeing and painting of fabrics

Embellishment
Design elements beyond the basic construction of a garment

Emblem
See also: Decorative Patch

Embroidery Frame
Device that holds the fabric taut during the embroidery process
Synonym: Embroidery Hoop

Embroidery Hoop
See also: Embroidery Frame

Eye
Enclosure part of a fastening system that receives a hook to complete the attachment
Facing
Fabric sewn on the raw edge of a garment piece that is turned under and serves as a finish for the edge

Fall
See also: Hairpiece

Fashion Fabric
Outer fabric in a garment

Feed Dog
"Teeth" under the plate on the sewing machine that move fabric as it is sewn

Felt
Nonwoven fabric made from wool or fur matted together by heat, moisture, and pressure

Fiberfill
Fluffy stranded materials used for filling or padding

Filtering Facepiece
See also: Dust Mask

Finger Pressing
Opening a seam with your hands and pressing or rubbing the seam open with your fingers

Finishing
Final processes done to complete the garment

Fitting
Process of customizing and adjusting the garment to the shape and size of the performer

Flat Lining
Process of lining a garment where the seam allowances are not hidden

Fold Line
Using a fold in the fabric to double a pattern piece
Foot
Piece of the sewing machine that presses down on the fabric as it is moved by the feed dogs below

Foundation Garment
Undergarments that create a silhouette for the outer garment

French Seam
Seam which is completely enclosed

Fuse
See also: Bonding

Fusible
See also: Fusible Web

Fusible Web
Characteristic of being able to be ironed on due to a heat-activated adhesive

G

Garment
Article of clothing

Garter
Loop of elastic material sometimes encased in fabric to hold up sleeve or stocking

Garter Belt
Undergarment with attachments for stockings

Gather
Collecting a piece of fabric into a series of folds to create fullness

Give
Degree of elasticity in a fabric or thread

Glue Gun
See also: Hot-melt Glue Gun

eSET: Costume
**Grading**
Trimming each seam allowance to a different width to reduce bulk

**Grain**
See also: Warp

**Gusset**
Bit of fabric sewn into a seam line to let a garment out or provide strength

**H**

**Hair & Makeup Department**
Personnel who execute hairstyles, makeup and prosthetics

**Hair & Makeup Designer**
Person who designs wigs, hair styles and makeup for performers

**Hairpiece**
Any additional arrangement of hair worn by the performer
Synonym: Fall, Queue, Rug, Switch, Toupee, Wig

**Ham**
Tightly stuffed, ham-shaped item that is used to support and provide the proper molding when pressing curved seams

**Hand Embroidery**
Decorative stitching created with manual embroidery tools

**Hand Steamer**
See also: Steamer

**Hand-sewing Needles**
Needles that have the eye opposite the point

**Hat Block**
See also: Head Block

**Hat Maker**
See also: Milliner

**Head Block**
Form to hold a hat during construction
Synonym: Hat Block

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**eSET: Costume**
Head of Shop
    See also: Costume Shop Manager

Head of Wardrobe
    Person who supervises the dressers, and wardrobe maintenance
    Synonym: Wardrobe Head, Wardrobe Master, Wardrobe Mistress

Headset
    Headpiece understructure

Heat Sealing
    See also: Bonding

Hem
    Fabric turned up on lower edge of a garment or sleeve to provide a finished edge

Hook & Eye Closure
    Pairing of metal hook and a loop made of fabric or metal
    Synonym: Hook & Eye

Hook & Loop
    Fabric-like fastener that is designed to interlock
    Synonym: Velcro®

Hose
    See also: Hosiery, Nylon Stockings

Hosiery
    Knitted coverings worn on feet and legs
    Synonym: Hose

Hot-melt Glue Gun
    Tool that melts sticks of thermally activated adhesive
    Synonym: Glue Gun

I

Inseam
    Seam inside the leg of pants that runs from the crotch to the hem
Interfacing
Fabric used between layers of fabric to provide stabilization and form; usually used in collars, cuffs, plackets, some waistbands and pockets, and facings

Interlining
Layer of fabric added between the lining and the fashion fabric for warmth, comfort or structure

Inventory
See also: Stash

Iron
Electrical appliance with a heated flat metal bottom See also: Press

Iron-on
See also: Fusible Web

Ironing Board
Specific shaped narrow padded surface for pressing garments

Ironing Table
Padded surface for pressing lengths of fabric

J

Jewelry
Ornaments worn on a person or attached to a garment

K

Knit Fabrics
Fabrics created by interlacing yarn or thread in a series of connected loops with needles
L

**Laundry Room**
Facility with appliances for cleaning and dying costumes

**Leather**
Animal skin with the hair removed and treated to prevent decay

**Lengthwise Grain**
See also: Warp

**Linen**
Yarn or fabric made from flax fibers

**Lining**
Pieced fabric that is used as the inside surface of a garment

**Loft**
Thickness of fabric, yarn, or batting

**Loom**
Machine or device for weaving thread or yarn into textiles

M

**Machine Embroidery**
Decorative stitching created by using a sewing machine

**Machine-stitching**
Sewing that is done by a machine

**Makeup**
Materials such as cosmetics, facial hair, and prosthetics used to change the appearance of an actor

**Makeup Artist**
Person who designs and applies cosmetics and/or prosthetics to actors

**Man-made Fabrics**
Material made from synthetic fibers
**Mannequin**
See also: Dress Form

**Mask**
Covering to conceal or disguise the face

**Measurements**
Collection of performer physical dimensions

**Merrowing Machine**
See also: Serger

**Merrow®**
Trade name (Merrow®) See also: Overlock

**Mic Pack**
Pouch for wireless microphone battery and transmitter
Synonym: Belt Pack

**Milliner**
Member of the costume crew whose responsibility is constructing hats and other headgear Synonym: Hat Maker

**Mock-up**
Test garment built of less expensive material than final costume

**Monogram**
Embroidered design composed of one or more letters, usually one's initials

**N**

**Nap**
Fuzzy surface of fabric or leather that is usually directional in nature

**Natural Fibers**
Materials derived from an animal, plant or mineral

**Neckwear**
Items worn around the neck by a performer such as a tie, ascot or scarf
**Needle**  
A small sharp pointed implement used for sewing with an eye or hole at one end

**Needle Eye**  
Thread hole of the needle

**Notch**  
V-shaped cut in pieces of a garment which indicate where the seams should be matched for sewing

**Notion**  
Items used in the completion of a garment other than the fabric and sewing machine

**Nylon Fabric**  
Cloth or yarn made from elastic synthetic polyamide

**Nylon Stockings**  
Sheer synthetic hosiery from the toes to the thigh  
Synonym: Hose, Nylons, Stockings

**Nylons**  
See also: Nylon Stockings

**O**

**Overcasting**  
See also: Overlock

**Overlock**  
Machine stitching done over a seam to prevent unraveling  
Synonym: Merrow®, Overcasting, Overstitching, Serge

**Overstitching**  
See also: Overlock
**P**

**Painter/Dyer**
Member of the costume crew whose responsibility is dying and painting raw fabric for the construction of costumes, and finished costumes that need further decoration or distressing More...

**Pantyhose**
Sheer synthetic hosiery that cover from the toes to the waist

**Particle Mask**
See also: Dust Mask

**Patch**
Piece of material affixed to a garment used to reinforce or repair fabric; also a badge or insignia

**Pattern Layout**
Efficient arrangement of pattern pieces on a length of fabric

**Pattern Weight**
Object used to hold paper patterns in place during cutting

**Pile**
Raised yarns or fibers designed to stand away from the surface of the fabric

**Pin**
Thin cylinder of metal with a sharp point at one end and a small head at the other

**Pin Tuck**
Narrow, sewn-down pleats, usually on the front of a garment

**Pinking Shears**
Scissor-like tool with sawtooth cutting edge blades

**Pinning**
1) To fasten a pattern piece to fabric for cutting; 2) Fitting a garment

**eSET: Costume**
**Piping**  
A cord covered with bias fabric, that can be sewn into seams for a decorative effect or used to edge hems

**Placket**  
Piece of fabric that reinforces the split or overlap in a garment along a closure

**Pleat**  
Flat fold in fabric made by doubling material over itself and held in place

**Pleather**  
See also: Vinyl

**Polyester**  
Low stretch synthetic polymer fabric

**Practice Clothes**  
See also: Rehearsal Clothes

**Preshrunk**  
Fabric washed before construction to maintain size of final garment  
Synonym: Prewashed

**Press**  
Flatten or shape a garment or piece of fabric with heat or steam  
Synonym: Iron

**Presser**  
Member of the costume crew whose job it is to iron and press costumes as they are being constructed

**Presser Foot**  
Part of the sewing machine that holds the fabric in place as it is being stitched

**Prewashed**  
See also: Preshrunk

**Pucker**  
To gather fabric into small wrinkles or folds

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**eSET: Costume**
**Pulled Costume**
Garment that is selected from inventory

**Q**

**QC**
See also: Quick Change

**Queue**
See also: Hairpiece

**Quick Change**
Rapid costume switch during a performance
Synonym: QC

**Quick Change Booth**
See also: Changing Booth

**Quilt**
To pad and stitch layers of fabric

**R**

**Raw Edge**
Edge of woven fabric that has been cut but not treated for unraveling
Synonym: Unfinished Edge

**Rayon**
Silk-like fabric made from wood pulp

**Rehearsal Clothes**
Garments used by the performers that have similar characteristics as the costumes that they will be wearing in the production
Synonym: Practice Clothes, Tech Rehearsal Clothes

**Reinforced Seam**
Two pieces of fabric joined by multiple rows of stitching
Synonym: Double-stitch, Triple-stitch
Respirator
Safety equipment worn over the mouth, nose and/or face for preventing inhalation of hazardous fumes and particles; note: training is required

Right Side
Side of the fabric that carries the design or nap

Rotary Cutter
Round cutting blade with a handle

Roving
See also: Unspun Wool

Ruff
Large round collar of pleated muslin or linen worn by men and women of the late 16th and early 17th centuries

Rug
See also: Hairpiece

Running Yards
Linear measurement of material

S

Safety Pins
Sprung pin with a sheathed clasp

Seam
Line of junction formed by joining two pieces of material

Seam Allowance
The fabric between the edge of the fabric and the line of stitching

Seam Ripping
Removing the stitching of a seam

Self-fabric
Additional uses of the fashion fabric within the same garment or ensemble

Selvage
See also: Selvage Edge

eSET: Costume
**Selvage Edge**
Finished edges of the manufactured length of fabric
Synonym: Selvage

**Separating Zipper**
Zipper that is designed to come completely apart when unzipped

**Serge**
See also: Overlock

**Serger**
Sewing machine that stitches the seam, encases the raw edge with thread, and cuts off excess fabric at the same time
Synonym: Merrowing Machine

**Serging**
Threads that are stitched over a seam to prevent unraveling

**Sewing Machine**
Mechanical device that stitches

**Shank Button**
Button with a loop on the underside that provides a small amount of space in between the garment and the button

**Sharp Needle**
Specialty hand needle that is short and sharp

**Shears**
Heavy duty scissors

**Sheer Fabric**
Translucent material

**Shop**
See also: Work Space

**Shopper**
Person who, under the direction of designer and/or shop manager, purchases all necessary supplies to construct the costumes
Silk
Fabric or yarn made of lustrous tough elastic fiber produced from silkworm cocoons

Sizing
Starch or glue applied to stiffen and/or fill the fabric

Slit
Narrow cut or open seam

Smocking
Tightly gathered section of material, usually elasticized for comfort and decoratively stitched

Snard
A broken piece of the end of a see-thru ruler that is still entirely good for measuring small distances

Snips
Small scissors used to trim threads

Specialty Threads
Threads designed for effects such as shine, glitter, iridescence or thickness

Spool
Core on which thread is wound

Stability
Degree to which a fabric resists pulling out of shape

Stabilizer
Woven or nonwoven material used beneath embroidered fabric to provide assist in keeping the fabric from stretching out of shape

Stash
Collection of fabric or yarn Synonym: Inventory

Stay
Stiff item inserted into garment to hold a flat shape Synonym: Bone
**Stay Tape**
Tape added to a garment within the seam or at the hem to keep the garment from stretching out of shape

**Steam Iron**
Iron that heats water into steam

**Steamer**
Appliance that delivers steam to a hand wand
Synonym: Hand Steamer

**Stitch in the Ditch**
Sew on top of a finished seam line from the top side of the garment. The stitch goes through all layers and holds them together.

**Stitch Length**
The number of stitches per inch

**Stitch Line**
A line drawn on a cut piece of fabric that indicates where a garment should be stitched together

**Stitch Witchery ®**
Trade name (Dritz®) See also: Fusible Web

**Stitcher**
Person who sews garments together after the pattern pieces are cut

**Stock Costumes**
Finished clothes in the inventory of the costume shop

**Stockings**
See also: Nylon Stockings

**Straight Grain**
See also: Warp

**Straight of Grain**
See also: Warp

**Straight Stitch**
Sewing in single forward stitches
Swatch
A sample strip cut from a piece of fabric

Switch
See also: Hairpiece

T

Tacking
See also: Basting

Tailor
Person responsible for final fitting and construction of men’s garments and/or fitted suits

Tape
See also: Tape Measure

Tape Measure
Flexible tape for taking body measurements
Synonym: Tape

Tech Rehearsal Clothes
See also: Rehearsal Clothes

Tension
Tautness of stitches on a sewing machine

Test Stitch
Stitch applied to a scrap of the fashion fabric to test the machine stitch

Thimble
Bucket shaped protective coverings for finger tips when doing hand sewing

Thread
Fine cord of natural or synthetic material with two or more strands twisted together and used for stitching

Tights
Opaque hosiery that covers from the feet or ankles to the waist
**Top stitch**
Stitch visible on the surface of the garment

**Toupee**
See also: Hairpiece

**Tracing paper**
Paper coated on one side with a brightly colored waxy substance

**Tracing wheel**
Wheel with handle that is used with tracing paper

**Trim**
Act of cutting excess seam allowances or fabric

**Triple-stitch**
See also: Reinforced Seam

**Tuck**
A flattened pleat or fold stitched into place

**U**

**Underlay Stitch**
Stabilizing stitching for centering, edging or zigzagging the design area of an embroidery stitch

**Underlining**
Layer of fabric basted directly to the wrong side of the fashion fabric to enhance the look and performance of the garment

**Understitch**
Line of stitching along the edge of a facing or undercollar to keep it from rolling to the outside

**Unfinished Edge**
See also: Raw Edge

**Unspun Wool**
Wool used for felting projects Synonym: Roving
V

Velcro®
   Trade name (VELCRO®) See also: Hook & Loop

View
   Illustrated variations of a garment's construction from a commercial pattern

Vinyl
   Polymer coated fabric
   Synonym: Pleather

W

Walking Foot
   Sewing machine attachment that moves thick fabrics past the needle

Wardrobe
   Department responsible for the organization and maintenance of finished costumes during the run of the show

Wardrobe Head
   See also: Head of Wardrobe

Wardrobe Maintenance
   Cleaning and repair of costumes during the run of a production

Wardrobe Master
   See also: Head of Wardrobe

Wardrobe Mistress
   See also: Head of Wardrobe

Wardrobe Supervisor
   Person who oversees the costumes during the run of a production

Warp
   Threads running the length of a woven fabric with little or no stretch
   Synonym: Grain, Lengthwise Grain, Straight Grain, Straight of Grain

eSET: Costume
**Weave**
Pattern resulting from the method of interlacing the threads in a woven fabric

**Weft**
Threads running at right angles (perpendicular) to the length of a woven fabric with stretch or give
Synonym: Cross Grain, Cross of Grain

**Welt**
Covered seam at the raw edges of a pocket or other opening

**Wig**
Hair piece that covers the majority of a performer's head

**Wig Form**
Model of the head to hold a wig during construction, styling or storage

**Wig Maker**
Person who creates wigs for use in a production

**Wig Master**
Person who acquires and styles wigs and hairpieces and often is in charge of maintaining them through the run of a production

**Wig Stylist**
Person responsible for the care and maintenance of wigs

**Wonder-Under®**
Trade name (Pellon®) See also: Fusible Web

**Wool**
Fiber made from sheep hair

**Work Space**
Any area where work such as stitching, dyeing, wig making, millinery or crafts can be completed
Synonym: Shop

**Woven Fabrics**
Cloth made by interlacing strands of yarn usually made on a loom by interlacing warp and weft threads

**eSET: Costume**
Wrong Side
Side of the fabric upon which there is no design or nap

Y

Yardage
Quantity of materials measured in running yards

Yarn
Continuous often plied strand composed of natural and/or synthetic fibers or filaments used in weaving and knitting to form cloth

Z

Zig Zag
Sawtooth line of stitches

Zipper
Fastener consisting of two rows of teeth on strips drawn together by a sliding piece