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ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THE
ENTERTAINMENT TECHNICIAN

**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

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

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

E**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

F

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

Synonym: Fusible, Iron-On, Stitch Witchery ® , Wonder-Under®

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

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

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 dyeing 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

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

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

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

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

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