



PILLOWS, PILLOWS, PILLOWS !

Teaching Outline

Objectives

1. To inform individuals of trends in styles, materials and ways of using pillows throughout the home.
2. To use good decision-making skills in selecting and using pillows to create an attractive updated home decor that meets expectations for the time and money spent.
3. To develop awareness of good consumer practices when shopping for decorative and functional pillows.
4. To provide individuals with quick and easy ideas for making pillows at moderate cost.

Before the Meeting

1. Review the materials and plan your presentation. Determine which topics and activities you wish to emphasize.
2. Assemble any teaching supplies that you need for your lesson.
 - A. Look for magazine pictures that help illustrate points in the lesson. Specialty magazines, such as Better Homes & Gardens, Window & Wall, Home, Southern Living and other shelter publications are good sources for information and pictures showing current styling for various types of pillows. Fabric shops and home decorating departments often have publications focusing on pillows.
 - B. Find examples of different pillow styles and how they are used throughout the home. Ask each member to bring a interesting pillow or idea using pillows that they would be willing to discuss with other members.

Locate examples that show creative use of fringe or decorative items (buttons, tassels, etc.

Creative styling examples could include such items as:

1. An “envelope” cover with a pointed flap folded over the top
2. Flange pillows
3. Butterfly shape (pillow tied around middle with large decorative cords and corners extending as butterfly “wings”)
4. Neckrolls
5. Knife-edge with fringe or tassels
6. No-sew pillow using square of decorative fabric or scarf and tied
7. No-sew pillow using 2 large napkins fitted over pillow form and tied at corners

Other types of examples that could be used to illustrate lesson information include:

1. Different types of fringe and tassels
2. Decorative buttons
3. Box cushions for dining chairs
4. Cushions for outdoor furniture

C. Slides or posters that you would like to use to supplement your lesson.

Materials Provided:

- For Leaders:
 - Consumer Decisions For Buying Pillows (Fact Sheet 1)
 - Selecting Decorative Pillows (Fact Sheet 2)
 - Selecting Bed Pillows (Fact Sheet 3)
 - Quick and Easy Pillows (Fact Sheet 4)
 - Pillows, Pillows, Pillows! Teaching Outline
 - Pillows, Pillows, Pillows! Evaluation
- For Members:
 - Consumer Decisions For Buying Pillows (Fact Sheet 1)
 - Selecting Decorative Pillows (Fact Sheet 2)
 - (Other fact sheets optional)

-- Lesson Outline --

Interest Builder

- A. Encourage members to share any educational experiences or tips that they have had when selecting pillows for their own home. What did they learn from their experience? What advice would they give to others?
- B. What do members look for when selecting comfortable bed pillows? What density or firmness do they prefer? What fillings do they prefer? Do they sleep well using pillows at a motel or hotel? Why or why not?

Introduction

Pillows come in all shapes and sizes to add color, texture and a finishing touch to a decorating plan. They help to carry out a theme for the room and add beauty and unity to a room through repetition of color and pattern. A pillow provides a bright accent color to add life to a dull room. It can also furnish an unexpected or humorous design for a touch of whimsy or surprise.

Some pillows are merely decorative while others may be primarily for comfort. Whether you're shopping for decorative pillows for the sofa, floor pillows to expand seating or bed pillows that are comfortable for sleeping, you'll want to get the best buy for your money. To do this, it's wise to think through a plan and to be aware of quality as you shop. You may also want to consider other alternatives, such as making pillows yourself. If you're on a busy schedule with limited time or if

you have limited sewing skills, don't worry. There are fashionable make-it-yourself styles using low-sew and no-sew skills. Or look for someone to custom sew your pillows in just the color, pattern and style you want.

Decorative pillows provide a quick way to update your home in the latest colors and design trends. Unusual colors can be added to your room without as large a cost as for larger more expensive furnishings. To get the best value for your money, be informed on the current styles, colors, patterns, and materials used. To have the best use of them in your home, be aware of different ways of using pillows and the type of care recommended. Let's take a look at some of the considerations for selecting and using pillows.

Activities and Learning Experiences

(Review the information in this lesson outline and select those activities that will best suit your group.)

1. Pillows can be plain or fancy, simple or ornate, traditional or contemporary, ordinary or unique. Many have unusual treatments and feature trims, tassels, unusual designs from border fabrics and a mixture of fabrics in patchwork designs of various kinds. Colors and patterns follow fashion trends as well as the tried-and-true classics.

Current fabric patterns emphasis floral and nature designs, classical and Renaissance motifs and fossils, engravings and drawings from ancient times. Of course stripes and simple plaids in current colors, textured fabrics and subtle tone-on-tone patterns are good mixers with other patterns.

Fabrics include traditional fabrics such as closely woven cotton, textured linen, polyester, elegant silks and rayons. You'll also see damask, brocade, incandescent and faux suede examples. A browse-through at a furnishings fabric store can quickly update you on colors and patterns.

Activity/discussion: Show pictures of various styles of pillows along with any samples or pictures of fabrics that help to illustrate these trends. Discuss the types of rooms and decorating styles for which the various fabrics would be appropriate.

Don't forget to browse through the trims that are gaining renewed emphasis in decorating. Fabric supply stores have many examples of trims for home furnishings.

Discussion: Talk about the advantages and disadvantages of using trim. (Advantages could include adding interest, focus point, create one-of-a-kind treatment, coordinate with other items, opportunity for creativity, etc.

Disadvantages could include more time to create or make, difference in type of care recommended, could become too much pattern, adds to cost, etc.) Discuss importance of figuring costs and determining care requirements before an actual purchase is made.

2. As with any home decorating project, it's wise to take time to plan ahead before making pillow purchases. Then become better acquainted with what's available by looking at what's available

from various sources. Carry color samples and fabric/wallpaper swatches with you as you shop in order to check colors and patterns.

Activity: Discuss where to find information on trends and new products. Examples include...

1. *Shelter and home magazines*
2. *Stores*
3. *Newspaper articles and books*
4. *Catalogs (Spiegel, J. C. Penney, Sears, specialty)*
5. *Home tours*
6. *Television programs and set designs (HGTV, soap operas, etc.)*
7. *Electronic (web pages)*
8. *Your County Extension Office*

Discuss shopping options within your community and within reasonable traveling distance from your home. What types of stores are available? What other options are there?

Examples include...

- a) *Department stores...Dillard's, J. C. Penney, Sears, etc.*
- b) *Discount stores (mass merchandisers)...Wal-Mart, K-Mart*
- c) *Home supply/improvement...Home Depot, Lowe's*
- d) *Traditional catalogs*
- e) *Speciality catalogs*
- f) *Home shopping network*
- g) *Internet*
- h) *Custom treatment retailers...drapery shops, fabric shops often have people who will take custom pillow orders*
- i) *Design services*
- j) *Arts and crafts shows*
- k) *Art/Craft shops and galleries*

3. Retail stores and designers are showing many options in materials, styling, colors and features for both decorative and functional pillows. When shopping for them, consider both function and the styling effect desired.

Activity/discussion: Show pictures or examples of some of the different types of pillows that are available. Discuss the various styling features and purchasing considerations for both decorative and bed pillows. Could any of the decorative pillows be made easily at home?

4. Discuss guidelines that should be considered when updating a home using home accessories such as pillows.

Discussion ideas could include:

Type of use expected considering location, family members, activities in the area, etc.

What design factors should be considered? Why?

How important is fashion to you?

How important a factor is type of care recommended?

5. Before you buy, be sure that you have followed good consumer practices. It's a good idea to check styles, quality and prices from at least three different sources. Analyze all hang tags and product information. Be sure you are not swayed by unimportant information. For instance, what does the information actually say? What is not included? Ask questions.
Activity: Have several catalogs showing information about various pillows. Discuss what draws their attention to the product shown and/or described. How much information is actually given about the product. Do they feel that enough information is given that they would be interested in buying the product? Why or why not? What additional information would they like to have?
6. Show slides, if desired, and discuss the main points brought out by the pictures shown.
7. Show examples of pillows that have been sewn. Discuss methods of making pillows and provide hints for styling and shortcuts to sewing. Include ideas and demonstrate a few examples of quick and easy pillows using quick-sew and no-sew methods.
Activity/Discussion: Ask participants to bring a decorative pillow or a picture of a pillow that they particularly like. Encourage them to show the pillow or picture to the other members and describe what features they like about it (creative styling, interesting use of fringe, good use of remnants from another project, soft and comfortable to use, a needlework top that was made into a pillow, etc.) If they made the pillow themselves, did they have any problems with it or have any hints to give others who might be making pillows.
8. Review the main ideas within the lesson. Ask participants to complete and return an evaluation.

Other Optional Activities

1. Ask participants to tell of a room or area in their own home where they would like to change or update through pillows. What ideas do they have for styles, colors, patterns, materials (filling or fabric selection and care) or use of pillows? Why?
2. Invite an interior designer or retailer (home furnishings fabric store; home furnishings and bedding departments of department store; furniture store featuring pillows; linen, bed and bath shop or other related retail business) to talk about trends in both decorative and functional pillows. Are these trends popular and readily available in your shopping area?
3. Conduct a tour of new homes or a designer's showcase home and particularly notice how pillows are used as finishing touches in various rooms. Notice the styles, colors, fabrics and ways they are shown. Be alert to how colors and patterns are combined within a room, unusual pillow treatments, and how these ideas help to carry out the theme of the room. Ideas for discussion questions include:
 - What new ideas did you notice?
 - Can some of these ideas be adapted for use in your home?

- What pillow ideas did you find that you particularly like? Why?
 - What ideas didn't you like as well? Why not?
4. Make arrangements at a department store or interior design shop to have someone talk to your group about pillows (bed and decorative types). Talk with the speaker ahead of time to suggest topics of special interest to the group (trends, new products, pricing, recommended care, etc.) Ask them what advice and types of assistance they give to customers who are selecting pillows. Show examples of decorative pillows with different types of fillings and check care labels on various styles. Allow members an opportunity to feel the "give" in different fillings and styles of bed pillows and discuss their preferences.

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Pillows, Pillows, Pillows Teaching Guide
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