

Slides 5.8: Sewing On a Button

Slide outline for Lesson 5.8, one day, twelve slides. Slide 1 says out loud that this is a life skill lesson, and it should stay on the screen while you say it. The thrifted shirt with the missing button does the introduction for you.

Slide 1: This is a life skill lesson

- Lesson 5.8
- A button falls off a shirt, a coat, or a pair of work pants
- The garment goes in a drawer or in the trash
- Four minutes of work saves it, and today everybody in this room learns those four minutes Image: a shirt on a hanger with one button missing and a loose thread where it used to be.

Slide 2: Do now

- Have you ever had a button come off something?
- Write what the item was and what happened to it after
- If it never happened to you, write about somebody in your house
- Three minutes Image: a single loose button lying on a table next to a shirt cuff. Notes: Debrief into three columns on the board: fixed, still in a drawer, thrown out. Count them.

Slide 3: Eighteen dollars against four cents

- This shirt costs about eighteen dollars to replace
- This button costs about four cents
- The repair takes four minutes
- This is the most useful forty minutes in the unit Image: a shirt with a price tag reading \$18 next to a single button with a tag reading \$0.04. Notes: *[Sal: your prices. Sew the button on in front of the class at the end of Step 1, in about ninety seconds, and hold up the closed shirt.]*

Slide 4: Step 1 and 2, position and anchor

1. Find the position: line the button up with the buttonhole it has to reach. The old thread leaves a mark. Mark it with chalk.
2. Knot the thread, come up at the mark, and take one small anchor stitch there
 - The anchor stops the knot from popping through on the first pull Image: a shirt front with a buttonhole on one side and a chalk X across from it, then two tiny stitches at the X with no button yet.

Slide 5: Step 3 and 4, the button and the toothpick

3. Put the button on the needle and slide it down to the cloth
4. Lay a toothpick across the top of the button, between the holes, and sew over it

- The toothpick is what makes the shank. Do not skip it. Image: a button lying flat on cloth with a toothpick resting across its middle between the holes.

Slide 6: Step 5, five or six passes

- Two-hole button: straight across, the same two holes every time
- Four-hole button: two parallel bars, or a cross. Pick one and keep it the same.
- Five or six passes is plenty. Fifteen makes a lumpy mess that fills the buttonhole. Image: a four-hole button with two parallel thread bars, and beside it a four-hole button with an X of thread.

Slide 7: Step 6 and 7, pull the toothpick and wrap

6. Pull the toothpick out. Lift the button. You should see loose thread underneath.
 7. Bring the needle up between the button and the cloth and wind the thread around those loose threads three or four times, snug
- That little column is the shank Image: a lifted button with thread wound in a tight column between the button and the cloth.

Slide 8: Why a button needs a shank

- The buttonhole side of the garment is a whole layer of fabric
- That layer has to slide underneath the button
- A button sewn flat has no room for it, so the garment will not close, or the thread tears out Image: a side view, one button sewn flat with an X over it, one button on a shank with the buttonhole layer sliding under it. Notes: This is the one idea students skip and the one that ruins the result. Show a flat one and let them try to close it.

Slide 9: Step 8 and 9, finish off and test

8. Needle to the back. Three tiny stitches in one place. Knot. Trim close.
 9. Tug it firmly. It should not move. Lift it. There should be slack under it.
- Ends on the back, always. An end trimmed on the front unravels in a week. Image: the back of the cloth showing three small stitches in one spot, with snips cutting the tail short.

Slide 10: The portfolio button

- Practice two buttons first: one two-hole, one four-hole
- Then the real one: one button, done well, on a clean scrap
- Thread the scrap through the card and fill in the four checks
- I tug every one of them Image: a portfolio card with a fabric scrap threaded through two slits and a sewn button facing out.

Slide 11: What the repair saves

Item	Replace	Button and thread	Saved
A shirt	\$18	\$0.05	\$17.95
A pair of pants	\$25	\$0.05	\$24.95

A winter coat	\$60	\$0.05	\$59.95
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- If every person here repaired one shirt instead of replacing it: _____ times \$17.95
Image: three garments with price tags next to a single button.

Slide 12: Why does anybody throw out a shirt over a button?

- Nobody in the house knows how
- There is no needle and thread in the house
- A new shirt is cheap and time is short
- Nobody ever told them it takes four minutes
- You now know. Go tell somebody. Image: a trash bin with a shirt in it and a needle and thread lying beside it, unused. Notes: Whip around the room out loud, one sentence each: “one thing I could fix at home now.” Cards go in the FACS folder, not home; they come back for the sampler in Lesson 5.11.