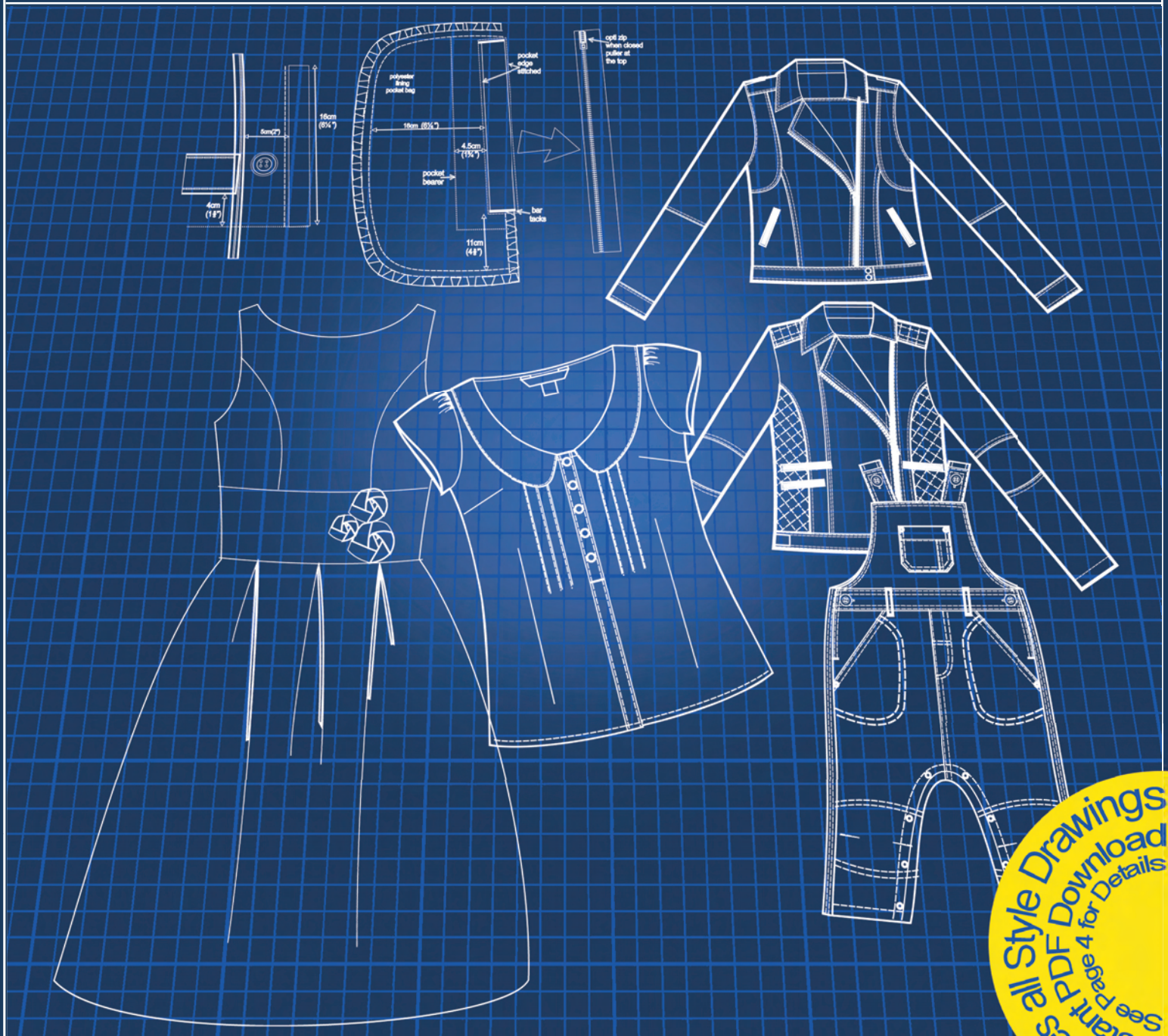


A PICTURE SPEAKS A THOUSAND WORDS



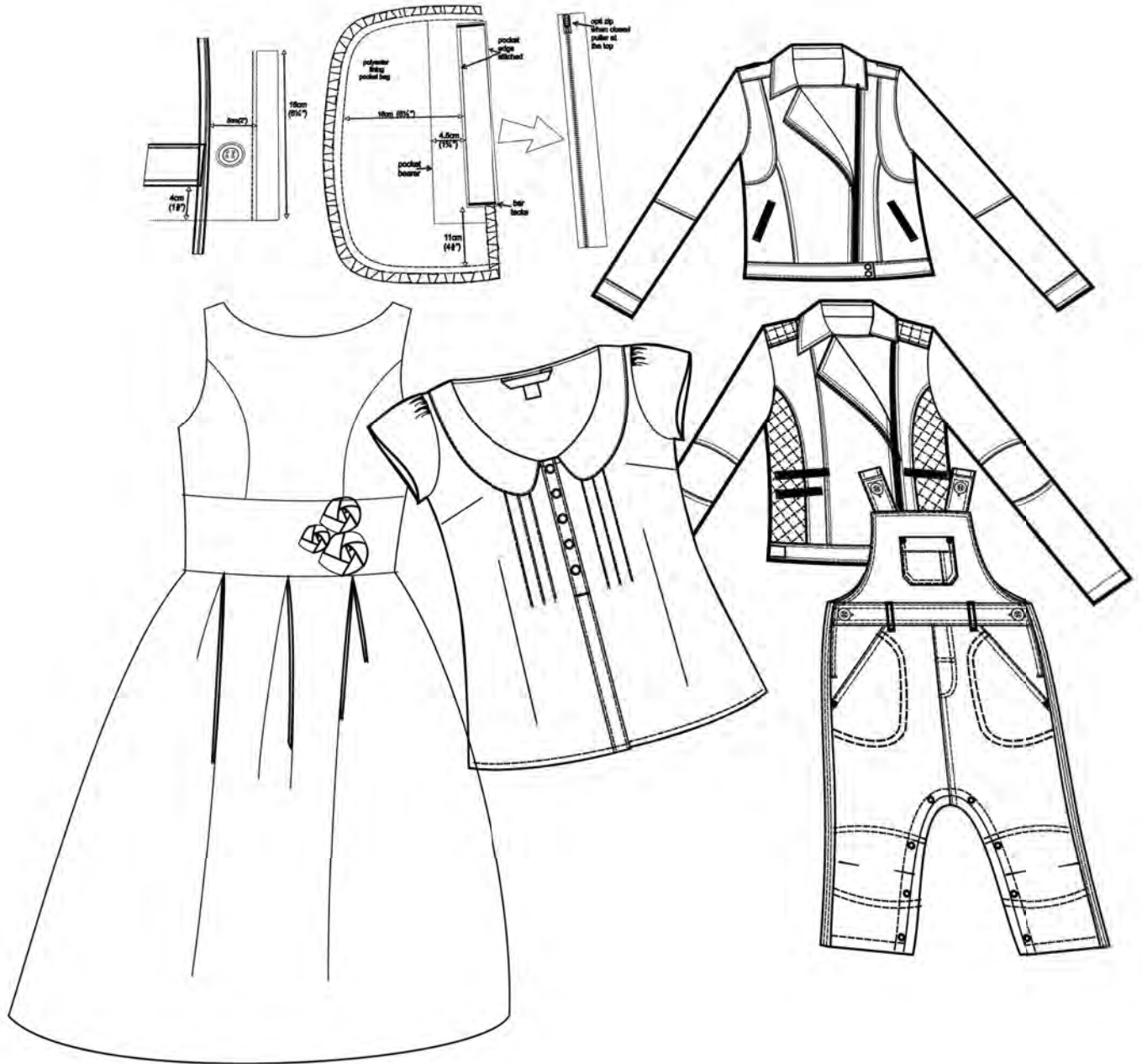
The most common issue between buyers and suppliers is the lack of communication and unclear specifications for products that leads to mistakes.

By Stanley Brahams

A DEFINITIVE APPROACH TO SPECIFICATION WRITING

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See Page 4 for Details

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How to Start a Fashion Company

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The team at Fashionindex for guiding me through the unknown territory of writing a first book.
My wife Andrea and family for their encouragement over the last three years.

stanley Brahams

DEDICATION

To my first grandchild Oliver.

If something is worth doing, then it is worth the time and effort to see it through to the end.

stanley Brahams

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	i
DEDICATION.....	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 - PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT	5
CHAPTER 2 - TEMPLATES.....	11
CHAPTER 3 - MOTOR BIKE.....	21
CHAPTER 4 - LADIES FASHION BIKE JACKET	27
CHAPTER 5 - DENIM JACKET	35
CHAPTER 6 – OVERCOAT.....	41
CHAPTER 7 - RAINCOAT.....	61
CHAPTER 8 - WATERPROOF ANORAK.....	89
CHAPTER 9 - LADIES FASHION TROUSER.....	103
CHAPTER 10 - CARGO PANTS.....	111
CHAPTER 11 - SHIRTDRESS	121
CHAPTER 12 - PARTY DRESS.....	127
CHAPTER 13 - BLOUSES	135
CHAPTER 14 - DENIM OVERALLS	143
CHAPTER 15 - TRAVEL BAG	151
SUMMARY.....	159
INDEX.....	161

INTRODUCTION

A Picture Speaks a Thousand Words

As manufacturing is now a global business, most companies place some or all production offshore, often in countries whose language is different from their own.

This book demonstrates the use of computer–aided design to create clearly detailed technical information for factories through the stages of design, development and manufacture, using graphic illustration wherever possible.

The specification is a critical document to be shared by all involved in the buying, selling, design and manufacture of the product. A style can be amended many times before the start of production, and specifications created by CAD can be quickly amended in minutes and circulated to everyone involved.

The book takes the reader through a variety of specifications step by step and explains the reasoning behind creating each page; a complete detailed specification may have up to 20 pages depending on the style and construction detail. This book is a practical, hands-on approach to the subject written with many years experience in the industry. The message is that good graphics is an international language, which helps to avoid misunderstandings; details that are in text can be lost in translation.

A recent quote from a source in China states that the most common issue between buyers and suppliers is the lack of communication and unclear specifications for products that leads to mistakes and that Quality Control is your most effective tool to getting the correct product when your specifications/expectations are clear.

This book is a definitive approach to specification writing for the clothing and related industries, demonstrating the advantages of using CAD.

This book will help those working in the industry and students starting textile courses to view specifications as an integral part of product development, quality assurance and manufacturing.

My purpose for writing the book

The idea for writing the book first came to me when the CEO of the company I worked for was showing customers around our department. Picking up a specification that I was working on, he commented. “A picture speaks a thousand words”. This prompted me to view the value of my work in a different light, because when compared to specifications I had seen from other companies I became convinced that my approach to writing specifications had much more to offer due to the positive feedback I was getting from customers and factories, and I was curious to see what books were available on the subject of writing specifications for the textile industry. To sum up, I found plenty of information on measuring and illustrating garments but that was the limit of what was available. I realized that I could offer much more substance to the subject.

I think that generally the subject of specifications has been overlooked. The reason may well be that very few people in the clothing industry have had the opportunity to work full-time as a Specification Technologist/Writer, since over a period of approximately 10 years I can only remember seeing four positions for specification writers advertised in the textile industry and I have held two of them. But there are thousands of Designers, Pattern Cutters and Technologists who write specifications as part of their many other responsibilities.

My wish is to share the methods I have discovered and challenges that I have come across over the years in my role as a Technologist.

Being responsible for a range from initial design to delivery to the customer is a very rewarding job especially when the products are flying out of your customer’s stores and catalogues and they turn to you to place large repeat orders wanted in their warehouse yesterday!

Below is a typical example of a job brief for a Technologist. Producing specifications is one of many responsibilities, but the specification is fundamental in linking all the parts of the job together.

- Maintain consistency of Quality standards on specific product.
- Work as part of a team.
- Assist in the update of quality standard documents.
- Monitor and achieve critical path dates from sample development to sign off for final production.
- Manage PRM files ensuring detail is correct at all times.
- **Develop new specs from design brief.**
- Ensure all product testing is complete and production wash codes are confirmed in line with the critical path.
- Ensure all shipment samples are in and approved ahead of shipment.
- Assist the technical manager on any production return issues.
- Travel to the warehouse on a regular basis to review and check product.
- Maintain the companies' established blocks and grade rules.
- Ensure changes in blocks are signed off with technical manager prior to rolling out to suppliers.
- Organize and prepare for fit meetings.
- Ensure comments sent to suppliers are clear and concise.
- Develop a good working relationship with the Design team and offshore suppliers.
- Keep the Technical Manager up to date of sealing status and flag any anticipated production delays.
- Travel as required to countries of production to check production and complete factory evaluations.

What is the purpose of writing a specification? The obvious answer is to provide information, but there are other advantages that might not be so obvious but are just as important to a business. Today companies are not only looking for the cheapest prices, but are also looking for reliable suppliers who have a good infrastructure as well as sound quality assurance procedures. Companies need to reduce the risks involved in buying from factories in other countries or that are several days travel from their head office, and it is common now to assess suppliers' procedures from design to the finished product being delivered to the warehouse.

That's why a specification is such an important document; it is a blue print of the product and should ideally show all style features, components inside and out, packaging and the methods of construction which demonstrates a professional approach enhancing your companies standing with its customers.

Changes and updates can be added and circulated to all concerned in minutes, all made possible by CAD and e-mail.

Why is such detail necessary? **As a general rule as little as possible should be left to interpretation by the factories because to do so is inviting problems.** It is far better to communicate information by picture/illustration wherever possible. Visual Imagery has always played an important part in our lives. Illustration is a common language and often the best way to convey ideas and information. It is not always practical or possible to send a sample for factories to copy. Speed and quick responses are essential today, especially in the fashion business, but accuracy is equally important.

Having worked successfully for several companies as a full-time Specification Writer and Technical Illustrator, I know what the key elements are to writing a good specification and how it benefits a company. Focusing entirely on specification writing gave me the opportunity to develop a structured approach to the job, which aims to comprehensively cover every aspect of the product and CAD is now becoming more widely accepted as a tool for specification writing.

If only we all spoke the same language life would be so much easier—how many times have we heard

that said? IKEA assembly instructions are an excellent example of using illustration instead of text. Any country in the world where their products are sold can follow the instructions; they don't need translating into different languages as they rely entirely on the illustrations.

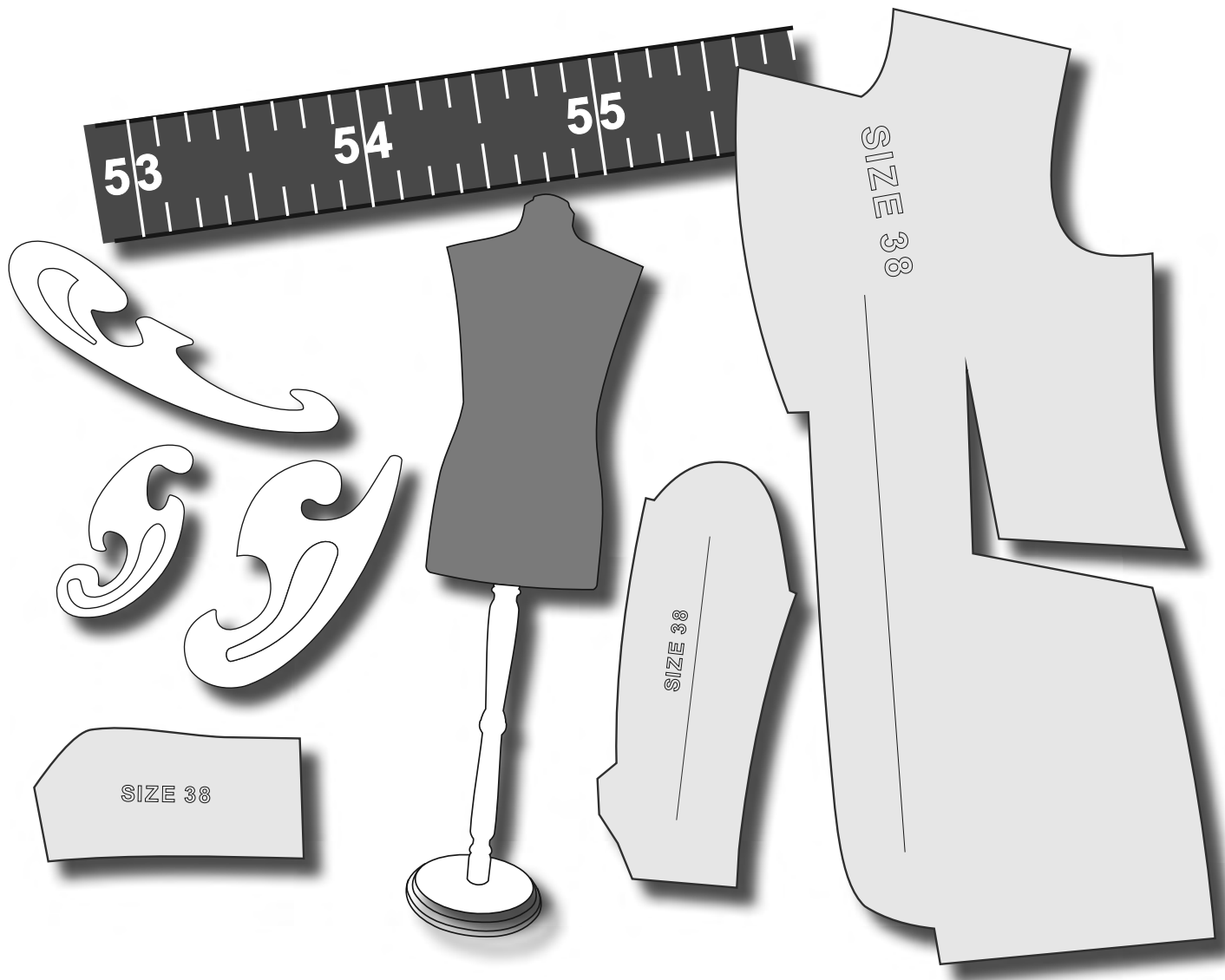
All companies write a specification for their products, but the amount of detail varies greatly depending on the type of business and the demands of their customers. Whatever market we are supplying every detail should be important. Of course the selling price is a limiting factor, but does it cost more to achieve good fit rather than a bad one, ensure pockets are the right size, correctly positioned and constructed, buttons and button holes are positioned correctly, and top stitching is the right width and color?

Designers and product developers work hard to achieve a well designed, aesthetically pleasing garment. So it is important to follow through and specify exactly what you want from the factories. Attention to detail can make the difference between success and failure and establishing customer loyalty.

The aim of this book is to show the advantages of using CAD and how to achieve the best results. Once a company uses CAD they become aware of the many possibilities open to them of illustrating detail that was not possible before with text and hand drawings. Simply put, companies understand the advantages of showing step by step and in detail what their requirements are as this can avoid costly mistakes.

Download all the style drawings for free at:

CHAPTER 1



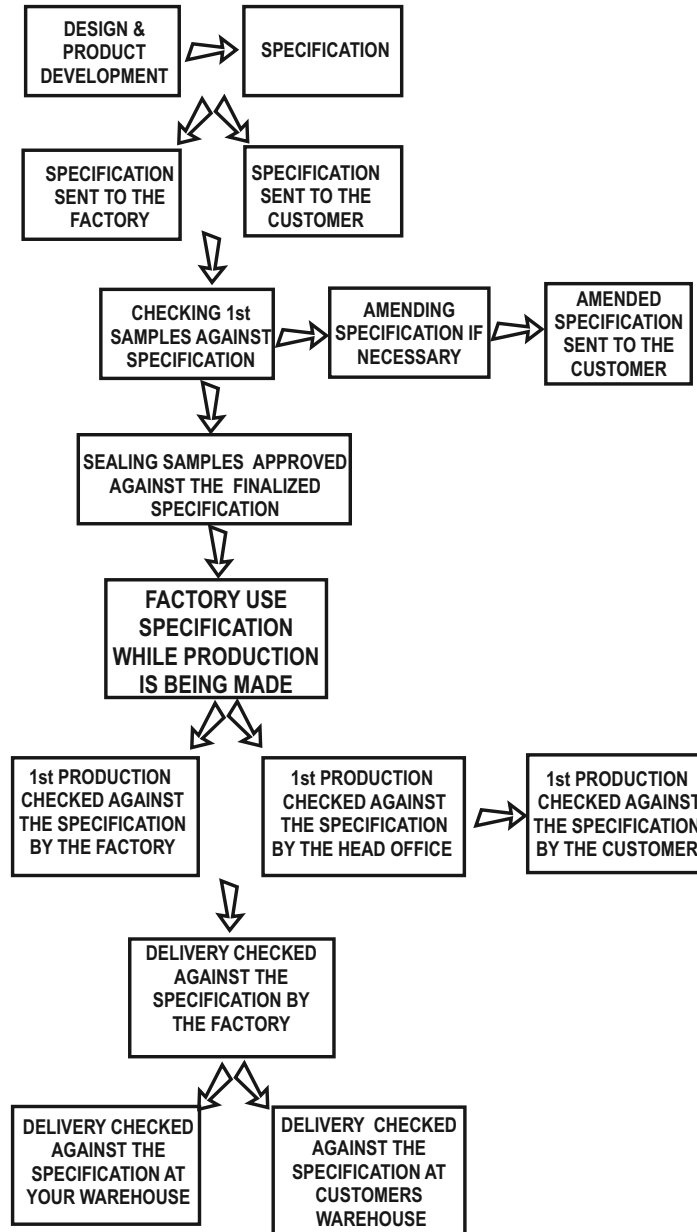
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Product development is now a continuous process in most companies, to keep ahead of the competition, improve quality and improve profit margins. Let's take a typical scenario of a company putting a range together. The range could consist of reworking previous styles and the introduction of new styles. The company could be a retailer with its own design and technical department who work directly with factories or an importer who will source new items from its own factories.

Designing a range can be done in several ways, such as looking around shops, buying in samples, researching the internet and discussion with customers. As the ideas develop we put them down on paper and quickly the initial designs takes shape. This may be in the form of a sketch that needs to be translated into flat drawings to create the specification. First samples or mock-ups could be made at the head office to check fit or style details and at this stage more detail can be added to the specification. With the style finalized and fabric and trim agreed upon, specification can be sent to the factory for a costing and first samples.

The flow chart

This shows how the specification becomes an integral part of the development process from the initial designs to delivery to the customer. The specification is an essential tool for quality control when compared to the sealed sample which, is used to check workmanship. The specification is much easier to use to check the garment measurements, pocket sizes, button positions, style detail and labeling. It is also possible that even after the sealed sample has been approved that minor changes can be made that can be updated on the specification and circulated to all concerned in minutes.



Planning ahead is very important and we would like to think that every style will be a winner, but we can never be sure why one style sells well and another does not. The merchandiser plays a key role in trying to forecast how many sales each style will achieve, but it is not an exact science and they don't want to be left with surplus stock. Merchandisers look carefully at how a new style sells at the beginning of the season and quickly identify which styles are selling well and where new orders will have to quickly be placed to meet demand through the season.

At this point companies go into overdrive. Firstly contacting the original supplier to see how quickly they can make repeats, and then companies will also contact alternative suppliers in case the first supplier cannot meet the increased demand in time. Most companies work with a number of factories making

the same type of product and often have to switch production. The clock is ticking away and every hour counts. Sending a correct sample if one is available by courier takes at least two to three days, but sending a detailed specification by e-mail takes minutes. The specification can be sent to any number of factories greatly increasing your chances of finding one or more factories able to quickly supply counter samples at the right price.

If a garment is a winner we want the repeats to be reproduced where possible with every detail of the original production, because if there is any compromise over quality or style details this subsequently may affect future sales. It is possible and sometimes absolutely necessary to supply every piece of information about the materials, style and construction of a product especially on items that could cause injury if the specification is not detailed enough. Generally with textiles and clothing we have some flexibility, in as much as that if we don't give enough information, the finished product might not be what we expected, but this will not cause physical harm—it only damage our profits. If we select factories that have a good track record and we give them sufficient information they should be able to fill in the gaps that we may not have covered.

The term Product specification would suggest that it contains all the information required for the product, but often it is presented in two documents: the style and technical specification and the Bill of Materials. The latter itemizes the quantity and quality of every piece of fabric, trim, button, zip, shoulder pads, types of sewing thread, label, bag, carton required for the product, which the specification writer needs to constantly cross reference the specification against the Bill of Materials. The factory also needs to know the following:

Quantity and size ratio

Delivery date

Shipping

Insurance

Some companies provide all the materials and arrange insurance and shipping themselves as well as supply the patterns, while others rely on the factories to source all the materials, patterns and build the shipping cost into their price.

I start a new specification by working on the illustrations first and add text later. The first drawings will represent the style and overall appearance of the product and from these more detail will evolve by having the capability to focus on specific areas and enlarge the illustration without having to re-draw the detail (See the boot as an example). The original drawing is copied and pasted, parts that are not needed are deleted to make extra room on the page to show more detail or a factory might request clarification on certain measurements. You will see examples of this in the following chapters.

It is essential that a detailed specification is finalized and agreed upon by both the customer and the factory before production starts.

Throughout the book I vary my approach to writing specifications because to manage our time efficiently we need to consider how much detail is necessary to put into the specification. This is not contradicting what I said earlier about nothing being left to the factories' interpretation, but time is a precious commodity and we need to put the extra time into a specification when required.

There are basically two main ways of doing business offshore-----

1. Using a group of factories that we may alternate our production between while sourcing new factories looking for better prices and quality.
2. Working with established factories, possibly owned by your company, whose methods of manufacturing we know and they know your standards.

With method one, a detailed specification is always advisable; with method two, we can rely more on the factory to know the correct method of construction. It is possible that a company uses both methods of manufacturing and the type of specification we do should be carefully considered.

The other factor to consider is the complexity of the product. As an example the construction of a pair of jeans is fairly standard and once we have approved a factory's standard, we can concentrate on detailing the other style features. The same applies to many unstructured, unlined garments, where the construction would normally be 5-thread over-locked as standard.

Prepare the specification as if you are the end user, think what information you would want and how you would like it presented. I've varied the amount of text between specifications—some factories may prefer both, but it becomes obvious how good graphics replace the need for all but the minimum of text.

Text should be highlighted with bullet points to show where one instruction starts and finishes, also use different colors. For example, measurements can be put in bold type so they stand out from the rest of the detail.

Order of making

Always try and keep to one format, so that the factories become familiar with your specifications and know where to find any particular piece of information. As an example with the Reefer Overcoat or any tailored coat I follow this format.

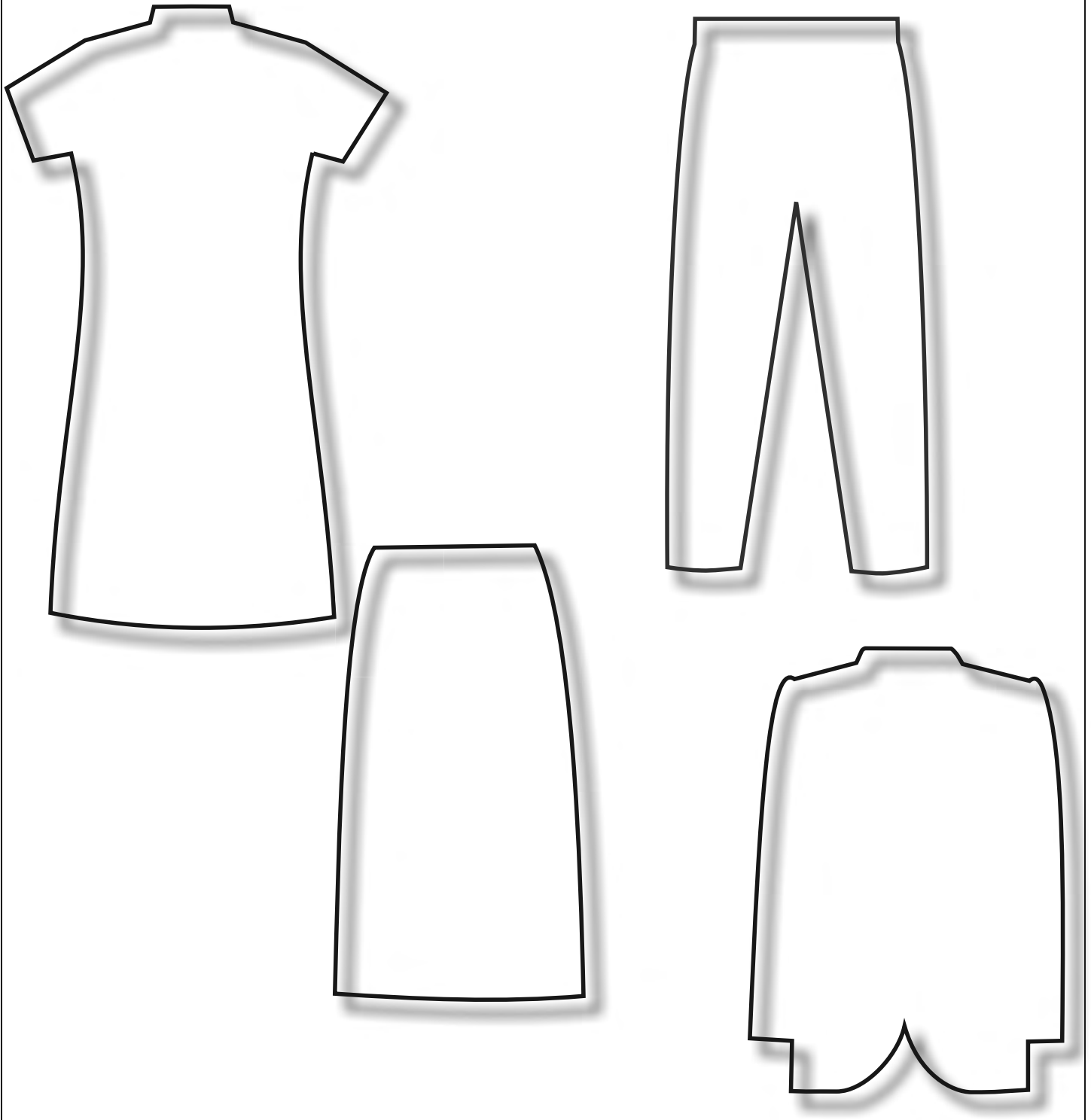
Interlinings
Fronts and pockets first, then the back
Sleeve, cuff and the shoulder straps
Collars
Lining
Buttoning
Packaging

Text and illustration should always be together wherever possible to give a complete picture for that particular part of the garment so you do not have to go from page to page to find all the information.

A detail can be missed if there is too much information on a page, specific detail can be highlighted on a separate page. Detailed specifications save time in the long run and will achieve better results and fewer mistakes.

A poorly written specification will throw up as many queries as points it answers, which will cause delays and mistakes.

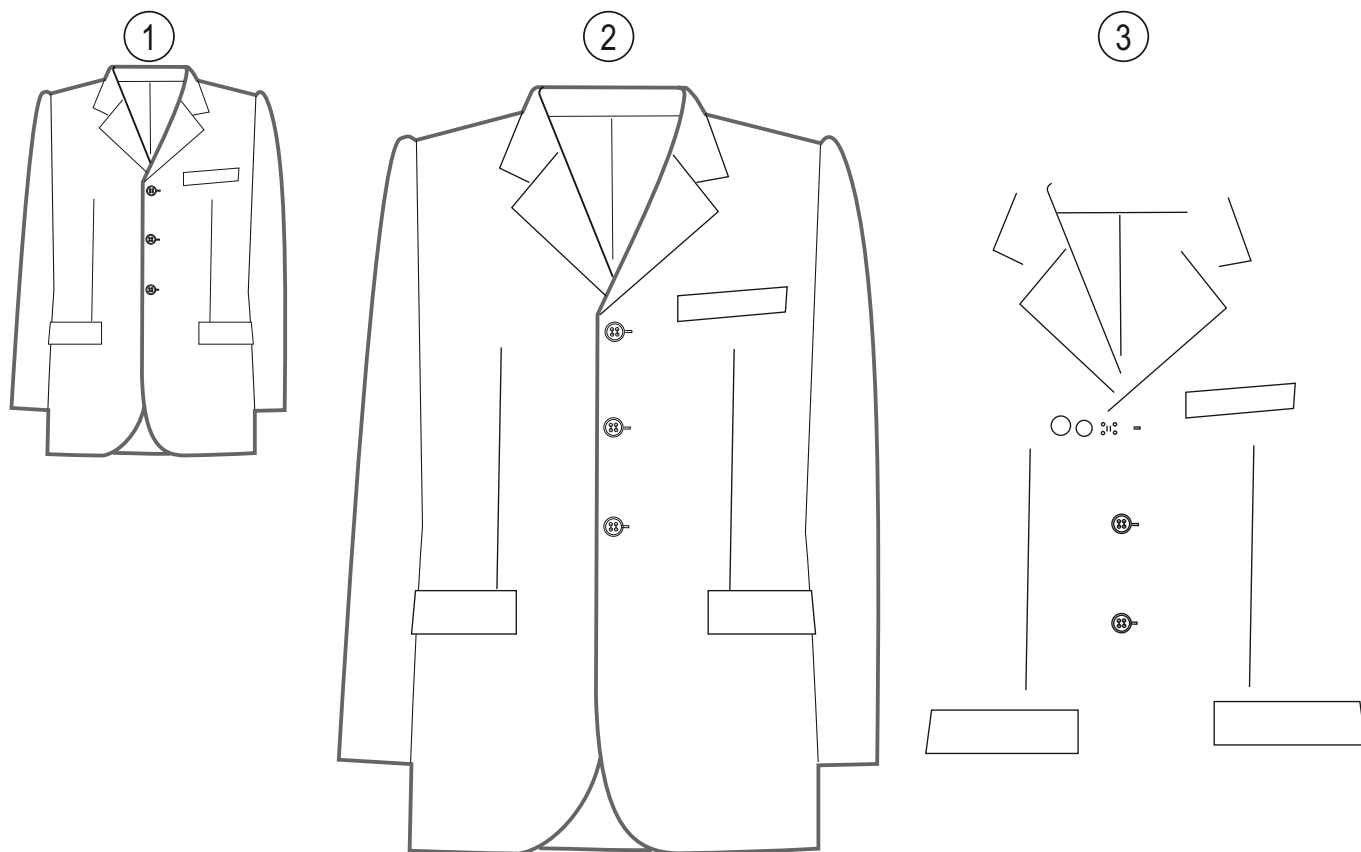
CHAPTER 2



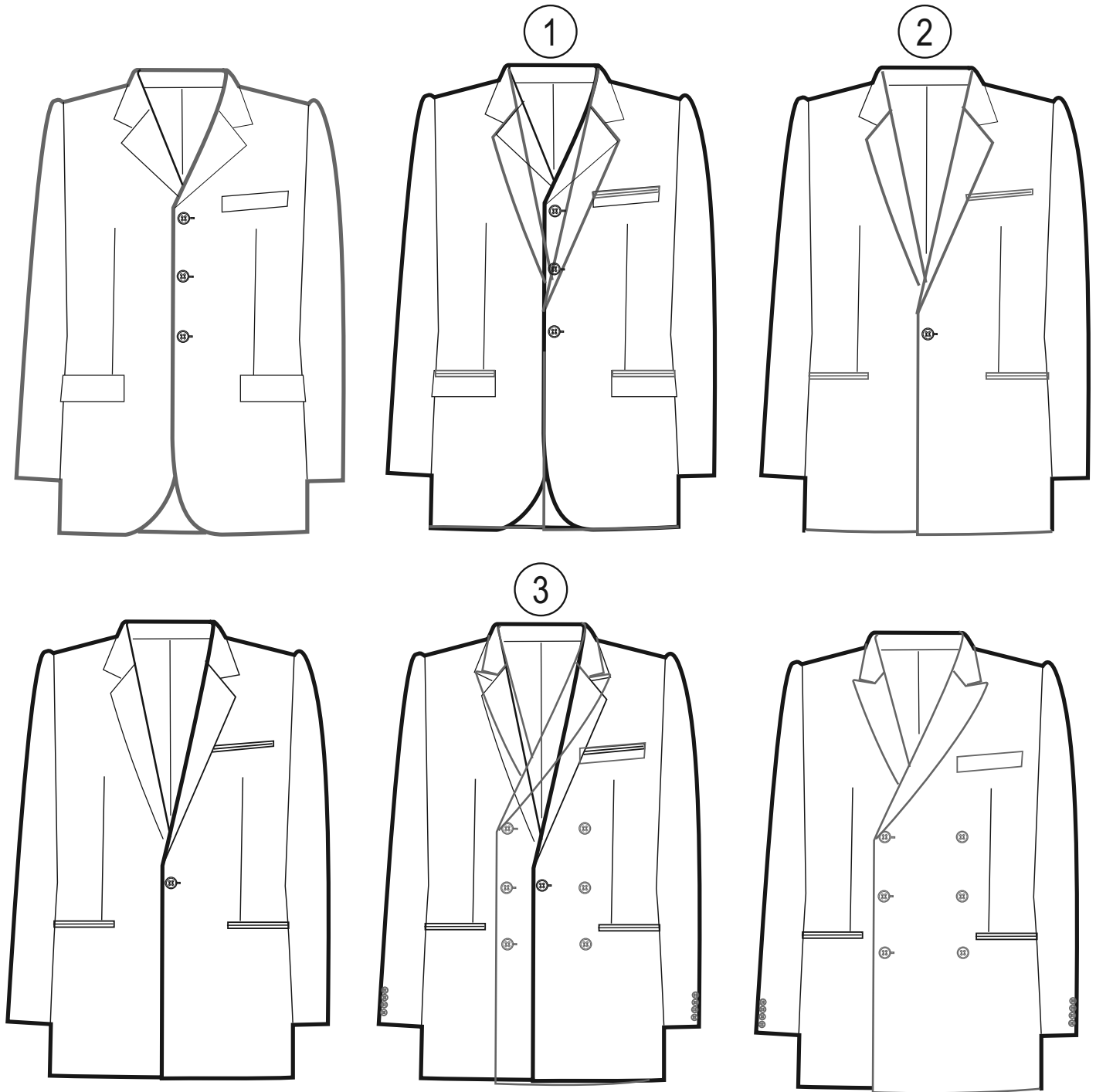
TEMPLATES

All the following define the word template and all are relevant in the process of writing specifications. Prototype, Model, Precedent, Established practice, Arrangement, Shape, Structure, Benchmark.

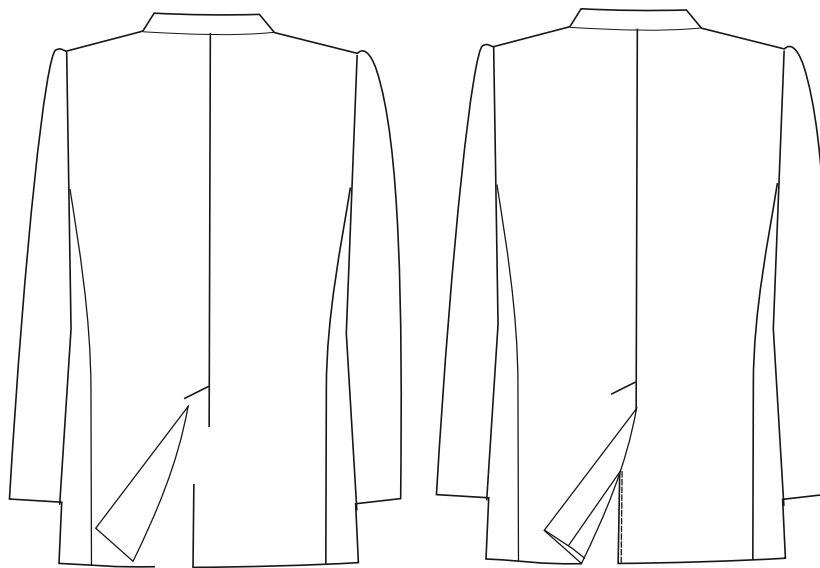
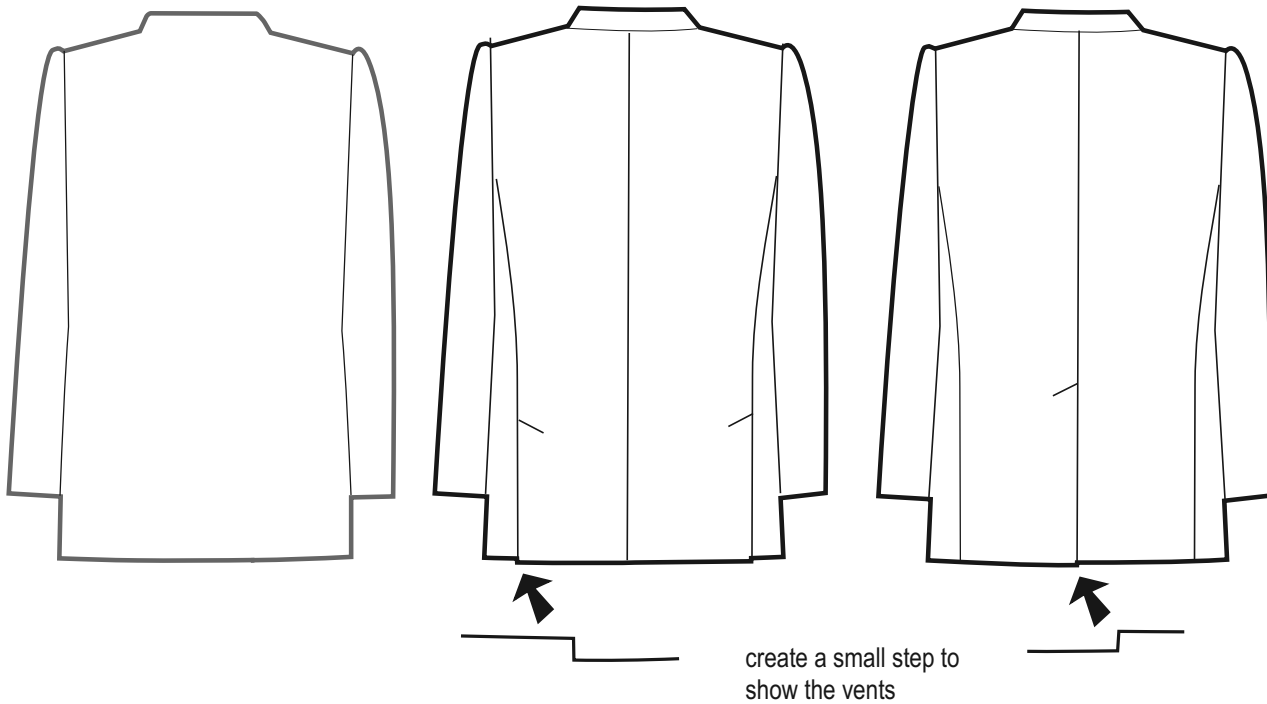
Maintaining consistency is very important when writing specifications, so we need to develop trusted, proven shapes, structures and methods for our illustrations which can be confidently used over and over again making the most of the advantages of CAD. This chapter deals in detail with creating a variety of templates. When I first started drawing, I had great difficulty in drawing objects to scale. This was mainly due to starting to draw an object usually from the top and then finding it was too big and would not fit on the page. I would start again making the drawing smaller, but would then find that when starting the next part of the drawing this was not in proportion to what I had already drawn. Do not rush to complete the drawing, but develop the outline first, height and width are crucial to getting the correct proportions. Once you think you have the right outline start to add a small amount of detail such as the outline of seams, pockets, lapels and keep checking that you are still happy with the appearance. At this stage you might start to see shapes or angles that you did not notice before and might need to adjust the drawing again. As a technical illustrator every drawing is a potential template to be used or amended for future work. Personal computers were unheard of when I first started work as a Technologist for a national mail-order company. During my first week at the company I was given a tour of all the departments, including the computer dept. It was like going into a place of worship with the staff being the equivalent of high priests. There were cabinet after cabinet of whirring discs in a spotless room with the temperature carefully controlled. This was the future but not yet for us mere mortals. After the visit I never saw a computer again for many years. Unless you were a talented drawer each Technologist assembled a collection of cardboard templates for the different garment shapes. To myself and the other Technologists this was cutting edge technology. My first lesson was if the outline was correct then you stood a good chance of producing a reasonable drawing. The templates on the previous page are approximately the size we worked with so they could fit neatly into boxes on the specification form. Style detail then had to be carefully added. The chapters in the book show how computer-aided design have revolutionised style/technical drawings to create very professional specifications, enabling designers and technologists to “think outside the box” and present information in different ways.



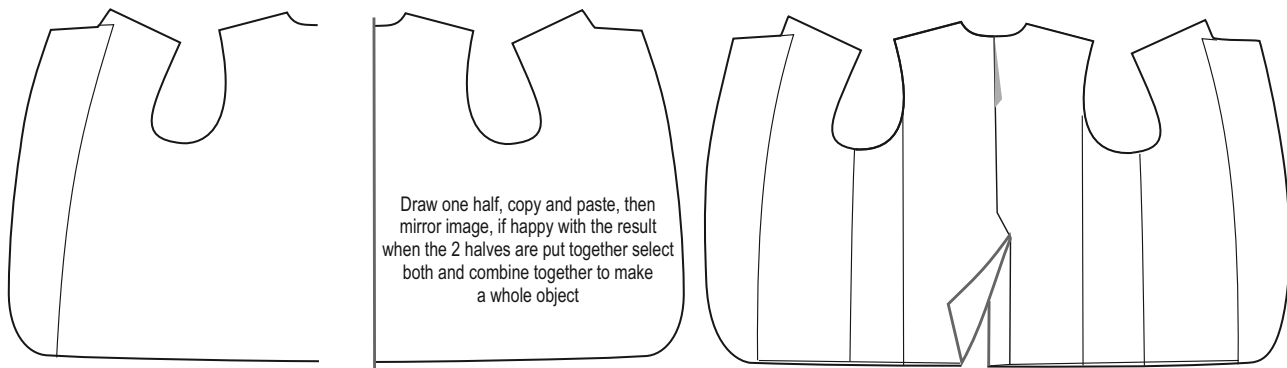
Using CAD I start with the same outline used for the cardboard cut outs and added the detail for the pockets darts, waist shaping, collar, lapel and buttons. Illustration 1 is now my first template, 2 demonstrates how the size of the drawing can be increased keeping exactly the same proportions freeing the illustrator of restrictions on the size of the drawing and the limitations of using a standard box to put the drawing in. The only limitation being the size of the page. Illustration 3 is a break down of the simple lines that make up the style features.

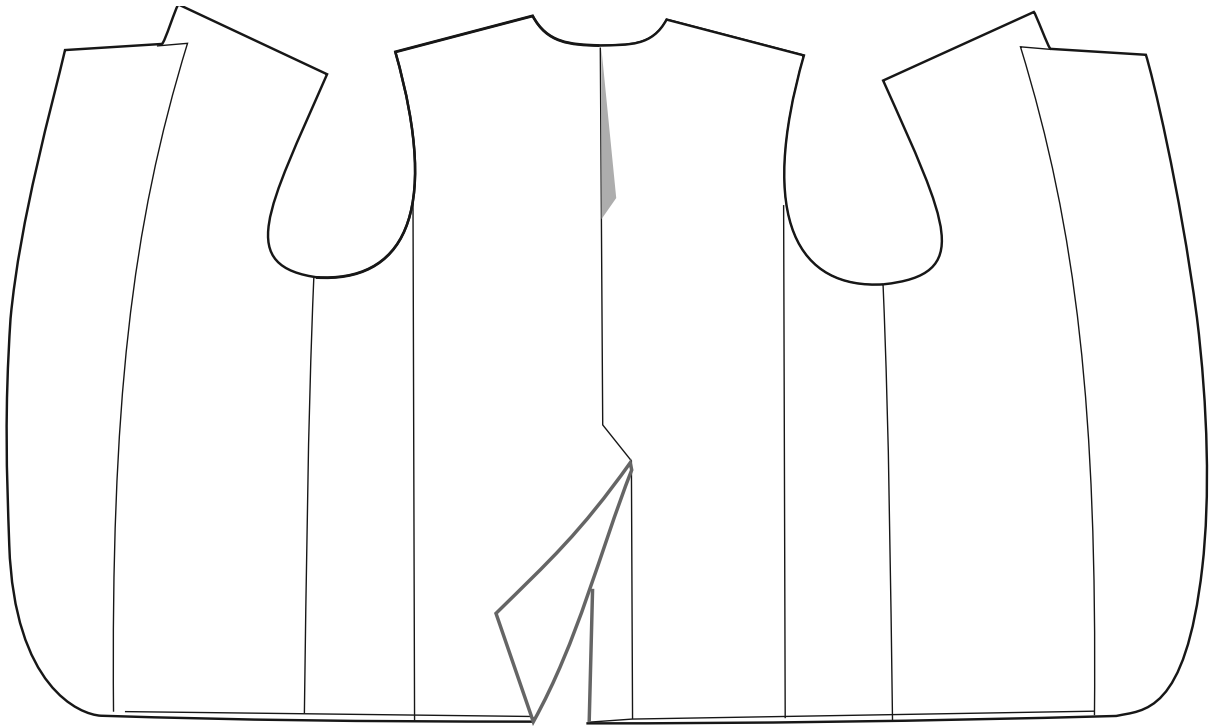


This page demonstrates how simple it is using your first jacket template to create style variations. Illustration 1 is changing the jacket to a one button fastening, square fronts with 3 jetted pockets using the first style as a guide and template to draw in new style details. When satisfied with the results select and delete the old style lines. If, as with this drawing the front edge is part of the outline, select and use the eraser tool to delete the part you don't want leaving the new shapes as illustration 2. Our next style 3 is derived from illustration 2 and is created in the same way as the first style. There are now three styles very quickly added to our library and many style variations can be derived from these first drawings.



The back view should not be overlooked, although usually there is not as much detail as the front, it is equally as important to show the style. The outline will be the same as the front, all that is needed is detail of the seam positions and on a jacket if applicable show centre or side vents. Some illustrators like to show the vent open.

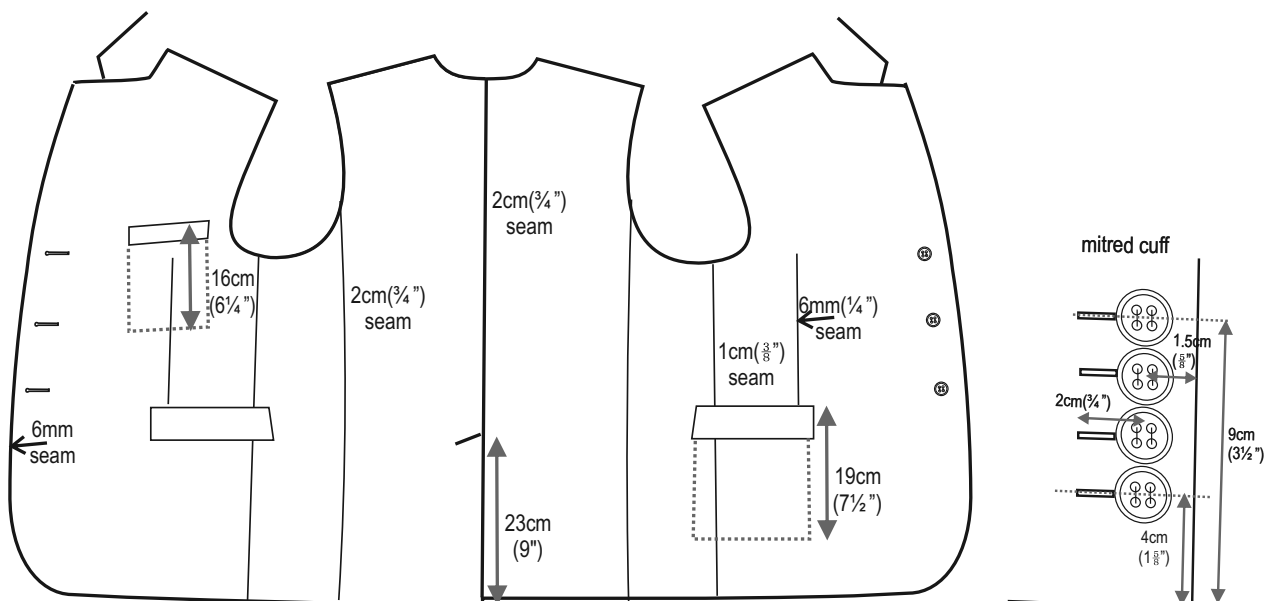


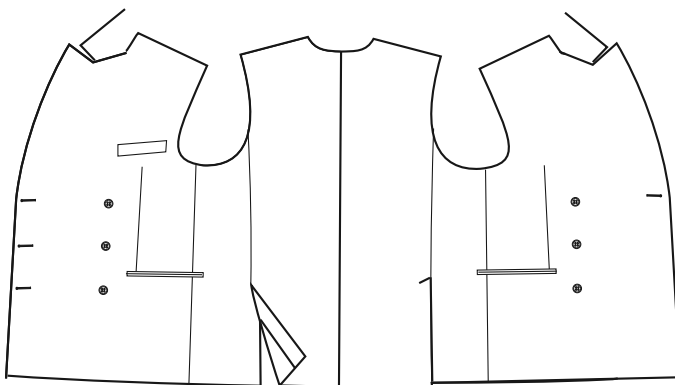
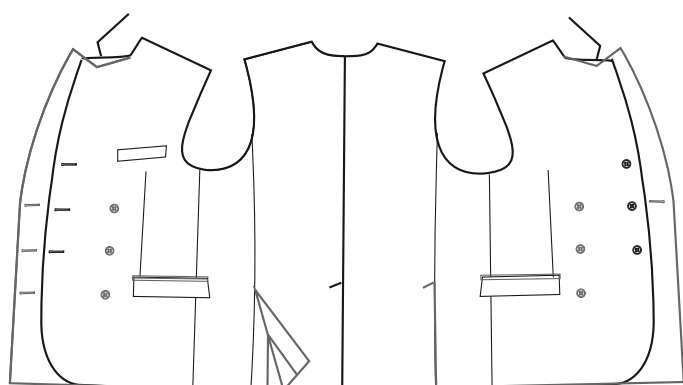
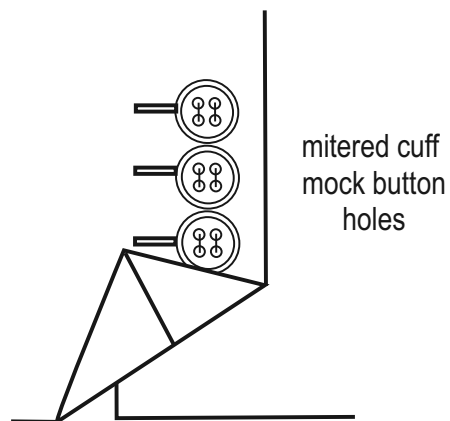
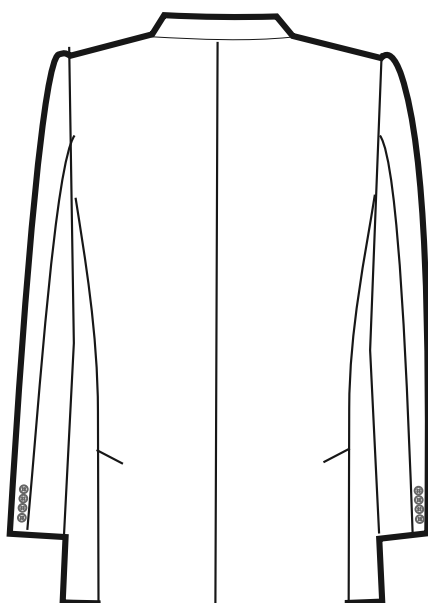
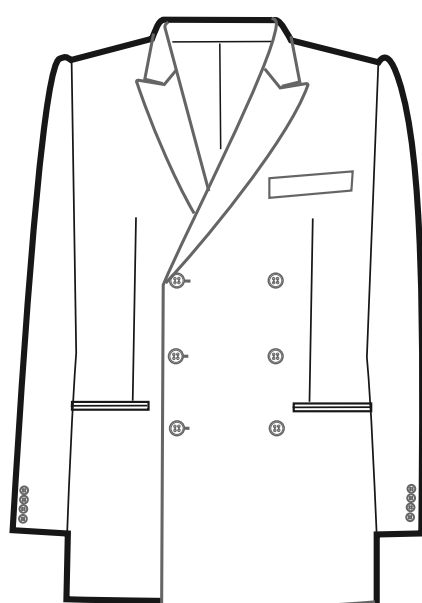
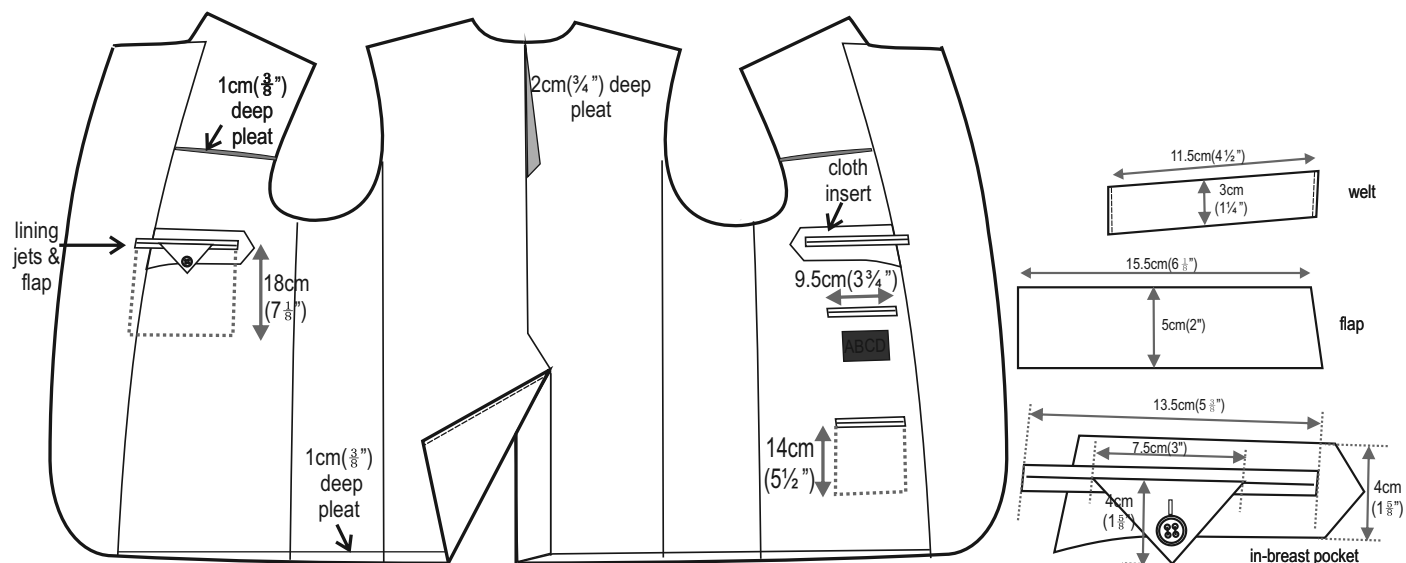


The inside

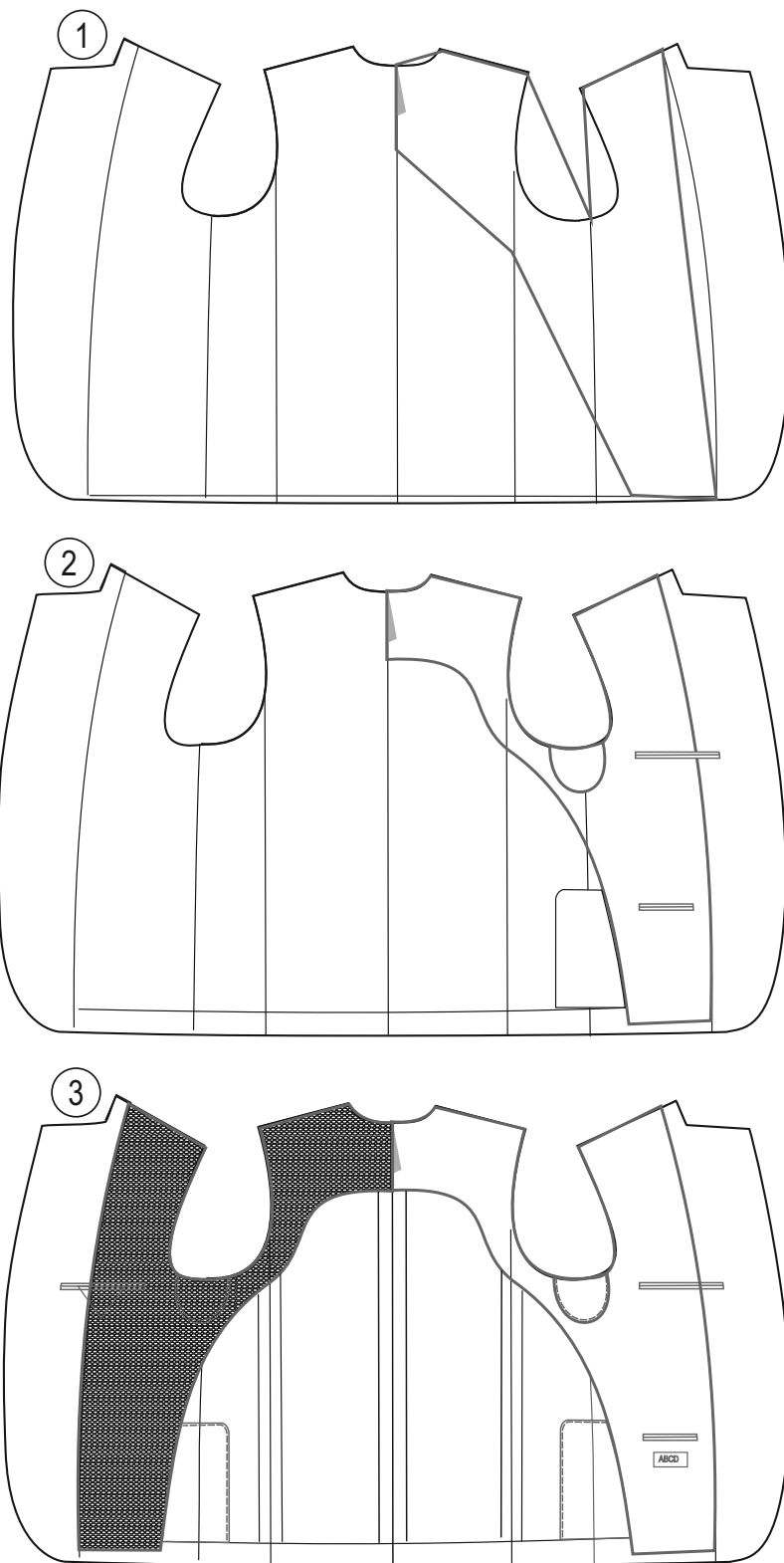
Once proficient at using CAD you will want to see how creative you can be adding new dimensions to your specifications. In the overcoat chapter I show the inside of the coat and this was very important to illustrate because of all the detail. I have used this method of showing the coat open before the shoulders are joined now for several years and the same outline with slight amendments can be used for many men's and ladies jackets and coat styles to great effect. This type of illustration is of great assistance especially to machinists as all the details are laid out like a map. It can also be used to illustrate the outside. See the next pages for examples of both.

This is another more simplified way of specifying a coat compared to the more detailed overcoat specification featured in the overcoat chapter, one outline is used for both outer and inner. I would use this method when working with a jacket factory who you already have an established relationship with. You may have many styles you want them to sample in a short time and this method saves you time but don't forget to highlight the key style details inside and out.





This shows the double breasted open jacket illustration created from the single breasted jacket.



The inside of this jacket is usually described as buggy or half lined and the lining is a mesh fabric. The best way to convey this to a factory is by illustration and I have used the mesh lining design from the anorak chapter as the fill to show the mesh. Using the template outline from the previous jacket, illustration 1 shows joining straight lines for the area covered by the lining. Illustration 2 are the lines curved to the required shape. With illustration 3 the finished shape has been copied, pasted and mirror imaged. When joined together the mesh fill is transferred to the shape with the power clip tool and the remainder of the style detail added. In this example I have used an existing outline as a template and created a new template for a buggy lined jacket.

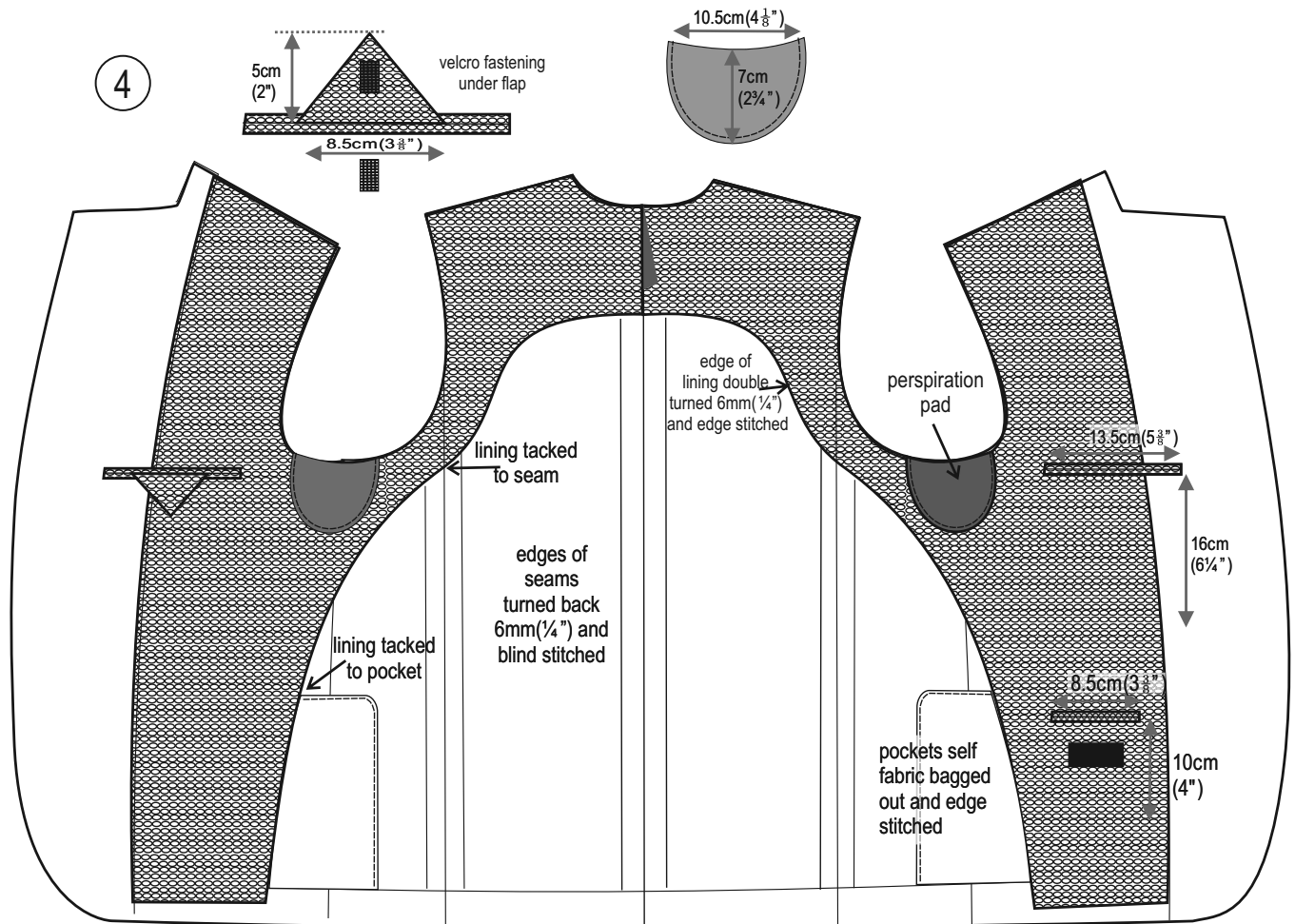
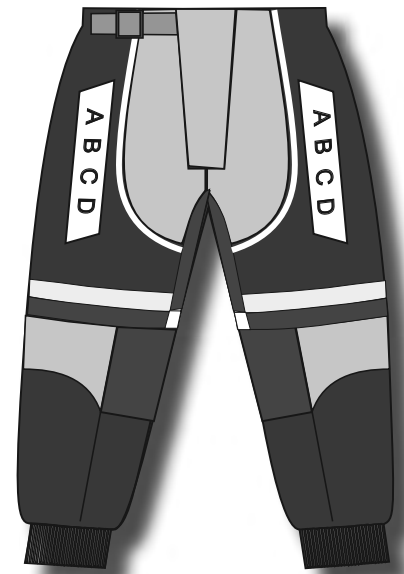


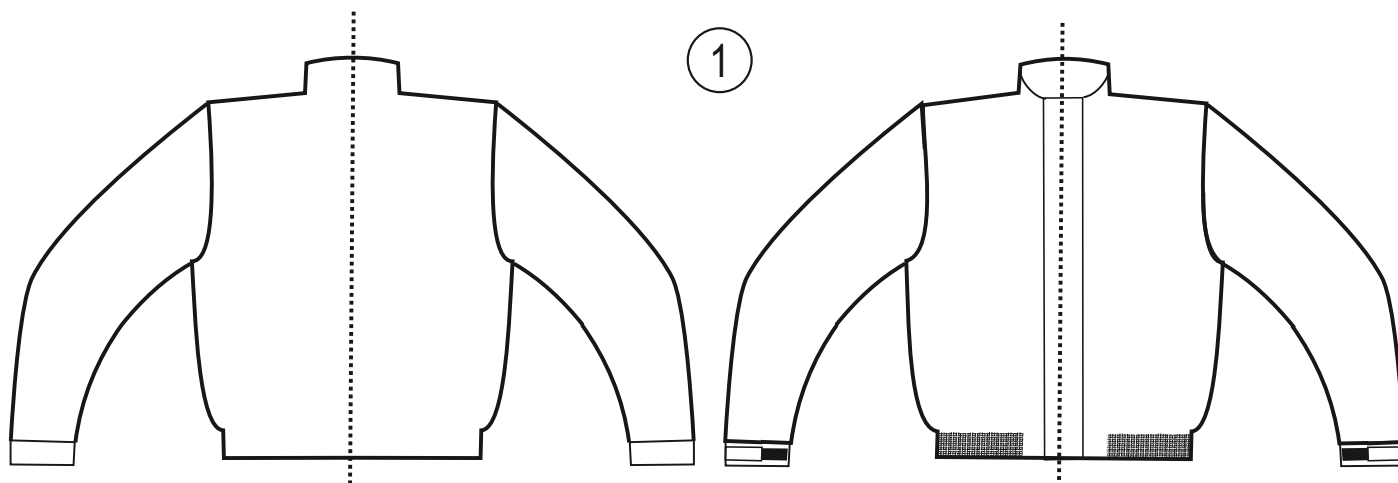
Illustration 4 is the completed inside, also taking the opportunity to add more detail. The pocket sizes are always important. Sometimes customers specify the pocket openings and depths but if they don't, it should not be overlooked and it should be added to the specification rather than leave it to the factory to decide. Add detail of the inner pocket flap and perspiration pads plus other details help to insure that the factory make the samples correctly.

CHAPTER 3

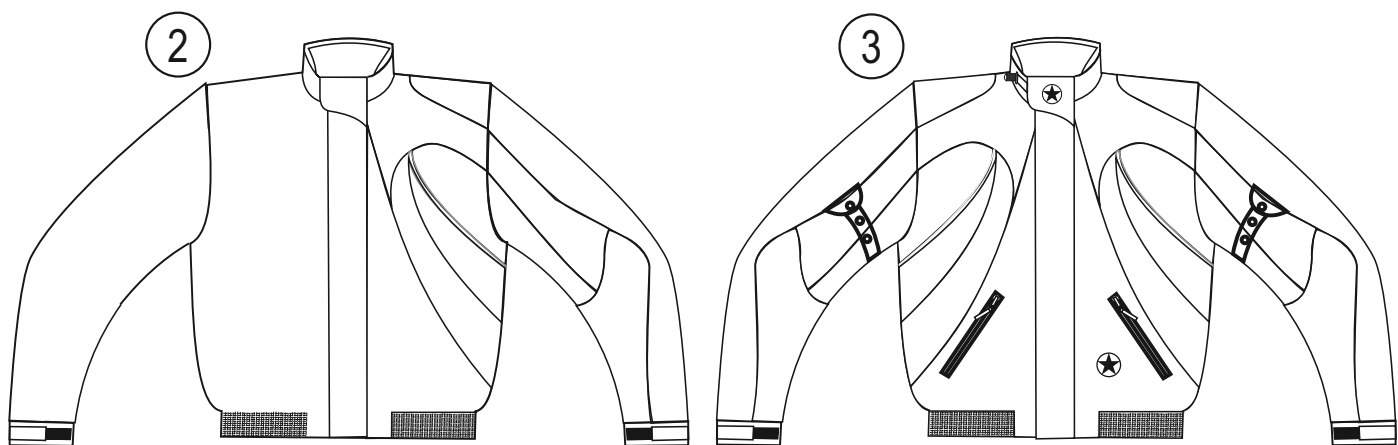


MOTOR BIKE

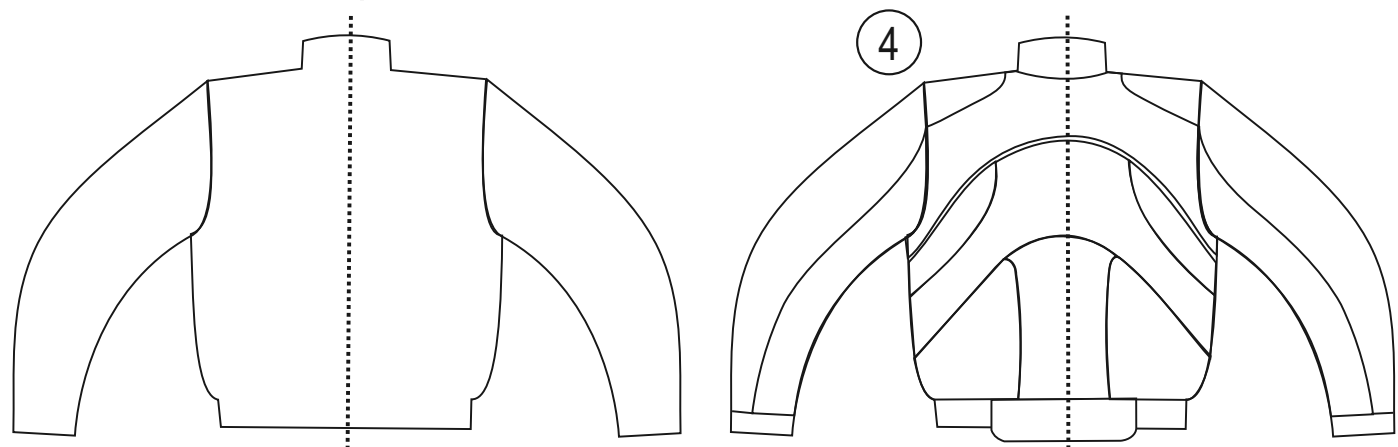
My introduction to CAD and how I got started... I was motivated to find a drawing package when working as a pattern cutter for a company making Motor bike clothing. Many of the garments were made of different colored panels to make the riders stand out and be noticed. The company owner designed the jackets and I cut the patterns. When the pieces were cut out ready for sewing they looked like parts of a jigsaw and it was difficult to recognize which parts fitted together and their color. A sample was always made first to make sure that the new design looked right, but they quickly disappeared, taken by the agents to show customers, so often there was no visual reference for the factory. Either the owner or his wife (who was the sample machinist) were on site if the machinists had a problem, but this was not the best solution. As the style developed, I wanted to keep a visual record for myself and the sewing room. It was impossible for me to draw these by hand and I discovered that the company had Corel Draw software but no one knew how to use it. This then was the beginning for me and I taught myself to use the software.



Creating the outline.

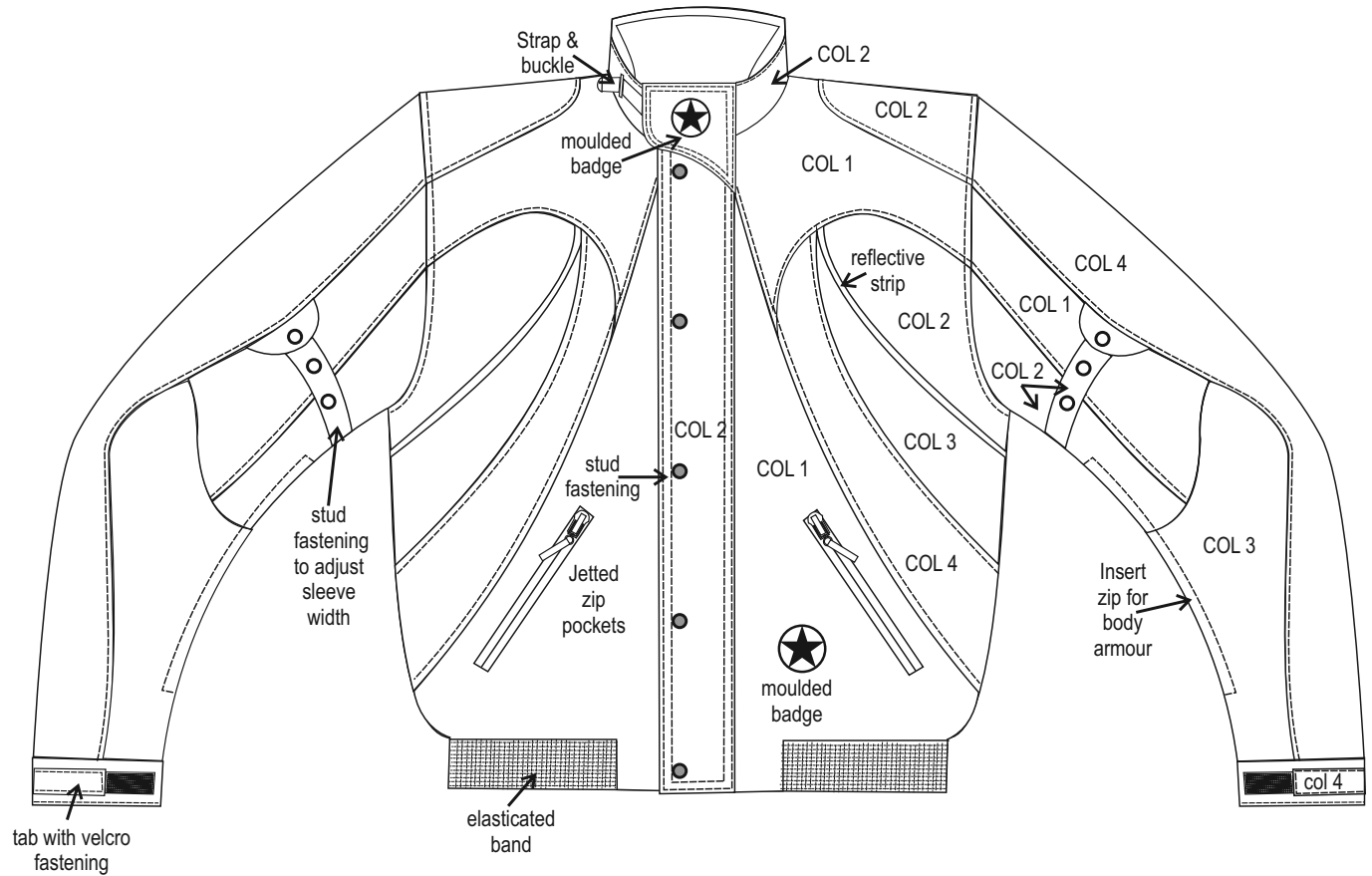


2. Add the panels first on one front and sleeve 3. Once happy with the result copy, paste and mirror image the outline of the panels to the other front and sleeve and add the remaining style details.

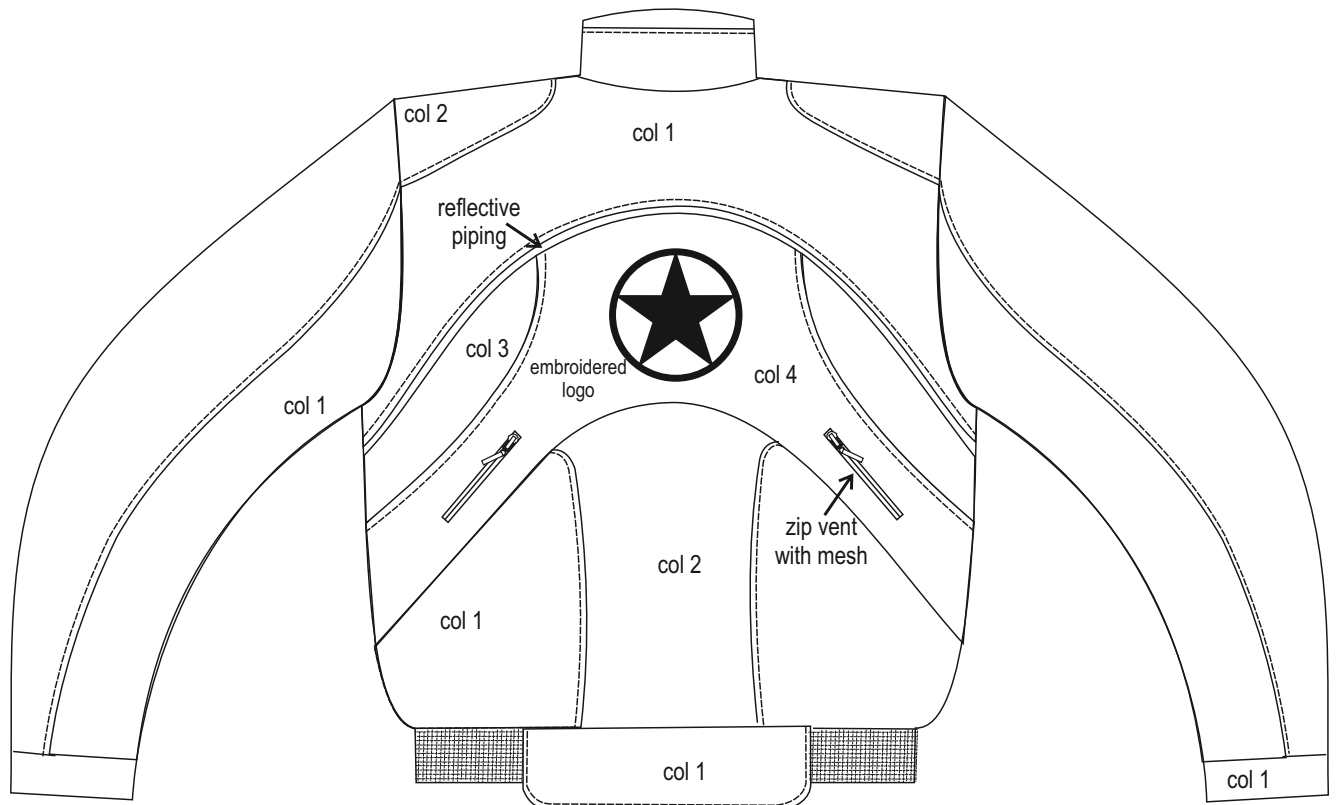


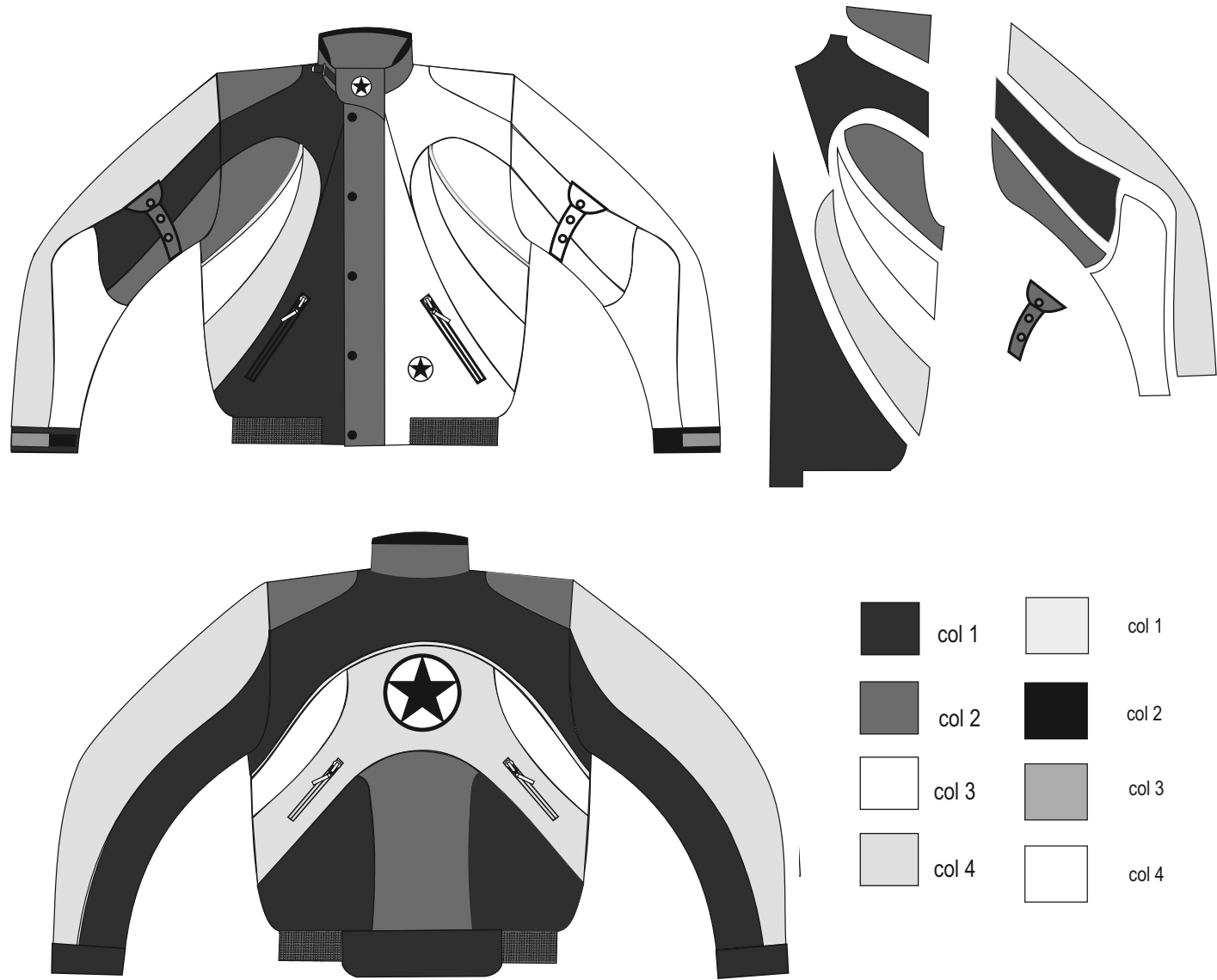
(The 2 halves of the jacket must be exactly the same)

4. Using the same outline, create the back panels.

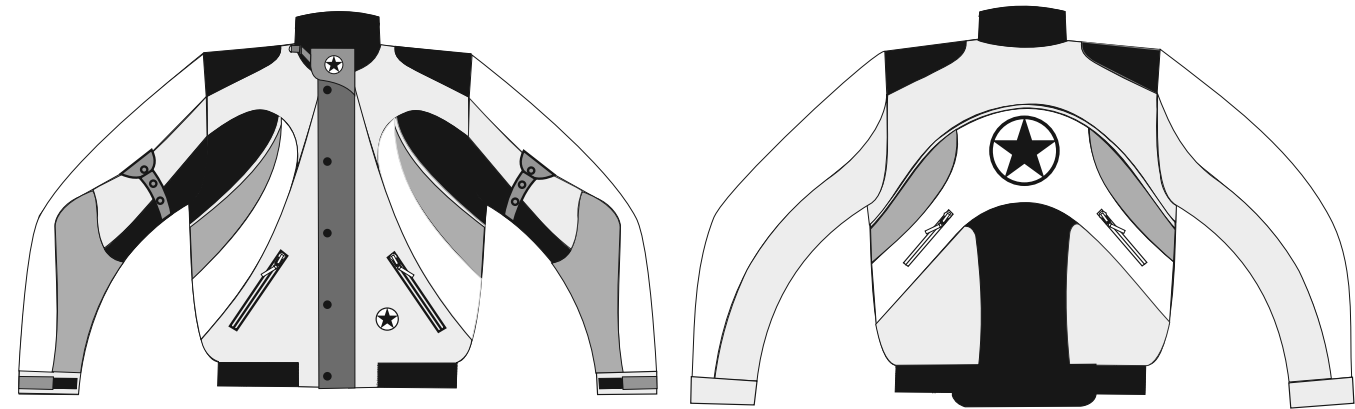


Illustrate the front & back of the jacket in more detail, showing which panels have top stitching and the color of the panels. Shows colored panels with coding.

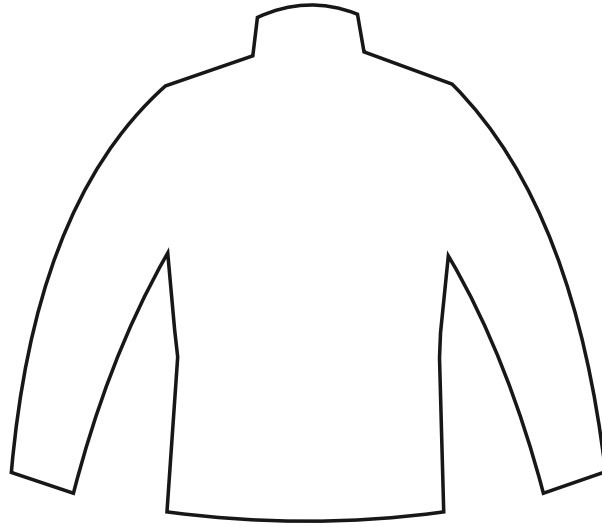




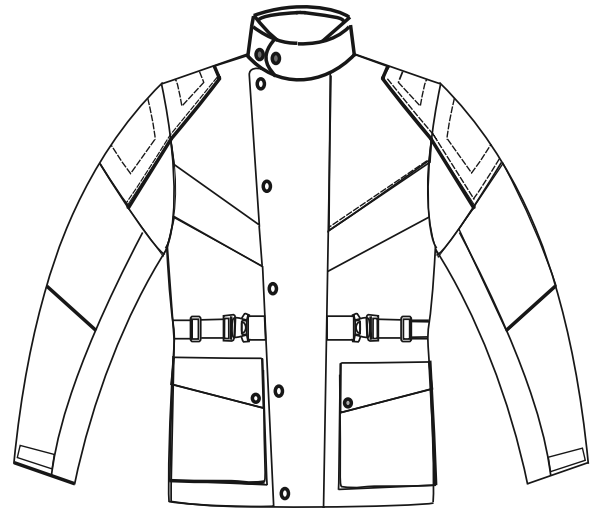
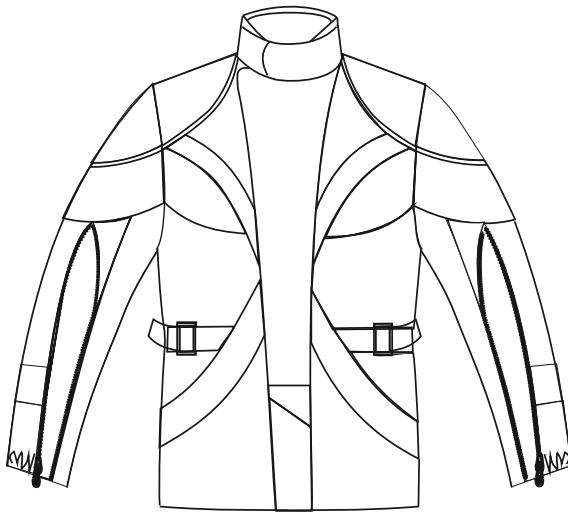
All panels are closed objects allowing them to be color filled. To change color, click on a panel and then choose a new color.



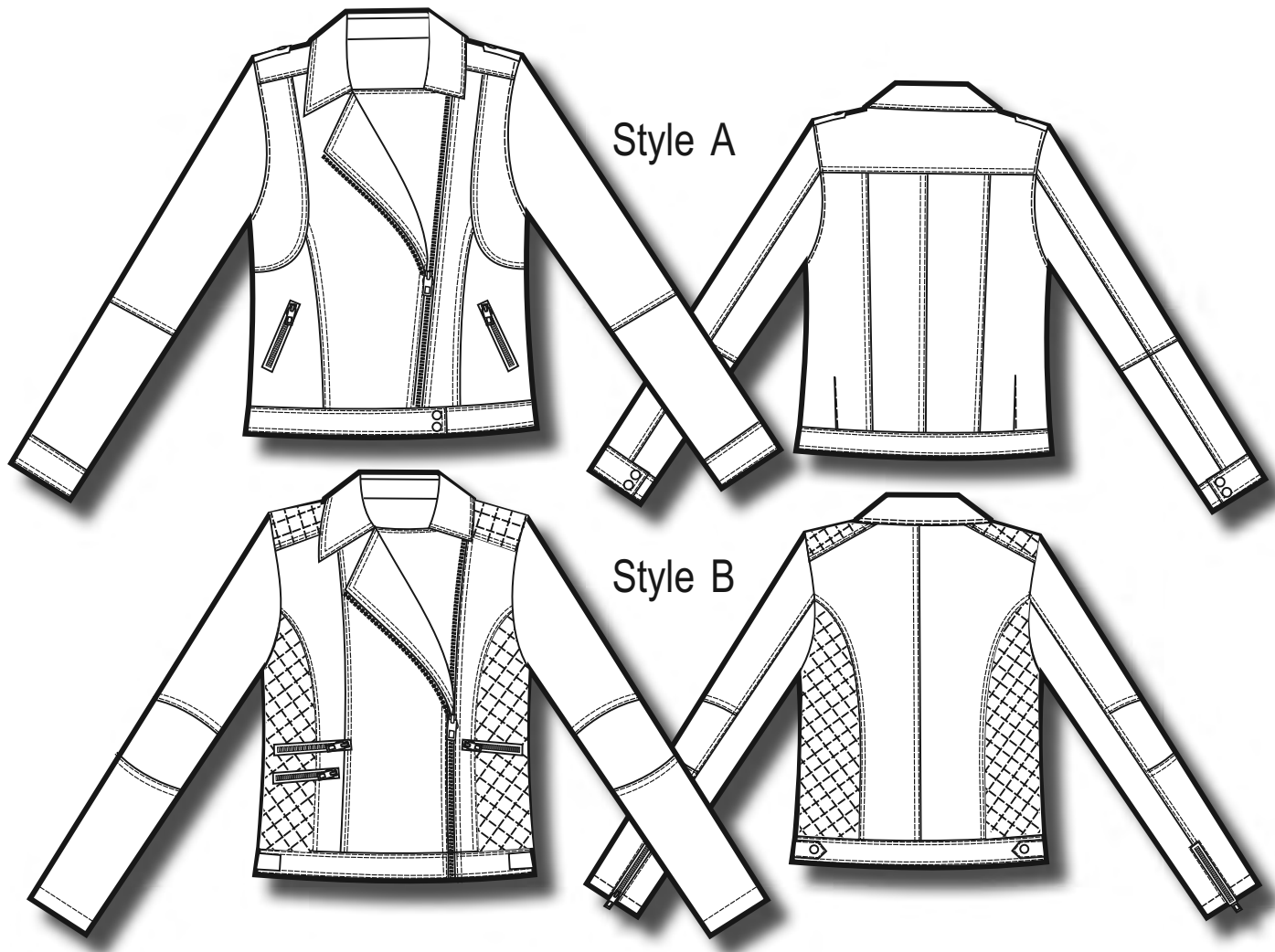
Alternative colors



These motor bike jackets as the previous style, feature different colored panels. This is also common with outdoor jackets, performance and sports wear. When doing specifications for these type of garments you will find that you will only need a few basic outlines. As an example the motor bike jackets are either a short racing jacket style or the longer touring style, but there are endless options for changing the style and color combinations. So first, establishing a good outline is very important, which can be tweaked if necessary. Your outline is a blank canvass to create a new style. Panel colors can be changed in seconds.



CHAPTER 4

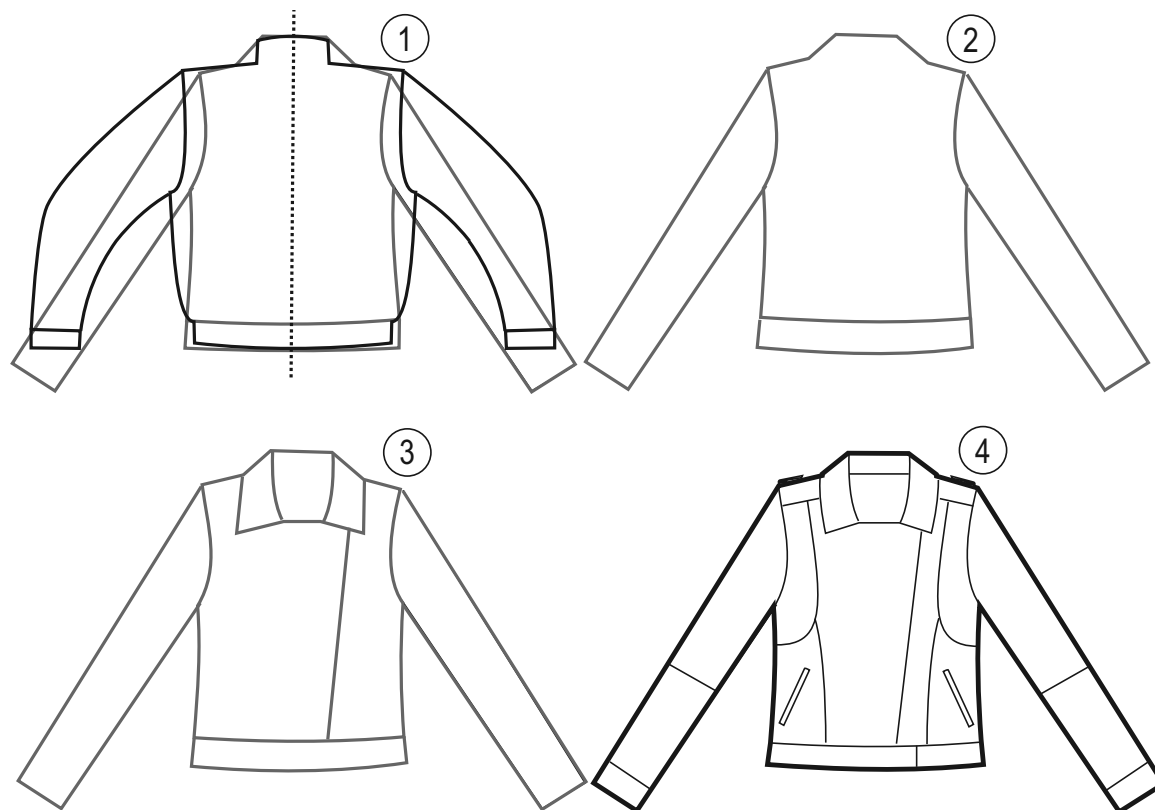


LADIES FASHION BIKE JACKET

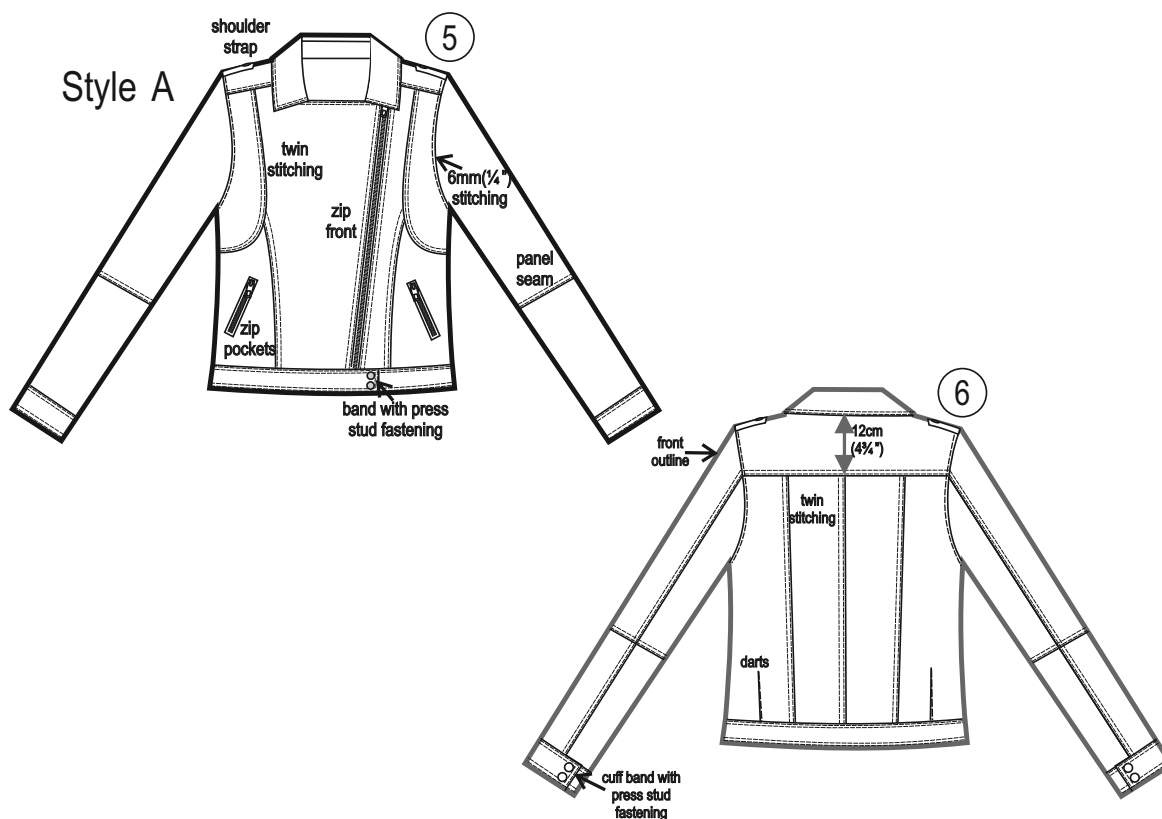
The previous chapter on motor bike clothing dealt with items that were designed specifically for wearing when riding a bike, but no one would wear these jackets on a bike as they wouldn't give any protection. Bike styles have always been popular and glamorized in many films such as Easy Rider, projecting a rebellious image. Designers often feature them in their ranges worn with t-shirts and jeans. Popular with men and women, the jacket can mix well with many different items. The genuine bike jackets in this style are made from high quality leather and could have wadding, for warmth and protection. These 2 jackets are made from PVC and will be a fraction of the cost of the genuine jackets.

The following specification for the 2 styles shows the development of style A and style B. These jackets are the same shape and measurements, only the style details are different. I have used the short biker jacket from the last chapter as a template to start off the new styles and to show the differences between a genuine biker jacket and the fashion versions.

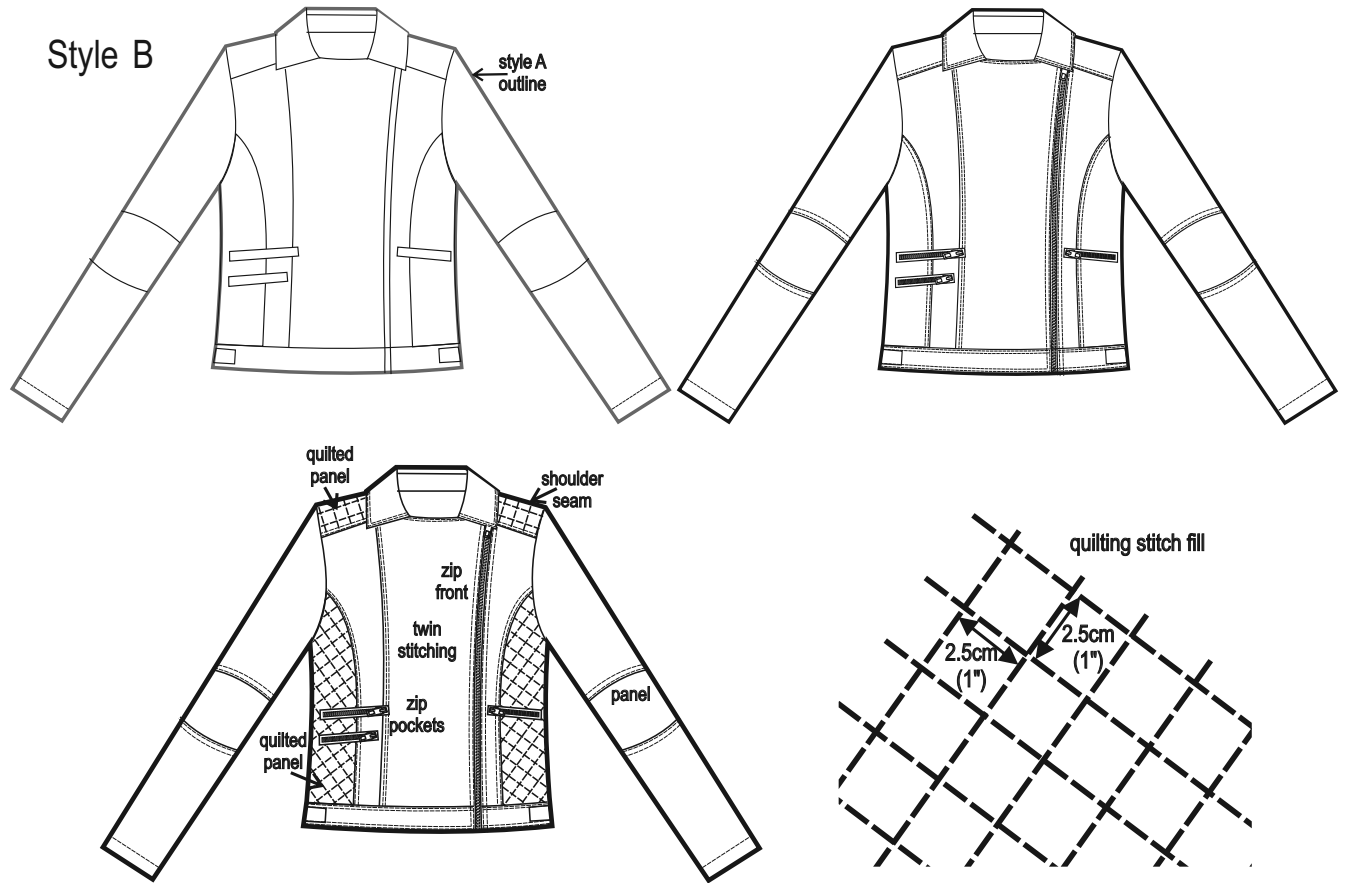
I have made these specifications as visual as possible concentrating on the design features, with the minimum of text. The style features can be interchangeable between the two jackets.



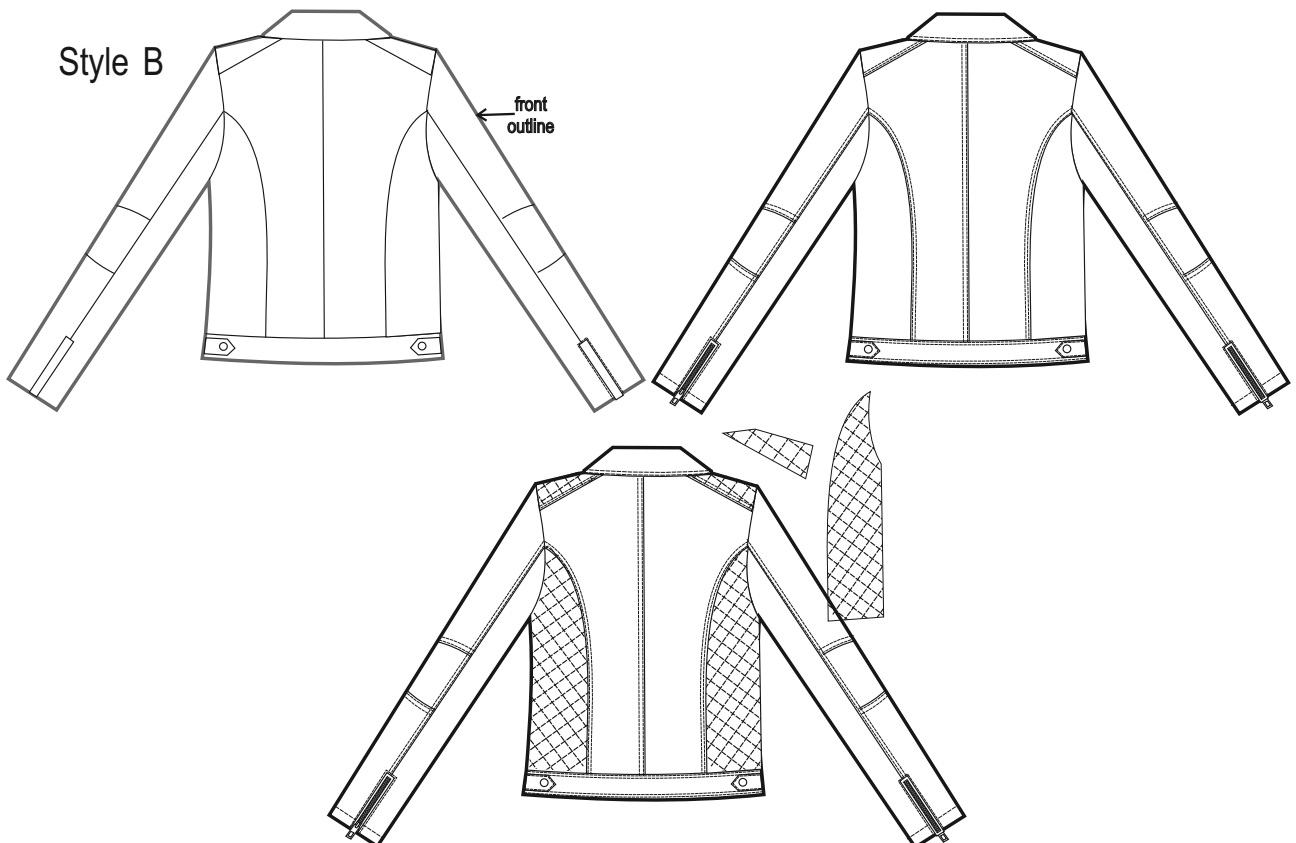
The black outline of drawing 1 shows the short bike jacket featured in the previous chapter. The new outline in drawings 1 & 2 are for both fashion jackets. The most noticeable difference between the true biker jacket and the fashion jacket is the shape of the sleeves (as shown on the black outline), which are cut for comfort when riding the bike. The true biker jacket is also wider to accommodate body armor and filling for protection & warmth. Drawing 3 & 4 are creating the outlines of style A.



Drawing 5 & 6 are the finished front & back. The back outline is exactly the same as the front

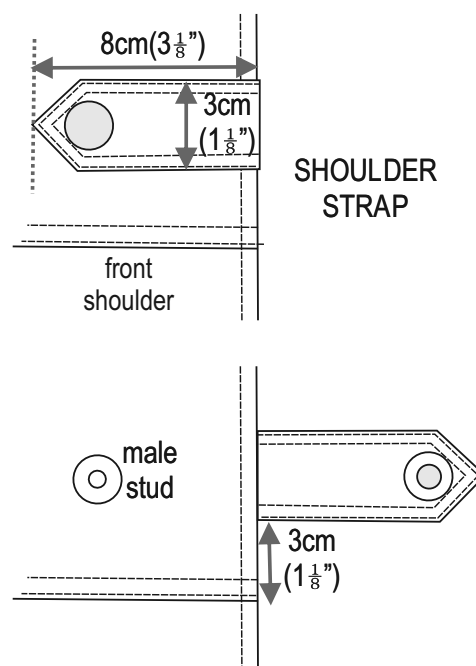
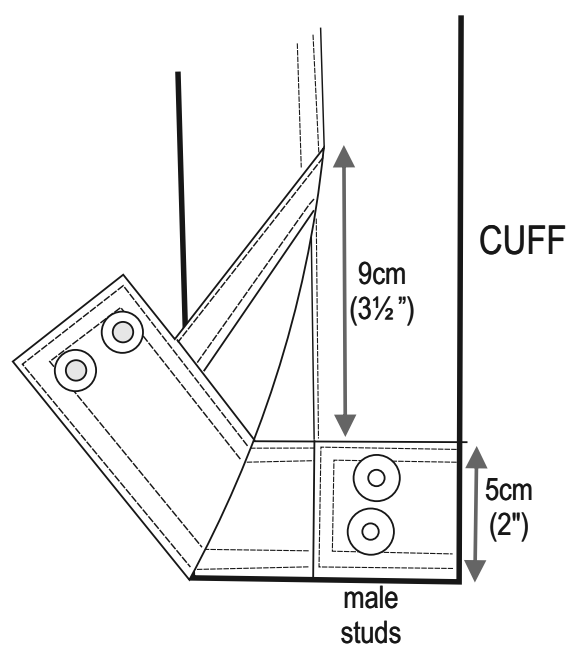
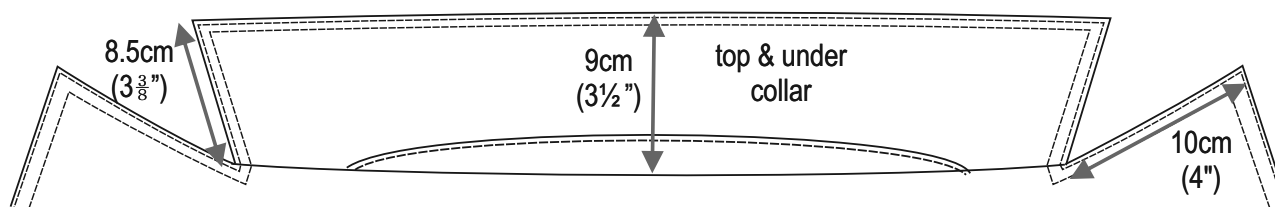
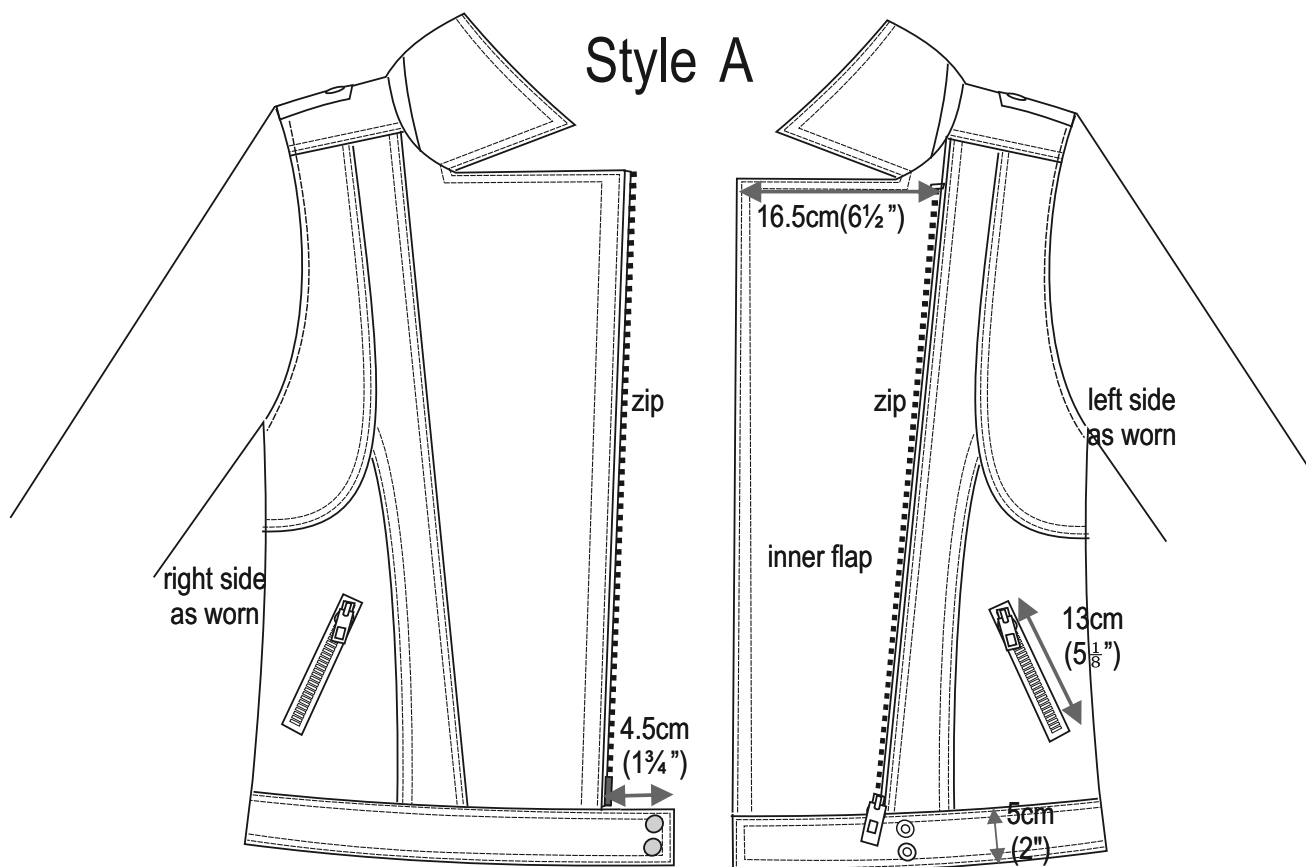


Creating style B from style A, adding each layer of detail.



Creating the back from the front outline adding each layer of detail. After creating the quilting fill, add to the panels, which are enclosed objects with the power clip tool.

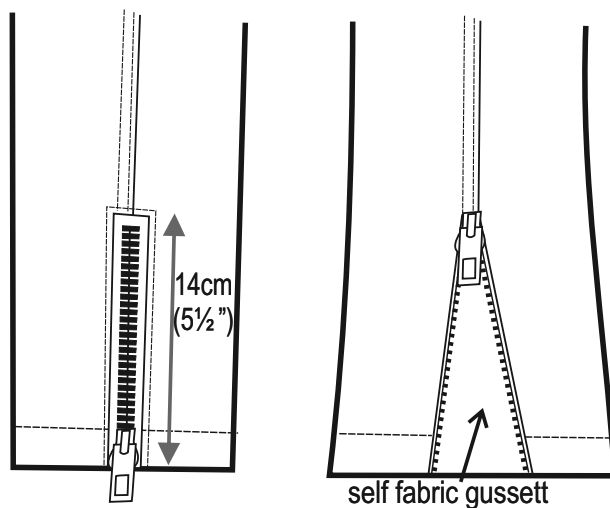
Style A



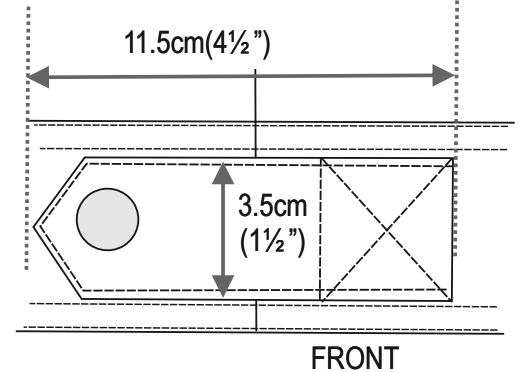
Style B



ZIP CUFF OPENING



STRAP AT WAIST BAND





As the measurements are the same for both jackets I have created one size chart. The drawings showing the measuring points are basic outlines, and do not show style details, but this is sufficient to show the critical measurements.

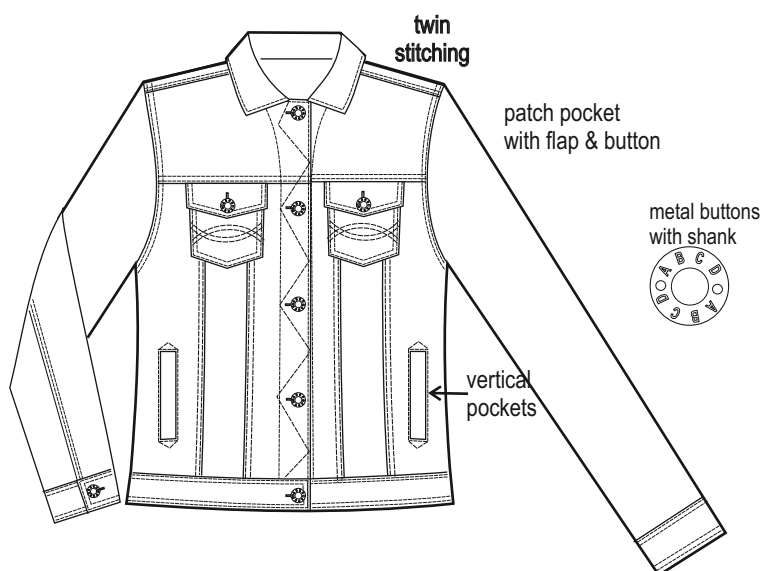
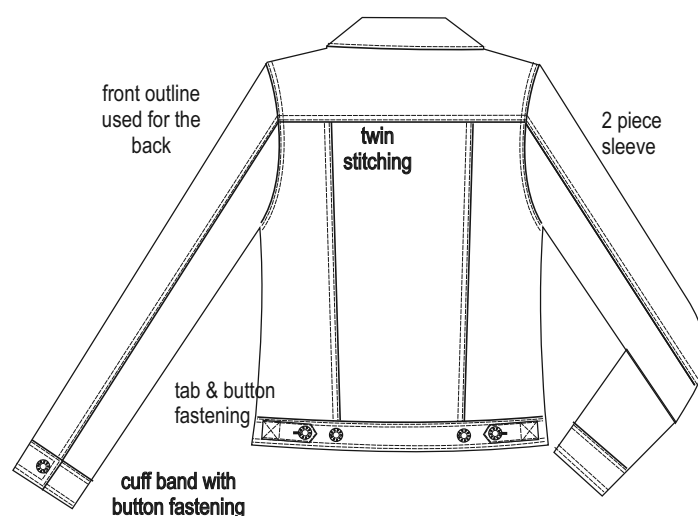
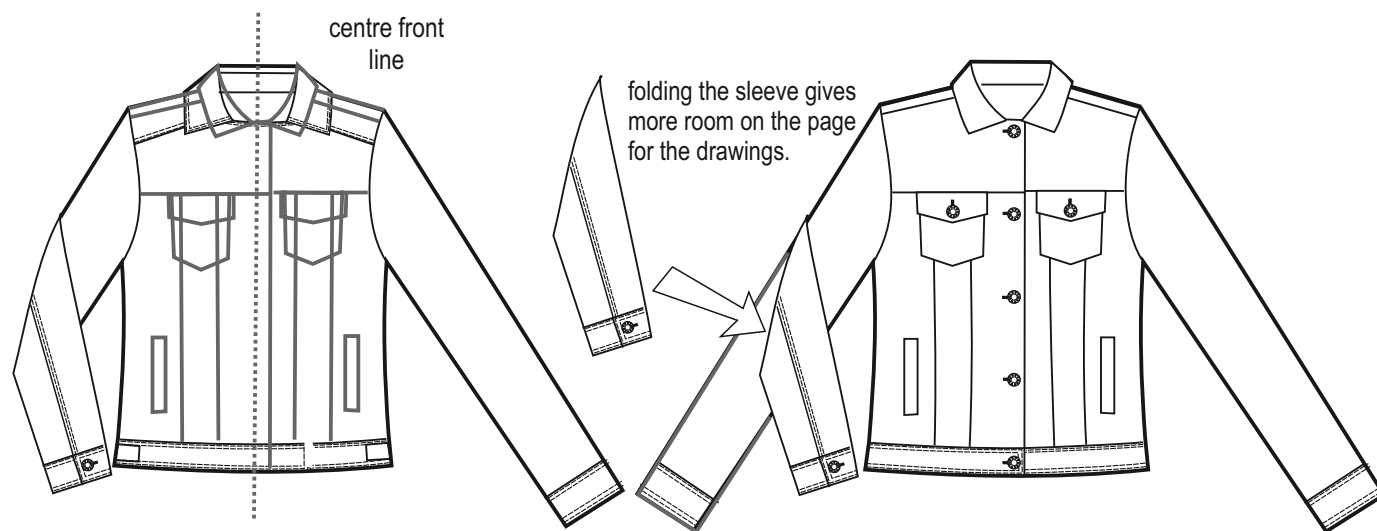
SIZE	UK 12	
	cms	Inches
A. Bust at base of armhole	100	39 $\frac{3}{8}$ "
B. Waist	88	34 $\frac{5}{8}$ "
C. Hem	92	36 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
D. Shoulder, measured on the natural shoulder line	11	4 $\frac{3}{8}$ "
E. Biceps	37	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
F. Cuff fastened	24	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
G. Back width	37	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
H. Full length from neck seam including bottom band	56	22"
I. Sleeve crown to bottom edge of the cuff including any bands	64	25 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

CHAPTER 5

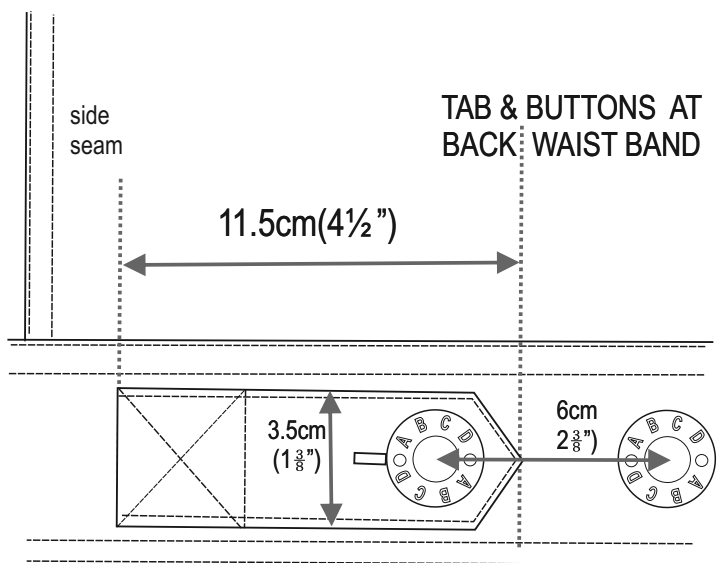
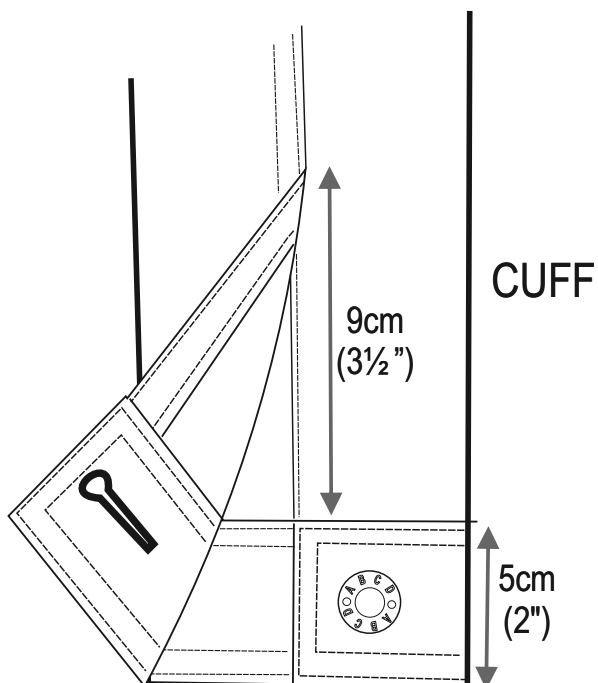
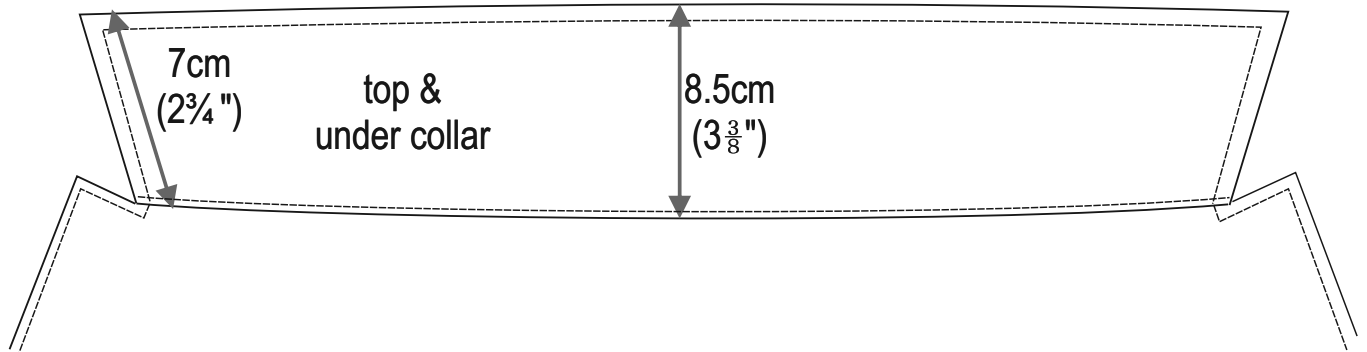
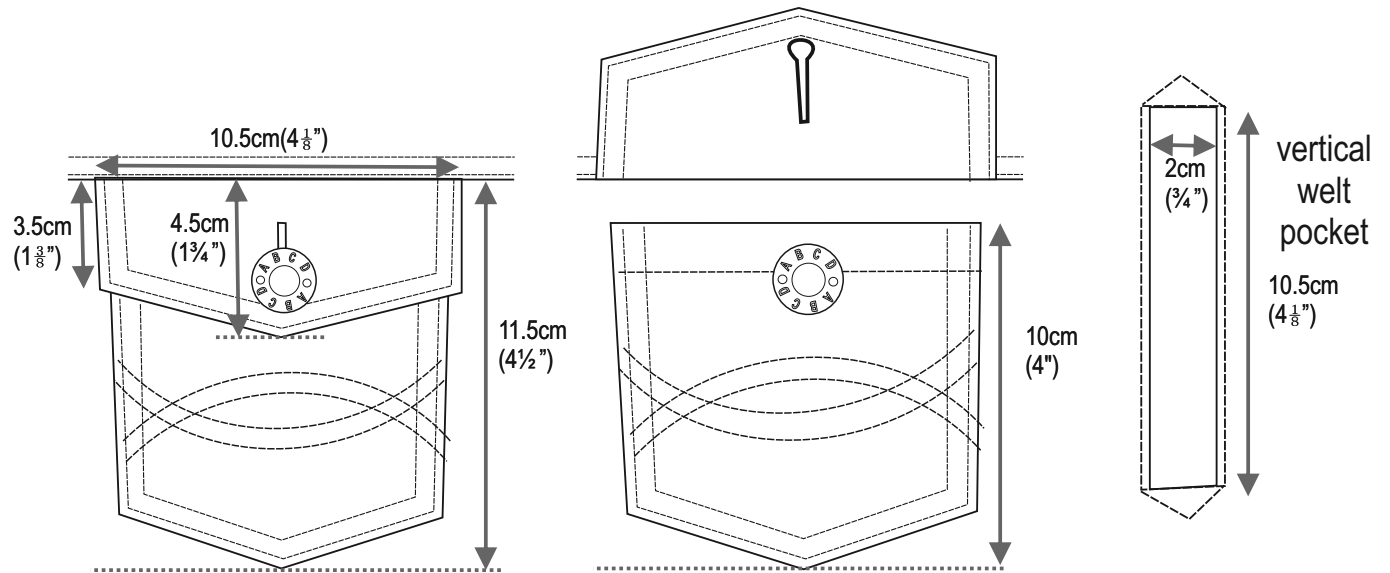


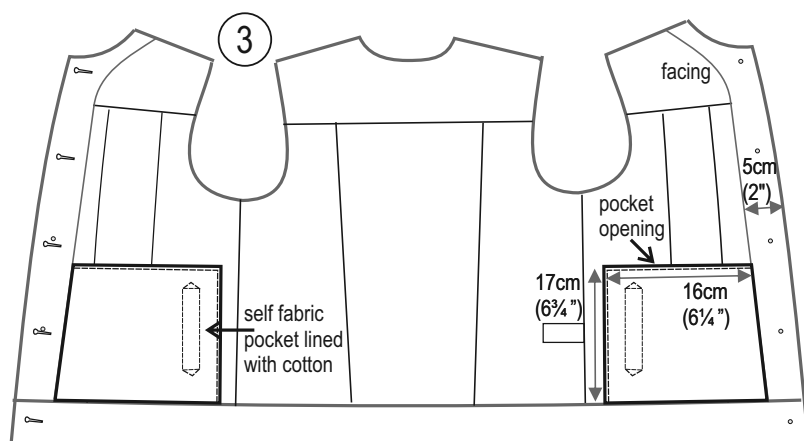
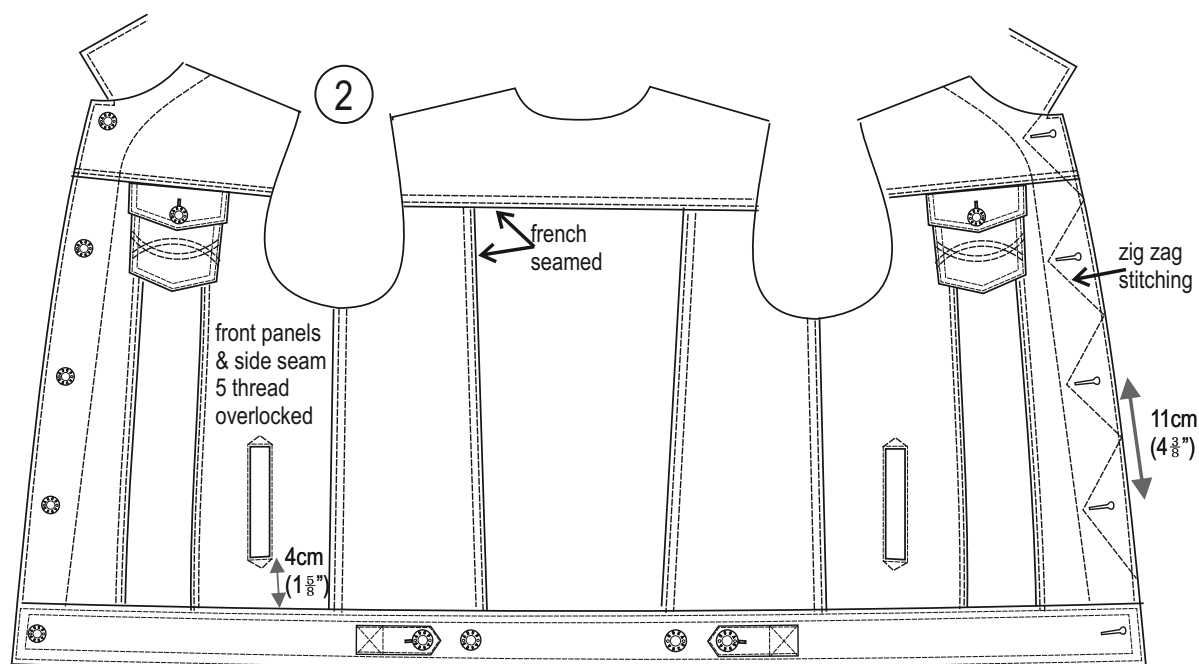
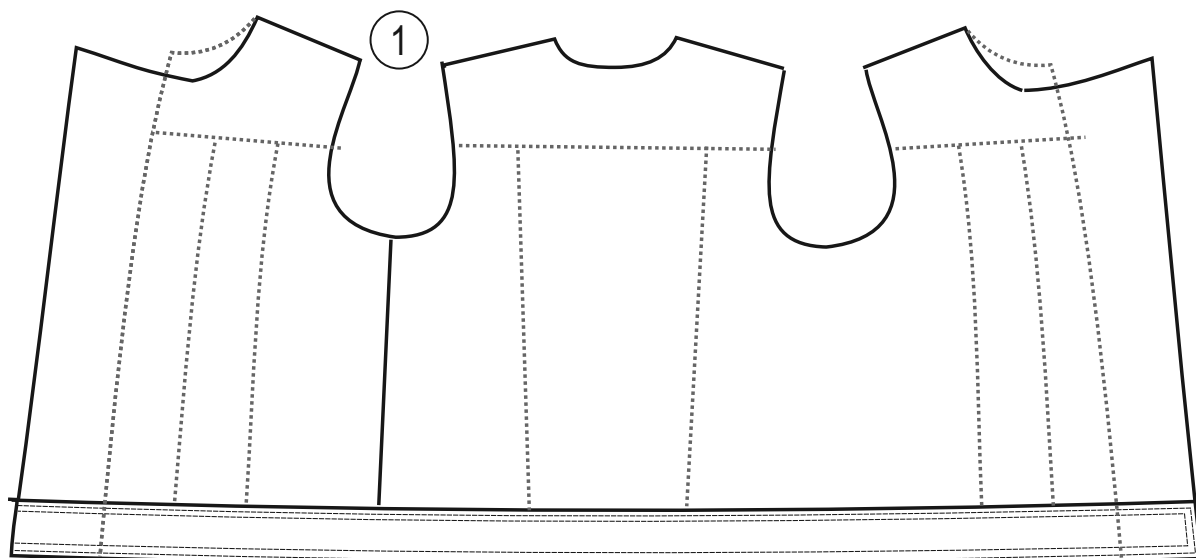
DENIM JACKET

This jacket never seems to go out of fashion, which was a good reason to include it in the book. But I realized that the outline and measurements were the same as the fashion bike jackets. I suspect that originally it was popular with cowboys for the same reason bikers like this style, because being short and fitted it's comfortable when riding. The shape is classic and a good addition to your library.



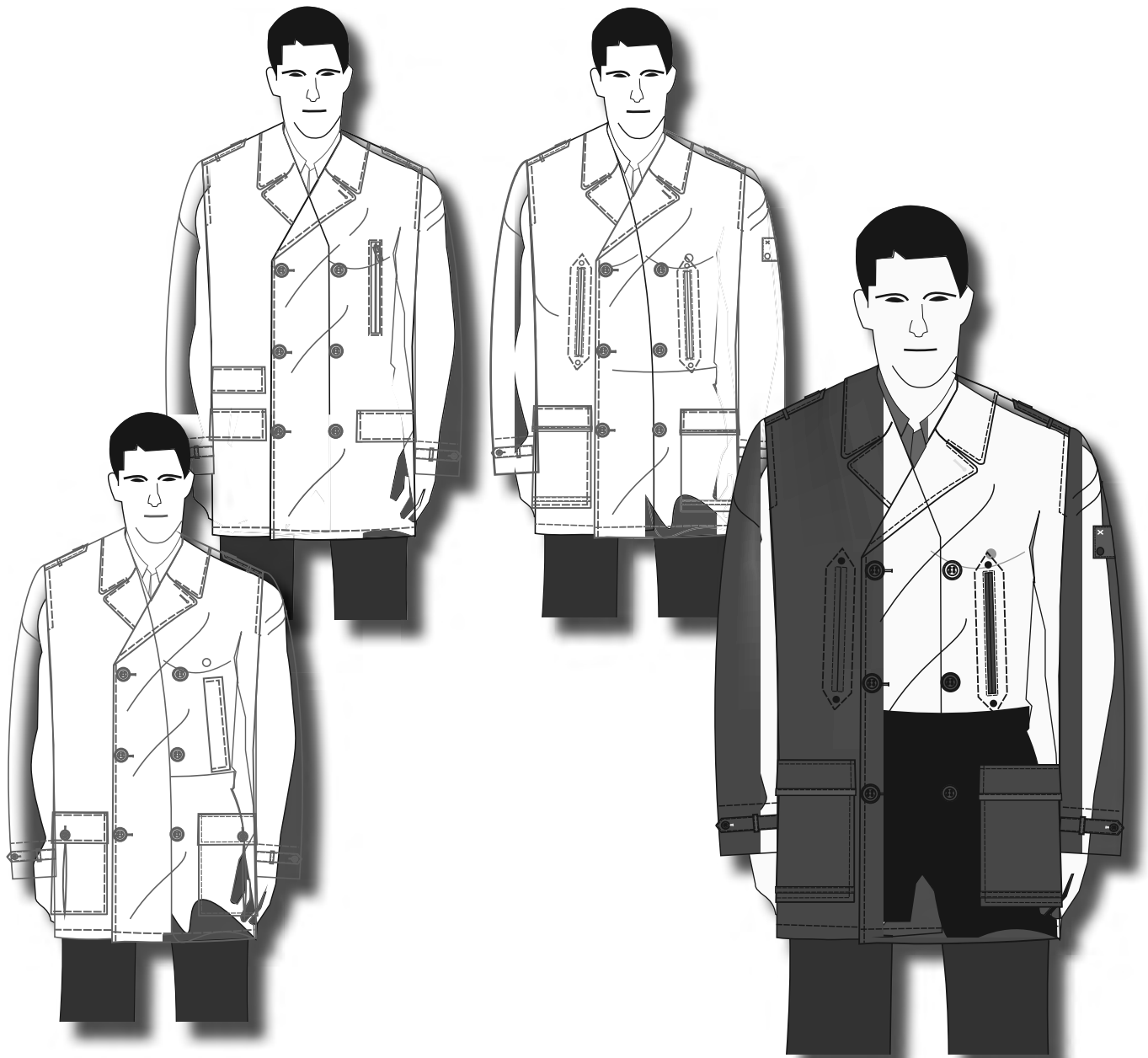
For the front I have used style B bike jacket and removed the panel seams and zip, but left the collar and shoulder seam as a guide for drawing the new collar and shoulder position. I copied the cuff details from style A and added the center front line for the position of the buttons. Finally I sketched the outline of the pockets and front panel seams. Style A was used for the back with the center back seam deleted and the side straps added to the back waist band. At this stage be sure that the first draft is correct before you start adding all the stitch detail to the final drawings.





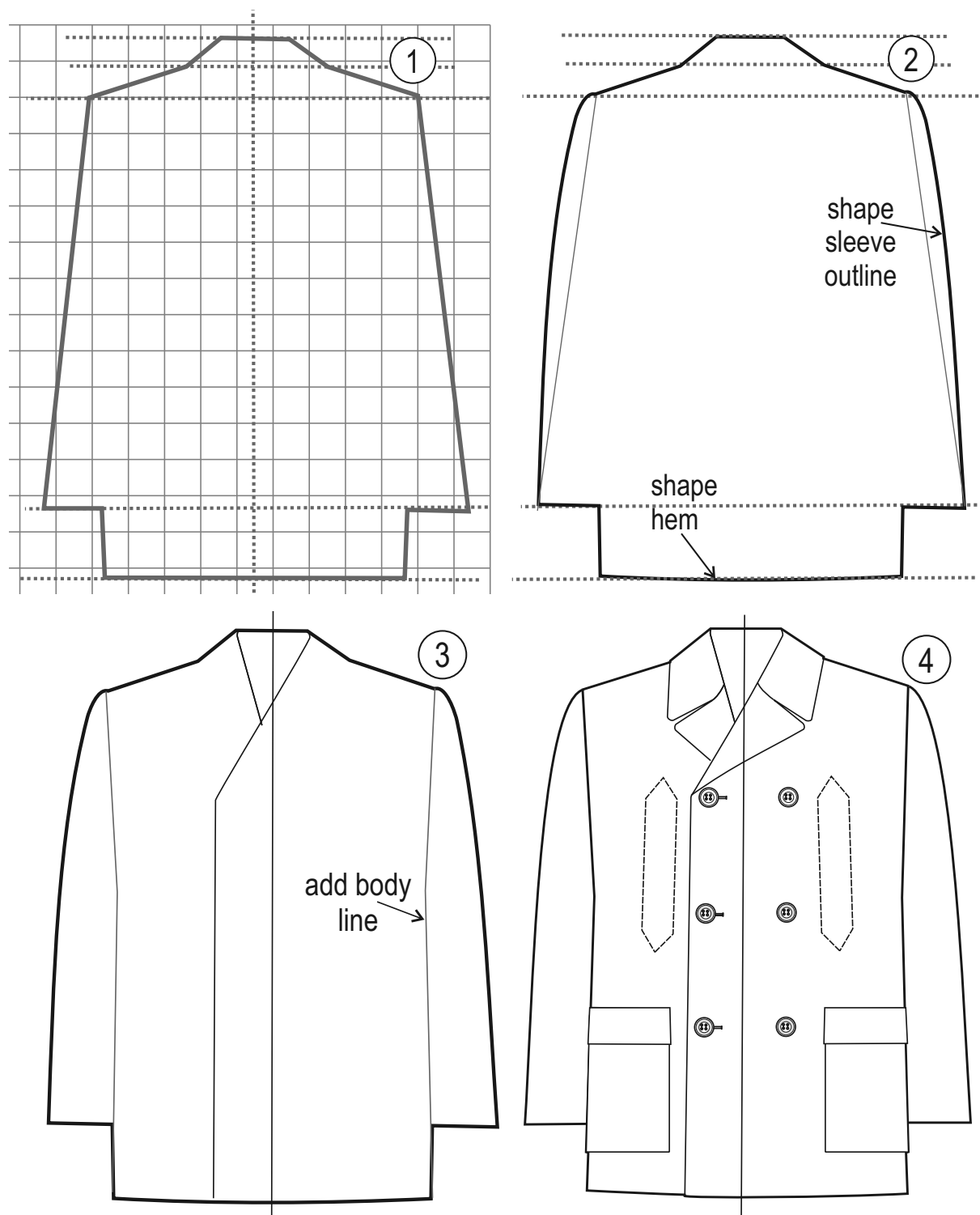
Drawing 1 is the outline of biker jacket A. The details of the denim jacket are shown with a dotted line. Drawing 2 is the completed opened out jacket. Drawing 3 is the inside. It is not necessary to show all the inside detail except the inner pockets and the width of the inner band. The jacket seams are either 5-thread over-locked or french-seamed and this is indicated on the drawing.

CHAPTER 6

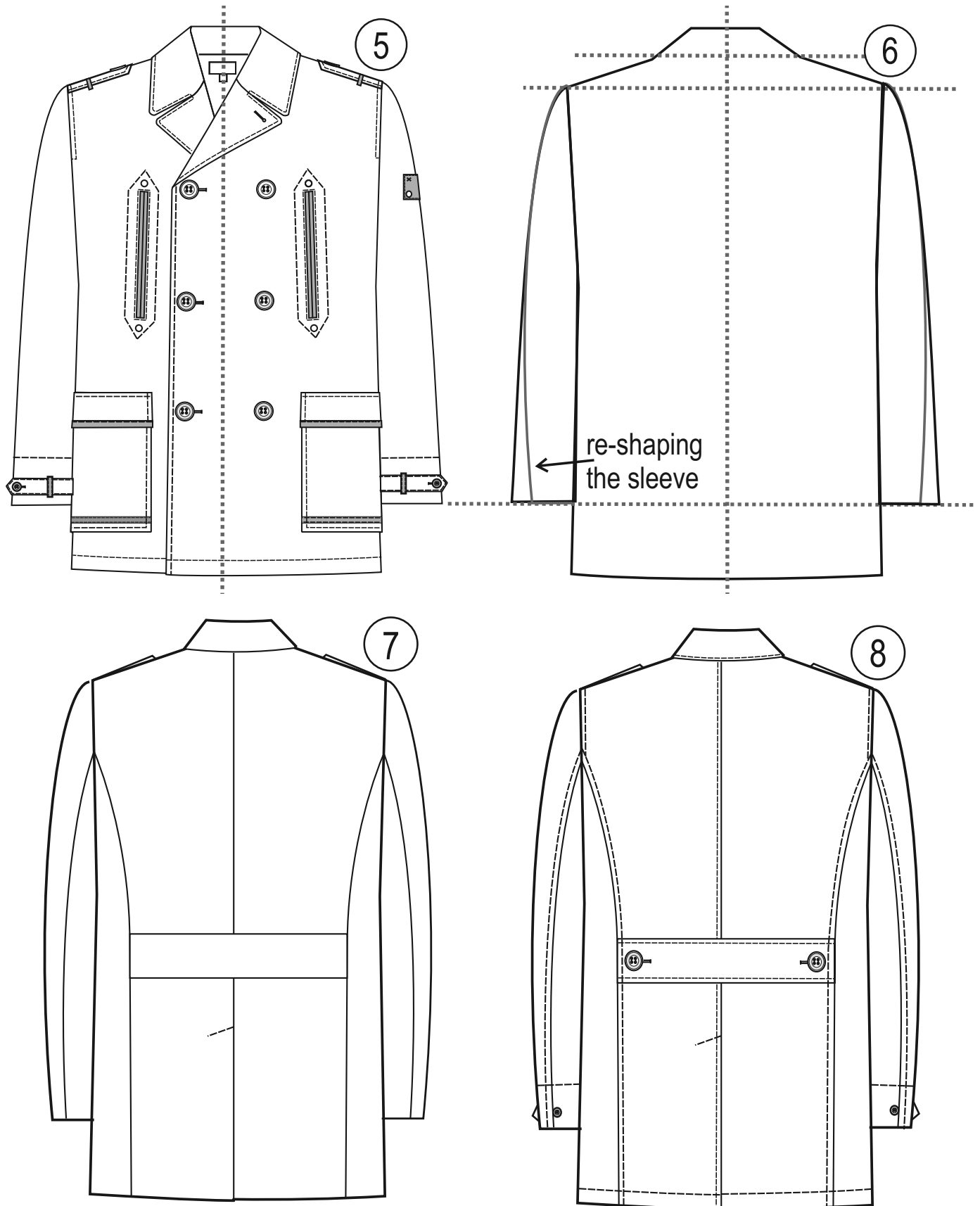


OVERCOAT

This is a classic modern shape that can be updated with a lot of interesting detail. The first step is to create a style drawing of the front and back. More frequently today, customers are turning to their suppliers for new ideas. Once the first style is created, the drawings can be used as a basis for a design brief by using the flat drawing and showing different options. If you feel particularly creative, find a suitable figure to scan into your PC, trace around the figure and superimpose the overcoat on to it showing each figure with different style details. Add lines to show movement. Corel has an application called mesh fill where you can mix other colors, showing light and dark areas creating a more interesting presentation. I do not consider myself very proficient at this, but it does impress customers if you make the effort to provide a design package as part of the overall product development procedure.



This first drawing is the most important because the key to drawing an accurate shape is to achieve the right proportions in the width and the height of the garment. Figure 1 is formed by connecting straight lines from the collar crease to the outer edge of the collar, to the shoulder point, the bottom of the sleeve and to the bottom of the coat hem as shown by the horizontal lines. I check that both sides of the coat are an equal distance apart by adding the vertical center front line, as the buttons will need to be centered equally either side of the line. Working with a grid helps you ensure that the left and right sides of the garment are level. Figure 2 shows a small amount of curve added to the sleeve and hem to complete the outline. You can only be sure that your drawing is accurate when you add the front edge, body line, buttons and the outline of the pockets as in figure 3 & 4. Figure 5 completes the front.



From this point onwards the rest of the style detail will fit into place. The back outline is exactly the same as the front except I have narrowed the cuff and tapered in the sleeve slightly. Figures 6 to 8 show the completion of the back. With a little bit of adjustment these outlines can be re-used for many jackets and coats styles. See chapter on templates.