

The vocabulary of garment construction — from first pattern to finished product.

PATTERN & FIT

Dart	A folded, stitched tuck that removes excess fabric to create 3D shaping — most common at bust, waist, and back shoulder.	Grain Line	The direction of the warp (lengthwise) threads in a woven fabric. Cutting on-grain gives structure; bias gives drape.
Princess Seam	A continuous vertical seam from shoulder or armhole to hem, shaping the torso without darts.	Bias Cut	Cutting fabric at 45° to the grain. Creates natural drape and stretch — characteristic of fluid, body-skimming garments.
Raglan Sleeve	Sleeve with a diagonal seam running from the underarm to the neckline — comfortable, sporty silhouette.	Seam Allowance	The margin of fabric between the cut edge and the seamline — typically 1–1.5 cm in RTW production.
Drop Shoulder	Sleeve seam sits below the natural shoulder point, creating a relaxed, oversized look.	Notch	A small mark on pattern pieces indicating where two sections align during construction.
Ease	Extra fabric built into a pattern beyond body measurements — wearing ease allows movement; design ease adds volume for style.	Grading	Scaling a pattern up or down between sizes while maintaining the designed proportions.

CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

Toile	A test garment made in cheap fabric (usually calico) to check fit and construction before cutting into final material.	Interlining	A layer inserted between the outer fabric and lining to add structure, warmth, or body.
Basting	Temporary, large-stitch sewing to hold fabric in place before final stitching — removed afterwards.	Underlining	Cut to match each garment piece and attached before construction — different from lining, which is added last.
Stay Stitching	A line of stitching on curved or bias edges to prevent stretching before assembly.	Topstitching	Visible stitching on the right side of a garment, functional and/or decorative.
Facing	A piece of fabric sewn to finish a raw edge (neckline, armhole) — turned to the inside of the garment.	CMT	Cut, Make, Trim — a factory service where the buyer supplies all materials and the factory provides only labour.

FABRIC & MATERIALS

Warp / Weft	Warp = lengthwise threads on the loom (strong, less stretch). Weft = crosswise threads (more give).	Interfacing	A woven or non-woven material fused or sewn to fabric to add stiffness — used in collars, cuffs, waistbands.
Selvage	The finished edge of a woven fabric as it comes off the loom — not cut, no fraying.	Lay Plan	The arrangement of pattern pieces on fabric to minimise waste before cutting — critical in production costing.
GSM	Grams per Square Metre — measures fabric weight. Lower GSM = lighter, sheerer. Higher = heavier, more structured.	Marker	A printed lay plan used by the factory to cut multiple plies of fabric simultaneously.
Trims	Everything added to a garment beyond fabric: buttons, zips, labels, thread, elastic, interfacing, lining.	Hand	How a fabric feels to the touch — its drape, softness, stiffness, and texture.

PRODUCTION TERMS

Critical Path	The timeline of every stage from design sign-off to delivery — missing any date can delay the entire season.	Photo Sample	Sample used for e-commerce and campaign photography — often the first production-quality unit.
Proto Sample	First physical sample, often in substitute fabric, to check construction and proportions.	Top of Production	The first units off the production line, sent for final QC sign-off before the full run ships.
SMS	Salesman Sample — production-quality sample used for wholesale sell-in and final buyer approval.	FOB Point	The agreed port where ownership transfers from supplier to buyer — the buyer pays freight from this point onwards.