

ROOM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT For 4-H Clubs

UNIT I

Planning Unit

Background and Windows



Circular 445

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
Agricultural Extension Division

Thomas P. Cooper, Dean and Director

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ROOM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FOR 4-H CLUBS

Have you often wished for a room of your own in which to express your particular likes in furnishings, colors, and accessories? You may have this wish—though more will be needed, of course, than wishing. The 4-H Room Improvement Project gives you an opportunity to make your room attractive, so that you will be proud to show it to your friends, and so that you will enjoy working and playing in it. Whether you have a room of your own or share it with another, and whether your family owns the house or rents, may make some difference in the approach, but the final result can be the same.

Attractive rooms are not obtained with money alone. If the finished room is to be satisfactory, you must do intelligent planning before buying the furnishings. Many times a girl will find that with careful planning and her own skill she can create an attractive room at very little cost.

The first step in beginning the Room Improvement Project is to make a study of the room, considering the following 5 units in the Room Improvement Project:

1. Planning Unit
2. Arrangement Unit
3. Dressing Unit
4. Reading, Sewing, or Study Unit
5. Sleeping Unit

Each of these units includes enough study and work to comprise a 4-H Club project. Older girls may complete more than 1 project in a year if they have time to carry out the requirements satisfactorily.

The Planning Unit is basic in the Room Improvement Project, and, as a rule, should be the first project taken. However, if the background of your room, the walls, floors, and woodwork, are in good condition, you may start with another unit. It is wise to start your room work with the unit which is needed most and that which you can carry out successfully. In any of the 5 projects, consider color, pattern, and texture of the backgrounds of the room before starting work.

Background and Windows

Room Improvement Project for 4-H Clubs

By EDITH LACY, DOROTHY GENTRY, and LYDA SUTHERLAND

Has anyone ever said of your room that it looks just like you? And was that a compliment? It will be if you have taken care and thought in planning and arranging it. Your room should not only be suited to its purpose, but also to you as an individual. For example, if you are a sturdy outdoor type with vivid dark coloring, you will choose a room scheme different from that chosen by a friend who is dainty, slender, and blond. The sturdy outdoor type generally looks best in strong colors of yellow, red, and green, and usually likes plaid, stripe, or dotted patterns on crisp or sturdy fabrics. A dainty girl, on the other hand, may appear to advantage in light values of blue, rose, and yellow, and prefer flowered soft materials. In beginning the room work, decide on the improvements that will add to your enjoyment of the room and at the same time make it a suitable setting for you.

WHAT TO DO IN THIS PROJECT

Head H, or Study Group

1. Learn the part that color and pattern play in room backgrounds and furnishings.
2. Look at your room as an outsider would and visualize changes that can be made.
3. Collect pictures and magazine articles which offer suggestions for room schemes.
4. Consider your coloring and your personality as they will affect the decoration of your room.

Hand H, or Work Group

1. Fill out the enclosed check sheet.
2. Start a Room Improvement booklet. Make covers for the book.
3. Plan a color scheme for your room, working colors of furnishings on hand into this plan.
4. Write a chapter in your Room Improvement booklet, telling what you have done.
5. Select from the following groupings, and plan for further improvements.

Woodwork

Wash and wax

Paint, varnish, or apply other finish

Floors

Clean

Fill cracks with crackfiller

Wax and polish

Oil

Paint or varnish

Floor Coverings

Wax or paint linoleum

Make one or more rugs as needed—braided, hooked, or woven

Buy a rug or linoleum

Walls

Clean paper and repair any torn places

Paint using casein or oil paints

Paper

Whitewash

Windows

Clean

Hang curtains to improve proportions of window

Recondition old curtains

Make new curtains

Make new drapery or recondition the old

Recondition, make, or buy shades

Improve outlook from window

Add a window

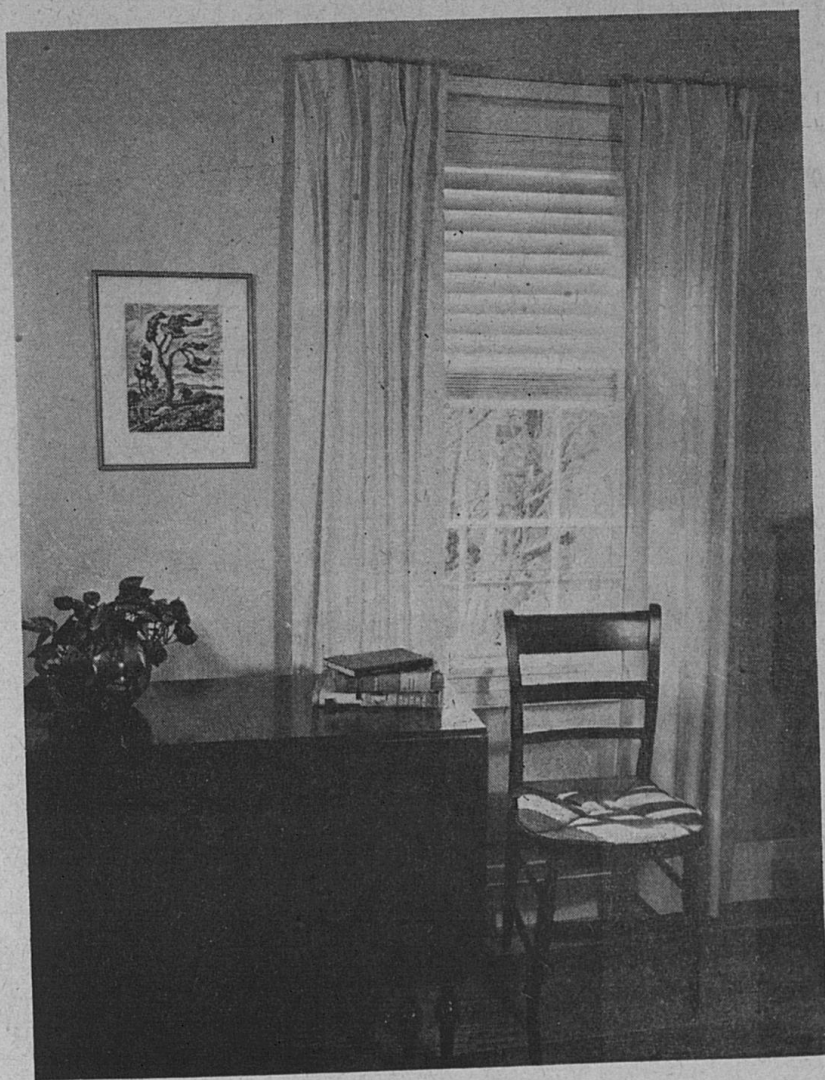
Close unneeded window or door for closet or book shelves.

COLOR

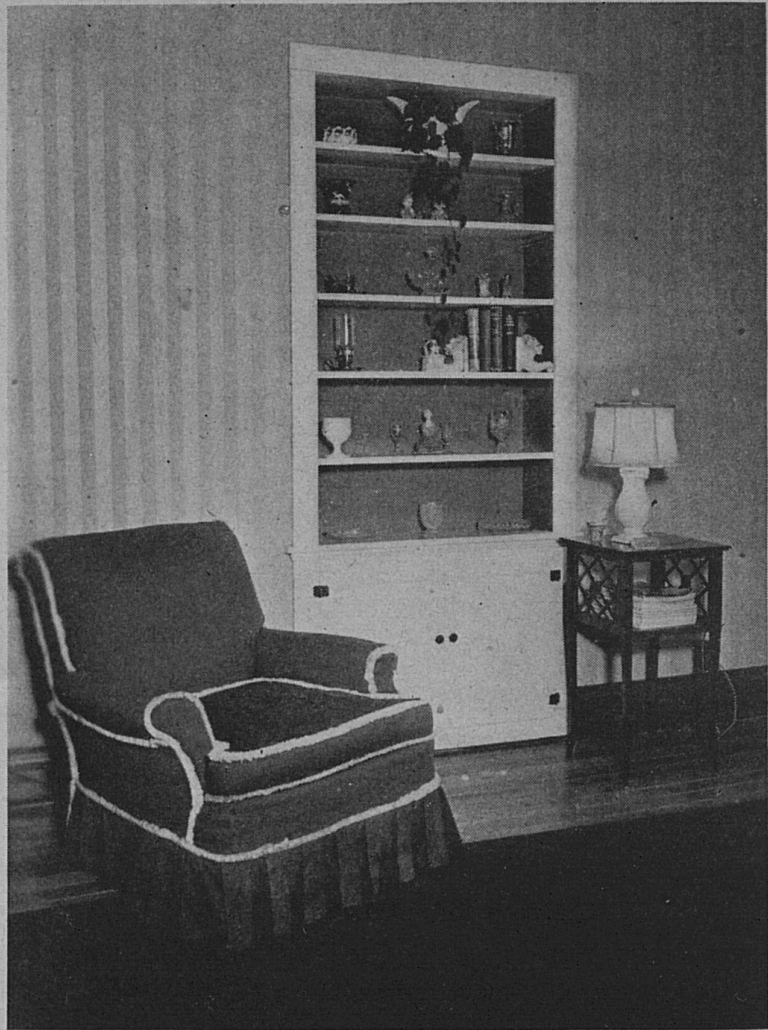
Color is very important in planning a room. By proper use of color, you can make the room restful and charming, or gay and beautiful. By poor selection of color you will make a room gaudy and unattractive, or dead and uninteresting.

Usually a Club girl likes a bedroom done in light colors. Light colors are easier to use than darker or brighter colors. A safe rule is to use neutral, dulled colors in large areas, and in small areas to use bright colors for accent. There are a few general rules that govern the planning of any color scheme. Consider the following:

1. The location and amount of light in the room. In rooms with little light, located on the north side of the house, use colors that reflect light and warmth, such as yellow or peach. For rooms with sunny southern exposure, use cool colors, such as gray, green, and blue.
2. The furniture and furnishings on hand.
3. The relation of the room to the rest of the house. For example, a bedroom in the front, opening into the living room, should have the color scheme closely related to the living room if the two rooms are to be used together.
4. Your own personality or tastes.



Drapery used without glass curtains. Note French plaits at top.



Bookshelves replace an unneeded doorway.

PATTERN IN THE ROOM

By "pattern" is meant the design or figures in drapery, chair covers, rugs, walls, and so on. A pleasing balance between patterned and plain surfaces in a room relieves monotony, and is as important as color in giving the desired effect. For example, if the walls are plain, use figured curtains, and perhaps, also, some design in rugs or slip covers. If walls are patterned, use plain curtains and rugs. The designs in most girls' rooms should be informal and gay.

WALLS

Walls can often be improved simply by removing uninteresting or excess pictures, patching the paper, or cleaning the walls with wall-

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paper cleaner. Sometimes the finish needs to be changed entirely. Usually the walls of a girl's bedroom should be dainty and very light in color tone. Paper and paint on a wall look darker than when seen in small amounts. Plain or indefinitely figured wall finishes make decorating easier.

Wallpaper

Use plain or figured wallpaper avoiding "spotty" or "crawly" designs. Paper with coarse texture, gold or satin figures, or stripes, is not good in small bedrooms. The design and color of the paper should fit into the spirit of the room. It should produce a simple, quaint, or dainty effect. A light, plain, or small indistinct design is best for the ceiling. The ceiling should be lighter than the walls and blend with them. Dot or star ceiling paper is inexpensive and attractive in attic rooms. To make small attic rooms look larger paper the wall and ceiling alike.

Painted Walls

Either oil or casein paints are effective on walls. Oil paint may be had in gloss, semi-gloss, or dull finish. The dull finish is more pleasing. Oil paint is expensive, but it wears well and is easy to clean. Casein paint, an inexpensive water paint, may be had in lovely colors, and does not rub off easily. Many girls find casein paint satisfactory for covering old faded wallpaper or wallboard. Because it costs so little, a new coat can often be applied over another to freshen up walls when it would not be practical to use a more expensive paint. Whitewash produces good effects in some rooms, especially in log houses. Whitewash is made by stirring 8 ounces of raw linseed oil and 8 gallons fresh milk into enough lime to make the mixture the consistency of paint. Use while fresh.

FLOORS

If you cannot afford to have old floors sanded and refinished, then the simplest finish for a badly worn floor is linoleum or oil. Clean and dry the floor, then apply the oil finish, using a mixture of equal parts of linseed oil and turpentine. Apply hot. Rub with a cloth, and wipe off excess with a dry cloth. When dry, apply wax which may be made at home by the following recipe.

FLOOR WAX

¼ lb beeswax 2 tablespoons alcohol ½ cup turpentine

Melt wax over hot water; remove from fire; add turpentine and alcohol; and stir until smooth.

OR

¼ lb beeswax

¼ lb paraffin

Melt beeswax and paraffin by placing them in a quart jar and setting the jar in a pan of hot water on the stove. Remove the jar from stove when they are melted, and add as much turpentine as the jar will hold. Stir and cool.

Paint is the best finish for a floor which has never had a finish. Clean the floor well, then apply 2 or 3 coats of good quality floor or deck paint. Sandpaper, and wipe off between coats.

WOODWORK

Woodwork may be painted the same color as the walls, or it may be lighter or darker, if it is of the same color tone. Ivory or white enamel on the woodwork is suitable for most rooms. A room with dark mahogany doors and frames can be made much lighter and more attractive by painting them in a light enamel. It may be necessary to use 2 or more coats of paint to cover old dark finish. Use dull finish rather than gloss for woodwork.

WINDOWS

Windows are truly the eyes of the room, and much of the charm of the room depends on the window treatment. See what you can do to improve the appearance of your windows as much as possible without spending money. Attractive windows are not obtained with money alone. In making plans for improving your windows, consider location, outlook, and treatments.

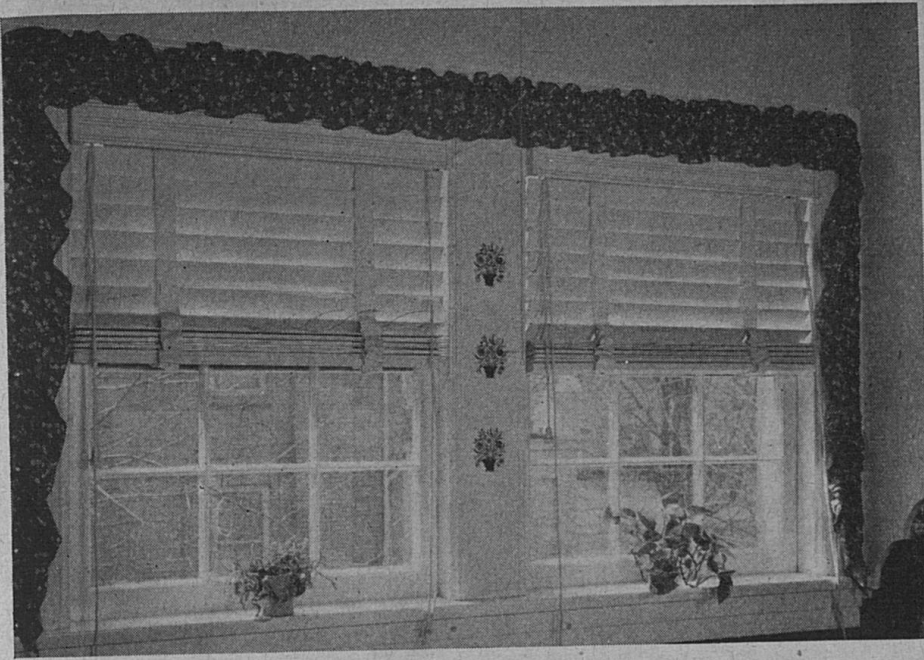
Location and Proportion of Windows

Is there enough light and air through the windows? If not, can you have another window added? If you can't afford this, can you curtain your room so that you will get as much light as possible?

The proportions of poorly sized windows can be improved by curtain treatment. Shorten the appearance of long windows by using tie-back or double dutch curtains. Widen narrow windows by placing wooden blocks on the top edges of the window casing and attaching rod fixtures to these so that curtains and drapery will extend only to inside window frame and not over the glass. This not only makes the window appear wider, but lets in more light.

Outlook

Improve the outlook from windows by planting flowers in the yard or in window boxes and by placing flower pots in the window. Glass shelves in windows provide an interesting way of displaying ornaments and small plants.



A ruffle may be used instead of curtains for small windows

Shades

Clean shades and reverse bottom ends to top, or make new ones of unbleached muslin, glazed chintz, denim, or regular shade material. Use rollers from old window shades if the springs are still good. New shades can be bought, though shades of good quality are fairly expensive.

Glass Curtains

Glass curtains hang next to the window glass, for the purpose of softening the light, and adding cheer to the room. Such materials as plain scrim, voile, organdy, swiss, lawn, net, or gauze may be used. Most windows require glass curtains but do not need drapery. Recondition old glass curtains by making them of correct length and tinting. If the walls have a cream background the curtains need to be slightly cream. If the wallpaper has a dark background with white design, use a white glass curtain rather than a colored curtain. Select the material and style of curtain which will fit into the room. Ruffled tie-back curtains fit in with dainty colors and light furniture; straight-hanging curtains look better in a room with heavy dark furniture.

Making Glass Curtains

Straight glass curtains should be just long enough to escape the sill, or, if no drapery is used, they should be long enough to cover the apron of the window frame. Take measurements with a yard stick, allowing for hems and casings. Leave hems 1 inch wide on the sides and 3 inches at the bottom. Cut off all selvage before making. If no

valance is used, a heading above the top casing is neat and attractive. Ruffling for ruffled tie-back curtains should measure from $1\frac{1}{3}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the length and width of the curtains. Ruffled curtains may come to the floor.

Drapery

For some rooms drapery may be desirable, and may be used with or without glass curtains. Use gingham, chintz, or percale prints, making drapery long enough to touch the floor.

YOUR STORY OF THE PROJECT

A booklet containing the story of the project is to be prepared. It is for the purpose of keeping records and showing changes made in the room, and it should accompany all exhibits. It is also a good place to preserve information and illustrative material on room improvement, and it can be made one of the most interesting parts of the work. Use a loose-leaf notebook with a cover $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12$ and pages $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inches. Use stiff cardboards covered with wallpaper, cretonne, gingham or oilcloth for a cover. Include the following:

(a) Detailed description of the room before beginning the work; its size, location, kind of furniture, and its arrangement. Pictures and drawings help to tell the story.

(b) The color scheme for the room: samples of wallpaper, curtains, or any materials used, but not miniature articles.

(c) Kodak pictures, or drawings of groups or individual pieces of furniture, of the room before and after improvement.

(d) Two diagrams of floor plan drawn to scale, showing location of doors and windows, and arrangement of furniture; one before beginning the work and the other after project is completed. (Drawings of the walls showing furniture and picture arrangement would add interest.)

(e) Record sheet giving itemized cost of improvements.

(f) Check sheet showing improvements needed and those to be made.

(g) A story of your experience in making the improvements.

(h) Each unit of work will make a chapter in the booklet.

Be as original as you like in making this booklet. Don't feel restricted to the ideas suggested. Each room has a different story. It can be interesting, attractive, and educational to the person who prepares it, and also to those who read it.

References:

- Ky. Circular 338, Wall treatment in the livable home.
342, Floor coverings in the livable home.

CHECK SHEET FOR PLANNING UNIT

The check sheet is to help determine what needs to be done in this project. The 4-H girl, the leader, the agent, and the mother should help in making this check.

Name of girl _____ Age _____

Address _____

Date of first check _____ Date of final check _____

	Satis- factory	Unsatis- factory	Will improve as follows
Color scheme			
Pleasing combination	_____	_____	_____
Suited to the girl	_____	_____	_____
Pattern or design			
Balanced	_____	_____	_____
Suited to the girl	_____	_____	_____
Woodwork finish			
Condition	_____	_____	_____
Type	_____	_____	_____
Color			
Is it inconspicuous?	_____	_____	_____
Does it go well with walls?	_____	_____	_____
Floors			
Finish			
Type	_____	_____	_____
Condition	_____	_____	_____
Cracks filled	_____	_____	_____
Floor covering	_____	_____	_____
Walls			
Kind of finish	_____	_____	_____
Condition	_____	_____	_____
Pattern	_____	_____	_____
Color	_____	_____	_____
Windows			
Outlook	_____	_____	_____
Ventilation	_____	_____	_____
Size and shape (can they be improved by curtain arrangement?)	_____	_____	_____
Treatment			
Curtains			
Condition	_____	_____	_____
Color and pattern	_____	_____	_____
Hanging style	_____	_____	_____
Shades	_____	_____	_____

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