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For all Jane Austen Admirers - Home Education "Pemberly Ball" Attire! by [Leo Steven](#)

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My child, Alex, was crazy regarding Jane Austen when we homeschooled. So much so that when he went to college he founded a Jane Austen club. One of the functions each year was having a "Pemberly Ball. " We have since discovered that various other homeschool groups hold very similar dances. If you are thinking about a "Pemberly Ball" for your own homeschool co-op, you may be curious in how to find the costumes! One of his young colleagues shared a few tips with me.

Although outfits for a Pemberley Ball are not demanded, you may want to arrive in one regardless. Here are some ideas for getting together a great outfit without the need of using up your life savings.

For the women, truly all you need is the dress. That is all someone will see. A general beginning point for that can be found courtesy of a nearby shop. If you choose to buy your own, my best recommendation to you is to look on E-bay, most gowns run in between \$40-80. They mail quite promptly, usually within a week, and are of superb quality even though the photos on the internet are not especially striking. The only disadvantage is that are totally unadorned, but all they will really require is a sash, which usually you do not even have to sew on, and that only costs a couple of dollars for ribbon. If you are more driven you can also add beading and trim to fit your fancy.

For you men, there are two really good instructions for MacGuyver-ing a look together from used merchandise. There are also good guidelines for tying a cravat online. Achieve this so that you will not encounter the disapproval of Sir Percy Blakney, the Scarlet Pimpernel, "Odd's Fish, m'dear! The man cannot even tie his own cravat! " Keep in mind that most stylish cravats in Jane Austen's period were white.

For those of you looking for a tailcoat and a waistcoat, You can get tailcoats from an E-bay seller. Look for secondhand tailcoats in their exact sizes and in terrific condition for only \$20, and waistcoats run about \$10. You will get them within three days of ordering them. For the waistcoats, the higher they button, the more period-correct they will appear. One last word about tailcoats: dark colors were more fashionable for that time period, so given the choice between black or gray, the two most typical colors you can find, go with the black.

For pants, long pants will work in a pinch, but if you would like to go for knee breeches, a great technique is to get a pair of women's capris or petal-pushers as long as they are quite plain and not denim. Then you just stick a pair of white knee socks with them, and you are completed!

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