

# Learn to Sew for your Doll

*A Beginner's Guide to Sewing for an 18" Doll*



Sherralyn St. Clair

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Front and back cover: The brunette doll is Emma from Springfield Dolls.

## INTRODUCTION

**B**efore I had even learned to read, my grandmother taught me how to sew. I do not know who taught my grandmother to sew, but I know that my mother's grandmother (my great-grandmother) taught my mother. I also know that my great-grandmother learned from her grandmother. When my daughter was growing up, she did not have a grandmother living nearby, so she had to learn to sew from me. My daughter and I have both taken sewing classes and I still read lots of books on sewing, but it is a family tradition to learn the first steps of sewing at home.

Because of all the sharp and hot equipment that sewing requires, a budding seamstress needs a lot of adult supervision while learning to sew. I am constantly referring to “your grownup” in the instructions. Mothers and grandmothers work great as sewing teachers, but other relatives or friends are also good choices.

If you would like to teach a special child how to sew, this book presents a series of skills in a learning sequence. It gives you a place to start and then builds on the initial skills.

You can also use the book with small groups. I have taught sewing to scout and church groups. I have even taught a quilting unit to a classroom of third graders. A group setting can offer a very pleasant way to learn sewing. Please check my copyright notice to see the ways that you can use this book with groups.

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## Getting Started

Before you start sewing, I would like to introduce you to Florabunda.



I'm glad to meet you,  
Nice Sewing Student.

Florabunda is a small doll that I designed and made. She is my assistant.



Assistant! I thought  
that I was *the* sewing  
instructor!

Florabunda is my *assistant* sewing instructor.

She lives in my sewing room and gets into all sorts of trouble.



Hey!

I mean she is very interested in sewing. She will sometimes explain things or add her opinions to the sewing instructions. Now that you have met Florabunda we can get started.

### Equipment You Will Need

Here is a list of the things that you will need as you learn to sew.

#### *Your Grownup*

Find an adult who can sew and who understands the sewing machine that you will use. Ask very sweetly for help learning to sew. Be sure to share this book with your grownup.

Use your innocent  
Bambi eyes and say,  
"Please, please help  
me learn to sew."

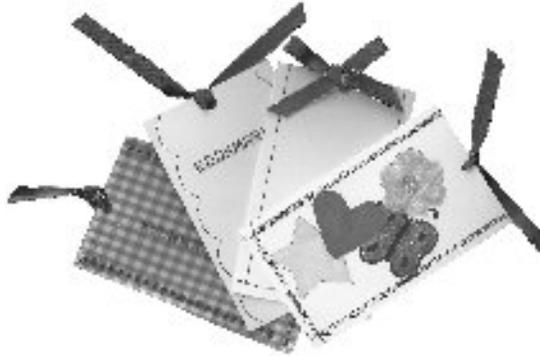


#### *A Sewing Machine*

##### *Foot pedal*

It is much easier to sew doll clothes if you use a foot pedal on your machine with controllable speed. A sewing machine that only has a fast speed foot pedal is hard to control while you are sewing short seams

## Making a Bookmark



Here is an easy project to introduce you to your sewing machine. You can turn a piece of light card into a bookmark and learn to work a sewing machine at the same time.

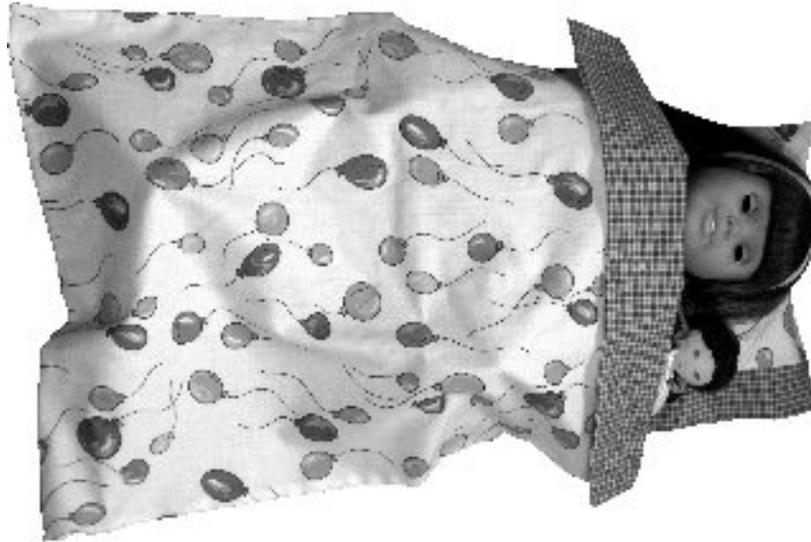
### You Will Learn

- How to start and stop the machine
- The difference between a stitch and a seam
- How to guide the stitching to make a straight seam
- How to sew a zigzag seam

### You Will Need

- Small index cards
- Colorful thread for your machine
- 100/16 (jean) machine needle (Save this needle for other paper projects after you use it. It will probably become too dull for sewing fabric.)
- Fabric glue or glue stick
- Optional ribbon
- Optional colored pens and pencils to decorate your bookmark
- Optional hole punch
- Optional fusible webbing for a cloth covered bookmark
- Your sewing machine

## Sewing a Cover for your Doll



Your first project with fabric is to make a cover for your doll to use when she takes a nap.

### You Will Learn

- How to find the straight of grain, the cross grain, and the fabric's bias
- How to tear fabric and how to pull a thread and cut fabric
- How to use scissors to cut accurately
- How to find the right and wrong side of the fabric
- How to sew two pieces of fabric together
- How to turn fabric right side out and use a point turner
- How to sew a slip-stitch

### You Will Need

- $\frac{3}{4}$  yd (about 70 cm) each of two different fabrics. One for the top and one for the lining. You will not use all of either piece of fabric, but you should save the scraps to make a matching pillowcase later.
- Matching thread
- Scissors
- Pins
- A tape measure
- A place to cut your fabric
- Your sewing machine
- A hand sewing needle

## Sewing a Pillow



### **You Will Learn:**

- How to read pattern markings
- How to use a pattern to cut out fabric
- How to mark the fabric correctly
- How to stuff a pillow

### **You Will Need**

- A copy of the pillow pattern at the end of this chapter
- A small piece of cotton fabric (It will be easier to find the straight of grain, if the selvedge is attached.)
- Matching thread
- A small amount of polyester fiber fill for stuffing
- Scissors
- Pins
- A place to cut your fabric
- Washable pen or pencil
- Your sewing machine
- A hand sewing needle

## Sewing a Two Tone Pillowcase



### You Will Learn

- How to place and cut patterns on a fold
- How to finish a raw seam

### You Will Need

- A copy of the pillowcase and pillowcase trim patterns from the end of this chapter
- The fabric scraps from the top and lining of the doll bed cover
- Matching thread
- Scissors
- Pins
- A place to cut your fabric
- Your sewing machine
- Pinking shears, if you will use them to finish the seam

## Sewing a Simple Sundress and Summer Top



I have a dress just like this. Look on the book's cover.

### You Will Learn

- How to gather fabric
- How to topstitch
- How to press a seam allowance to the inside of a garment

### You Will Need

- A copy of the sundress and summer top patterns at the end of this chapter
- $\frac{1}{3}$  yd (30 cm) piece of cotton fabric in an interesting color or pattern for the sun dress
- $\frac{1}{4}$  yd (23 cm) piece of cotton fabric for a summer top
- 20" (50 cm) of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " (1 cm) wide ribbon for each dress or top
- Matching thread
- Scissors
- Pins
- A place to cut your fabric
- Washable pen or pencil
- Your sewing machine
- Pinking shears if you plan to use them
- An index card to make an ironing aid
- A hand sewing needle
- A needle threader

## Sewing an A-line Skirt



### You Will Learn

- How to make an elastic casing
- How to pull elastic through a casing
- How to topstitch a hem

### You Will Need

- A copy of the skirt pattern at the end of this chapter
- $\frac{1}{4}$  yd (20 cm) piece of cotton fabric in an interesting color or pattern
- Matching thread
- $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3 mm) wide elastic
- Scissors
- Pins
- A place to cut your fabric
- Your sewing machine
- A bodkin
- Pinking shears, if you plan to use them

### Cutting and Marking

1. Cut two fabric pieces from the skirt pattern. One piece will be the front and the other piece will be the back.
2. Mark the notches.

## Sewing a Pair of Shorts



### You Will Learn

- More about matching notches
- How pants patterns fit together

### You Will Need

- A copy of the shorts pattern at the end of this chapter
- $\frac{1}{4}$  yd (20 cm) piece of cotton fabric in an interesting color or pattern
- Matching thread
- $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3 mm) elastic
- Scissors
- Pins
- A place to cut your fabric
- Your sewing machine
- A bodkin
- Pinking shears if you plan to use them

### Cutting and Marking

- Cut two of the shorts pattern.
- Mark the notches.

## Sewing a Two Tier Skirt



### You Will Learn

- To hand baste fabric pieces together before machine stitching
- To sew gathered fabric to flat fabric

### You Will Need

- Copies of the two tier skirt pattern pieces at the end of this chapter
- Glue stick or tape to assemble patterns
- $\frac{1}{4}$  yd (23 cm) of cotton fabric for a single color skirt or fabric scraps for a two-toned skirt
- Matching thread
- $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3 mm) wide elastic
- Scissors
- Pins
- A place to cut your fabric
- Your sewing machine
- A hand sewing needle
- A bodkin
- Pinking shears if you plan to use them

### Gluing the Pattern Pieces

- Copy and cut out the two pattern pieces for the skirt top tier and glue them together.

## Sewing a Smock Top and Nightgown



### You Will Learn

- How to sew a sleeve that is cut as part of the front and back smock top (not a sewn-in sleeve)
- How to sew a sleeve casing
- How to make a back closing
- How to add hook and loop tape to a back closing

### You Will Need

- Copies of the smock pattern pieces at the end of this chapter
- Glue stick or tape to assemble patterns
- Paper (gridded paper is best) for nightgown pattern
- $\frac{1}{4}$  yd (23 cm) piece of cotton fabric for the smock top
- $\frac{1}{2}$  yard (45 cm) piece of cotton fabric for the nightgown
- Matching thread
- $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3 mm) elastic
- Matching ribbon for a bow (optional)
- Hook and loop tape such as Velcro®
- Scissors
- Pins
- A place to cut your fabric