

Capes



The great puppet capers

What do magicians, musketeers, Superman, Zoro, and Little Red Riding Hood all have in common? You guessed it—capes! Capes can add dramatic effect to any puppet's stage presence, especially entrances and exits. Making a cape is a lot like making a pillowcase, so you only need a few materials.

What you need

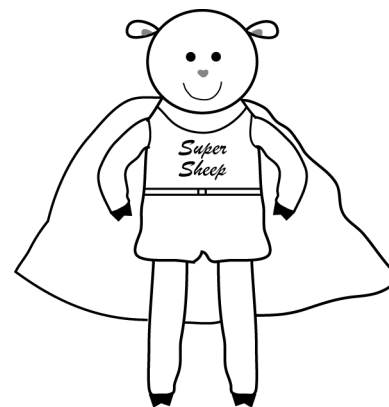
- ✧ Large rectangle of fabric
(at least twice as much as the size of the finished cape)
- ✧ Matching thread
- ✧ Safety pins (optional)

If you want to add a hood to your cape (see page 107), you need extra fabric for that too.

Why use two layers?

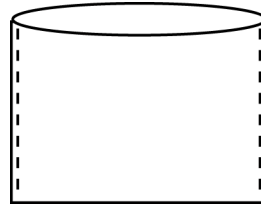
Since both sides of a cape show, you generally want both sides to look equally nice.

For a simple cape, you can choose a soft fabric that doesn't ravel (like fleece) and just cut it to size. That way, you don't have to sew anything! You can attach the cape to your puppet's costume using the guidelines on page 99.



Make the cape

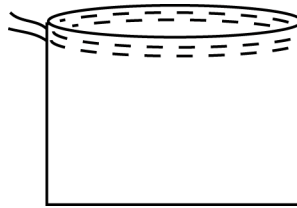
1. Fold the fabric in half right sides together.



2. Stitch along the edges perpendicular to the fold, leaving the edge opposite the fold open.

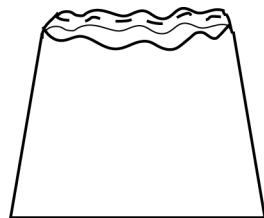
3. Turn the fabric right side out.

4. Gather the open edges of the fabric (using the directions on page 22), making sure that you *do not sew the layers together*.

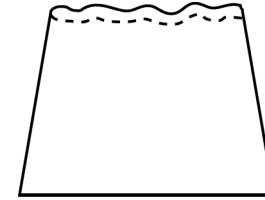


Close the cape

1. Once you've finished gathering both layers of the cape, fold both gathered edges inside the cape so the basting no longer shows.



2. Pin these edges together, then stitch the cape shut with a matching colored thread.



Add a hood (optional)

If you want to make a hood for the cape, see the directions on page 107 of the “Hats” chapter. Once you’ve completed the hood, you can stitch it to the top of the cape (right sides together!) or you can make it removable by attaching it with safety pins (see page 100 for guidelines).

Attach the cape

You can either attach the cape to an outfit using strategically placed safety pins (making the cape removable for use with other costumes), or you can attach it permanently by sewing it on.

Either way, the cape’s primary attachment should be in front of your puppet’s shoulders. This helps prevent the cape from dragging down the back of your puppet’s

costume, and allows the puppet (and hence, your arm) to carry the weight of the cape more easily.



Safety pin method

To get the best results from safety pins:

- ✂ Use many small safety pins rather than a few large ones, since large pins can leave awkward gaps.
- ✂ Start the pin from the inside of the costume.
- ✂ Avoid pinning through the top outside layer as much as possible. (This is easy with capes, since the cape has two layers.)

- ✂ Start by pinning the “stress” points (the ones that carry the weight of the costume), then work on filling in the gaps. (For capes, start with the front of the shoulders—the cape’s main attachment—and the middle of the back. Then pin the rest of the edges.)
- ✂ If at first you don’t succeed, pin, pin again!

Sewing method

Once you have the cape positioned on the costume (as directed in the “Attach the cape” section on page 99), pin the cape to the costume. Stitch them together, and you’re ready to fly! (Or at least your puppet is...)

