

## Dresses & jumpers



### What type of top?

- ☞ Carmen Miranda — jumper
- ☞ Bo Peep/Princess — jumper
- ☞ Dutch girl — jumper
- ☞ Cheerleader — vest
- ☞ Little Red/Dorothy — suit
- ☞ Bride/Ginger Rogers — sack
- ☞ Glinda — suit
- ☞ French maid — shirt

You can learn more about all these tops on page 83. (The dresses not listed are “Cinderella’s sack dresses”—see page 72.)

### Shirts into dresses

By combining outfits like shirts with skirts, you can create not “shirts,” but dresses. (Amazing!?) This chapter doesn’t explain how to make shirts and skirts, but it does explain how to put them together—and why you might want to consider doing so.

### To dress or not to dress?

No, I don’t mean to ask whether or not your puppet should get dressed. (Obviously I’m all for that—if I weren’t, I wouldn’t be writing a costuming book!) What I mean is: Sometimes it’s very convenient to have a complete dress in one piece. For example, you may want to put a single zipper through both top and skirt for easy changing (as for the Dorothy of Oz/Little Red Riding Hood dress). For other outfits (like the Dutch girl blouse and jumper), you may wish to leave the top and bottom separate so you can use them over and over again with several different costumes.

And this doesn’t have to be limited to dresses, either. As with the Juggling Jester on the front cover (or Cowardly Lion on the back), you can sew a pair of pants to a top to create rompers too. (In most cases, however, it’s more useful to leave the pants separate.)

## Types of tops

You can use any of the “Shirts & robes,” “Suits & coats,” “Vests,” or even “Cinderella’s sack dresses” as dress tops. But you may need to make them a little shorter than usual. While shirts and suits generally cover the puppet’s entire torso (and sack dresses cover much of the body), outfits used for tops reach only to the waistline. When in doubt, it’s better to make the top too long and trim it down later.

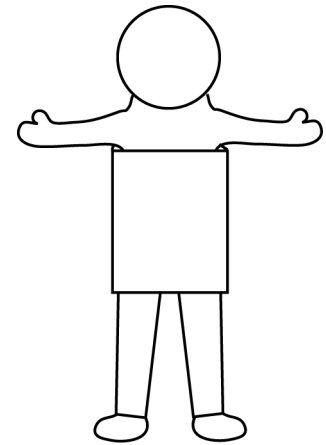
### Jumper tops—the wraparound

These types of tops work really well for flat-bodied puppets. If you have a more shapely puppet, you can use the traditional tops listed above, or the top from the next section, “Jumper tops—the half wraparound.”

Wrap-around jumper tops are actually sort of a simpler, shorter version of “Cinderella’s sack dresses.” I’ve used them for the lavender Bo Peep/Princess jumper on the front covers. By making the top extra long and gathering the top and bottom edges (page 22), I even created a ruffled bikini top for the Carmen Miranda dress!

To make a wrap-around jumper top...

1. Cut a rectangle of fabric that’s twice as tall as you want the top (plus 1/2”) and wide enough to wrap comfortably around your puppet’s upper body with enough extra room for fasteners (see page 44).



2. Fold the fabric in half right sides together and stitch along the side edges.



3. Turn the top right side out (you may need a blunt object, like a pen, to get the corners out) and iron it flat. Stitch along the bottom edge. (It doesn’t matter that the stitches show, since they’ll be covered up when you attach the top to a skirt.)



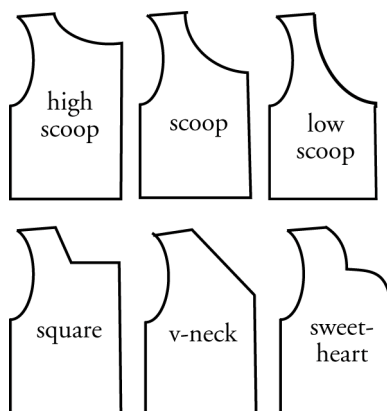
If you want to put a single fastener (like a zipper) in both the top and skirt, it’s easiest to “Attach the top and skirt” first (page 87). For fastener instructions, see the chapter “Zippers, buttons, & more.” If your puppet doesn’t need any fasteners, you can simply fold the jumper top in half (right sides together!) and sew the back shut. Once you have the top completed, you can “Add straps” by following the directions on page 86.

## Jumper tops—the half wraparound

Unlike full wrap-around jumper tops, the half wrap-arounds work well for any type of puppet. They're also a little more shapely, and allow a greater variety of necklines. (The Dutch girl on the front cover has this type of top.)

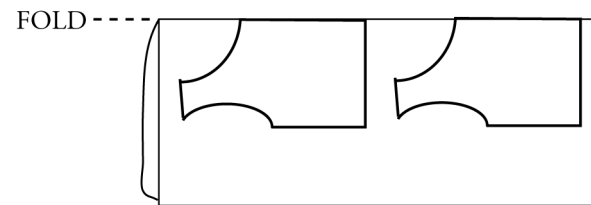
To make a half wrap-around jumper top, you need a “Basic pattern front” from page 38 and enough fabric to cut out four of these pieces. (If you're running short on fabric, two of the pattern fronts can be cut from a lightweight, light colored fabric to make the lining.) You also need enough fabric to cover your puppet's back *twice*.

Once you have the basic pattern front ready, you can adjust the neckline to suit the style you want. (Scoop necks work particularly well for jumpers.)

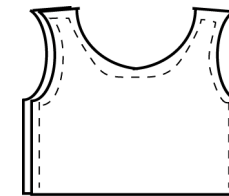


To make the front of the jumper top:

1. Fold your fabric in half right sides together and place the pattern on it *with the inside edge against the fold*. Cut out two pieces of fabric this way (one for the outside, one for the lining.)



2. Unfold your fabric and lining pieces and place them right sides together. Stitch the fabric and lining together along all edges except the bottom.

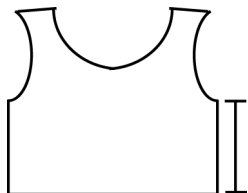


3. Turn the fabric right side out (using a blunt object to turn the corners if necessary) and iron it flat.

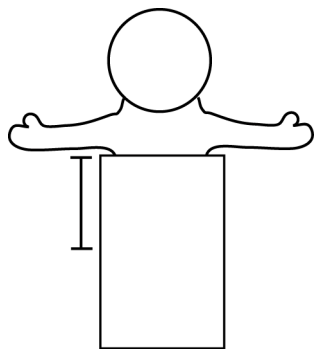
Now that you have the front section done, you have a choice about how you want to make the back—in one piece with no fasteners (coming up next), or in two pieces with fasteners (as described on page 85). Fasteners are quite handy for a tight fitting outfit, but for a fairly loose jumper, you probably don't need fasteners, especially if you make the straps button in the back.

To make the back of the jumper top with **NO** fasteners:

1. Measure the side of the jumper front under the armhole.



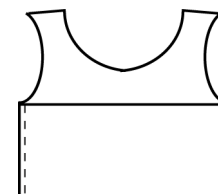
2. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's twice as tall as this measurement, and wide enough to cover your puppet's back plus an inch or so.



3. Fold the fabric in half heightwise *wrong sides together* and stitch along both sides.



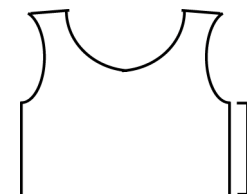
4. Place the fabric against the jumper front right sides together and stitch them together along the sides.



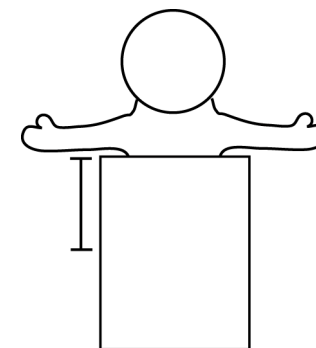
Turn the jumper right side out, and you're ready to "Add straps" and "Attach the top and skirt!" (See page 86.)

To make the back of the jumper **WITH** fasteners:

1. Measure the side of the jumper front under the armhole.



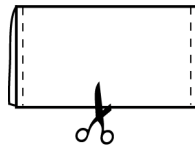
2. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's twice as tall as this measurement, and wide enough to cover your puppet's back plus 2-3" (depending on the type of fastener you want—see page 44).



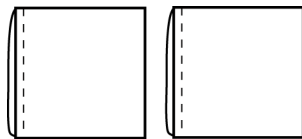
3. Fold the fabric in half heightwise *right sides together* and stitch along the two side edges.



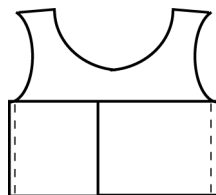
4. Cut the fabric in half down the middle.



5. Turn each piece right side out and iron it flat, then stitch along the open side of each piece.



6. Place the stitched side of the pieces against the sides of the jumper front (right sides together). Then stitch the jumper front and back together.



If you want to put a single fastener (like a zipper) in both the top and skirt, it's easiest to "Attach the top and skirt" first (page 87). For fastener instructions, see the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more."

Once you have the top completed, you're ready to "Add straps!"

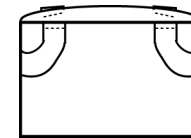
## Add straps

1. To make straps for the jumper top, follow the directions on page 113. Make sure each strap is long enough to wrap from the front of your puppet's jumper top over its shoulder to the back of the jumper, plus an inch or so for seam allowance.

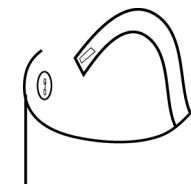


2. Put the jumper top on your puppet to decide where to position the straps.

3. Remove the top from your puppet and sew the straps to the top right sides together.



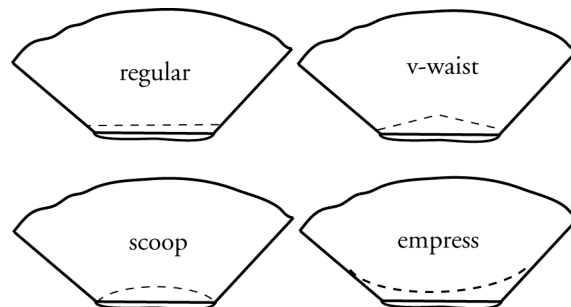
To get your puppet's jumper on and off more easily, you can put a buttonhole in one end of the strap and a button on the inside of the jumper where you want the strap to attach. (See page 33 for more information on buttons and buttonholes.)



## Attach the top and skirt

Whether you're creating a dress or a jumper, you need to be able to attach the top to the skirt.

1. Place the top and skirt right sides together and pin them together. Depending on how you position the top, you can create different waistlines. (For legless hand puppets, you may want to make the waistline higher than normal to allow the skirt to show.)



2. Stitch the top and skirt together, removing the pins as you go.
3. Turn the top right side up and you're finished!

## Dresses as robes

As mentioned in the “Shirts & robes” chapter, you can make simple robes just by extending the length of a shirt (or suit) pattern. But for really full robes, you need a top attached to a skirt. You can make the top of the robe just like a normal shirt (or suit) and attach a skirt to it by following the directions in the previous section, “Attach the top and skirt.”



Gathered skirts made from relatively few sections work especially well for flowing robes. (See the “Skirts” chapter for more information.)

## A reminder on style

The Glinda and Dorothy dresses on the back of this book don't look much alike, but with a closer look, you can see that they're both a top (a “suit”) attached to a skirt, made almost exactly the same way. This goes back to the true key of costuming—it only takes slight variations in style (and in fabric!) to make a great variety of outfits. These few basic choices—what kind of fabric, what kind of sleeves, what length of skirt, what kind of embellishments—do a lot to enhance the breadth of your puppet's wardrobe.