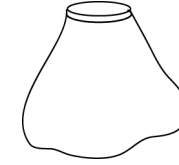




# Skirts



## Piece by piece

One of the easiest ways to make a skirt is to use sections that are about three times wider at the bottom than they are at the top (like triangles with the top point cut off). This gives the skirt flow while keeping the waist smooth. You can make this type of skirt long or short, full or sleek. How wide the skirt ends up depends upon how many sections you use (even numbers work best) and on how much wider the bottom of each section is than the top.

## What you need

- ✂ Paper
- ✂ Fabric
- ✂ Matching thread
- ✂ Lining fabric

To figure out how much fabric you need, make the section pattern according to the directions on pages 78-79. You need enough fabric to cut out however many sections you've chosen to use, plus a little extra.

## How many sections?

- ✂ Glinda, Bo Peep/Princess — 2
- ✂ Fortune teller — 4
- ✂ Carmen Miranda, dirndl — 6
- ✂ Flying maid, cheerleader — 8
- ✂ Dorothy/Little Red — 12


In most cases, 6-8 sections work best, since very few sections can be hard to manage, while too many sections become tedious to sew. With narrowly striped or gingham fabric, you can use many narrow sections to create a pleated look (like the “Dorothy” dress).

(Don't forget to plan for extra fabric if you want to make a matching top!) You also need at least as much lining material as fabric—more if you want to make lots of layers of underskirting.

You can attach the skirt to any kind of top you want—even to the basic sack dress made waist-length instead of dress-length. (For more dress ideas, please see the “Dresses & jumpers” chapter.) And, besides making a pretty dress on its own, you can also make the skirt just out of lining material to get a flowy, petticoat-like slip for your puppet to wear with any outfit needing a lot of poof.


### Start with measurements

1. Measure your puppet's waist. (I'll use 16" as an example.)
2. To figure the width of the top of each section, divide the waist measurement by the number of sections you plan to use. (For example, 8.)




EXAMPLE  
 $16 \div 8 = 2$  inches

3. To find the bottom width, multiply the top width (result of step 2) by 3.




EXAMPLE  
 $2 \times 3 = 6$  inches

4. Add half an inch (for seam allowance!) to the top and bottom widths (results of steps 2 and 3).



EXAMPLE  
 $2 + 0.5 = 2.5$  inches  
 $6 + 0.5 = 6.5$  inches

5. Divide the results of step 4 in half. This is the measurement you use in making the skirt pattern.

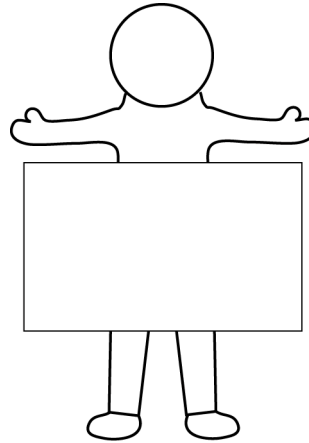


EXAMPLE  
 $2.5 \div 2 = 1.25$  inches  
 $6.5 \div 2 = 3.25$  inches

That wasn't so bad, was it? Now that you've got your puppet's measurements in hand, you can use them to make a pattern.

## Make the pattern

Get a piece of paper that's at least as wide as the bottom section measurement (or tape several pieces of paper together) and cut it so that it's about two inches longer than the distance from your puppet's waist to where you want the bottom of the skirt.

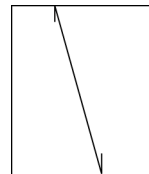


1. Fold the paper in half widthwise.

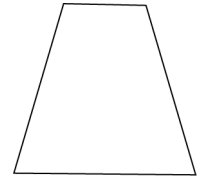


2. Starting from the fold, mark the distance of the top and bottom widths (step 4 of previous section) at the top and bottom of the paper.

3. Connect these two points with a straight line.



4. Cut along this line, unfold the paper, and you've got yourself a skirt pattern!

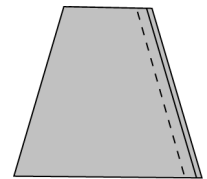


With another piece of paper, cut a lining pattern identical to the first section pattern except an inch and a half shorter.

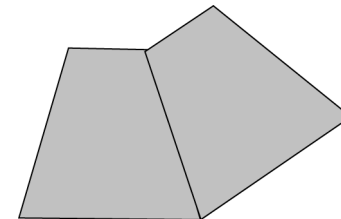
## Sew the skirt

Using your respective pattern pieces, cut the number of sections you've chosen to use out of dress fabric, and an equal number out of lining material.

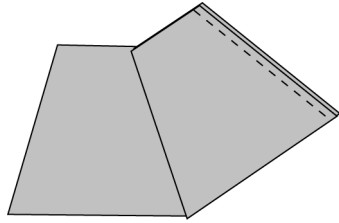
1. Match up two of the dress sections right sides together, then stitch them together along the long edge.



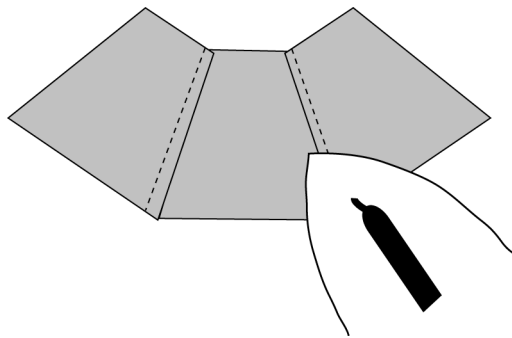
2. Unfold the sections you just stitched.



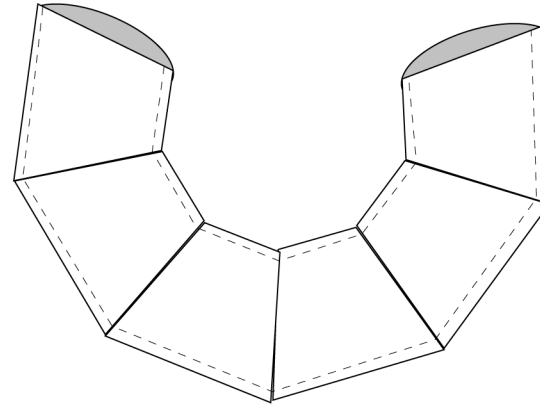
3. Place another dress section right side down on top of one of these sections, matching up and stitching the (unsewn) long edges.



4. Unfold this added section, and keep adding and stitching dress sections together in this way (right sides together!) until they form a continuous string.
5. Set the dress sections aside, and stitch all the lining sections together in the same way. When you're finished, iron all the seams flat.



6. Place the dress sections and lining sections right sides together, then stitch them together along the top and bottom. It's okay for the dress fabric to bag out a bit.



7. Reach into the skirt and turn it right side out like you would a pillowcase.

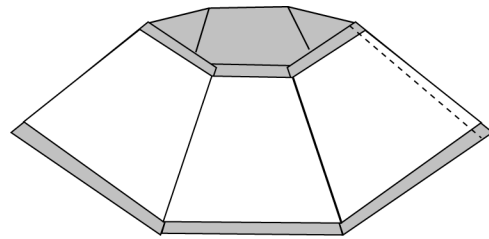
Because the lining is shorter, the dress fabric should fold itself under a little bit. (Automatic hems—wow!)

### Finish the skirt

**NOTE:** If you want to attach the skirt to a top, you may want to do that before sewing it shut. This will allow you to put a zipper in both the top and the skirt in one fell swoop. (For more information and ideas, please turn to the “Dresses & jumpers” chapter.)

To finish the skirt without fasteners:

1. Fold the skirt in half widthwise so that the dress fabric is on the inside, then stitch the edge opposite the fold shut. If you are making the skirt for a hand puppet and the skirt is a lot longer than your puppet's body, you need to leave an open space in this seam so you can slide your hand into the puppet without hiking up its dress.



2. Turn the skirt right side out.

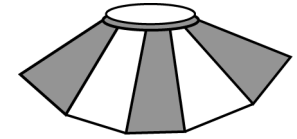
It should now look like a skirt!

### Variations & tips

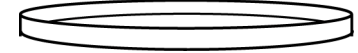
- ✂ For a finished, professional look, you can attach the skirt to a waistband (page 113). Remember to sew the band to the skirt right sides together!



- ✂ To make a whimsical or cheerleader skirt, try alternating sections with contrasting fabrics.



- ✂ If you want a skirt that really has shape, use a boning hoop. Boning is a thin strip of plastic covered by a sheath of fabric, or a single strip of stiff polyester. It's sold by the yard in most fabric stores. Just cut the boning to the same width as the bottom of the skirt, and before you sew the ends of the skirt shut, insert the boning in between the lining and the skirt fabric. You may want to hand stitch it to the lining here and there to hold it in place. (See page 25 for hand stitching information.)



- ✂ For a full or ruffled skirt, you can use the gathering technique discussed on page 22. Just make the top of each skirt section an inch or two wider than normal, but make the lining sections normal size. Once you have all the skirt sections sewn together, gather them until they match up with the lining sections. Then sew the skirt together as usual.

