

Nancy's Notions®

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Little Dresses for Africa

Follow the simple directions below to make a dress that will be a prized possession for a grateful little girl in Africa. Use fabric yardage, or modify a purchased or gently used pillowcase. Mail completed dresses to Little Dresses for Africa, c/o Nancy's Notions®, 333 Beichl Ave., Beaver Dam WI 53916-0683, and we'll ship the dresses to their destination. If you would like confirmation that your dresses have been received at Nancy's Notions®, please enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard. For additional information, go to littledressesforafrica.org/blog/.

Dress with Elasticized Top

Materials required:

- $\frac{3}{8}$ yd.–1 $\frac{1}{8}$ yd. cotton fabric, depending on size
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ yd. double fold bias tape
- 12"–18" elastic, $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, depending on size
- Coordinating all-purpose thread

Making the Dress

Note new sizing!

1. Cut a fabric rectangle the width of the fabric and the length indicated.
Finished dress length is measured from the shoulder to the hem.

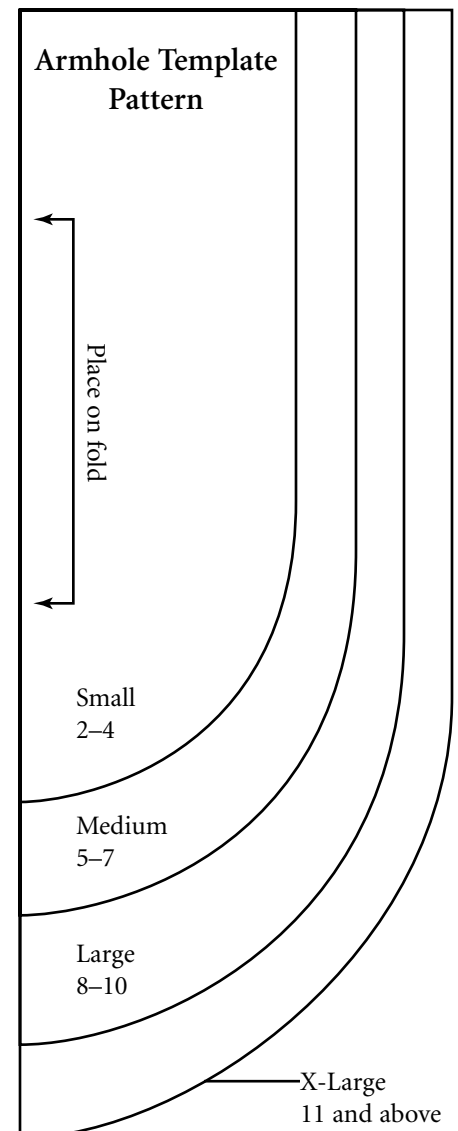
<u>Size</u>	<u>Size of cut rectangle</u>	<u>Finished dress length</u>
Small (2–4)	19"–26" L x 42" W	16"–23" long
Medium (5–7)	27"–32" L x 42" W	24"–29" long
Large (8–10)	33"–37" L x 42" W	30"–34" long
X-Large (11 and above)	38" L or more x 42" W	35" or more long

2. Fold fabric in half, meeting selvage edges. Stitch or serge the seam. Press seam open or to one side. Center seam on the stitched tube. (This will be the center back of the dress.)
3. Cut out armholes on upper side edges using the appropriate Armhole Template Pattern at right.
4. Fold under casings at the front and back top edges (the edges containing the armholes). Fold edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{1}{2}$ " to make each casing. Edgestitch casings.
5. Cut elastic into two equal lengths (6" for size small, 7" for size medium, 8" for size large, and 9" for size X-large). Insert one length into each casing. Thread elastic through the casing; stitch elastic ends to the outer edges of the casing to prevent them from pulling out. This gathers the front and back edges.
6. Cut two 38" lengths of double fold bias tape. Open tape and turn under $\frac{1}{4}$ " on each end to finish the ends of the tape. Refold tape and encase armhole, allowing equal tape extensions at each end of the armhole so the dress can be tied at the shoulders. Edgestitch tape.
7. Hem the lower edge by turning under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then 2". Edgestitch.

You're finished! Wasn't that easy?

Optional trim ideas:

- Add one or two pockets.
- Add a band of a contrasting or coordinating fabric to the dress.
- Add lace or other trims.
- Add an appliqué.
- Add machine embroidery.
- Use your imagination! This is a great way to use bits and pieces of leftover trims and fabrics.



Dress with Bias Tape Ties

Materials required:

- $\frac{5}{8}$ yd.–1 $\frac{1}{8}$ yd. cotton fabric, depending on size
- 3 yd. double fold bias tape
- Coordinating all-purpose thread

Making the Dress

1. Cut a fabric rectangle the width of the fabric and the length indicated.
Finished dress length is measured from the shoulder to the hem.

<u>Size</u>	<u>Size of cut rectangle</u>	<u>Finished dress length</u>
Small (2–4)	19"–25" L x 42" W	16"–22" long
Medium (5–7)	26"–31" L x 42" W	23"–28" long
Large (8–10)	32"–37" L x 42" W	29"–34" long
X-Large (11 and above)	38" L or more x 42" W	more than 35" long

2. Fold fabric in half, meeting selvage edges. Stitch or serge the seam. Press seam open or to one side. Center seam on the stitched tube. (This will be the center back of the dress.)
3. Cut out armholes on upper side edges using the appropriate Armhole Template Pattern on p. 1.
4. Cut two lengths of bias tape long enough to bind the armholes. Bind cut edges of armhole and edgestitch tape.
5. Fold under casings at the front and back top edges (the edges containing the armholes). Fold edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{3}{4}$ " to make each casing. Edgestitch casings.
6. Cut remaining bias tape into two equal pieces. Stitch folds and cut ends of tape together with a narrow zigzag to prevent stitches from breaking. Insert one piece through each of the casings, allowing equal extensions at each end. Machine stitch at center front and center back to prevent tape from pulling out of the casing.
7. Hem the lower edge, turning under $\frac{1}{4}$ " and then 2". Edgestitch hem.

To wear the dress, pull up tape ties to gather the top of the dress to fit. Tie bias tape at the shoulders.

Optional: Trim dress as desired. Several possibilities are listed on p. 1.

Modifying a Pillowcase to Make the Dress

Materials required:

- One new or gently used cotton pillowcase
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ yd. double fold bias tape
- 12"–18" elastic, $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, depending on size
- Coordinating all-purpose thread

Making the Dress

1. Trim off the seamed end of the pillowcase. Do not cut off the hemmed edge; it will be the hem of the dress.
2. Cut out armholes on the cut edge, using the Armhole Template Pattern as a guide.
3. Fold under casings at the front and back top edges (the edges containing the armholes). Fold edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{1}{2}$ " to make each casing. Edgestitch casings.
4. Cut elastic into two equal lengths (6" for size small, 7" for size medium, 8" for size large, 9" for size X-large). Insert one length into each casing. Thread elastic through the casing; stitch elastic ends to the outer edges of the casing to prevent them from pulling out. This gathers the front and back edges.
5. Cut two 38" lengths of double fold bias tape. Open tape and turn under $\frac{1}{4}$ " on each end to finish the ends of the tape. Refold tape and encase armhole, allowing equal tape extensions at each end of the armhole so the dress can be tied at the shoulders. Edgestitch tape.

Optional: Trim dress as desired. Several possibilities are listed on p. 1.

Little Dresses for Africa

Lillian's Dress

Designed by Geraldine Lowery

Lillian's dress is named for Lillian Weber, one of the many volunteers for Little Dresses for Africa, who has dedicated the biggest part of every day to making a little dress that will be a prized possession for a grateful little girl in Africa. Lillian turned 100 in May 2015, and reached her personal goal of sewing over 1000 little dresses!

If you would like to be involved, simply follow the instructions below to make little dresses for Africa. Mail the completed dresses to Little Dresses for Africa, c/o Nancy's Notions®, 333 Beichl Ave., Beaver Dam WI 53916-0683, and we'll ship the dresses to their destination. If you would like confirmation that your dresses have been received at Nancy's Notions, please enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard. For additional information go to littledressesforafrica.org/blog/



Supplies (for one dress):

These supplies will make one size 6 dress—the size most often requested.

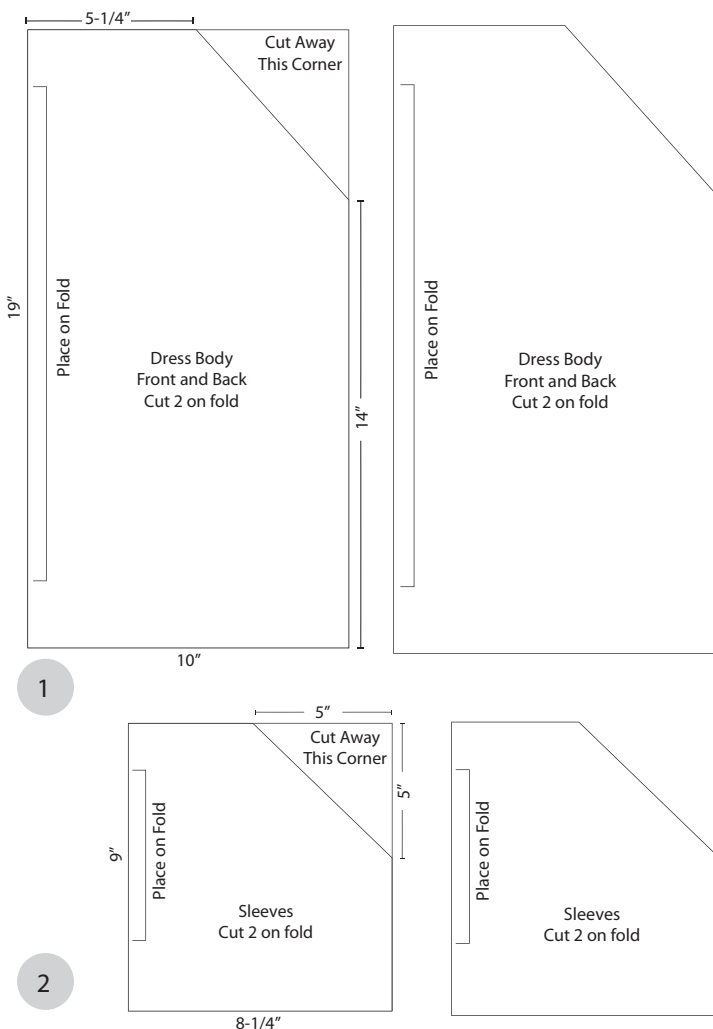
- 1¼ yd. 40" cotton fabric
OR (contrasting fabric as shown) use ⅝ yd. cotton fabric for dress body and ⅝ yd. cotton fabric for sleeves and ruffle
- 1 pkg. ½" ready-made double fold coordinating bias tape
- 17" of ¼" elastic
- Coordinating all-purpose thread
- Optional: Fuse 'n Gather tape

Instructions:

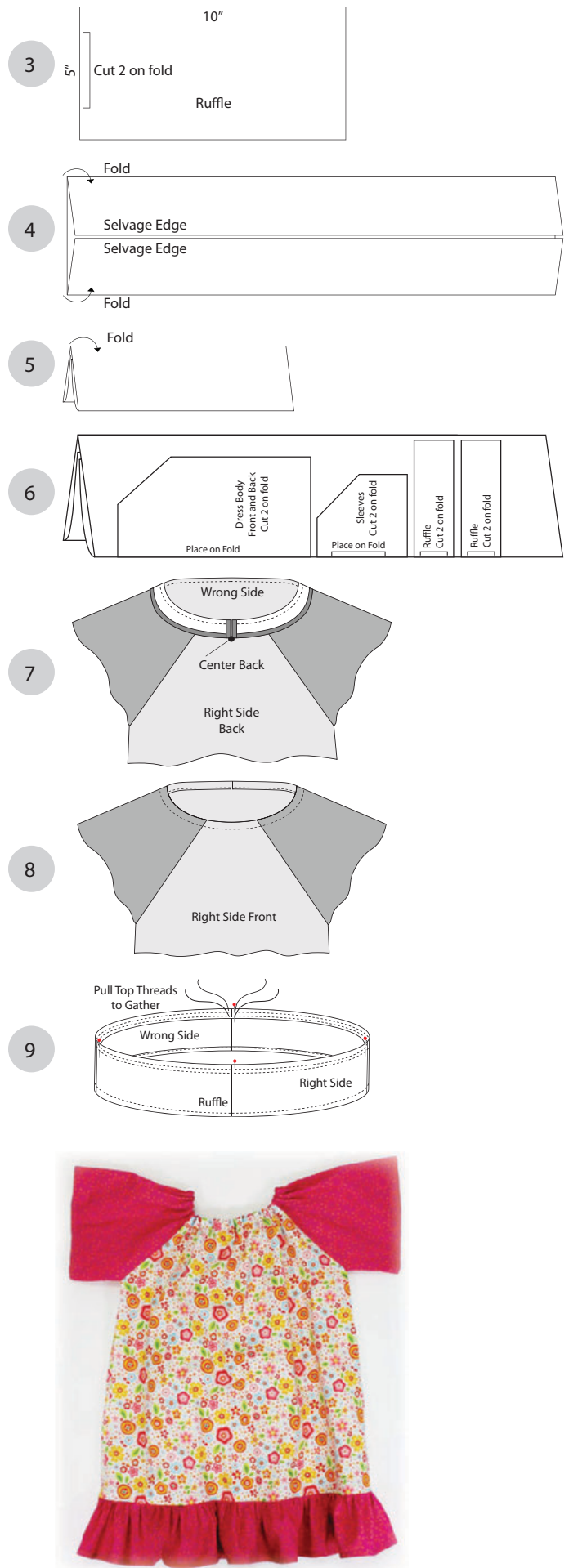
Note: Use ¼" seams unless otherwise stated.

1. Prepare pattern.

- Dress Body (front and back):
 - Draw one 10" x 19" rectangle.
 - Mark the left (19") long edge "Place on fold."
 - Mark neck opening 5¼" from fold at top short edge.
 - Mark side seam 14" from bottom edge.
 - Connect markings, and add a ¼" seam allowance to the diagonal sleeve line.
 - Mark "Cut two on fold" on the Dress Body pattern. (1)
- Sleeve:
 - Draw an 8¼" x 9" rectangle.
 - Mark left 9" edge "Place on fold."
 - Mark top edge and side edge (opposite fold) 4¼" from the corner.
 - Connect markings, and add a ¼" seam allowance to the diagonal line.



- Mark "Cut two on fold" on the Sleeve pattern. (2)
 - Ruffle:
 - Draw a 5" x 10" rectangle.
 - Mark one 5" edge "Place on fold."
 - Mark "Cut two on fold" on the Ruffle pattern. (3)
2. Prepare fabric.
 - Fold selvages of fabric to the center of the fabric on each side. (4)
 - Fold the fabric in half lengthwise meeting the folded edges. (5)
 3. Cut patterns from fabric.
 - Cut two of each pattern piece by placing the patterns on the **double-folded edge** of the fabric.
 - Place the ruffle pattern on the **double-folded edge** of the fabric **twice**, cutting a total of 4 ruffle sections. (6)
 4. Press a ¼" hem in each sleeve. Open hem and press edge to the hemline (about ⅜"). This process will make hemming easier later.
 5. Stitch the sleeves to the front and back at neck opening, stopping stitching ¼" from armhole edges. Press seams open.
 6. Stitch bias tape around neckline opening to form casing for elastic.
 - Open out folded edge on one side of bias.
 - Turn and press under the short edge at beginning of bias tape ¼", toward the wrong side.
 - Start at center back, and place raw edge of bias at raw edge of neckline, right sides together. Stitch to neckline.
 - Stop stitching a few inches from the beginning edge of the bias. Trim excess length, leaving enough to turn under ¼" and meet the beginning and ending edges of the bias. (7)
 - Complete stitching the bias. Press bias to the wrong side of the neckline and topstitch in position to form the casing. (8)
 7. Stitch front and back together at side seams. Finish seams if desired. Press seams open.
 8. Hem sleeves.
 - Fold up prepressed hems to wrong sides of sleeves.
 - Topstitch hems into position.
 9. Complete elastic casing at neckline.
 - Thread ¼" elastic through the neckline casing at the opening in the back of the casing.
 - Stitch elastic ends together. Ease neckline gathers evenly around the neckline.
 10. Complete the ruffle.
 - Stitch the ruffle ends to make a complete circle.
 - Hem the lower edge by turning up a double-folded ¼" hem; press. Edgestitch. (9)
 11. Join top of ruffle to bottom of dress, right sides together, adjusting gathers to fit. Stitch ruffle in place, using a ½–⅝" seam. Press the ruffle seam toward the dress and topstitch in place.



sewing with nancy hint I like to use Fuse 'n Gather tape for gathering—the results are fast and easy to accomplish. Press Fuse 'n Gather, with blue threads facing up, to the top edge of the wrong side of the ruffle fabric. Pull blue threads to gather. (9)