

Gemma-Bella

A sweet 18" little girl just waiting to steal your heart



I first designed this doll in 1999, during my formative years as a doll maker. She, like me has evolved over the ten years since she first came to be. The original doll is a bit smaller and had mitt hands, being a novice doll maker I wasn't comfortable with separated fingers at the time. But in essence she is the same doll. She has a 3 piece head with a separate neck piece, separated wired fingers, needle sculpted toes and a nicely rounded tummy. She can also have a needle sculpted butt although I didn't do that for this particular doll.

She wears socks, wool felt shoes, pantaloons that are pleated at the side, an underdress, blouse, jumper and a wool felt hat. Her hair is a store bought wig size 9. I buy my doll wigs from <http://www.PrillyCharmin.com> because they have the best prices. Maybe not the best selection but I've been very happy with what I've received from them. Her little valentines basket is from <http://www.thetoymaker.com>, a wonderful site with all sorts of lovely paper playthings that are quite workable for dolls. Some things may need to be sized down when printing.

Let's make Gemma-Bella! Her beautiful name courtesy of Angela Wayenburg.



Supplies / Tools

To make the doll:

1/2 yd. craft velour or doe suede in skin tone of your choice
(you can make her from cotton but understand that she will be smaller in size)
10 chenille stems in a light color, the thickest you can buy
Polyfill stuffing
Thread to match your skin fabric
Strong thread, like upholstery or button and craft thread for sculpting
2 - 1 inch covered buttons
2 - 3/4 or 5/8" covered buttons
Size 9 doll wig
Basic sewing tools, freezer paper, stuffing tool

To color the face of the doll:

Mechanical pencil or disappearing ink marker
Prismacolor pencils or the brand you are comfortable with:

- 2-3 shades of rose, pink or peach
- 3 shades of eye color
- very light blue
- deep gray
- 2-3 shades of browns, sepias, umbers for face shading

White paint pen or acrylic paint, white gel pen
Black or dark brown gel pen or similar
Medium brown gel pen or similar
Fabric blender of some sort:
tortillons, piece of felt cloth, q-tips
Textile medium or Matte acrylic spray
Optional: Mod-podge

Hat and shoes:

Fat quarter of wool felt in chosen color
cardboard
Approx. 15 inches of 1/8-1/2 inch ribbon for shoes
10x10 inch square of contrasting fabric
2 feet of 1/8 inch ribbon for hat

Clothing:

1/2 yard fabric for jumper + small piece for bodice lining in contrast
2 - 1/4" snaps
2 - 1/2" buttons

1/2 yard fabric for underdress + small piece of muslin for bodice lining
1 - 3/8" button

Fat quarter for blouse
3-4 doll buttons
3-4 small snaps if not using buttons

Fat quarter for bloomers
2 - 7/8" buttons
12 inches of 1/4" elastic

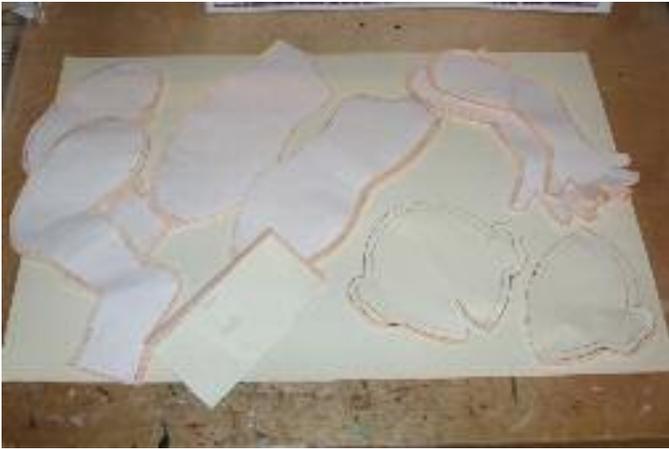
For the socks I use pieces cut off from women's trouser socks. You can also use t-shirt knit or cotton lycra.

To begin:

Please read through the directions to familiarize yourself with the construction of the doll.

Transfer leg, arm and body pieces to freezer paper and cut out. Cut two legs and two arms. Iron these pieces to the wrong side (the fuzzy side) of your doubled body fabric. **Be mindful of the grain line! Grain will be with the MOST stretch.** You will notice that the body, head and neck piece are on different grain than the arms and legs. Make sure to note the “open” areas on each piece. These are your templates and sewing is one following the edges of the templates except where noted. The head and neck pieces are **patterns** and have a seam allowance on them. Pin these to your fabric and cut according to grain.

Below is a picture of all the parts sewn and cut out.



The body:

The center front and the center back of the templates should be stitched next to the template. Cut out along the other edge. Remove templates and place front to back, right sides together and stitch with a 1/4” seam allowance, starting at neck down to crotch on one side, then

repeat for the other side. Sewing the body in this manner keeps the body from stretching out of proportion when stuffing it. Turn right side out and stuff firmly. By firmly I mean stuffing so that the body feels like ripe peach in your hand, with a little give. Set aside.



The neck:

Sew down the long side of the neck. Thread a needle with strong thread and run a tight gathering stitch around one of the short ends, pull up tightly and fasten off. Turn the neck right side out and stuff firmly. Run another tight gathering stitch at the open end and pull up tightly and fasten off.



Pick up the body and using your fingers or a stuffing tool, burrow a hole down into the body through the neck opening. Insert the neck into the

opening and with a screwing motion, screw the neck down until it is about half way down. With strong thread, ladder stitch the neck to the body with small stitches.



The legs:

Sew around the leg templates leaving open where indicated. Cut out. At the toe end, match the seams together and stitch across in a slight curving seam 1/4" away from the open edge. Turn right side out and stuff toes medium firm (to prepare for needlesculpting) and the rest of the leg firmly.



Thread a needle with strong thread and knot the end. On the toe, mark lightly with a mechanical pencil, 4 small lines to indicate toe separations. These will be your guides for needlesculting the toes.

Insert your needle at the bottom of the foot, tugging on the thread to embed the knot inside. Exit your needle on the top of the foot where one of the lines begins. Using the stab stitch, go back and forth through the foot up to the end of the toe, lightly pulling on the thread to indent the toe. Repeat for the other toes. Knot off thread and bury end.



At this point I like to lightly shade between the toes with a dark peach or light umber color. Gently add color and then blend the color into the fabric with your blending tool.

Get your larger covered buttons and cover them with the body fabric. I like to do this so that the stuffing grabs onto the buttons. Insert a button through the opening at the back of the thigh and push it up to the



top of the thigh on the **inside** of the leg. Secure with a safety pin, ladder stitch opening closed and set aside.



The arms:

Sew all around the arm template leaving open where indicated. Take two stitches between the fingers, and use the lift, turn, presser foot down method when sewing the fingers. Cut out, making small clips into the corners on the fingers. After clipping you may want to put a tiny dab of fray check at the "v's" of the fingers for extra strength. I find it is usually not necessary when using doe suede or craft velour but if you are using cotton it may be helpful.



The arm is then turned right side out, but only halfway to prepare for inserting the chenille stems for the fingers. Use turning tools for turning the fingers.



Bend all the chenille stems in half, on the unbent ends, turn under about an inch. Insert one stem per finger. Push the arm fabric down to the wrist area and taking strong thread, make a slip knot, put over all the stems and tighten. Wrap the thread up and back down the stems to create a "bone". Fasten off.



Add small bits of stuffing to the fingers to fill them out if need be. Stuff the base of the thumb and palm, use minimal stuffing on the top of the hand. Firmly stuff the rest of the arm from the wrist up, packing the stuffing around the "bone" to encase it.

Insert the covered button in the same manner as with the leg. Safety pin to secure, ladder stitch opening closed.



Jointing legs and arms to body:

On this doll I use the Judi Ward method of invisible jointing. That is why you start out by burying the covered buttons inside the limb.

1. Thread a 5-7" doll sculpting needle with quadrupled strong thread or dental floss (unwaxed).
2. Pull threads about 4" past the eye.
3. Put needle through shank of button in left leg.
4. Pull threads so 1/2 are on either side of shank.
5. Tie the threads to the shank on that leg.
6. Trim all the ends even. You will have 4 ends now.



7. Put all 4 ends through the eye of jointing needle. Pulling only about 4" from the eye.
8. Sit the doll body on a flat surface and hold the leg up to her body so that the leg sits flat against the surface. Peek under the leg, and see where the "shank" touches the body. That is where the needle will go in.
9. Insert the needle through the body from side to side, entering where the shank touched the body and exiting at the same height on the other side.
10. Pull the needle out the other side, twisting back and forth as you pull.
11. Pull the threads off the needle and divide in half, rethread half of the cords through the eye of your needle. Only pull about 4" past the eye.
12. Put the needle, with the cord on it, through the shank of the button in the other leg from right to left. Pull the threads off the needle.
13. Rethread the needle with the other cords and insert the needle through the shank from the opposite direction.
14. Grip the cords coming from the shank in the leg, and wrap them around your hands.
15. Now, pull as hard as you can and then some.
16. Keeping the cords TAUT, press down on the body with one thumb.
17. Still keeping the cords TAUT, quickly wrap the cords in your free hand around between the body and limb twice. As soon as you have wrapped the cords you can let go of the cords and they will stay tight!
18. Now tie the cords. Use a secure surgeon's knot. Wrap the threads around again and tie two more knots.
19. Cut the cords close to the fabric.
20. Repeat this same method for attaching the arms to the body.

The head:

The head pieces are patterns and have the seam allowance included. Cut one front head and two back heads. Stitch the head back leaving open where indicated. Stitch the dart in the head front. Place the pieces right sides together and starting at the top of the head, stitch

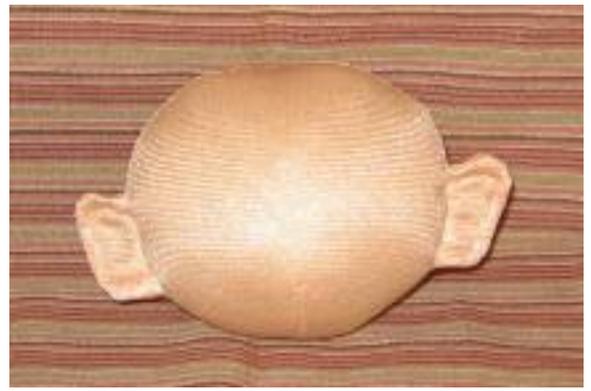
down to the chin with a scant 1/4" seam allowance - gradually reducing to 1/8" when going around the ears. Repeat for the other side of the head starting once again at the top and sewing down to the chin.

Turn right side out.



Topstitch the ears close to the seam edge and around the face edge. Do not stuff the ears.

Stuff the head firmly like a ripe peach making sure to push stuffing up into the end of the dart on the front face and into the cheek area.



Attaching the head to the body:

Using your fingers burrow a hole up into the head through the back opening to receive the neck. Once again, using a screwing motion, screw the neck up into the head. I find a large hemostat helps here. I grasp the neck with the hemostats and push it really hard into the head. Anchor the head with some pins. Thread a needle with strong thread and ladder stitch the head to the neck. Use small stitches and tilt the head slightly as you go.



Gemma-Bella's body all put together.

Coloring the face

On the picture of Gemma-Bella I have drawn lines to help indicate placement of features. The end of the dart on the face is where the bottom of the nose is located. I use this as my starting point on this face. I lightly draw the features with a mechanical pencil or a very sharp umber colored pencil.

1. Start with the nose and draw a line that looks like this:



Make small parentheses shaped lines at each of the outer edges of this line.

2. The top of the eye is even with the top of the ear. With a white paint pen I make circles about 1/2" across. Allow the paint to dry and then go over it again.

3. With your chosen main eye color, draw iris circles within the whites. The outer edge of the iris is the darkest color. Shade the iris with two shades of eye color, shading the upper edge darker than the lower edge. Or shade darker to lighter side to side. With the darkest color of eyes, draw small radiating lines in the iris, 3-5.

4. Make your pupil circles with deep dark brown or black. Add a white highlight dot with gel pen or paint.

5. With a dark umber or dark grey, draw the upper eye line. With a medium umber draw the line of the crease in the eyelid. Lightly shade over this line. Also lightly shade the inside and outside corners of the eyelid with medium

to light brown or umber.

6. Shade the outside corners and lower edge of the eye whites with pale blue. Lightly draw the lower line edge with a medium brown or umber.

7. Shade up the sides of the nose, blending into the eyelid area with dark peach and light umber. Shade the nostrils with dark brown. Lightly shade the indent below the nose with light umber.

8. With the darker color chosen for the lips, lightly make 2 small circles below the nose, approx. 1/2" below. With the lighter lip color, make a larger circle below the other two circles, and centered. With the darker color trace around these circles to create the lip line. Also make the line separating the upper lip from the lower lip. Blend colors well, adding more color where you think it is needed.

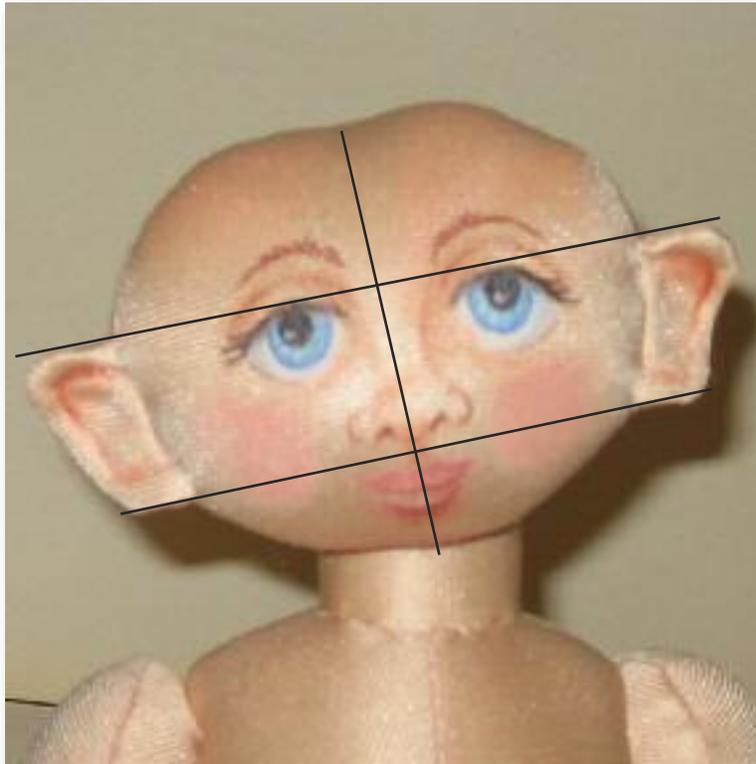
9. Lightly shade below the lower lip with light umber.

10. With a brown gel pen, lightly feather in eyebrows. Add extra detail with the gel pen on the eyes and nose lines if desired.

11. Lightly shade the topstitched lines on the ears.

12. With a light pinky peach, shade circles on the cheeks. Blend well.

13. Let the face rest overnight and then paint the entire face with textile medium. Allow to dry.





The clothing/accessories

Socks:

Cut two socks on fold. Stitch down the long edge. Refold the sock so the stitched edge is centered. Stitch along one short side. Turn top edge down 1/4" and hand stitch. Turn sock right side out and place on doll. Repeat for other sock.

Shoes:

Cut two shoe uppers and two shoe soles from felt. Cut two inner soles from stiff cardboard. Blanket stitch or zig zag the upper edges of the shoe, starting at the center back around the straps and on to the other side. This gives a bit more stability to the shoe. Stitch the center back seam with a 1/8" seam allowance. Place shoe and sole right sides together and matching up notches, sew all around the sole. Turn RSO. Insert cardboard inner sole. **Note: There is a left and right shoe so be careful when sewing. I like to place them right in front of me, each facing the appropriate way so I can tell which one goes where.** Cut one length of ribbon 15 inches long. Punch holes in the strap ends, not TOO close to the edges and thread the ribbon through. Once the shoes are on the doll and tied into a bow, you can then trim any excess.

Bloomers or Pantaloons:

Depending on which style of underwear you want, use the wider pattern for the pleated bloomers and the other one for bloomers that are gathered. Cut two on fold from chosen bloomer fabric. Place RST and stitch one crotch seam. Open out, turn the waist edge down 1/4" and press. Turn down again 1/2", press then stitch in place. Measure your doll's waist and add 1/2". Cut a piece of 1/4" elastic this measurement. Thread the elastic through the casing using whatever method works for you; I use a safety pin. When the opposite end gets close to the edge of the fabric, stitch across a few times to secure. Pull the other end out and holding it in place, stitch it to secure at the other side. Stitch the back crotch seam.

Pleated Bloomers:

Turn under hem edge 1/4" on both legs and press. Stitch inner leg seam. Turn up hem 1" from the pressed edge, press again, stitch hem by hand. Lay bloomers flat and find the center point on the side of the bloomers. Measure in 1 inch from that point and stitch a 3" length. Flatten the pleat so it is centered on the seam and press. Stitch a button to the pleat to hold it in place.

Gathered Bloomers:

Turn under hem edge 1/4" on both legs and press. Turn under 1/4" again and press. Stitch hem in place. Measure around the dolls knee. Cut two pieces of 1/8" elastic this measurement. Measure up 1 inch from hem edge and anchor the elastic on the side, then with a small zig zag stitch, stitch elastic to fabric stretching the elastic as you go. Stitch inner leg seam.

Underdress:

The underdress is a variation on the jumper. Cut one underdress skirt and 4 jumper top pieces. The top is lined. Stitch two top pieces together at ONE shoulder seam, repeat for the lining pieces. Press seams open. Place these two pieces RST and sew the corresponding armhole seam. On other side stitch starting at one side of the armhole seam around the shoulder, neck, other shoulder, neck, shoulder and back down to opposite armhole. You should now have a closed shoulder and an open shoulder. Turn RSO and press. Match up the sides and sew the side seams. Sew center back seam on skirt. Run two lines of gathering stitches along one edge of the skirt. Gather up to fit the lower bodice with RST. Stitch in place. Trim seam and zig zag over the raw edge. Press hem under 1/4", turn under again and stitch. Press. You can add trim to the skirt if you wish. On the open should, sew a button to the back shoulder, make a thread loop on the front shoulder.

Blouse:

To make the blouse you will alter the simple dress front and back. Cut 2 dress front but **add 1 inch to the bottom hem before cutting**. Cut 4 of the back dress, also **adding 1 inch to the bottom hem**. The blouse is lined. Cut two sleeves and 4 collars. If making cuffs, cut 2. **Note: If using cuffs on the sleeves, shorten the length of the sleeve by 1 inch.** Directions for both gathered sleeves and cuff will follow.

Sew blouse front to backs at shoulders. Do the same for the lining. Press seams open. Sew two pairs of collars together. Clip curves and turn RSO. Press. Lay the fabric blouse piece down in front of you right side up and lay the collar pieces on the neckline so the raw edges are even and the collars meet at center front. Lay the lining piece wrong side up on top of the other piece with collars. Pin to hold all in place. Sew starting at lower back all around the inside edge of the blouse, catching the collars in the seam allowance. Clip curves and corners and turn RSO and press.

Sew two rows of gathering stitches along the curved edge of the sleeves. Pull up gathers and pin sleeve into armhole adjusting gathers to fit. Stitch, trim seam and zig zag over the raw edge.

Gathered sleeves:

Turn under 1/4" on the hem edge and press. Turn under again and stitch. Cut a 3" piece of 1/8" elastic and anchor at the side of the sleeve, one inch above the hem. Zig zag the elastic across, stretching the elastic as you go. Sew underarm seam. Hem bottom of blouse. Sew on small snaps or hooks and eyes for closures at the back.

Cuffed sleeves:

Cut off one inch of the hem edge of the sleeve. Run two rows of gathering stitches along hem edge. Draw up gathers to fit the cuff. Sew. Turn under 1/4" on the other edge of the cuff and press. Sew underarm seam. Turn cuff to inside and handstitch the pressed edge to inside of cuff. Finish blouse as above.

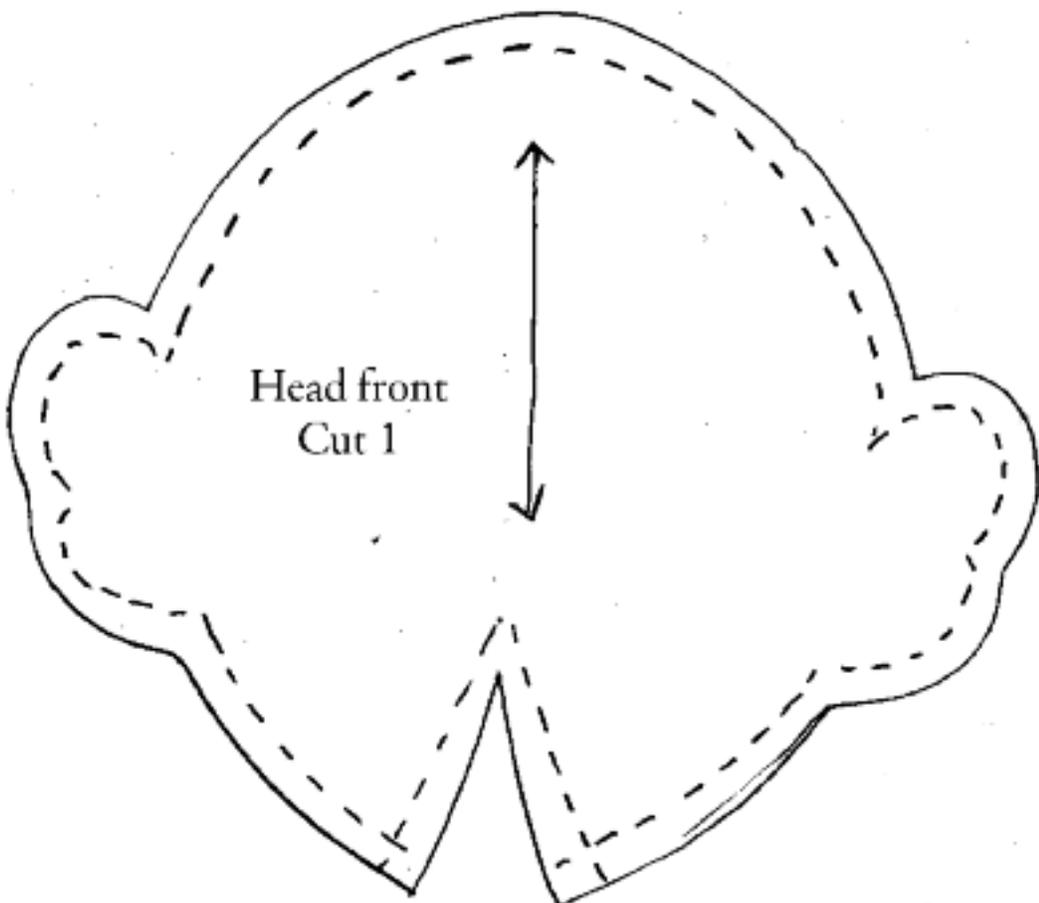
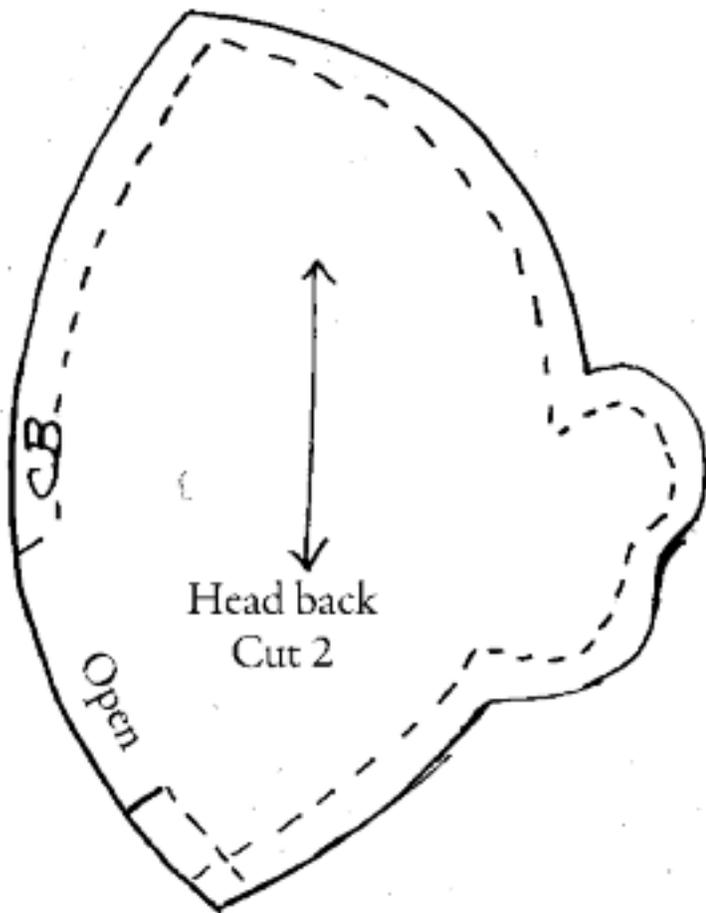
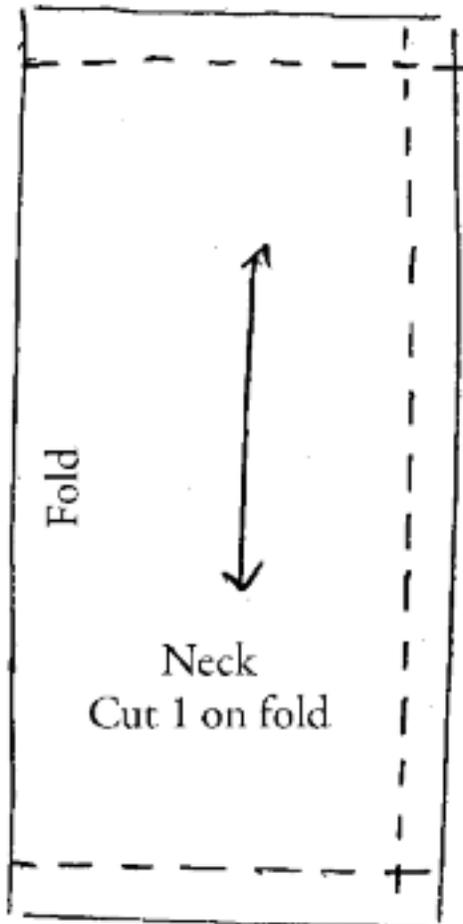
Jumper:

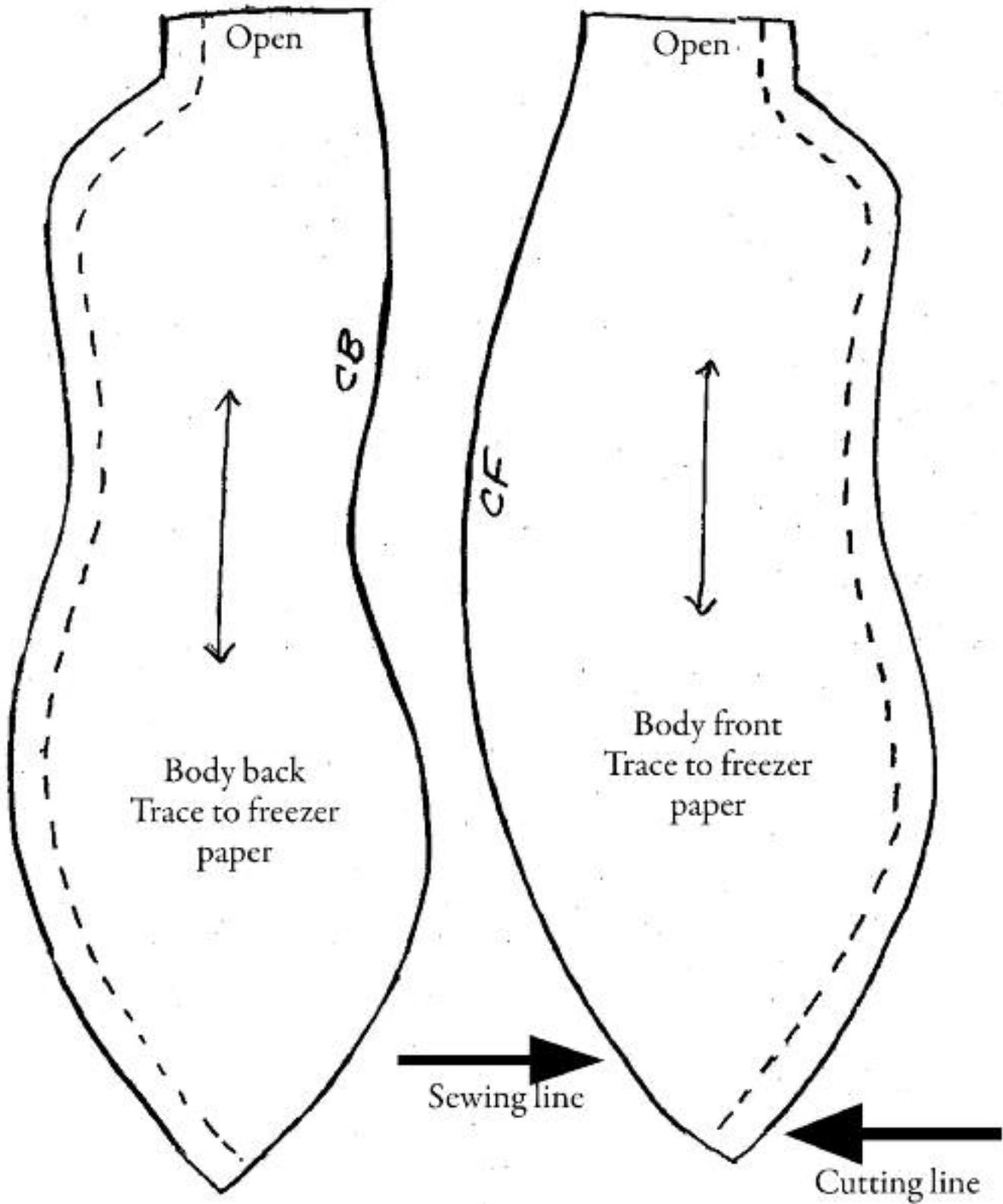
The front piece for the jumper also has an alternate front. Use the one you like. Cut two jumper fronts on fold, 1 fabric, 1 lining. Cut 2 jumper backs on fold, 1 fabric, 1 lining. Cut 1 dress skirt. Sew jumper front and back together on the side seams. Repeat for the the lining pieces. Press seams open. With RST sew the lining to the jumper top along the top edge, the edge with the shoulders. Clip curves, turn RSO and press.

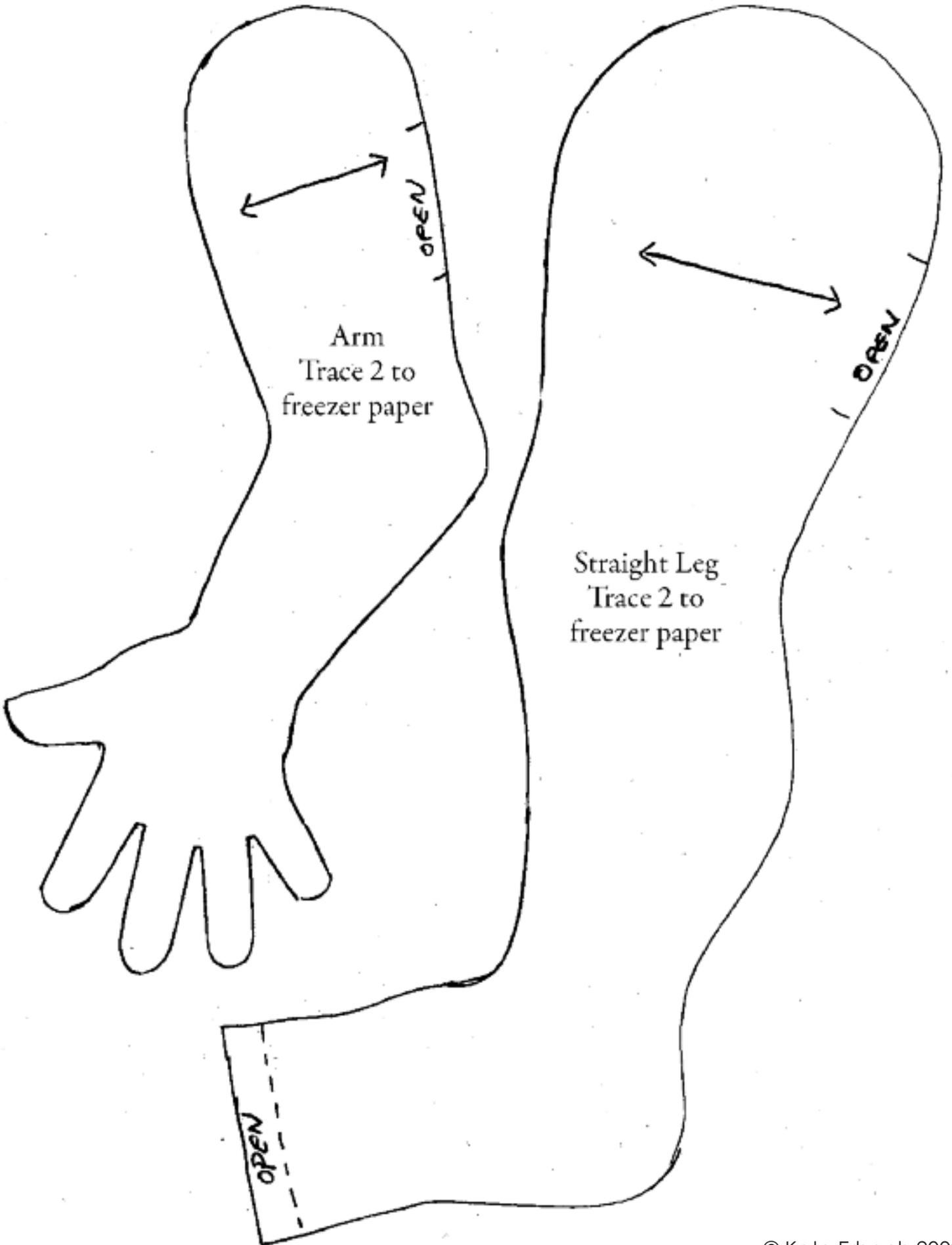
Sew center back seam on skirt, press open. Run two rows of gathering stitches along top edge. Pull up gathers to fit the jumper top and stitch in place. Trim seam and zig zag over the raw edges. Turn up hem edge 1/4" and press, turn up 1" and stitch in place. Add trim on outside if desired. Sew buttons to front of back tabs on jumper top. Sew snaps under buttons and in corresponding position on front of jumper top.

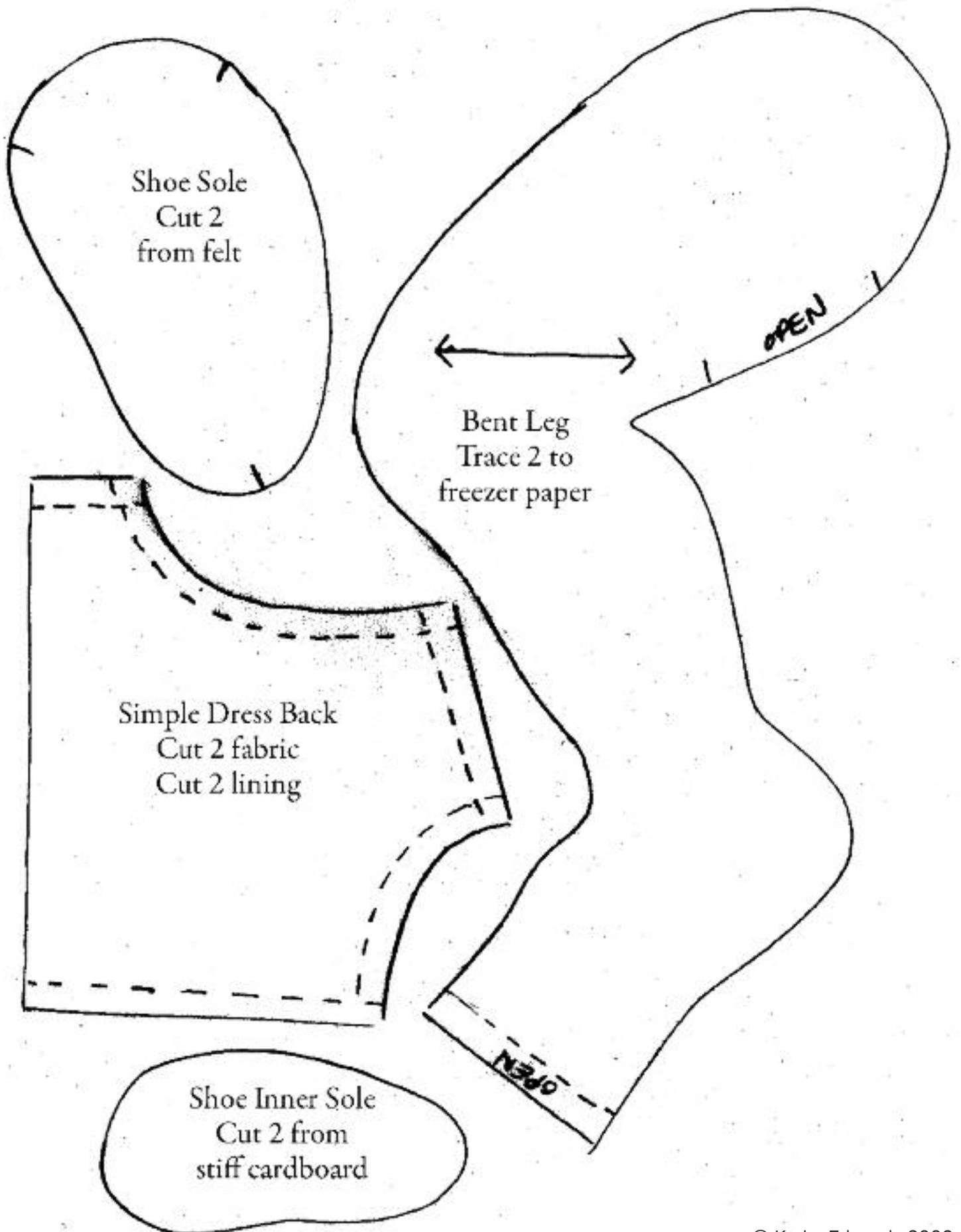
Hat:

Cut one brim from felt and one from lining. Cut 4 crown pieces from felt. Note where the center back and front are located on these pieces. Sew two crowns together on CF/CB seam using a 1/8" seam allowance. Repeat for other two pieces. With RST, sew these two pieces together along the side seams with 1/8" SA. Turn RSO. Pin felt brim to crown, RST and stitch with 1/8" seam allowance. Take lining for brim and place it RST on the felt brim. Stitch around the outside edge using 1/8" SA. Turn RSO. Press. Top stitch 1/4" away from pressed edge. On inside, turn under 1/8" on lining at crown edge and handstitch to the seam on the felt. Add ribbons at the side seams on the inside of the hat. Embellish the outside of hat if desired.









Dress Skirt
Cut 1 - 36 inches x 10 inches

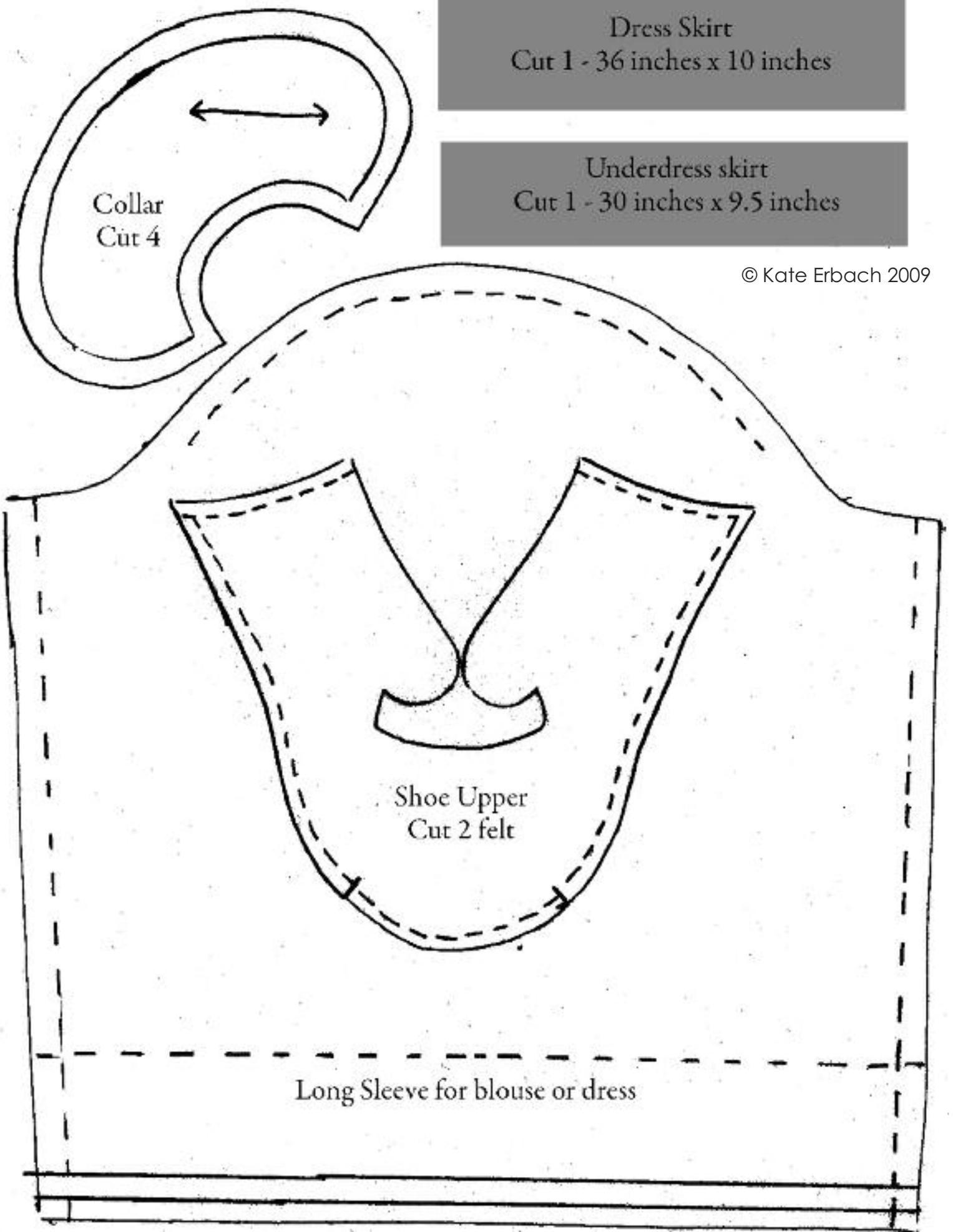
Underdress skirt
Cut 1 - 30 inches x 9.5 inches

Collar
Cut 4

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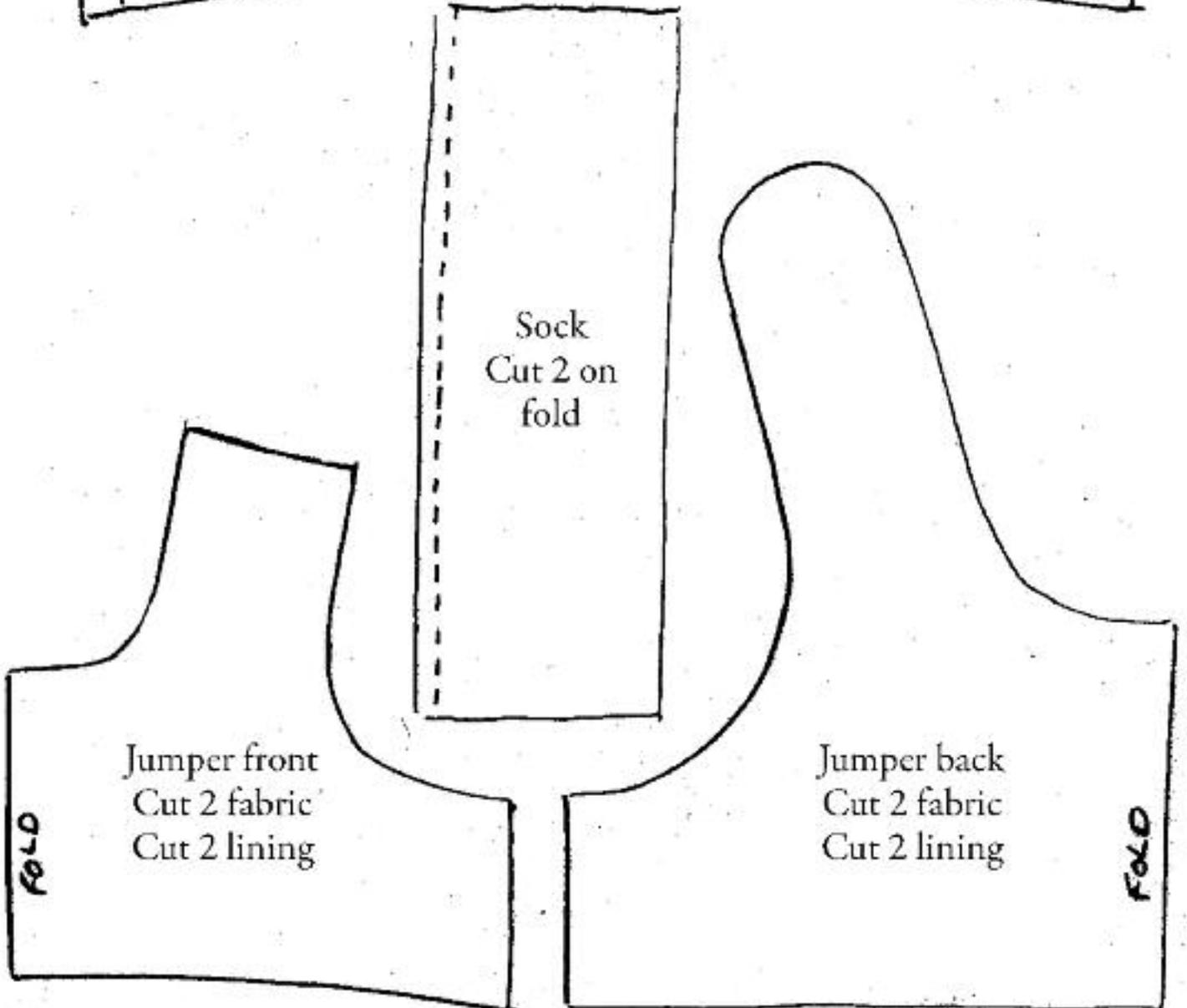
Shoe Upper
Cut 2 felt

Long Sleeve for blouse or dress





Simple Dress front
Cut 1 fabric
Cut 1 lining



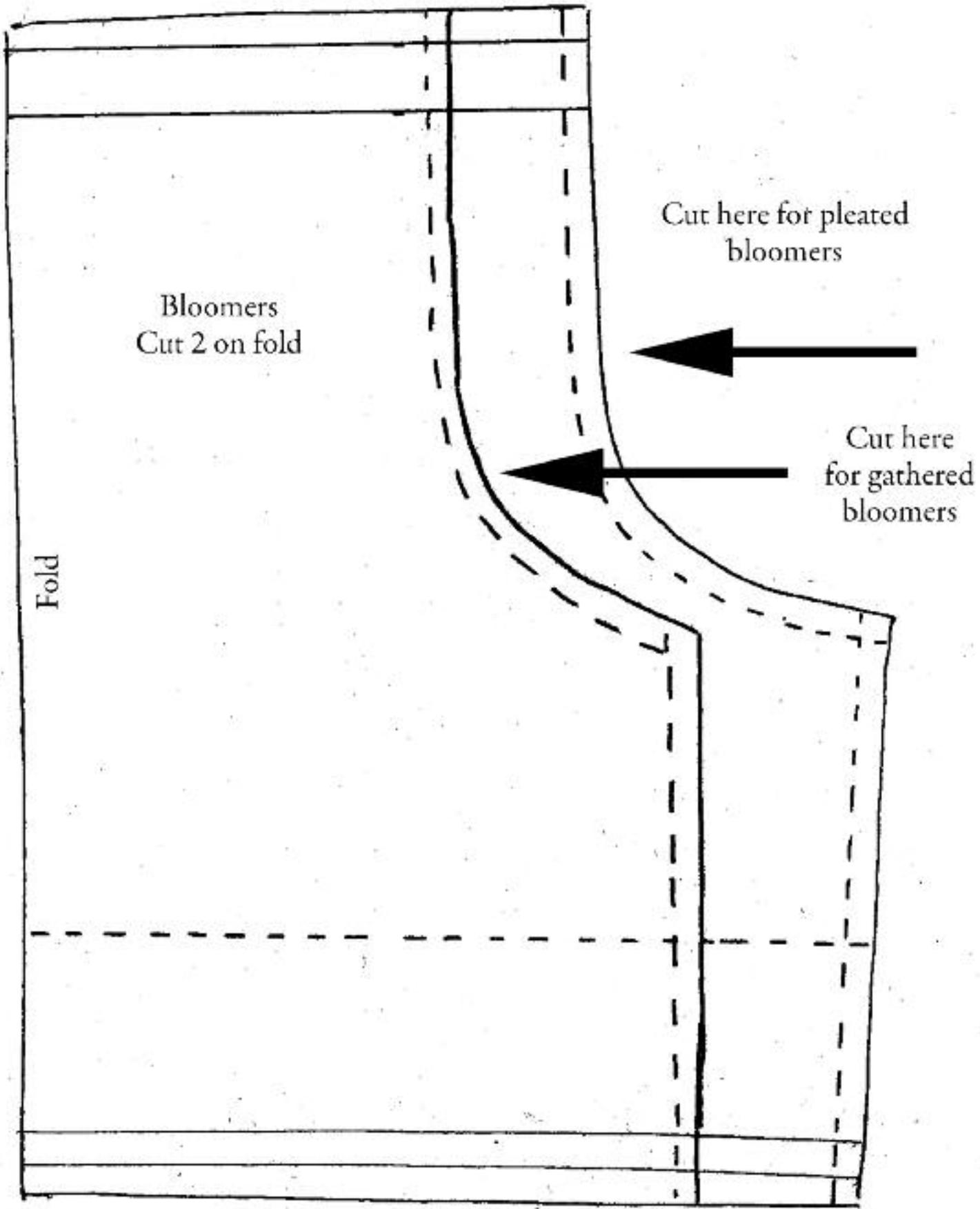
Sock
Cut 2 on
fold

Jumper front
Cut 2 fabric
Cut 2 lining

Jumper back
Cut 2 fabric
Cut 2 lining

FOLD

FOLD



Cuff
Cut 2 - 4 inches x 1.5 inches

