



A FREE SEWING PATTERN BY











polar bear plush

In preparation for the holidays, this sweet polar bear is here to warm up your winter nights! It has a chubby style body with tiny ears as well as stumpy arms and legs. On its own, it would make a great gift for anyone, but what really puts it over the top is the cute Santa hat that has little slots for its ears!

Its sweet face is sure to have you feeling extra festive!

DIFFICULTY:

The most difficult part is in sewing the legs, which involves a good bit of curved sewing. If you take it one section at a time following the directions, you'll have more success. Also, there is a lot of hand sewing in both the arms and feet.

SKILLS USED:

- Fusible web applique
- Curved sewing
- Basting
- Darts
- Ladder stitch
- Sewing small pieces
- Matching notches and points

MAKES:

ONE PLUSH: about $6\frac{1}{2}$ " tall, $4\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, and 5" long.

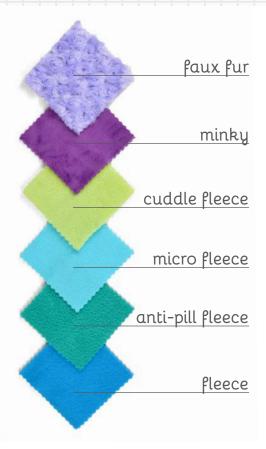


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materials & tools:

- ¼ yd. of fabric for main body
- FOR HAT: ¼ yd. (or 9" x 14") of fabric for main hat, ½ yd. of accent fabric for brim & pompom
- 3" x 3" piece of accent applique fabric (flannel, felt, fleece, cotton, etc.) for irises
- 4" x 4" scrap of black applique fabric for pupils, nose, & paws
- 2" x 2" scrap of white applique fabric for eye shines
- 2" x 2" scrap of pink applique fabric for blush
- 7" x 7" piece of light or heavy duty fusible web
- sewing thread to match main fabric and applique fabrics
- poly-fil stuffing
- basic sewing tools (sewing machine, scissors, iron, needles, pins, fabric marker, seam ripper)





SUGGESTED FABRICS:

Plush, stretchy fabrics such as fleece or minky are suggested. The variations of fleece and minky mentioned to the left would work well, but really any plushy fabric with a bit of stretch on the crosswise grain would be well-suited.

Stretch fabrics like **FLEECE** or **MINKY** will create a more squat, round shape when stuffed. Non-stretchy fabrics, like **FELT** or **COTTON**, won't stretch when stuffed so the resulting plush will look elongated as shown.

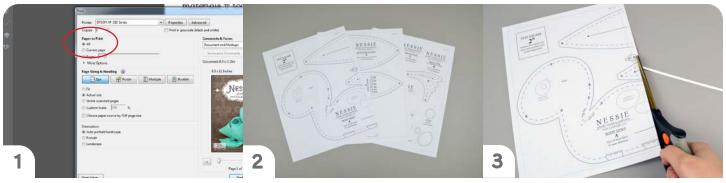


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printing the pattern:

For just the **BEAR**, print **PAGES 25-27**. For the **HAT**, print **PAGES 28-30**.

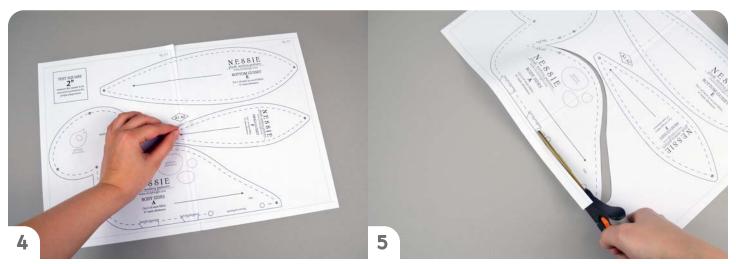
If you're unfamiliar with printing and assembling a .pdf pattern, read the steps below.



At the print dialog box, check the box that says print at "Actual Size" or 100%. Any other selection (such as "Fit to page") will distort the pattern so it's slightly larger or smaller and we don't want that.

Print the pages needed for the file. You might have one or more. Either way, be sure you have the full collection by noting the page numbers in the corner.

It's likely your printer will have a margin that ensures your image doesn't print to the very edge.
Assembly will be easier if you trim off this blank margin edge. This will give you pages that overlap slightly during assembly. If you trim across the gray outline boxes, this will give you pages that don't overlap but rather butt against each other.



To line up the pattern pages, match up the corresponding diamond shapes. Each diamond will have a letter, so it's simply a matter of matching A1 to A2, B3 to B4 and so on. The faint gray lines indicate the border of every page, you should be able to line those up as well. When the diamond goes together, tape it in place.

If you have many pages, it's easier to tape up the pages into rows first. Then tape the rows together into a full block.

You can trace the patterns onto a different paper, or you can also just cut them straight from the printer paper -- be sure that each piece is fully taped together along the joins so they don't fall apart when you cut them.

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cutting the fabric:



Place pattern on the fabric, and make sure the stretch line matches the stretch of the fabric. The nap line should go in the direction of the fur.



Pin the pattern in place, use pattern weights, or trace the outline of the pattern with a washable marker.

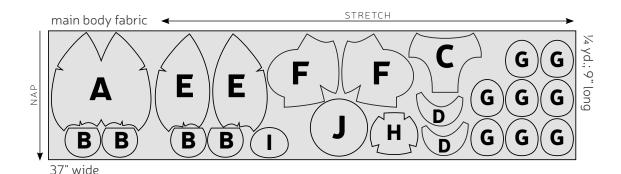


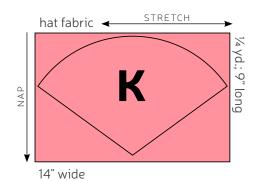
Using the paper as a template, cut out the fabric. Cut the required amount according to the pattern.



For all fur fabrics, shake the excess fuzz away.

cutting layout:







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BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

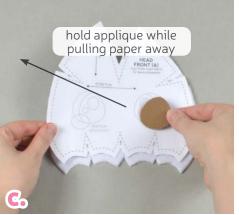
- Briefly read the project instructions so you know what to expect.
- If desired, mark the cut fabric pieces with the markings and symbols from the pattern. Or wait until the applicable step before transferring.
- Note that a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance is used throughout the project, except for the **HAT BAND** (L), which is $\frac{1}{2}$ " as you'll see later.





1. PREPARE THE FACE APPLIQUE

- a. Grab your fusible web and trace all the applique pieces you want for your bear onto the smooth (paper) side. You should have at least 2 *irises*, 2 *eye shines*, a *nose*, and *paws*. Pieces like *blush* and *pupils* are optional.
- **b.** Fuse the bumpy (adhesive) side onto the wrong side of your applique fabric. The *irises* should be fused to an accent color, the *pupils*, *nose*, and *paws* on black, the *eye shines* on white, and the *blush* on pink.

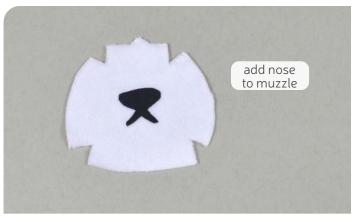






- **a.** Cut out the face applique and grab your **HEAD FRONT** (A) piece. Set your paper pattern on top of the fabric piece (right sides up). Align the *iris* piece on top where the *placement markings* are. Then carefully slide the paper pattern away while holding the applique piece in place.
- **b.** If you're using **blush**, tuck them underneath the **irises**. Fuse the **irises** in place with your iron. Use a press cloth if you're using a polyester or fuzzy fabric like minky. A scrap piece of cotton works as a press cloth, and will help prevent the fabric from melting.
- c. Next, move onto the smaller pieces: the *pupils* and *eye shines*. Fuse them the same way as you did the *irises*, using the paper pattern and photos as a guide.

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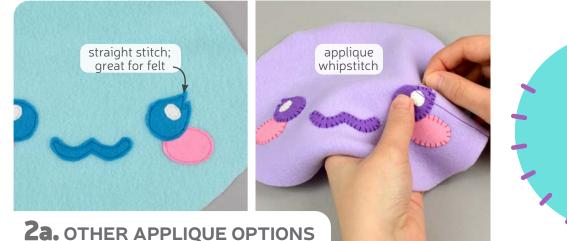


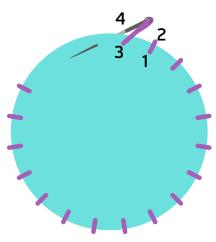
2. APPLIQUE THE OTHER BODY PIECES

- **a.** Take this time to also applique your other body pieces using the same method. Applique the nose to the **MUZZLE** (H).
- **b.** And applique the paws to two of your **FOOT/ARM** pieces (G).

If you used heavy duty fusible web, you can keep the pieces fused without sewing, or you can sew them in place a number of ways. I've used a zigzag stitch here.

→ Refer to the next step for some other applique options.

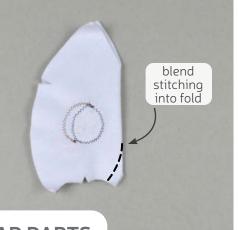




- **a.** Other good options for applique include a straight stitch, which involves sewing around the edge of the applique pieces with a straight stitch using matching thread -- about 1/8" in from the edge.
- **b.** You can also applique by hand; I prefer a whipstitch. Thread a hand-sewing needle with some matching thread and knot it. Bring the thread up from the back of the project; about 1/8" in from the edge of the applique shape. Bring it down perpendicular from the curve, just outside of the applique shape. This completes one stitch.
- **c.** For the next stitch, bring the needle back up about 1/8" away from the previous stitch and 1/8" in from the edge just as in the first stitch. Once again, bring it down just outside the applique shape. Continue this way until you've sewn around the shape.

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3. SEW THE BOTTOM HEAD DARTS

will create a rounder finish for your plush.

- a. Grab your **HEAD FRONT** piece (A). You'll notice it has many darts all over the bottom and top edges. Fold the fabric with right sides together along the point of the center bottom *dart*, matching up the slanted lines. Sew the *dart* starting at the opening and working toward the point. Try to blend your stitching into the fold of the fabric. This
- **b.** Repeat two more times with the remaining two neck *darts* located along the bottom of the head front.

DARTS:

A wedge-shaped gap found in a pattern. When sewn in fabric, it creates a tuck in the fabric and develops a 3D shape. The diagonal sides of the wedge are the **LEGS**; these are matched up and sewn to the **POINT** of the dart.







- a. The top of the **HEAD FRONT** (A) also has several more *darts*, starting with the largest one in the center. Fold the head front in half along the point of the dart with right sides facing to match up the slanted lines in the middle.
- **b.** Sew the *darts* similarly to the previous ones. Start at the opening and blend your stitching into the fold of the fabric. When complete, sew the two smaller darts on each side of the center dart.
- **c.** When complete, you should have 6 *darts* total, 3 along the top and 3 along the bottom.

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- a. Grab your **EAR** pieces (B). Take two of them and align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- **b.** Sew them together around the long curved edge. Leave the straight edge free for turning it right side out later.
- c. Turn the ear right side out, then repeat with your remaining ear pieces for two ears total.





BASTING:

A form of temporary sewing meant to hold pieces in place. A long stitch length is often used for this reason. The finished result is not meant to be seen and sometimes is even removed later (depending on your project).

- a. Take your finished **EAR** (B) and fold it along the bottom, using the **fold guide** found on the paper pattern for help.
- **b.** Repeat this with your other ear, but folding in the other direction.

 Baste the ears along the raw edges to hold the folds in place. When complete you should have a mirrored pair.

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- a. Grab your **HEAD FRONT** piece so far and lay it on your work surface so the right side is facing up. Grab your **EARS** so far (B) and align them along the top edge of the head, centered over the *upper side* darts. The folds should be facing up and also pointing toward the center.
- b. Now flip the ears inward so the folds are facing down. Baste the ears to the edge of the fabric within the seam allowance to hold them in place for future steps.











- **8.** SEW THE INNER LEGS
- **a.** Grab your **BODY FRONT** (C) and **INNER LEG** pieces (D). Align the inner curve of the inner leg with the inner curve of the body front. Match up the *notches* on both pieces to help ensure they're not flipped the wrong way. They also have *numbered points*, which will be helpful later in step 16.
- **b.** Sew the inner leg to the body front along the inner curve from *points 1 to 2*.
- **c.** Repeat with the other inner leg piece so both are joined.

- a. Grab your **HEAD FRONT** piece from before (A/B) and your BODY FRONT with the INNER LEGS attached (C/D). The neck edges of both of these pieces will be joined next.
 - The neck edges are marked with a circle marking in the center for easy identification and alignment.
- **b.** Layer the head front over the body front, matching up the raw edges and circle marking at the center. Pin the fabrics together.
- c. Sew the head front to the body front along this neck edge.
- d. Open up the pieces when complete.
 - → Set your body front aside for a while as we construct the back.

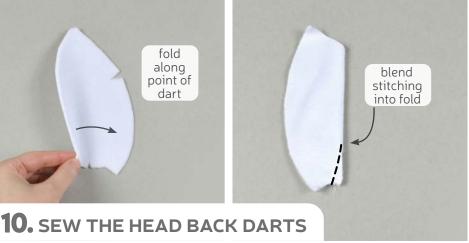


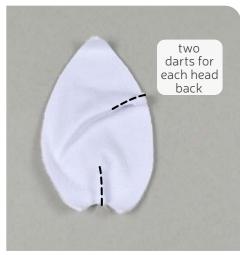












- a. Grab your **HEAD BACK** pieces (E). You'll notice they also have *darts* along the top and bottom. Sew them the same way as we have done for previous *darts*. Fold the fabric along the point of the *dart* so the slanted edges match up.
- **b.** Sew from the opening of the *dart* into the fold of the fabric and blend your stitching for a rounder finish.
- c. Sew both the bottom dart and upper dart on the head back piece. Repeat with your other head back piece for two total.

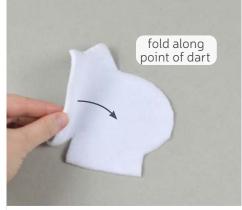


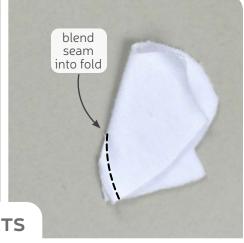




- a. Grab your **HEAD BACK** pieces (E) and align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- **b.** If you haven't already, locate the **opening for turning markings** found on the paper pattern for the head back. Transfer them over to the wrong side of the fabric. Sew the head back pieces together along this edge only, but leave the opening that you marked.
- c. Open up the pieces when complete.
 - → Set aside your head back for a bit while as we work on the body back.
- a. Grab your **BODY BACK** pieces (F). This piece also has a *dart*, found in the bottom corner. Sew it similarly to the others, starting by folding it along the point of the *dart* and matching the slanted lines
- b. Sew at the opening and work toward the point. Try to blend your stitching into the fold of the fabric. This will create a rounder finish for your plush.

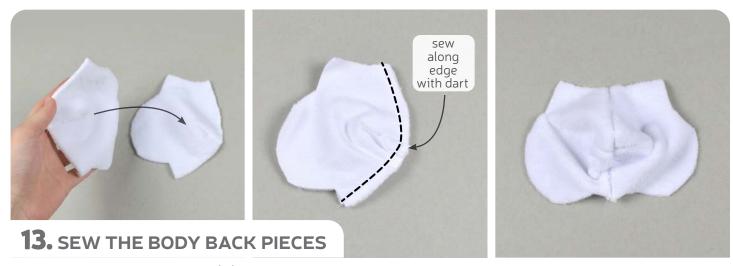
 Repeat with your remaining body back piece for two total.



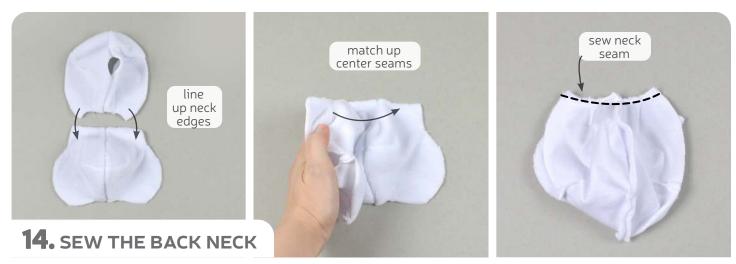


12. SEW THE BODY DARTS

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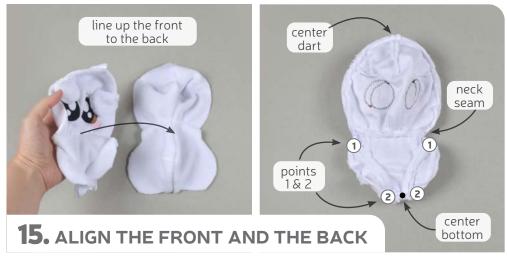


- **a.** Take your two **BODY BACK** (F) pieces and align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- **b.** Sew them together along the edge with the *dart* from the previous step.
- c. Open up the pieces when complete.



- **a.** Grab your **HEAD BACK** pieces from before (E) and your **BODY BACK** (F). The *neck edges* of both of these pieces will be joined next.
- **b.** Layer the head back over the body back, matching up the raw edges and the *center seams*. Pin the fabrics together.
- c. Sew the head back to the body back along this neck edge.

a. Grab both of your front and back pieces so far. Align them with right sides facing. Before you pin, note that there are certain crucial points that should match up. We'll go over them in general here. Advanced sewers may want to sew this part all in one go, but the next step will break down the parts in more detail.



b. Pin the front to the back, matching up the center front dart with the head back seam. The neck seams (from steps 9 and 14) should also match up. At the body, points 1 and 2 from the INNER LEGS, BODY FRONT, and BODY BACK should also align. The center circle marking on the body front will also match the body back seam (from step 13).

16. SEW THE FRONT TO THE BACK









- **a.** Begin by sewing the head. Line up the **neck seams** (from steps 9 and 14). Next match up the **head back seam** (from step 11) with the **center top dart** (from step 4). Sew around the entire head, but be careful over the ears since there is a lot of bulk there.
- **b.** Next, sew down the side of the **BODY** pieces. This is the edge starting at the neck and going down to **point 1**.
- **c.** Now sew around the leg. This is the outer curve going around the **INNER LEG** piece (D) and joins to the outer curve of the **BODY BACK** (F). It starts at **point 1** and goes around to **point 2**.
- d. At the edge between the legs, the *center circle marking* on the **BODY FRONT** (C) will match up with the *body back seam* (from step 13). Sew between the legs, from one *point 2* to the other. Lastly, finish up the other side by repeating the previous parts. Sew from *point 2 to 1*, then up the side, ending at the *neck seam*. This should take you all the way around the body.

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- a. Finish by clipping the seam allowances at the corners of the body, particularly at the **neck seam** and **points 1 and 2**.
- **b.** Turn the body right side out through the opening in the back of the head.











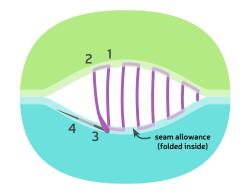
- **18.** STUFF THE BODY
- **a.** Begin by stuffing the legs with stuffing. Fill the legs really tightly, as they like to deflate and force the stuffing out.
 - Fill up the rest of the body, and sneak extra bits of stuffing into the legs if necessary. Keep filling the body until it's firm before moving onto the head.
- **b.** Move onto stuffing the head. Get plenty of stuffing near the darts to smooth out any wrinkles in the fabric. Then you can fill up the rest of the head.
- **c.** Once the plush is stuffed, make sure the seam allowances in the opening are tucked inside and prepare to ladder stitch it closed. Thread a hand-sewing needle and knot it at the end. Insert the needle from the inside of the opening and out of the plush near one edge of the opening. This will leave the knot inside the plush.

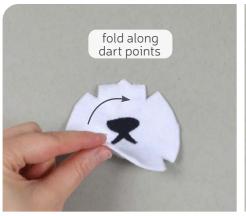


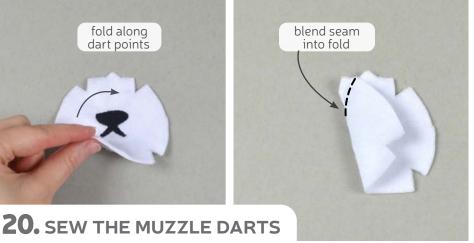




- a. Continue from here doing a ladder stitch. Take a 1/8" stitch into the fold of one side of the opening, then go across and take another. Keep going down the opening until you reach the end.
- **b.** When you're finished, stitch a knot into the end of the seam. Then insert the needle near the finished knot and out of the plush about 1-2" away.
- c. Pull the thread through and hold it taut while snipping the thread. The excess thread should sink back inside the plush -- all hidden!









- **a.** Grab your **MUZZLE** piece (H). Note the tiny wedge shapes around the muzzle piece. These are *darts*. Fold the muzzle fabric along the point of one **dart** to match up the slanted lines.
- **b.** Sew the dart by starting at the opening and curving into the fold of the fabric.
- c. Repeat sewing the remaining darts on the muzzle piece for 4 *darts* total.

- a. Grab your MUZZLE BACK piece (I). Note the **notch** markings on both the MUZZLE and MUZZLE BACK. Match up the **notches** for these pieces with right sides facing. The *circle markings* will also match up. Pin the muzzle all the way around the shape.
- **b.** Sew the muzzle to the muzzle base all the way around.
- c. To turn the muzzle right side out, cut a small slit into the center of the muzzle back. Be sure to cut through one layer of fabric only.
- d. Turn the muzzle right side out through the opening.















- a. Stuff the muzzle until it takes shape and no longer has any wrinkles in the fabric.
- b. Align the muzzle over the face of your bear. Place it with the cut side down just barely covering the corners of the eyes. Hold the muzzle in place by sticking pins down into the base of the muzzle and through the head of the bear.
- **c.** Stitch the muzzle to the face around the base using a ladder stitch.







- a. Grab your ARM & FOOT pieces (G). For the feet, take one that has the paws appliqued and one that's blank. Align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- **b.** Sew them together around the whole edge.
- c. To turn the pieces, cut a 1" slit through the back layer of the fabric only, near the base. There's also a cutting guide on the paper pattern for extra help.
- a. Repeat step 23 with another appliqued foot piece and another blank piece. Then repeat step 23 two more times with your remaining **ARM & FOOT** (G) pieces. When complete you should have 2 complete feet (with appliqued paws), and two complete arms (that are blank).
- **b.** Stuff the pieces lightly with stuffing, just enough so they puff up a little. To make the following steps easier, you may want to stitch the arms and feet closed with a whip stitch.





→ TO WHIP STITCH: With a hand-sewing needle and thread, stitch into the fabric on one side of the cut and come out the other side of the cut. Pull at the thread but don't tighten it too much, just enough for the thread to lie flat. Stitch up the rest of the cut using this method. The goal is to just keep the stuffing inside so the following steps are easier. The stitching doesn't have to be perfect. If you have thread leftover, you can use it to attach the foot next.

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- a. Take one of your **FEET** and align it over the *leg seam* (from step 16). The cut side should be facing down.
- b. Sew the foot to the leg using a ladder stitch. Go around the cut you made in step 23. Go around with long stitches for the first pass. Check that you like the placement, then go around again with tinier, neater stitches for the second pass.
- c. Repeat parts A & B but for the **ARMS**. Place the cut side of the arm down onto the **BODY FRONT** (C) right between the **INNER LEG** (D) and the **neck seam**.
- **d.** Ladder stitch the arms to the body front, going around the cut from step 23.





GATHERING:

ladder stitch in place

The process of shortening the length of a piece of fabric by sewing long stitches through it. When the thread is pulled, it forms small folds that ruffle the fabric.

GATHERING STITCH:

A long version of the running stitch, which is a stitch done by weaving the needle in and out of a length of fabric going along a line. The long stitches (about $\frac{1}{4}$ "- $\frac{1}{2}$ " long) gather the fabric when pulled later.

26. GATHER THE TAIL

a. Grab your **TAIL** piece (J). Also grab a hand sewing needle and thread it. Sew a gathering stitch around the edge of the tail, about ¼" away from the edge.

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- a. Pull at the gathering thread gently so the **TAIL** (J) starts to cinch up. Stop when it makes a cup-like shape.
- **b.** Fill the tail with stuffing while it's in that cup shape.
- c. Then continue pulling at the thread until the entire tail is cinched closed. Sew a few knots into the center of the tail to secure it.
- d. Place the tail on the back of your bear, cinched end down. In the samples, it's placed just above the body back dart.

Ladder stitch the tail to the body, just like with the arms, feet, and muzzle.

→ Congrats! That completes your bear! See below for making it a hat.



- a. Grab your **HAT CROWN** piece (K). Fold it in half with right sides facing so the straight edges match up.
- **b.** Sew the hat along the straight edge of the piece, from the opening down to the corner.



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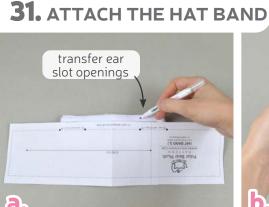
- a. Trim the excess seam allowance at the corner of the **HAT** (K) to reduce bulk.
- b. Turn the hat right side out and define the corner with a chopstick or similar turning tool.

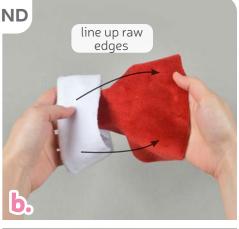


- a. Grab your HAT BAND piece (L). Fold it in half widthwise with right sides facing so the short edges match up.
- **b.** Sew the band along the short edge only. It should now make a ring.
- c. Fold the ring in half with wrong sides of the fabric facing. This should match up the raw edges at the top and bottom of the hat band.
- d. When complete, the hat band should make a ring with raw edges along one side and a fold along the bottom.



- a. If you haven't already, note the ear slot openings found on the paper pattern for the HAT BAND (L). Transfer them over to the raw edge of your hat band fabric.
- **b.** Loop the hat band through your **HAT** piece (K) so the raw edges match up. Also try to match up the back seams too. Pin the fabrics together.
- C. USING A 1/2" SEAM **ALLOWANCE**. sew the hat to the hat band. But leave openings where you marked earlier as **slots** for the bear ears.
- d. Sew around the complete ring of the hat band, and it should look something like photo D.







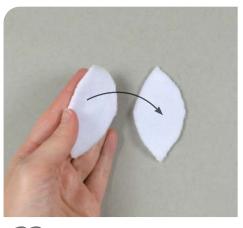


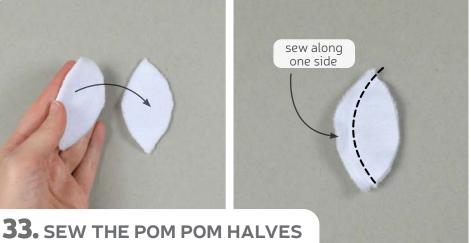






- a. Open up the **HAT BAND** and **HAT** pieces (K-L).
- b. Turn the hat wrong side out and open up the seam allowances from the seam in step 31. If you fold these out of the way it will help the ear slots look nicely finished.
- c. To help hold the seam allowance out of the way, whip stitch the seam allowance to the hat. This should hold them back when dressing the hat on the bear.



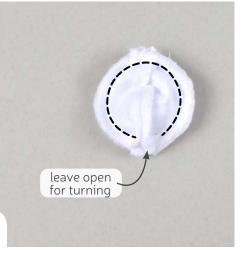




- a. Grab your POM pieces (M). Take two of them and align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- **b.** Sew the two pieces along one of the curved edges only.
- c. Repeat this with your remaining pom pom pieces. This will create two halves to your pom pom.









- a. Align the two halves of your **POM POM** together with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- **b.** Sew the pom pom together all around the outer edge, but leave an opening at the bottom for turning the piece.
- **c.** Turn the pom pom right side out through the opening in the bottom.







- a. Stuff the **POM POM** with stuffing until it takes shape and no longer has wrinkles in the fabric.
- **b.** Align the opening of the pom pom over the tip of your hat. Tuck the tip of the hat into the stuffing.
- c. Tuck in the edge of the seam allowances on the pom pom and ladder stitch the pom pom to the hat. You can now dress it on your bear!



