

The Pincushion Costume

A complete sewing guide in three parts

TOMATO SKIRT / STRAWBERRY / TAPE SASH



Build a playful, padded costume with a wearable lining, a soft strawberry accessory, and a yellow measuring-tape sash.

English edition • A4 print layout • Metric measurements with inch equivalents
New 3D construction illustrations + calibrated sewing templates

Your sewing roadmap

Three coordinated projects

Part 1 creates the rounded tomato skirt. Part 2 makes a six-panel strawberry to carry by a ribbon loop. Part 3 makes a loose measuring-tape sash. Each section ends with its own print-and-cut or drafting pages. The last page shows the supplied complete-costume photograph.

Section	Pages
Getting ready	2
Part 1 - tomato skirt	3-12; printable templates on 10-12
Part 2 - strawberry	13-17; printable templates on 16-17
Part 3 - measuring-tape sash	18-21; drafting/template sheet on 21
Complete outfit	22

Use this pattern as a measured starting point

The supplied pictures are visual references, not graded patterns. This guide develops a coherent construction and new measured templates from that appearance. The project has not been physically sample-sewn. Make a low-cost fabric fitting shell before cutting your final fabric.

Measurements and terminology

Centimeters are the controlling units; inches are rounded (1 in = 2.54 cm). Right sides together means the outer faces touch. Baste means temporary long stitches. A seam allowance is the fabric between the cut edge and the seam. Cut-on-fold edges receive no added allowance.

Wearable construction: Keep the skirt open at both waist and hem. Fill only the space between shell and lining. Use soft fabric or foam decorative pins with flexible stems, never metal pins, wire, skewers, or rigid rods. Keep the sash loose and easily removable.



Measure before cutting

Example only: a 60 cm (23 5/8 in) waist and 72 cm (28 3/8 in) hip.

A balloon shell around a straight lining

Eight curved outer gores give the skirt its tomato shape. A straight inner tube keeps padding away from the legs. The outer hem gathers onto the lining hem; their top edges join at a separate green elastic casing. Green seam welts emphasize each segment.

Measure or feature	Example / planning rule
Waist W	60 cm (23 5/8 in), measured over the clothes worn underneath.
Hip H	72 cm (28 3/8 in), measured at the widest point.
Lining circumference C	96 cm (37 3/4 in). Must pass over hips and allow a comfortable stride.
Finished lining length	30 cm (11 3/4 in) below the waistband.
Outer gore seam height	40 cm (15 3/4 in), shaped into a shorter balloon.
Waistband	3 cm (1 1/8 in) finished height; use 2 cm (3/4 in) elastic.

Adjust circumference without changing the balloon depth

For a custom sample, choose C at least hip + 20 cm (7 7/8 in); increase it if a walking test requires more room. Add $(C - 96) / 8$ cm to the FULL width of each gore at top, middle, and bottom. Add half that change to the half-pattern. Use lining and waistband cut lengths $C + 2$ cm.

Adjust length separately

To change the example length by d cm, add d to the lining length and the gore height, through the middle of the pattern. Reblend the side curves and lengthen the welts. Keep the waistband unchanged. Do not scale the entire PDF: that also changes seam allowances.



Prepare the fabric

For the example size, allow approximately 1.5 m (1 5/8 yd) red cotton, 0.5 m (5/8 yd) lightweight lining, and 0.75 m (7/8 yd) green cotton, all 110 cm (43 in) wide. Add 0.25 m (3/8 yd) green felt if using felt leaves. A narrow fabric or a directional print may need more.

Also gather a 250-500 g bag of polyester fiberfill (use only enough for a light shape), 2 cm elastic, matching polyester thread, sewing clips, removable marker, scissors, iron, tape measure, and a sewing machine with a suitable universal needle.

Piece	Cutting instructions - example size
Red outer gores	Cut 8 on fold using pages 10-11. Approx. 42 cm tall x 26 cm maximum full width; 1 cm seam allowance included.
Straight lining	Cut 1 rectangle 98 x 32 cm (38 5/8 x 12 5/8 in).
Green waistband	Cut 1 rectangle 98 x 8 cm (38 5/8 x 3 1/8 in).
Green flat welts	Cut 8 bias strips 3 x 46 cm (1 1/8 x 18 1/8 in). No piping cord is needed.
Green leaves	Cut 8 felt leaves using page 12; no seam allowance needed.
Waist elastic	Start with W + 2 cm, then fit. Overlap ends by 2 cm after checking comfort.

Preparation and stitch settings

Prewash and press washable fabric before cutting. Keep every gore grainline parallel to its fold. Mark top, bottom, and mid-height with chalk. Use about 2.5 mm straight stitches for seams and 4-5 mm for gathering. Test on scraps first.

All skirt construction seams are 1 cm (3/8 in) unless specified. Finish exposed raw edges with a zigzag or overlock stitch. Do not add seam allowance again to the printed gore.



How the layers fit together

Read the illustrations left to right, then top to bottom. The written measurements control the construction.



1. Cut the gores and welts. **2.** Sandwich a welt in each seam. **3.** Form the open outer shell. **4.** Prepare a separate lining. **5.** Fill between layers only. **6.** Add the waistband and leaves. Illustrations are schematic 3D teaching views, not cutting templates.



Sew the shell and lining

1 Cut and mark eight matching gores

Assemble the half-gore template, place its straight center edge on folded fabric, and cut eight complete gores. Keep the top edge marked so that no gore is reversed. Mark a midpoint on both curved sides of every piece. Cut the lining and waistband from the rectangular measurements.

2 Prepare the soft green seam welts

Fold each bias strip lengthwise, wrong sides together, and press gently. Place its two raw edges together along a gore side. Baste about 7 mm from the aligned raw edges. At the final 1 cm seam, approximately 5 mm of folded green fabric will remain visible. Let the strip extend beyond the top and bottom, then trim it after sewing.

3 Join all eight gores into a ring

Put a second gore right sides together with the prepared gore, enclosing the welt. Match the top, midpoint, and hem. Sew the curved side with a 1 cm allowance without stretching it. Repeat around the ring, adding one welt to each of the eight seams, including the last join. Check that all narrow top edges align.

4 Make the lining tube

Place the two short sides of the 98 x 32 cm lining rectangle right sides together. Sew a 1 cm seam to form a tube with a 96 cm circumference. Finish and press that seam. Do not close either circular opening. Mark quarters on both lining edges and on the outer shell.

Fitting checkpoint: Try the unpadded lining over the intended clothing. It should pull over the hips without strain. Temporarily hold it at the waist and test sitting and a full comfortable step. Enlarge both lining and shell before continuing if movement is restricted.

Keep the shape smooth

Press curved shell seams over a rolled towel. Snip only within the seam allowance where a curve pulls, stopping well short of the stitches. Keep the welts on the outside and prevent the gores from twisting.

Create the balloon shape

5 Gather and join the lower openings

Sew two gathering rows around the outer shell hem, 5 mm and 8 mm from the edge. Leave long thread tails. Match shell and lining quarter marks with right sides together at the hem. Pull the gathering threads to fit the shell to the lining; distribute fullness evenly. Sew a permanent 1 cm seam around the complete opening.

6 Turn the layers into their wearing position

Turn through the open waist. The shell right side should face out and the lining right side should face the wearer. The hem seam lies between them. The shorter lining draws the longer shell upward to create the rounded lower edge. The central tunnel must remain entirely open.

7 Add light, even padding

With the waist still open, place small fluffed handfuls of fiberfill between shell and lining. Start at the lower curve and work around evenly. Keep the top 5 cm relatively flat for gathering. Use only enough to support the shape: tightly packed padding makes a heavy, stiff costume. Optional loose hand tacks between lining and shell seam allowances can reduce shifting.

8 Baste the waist layers together

Match quarter marks at the top. Ease or lightly gather the outer edge to match the lining; tiny differences can result from curved seams. Baste the layers together 5 mm from the raw edge, keeping filling out of the seam. Try the shape again with temporary elastic or a ribbon holding it at the waist.

Open-bottom reminder: The hem joins the shell to the lining as a ring. Never pull the hem closed into a pouch. Check leg clearance after padding as well as before padding.

If the shape is uneven

Move filling through the still-open waist before attaching the casing. A low side usually needs less filling, better distribution, or corrected quarter alignment. Do not compensate by tightening the hem around the legs.

Waistband, leaves and soft pins

9 Sew a separate elastic casing

Join the short ends of the 98 x 8 cm waistband with a 1 cm allowance to make a ring. Press the seam open. Press one long edge inward by 1 cm. Sew the other long edge to the skirt waist, right sides together, using 1 cm. Fold the band inward so its pressed edge covers the seam; edgestitch, leaving a 3 cm opening.

10 Fit and secure the elastic

Thread 2 cm elastic through the casing with a bodkin. Check that it is flat all the way around. Fit it snugly but comfortably over the wearer's clothing; adjust its length before joining. Overlap ends by 2 cm and stitch a strong box with a cross. Close the casing gap and distribute gathers. Tack elastic at the waistband seams to limit twisting.

11 Attach the green leaves

Cut eight green felt leaves. Add a stitched center vein if desired. Arrange their rounded bases at the lower edge of the green casing, points hanging down over the red shell. Overlap slightly. Stitch the upper 1-2 cm of each leaf securely to the outer waistband layer without catching the elastic. Leave points free.

12 Add optional soft imitation pins

For each pin head, cut a 10 cm (4 in) circle of colorful felt, run gathering stitches 5 mm from its edge, and add a small amount of fiberfill. Gather closed to make a soft ball. For the stem, cut a 4 x 12 cm (1 5/8 x 4 3/4 in) white felt strip, fold lengthwise, and sew with 5 mm seams; turn and lightly fill. No rigid core is used.

Stitch the closed stem end into the soft ball and close the gathering opening securely. Sew at least 3 cm of the lower stem flat against an outer skirt seam with several strong tacks. Keep stems short and flexible. Add only a few accents so the costume remains light; omit them for active play.

Finish: Remove all sewing pins and loose threads. Check every decoration with a gentle pull. Test sitting, walking and taking the costume off. Use spot cleaning for the stuffed skirt and let it dry completely.

Print and assemble the skirt pattern

Print only the template pages at actual size

Use A4 paper, 100% or Actual Size, and disable Fit, Shrink and borderless enlargement. Check the 5 cm square on page 12 in both directions. If it is wrong, correct the printer settings before cutting. Pages 10-11 are two tiles of one half-gore; page 12 is the separate leaf.

Join tile A to tile B

The horizontal join is 21 cm below the top cut edge. Page 10 ends at this join line. Page 11 repeats the preceding 2 cm as an overlap strip. Trim page 10 at the join line, lay it over page 11, and align the join marks and the straight fold edge. Tape the sheets, then cut the outside contour.

Template key and cut quantities

Solid black line = cut. Dashed line = suggested seam line. Straight center line = fabric fold; do not cut through the fold. The full cut gore is about 42 cm tall and 26 cm at its widest point. Cut eight on fold. The working seam dimensions are approximately 40 cm high, 12 cm wide at top, 24 cm at the widest part, and 14 cm at the lower edge.

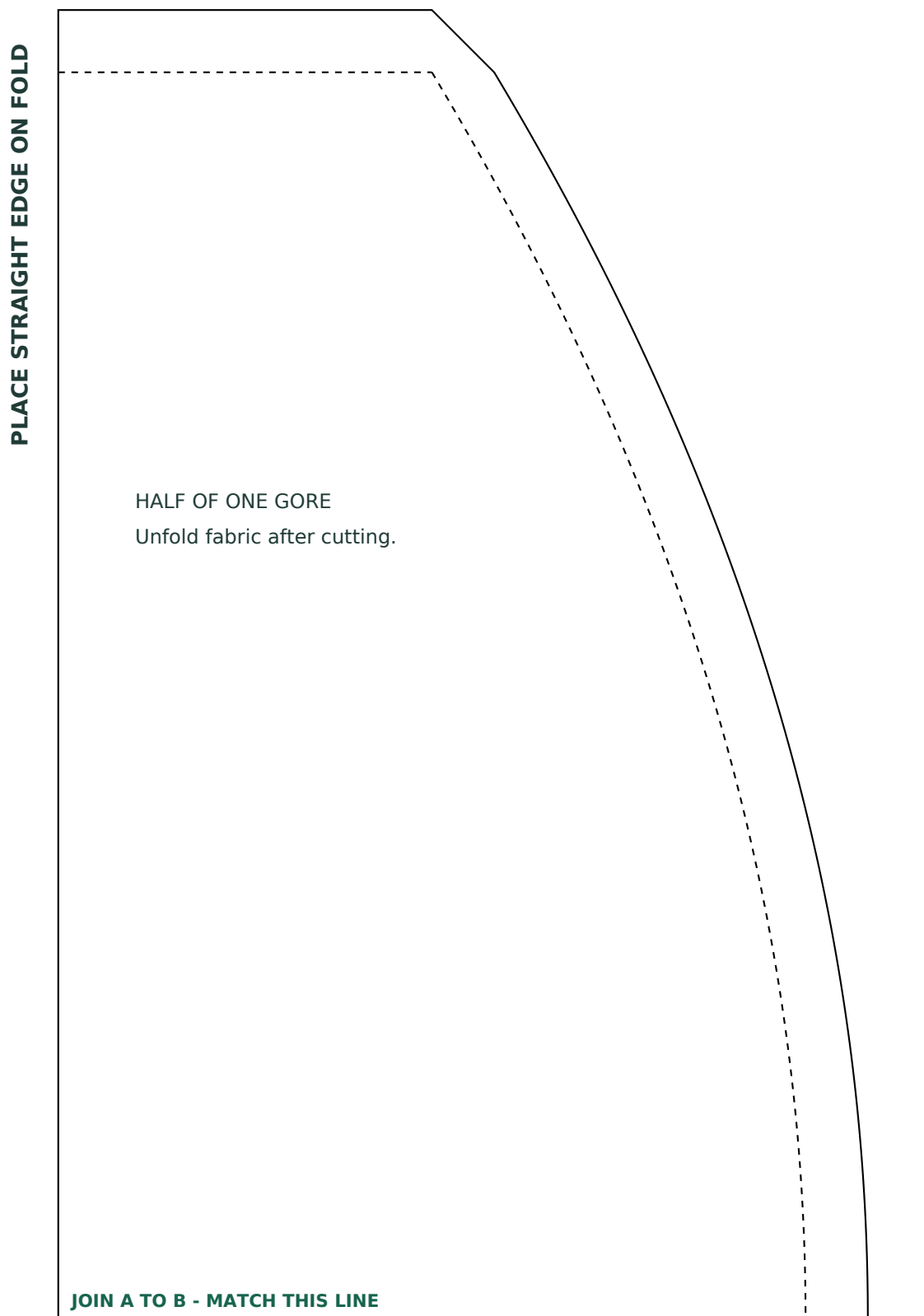
Draft rectangles with a ruler	Cut size; allowances included
Lining, cut 1	98 x 32 cm
Waistband, cut 1 green	98 x 8 cm
Bias welt strips, cut 8 green	3 x 46 cm
Optional pin stem, per pin	4 x 12 cm white felt
Optional pin head, per pin	Circle, 10 cm diameter

The following clean template pages replace the unscaled reference layouts. Do not measure from the 3D drawings. For a changed size, redraw the template using the adjustment instructions on page 3, then make a fabric test.



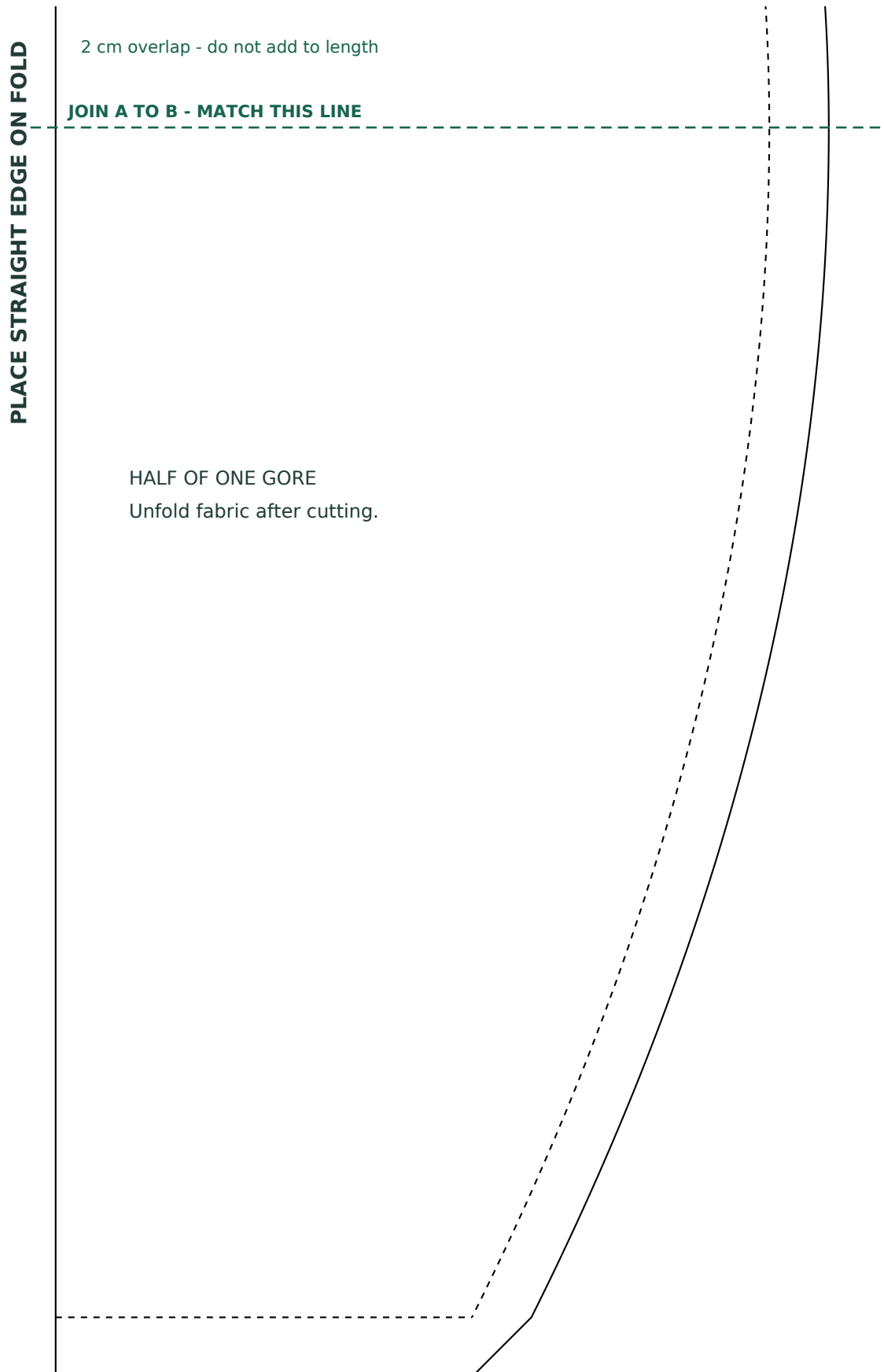
Half-gore - tile A

Cut 8 red on fold • 1 cm seam allowance included • Print at 100%



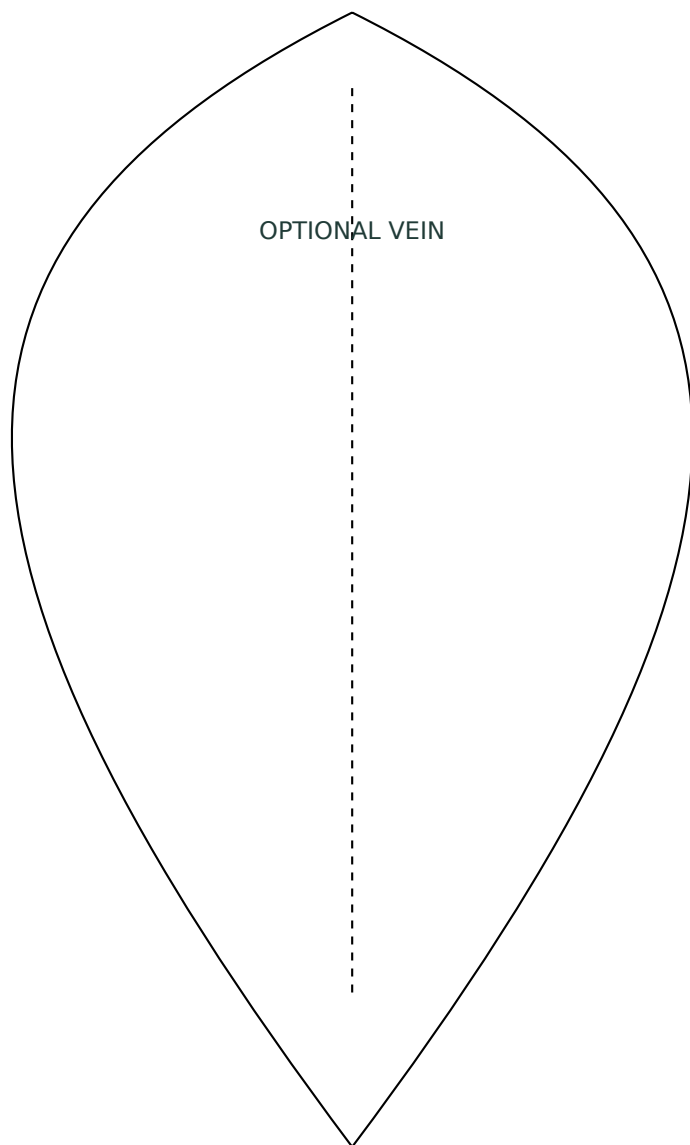
Half-gore - tile B

Cut 8 red on fold • 1 cm seam allowance included • Print at 100%

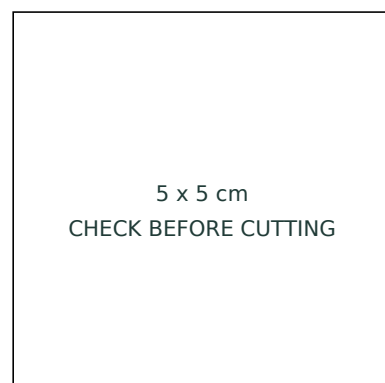


Green leaf

Cut 8 from felt • Finished outline • No seam allowance • Print at 100%



Leaf length: 15 cm (5 7/8 in).
Attach the upper rounded end.
The pointed end hangs down.



A soft strawberry accessory

This version uses six tapered gores joined into one three-dimensional fruit, then gathered under a green felt calyx. It avoids mixing the two-piece and six-piece systems shown in the reference artwork. The finished fruit is approximately 14-15 cm (5 1/2-6 in) tall; fullness depends on the fabric and filling.

Material	Quantity / cut list
Red felt or woven cotton	About 25 x 50 cm (10 x 20 in). Cut 6 fruit gores from page 16. Use a thin, flexible felt if sewing on a machine.
Green felt	One 15 x 15 cm (6 x 6 in) square. Cut 1 six-leaf calyx from page 17.
Red ribbon	20 cm (7 7/8 in), about 1 cm (3/8 in) wide.
Fiberfill	A small handful, added gradually.
Thread	Red and green sewing thread; optional yellow embroidery floss.
Tools	Needle, clips, scissors, removable marker and machine, if preferred.

Seam allowance and placement

The fruit template includes a 6 mm (about 1/4 in) seam allowance on the two curved sides. The straight upper edge is the gathering opening; do not sew it shut while joining gores. The pointed end is always the bottom. The felt calyx is cut at its finished outline without extra allowance.

Seeds are easiest before assembly

Optional small yellow straight stitches create seeds. Scatter them over the central part of each gore, keeping at least 1 cm clear of every edge. Knot the ends securely on the wrong side. Embroidery gives a softer finish than beads and does not leave hard pieces on a child's accessory.

The ribbon is a short carry loop, not a wrist restraint or necklace. Keep small ornaments out of reach of children who mouth objects. Check the ribbon attachment regularly.



From six gores to one fruit

Read left to right, then top to bottom. Keep the opening at the top throughout assembly.



1. Cut six gores, calyx and ribbon. **2.** Join curved edges. **3.** Leave the top open. **4.** Turn and fill. **5.** Gather and secure the carry loop. **6.** Attach the green calyx. The gores meet at the lower point.

Join, stuff and finish

1 Make two groups of three

Place two gores right sides together. Sew one curved edge with a 6 mm allowance, starting at the top and ending at the bottom point. Backstitch gently. Add a third gore to the free side. Repeat with the remaining three pieces. Six gores make two groups of three, not six pairs.

2 Join the two halves

Place the three-gore halves right sides together. Sew one remaining side from the top down to the point, then sew the other side from its top down to the same point. Keep the top opening unsewn. At the tip, make sure seams meet without a hole. Trim bulky seam tips carefully, leaving at least 3 mm of fabric beyond the stitches.

3 Turn and fill

Turn the shell right side out through the upper opening. Use a blunt tool to ease the point outward without piercing the cloth. Add small pieces of fiberfill, starting at the tip. Fill evenly until rounded; do not stretch the seams. Stop short of the upper edge so it can gather neatly.

4 Anchor the ribbon and gather the top

Fold the 20 cm ribbon into a loop. Insert both ends about 2 cm inside the opening and hand-sew them securely to opposite seam allowances near the top. With strong doubled thread, sew running stitches 6 mm below the upper edge. Pull closed around the ribbon and tie off. Add several stitches across the gathered opening.

5 Add the calyx

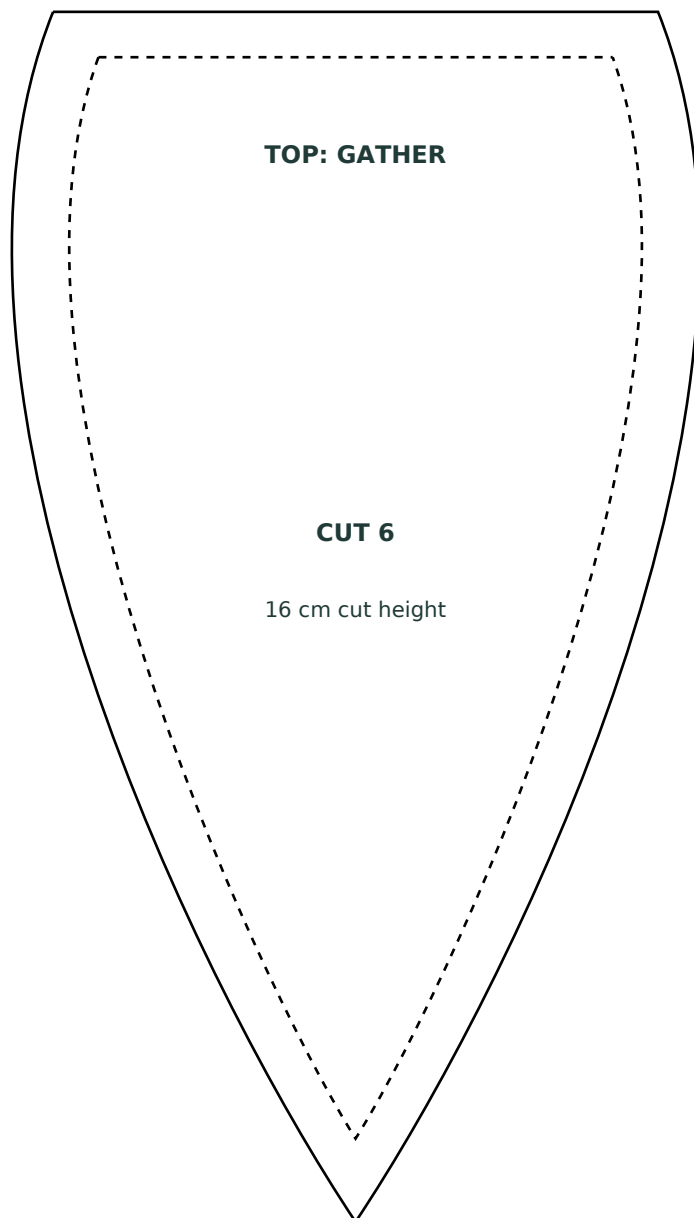
Cut the six-leaf green felt shape. Fold the ribbon loop flat and pass it through a small 1 cm slit at the calyx center. Slide the calyx over the gathered top. Stitch around its center, then add a small tack near the base of each leaf. Leave the pointed tips loose so they drape naturally over the fruit.

Finish check: Gently pull the carry loop and each leaf. Reinforce any movement. Shape the filling with your fingers, trim loose thread, and spot clean. If a visible hole remains under the calyx, close the fruit first; the calyx should cover a secure seam.

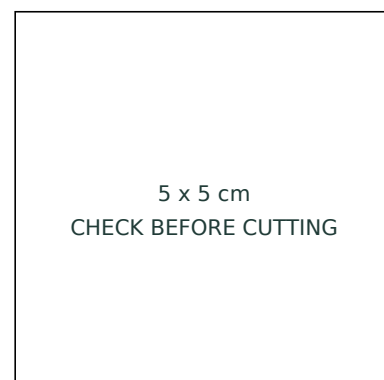


Strawberry gore

Cut 6 red • Curved-side seam allowance: 6 mm included • Print at 100%

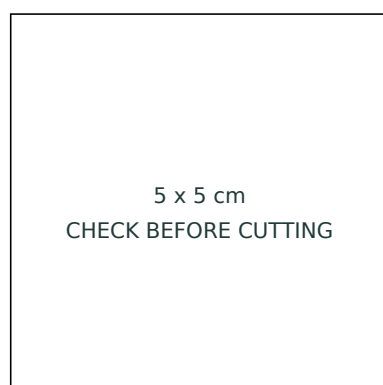
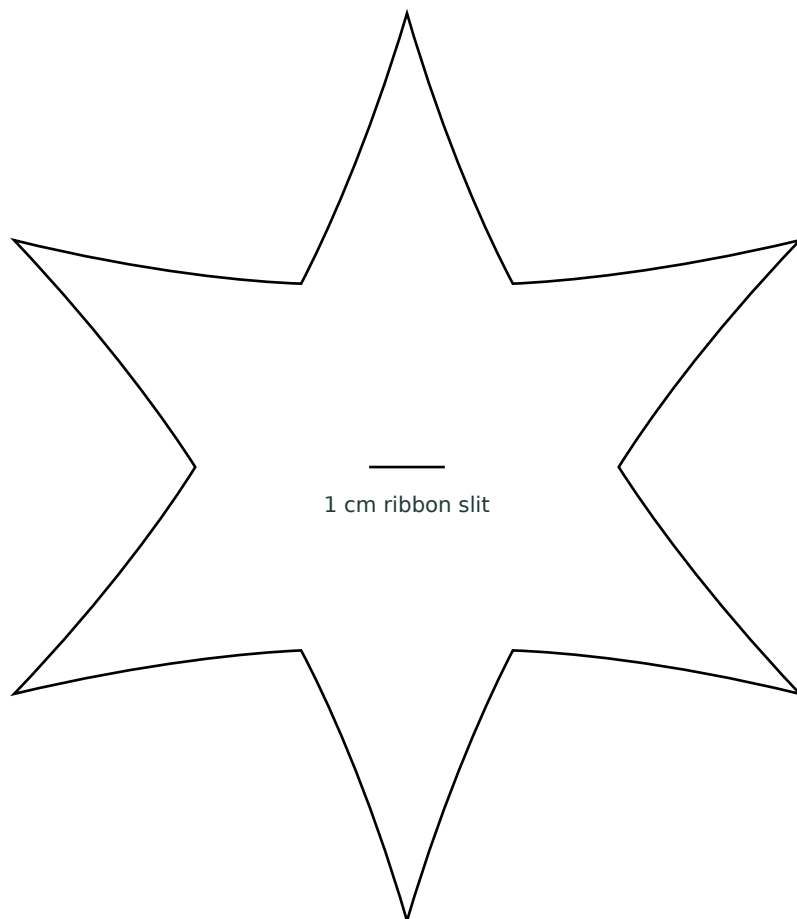


Solid = cut line.
Dashed = stitching guide.
Sew 6 mm from curved edges.
Top stays open until filling.



Six-leaf strawberry calyx

Cut 1 green felt • No seam allowance • Print at 100%



Approximate tip-to-tip diameter: 12 cm (4 3/4 in).

Cut the slit only after checking the ribbon width. Keep it small; the center is stitched over the closed top of the fruit.

A flexible costume tape

The sash is a decorative strip worn loosely over the shoulders and crossed in front, with free-hanging tails. A two-layer cotton construction gives it clean edges without making it rigid. The example finishes approximately 140 x 8 cm (55 1/8 x 3 1/8 in).

Material or piece	Example size / quantity
Yellow cotton front	Cut 1 strip 142 x 10 cm (55 7/8 x 4 in).
Yellow cotton back	Cut 1 matching strip 142 x 10 cm.
Light interfacing, optional	Cut 1 strip 140 x 8 cm; keep it out of seam allowances.
Black fabric marker or paint	Use a product intended for cloth; follow its drying and setting instructions.
Soft hook-and-loop tape	A small sew-on patch, approximately 2 x 2 cm, for a releasable shoulder attachment.
Other supplies	Ruler, removable marker, yellow thread, clips, iron and blunt turning tool.

Measure the wearer, not the photograph

Drape a ribbon loosely over the shoulders, cross the ends in front, and choose where the tails should stop. Keep them above the knee and away from the feet. Measure this route without pulling it tight. Call the desired finished length L; cut both fabric strips L + 2 cm long and 10 cm wide.

Fabric layout and joining strips

A 150 cm-wide fabric can accommodate the 142 cm strip across its width. If using narrower fabric, join shorter sections with 1 cm seams and press open. For example, two 72 cm sections join into a 142 cm strip. Repeat for the back, staggering front and back joins if possible.

The printed markings are decorative and are not a calibrated measuring tool. Avoid a fixed, closed loop around the neck. Use a loose drape with a small releasable attachment at clothing or shoulder.



Make a clean, flat sash

Read left to right, then top to bottom. Keep the two strip layers the same size.



1. Cut front and back. **2.** Fuse light interfacing if needed. **3.** Sew the perimeter with a turning gap. **4.** Turn, press and topstitch. **5.** Draw ticks and numbers. **6.** Fit the loose drape and releasable attachment. Use the written marking sequence for exact spacing.

Finish the measuring-tape look

1 Stabilize and stitch

If desired, center the interfacing on the wrong side of the front strip and fuse according to its directions. Put front and back right sides together. Sew around all four edges with a 1 cm allowance, leaving an 8 cm turning gap midway along one long edge. Backstitch on both sides of the gap.

2 Turn and press

Trim corner seam allowances diagonally without cutting the stitching. Turn through the gap. Ease the corners with a blunt tool. Press the edges flat and fold the gap allowances inside by 1 cm. Topstitch 2-3 mm from every edge, closing the gap as you sew.

3 Lay out evenly spaced marks

Choose one long edge as the measuring edge. Begin 2 cm from a short finished end. Use a ruler and removable marker to mark positions at 1 cm intervals. Draw short ticks about 1 cm long, medium ticks about 1.5 cm long at every fifth interval, and long ticks about 2.5 cm long at every tenth interval.

4 Add bold, readable numbers

Write 0 at the first long tick and continue 10, 20, 30 and so on at 10 cm intervals. Keep all digits facing the same direction along the strip. Test on an offcut, place scrap paper underneath, and trace with black fabric marker or paint. Let the ink dry and heat-set only as the product directs.

5 Fit a loose drape

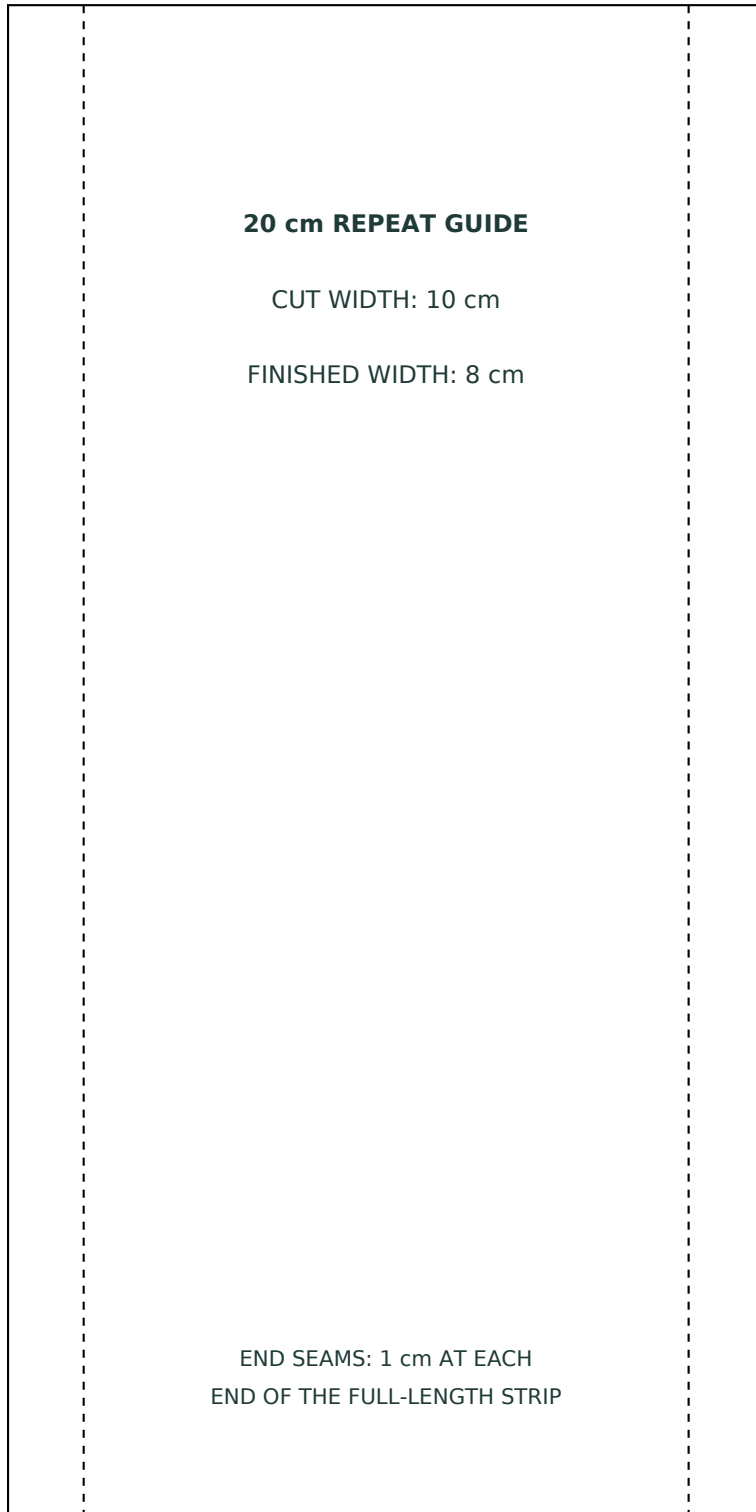
Place the strip over the shoulders without tightening it behind the neck. Cross the tails loosely in front. If needed, use a small hook-and-loop patch between the sash back and a matching sewn patch at the shoulder of the costume shirt. Check that it releases easily. Do not pin it with exposed safety pins.

Final fitting: Put on the skirt and sash together. Shorten tails if they reach the knees, catch on decorations, or interfere with the hands. The child should be able to remove the sash easily. Use adult supervision during wear.



Sash width and repeat guide

Print at 100% • Strip cut width: 10 cm • Seam allowance: 1 cm included



Draft a continuous rectangle on paper or fabric.

Example: repeat this 20 cm length 7 times to reach 140 cm, then add 2 cm total for the two end seams.

Final cut length = 142 cm.

Do not cut and sew seven separate pieces. This is a ruler guide, not a tiled strip.

Cut 2 yellow strips. For a custom finished length L, cut $L + 2$ cm.

Ready for the costume reveal

The supplied photograph shows the intended overall look; construction details follow this guide.

