

1914 Girl's Afternoon Dress Pattern



Notes:

I created this pattern as a companion for my women's 1914 Afternoon Dress pattern. At right is an illustration from the 1914 Home Pattern Company catalogue. This is, essentially, what this pattern looks like if you make it up with an overskirt and cap sleeves. To get this exact look, you'd embroider the overskirt (or use eyelet), add a ruffle around the neckline and put cuffs on the straight sleeves. But the possibilities are as limitless as your imagination! Styles for little girls in 1914 had changed very little from the early Edwardian era—they just “relaxed” a bit. Sleeves and skirt styles varied somewhat over the years, but the basic silhouette remained the same. In the appendix of the print pattern, I give you several examples from clothing and pattern catalogues from 1902-1912 to show you how easy it is to take this basic pattern and modify it slightly for different years.

Skirt length during the early 1900s was generally right at or just below the knee. If you make a deep hem on this pattern, that is where the skirt will hit. However, I prefer longer skirts and so made the pattern pieces long enough that the skirt will hit at mid-calf if you make a narrow hem. Of course, I always recommend that you measure the individual child for hem length. Not every child will fit exactly into one “standard” set of pattern measurements, as you'll read below!

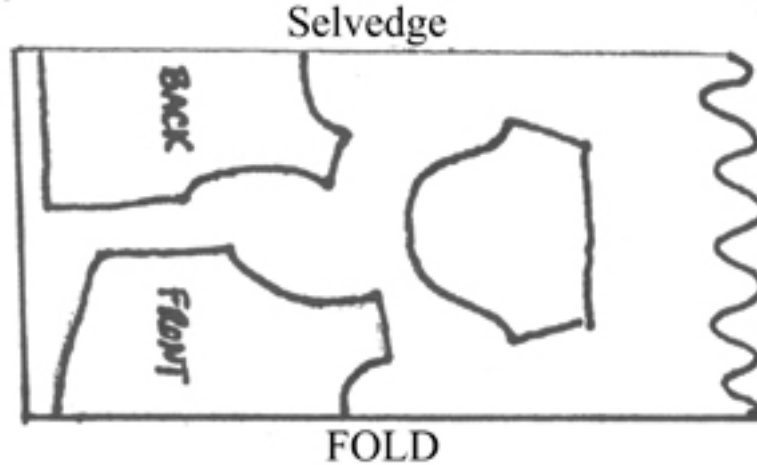
Before you begin, please read all of the instructions. You may discover by the end that you have a completely different idea of how you want the dress to turn out! When you are ready to start, trace all of the pattern pieces onto interfacing or pattern paper. This keeps your original pattern intact, so you can use other sizes later if you wish. It is absolutely essential that you measure the child for whom you will be making the dress. Do not look at the size on the chart and assume that a “6” in patterns corresponds with a “6x” off-the-rack. It does not! Pattern measurements are very different from retail clothing measurements. Go by the measurements, not by the “size.”

Also note that, while the sizes have been carefully drawn, each child has her own unique shape, particularly when it comes to height. You may find that you need a “3” bodice but a “4” sleeve for one child, while another will fit nicely into a “6” all around. What is nice is that you can cut out the bodice according to the child's chest size and the sleeves according to her arm length and/or circumference. You will also follow my instructions to cut out a customized waistband. You'll be able to get a true fit all over.

There are a lot of fabrics that will work beautifully for this pattern. You can make spring and summer dresses in lightweight cottons (soft pima is my personal favorite) or linen. Fall and winter dresses are lovely in lightweight woolens or flannel. If you'd like, you can use heirloom fabrics such as voile and organdy to make a sheer dress with lace insertion, embroidery, and other trimmings (see instructions below). For sheer dresses, you can make a sleeveless underdress (slip) from this pattern. Cotton, silk and velvet all work nicely for the waistline sash. If you plan to line the dress, I recommend pima cotton, which is lightweight, breathable and comfy. Bleached muslin also works. Once you have your fabric pre-washed, you are ready to go!

One final note in case you missed it on the yardage chart: 1/2” seams allowed on all seams!

Pattern Layout:



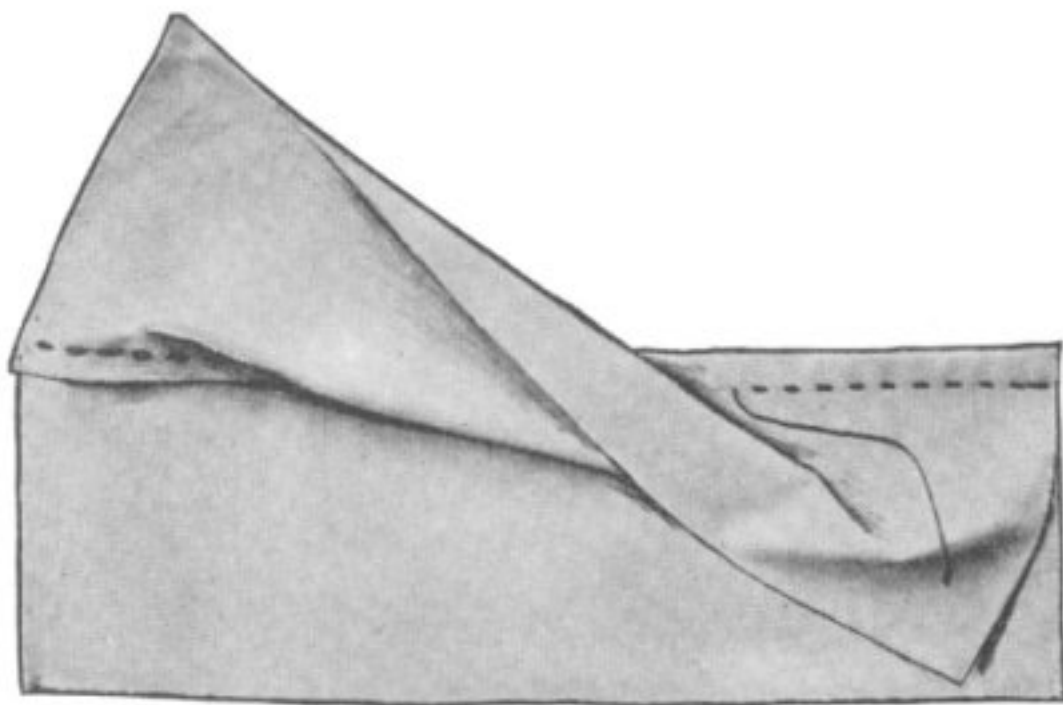
Here is the suggested layout for the bodice and sleeve pieces on 45" wide material. The long sleeve can go where the cap sleeve is shown in the illustration (extra yardage required; see chart). The rest of the material is used for skirt pieces (see note on yardage chart for 60"-wide fabric). Be sure to see the special instructions on the skirt piece for cutting out the skirt back, which needs to be wider than the front.

Assembly Instructions:

Note: There are a couple of ways to put this dress together, so I am going to give the most common way first (unlined), then give you additional instructions at the end for a lined dress. I'll also provide instructions for making an underdress below.

1. **Bodice** (Note: French seams are a must for a sheer, unlined dress! Pay careful attention, and you'll have them mastered in no time!)

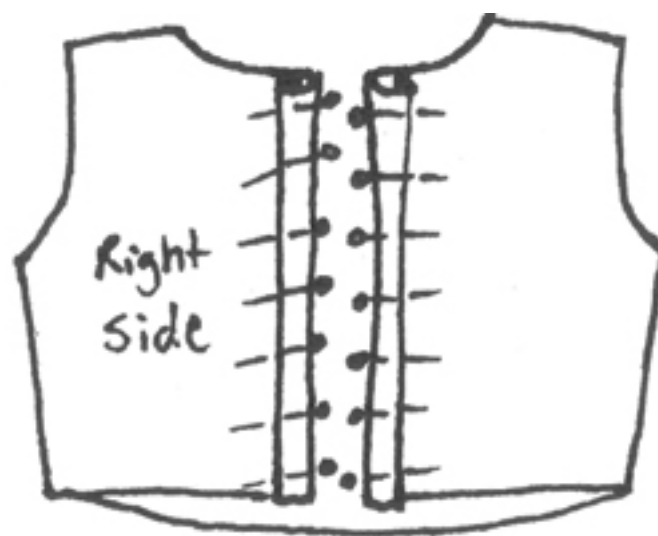
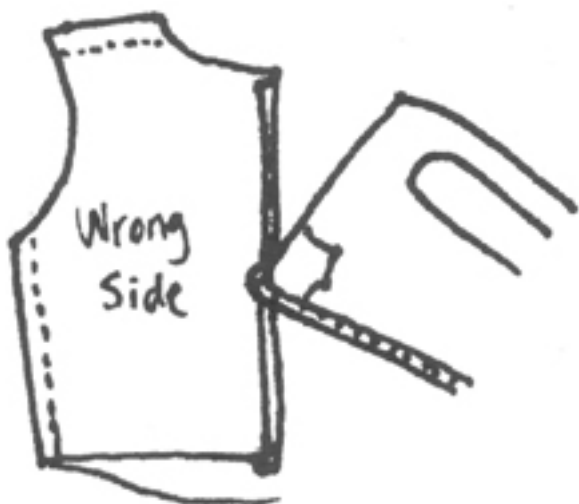
A. Pin the bodice back pieces to the front at the shoulders *wrong sides together*. Put the presser foot on the edge of the seam allowance and stitch (making slightly less than a quarter-inch seam). Turn the bodice so that right sides are now together. Press your first seam. Now stitch again, taking up a 1/4" seam. This is a French seam, which completely encloses the raw edge of your material. As they say in Paris, "*Voilà!*"



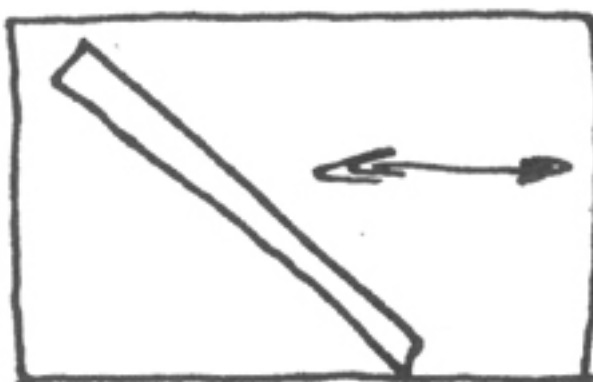
B. Pin the bodice back to the bodice front at the side seams, *wrong sides together* once again. Stitch a scant seam, turn and press, stitch a 1/4" seam and press. See how easy this is? Beautiful seams in your sheer material!



C. Time to finish off the raw edge of your neckline and turn under the back overlap. When using sheer material, you do not want to have facing at the neckline. Instead, you will bind the neckline edge with bias binding made from your dress material. Before you cut that out, turn under 1/4" of the back edges and press (this turns the selvedge to the inside). Now turn the edges of the back opening on the fold line toward the *outside* of the dress and pin them, as shown below.



D. Measure around the neckline from one folded edge to the other. Add 3/4" to this measurement. (The extra 3/4" is to give you 3/8" on either end to turn under.) Cut a thin strip of material 1 1/2" wide on a 45-degree angle as shown below. This is your bias binding.

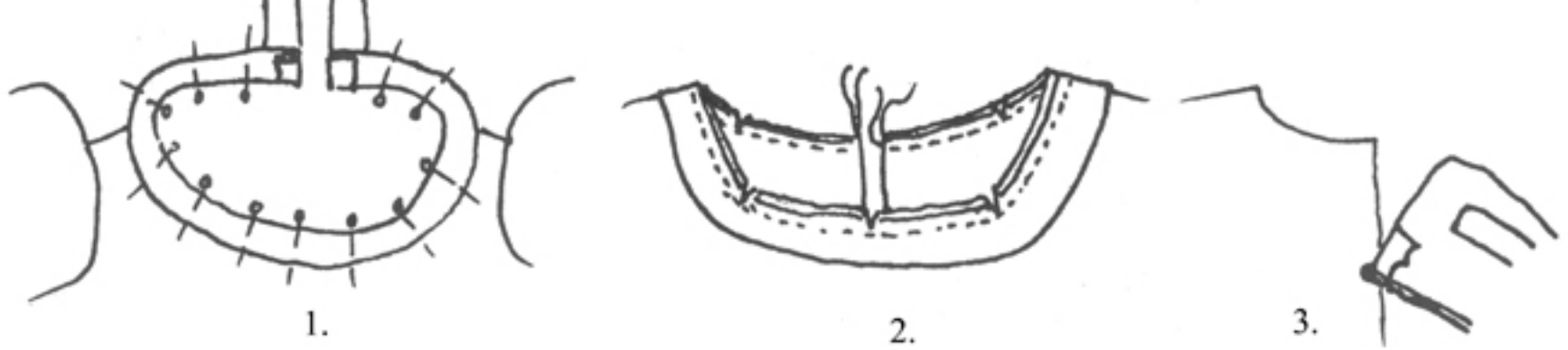


E. 1) Starting at one folded back edge, pin the binding around the neckline, turning under a bit of the binding at each end so there are no raw edges. You will find that bias binding stretches if you pull it, so you may have a bit more than 3/8" left at the end when you reach the other side of the back opening. Just cut off any excess and turn under at least 3/8".

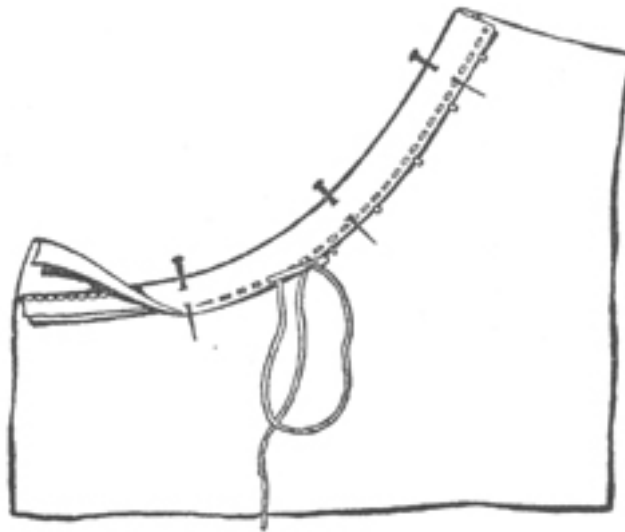
2) Stitch in place around the neckline, taking up a 1/2" seam.

3) Now turn the back edge of the dress right side out at the fold, and press the back opening along the fold line.

You've now created the back overlap of your gown.



F. Turn the bias binding under until none of it shows on the outside of your dress. Iron to make a crisp neckline edge with no puckers. Turn under the raw edge of your binding once, then once again to completely enclose the neckline seam. Pin in place. Whipstitch or straight-stitch by hand, taking up the smallest stitch possible on the outside of the gown and keeping stitches even (see illustration below).

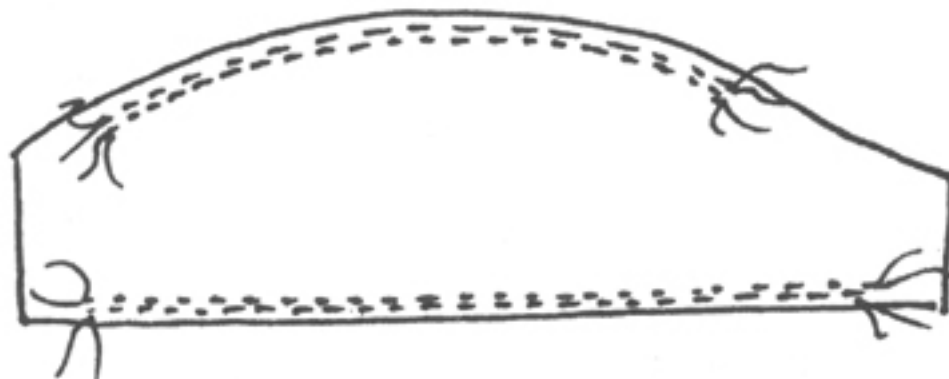


Period Illustration of bias binding being hand-stitched in place after being sewn around the neckline.

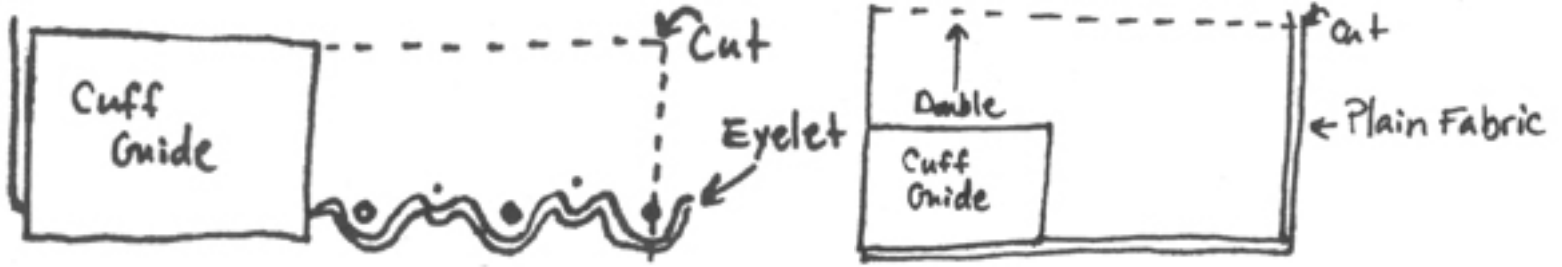
G. Run two lines of gathering stitches along the bottom of the bodice front (the topmost set should be $\frac{3}{8}$ " away from the bottom edge, and the second set should be just under the first set). You may now try the bodice on the child if you like. Time to add the sleeves!

2. **Sleeves** (Note: Puffed sleeves with bands are shown. Instructions for straight sleeves are given below.)

A. Run gathering (or "ease") stitches on tops and bottoms of sleeves. Gathering stitches should be no more than $\frac{3}{8}$ " away from the edge of the material.



B. To create the band, first measure around the flexed bicep of the child right above her elbow. To this measurement, add one inch for ease (comfort) and one inch for a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance. For instance, if the child's flexed bicep measures six inches, you'll add two inches, leaving enough room for the $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance and an inch of "breathing room." If you want to make a tight cuff (fitted to the bicep), I still recommend leaving at least $\frac{3}{8}$ " of room for movement. You can make the band from the dress material, but I prefer the method shown in the home ec. textbook from which the woman's version of this pattern came. The band shown in the book is made of eyelet or embroidered netting/lace (and therefore doesn't need a hem). To make a band like that, simply place your width guide on the edge of the eyelet or lace and cut the band to the proper length (8" in this example). Cut two bands by doubling the eyelet or lace. If you prefer a plain band out of regular material, you will double the width of the band, since you are going to turn it to the inside of the sleeve to cover the seam (and also eliminate the need for a hem)—see illustration below.

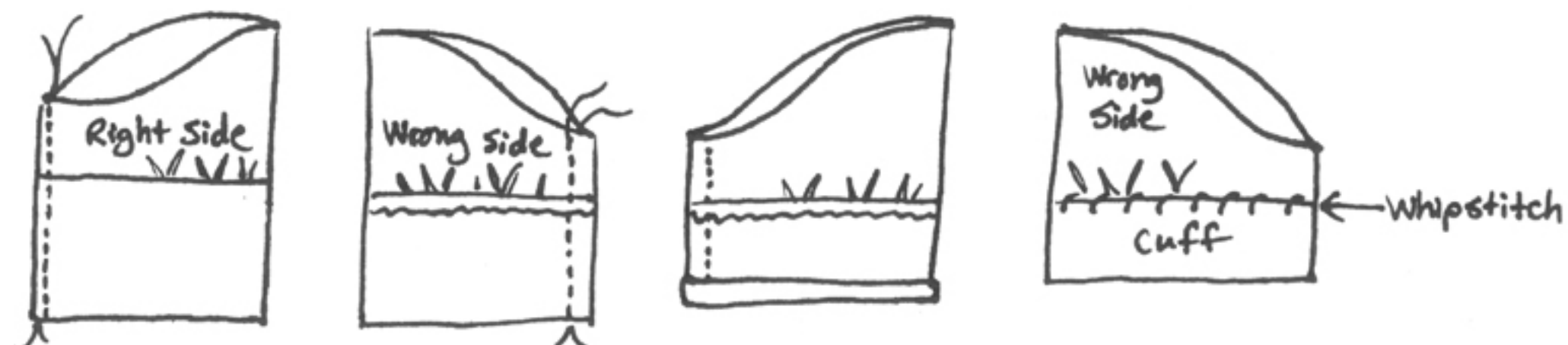


C. Pin the band to the sleeve, pulling gathering stitches to fit. Stitch. If you're using an eyelet or lace band, finish off the raw edge of the cuff seam by binding with bias tape or self fabric bias binding (this is optional, but it keeps the seam from unraveling and makes a much nicer finish).

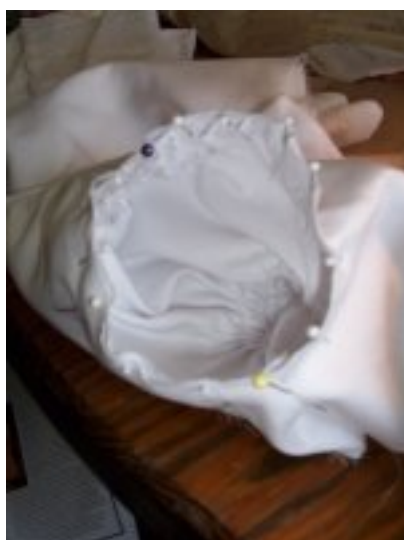


(Sleeve Pinned to Band - Click for larger image)

D. Sew sleeve seams together, using the French seam method (wrong sides together, then right sides together). Turn sleeve right side out and press. If you're using a regular fabric band (doubled in width), turn under 1/4" of the raw edge and press. Turn band to the inside of the sleeve until the folded under edge completely covers the band/sleeve seam allowance. Whipstitch in place.



E. Pin sleeves into armholes, right sides together. Pull up gathering stitches for puffed sleeve or use ease stitches to fit cap sleeve into armhole. Stitch. To finish the raw edge of the seam allowance, use self bias binding (zigzag or Serger stitches will show through your sheer material).

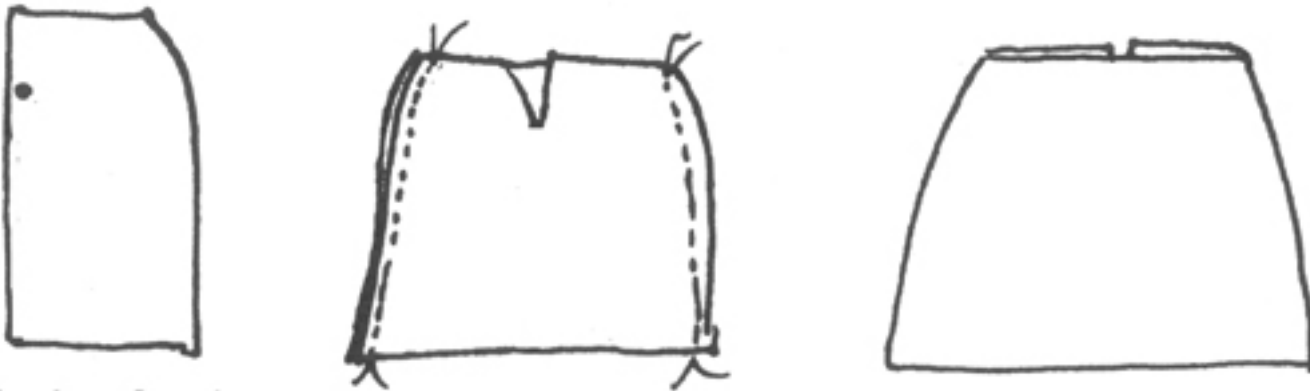


(Sleeve pinned into armhole - click for larger image)

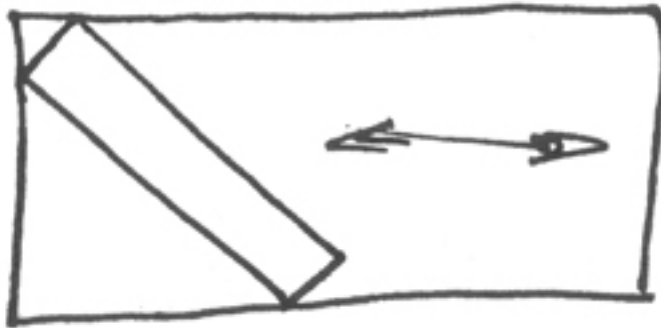
Cap Sleeves: You can cut these off at the elbow or make them wrist-length. Sew the sleeve seams together, using the French seam method. Turn sleeves right side out and press. (You will press under the wrist edge only when you have determined the hem width after trying the dress on the child.) Run ease stitches along the top of the sleeve as indicated on the pattern. Pin sleeve into armhole, matching front edge to front edge of the bodice and sleeve seam to underarm seam. Ease curve into armhole. Stitch, then finish raw edge as shown in step “E” above.

3. Skirt

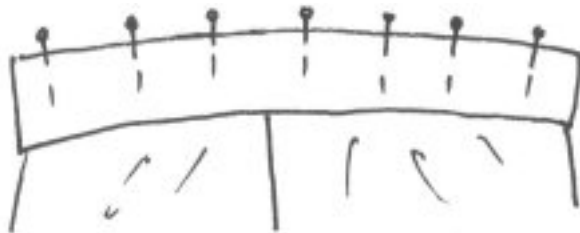
A. Cut skirt back to dot for the back opening. Sew skirt back to skirt front at side seams (French seaming once again). Turn skirt right side out and press.



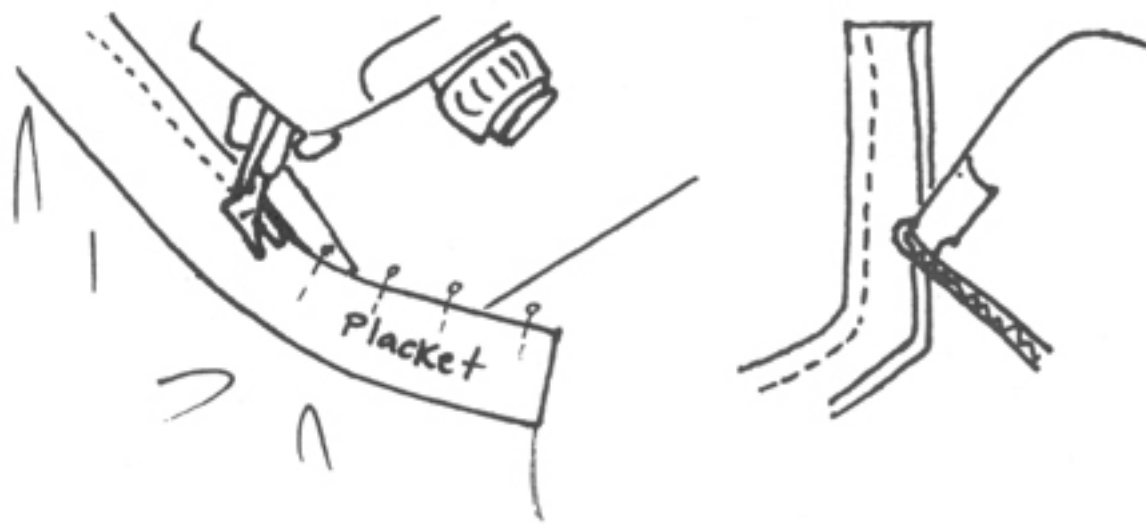
B. To make a placket for the center back skirt opening, cut a piece of fabric on the bias twice as long as the back opening and 2 3/8” inches wide.



C. Pin placket to right side of skirt back opening.



C. Stitch placket to skirt (and lining, if you have one), starting at the top edge of the left side of the skirt opening (left as you are looking at it) and taking up a 1/2” seam. When you reach the center, leave your needle in the fabric, lift the presser foot and pivot the fabric to head back up the other side of the back opening. When you’ve finished inserting the placket, turn under 1/4” of the free edge of the placket and press. Trim the placket seam allowance to about 1/4”.



D. Press the placket as illustrated so the left side is completely turned under along the seam line. You will turn the right side of the placket in only enough to cover the placket seam on the inside of the dress. Now the left side of the back opening will overlap the right and make an even closure, as seen below.



(Placket Opened and Closed - Click for larger images)

E. Run gathering stitches in top of skirt, breaking at side seams.



(Skirt and Optional Overskirt - Click for larger image)

4. Making the Waistband

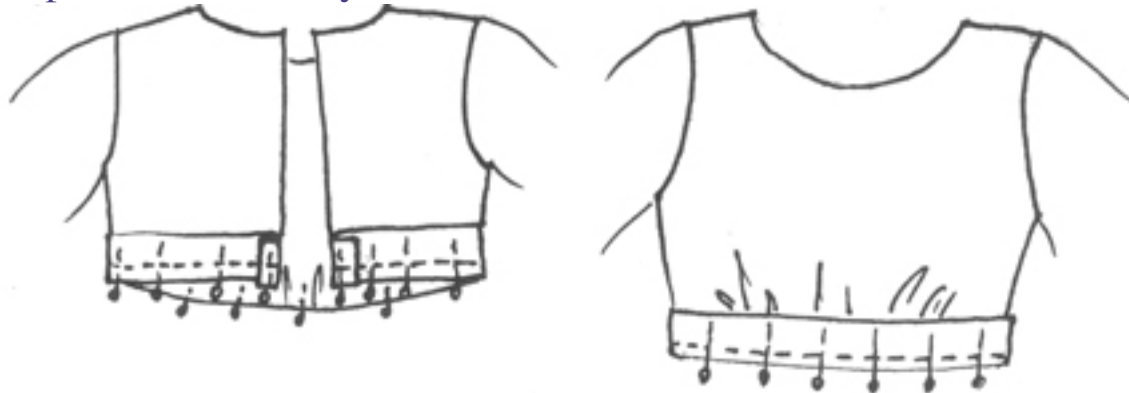
A. Measure around the child's waistline (over undergarments), keeping one finger between the tape and her body for ease. Write down this measurement. Now add 1 1/2" to this measurement to allow for the back overlap and 1/2" to

turn under. For example, let's say the child's waist measures 20" (with a finger between the tape and her body). You'll add 1/2" for the back overlap (the left laps over the right 1/2"), plus 1" to give you 1/2" on each end of the waistband to turn under.

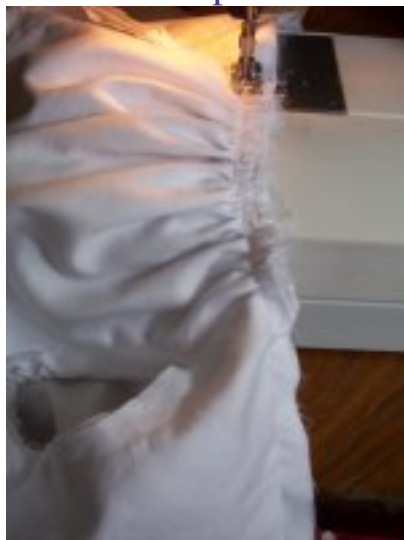
B. Using the waistband width guide, cut out the waistband (it would be 21 1/2" in this example). Also cut out a waistband lining out of the lining material and set it aside. (Optional: You can also make the waistband out of entredeaux for an heirloom dress.

5. Attaching Bodice to Waistband

A. Pin bodice to waistband, beginning at the back opening and turning under 1/2" at each end of the waistband. Pin all the way around to the side seams, then match center front of waistband to center front of bodice and pin. Pull up gathering stitches to fit and spread them evenly. Stitch bodice to waistband.



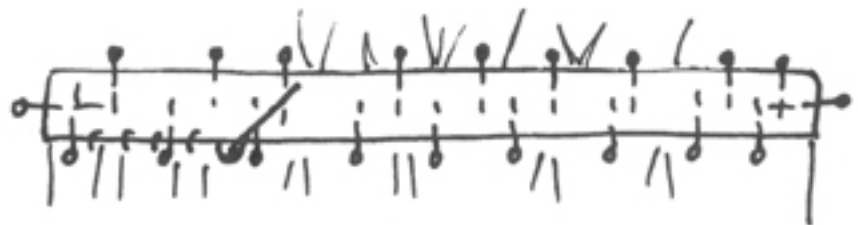
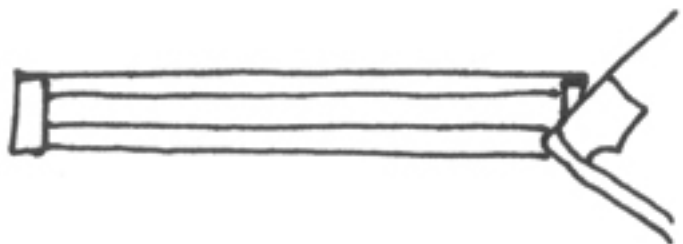
B. Pin skirt to waistband, matching placket edges to back edges of waistband exactly (to allow for overlap). Match side seams and center front. Pull up gathering stitches and spread evenly. Stitch skirt to waistband.



(Bodice being sewn to waistband - Click for larger image)

5. Finishing the Dress

A. Press under the top and bottom of the waistband lining 1/2", then press under 1/2" at each end. Pin waistband lining over skirt and bodice seam allowances inside the dress and whipstitch or slipstitch in place. (This completely encloses the raw seams and prevents unraveling.) [Note: If you choose to use entredeaux, you do not need to line the waistband. Instead, bias bind the raw seams to finish them off.



B. Mark buttonholes horizontally on the overlapping back flap of the bodice. You can space the buttons up to 1" apart, but larger gaps between buttons will result in puckering of the overlap between buttons. Eight to twelve 3/8" buttons will fill the space, depending upon how far apart you space the buttonholes and depending upon the height of the child for whom the dress is made. You can also put a button in the center of the waistband, although a skirt hook and eye will work nicely (and is period correct). If you are using a particularly delicate material (like voile), I recommend backing each buttonhole with interfacing (you can sandwich a thin "slice" of interfacing inside the fold of

the back overlap, then stitch each buttonhole through the three layers). Clip buttonholes open, then pin the bodice closed and mark where the buttons should be sewn. Sew buttons in place. If desired, also sew a snap or hook and eye closure in the placket.

C. To hem the dress, try it on the child and mark the hem length. Turn up and hand stitch the hem in place. Press. If you've lined the dress, the skirt lining should be hemmed to almost the exact same length, save ¼" inch (to keep the lining hidden). Or, if you prefer, you can embellish the hemline of the lining with eyelet or embroidery and leave it peeking out. [Note: Obviously there are lots of alternatives. You can make a skirt of eyelet, which won't need a hem; you can make double skirt layers; you can hemstitch or place lace insertion. See the appendix for more embellishment ideas.]

7. Instructions for Making a Lined Bodice:

A. Cut out the bodice and lining pieces.

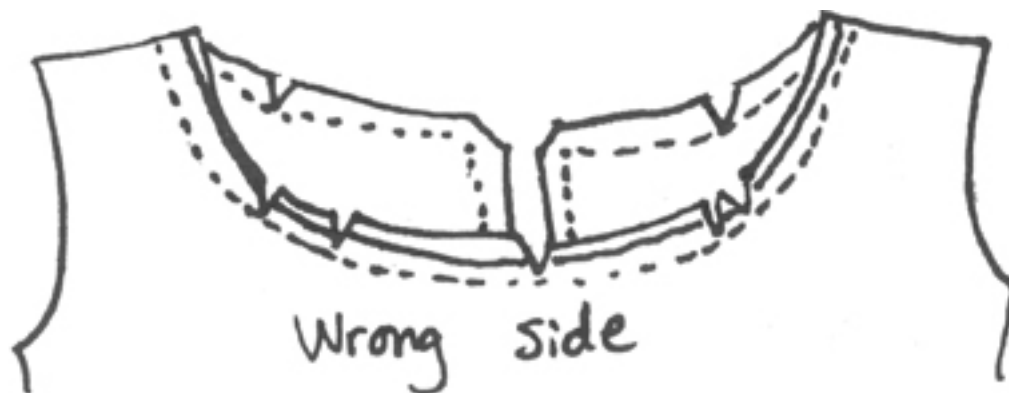
B. Follow the steps given above for sewing the shoulder and side seams together on the bodice and bodice lining with one exception: you do not have to make French seams, since your seam allowances will be completely enclosed. [Important note: If you are still using sheer fashion material, you will need to interline the bodice. This means you will pin backing pieces to the bodice front and back pieces before you sew the front and backs to the lining. This interlining keeps the sheer fashion material from being "see-through" and therefore hides the seam allowances.]

C. Pin the bodice lining to the bodice, right sides together. Stitch.



(Bodice pinned to lining - Click for larger image)

D. Clip curves and corners and grade seam allowance.



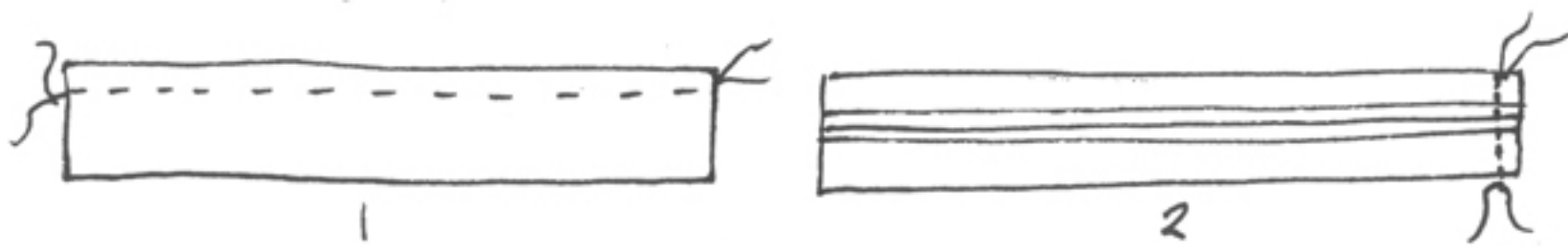
E. Turn bodice right side out and understitch up the inside of the back edge, around the neckline and down the opposite back edge. (You are stitching through the seam allowance. This prevents the lining from "rolling" to the outside of the dress.) Press.



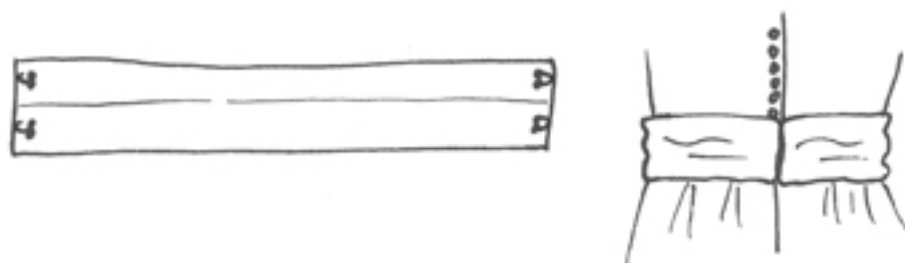
F. Proceed through the rest of the steps given above to complete the dress (if you are not using sheer material, you do not have to make French seams on the skirt, although I highly recommend this method, since it makes such a nice finish and keeps the seam allowances from unraveling).

8. Making the Waistline Sash

A. To make the sash, measure around the child's waist while she is wearing the dress. The width guide on the pattern sheet is only a suggestion. You may make the sash as wide or as narrow as you please. 1914 styles were all over the map when it came to sashes. A "medium" sized sash that has enough fabric to bunch up nicely will be 10" wide. You will cut the sash the width you desire and 1" longer than the child's waistline measurement you just took over the dress. You will be cutting the sash across the material from selvedge to selvedge rather than up and down with the grain. (If you prefer a sash that ties in the back, you can cut a long one down the grain.)



B. Fold sash in half, right sides together, and stitch down the long seam. Then stitch one end closed with the long seam in the middle, rather than at the top or bottom edge. (This makes for a nicer-looking sash, since the long seam will be hidden beneath.)

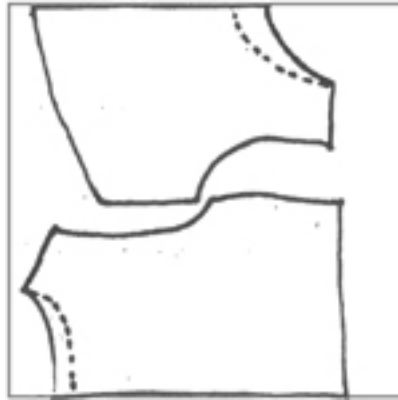


C. Turn sash right side out, then turn under the open end and slipstitch closed, leaving no stitches on the outside of the sash. Have the child try on the sash over the dress, scrunching it up into nice folds. The sash ends should just meet, but if they overlap a bit, that's okay. Just mark how much of an overlap there is (or if there isn't an overlap). Sew hooks and eyes to the underside of the sash so that they can fasten and remain hidden from view. If you've made a long sash for the child, you can tie it and leave the ends hanging down behind or in front. You can make many different sashes and change the look of the dress any time!

9. Making the Underdress:

You will use the same pattern pieces to make the underdress, only you'll be leaving the sleeves off and changing the waistband.

A. Lay out the bodice back piece as usual, but cut the neckline down one inch away from the child's regular size line (leaving the shoulder area the same). Lay out the bodice front piece on the fold as usual, but cut the neckline down two inches from the child's regular size line (leaving the shoulder area the same)—see illustration below.

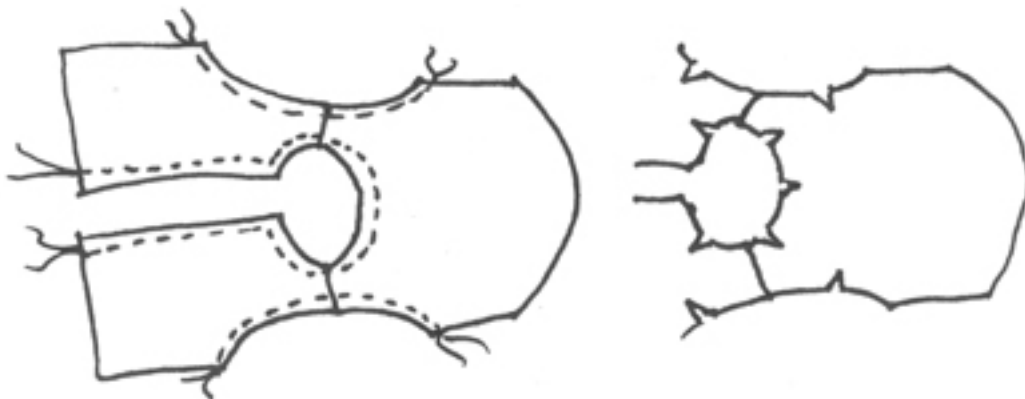


Cutting out the underdress bodice.

B. Use these pieces to cut out lining if you wish to line the underdress. If you do not wish to line it, you'll need to cut self bias binding for the armholes and neckline.

C. If you are making a lined bodice, stitch bodice front and back together at shoulders only. Repeat for the lining. If you are making an unlined bodice, stitch front and back together at shoulders and side seams.

D. Take the bodice lining and pin it to the bodice, right sides together. Stitch around the neckline and at the armholes, as shown below, then clip corners and curves.



E. Turn bodice right side out by “feeding” the bodice back pieces through the shoulders at each side and pulling them out the front of the bodice. Press. Set aside.

F. If you're making an unlined bodice, bind the armholes and neckline with bias binding as explained in steps 1E & F above. Set aside.

G. Sew skirt pieces together and add placket, as explained in section 3.

H. You can make the waistband plain or of beading, cutting the waistband exactly as explained above and sewing it to the bodice and skirt pieces. If you use beading, you can run a pretty ribbon through the holes and have it tie in the back.

I. Finish the rest of the underdress just as you finished the dress. You can trim the hem with lace or embroidery if you like. The sky is the limit!

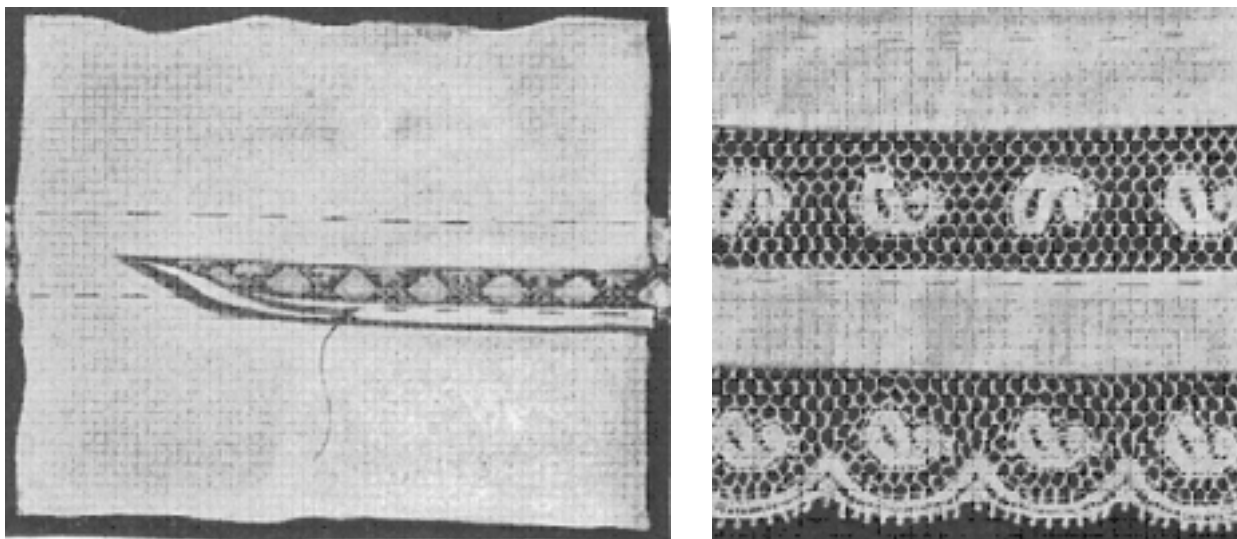
10. Tips for Embellishing the Dress:

There are so many possibilities for decorating this dress! Girls' dresses (particularly for church or fancy events) were often lavishly embroidered around the neckline, down the bodice, above the hem of the skirt and on the sleeves. I've included some basic embroidery designs at the end of the instructions so you can try them out. I recommend practicing on a scrap of fabric first if you're new to embroidery.

You can also add lace insertion to the dress in the bodice, sleeves and skirt. Inserting lace is much easier than it looks! Should you decide to do it, you need to add all of the lace before you sew the dress pieces together. Below are some basic instructions for lace insertion (taken from a vintage dressmaking book). Try it out on scrap fabric first, and you'll soon get the hang of it.

To insert lace insertion in a garment, pin the lace in the position desired [on the right side of the material], and

baste down both edges of the insertion. If the insertion is narrow, the [backing] material is cut through the center (Fig. 1); but if the insertion is wide, the material is cut away from underneath, simply allowing a seam on each side. The edge is turned in a narrow hem covering the line of the basting. Stitch the insertion close to the edges from the right side, and at the same time catching through the material hemmed down. [Fig. 2 gives an example of lace insertion above a hem with lace trimming the hem.] (from *The Dressmaker*, Butterick Co., 1911)



(Figure 1 and Figure 2)

You can invent your own patterns for lace insertion (circles, ovals, straight lines, scallops, bows, etc.), but I've included a couple of vintage pictures at the end of the instructions to give you some ideas. The main thing is to be creative and enjoy yourself!

Enjoy your new creation!



(The Finished Dress - [Click for larger image](#))

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