

Lesson Plan: My First Monster Friend - A Hand-Sewing Adventure

Materials Needed:

- Felt sheets (at least two 9x12 inch sheets in a main color, plus smaller scraps in various colors for eyes, mouths, etc.)
 - Embroidery floss or thick thread (a contrasting color to the main felt works best to see stitches)
 - A large-eyed needle (tapestry or embroidery needles work well)
 - Scissors (one for paper, one for fabric if available)
 - Straight pins
 - Polyester fiberfill (stuffing)
 - Optional decorations: Buttons, yarn for hair, fabric glue
 - Paper and pencil/crayons for designing
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Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Design a unique character on paper and translate it to a fabric pattern.
 - Safely cut fabric pieces for a sewing project.
 - Demonstrate how to thread a needle and tie a knot.
 - Sew a basic running stitch to join two pieces of fabric.
 - Create a finished, three-dimensional plush toy.
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Lesson Activities

Part 1: The Mad Scientist's Sketchbook (15 minutes)

Every great creation starts with a plan! In this step, we'll design our monster.

1. **Brainstorm:** What makes a monster a monster? Is it friendly, grumpy, or silly? Does it have one eye or ten? Long arms or no arms? Let your imagination run wild!
2. **Design Your Monster:** On a piece of paper, draw the main body shape of your monster. Keep it simple for your first project—a blob, a square, or a simple teardrop shape works great. Don't make it too complicated or have too many pointy parts yet.
3. **Add Details:** Draw the eyes, mouth, and any other features (like spots or stripes) you want your monster to have. This is your blueprint!

Teacher Check-in: Let's look at your design together. Is the main body shape one we can cut out easily? Great! Let's move on to being the tailor.

Part 2: The Pattern Maker (15 minutes)

Now we turn your drawing into a pattern to cut our fabric.

1. **Cut the Pattern:** Carefully cut out the main body shape from your paper drawing. This is your pattern piece.
 2. **Pin the Pattern:** Take your two main pieces of felt and lay them on top of each other. Place
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your paper pattern on top of the two layers of felt and secure it with a few straight pins. Pinning keeps the fabric from wiggling while you cut.

3. **Cut the Fabric:** Carefully cut around your paper pattern. You should now have two identical pieces of felt. These will be the front and back of your monster.
4. **Cut the Features:** Using your smaller felt scraps, cut out the shapes for the eyes, mouth, or spots you designed.

Safety Tip: Always be mindful of where your fingers are when using scissors and pins. Ask for help if you need it!

Part 3: The Monster Comes to Life! (45-60 minutes)

This is where the real magic happens. We'll start sewing!

1. **Decorate the Face:** It's much easier to add features now than when the monster is stuffed. Take ONE of your main felt body pieces (this will be the front). Arrange the eyes, mouth, and other features on it.
 - You can sew these on with a few simple stitches or use fabric glue for a no-sew option. For button eyes, now is the time to sew them on.
2. **Threading the Needle:** Cut a piece of embroidery floss about the length of your arm (from your fingertips to your shoulder). Thread it through the eye of the needle and tie a big knot at the very end of the thread. Let's practice this together a couple of times.
3. **Pin the Body:** Place the decorated front piece and the plain back piece together, making sure all the edges line up. Use straight pins around the edge to hold them together.
4. **Learn the Running Stitch:** We'll start our first stitch from the inside so the knot is hidden. Push the needle up through both layers of felt from the back to the front. Now, make a simple stitch by poking the needle down through the fabric a short distance away, then back up again. It's like a dolphin jumping through the water! Continue this up-and-down stitch all the way around your monster.
5. **LEAVE A GAP:** Stop sewing when you have a small opening left, about two or three fingers wide. This is important! Don't sew it all the way shut yet.
6. **Stuff Your Monster:** Take small handfuls of the polyester fiberfill and gently push them inside the monster through the gap you left. Make it as plump or as floppy as you like. Use a pencil to help push stuffing into any corners.
7. **Close the Gap:** Once your monster is stuffed, continue your running stitch to sew the opening closed. When you're done, make a few stitches in the same place to form a knot, then carefully snip the thread.

Part 4: Show and Tell (5-10 minutes)

Congratulations, you've made a monster friend!

- **Introduce Your Monster:** Give your monster a name. Tell me a little bit about its personality.
- **Reflect on Your Work:** What was your favorite part of making the monster? What part was the most challenging? If you made another one, what would you do differently?

Differentiation and Extensions

- **For Extra Support:** Use a fabric marker to draw a dotted line for the student to follow with their stitches. Felt is a forgiving fabric, but if cutting is a challenge, pre-cut the main body shapes.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** Introduce a new stitch, like the backstitch, for a stronger seam. Try adding 3D limbs (like arms or legs) by sewing smaller stuffed tubes into the main seam. Or,

add a small pocket to the monster's front or back.