

# Design Your Own Shoulder Bag: A Sewing Adventure!

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## Materials Needed

- **Fabric:** Two pieces of sturdy cotton fabric (like canvas or quilting cotton), each about 12x14 inches. Pick fun patterns!
  - **Lining Fabric (Optional but recommended):** Two pieces of a lighter cotton fabric, same size as the outer fabric.
  - **Strap Fabric:** One long strip of the sturdy fabric, about 4 inches wide and 30-40 inches long (adjust for student's height).
  - **Sewing Machine:** With a universal needle.
  - **All-Purpose Thread:** Choose a color that matches or contrasts nicely with your fabric.
  - **Fabric Scissors or Rotary Cutter & Mat**
  - **Measuring Tape or Ruler**
  - **Fabric Marker or Chalk**
  - **Straight Pins**
  - **Iron and Ironing Board**
  - **Optional Creative Embellishments:** Buttons, ribbons, fabric paint, patches, felt for appliqué's.
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## Lesson Plan

### 1. Learning Objectives (Our Mission!)

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

- Measure and cut fabric accurately using a ruler and fabric marker.
- Safely operate a sewing machine to sew straight seams.
- Construct a simple, functional shoulder bag from start to finish.
- Add a personal, creative touch to your finished project.

### 2. Instructional Activities (The Adventure Begins!)

This project is broken down into fun "missions" to make it easy to follow.

#### Mission 1: The Design Studio (15 minutes)

1. **Become the Designer:** Before we touch any fabric, let's be fashion designers! On a piece of paper, sketch your dream bag. What colors will it be? Will it have a special pocket or a cool button? This is your chance to plan your masterpiece.
  2. **Select Your Materials:** Based on your design, choose your main fabric, lining fabric, and thread. Think about how the colors and patterns work together.
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### Mission 2: The Prep Station (20 minutes)

1. **Measure Twice, Cut Once:** Lay your main fabric flat. Using your ruler and fabric marker, draw two identical rectangles, each 12 inches wide by 14 inches tall. For the strap, draw one long rectangle that is 4 inches wide and about 35 inches long.
2. **The Big Cut:** Carefully cut out your three fabric pieces using fabric scissors. If you are using a lining, repeat step 1 and 2 with your lining fabric (just the two 12x14 inch pieces).
3. **Press for Success:** An important step many people skip! Iron all your fabric pieces so they are flat and crisp. This makes sewing much easier and more accurate.

### Mission 3: Safety Briefing (5 minutes)

Before using the sewing machine, let's review the rules for being a super-safe sewing master:

- Keep fingers away from the needle at all times. Guide the fabric from the sides.
- Sew at a slow, steady pace. This isn't a race!
- When you stop sewing, take your foot off the pedal.
- Ask for help if you hear strange noises from the machine or if the thread gets tangled.

### Mission 4: Bag Assembly (45-60 minutes)

1. **Sew the Body:** Place your two main fabric pieces on top of each other, with the "pretty" sides facing inward. Pin along the two long sides and the bottom. Leave the top edge open.
2. **Stitch it Up:** Using the sewing machine, sew along the three pinned sides. Try to keep your stitches about 1/2 inch from the edge of the fabric. Remember to "backstitch" (sew backward for a few stitches and then forward again) at the beginning and end of your seams to lock them in place.
3. **Create the Strap:** Take your long strap piece. Fold it in half lengthwise with the "pretty" sides together, so it looks like a very long, skinny rectangle. Iron it flat. Sew along the long open edge.
4. **Turn the Strap:** This is a bit tricky but fun! Attach a safety pin to one end of the strap and feed it through the fabric tube to turn it right-side out. Once it's turned, iron it flat so the seam is neat.
5. **Attach the Strap:** Turn your main bag body right-side out. Tuck the raw ends of the strap about 1 inch down inside the bag's top opening, one on each side seam. Pin them securely in place.

### Mission 5: Finishing Touches (20 minutes)

1. **Create a Clean Edge:** Fold the top raw edge of the bag down toward the inside by about 1 inch. Iron this fold to create a crisp crease. This will hide the raw fabric edges and the ends of your strap.
2. **The Final Seam:** Carefully "topstitch" all the way around the top opening of the bag, about 1/2 inch from the folded edge. This will close the opening, secure the strap, and give your bag a professional look. Make sure you sew through the folded edge and the straps.
3. **Show Your Style!** Now is the time to add your creative ideas from Mission 1! Hand-sew on a cool button, use fabric glue to add a felt shape, or use fabric markers to draw a design. Make it uniquely yours!

## 3. Assessment and Showcase (How Did We Do?)

Let's admire your work! We'll evaluate your new bag based on the "Awesome Bag Checklist":

- **Function:** Can it hold a book or a water bottle? Are the straps secure? (Give it a gentle tug!)
- **Construction:** Are the seams mostly straight? Is the top edge neat?
- **Creativity:** Did you add a personal element that makes you proud?

The most important assessment is: Do you love it? Let's take a photo of you with your new, custom-made bag!

#### 4. Differentiation (Go Further or Get Support)

- **For Extra Support:**

- Use a larger seam allowance (e.g., 1 inch) to make it easier to guide the fabric.
- Draw the sewing lines directly on the fabric with a washable marker to follow.
- Instead of sewing the strap, you can use a sturdy pre-made ribbon or webbing. Just pin and sew it in place.

- **For an Extra Challenge:**

- **Add a Lining:** Sew the lining pieces together just like the main bag body, but leave a 4-inch gap in the bottom seam. Place the lining bag inside the main bag ("pretty" sides together), sew around the top edge, and then pull the whole bag through the gap in the lining. Sew the gap closed.
- **Add an Internal Pocket:** Before sewing the lining pieces together, sew a smaller fabric rectangle onto one of the lining pieces to create a simple patch pocket.
- **Create a Button Closure:** Sew a small loop of elastic or ribbon into the top seam of one side, and sew a button onto the other side.