

# Lesson Plan: My First Designer Shoulder Bag

## Materials Needed

- **Sewing Machine:** Threaded with a universal needle and thread that complements the fabric.
- **Fabric:** Two pieces of sturdy, easy-to-sew fabric (like cotton, canvas, or denim) for the main bag, each measuring 12x14 inches. One piece for the strap, measuring 4x40 inches. (*Tip: Using two different but coordinating fabrics for the outside and lining makes the bag look very professional!!*)
- **Measuring Tool:** A ruler or measuring tape.
- **Fabric Scissors:** Sharp scissors designated for fabric only.
- **Straight Pins** or fabric clips.
- **Iron and Ironing Board:** Essential for pressing seams.
- **Fabric Marker or Chalk:** For marking lines.
- **Optional Decorations:** Fabric paint, patches, buttons, ribbon, embroidery floss.
- **Notebook and Pencil:** For the design phase.

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## Learning Objectives (What You'll Be Able to Do!)

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

1. Design a unique shoulder bag by sketching your idea and choosing fabrics.
2. Measure and cut fabric accurately according to your design dimensions.
3. Safely operate a sewing machine to sew straight seams with a consistent seam allowance.
4. Construct a simple, functional shoulder bag from start to finish.
5. Attach a strap securely to a bag.

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## Lesson Procedure (Let's Get Started!)

### Part 1: The Design Studio (Approx. 20 minutes)

1. **Brainstorm & Sketch:** In your notebook, let's be fashion designers! Sketch out what you want your bag to look like. What shape will it be? Where will the strap go? Will it have any special decorations? Don't worry about a perfect drawing; just get your ideas on paper.
2. **Select Your Materials:** Lay out the available fabrics. Which ones match your vision? Think about what fabric you want for the outside of the bag, the inside lining, and the strap. Hold them together to see if you like the combination.

3. **The Blueprint:** Let's confirm our measurements. We'll start with a simple plan:

- **Bag Body (Cut 2):** 12 inches wide x 14 inches tall.
- **Strap (Cut 1):** 4 inches wide x 40 inches long. (You can adjust this to be longer or shorter depending on how you want the bag to hang).

This is a great time to practice using a ruler and drawing straight lines with your fabric marker on the "wrong" side (the back) of the fabric.

**Teacher Tip:** Ask guiding questions like, "What will you use this bag for? How does that affect the size you need?" or "What colors make you feel happy? Let's use those!" This connects the project to the student's life and preferences.

## Part 2: The Workshop - Construction Time! (Approx. 60-75 minutes)

*Safety First! Remind the student to keep fingers away from the sewing machine needle and to turn off the machine when not in use. Always have an adult supervise the use of the iron.*

1. **Cut with Care:** Carefully cut out your three pieces of fabric along the lines you drew. Remember the rule: "Measure twice, cut once!"
2. **Create the Strap:**
  - Take your long strap piece and fold it in half lengthwise, with the "wrong" sides together. Press the fold with an iron.
  - Open it up. Now fold the outer edges in to meet at the center crease you just made. Press again.
  - Fold the whole thing in half along the original center crease. You should now have a long strap that is 1 inch wide with no raw edges showing. Pin it together.
  - At the sewing machine, sew a straight line close to both long edges of the strap. This is called "topstitching" and makes it strong and neat. Set your finished strap aside.
3. **Assemble the Bag Body:**
  - Place your two large bag pieces on top of each other with the "right" sides facing in. The "wrong" sides should be facing out at you.
  - Pin the pieces together along the two long sides and the bottom. Leave the top edge completely open!
  - At the sewing machine, sew along the three pinned sides. Try to keep your stitches about 1/2 inch away from the edge (this is your seam allowance). Remember to "backstitch" (sew backward for a few stitches and then forward again) at the beginning and end to lock your stitches in place.
4. **Press for Success:** Take your sewed bag "tube" to the ironing board. Press the seams open. This step seems small, but it makes the final bag look crisp and professional.
5. **Attach the Strap:**
  - Keep the bag inside out. Fold the top raw edge down about 1 inch toward the inside and press it with the iron.
  - Take your finished strap. Place one end of the strap inside the bag, against one of the side seams. The end of the strap should be about 1.5 inches down from the top folded edge. Pin it securely in place.
  - Do the same with the other end of the strap on the opposite side seam. Make sure the strap isn't twisted inside the bag!
6. **The Final Seam:** At the sewing machine, "topstitch" all the way around the top opening of the bag. Sew about 1/4 inch from the folded edge. When you get to the straps, sew back and forth over them a few times (in a square or "X" pattern) to make them extra strong.

## Part 3: The Big Reveal & Showcase (Approx. 15 minutes)

1. **Turn It Right Side Out:** Reach inside your bag and pull it right side out. Poke out the corners so they are nice and sharp. Admire your work!
2. **Final Touches (Creative Freedom!):** Now is the time to add your optional decorations. Use fabric paint to add a design, iron on a patch, or sew on a cool button. Make it truly yours.
3. **Showcase:** Model your new bag! Talk about your design choices. What is your favorite part of the bag? What was the most challenging part of making it? What did you learn?

## Ways to Differentiate (Making it Just Right for You)

- **For Extra Support:** Pre-draw the cutting and sewing lines directly on the fabric. Use lots of fabric clips instead of pins, as they can be easier for small hands to manage. Work on one step per day to break the project into smaller pieces.

- **For an Extra Challenge:** Add an internal or external pocket. This requires cutting an extra piece of fabric and sewing it onto the bag body panel before assembling the sides. Or, add a simple flap and button closure to the top.
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## How We'll Know You've Succeeded (Assessment)

- **The Finished Product:** The main assessment is the beautiful, functional bag you created! We will look to see if it meets the goals: it holds items, the strap is secure, and the seams are mostly straight.
- **Process Check-in:** I will ask questions during the process, like "Can you show me the 1/2 inch seam allowance on the machine?" or "Why do we press the seams?" to check for understanding as we go.
- **Student Reflection:** At the end, you'll answer a few questions: What part are you most proud of? If you made another one, what would you do differently? This shows you are thinking like a real designer and maker.