

CATBUS PLUSH



A FREE SEWING PATTERN BY



CATBUS PLUSH

Another classic Ghibli character joins the collection! The adorable Catbus from My Neighbor Totoro is a weird yet strangely cute combination of a huge tabby cat with the body of a bus. It has 12 legs, a big striped tail, and a set of glowing windows down its torso. Any Ghibli fan is sure to love it!

DIFFICULTY:



This plush has a lot of the regular darts and curved sewing as in most plush toys, but the difficulty here likely comes from the many many legs. Double check the body seams that join the legs as often as possible to avoid issues.

SKILLS USED:

- Fusible web applique
- Basting
- Darts
- Sewing small pieces
- Ladder stitch
- Sewing curves

MAKES:

One plush: body about 10" long, 6" wide, and 5" tall (not including legs, ears, and tail)



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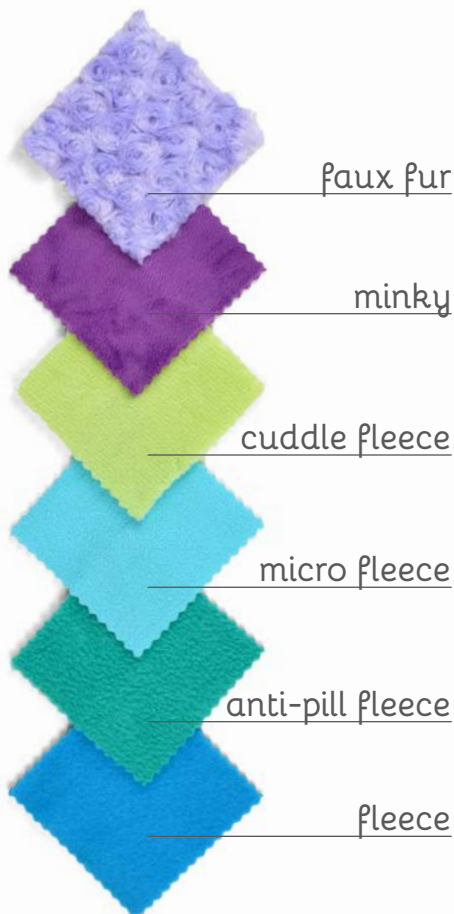
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materials & tools:

- ¼ yd. of tan fabric for head and sides
- ½ yd. or 17" x 14" of dark brown fabric for back and stripes
- ¼ yd. or 7" x 10" of cream fabric for inner ears and belly
- 8" x 6" piece of yellow applique fabric (felt, cotton, etc.) for eyes and windows
- 2" x 2" piece of black applique fabric for pupils
- 2" x 6" piece of white applique fabric for smile
- 3" x 8" piece of brown applique fabric for nose & side stripe
- 9" x 9" piece of light or heavy duty fusible web
- sewing thread to match main fabric and applique fabrics
- poly-fil stuffing
- basic sewing tools (sewing machine, scissors, iron, needles, pins, fabric marker, seam ripper)

SUGGESTED FABRICS:

Plush, stretchy fabrics such as fleece or minky are suggested. The variations of fleece and minky mentioned to the left would work well, but really any plushy fabric with a bit of stretch on the cross-wise grain would be well-suited. Stretch fabrics like **FLEECE** or **MINKY** will create a more squat, round shape when stuffed. Non-stretchy fabrics, like **FELT** or **COTTON**, won't stretch when stuffed so the resulting plush will look elongated as shown.



MINKY

VS.

FELT

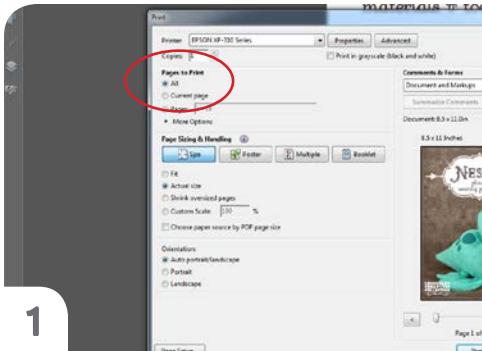


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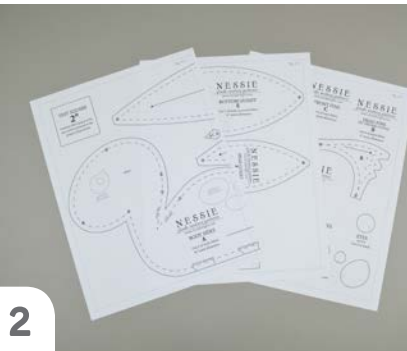
printing the pattern:

To print the pattern, set your computer to print **PAGES 19-23**. If you're unfamiliar with printing and assembling a .pdf pattern, read the steps below.



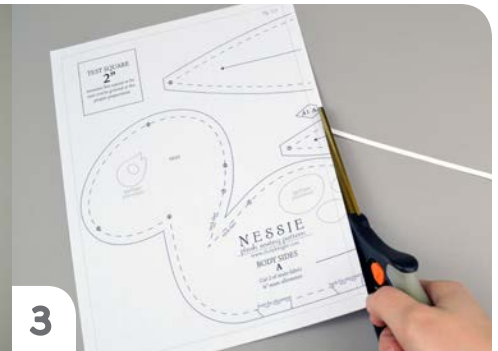
1

At the print dialog box, check the box that says print at "Actual Size" or 100%. Any other selection (such as "Fit to page") will distort the pattern so it's slightly larger or smaller and we don't want that.



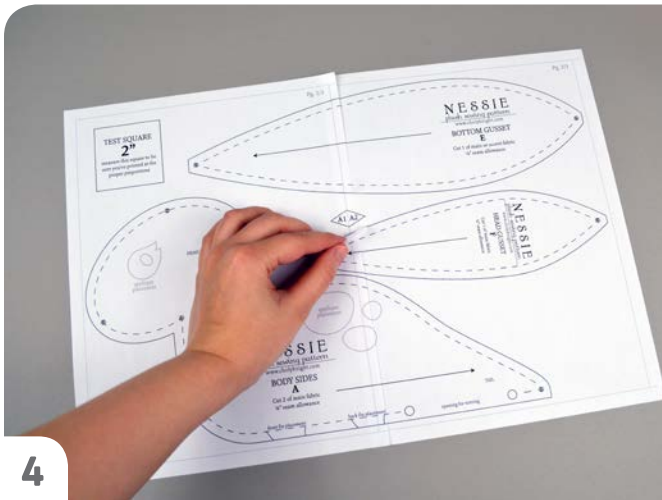
2

Print the pages needed for the file. You might have one or more. Either way, be sure you have the full collection by noting the page numbers in the corner.



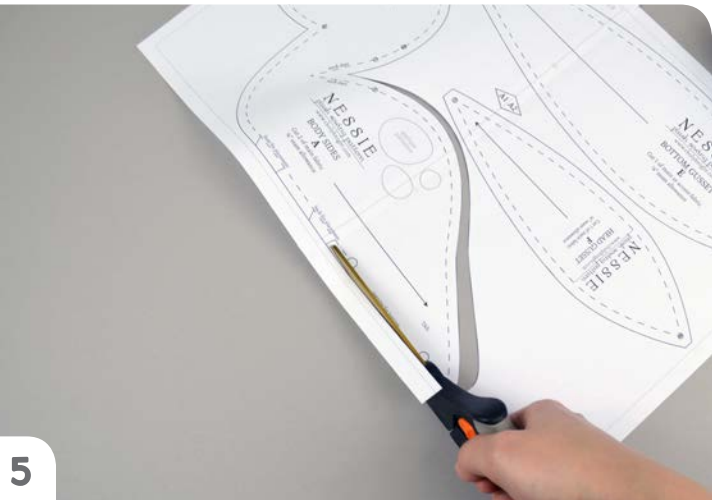
3

It's likely your printer will have a margin that ensures your image doesn't print to the very edge. Assembly will be easier if you trim off this blank margin edge. This will give you pages that overlap slightly during assembly. If you trim across the gray outline boxes, this will give you pages that don't overlap but rather butt against each other.



4

To line up the pattern pages, match up the corresponding diamond shapes. Each diamond will have a letter, so it's simply a matter of matching A1 to A2, B3 to B4 and so on. The faint gray lines indicate the border of every page, you should be able to line those up as well. When the diamond goes together, tape it in place. If you have many pages, it's easier to tape up the pages into rows first. Then tape the rows together into a full block.



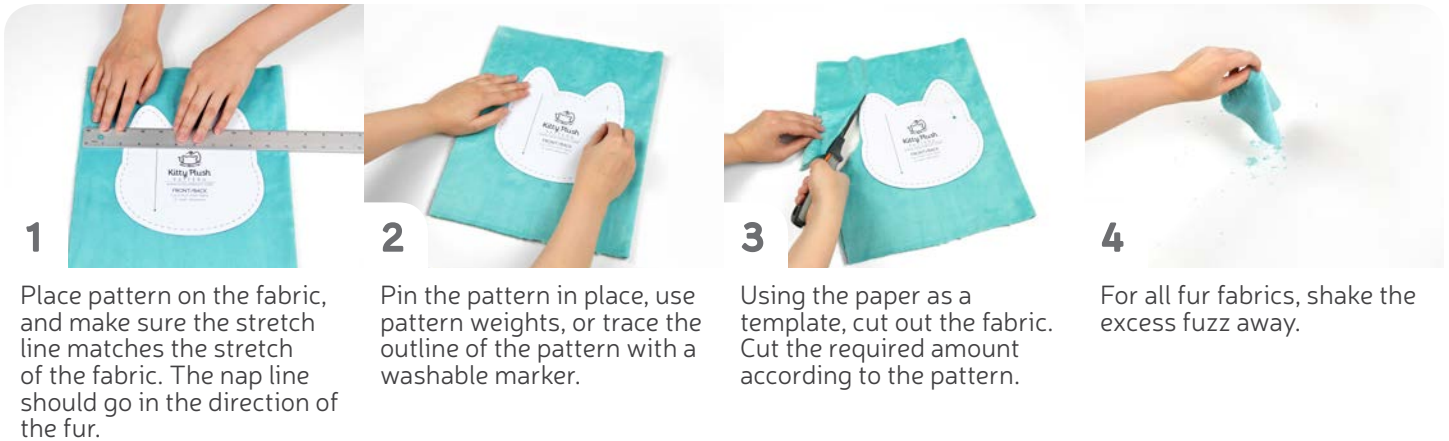
5

You can trace the patterns onto a different paper, or you can also just cut them straight from the printer paper -- be sure that each piece is fully taped together along the joins so they don't fall apart when you cut them.

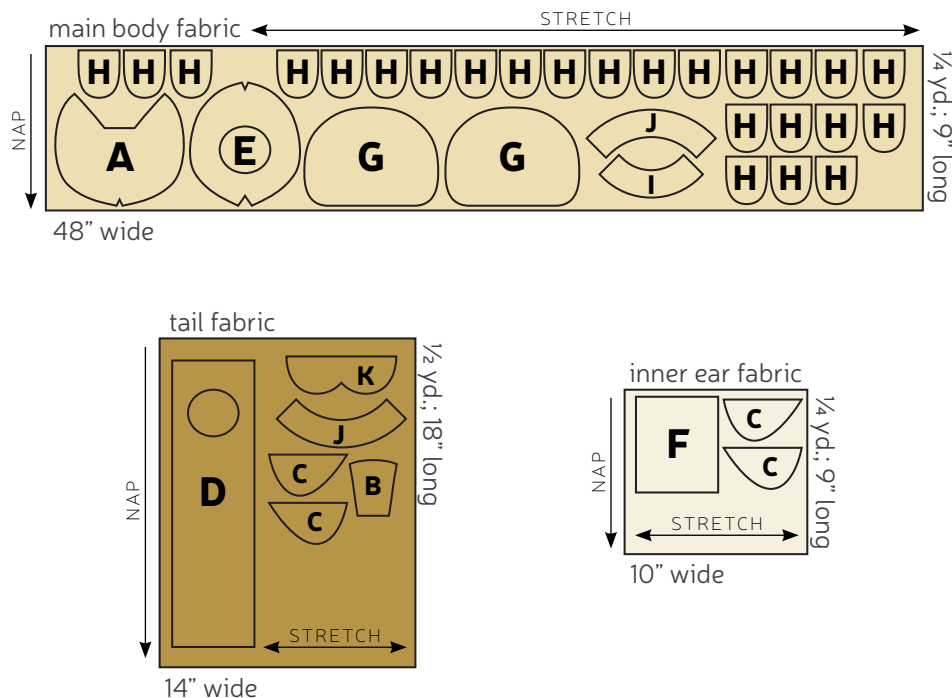
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cutting the fabric:



cutting layout:



BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- Briefly read the project instructions so you know what to expect.
- If desired, mark the cut fabric pieces with the markings and symbols from the pattern. Or wait until the applicable step before transferring.
- Note that the seam allowance used is 1/4" throughout the project.

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1. PREPARE THE FACE APPLIQUE

- Take your fusible web and trace all your applique pieces onto the smooth (paper) side. You should have 2 eyes, 2 pupils, 1 nose, and 1 smile.
- Fuse the bumpy (adhesive) side onto the wrong side of your applique fabric. The eyes go onto yellow, the smile on white, the pupils on black, and the nose on brown.
- Cut out the eye pieces and arrange them on the **HEAD FRONT** (A) piece. Set your paper pattern on top of the fabric piece (right sides up). Align the eye piece on top where the placement markings are. Then carefully pull the paper pattern away while holding the applique piece in place.



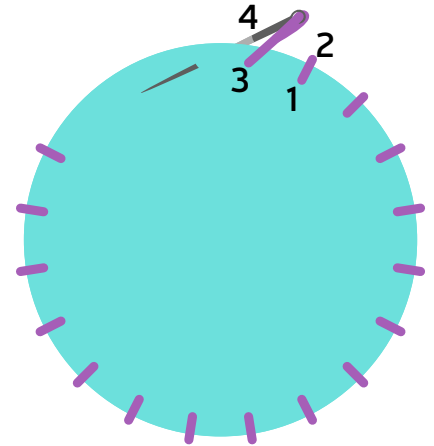
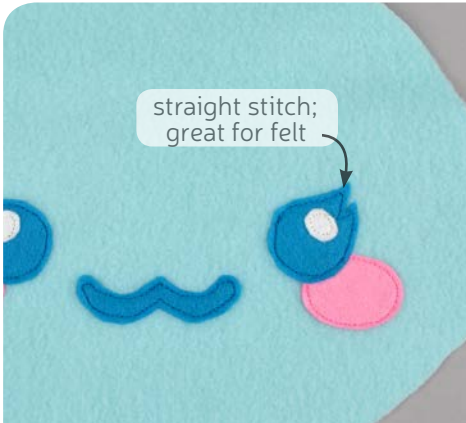
2. FUSE THE APPLIQUE

- Fuse the eye pieces in place with your iron (use a press cloth -- such as a scrap piece of cotton -- if you're using a polyester or fur fabric like minky).
- Next, move onto the pupil, nose, and smile pieces. Fuse them much the same way as you did the eyes, using the paper pattern and photos as a guide.
- If you used heavy duty fusible web, you can keep the pieces fused without sewing, or you can sew them in place a number of ways. I've used a zigzag stitch here. Sew black lines along the smile for the teeth, or draw them in with a permanent marker.

→ Refer to the next step for some other applique options.

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2a. OTHER APPLIQUE OPTIONS

Other good options for applique include a straight stitch, which involves sewing around the edge of the applique pieces with a straight stitch using matching thread -- about 1/8" in from the edge.

You can also applique by hand; I prefer a whipstitch. Thread a hand-sewing needle with some matching thread and knot it. Bring the thread up from the back of the project; about 1/8" in from the edge of the applique shape. Bring it down perpendicular from the curve, just outside of the applique shape. This completes one stitch.

For the next stitch, bring the needle back up about 1/8" away from the previous stitch and 1/8" in from the edge just as in the first stitch. Once again, bring it down just outside the applique shape. Continue this way until you've sewn around the shape.



3. SEW THE FOREHEAD

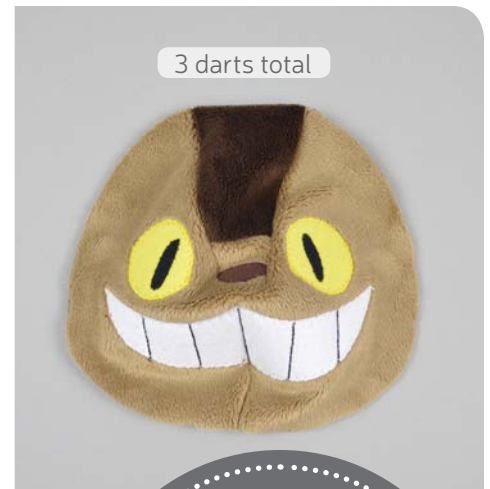
- Grab your **FOREHEAD** piece (B). Align the short edge of the forehead with the short edge between the eyes on the **HEAD FRONT** piece (A).
- Sew the forehead to the head front at this area between the eyes.
- Once complete, open up the pieces and treat the whole head front as one.

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- a. Focus on the narrow wedges found on the sides of the **FOREHEAD (B)** -- these are darts. Fold the **HEAD FRONT (A)** with right sides together along the point of the dart and match up the slanted lines that make the wedge shape.
- b. Sew the darts by starting at the opening and moving down to the point.
- c. When sewing the point, try to blend the seam in with the fold so it makes a smooth transition and a rounder finished plush.
- d. Repeat with the dart on the other side of the forehead for 2 darts total.

4. SEW THE FOREHEAD DARTS



5. SEW THE CHIN DART

- a. Repeat the same process with the small dart found on the bottom of the **HEAD FRONT (A)**. Fold the head in half along the point of the dart, matching up the slanted edges.
- b. Sew from the opening of the dart down to the point.
- c. Blend the seam of the dart into the fold for a rounder finished result.

darts:

A wedge-shaped gap found in a pattern. When sewn in fabric, it creates a tuck in the fabric and develops a 3D shape. The diagonal sides of the wedge are the **LEGS**; these are matched up and sewn to the **POINT** of the dart.

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6. SEW THE EARS

- Grab your **EAR** pieces (C). Take two of them; one in inner ear fabric and one in the accent fabric. Align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- Sew them together along the long curved edge. Leave the straight edge free for turning right side out.
- Turn the ear right side out. Repeat with the remaining two ear pieces for two complete ears total. Refer to the **EAR** paper pattern to find the **fold line** for the ears. Use this as a guide to fold the ear with inner fabrics facing. Pin the ear together.



7. BASTE THE EARS

- Baste the ear along the bottom edge to hold the fold in place. Repeat with the remaining ear so you have a mirrored pair.
- If you haven't already, locate the **ear placement lines** found on the **HEAD FRONT (A)** paper pattern. Transfer them over to the right side of the fabric. Place the open end of the ear within these placement lines. Be sure that the fold is pointing toward the middle of the front. Pin the ears in place.
- Baste the ears to the front within the seam allowances to hold them in place for future steps.

basting:

A form of temporary sewing meant to hold pieces in place. A long stitch length is often used for this reason. The finished result is not meant to be seen and sometimes is even removed later (depending on your project).

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8. SEW THE HEAD BACK DARTS

- Grab your **HEAD BACK** piece (E). Locate the two darts on the top and bottom. Fold the back piece in half with right sides facing so the slanted edges of the darts match up.
- Sew the darts as with previous ones. Start at the opening and work down to the point. Blend the stitching in with the fold of the fabric for a rounder finish.
- Once complete, you should have a finished dart on the top and bottom.

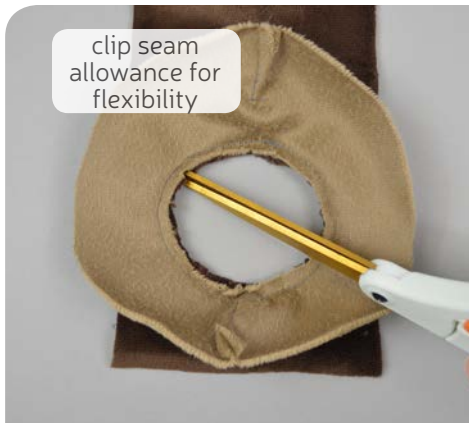


9. SEW THE HEAD TO THE BODY BACK

- Grab your **BODY BACK** piece (D). At this time, add the sign applique if you want it. Refer back to steps 1 and 2 for more detailed instructions.
 - Trace the sign oval onto your fusible web, fuse this to your yellow applique fabric. Cut out the applique fabric and fuse it to your back piece. Either leave fused or sew it in place.
- If you haven't already, locate the **head placement notches** found on the paper pattern for the **HEAD BACK** (E) and the **BODY BACK** (D). Transfer them over to the fabric. This will help align the head to the back more accurately.
Align the hole from the head back to the one found in the body back with right sides facing. Match up the **single and double notches** to be sure it hasn't twisted or turned. Pin the edges together.
- Sew the head back to the body back around the open hole.

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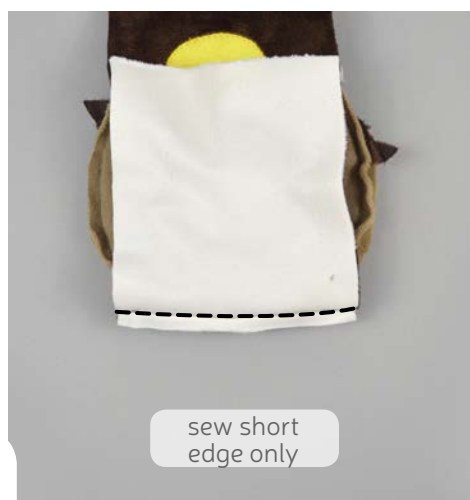
- a. Clip the seam allowance around the hole in the previous seam. This will allow the fabric to stretch more once it's turned.
- b. Turn this piece so the right side of the head fabric is facing out.

10. TURN THE HEAD BACK



- a. Grab your **HEAD FRONT (A)** piece from before. Align it over the **HEAD BACK (E)**. The **bottom darts** should match up. The **top dart** on the head back should rest between the ears on the head front.
- b. Sew the head front to the head back all around the edge. Be sure the **BODY BACK** is moved out of the way and the ears are tucked inside the head.

11. ATTACH THE HEAD FRONT

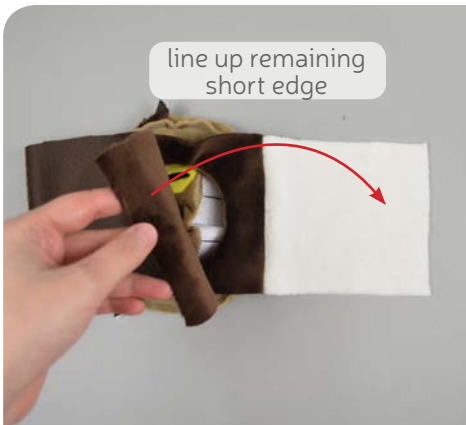


- a. Flip the piece over so now the **BODY BACK (D)** is facing up. Grab your **BELLY** piece (F). Align the short edge of it over the short edge of the body back (just beneath the head).
- b. Sew the body back to the belly along this edge.

12. ATTACH THE BELLY

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13. SEW THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BELLY

- Grab the other short end of the **BODY BACK** (D) and align it to the remaining short end of the **BELLY** (F). Pin the short edges together.
- If you haven't already, locate the **opening for turning** marking found on the body back. Transfer it over to the wrong side of the fabric. Sew the body back to the belly along this edge, but leave an opening where you marked before. When complete, your body back and belly should form a ring.

- Grab your **LEG** pieces (H). Take two of them and align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- Sew them together along the long curved edge. Leave the short straight edge free for turning right side out.
- Repeat with the remaining 22 leg pieces for 12 complete legs total. Turn them right side out.
- Stuff each leg lightly. The top edge will be sewn later, so be sure not to put too much stuffing in them.

14. SEW THE LEGS



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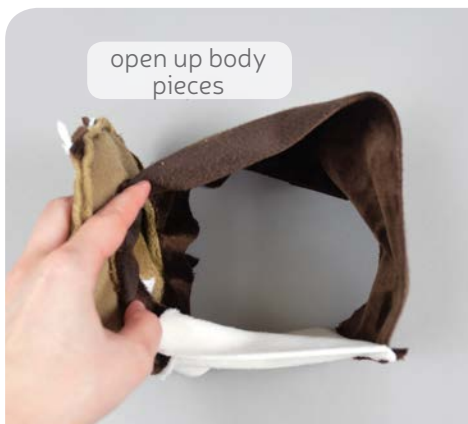
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15. BASTE THE LEGS



- Grab your **SIDE** pieces (G). At this time, add the window and stripe applique. Refer back to steps 1 and 2 for more detailed instructions.
 - Trace the window templates onto your fusible web, fuse this to your yellow applique fabric. Repeat the same with the stripe template; fuse this to your brown applique fabric. Cut out the applique fabric and fuse it to your side piece. Either leave them fused or sew them in place.
- If you haven't already, locate the **leg placement lines** found on the side paper pattern. Transfer them over to the right side of the fabric. Align the open ends of the legs within all these placement lines. They will be really snug against each other. Pin them in place.
- Baste all the legs in place along the bottom edge of the side. Repeat with the remaining 6 legs on the other side piece for two complete sides total.



16. SEW THE SIDES



- Open up the ring that forms the **BODY BACK** (D) and **BELLY** (F). This big open edge is where the sides will go. If you haven't already, locate the **center top & bottom notches** found on the body back and belly paper pattern. Transfer them over to the wrong side of the fabric. Do the same with the **SIDE** (G) pieces.
- Align the side around the open edge of the body. Match up the notches at the center top and bottom so the fabric is evenly distributed. Pin the side to the body completely around the shape.
- Sew the side to the body around the edge. Be especially careful around the legs, as the stuffing can make things shift. When in doubt, check the right side of the plush to be sure the legs are in the seam, then sew over the area again if necessary. Repeat with the remaining side piece and the other side of the body to complete the body of the bus.

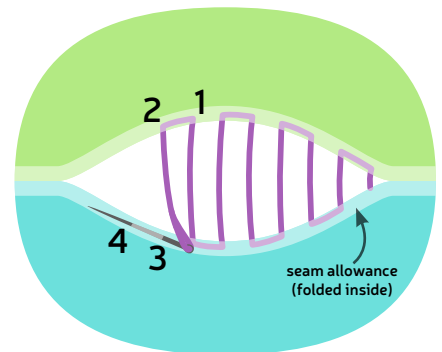
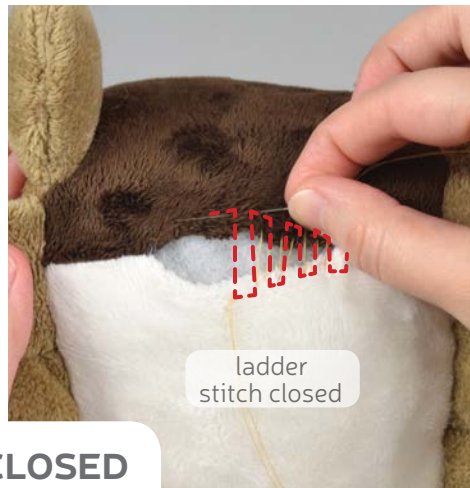
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17. TURN AND STUFF THE PLUSH

- Turn the plush right side out through the opening in the **BELLY (F)**.
- Begin stuffing the plush by starting in the head and face. Fill it up completely until there are no wrinkles left in the plush.
- Next, fill up the rest of the body with stuffing until it's completely full. It doesn't have to be firmly stuffed, but it does take a lot because the body is so big.



18. STITCH THE PLUSH CLOSED

- Once the plush is stuffed, make sure the seam allowances in the opening are tucked inside and prepare to ladder stitch it closed. Thread a hand-sewing needle and knot it at the end. Insert the needle from the inside of the opening and out of the plush near one edge of the opening. This will leave the knot inside the plush.
- Continue from here doing a ladder stitch. Take a 1/8" stitch into the fold of one side of the opening, then go across and take another. Keep going down the opening until you reach the end.

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- a. When you're finished, stitch a knot into the end of the seam. Then insert the needle near the finished knot and out of the plush about 1-2" away.
- b. Pull the thread through and hold it taut while snipping the thread. The excess thread should sink back inside the plush -- all hidden!

19. TRIM THE THREADS



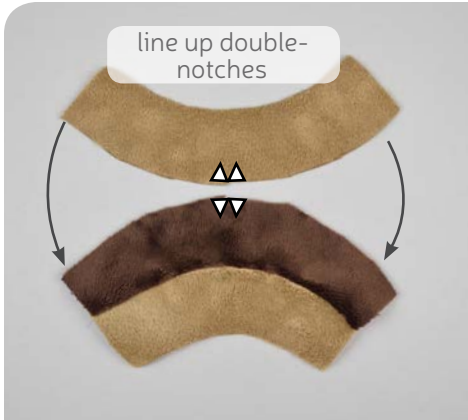
20. SEW THE FIRST TAIL STRIPES

- a. Grab your **BASE TAIL STRIPE** (I) and **MIDDLE TAIL STRIPE** (J) pieces from opposing fabrics. Note the notches found on the paper pattern for these pieces. The sides with the **single notch** are going to be sewn together next.
- b. Stretch the middle tail stripe piece to fit around the longest edge of the base tail stripe. Match up the notches and pin the fabrics together.
- c. Sew the stripes together along this edge.



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21. SEW THE MIDDLE TAIL STRIPE

- Grab your remaining **MIDDLE TAIL STRIPE** (J); it should match the **BASE TAIL STRIPE** from the previous step. Note the notches found on the paper pattern for these pieces. The sides with the **double notch** are going to be sewn together next.
- Layer the current tail pieces over the middle tail stripe. Match up the notches and pin the fabrics together.
- Sew the stripes together along this edge.

- Grab your **TAIL TIP** piece (K). Note the notches found on the paper pattern for these pieces. The sides with the **single notch** are going to be sewn together next.
- Stretch the **MIDDLE TAIL STRIPE** piece to fit around the notched edge of the tail tip. Match up the notches and pin the fabrics together.
- Sew the stripes together along this edge.
- Open up the fabrics for the completed tail stripes!

22. SEW THE TAIL TIP

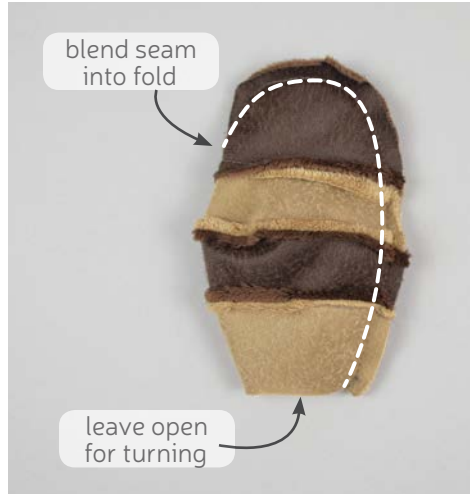


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23. SEW THE TAIL



- Fold the **TAIL** in half lengthwise with right sides facing. This should make the tail skinnier and match up the curved edges.
- Sew the tail together along the curved edge. Leave the short edge free for turning the tail right side out. Also blend the end of your stitching with the fold much like with the darts from previous steps.
- Once complete, turn the tail right side out.



24. STUFF THE TAIL



- Stuff the tail fully with stuffing so it takes shape.
- Thread a hand sewing needle with thread and knot the end. Sew a long gathering stitch around the opening of the **TAIL**, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the edge.

gathering:

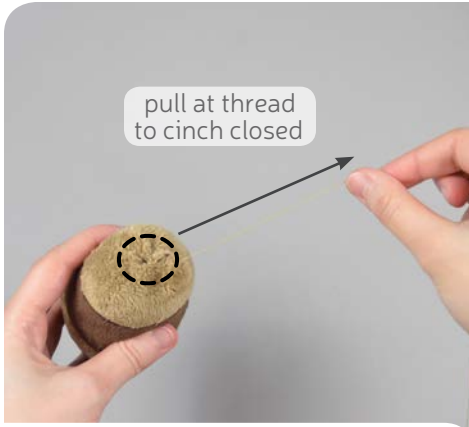
The process of shortening the length of a piece of fabric by sewing long stitches through it. When the thread is pulled, it forms small folds that ruffle the fabric.

gathering stitch:

A long version of the running stitch, which is a stitch done by weaving the needle in and out of a length of fabric going along a line. The long stitches (about $\frac{1}{4}$ " - $\frac{1}{2}$ " long) gather the fabric when pulled later.

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25. ATTACH THE TAIL

- Once finished, pull at the thread to gather the fabric and cinch up the opening of the **TAIL**. Sew a few knots at this opening to hold it closed. If you have a lot of thread left, consider leaving it attached for adding to the body.
- Align the cinched end of the tail at the back of the body. Center it about 2" above the belly seam. Hold it in place by sticking pins into the base of the tail and into the body.
- Stitch the tail in place along the base with a ladder stitch.

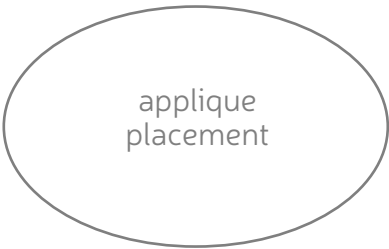
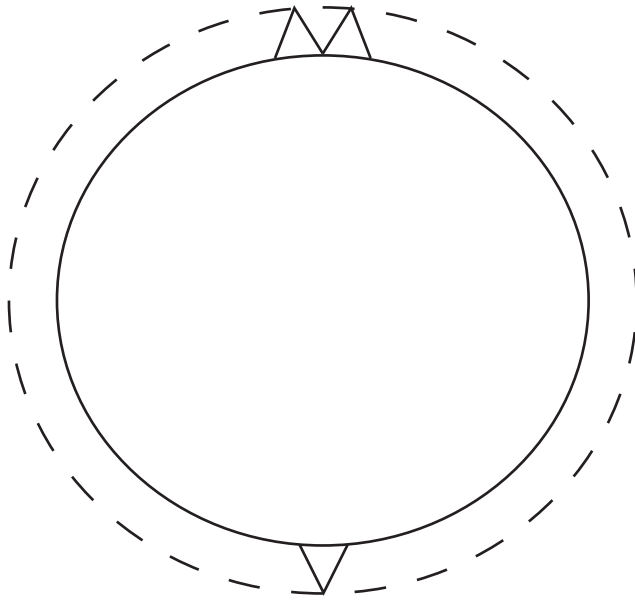
congrats!
this completes
your plush! Now
give it a big
hug!



For
a fun
finish, use
a permanent
marker to write a
name on the bus
sign!

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Catbus Plush

P A T T E R N
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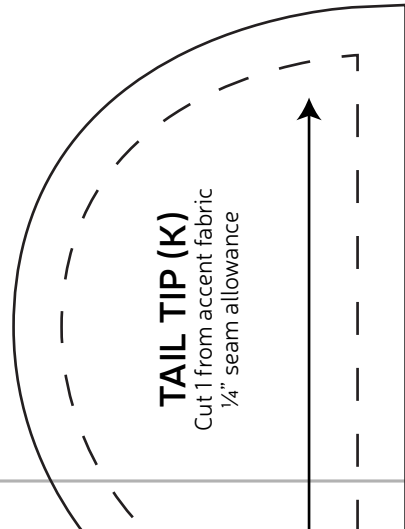
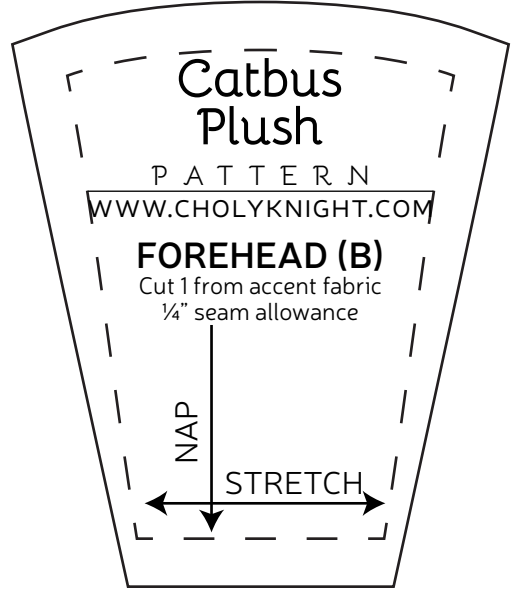
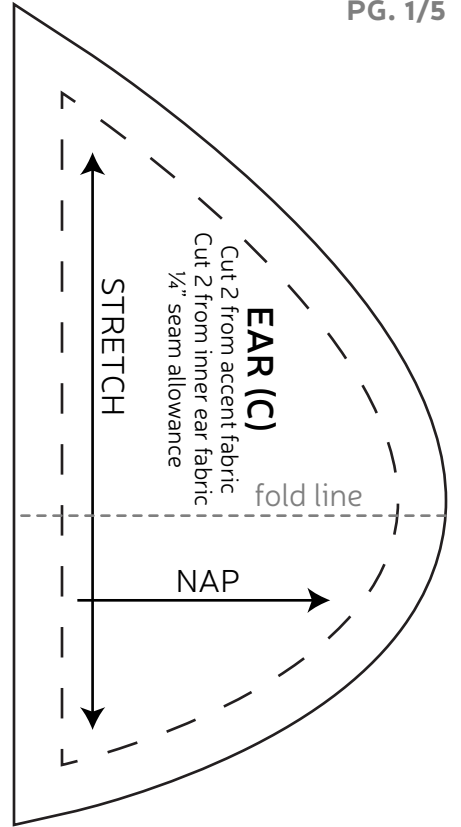
BODY BACK (D)

Cut 1 from accent fabric
1/4" seam allowance

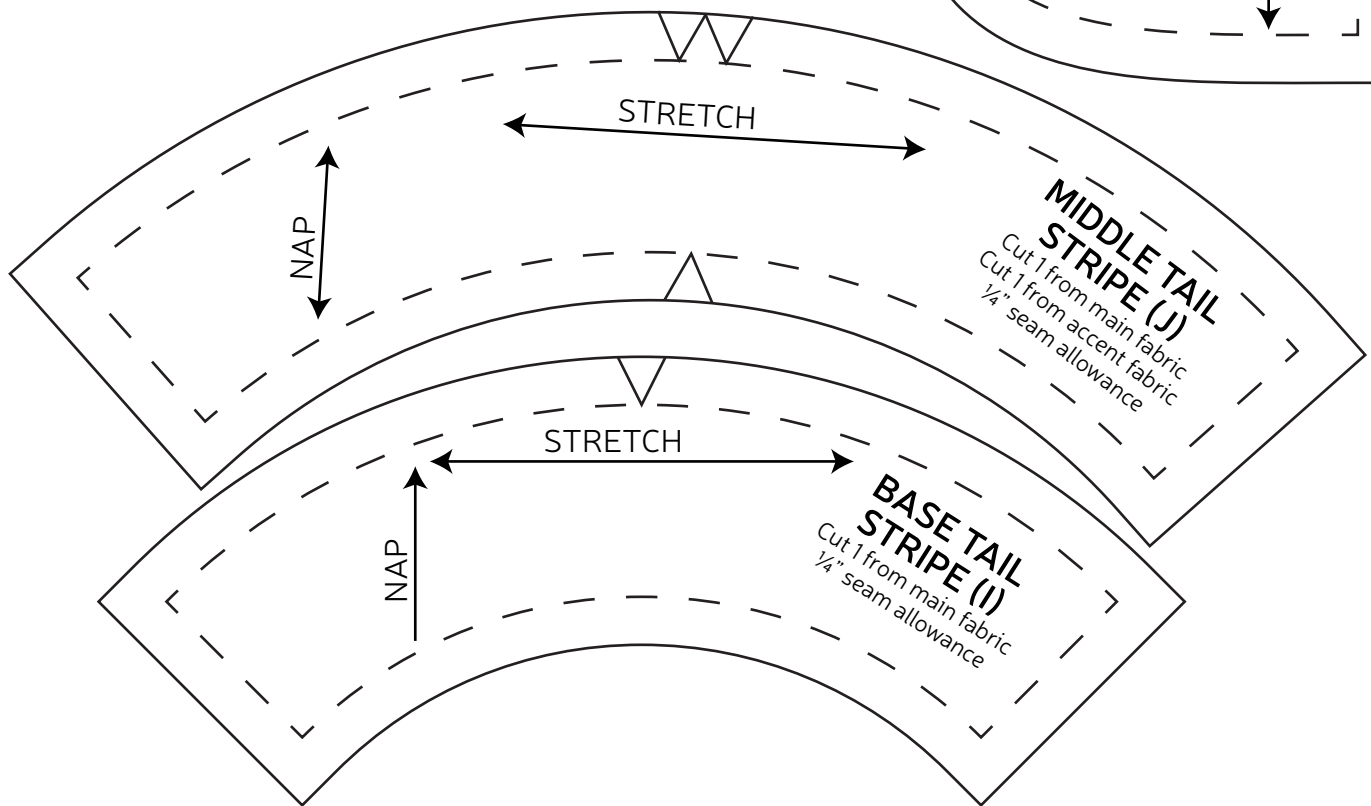
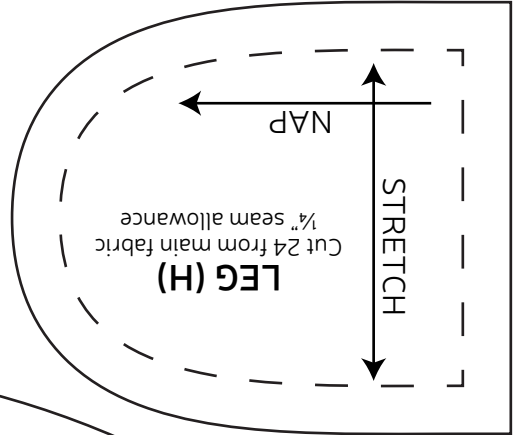
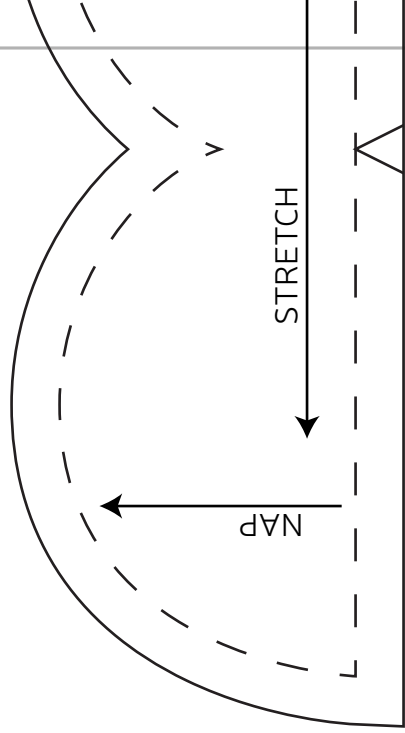
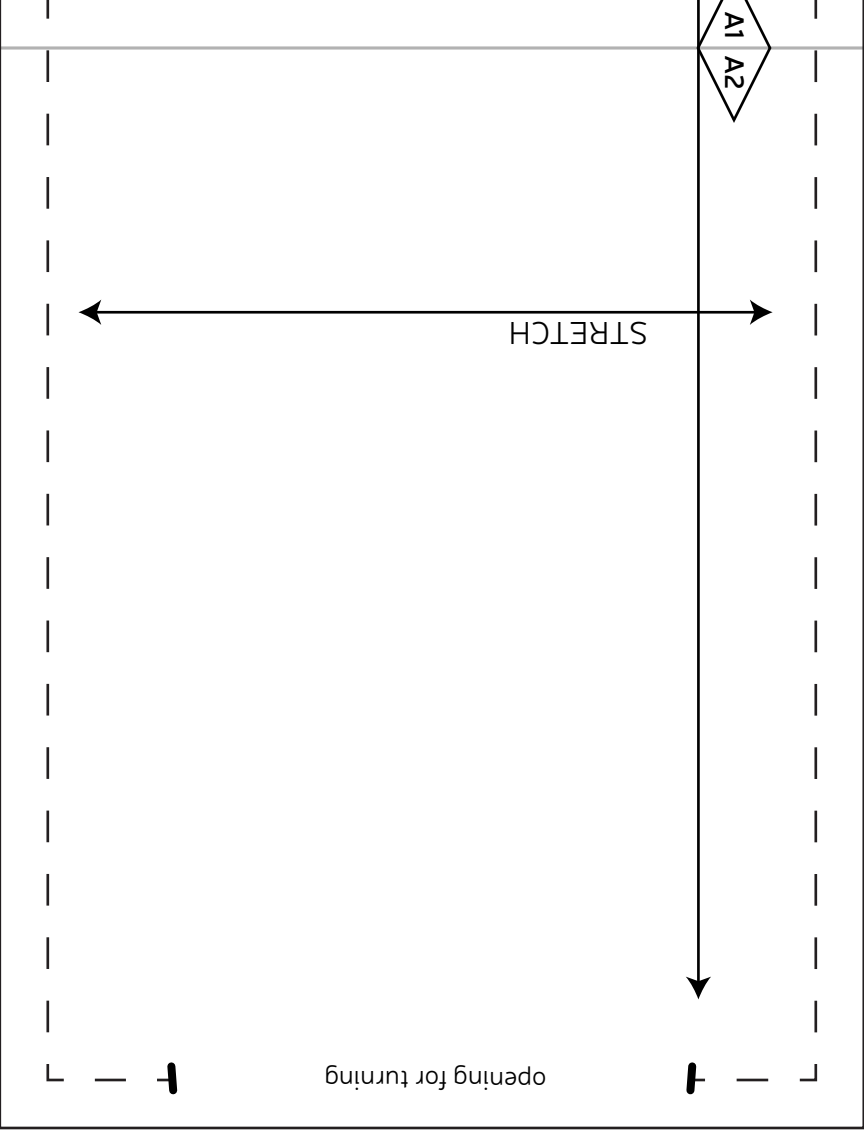
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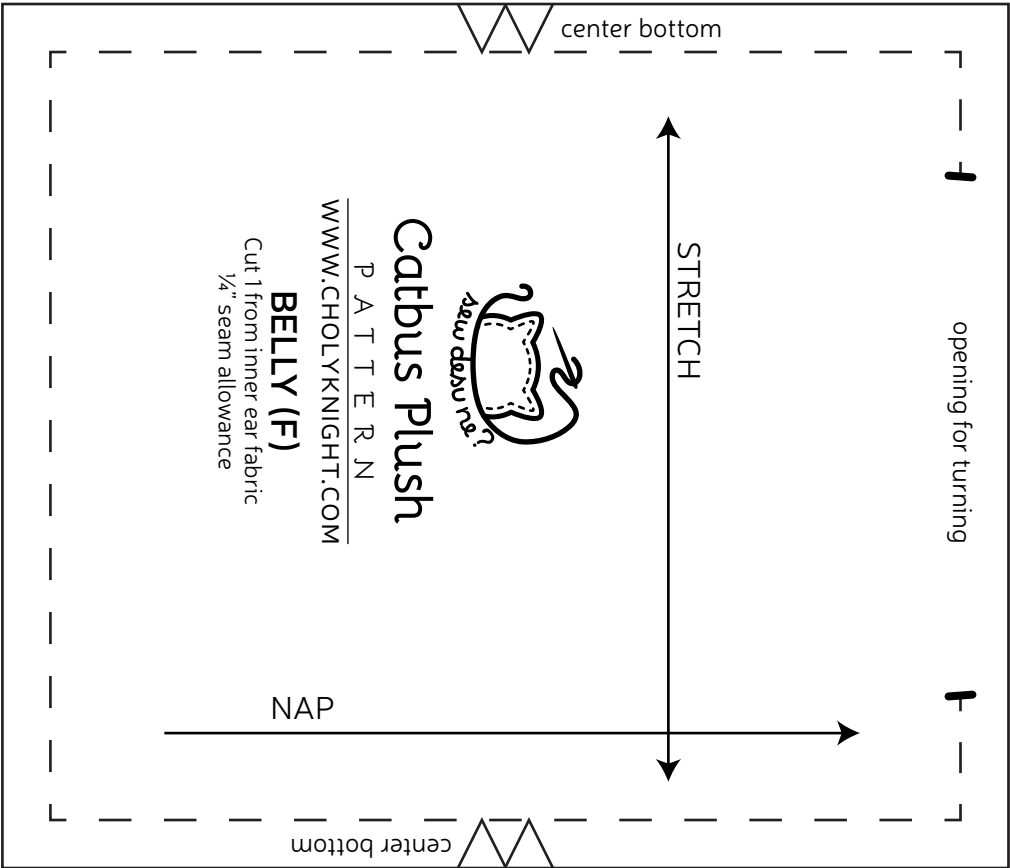
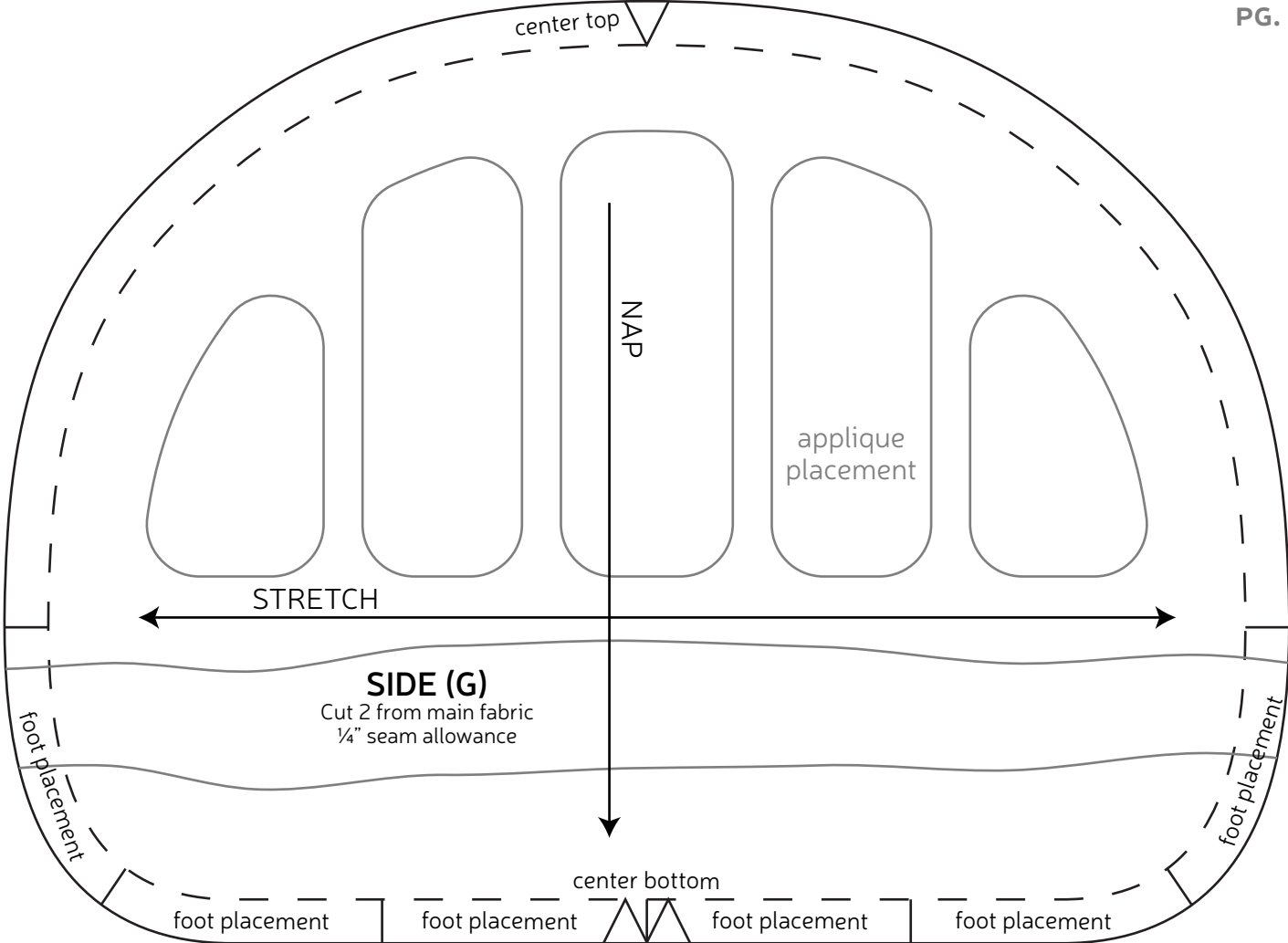
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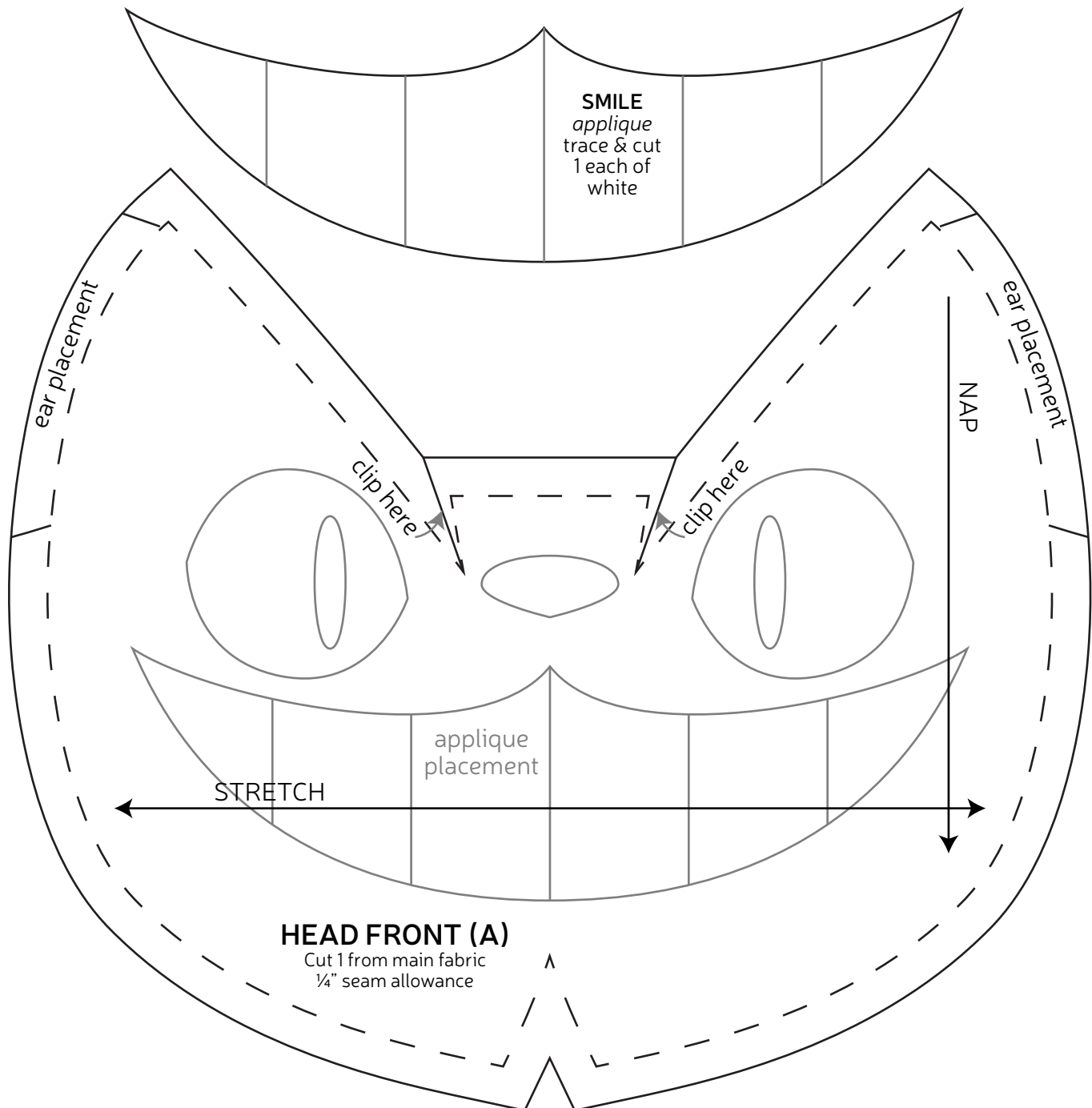
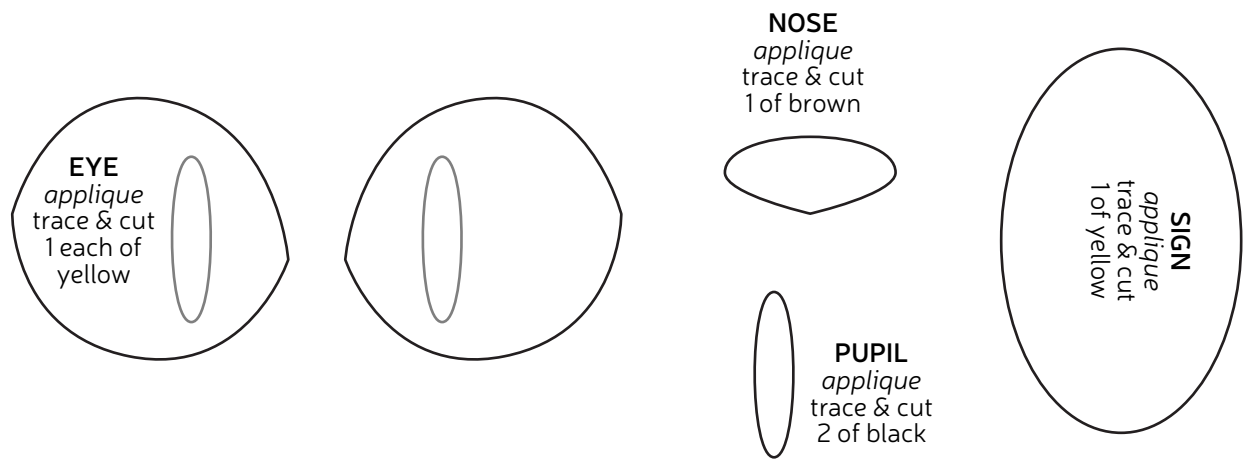
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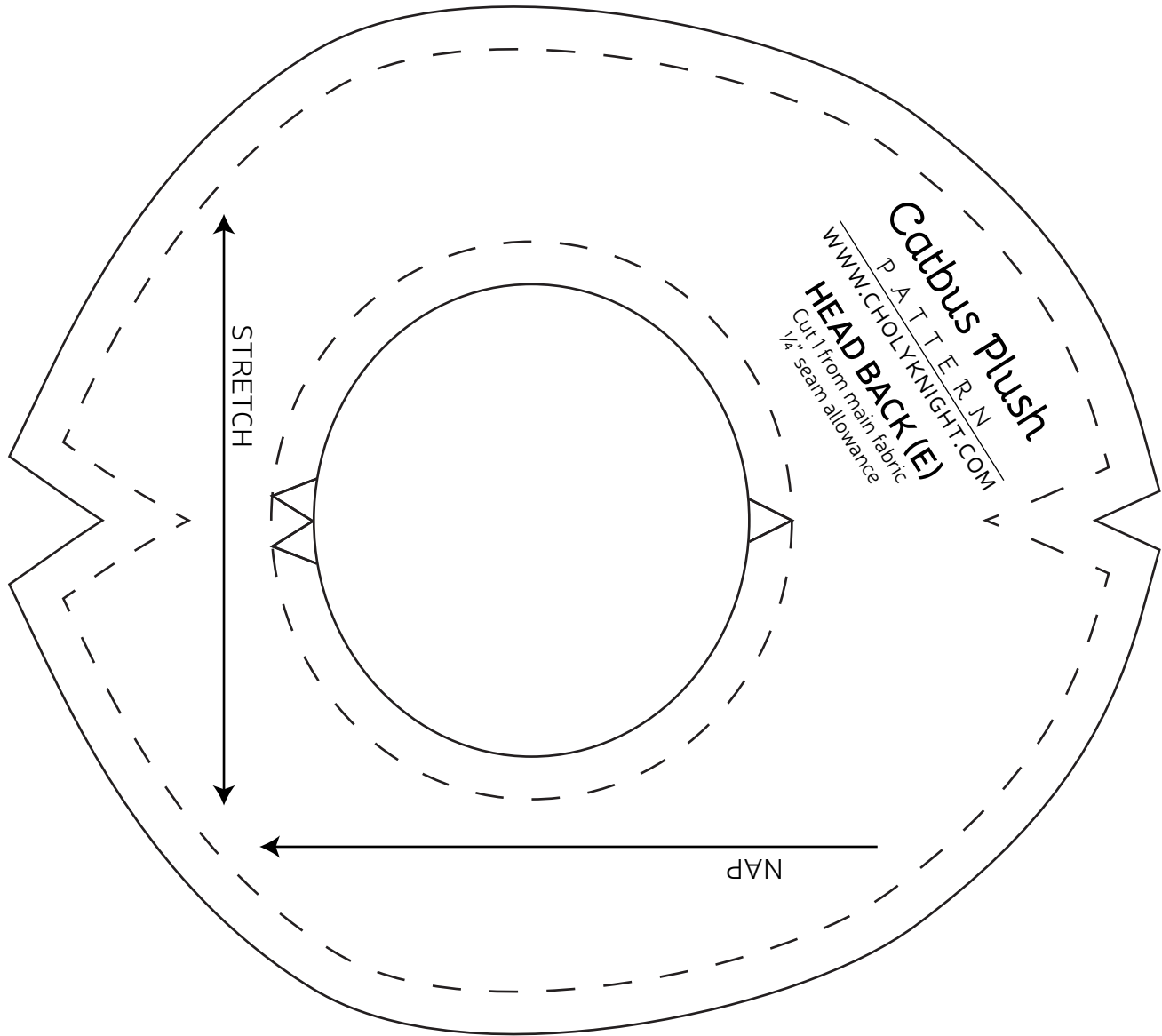


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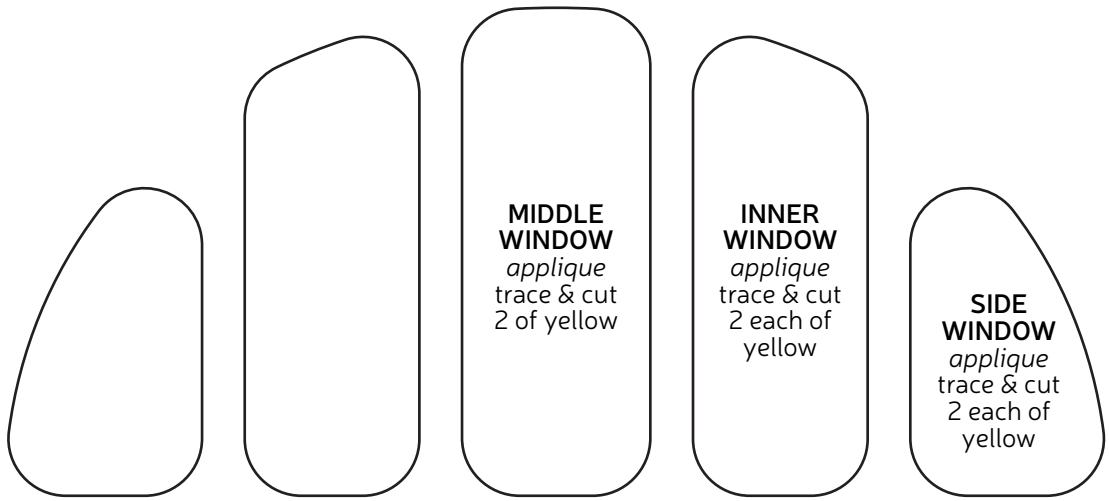








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P A T T E R N
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HEAD BACK (E)
Cut 1 from main fabric
1/4" seam allowance



MIDDLE WINDOW
applique
trace & cut
2 of yellow

INNER WINDOW
applique
trace & cut
2 each of
yellow

SIDE WINDOW
applique
trace & cut
2 each of
yellow

STRIPE
applique
trace & cut
2 of brown

