



SUGAR SKULL KITTY PLUSH

A SEWING PATTERN BY



SUGAR SKULL KITTY PLUSH

This pattern pays homage to the beautiful calaveras seen in Dia de Muertos art. It's a simple kitty plush with button jointed limbs and an ornate sugar-skull mask. Without the colorful details it would make a great skeleton kitty. But if you include them I think it would be a wonderful way to honor a cat in your life that has passed on.

The arms and legs are attached via buttons. This allows the limbs to reposition a bit and adds an extra pop of color.

As a disclaimer, I'm not an embroidery master, so I took a very laid-back approach to this section. You can play around with the different stitches if you're new to it as well. Or if you want to whip out your best skills for the details, please have at it!

DIFFICULTY:



I would give this a 3 star rating if you're skipping the embroidery. If you're tackling it, however, know that it does take some time.

The arms and legs need some extra love and care as well, since those are also attached by hand.

MAKES:

One plush, about 6" wide by 9" tall

SKILLS USED:

- Fusible web applique
- Double cross stitch
- Chain stitch
- French knot
- Darts
- Curved sewing
- Ladder stitch
- Attaching buttons
- Gathering stitch



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materials & tools:

- 1/3 yd. of black fabric for body
- 6" x 6" piece of white fabric for skull
- 3" x 3" piece of white applique fabric (felt, cotton, etc.) for ribcage
- 3" x 3" piece of black applique fabric (felt, cotton, etc.) for eyes
- 4" x 4" piece of accent applique fabric #1 (felt, cotton, etc.) for eye borders
- 3" x 3" piece of accent applique fabric #2 (felt, cotton, etc.) for paisley shapes
- 6" x 6" piece of light or heavy duty fusible web
- Four colored buttons, about 1/2" in diameter
- sewing thread to match main fabric and applique fabrics
- embroidery thread in 3 colors
- embroidery needle
- embroidery transfer paper (if desired)
- poly-fil stuffing
- basic sewing tools (sewing machine, scissors, iron, needles, pins, fabric marker, seam ripper)

SUGGESTED FABRICS:

Thick, plush fabrics such as fleece or minky are suggested. Ones with a little bit of stretch along the crosswise grain will add a nice softness and roundness to your plush, but isn't necessary.

Other non-stretchy options include flannel, cotton, and terry cloth.



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printing the pattern:

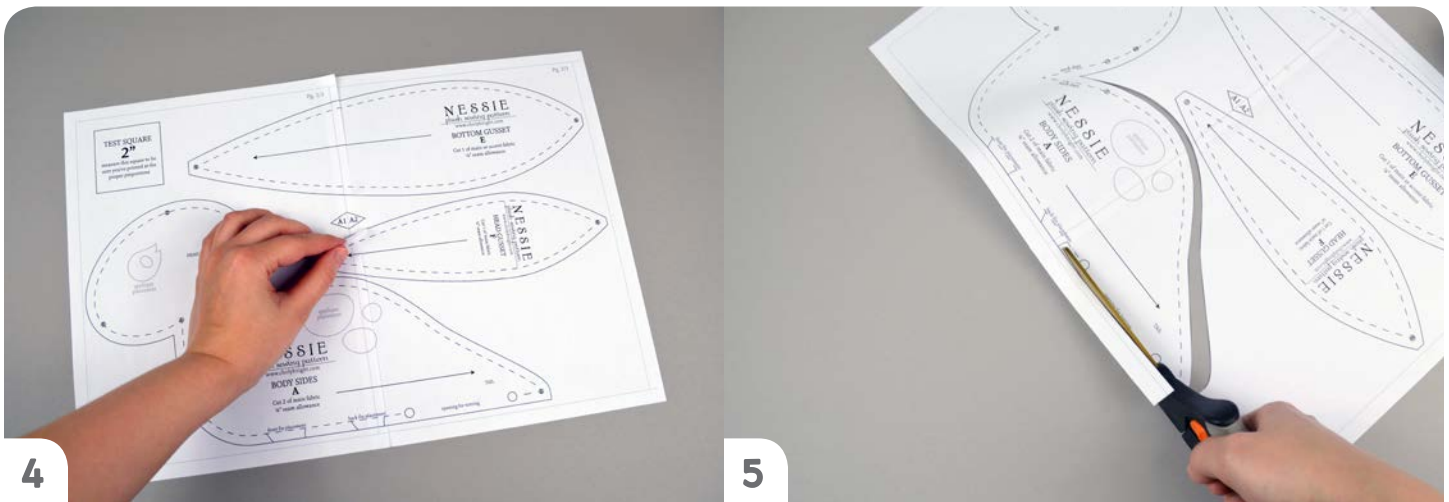
To print the pattern, set your computer to print **PAGES 12-13**. If you're unfamiliar with printing and assembling a .pdf pattern, read the steps below.



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.

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.

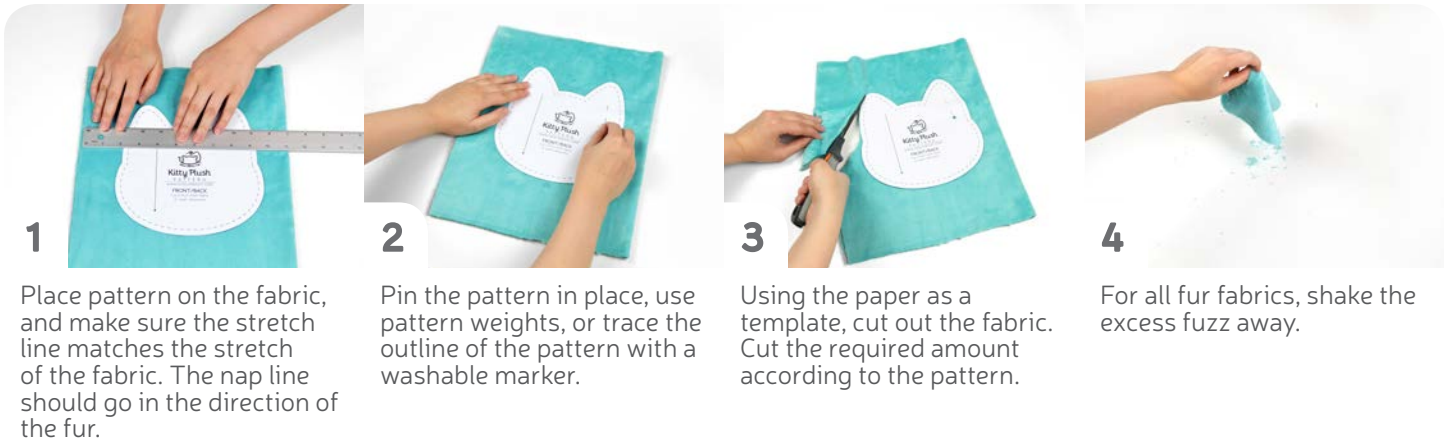
It's likely your printer will have a margin that ensures your image doesn't print to the very edge. Assembly will be easier if you trim off this blank margin edge. This will give you pages that overlap slightly during assembly. If you trim across the gray outline boxes, this will give you pages that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



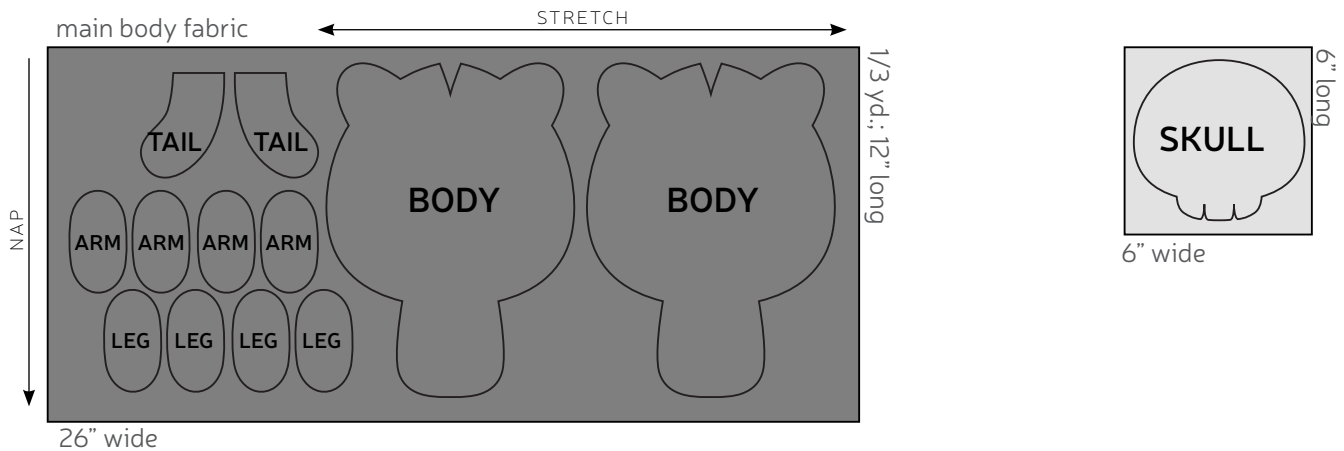
To line up the pattern pages, match up the corresponding diamond shapes. Each diamond will have a letter, so it's simply a matter of matching A1 to A2, B3 to B4 and so on. The faint gray lines indicate the border of every page, you should be able to line those up as well. When the diamond goes together,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

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.

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 $\frac{1}{4}$ " throughout the project.

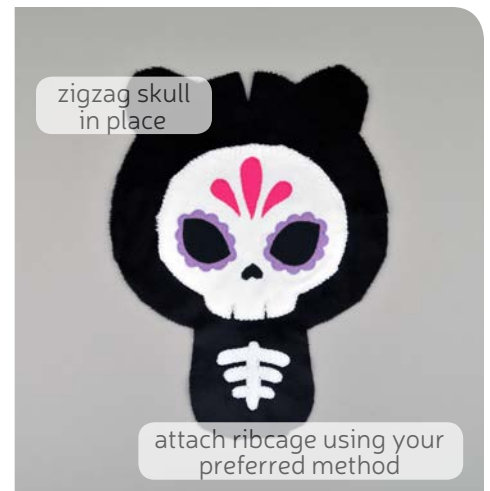
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1. PREPARE THE APPLIQUE

- Take your fusible web and trace the all your applique pieces onto the smooth (paper) side. These include two eyes, two eye borders, a nose, a ribcage, and three paisley shapes.
- Fuse all the pieces to the wrong side of your appropriate applique fabrics. Black: eyes & nose; white: ribcage; accent #1: eye borders, accent #2: paisley shapes.
- Cut out the decorative pieces and arrange them on the skull piece. You can do this by setting your paper pattern on top of the fabric piece (right sides up), align the eyes borders on top where the placement markings are, then carefully pull the paper pattern away while holding the applique piece in place.

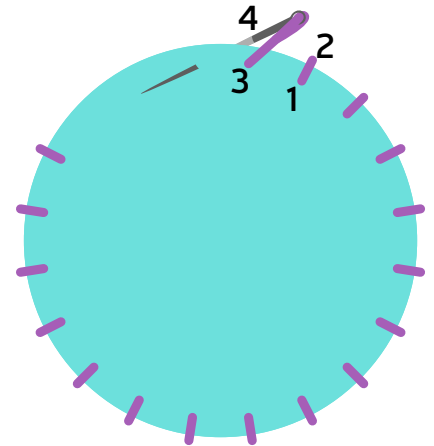
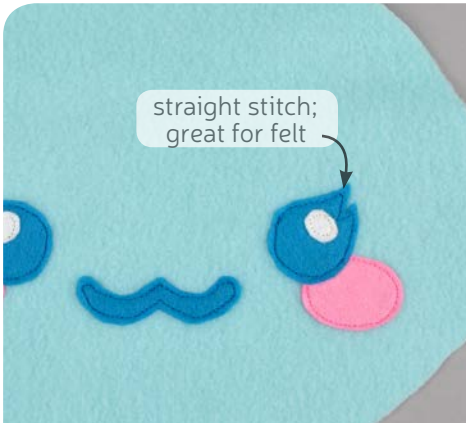


2. SEW THE APPLIQUE

- Fuse the eye borders 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). Repeat with the eyes, nose, and paisley shapes in the same manner. 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.
- Refer to the next step for some other applique options.
- Place the skull onto the head area of one of your body pieces, using the same placement method for applique as in the last step. Pin the skull in place. Place the ribcage applique piece in place the same way you did the eyes and nose back in the previous step.
- Sew the skull in place using a zigzag stitch around the outline. Sew the ribcage the same way you did the other applique pieces earlier in this step.

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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. EMBROIDER THE SKULL

- Next up is the embroidery, so gather your embroidery thread, needle, and transfer paper if you prefer it. The embroidery on the skull is very simple, so there's no need to get too fancy with it. I simply freehand sketched the placement of the details, but you can transfer yours if you prefer.
- The stars found near the paisley shape (labeled A) are a double cross stitch. That is an X shape with a + shape stitched over it. Do 3 of these in one color.
- The swirls found between the eyes and forehead (labeled B) are sewn in a chain stitch. Stitch along the lines on each side in your second color.
- The dots found on the side of the eyes (labeled C) are French knots. Do one for each dot on the side of the head in your third color.

tip:

I got the best results using 2 strands of embroidery floss and some **THREAD HEAVEN** thread conditioner.

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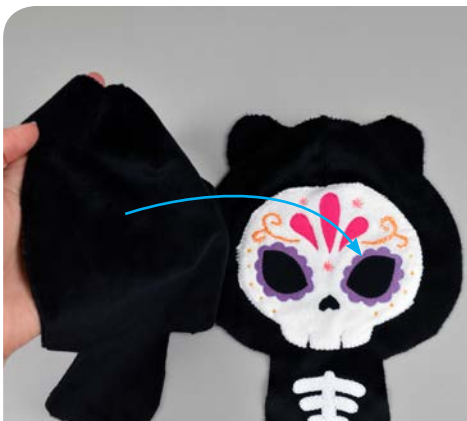


4. SEW THE BODY DART

- Lay out your freshly embroidered work and check it over. Press it if you prefer, if the fabric has stretched or warped while you embroidered it. This is now your body front.
- Note the small notch at the top of the head. This is the head dart. Fold the body in half lengthwise (right sides facing) to match up the edges of this notch.
- Sew the along this edge to create the dart. If possible, try to blend your stitching into the fold as closely as possible for the smoothest seam. Repeat for both body pieces.

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 or **APEX** of the dart.



5. SEW THE FRONT TO THE BACK

- If you haven't already, find the opening for turning marking on the body paper pattern. Transfer that area over to the wrong side of one of your body pieces. Take both of your body pieces and align them with right sides facing.
- Sew around the perimeter of the body, being sure to leave an opening where you marked before.
- Once sewn, clip into the seam allowance of the body where the head meets the body and around the ears. This will increase flexibility when the body is turned.

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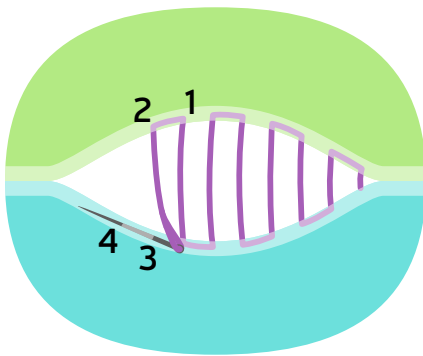


6. STUFF & CLOSE THE BODY

- Turn the body right side out and define the ears and other corners with a chopstick or similar blunt tool. Use small balls of stuffing to fill out the ears first, then stuff the rest of the body lightly.
- Thread a hand sewing needle with matching thread and knot the end. Insert the needle into the opening of the head near one end. Bring the needle out so the knot is now hidden within the plush. Tuck under the seam allowance of the head opening.
- Continue from here doing a ladder stitch. Take a 1/8" stitch into the fold on one side of the head, then go across and take a stitch into the other side of the head. Keep going down the opening until you reach the end. See the illustration below for another look at a ladder stitch.

TIP:

A ladder stitch is also sometimes called a **SLIP STITCH, HIDDEN STITCH, or INVISIBLE STITCH.**



7. FINISH THE SEAM

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



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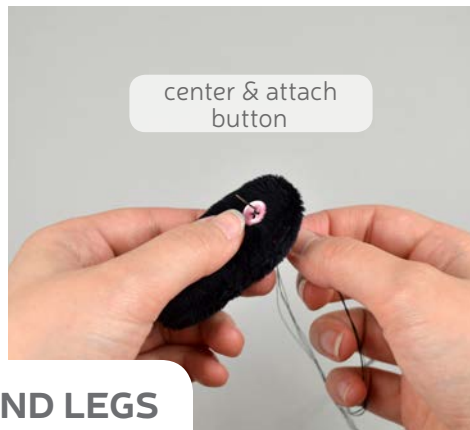
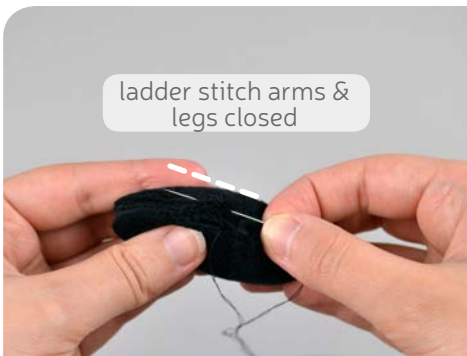
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8. SEW THE ARMS AND LEGS

- Grab two of your arm/leg pieces and align them with right sides facing. If you haven't already, locate the opening for turning markings on the paper pattern. Transfer them to the wrong side of one of your arm/leg pieces.
- Sew around the perimeter of the piece, being sure to leave an opening where you marked.
- Repeat this so far with the remaining six arm/leg pieces to have two arms and two legs total. Turn them all right side out through the opening for turning.



9. ATTACH THE ARMS AND LEGS

- Stuff the arms and legs lightly with stuffing. Tuck under the seam allowances and prepare to sew the arms and legs closed. Thread a hand sewing needle and knot the end. Refer back to steps 6 & 7 and ladder stitch all 4 arms and legs closed.
- Switch to some heavy duty thread if you have it (if not, you can also double over your all-purpose thread). Grab one of your colored buttons and center it along one end of the arm. The paper pattern has a placement point to give you an idea. Stitch the button in place with a few stitches; just to hold it.
- Take the arm to your kitty body and position it on the side where the head meets the body. The paper pattern has a placement point to give you an idea. Make sure the arm is pointing in the same direction as the face. Attach the arm by taking a stitch through the body, then another through the button. Keep the thread tight so the join is secure. Repeat 4 or 5 more times for a really strong join.
- Repeat the same process with the other arm on the other side of the body. Then do the same for both legs along the bottom side of the body (look for the pattern marking for help).

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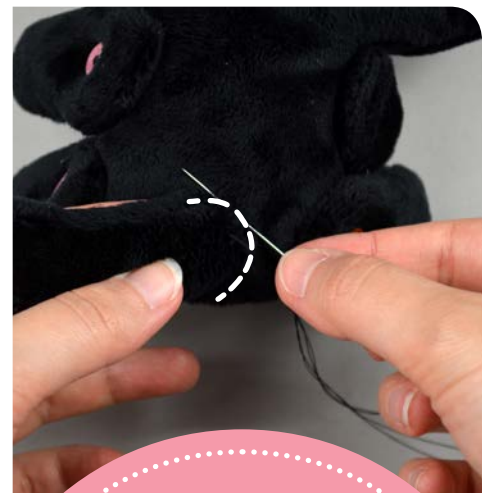
10. SEW THE TAIL

- Take your two tail pieces and align them with right sides facing.
- Sew them together along the long curved edge, leaving the straight edge free for turning right side out later.
- Turn the tail right side out and stuff it lightly with stuffing.



11. ATTACH THE TAIL

- Thread a hand sewing needle with black thread and knot the end. Sew a long gathering stitch around the opening of the tail, about 1/4" away from the edge.
- Once finished, pull at the thread to gather the fabric and cinch up the opening. 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.
- Position the tail at the lower back of the kitty. It should be centered along the back. Make sure the tail is pointing upward as well. Once it's aligned, sew the tail in place with a ladder stitch around the base.



gathering:

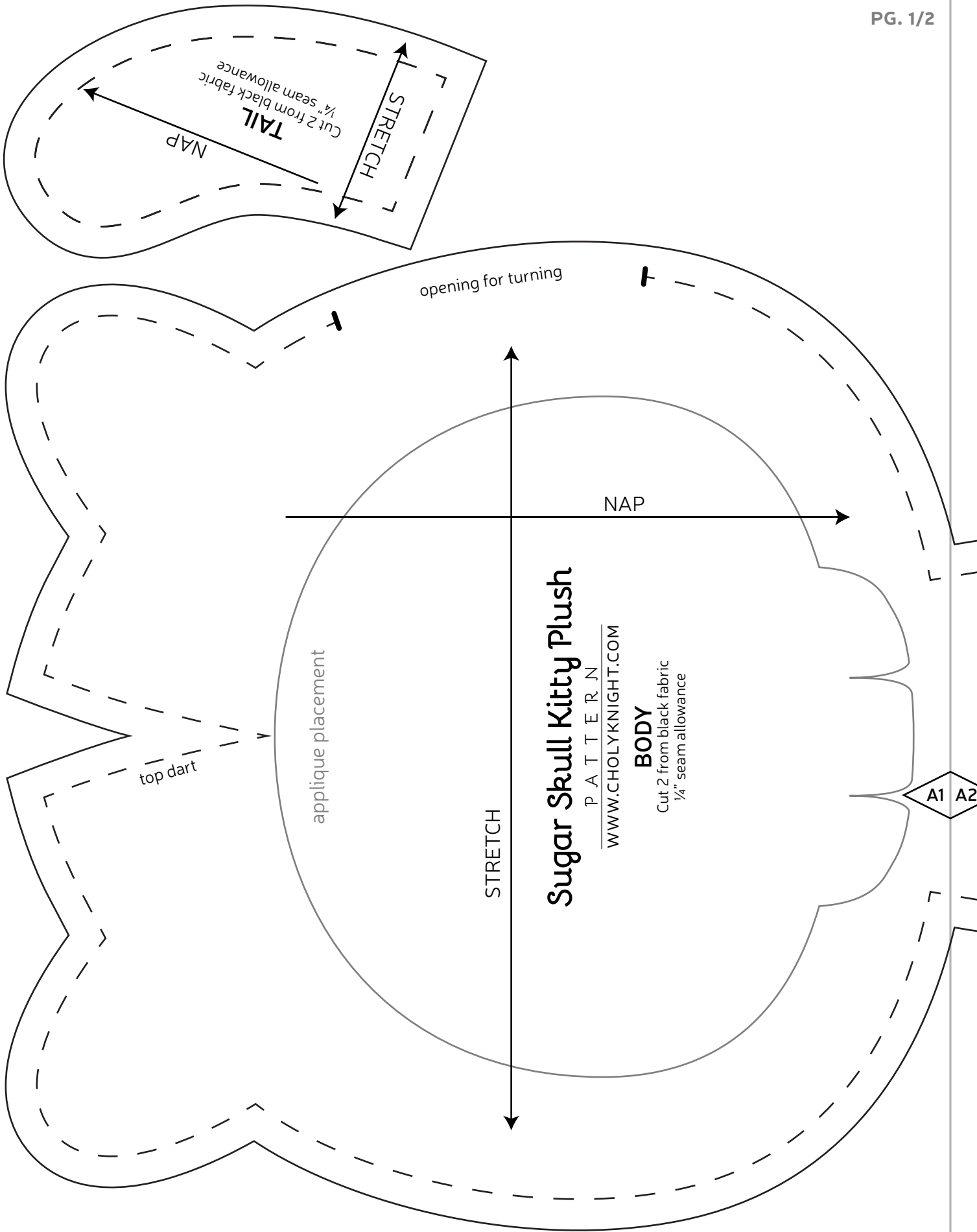
The process of shortening the length of a piece of fabric by sewing long stitches through it. When the thread is pulled, it forms small folds that ruffle the fabric.

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 1/4" - 1/2" long) gather the fabric when pulled later.

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P A T T E R N
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BODY

Cut 2 from black fabric
1/4" seam allowance

applique placement

STRETCH

NAP

opening for turning

TAIL

Cut 2 from black fabric
1/4" seam allowance

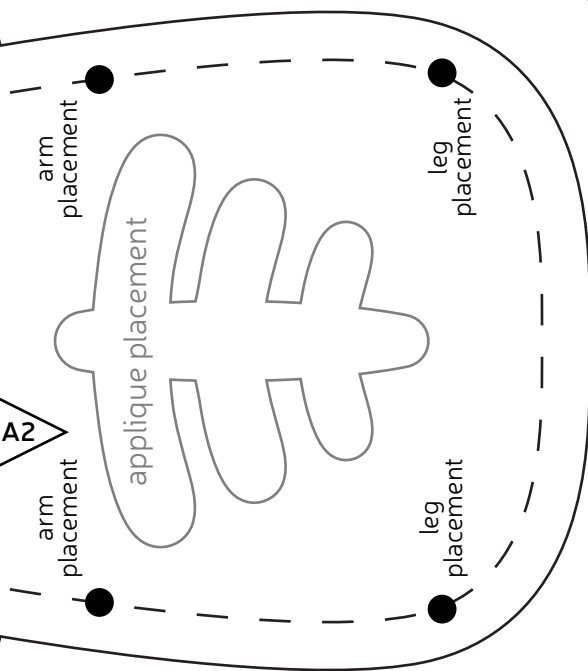
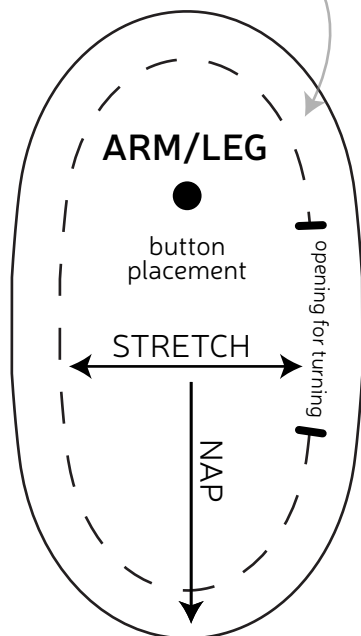
STRETCH

top dart

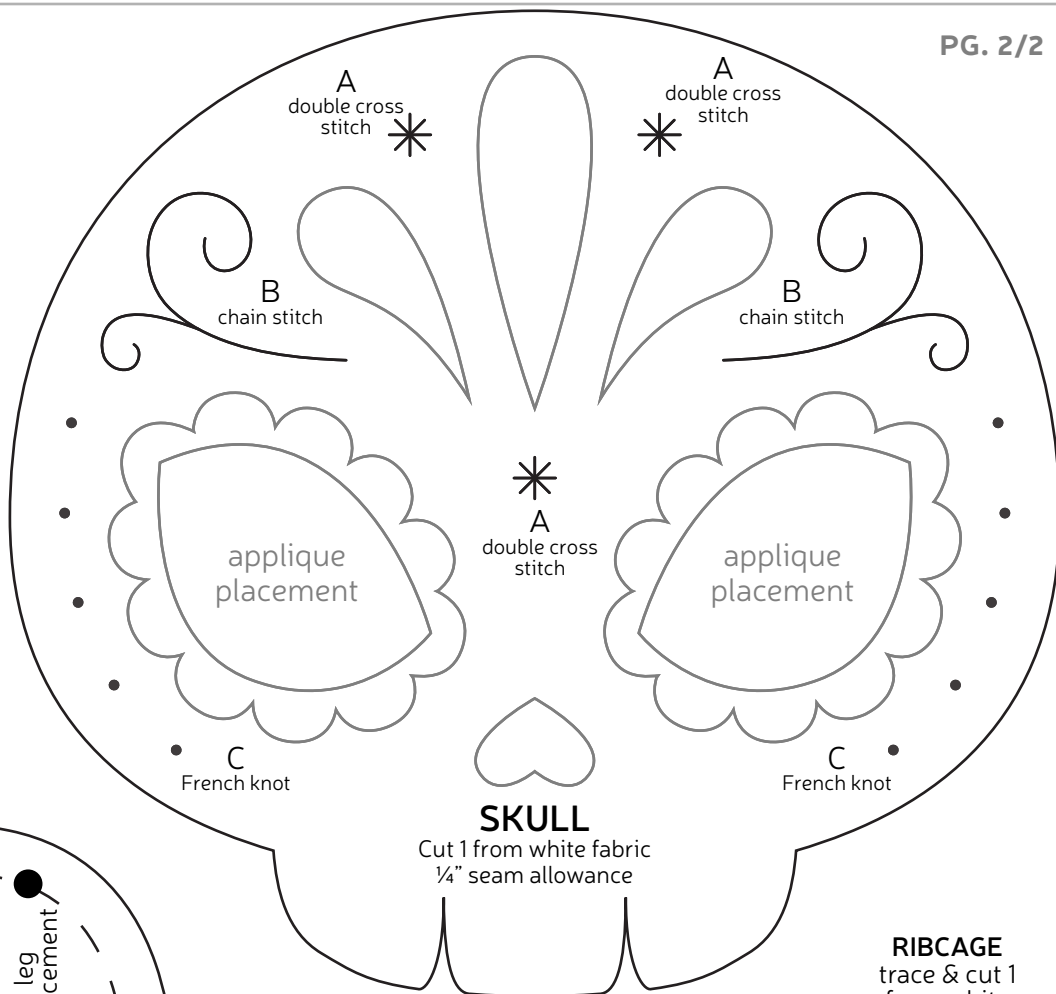
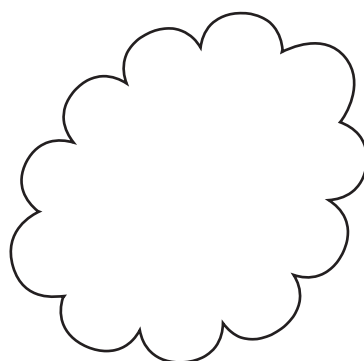
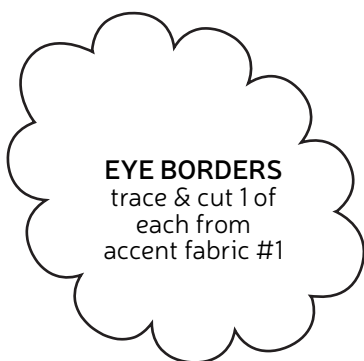
A1 A2

ARM/LEG

Cut 8 from black fabric
1/4" seam allowance

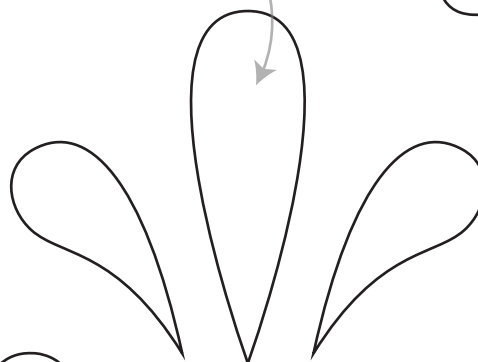


A1 A2

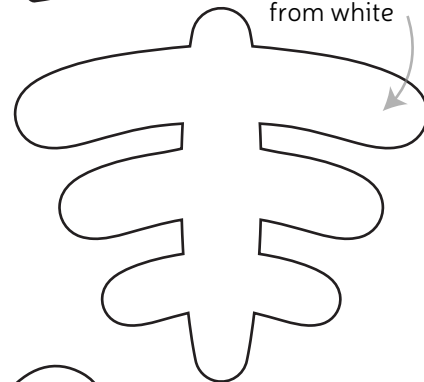


PAISLEY SHAPES

trace & cut 1 of each from accent fabric #2



RIBCAGE
trace & cut 1 from white



NOSE
trace & cut 1 from black

