

## Make a basic hankie dress for Bleurette

baw 10/8/2012

### Materials:

- A Bleurette!
- A hankie, approximately 12 inches square
- An iron and ironing surface
- A squirt bottle with water
- A seam gauge
- Sharp scissors
- One 1/4 inch button
- A sewing machine; or, if you like hand work, you could do this by hand.

This is primarily a picture tutorial; there are no patterns needed to turn a pretty hankie into a sweet little dress for your doll.



So, find a pretty hankie, vintage or not, to get started. If you are squeamish about cutting into a special or vintage hankie, try practicing these steps with a 12" x 12" piece of muslin or batiste.



Fold your hankie in half, and then in half again, so you are looking at one quarter of the hankie. We want to make the neck opening about 1 1/2 inches in diameter; look around for a sewing spool that is

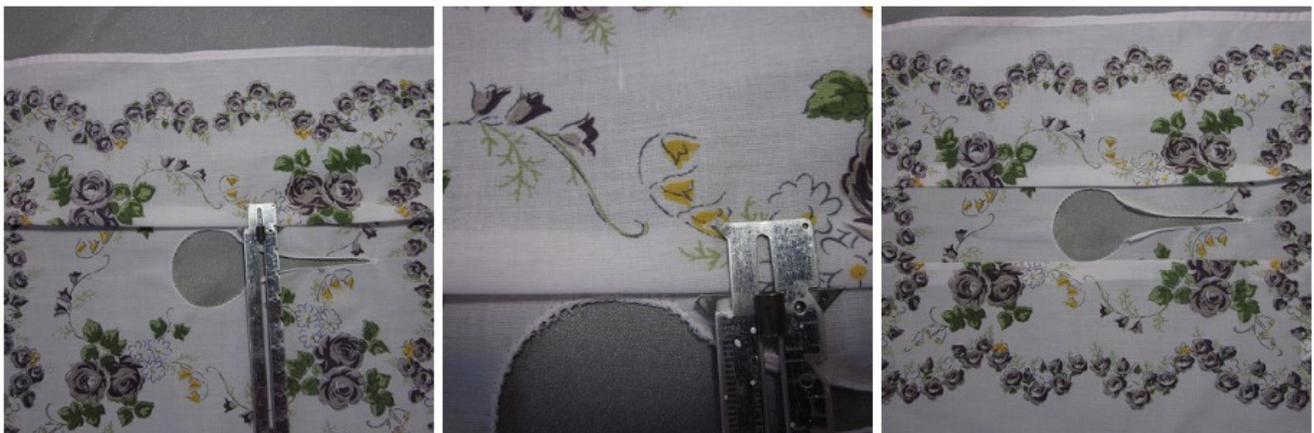
A design that has been around for ages, but please do not sell this pattern.

about this diameter and use it as a template to mark the neck opening on your hankie. With sharp scissors, cut out the neck opening.



Measure from the neck opening down three inches for the center back opening. Mark this then cut along the line. To finish the raw edges, I zig-zag stitched all around the edges twice. Use a narrow width zig-zag, and a short stitch length. On my Viking sewing machine, I used a zig-zag width of 3, and a stitch length of 1.5.

Stitch with the wrong side facing you, and this will turn the fabric slightly to the wrong side. Stitch twice, then trim any loose threads from around the neck opening and center back. Make a bar tack (like the bottom of a buttonhole) to secure the bottom of the center back opening.



Press around the hankie and around the neck and back opening. Fold up your first pleat from edge to edge about 1/2 inch (a seam gauge is handy for measuring accurately). Be careful to fold up evenly from one edge of the hankie to the other. Press this fold with a hot iron (use a cotton setting, be careful not to burn your pinkies!). Fold up and press a pleat on the opposite side of the neck opening.

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Make two more pleats on each side of the neck opening as you did the first pleat, overlapping the pleats slightly. Press each pleat as you make it, and take care that they are all the same width. I made this dress with three pleats on each side, and it fits very loose. You can make a fourth pleat and it will result in a more fitted look.

Once you've pressed your pleats in place, mist them to dampen them slightly then carefully press over all until the hankie is dry. This will give you nice, sharp pleats as in the picture on the right.



After your pleats have been sharply pressed, fold the hankie dress, wrong sides together, along the shoulder line. Measure down from the shoulder the length you want your pleats to be stitched. For this dress I measured down 1 3/4 inches. Place a pin in the first pleat at this point in the front, then measure the same distance on the back and place another pin. You will stitch the pleats down between these pins.

Stitch with a straight stitch close along the folded edge of the pleat from pin to pin. Repeat for each of the pleats.

Once all of the pleats have been stitched down, iron them carefully.

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If you have a hankie with a pretty edging: scalloped, rolled, embroidered or crocheted, you may want to simply overlap the side seams and tack them in place, so the pretty edges will show. If you don't, you can sew up the side seams like I have done with this hankie dress.

Measure down from the shoulder about 1 3/4 inches for the armhole opening, and place a pin here. Pin the rest of the side seam down to the hem. Sew the side seam from the bottom up. When you get close to the last pin, turn your work and sew off the edge of the hankie, forming a short sleeve seam. If you look closely at the middle picture, you will see what I mean.

Clip into the curve of the sleeve seam to allow you to press and turn the side/sleeve seam; be careful not to clip into the stitching. Press open the side and sleeve seam. Pressing ALWAYS makes your sewing look better!



Almost done! The dress fits a bit loose. If you like, you can thread silk ribbon from the front to the back at the sides to tighten up the fit, as I have done here. You can leave the neck edge as is, or crochet a bit of trim to sew to the edge, or sew a bit of lace, or make a little collar.

For the back closing, make a thread loop on one side and sew a 1/4 inch button to the other.

Enjoy!

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