

For May block, we're doing "Housedress" from Better Homes & Gardens' 101 Full-Size Quilt Blocks and Borders. We're calling it "Mama's New Dress" in honor of Mother's Day. This block, although more challenging than the others we've done, will be lots of fun embellishing once you get the work behind you. Challenge: "set-in pieces" or Y Seams which are the three background pieces. *Just pretend like you're making a doll's dress for your favorite little girl.*

Fabric Requirement

Background: 16" x 4" piece of Unbleached Muslin (3 background pieces)

Dress: 9"x 14" piece of Aunt Gracie's or other 1930's style print (Sleeve, Bodice & Skirt)

Collar: Color of your choice (3-1/2" x 7")

Cutting

We've set it up similar to a dress pattern. (The arrows on the pattern pieces should be placed on the straight grain of the fabric.) Cut apart the templates and use them as a pattern, pinning them to fabric (which has been folded in half, wrong sides together) and cut out on cutting line. We used our rotary cutter; so, it was nice to have flat pins like the flower pins. This will give you two mirror-image pieces for each section - one for each side of the block. (Only need to cut 1 of Background Piece 6.) *Sides of block will be constructed separately until they are joined in step #5 below.*

Marking

Draw sewing line $\frac{1}{4}$ " from edge on wrong side each piece of the block.

Construction

(IMPORTANT NOTE: When you are sewing units together, only sew to the edge on the outside pieces. On the inside pieces - where the background sections will meet the dress or collar, sew only to the dot where the seam lines intersect and backstitch to secure. This will give you the wiggle room to manipulate the set-in piece.)

- 1) Sew bodice to sleeve on both sections. Press toward sleeve.
- 2) Sew bodice/sleeve unit to skirt on both sections. (Still 2 separate sections.) Press this seam open.
- 3) **First of set-in pieces:** Sewing the background Piece 4 to bottom of sleeve, side of bodice & side of skirt. (Still 2 separate pieces.)
 - a) Begin the process of setting in Piece 4 by sewing the seam line between the bodice & the background, dot to dot. (I found this easier to do by sewing on the muslin side.)
 - b) Sew Background Piece 4 to side of sleeve, matching dots at waist
 - c) Sew Background Piece 4 to underside of skirt, matching dots at underarm point.
 - d) Press seams toward dress. *Note: You will be pivoting fabric at dots so that you get flat seams.)*
- 4) Stitch collar to dress, being sure to sew only to dots in center of dress.
- 5) **Joining the two sections.** Stitch halves together along center front. Press seam open.
- 6) Set in Background Piece 6 (again sewing only to dots.) This will finish the block.

Now the fun begins! Decorate Mama's New Dress with buttons, bows, lace around the collar, rick-rack on the skirt, buttons down the front, buttons on the collar - however you choose. Have fun decorating the little dress you have created.

P.S. IT MAY BE SIMPLER FOR YOU TO FOLLOW PATTERN AS IT APPEARS IN THE BOOK, USING THEIR DIRECTIONS, WHICH ARE ATTACHED.

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