The Basic Tote Tutorial

Make this fun and functional basic tote bag with bright and cheery fabrics. Perfect for school, or running around town; this simple project is perfect for beginners. Happy Sewing!

Supplies:

💚 Main Print & Inside Pocket: ½ Yard

💚 Top Accent Band: ¼ Yard

💚 Lining & Straps: ¾ Yard

💚 Thread

💚 Interfacing (Optional): ¾ Yard

Cut out all your fabric pieces:

Main Fabric – cut 2: 14 x 15 ½"
Top Accent Band – cut 2: 4½ x 15½"
Lining – cut 2: 15½ x 18"
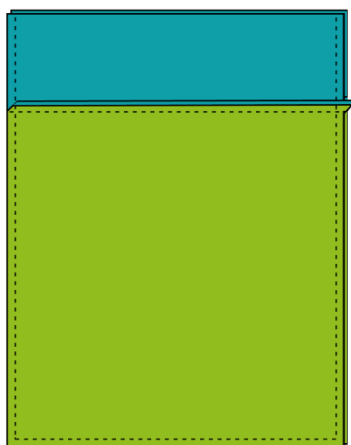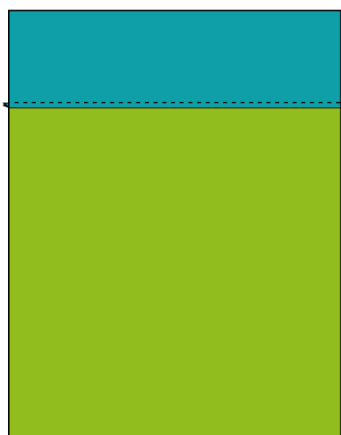Pocket – cut 1: 5½" x 7"
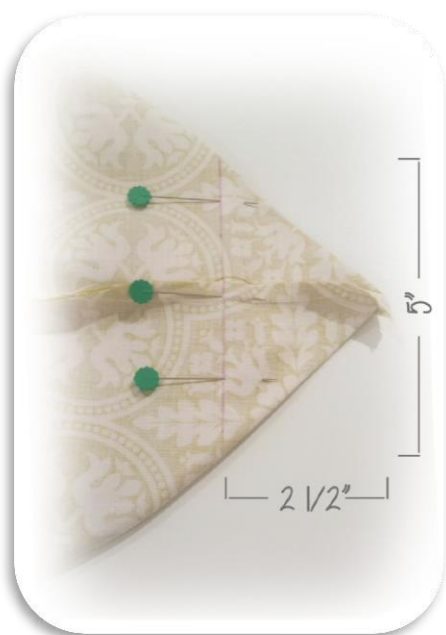Strap – cut 1: 3 x 44" strip

Note: All seam allowances are ¼" unless otherwise noted.

Assembling the Outside:

Sew the Top Accent Band to the main print. Press seams toward the top and topstitch 1/8" above the seam line to make the front of the bag. Repeat to make the matching bag back.

Layer bag front and back; sew together side and bottom edges. Using tip of iron carefully press seam open.

To shape the flat bottom for bag, at one corner match bottom seam line to side seam line, creating a flattened triangle. Measure and mark on seam allowance 2 ½" from point of triangle. Draw a 5" long line across triangle and sew on drawn line. Trim excess fabric. Repeat at remaining bottom corner to make bag body. Turn bag body right side out.

5"

2 1/2"

Straps: With wrong sides together, sew the raw edge at ¼" to make one long tube. Turn right side out and press. Topstitch at 1/8" on both sides of the strap. Cut in half to make 2 straps and trim so both straps are 21 ½".

Pin a strap's raw edges to front edge of bag body; make sure strap is centered with 4" between the ends. Baste strap ends to bag body a scant ¼" from bag's edge. Repeat with the second strap.
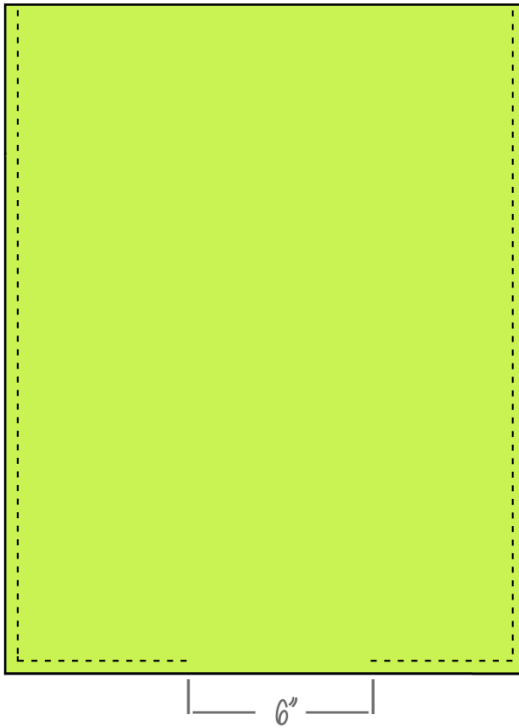
⊢— 4" —⊣

Assembling the Pocket & Lining:

Pocket: On one 5½" side, turn down ¼" and iron, on that same side turn down 1" and iron. Top stitch the top of the pocket at 1/8" seam allowance.

Fold other 3 sides at ¼" and iron.

Position the pocket on the right side of the one of the lining pieces. Center the pocket 3" from the top edge, and 5½" from either side. Pin in place. Edge stitch the pocket to the lining along the side and bottom edges. Leave top edge open.
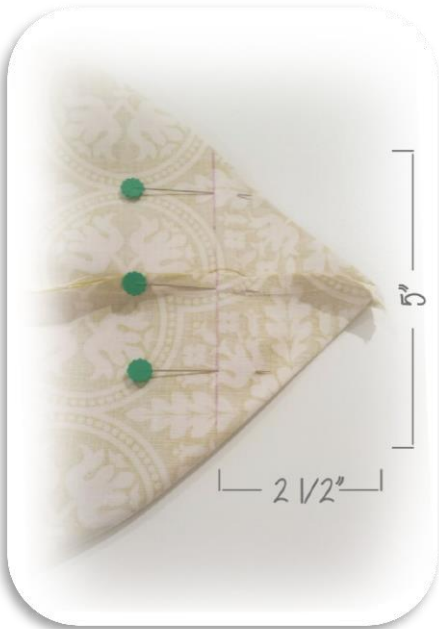
Layer the two lining pieces, right sides together; sew side and bottom edges leaving a 6" opening along the bottom edge for turning bag right side out. Using tip of the iron, carefully press seams open to make bag lining.

Shape a flat bottom for lining the same way you shaped the outside of the bag.

Leave lining wrong side out.

6"

5"

2 1/2"

Assembling the Tote Bag:

Insert bag body inside bag lining with right sides together; straps should be between bag and lining. Align raw edges and seams. Stitch together upper edges of bag body and lining. Back stitching over each strap for reinforcement.

Turn bag and lining right side out through opening in lining; then pull lining out of bag. Hand stich opening of lining closed.

Insert lining back into bag and press upper edge. Topstitch 1/8" from upper edge to complete tote bag.

DONE!

For fun fabrics and more project ideas, be sure to check us out on the web:

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