



18 INCH AND AMERICAN GIRL DROP WAIST DRESS 5 WAYS

1. Preview of Completed Outfit

2. Tools and Resources Required

- 1) Paper pattern (printed from PDF file downloaded to your computer)
- 2) Fabric - woven fabric e.g. cotton, cotton blend, satin
 - Dress – 14 inches (35cm)
 - Collar – 7 x 8 inches (18 x 20cm) plus small amount of interfacing if using fine fabric for the collar
- 3) Matching thread
- 4) Velcro strip American Girl Size 5 inches (13cm) long x ½ inch (1.2cm) wide
Velcro strip Australian Girl Size 5 7/8 inches (15cm) long x ½ inch (1.2cm) wide
- 5) Additional Trimmings (optional) e.g. buttons, ribbon, embellishments
- 6) Paper scissors
- 7) Glue
- 8) Fabric scissors/Rotary Blade
- 9) Marking Pen
- 10) Clippers/snips
- 11) Pins
- 12) Point turner
- 13) Ruler, tape measure or sewing gauge





3. Preparing Paper Pattern

- 1) Check the 'Tip' measurement to ensure the pattern is printed correctly.
- 2) Cut out pattern pieces following the solid line. Taking note of the different cutting lines for the Australian Girl size pattern.
- 3) Skirt (Piece #5) – There are 2 parts to this one piece, so you will need to glue them together placing glue in the overlap section and matching the solid line to the dashed line as marked. Glue Part 2 on top of Part 1.

4. Cutting Out Fabric – the following instruction is for the dress with sleeves and collar, so please omit the pieces not required if making the dress without sleeves or collar.

- 1) Fold fashion fabric in half matching the selvedge. Place the left edge of pattern piece #5 (Skirt) onto the fold of the fabric. Place pattern pieces #2 (Bodice Back), #3 (Sleeve) and #4 (Back Lining) onto the fabric making sure the grain line runs parallel to the selvedge or in the same direction as the threads in the fabric.
- 2) Pin pattern pieces in place and cut around with scissors or rotary blade.
- 3) Open the fashion fabric out to single layer and place pattern piece #1 (Bodice Front) and piece #3 (Front Lining) onto the fabric making sure the grain line runs parallel to the selvedge or in the same direction as the threads in the fabric. Pin in place and cut around with scissors or rotary blade.
- 4) Remove Pins.

Collar

- 5) Double the contrasting fabric over twice so you can cut all four pieces of the collar at the same time. Place pattern piece #4 (collar) onto the fabric making sure the grain line runs in the same direction as the threads in the fabric. Pin in place and cut around with scissors or rotary blade.
- 6) Remove Pins.

*If the fabric is thin, cut 2 pieces of lining in the shape of pattern piece #4 (collar).

5. Sew Shoulder Seams

- 1) Place the Bodice Front piece on the table in front of you with the right side facing up. Take one of the back pieces and with the right side facing down, match shoulder seam of back to shoulder seam of front with side seam and arm holes on the same side. Pin at shoulder. Repeat with the second back piece and the second shoulder of the front piece.



- 2) Using a straight stitch, sew $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) seam securing beginning and end with reverse stitches.
- 3) Repeat Steps 1) and 2) with the lining.

DRESS WITH COLLAR

6. Prepare Collar

- 1) Match two collar pieces with right sides of fabric together and pin. Using a straight stitch, sew $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) seam around the large curved edge of the collar securing beginning and end with reverse stitches.

** If the fabric is thin and you are using lining or an additional piece of fabric, place this on top of the two collar pieces before pinning and then sew $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) seam around the large curved edge of the collar securing beginning and end with reverse stitches.

Tip: When sewing curves use a smaller length straight stitch e.g. 1.8 – 2.0 length.

- 2) Repeat step 1) with the remaining collar pieces.
- 3) Clip notches away from the seam allowance about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) apart or if you have pinking shears, cut the seam allowance away close to the stitching line.
- 4) Turn collar to right side and press.

7. Attach Collar

- 1) Mark the center front of the dress at the neckline by folding the dress in half, matching the shoulder seams. Where the fold is, place a pin or mark with a pen at the neckline.
- 2) With the right side of the bodice facing up, place the first collar piece on top of the bodice on the left-hand side of the neckline matching the raw edges of the collar with the raw edges of the neckline. Also match the right end of the collar with the pin or pen mark showing the center front of the neckline. The other end of the collar should be about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2cm) from the back edge of the bodice. Pin in place
- 3) Place the second collar on top of the bodice on the right-hand side of the neckline matching the raw edges of the collar with the raw edges of the neckline. Match the left end of the collar with the mark at the center front of the neckline – the two collars should be butting against each other. The other end of the collar should be about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2cm) from the back edge of the bodice. Pin in place.
- 4) Using a straight stitch sew a seam less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) around the neckline attaching the collar to the bodice.



** Sewing inside the usual ¼ inch (6mm) seam allowance means that you won't see this stitching when you sew your lining on top.

ALL OPTIONS

8. Attach Facing

- 1) Place the dress down in front of you with the right side facing up. Place the prepared lining on top of your bodice with right sides together matching the raw edges of the neckline and the shoulder seams. Pin at the shoulder seams with one seam allowance facing one way and the other seam allowance facing the opposite direction to reduce bulk at the shoulders. Add extra pins around the neckline where necessary.
- 2) Using a straight stitch sew ¼ inch (6mm) seam around the neckline securing beginning and end with reverse stitches.
- 3) Clip around the curved neckline from raw edge up to the stitching line being careful not to cut the stitching. I usually make a cut every ¼ - ½ inch (6 – 12mm).
- 4) If you are making the dress with sleeves, turn bodice to right side and press. Jump to **step 11 – Hem Facing**.
- 5) If making the dress without sleeves, pin the facing to the dress around each armhole making sure the seam allowance is facing the same direction as it is at the neckline.

Tip: If sewing a dress with collar, make sure the collar is folded up at the shoulder so that you do not catch it when sewing the armholes.

- 6) Using a straight stitch sew ¼ inch (6mm) seam around each armhole securing beginning and end with reverse stitches.
- 7) Clip around the curved armhole from raw edge up to the stitching line being careful not to cut the stitching. I usually make a cut every ¼ - ½ inch (6 – 12mm).
- 8) Turn bodice to right side and press.

SLEEVELESS DRESS

9. Sew Side Seam

- 1) Fold the back of the dress over on top of the front matching side seams. Open out the facing/lining so that the right sides of both the lining and the fashion fabric are together. Match the seam under the armhole and place a pin.



- 2) Starting at the bottom, stitch a ¼ inch (6mm) seam allowance up the side of the dress and facing securing the beginning and end with reverse stitches.
- 3) Repeat steps 1) and 2) with second side seam.
- 4) Overcast the raw edges with a zig zag stitch.
- 5) If you are using a full facing you can simply separate the seam allowances and fold bodice to right side. Press.

10. Hem Facing

**** Note: If you are doing the dress with a full lining, there is no need to do this step.**

- 1) Fold the raw edge of the facing up to the wrong side ¼ inch (6mm).
- 2) Using a straight stitch sew hem in place.
- 3) Fold facing down to the inside of the dress, making sure the seam allowance is folded in the same direction as it is sewn at the hem of the facing.
- 4) With the seam of the facing and the seam of the dress lining up, turn the dress over to the right side and sew a few stitches forwards and backwards in the seam at the bottom of the facing, securing the facing to the dress.

DRESS WITH SLEEVES

11. Hem Facing – Dress with Sleeves

- 1) Fold the raw edge of the facing up to the wrong side ¼ inch (6mm).
- 2) Using a straight stitch sew hem in place on all three parts of the facing

12. Prepare Sleeves

- 1) Fold the raw edge of the sleeve down ½ inch (12mm) to the wrong side and press.
- 2) Fold the raw edge of the sleeve down into the fold you that you have just pressed and press again.
- 3) Repeat with the second sleeve.
- 4) Using a straight stitch sew close to the top fold on both sleeves.



- 5) Sew a row of gathering stitch along the top of each sleeve just inside $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) from the raw edge starting about 1 inch (2.5cm) from the end of the sleeve and finish about 1 inch (2.5cm) before the other end of the sleeve leaving excess threads at beginning and end of sewing.
- 6) Sew a second row of gathering stitch beside the first row and a little more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) in from the raw edge leaving excess threads at beginning and end of sewing. When you attach the sleeve to the bodice you will sew in-between these two rows.

13. Attach Sleeves

- 1) At the armhole, pin the facing to the dress matching the shoulder seams and the two ends. Using a straight stitch sew just inside $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) from the raw edge so that this stitching is not visible when the sleeves are attached.
- 2) Repeat with the second armhole.
- 3) Fold each sleeve in half matching the two short ends. At the top of the sleeve where the fabric has folded place a pin or mark with a pen. This is the center of your sleeve.
- 4) With right sides together, match the center mark at the top of your prepared sleeve with the shoulder seam at the top of the armhole on one side of the dress. Ensure raw edges are even and place a pin. Take one end of the sleeve and match it to the end of the armhole ensuring that all three raw edges are even, place a pin. With raw edges of the sleeve and the armhole even, place another pin at the beginning of the gathering stitches.
- 5) Repeat with the other end of the sleeve.

Tip: place your pin vertically across the stitching line so that you can easily pull the threads to gather the sleeve between these pins.

- 6) Take the two bobbin threads (threads on the wrong side of the fabric) of one end of the sleeve and pull gently to gather the fabric of the sleeve between the pins. Continue pulling until the sleeve is the same length as the armhole and even out the gathers in between the pins. Repeat on the other side.
- 7) Sew a row of straight stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) in from the raw edges to attach the sleeve to the armhole ensuring the gathers are even as you go and secure with reverse stitches at the beginning and end.
- 8) Remove gathering threads.
- 9) Overcast raw edges together with a zigzag stitch.
- 10) Repeat steps 4) to 9) with the second sleeve.



14. Sew Side Seams

Tip: If using a full facing, stitch the facing to the dress down the sides of the front and both back pieces to ensure that the facing is stitched into the side seam.

- 1) Fold the back of the dress over on top of the front with the right sides together and match the seam under the arm. Pushing one seam allowance one way and the other seam allowance the opposite way and with raw edges even, place a pin. Match the hem of the sleeve and the raw edges of the seam and place a pin. Match all four raw edges of the side seam of the dress and facing and place a pin.
- 2) Using a straight stitch, sew $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) seam allowance from the hem of the sleeve down to the bottom of the dress securing beginning and end with reverse stitches.
- 3) Overcast raw edges together with a zigzag stitch securing the beginning with reverse stitches.
- 4) Repeat steps 1) to 3) on the other side.
- 5) Turn dress to right side.

ALL OPTIONS

15. Hem Skirt

- 1) Fold one long raw edge up $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (12mm) to the wrong side and pin. Press.
- 2) Fold raw edge into the fold that you have just pressed and press again.
- 3) Fold in one end of the skirt $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (12mm) to the wrong side and pin. Repeat with the other end of the skirt. Press both ends.
- 4) Fold raw edges into the fold that you have just pressed on one end of the skirt and press again. Repeat with the other end of the skirt.
- 5) Sew a row of straight stitches close to the inside fold starting at one end continuing all the way down, along and up to the other end of the skirt.



GATHERED SKIRT

16. Sew Gathers

- 1) Sew a row of gathering stitch just inside $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) from the raw edge of the top of the skirt leaving excess threads at beginning and end of sewing.
- 2) Sew a second row of gathering stitch beside the first row and a little more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) in from the raw edge leaving excess threads at beginning and end of sewing. When you attach the skirt to the dress you will sew in-between these two rows.

17. Attach Skirt

- 1) Fold the dress in half matching the side seams and where it folds, place a pin or mark with a pen at the raw edge. This is the center front of the dress.
- 2) Fold skirt in half matching the two short ends. Place a pin or mark with a pen at the fold on the raw edge – this is the center of the skirt. Open skirt out and take one end into the center pin to find the $\frac{1}{4}$ mark. Place a pin or mark with a pen at this point. Repeat on the other side. You now have the skirt marked into 4 even sections.
- 3) Lay the dress down in front of you with the right side facing up and the raw edge to the top. Place the skirt on top of the dress with right side facing down, matching the raw edges and the two center pins or marks. Pin the two pieces together here.

Tip: place your pin vertically across the stitching line so that you can easily pull the threads to gather the sleeve between these pins.

- 4) Now working out towards the end, match the quarter pin of the skirt with the side seam of the dress and pin.
- 5) Take the end of the skirt and place it $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) in from the end of the dress and matching raw edges. Pin in place.
- 6) Repeat steps 4) and 5) attaching the other end of the skirt to the other side of the dress.
- 7) Working from one end of the skirt, take the two bobbin threads (threads on the wrong side of the fabric) and pull gently to gather the fabric of the skirt between the pins. Continue pulling until the skirt is the same length as the dress and even out the gathers in between the pins. Place another pin in between the existing pins.
- 8) Repeat step 7) on the other end of the skirt.



- 9) Using a straight stitch sew $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) seam to attach the skirt to the dress securing beginning and end with reverse stitches. You will be sewing in between the two rows of gathering stitches. Remove gathering threads
- 10) Overcast raw edges of seam allowance with a zigzag stitch.
- 11) Turn dress to right side.
- 12) With the seam allowance pushed up towards the dress, sew a row of top stitch about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3mm) up from the seam securing beginning and end with reverse stitches. This will secure the seam allowance to the dress.

Tip: If you wish to add a ribbon at the top of the skirt, attach it at this point.

PLEATED SKIRT

18. Mark Skirt for Pleats

- 1) Fold the skirt in half matching the two short ends. At the fold, place a pin at both the top and bottom i.e. at the raw edge and at the hem. This is the center of the skirt.
- 2) Take your paper pattern piece #5 (Skirt) and place it onto the skirt matching the 'place on fold' end with the pins marking the center. Move the pattern down so that you can see $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) of the fabric at the top.
- 3) Transfer the pleat marks from the pattern onto the fabric along the top using an erasable pen or pins.
- 4) Slide the pattern up so that you can see $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) of the fabric at the hem.
- 5) Transfer the pleat marks from the pattern onto the fabric along the bottom using an erasable pen or pins.
- 6) Flip your skirt upside-down and repeat steps 2) to 5).
- 7) Remove center pins.

19. Pleat Skirt

- 1) Turn your skirt vertical with the raw edge of the skirt to your right.
- 2) Starting at the bottom fold the fabric at the first mark and take it up to meet the second mark. Place a pin at the raw edge and the hem.



- 3) Go up to the next mark, fold the fabric and bring it down to meet the folded edge of the first pleat. Place a pin at the raw edge and the hem.
- 4) Go up to the next mark and repeat steps 2) and 3) until you have completed all the box pleats.
- 5) Secure your pleats along the top raw edge by sewing a row of straight stitches just inside $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm).

Tip: You may like to sew a row of basting stitches along the hem to hold the pleats in place at the bottom to make it easier when pressing the pleats with the iron. Remove the basting stitch when the dress is complete.

20. Press Pleats

- 1) Carefully press all your pleats in place.

21. Attach Pleated Skirt

- 1) To ensure the facing and the dress are kept together, stitch the facing to the back of the dress using a straight stitch.

Tip: If you are using a full facing you may like to sew the facing to the dress down the back, along the bottom and back up the other back piece. Be sure to sew inside the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) seam allowance along the bottom so you don't have to remove the stitches.

- 2) Fold the dress in half matching the side seams and where it folds, place a pin or mark with a pen at the raw edge. This is the center front of the dress.
- 3) Lay the dress down in front of you with the right side facing up and the raw edge to the top. Place the skirt on top of the dress with right side facing down, matching the raw edges and the two center marks. Join the two pieces together here.
- 4) On one side, match the raw edges of the skirt and the dress at the side seam and secure with a pin.
- 5) With the raw edges of the skirt and the dress together, the end of the skirt should be $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (6 - 9mm) from the end of the dress. Secure with a pin.
- 6) Repeat on the other side.
- 7) Using a straight stitch sew $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) seam to attach the skirt to the dress securing beginning and end with reverse stitches.
- 8) Overcast raw edges of seam allowance with a zigzag stitch.



9) Turn dress to right side.

10) With the seam allowance pushed towards the dress, sew a row of top stitch about 1/8 inch (3mm) up from the seam securing beginning and end with reverse stitches. This will secure the seam allowance to the dress.

Tip: If you wish to add a ribbon at the top of the skirt, attach it at this point.

ALL OPTIONS

22. Attach Velcro

- 1) With the back of the dress facing you, turn the raw edge of the left back piece to the right side of the fabric i.e. you will see the raw edge on the outside of the dress but don't worry as you will cover this with the Velcro strip. Pin and press.
- 2) With the back of the dress facing you, turn the raw edge of the right back piece to the wrong side of the fabric i.e. you have turned it to the inside of the dress. Pin and press.
- 3) Place the hook side of the Velcro strip on top of the back piece that is on the left-hand side. Ensure the Velcro is close to the neckline, close to the edge of the dress back and goes all the way to the top of the skirt. It will be covering the raw edge of the back of the dress that you pressed in step 1). Stitch in place with a straight stitch securing beginning and end with reverse stitches.
- 4) Place the loop side of the Velcro strip on wrong side of the other back piece. Ensure that the Velcro is close to the neckline, close to the edge of the back of the dress and goes all the way to the top of the skirt. It will be covering the raw edge of the back of the dress that you pressed in step 2). Stitch in place with a straight stitch securing beginning and end with reverse stitches.

23. Congratulations YOU did it!

Celebrate! YOU made another great outfit. Well done!