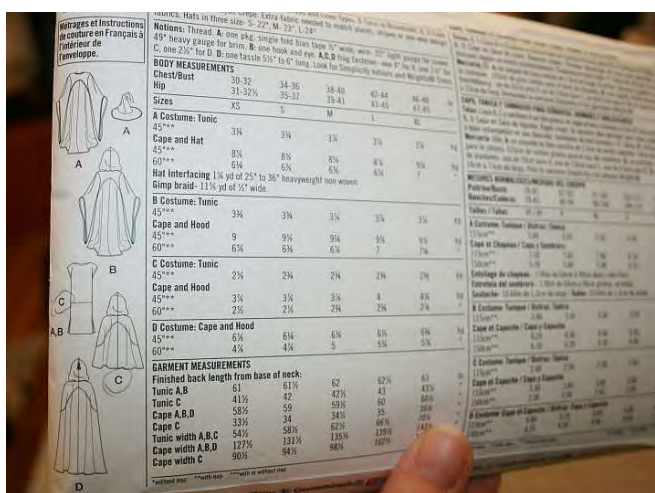




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## “Customizing a Costume from Standard Industry Pattern”

**Description:** This document was designed to show a Standard Industry Pattern and easy alterations to personalize for the wearer. Full color pictures are included of several techniques and ideas to inspire creativity, and add comfort.



*Original Pattern Front and Back showing various items that can be sewn*

Materials needed:

**Pattern of your choice— The fabric required to complete the basic components of the pattern**

**Additional fabrics for alterations as needed**

**Matching Thread**

**Stabilizer if using an embroidery machine**

**Various notions like scissors, pins, marking pen, measuring tape**

**Purchased accessories for the desired finished look**



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The Original pattern utilized for this costume was Simplicity 1582. There are several choices in the pattern that include a Tunic, Cape with hood and Wizard's Hat. The cape and tunic can be made in different lengths. It is a very easy pattern to complete and will give an excellent starting point for alteration. The tunic when finished has a boat neck and no sleeves, so the wearer will most likely need a shirt underneath. On our version, long blousy sleeves were added as well as elastic sleeve holders to allow the wearer the ability to keep them pushed up and away from the wrists. The tunic pattern also does not include the collar. We added that element with the embroidered crest and a strategically placed dart. Belt loops were added into the side seams to accommodate a purchased canvas belt. The Boot Covers or Spats were not part of the pattern but a companion document can be downloaded for techniques. Finally the cape hood was altered slightly due to the size causing vision problems when worn and the canvas crossover bag was purchased. Several pictures of the alteration techniques used on the original pattern will be shown.



This view shows that the Tunic with the added sleeves can be worn without a shirt underneath. The customization is helpful for varying weather temperatures that might dictate the cape would be an unwelcome layer and to retain the integrity of the costume.



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We completed the tunic and when the wearer tried it on we realized that the boat neck was a little wide for our desired finished look. There are no sleeves in the pattern and the armholes were quite generous. This might be the look intended but for our purposes, we wanted a more refined look.



Another view of the finished armhole. We found the completed tunic to be very generous in size all over. If layering clothes underneath, you should have plenty of room



The completed tunic is basically a rectangle and easy to sew. We added a small loop to each side to accommodate a belt which would allow a cinched look. This is a very easy alteration and can be done quickly when the side seams are being finished. Two small tubes of fabric placed at the natural waist will help everything stay up as the wearer is moving about their day.





We used some scrap cotton batiste to make the set of sleeves. From the finished armhole we measured how wide our folded piece needed to be. We also measured the wearer's arm length for our other cut. Our fabric was about 22 inches by 28 inches. We did not worry about cutting the wrist area narrow because we knew it would be gathered later so the sleeves would be blousy. Two of these were cut.



Another view of our layout. Note this is being done after the original tunic armholes have been completed. For your own purposes you could do this before that stage in the pattern.



We placed right sides together and sewed a seam down one long side to make a tube.



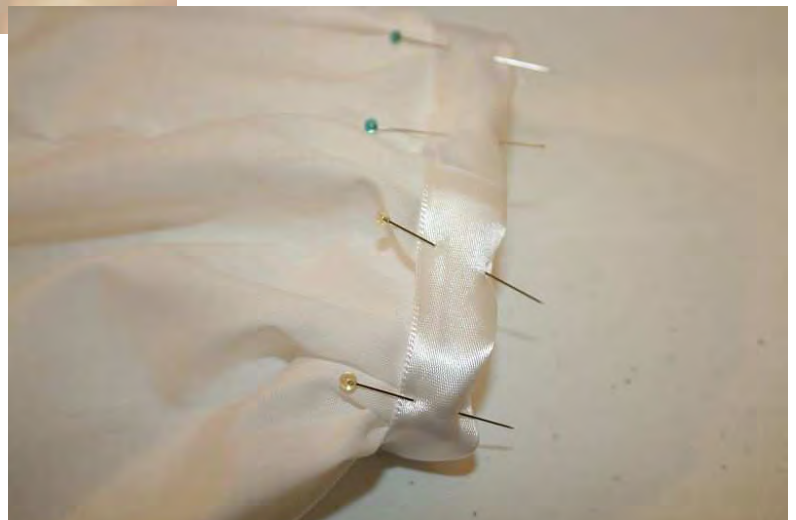
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We then used a Serger and adjusted the differential feed so that it would gather one end of the tube. You can also do this by sewing two lines of basting or long stitches and pulling your bobbin threads to gather to your desired size. Double check the fit of your wearer hands to ensure they will move in and out of the gathered wrist comfortably before moving to the next step.



The sleeves need to be bound with something to lock in your gathers so we chose satin ribbon to be pinned and sewn along the edges. Other types of bias binding could be used also if you would like a different finished edge. Or turning the ends to make a hem might be better for your look.



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The sleeves will be ready to set into the armholes once you get to this point.



We made sure our sleeves and our tunic were materials right sides together. Note the tunic is inside out at this point so you can see where your seam is going. We also ironed the ends of the sleeve under that would adjoin the armhole so an enclosed hem would be formed when stitched. This shows the sleeve being put into the armhole in preparation to sew. If this is confusing the best tip is to pin all of your edges really well and turn it right side out very carefully before you sew to make sure everything looks the way you want it to. Then turn it inside out again and sew your seams.



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Now the Tunic looks dressier. The seam to attach is just a straight one. If you wanted to stop now, it could be worn just like this. This method looks good even with the finished armhole on the tunic because the sleeve material is a lighter weight that does not add very much bulk and if you are careful you can sew over the original armhole seams.

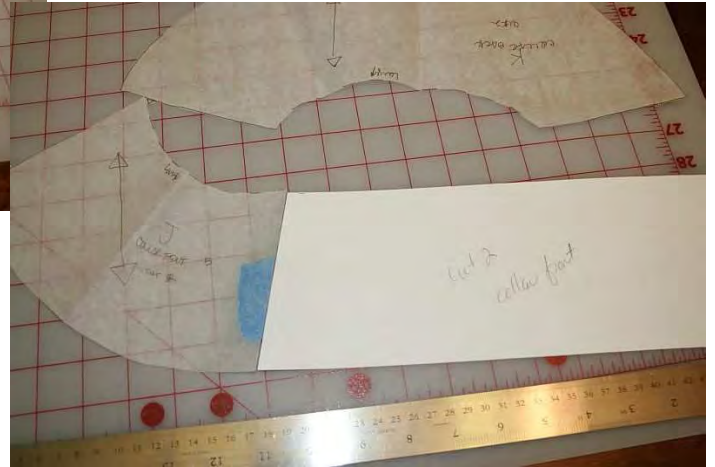


On our tunic we wanted to add some sort of crest or emblem. This could be done on the front of the tunic with paint or embroidery. A vest could be sewn and that would look very nice since the Tunic is plain. We decided to put a collar on the top of ours that would cover the boat neck since it is very wide. We used some more batiste scraps to make the collar. This choice also will not limit the costume if the wearer wanted to use it for other events. The collar could be easily removed in the future.



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Our collar is basically two parts. There is a curve that will go around the back of the neck and two longer parts on either side. We had a collar pattern from another project that was round so we added some length to either side with a piece of paper cut to the width and length desired.

We taped the longer pieces together on the pattern as needed to cut.



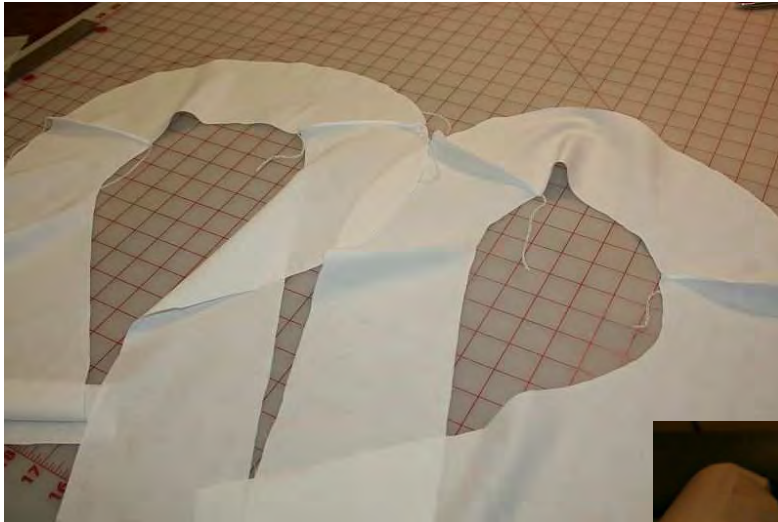
We cut two of these. One for the front of the collar and one for the back. The pieces were sewn together right sides together at the short seams so we could decide where the embroidery emblem needed to go.



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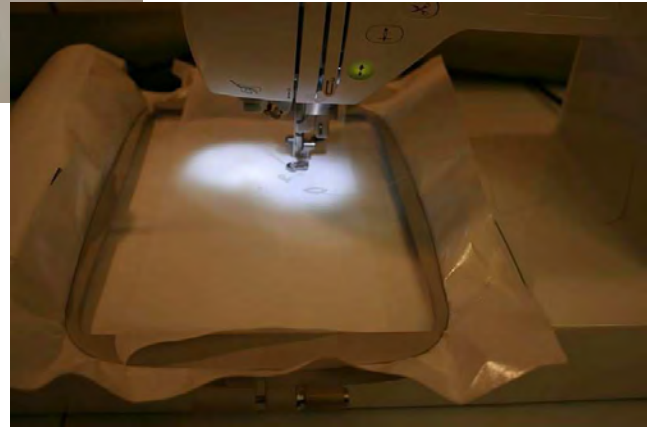
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Here we have our front and back ready to go.

Next we machine embroidered a crest on the area that would become the front of the collar.



After removing the stabilizer we sewed the collar pieces right sides together leaving a small hole for turning. We closed the hole with a whip stitch and then ironed it really well. At this point we also realized that we could do a small dart on the front and back of the tunic. This would give the tunic a little more interest and accommodate the collar better. You can see the small clip holding the dart in place on the front as we fit the collar on the dress form. The same amount was put into a dart in the back at the same area so it would be even.



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The front and back darts were a matter of turning the tunic inside out and sewing a diagonal seam to make a triangle and then clipping away the excess fabric.



The boat neck collar went from plain to having a bit of interest as well as being a better fit on the front and back. Just double check the head clearance before you make your cuts to ensure the wearer can pull it on and off with ease. This will be the same when adding the collar. All adjustments at this point need to be altered on the person who will be wearing it or a dress form that has their measurements. It takes a little time but is worth the fit.



Our collar was first tied in a way to emphasize the embroidery and then attached by a few whip stitches to the tunic collar. We attached it to the tunic so that the wearer could get dressed quickly without having to retie the collar each time.



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We used the shoulder seams of the tunic and the collar for good placement.

The rear dart placement assisted in finding the middle point for attachment. Only a few points were used to place the collar to “cover” the neckline. This will allow more comfort for the wearer because the neckline is a boat neck and the collar is round. Our intention was to give the illusion of a shirt so the tunic is cooler to wear but has maximum coverage. Our wearer will be in an outdoor setting at a LARP or Live Action Role Playing Event so mobility is also very important. Removing the collar in the future will be easier if there are only a few attaching points.



A very nice altered tunic!



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Two long pieces of tubing were sewn from scraps, turned and then elastic inserted to form a sort of garter belt for each sleeve. The sleeves are very large and these bands will keep the volume of fabric under control. They were sized for the wearer and can be pushed up or down the arm without taking away from the sleeve drape.



We used a canvas material to sew the cape. The best feature of the original pattern is a front and back yoke that makes the cape stand out at the shoulders. It gives the impression of a wider stance and allows the cape to have more swing. It is a very easy pattern and sews up quickly. The only issue we had was that the hood is very generous. This may not be an issue for your purposes but our wearer will be in mock battles so we had to do some adjusting in order for him to be able to have good vision while moving about.



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One of the things we did was box the tip of the hood. This was accomplished by turning it inside out and sewing a Serged seam along the end to cut the point off. The original pattern hood will result in a point and the wearer stated that he preferred this look and as an option it was easily changed.



Along with boxing the tip, we also flipped the very edge of the cape back on itself and sewed a small tack seam along the top with a whip stitch by hand. As you can see the cuff is very large. This is the amount of excess fabric you may have on your hood. This costume might be used for other events and characters so we did not want to remove fabric. This cuff will ensure the wearer can see better in his surroundings without limiting future wear.



A standard industry pattern can be altered with a few items to make it personalized. The addition of a purchased crossover bag and belt will help complete the look. In this view you can see boot covers or spats were also sewn. Look for our companion download to see that process.

*Enjoy!*



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