

Wren ★ Feathers

Summer Sew-Along 2024: Week 2



Dress pictured on Petitcollin Lisa

Week 2: Updating the basic dress for the 1930s

What tips this dress more into the 30s, other than the cute feedsack print, is the skirt having so little fullness. Later in the 30s and through the 40s, fullness was concentrated at the shoulders with large, puffed sleeves and shoulder pads for women. This tapered into a very small waist, and skirts were shorter and not as full as they would be later. There were a few patterns for Shirley Temple dolls that had this silhouette, as well as of course, versions for actual kids.

During the Depression, when many moms were making their little girls' dresses from feedsacks, it was important to be able to cut the skirt with as little fabric as possible. Cutting skirts and dresses to be fitted, but on the bias was popular even for movie stars' costumes.

Shaping the skirt like this gives it a nice drape at human scale, and fullness on the bottom even at doll scale, but doesn't use nearly as much fabric as a gathered rectangular skirt would. If you are increasing for a larger doll, this skirt is a great choice to save fabric. Even for a slim 18" doll you could probably still cut it out of a fat quarter! Note that the purple version has a seam down the center, which was done so I could use the fabric I had. The pattern piece is meant to be cut on the fold if you can.

Let's talk darts:

If the 1920s were a cylinder shape, the 1930s were more of an hourglass, and that would persist more or less until the A-line craze of the 1960s. In keeping with the "new" 30s hourglass silhouette, I added darts to the basic bodice this week in case you want them...but do you?

Sometimes darts are needed, and sometimes they're a design feature. Vintage Barbie, for example, needs darts to have anything fit her torso without looking really baggy.

For child dolls with a more rounded/apple shape like Lisa, Animators, AGs, etc. there's really no reason to put waist darts because the measurement difference between the bust and waist is not an issue. For dolls with a really defined waist, like Finouche or Götz, adding darts will fit the bodice more tightly to the torso, which you might want. That said, if you examine vintage patterns, it was often the case that waist darts were used on little girls' dresses and dress patterns for dolls with toddler-type bodies like the first Shirley Temple dolls.

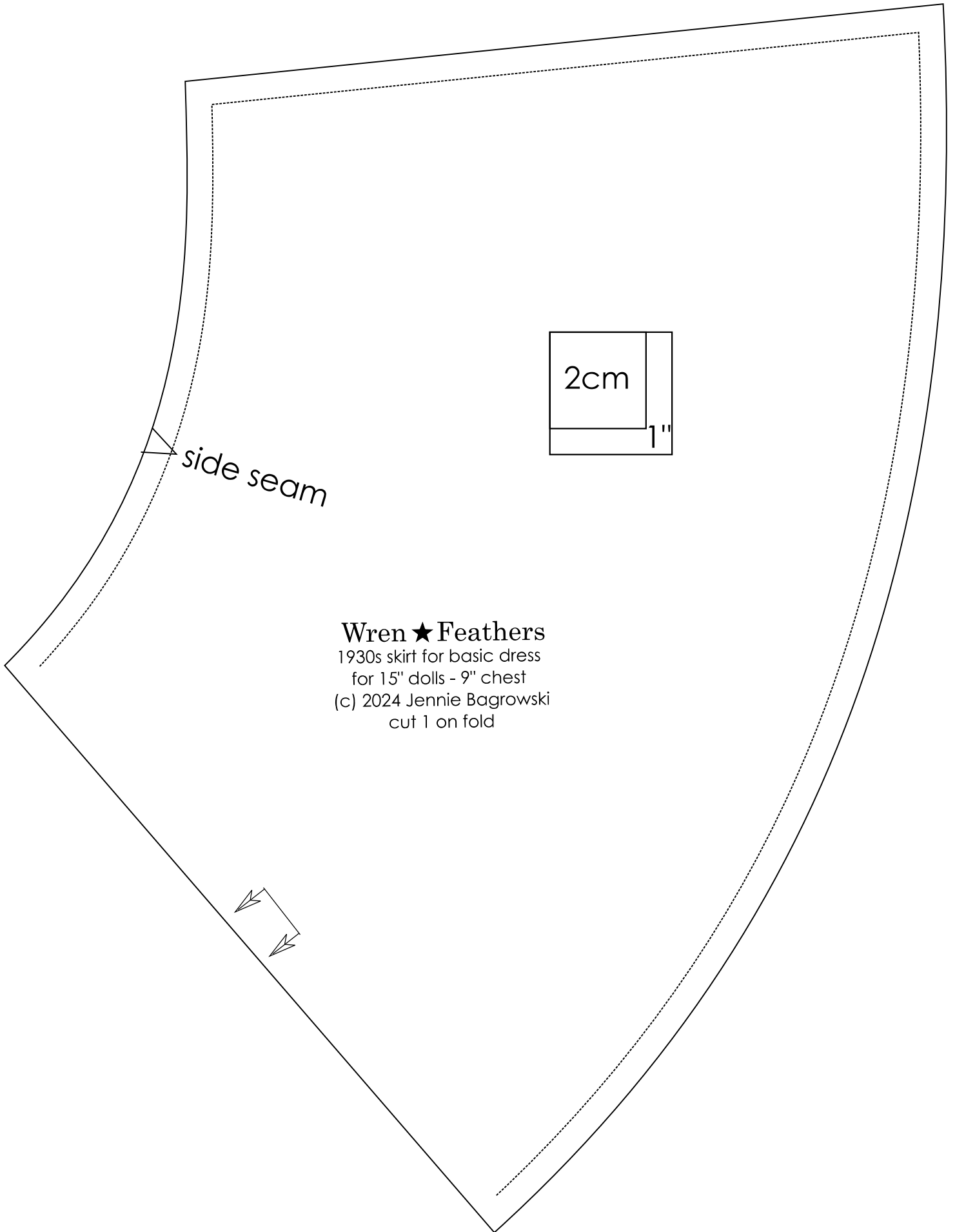
If you need to add "design feature" darts for a doll that doesn't really need them, it's a slightly different process than if you need to take in fullness at the waist for a doll that does need it. I'm telling you this **in case you are resizing or using for a different doll – there's a chance this bodice won't fit exactly the same as you see on my Lisa unless the dolls are a similar shape.** Make a muslin first, and if it doesn't work, that's OK! You can still use the basic bodice from week 1 with all of the sleeves/collars/skirts in the sew-along and you'll save the time of marking and sewing all those darts.

This will fit dolls like AGAT, Sasha, Disney Animators, etc. **There is no way to make this fit 18" OG/AG/Maplelea/etc. with just a percentage increase on a copier.** Enlarging to their chest size would mean re-drafting the neckline, collar, armholes, and sleeves.

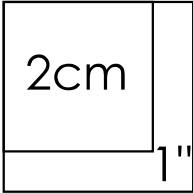
Note that I'm not providing any sewing or resizing instructions in this week's free pattern. The whole collection will be available in my etsy shop in the next couple of weeks with well-illustrated instructions for sewing all of the basic dresses, more sizes, and maybe some bonus pattern pieces as well!

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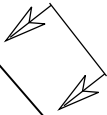
Quarter inch seams allowed unless otherwise specified.



side seam



Wren ★ Feathers
1930s skirt for basic dress
for 15" dolls - 9" chest
(c) 2024 Jennie Bagrowski
cut 1 on fold



Sleeve band
adjust width to fit your doll's arm

