

Project: Sew Simple Purse

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Try an easy purse project. Sew a trendy bag using fabric from the Sunshine & Shadow collection by Jane Sassaman for FreeSpirit (freespiritfabric.com) and handles by Purse n-alize-it!, which are available at Jo-Ann Stores (joann.com).

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Materials

- $\frac{2}{3}$ yard black-and-white print (bag body)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ yard black polka dot (bag lining)
- 2— $8\frac{1}{8}$ ×4" bag handles

Finished bag: 20×9" without handles

Quantities are for 44/45"-wide, 100% cotton fabrics.

Measurements include $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowances. Sew with right sides together unless otherwise stated.

Cut Fabrics

Cut pieces in the following order.

From black-and-white print, cut:

- 1—21" square

From black polka dot, cut:

- 1—21" square

Assemble Bag Body

- 1.** Fold black-and-white print 21" square in half with right side inside to make a $21 \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle.
- 2.** Referring to the red broken lines on **Diagram 1**, sew 4" of each pair of side edges together to make bag body.
- 3.** Clip seam allowances at sewn corners (**Diagram 2**, left-hand side). Press side seams open; press under seam allowances of unsewn portions of side edges (**Diagram 2**, right-hand side). Turn bag body right side out.

Assemble Bag Lining

Using black polka dot 21" square, repeat Assemble Bag Body steps to make bag lining, but do not turn lining right side out.

Assemble Bag

- 1.** Insert bag lining into bag body with wrong sides together. Align the side seams, the folded side edges, and the raw top edges; pin.
- 2.** Referring to **Diagram 3**, topstitch a bag body folded side edge to a bag lining folded side edge, stitching $\frac{1}{4}$ " from folds. Repeat with remaining folded side edges.
- 3.** Zigzag or serge the raw top edge of bag body to raw top edge of bag lining (**Diagram 4**). Repeat with remaining raw top edges to make bag.

Finish Bag

- 1.** Turn bag wrong side out. Fold $1\frac{5}{8}$ " of a bag top edge over lower bar of handle toward lining (**Diagram 5**), allowing enough ease for handle to move freely and for the gathers to be distributed across bar. Hand-baste bag edge to lining. Attach zipper foot to your sewing machine. (The zipper foot enables you to sew close to handle.) Stitch through all layers, $\frac{1}{4}$ " from bag edge, moving gathers along handle as you sew (see Editor's Tip, *right*). If desired, omit machine stitching and hand-stitch bag edge to lining.
- 2.** Repeat Step 1 with remaining handle and remaining bag edge to complete bag.

Editor's Tip

Leave the machine needle in down position and raise the zipper foot when adjusting gathers around lower bar of handle to make a flat area for sewing. Then lower the zipper foot and resume stitching until gathers need further adjustment. Stitch slowly and carefully, sewing only about 1" at a time before adjusting gathers.

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