

CLOAKING DEVICES.

Basic Cloak

I have made many, many cloaks, and each time I have done the process differently, with different materials. The process described here is the most efficient one I've tried. In this first of two articles, I concentrate on the basics of constructing a cloak. In the second, I'll deal with the quilted embellishment, the hood and pockets. The pattern I drafted may differ from those made by many other fan costumers, in that the body or skirt of the cloak is flared. This is designed to give the cloak more swing at the hem, and less bulk at the top. It makes a great "Darth Vader" swing when you walk! I also choose to use a lighter, pants-weight fabric to allow more movement, and to keep the cloak from being too hot or heavy, so that it may be worn indoors. So here goes...

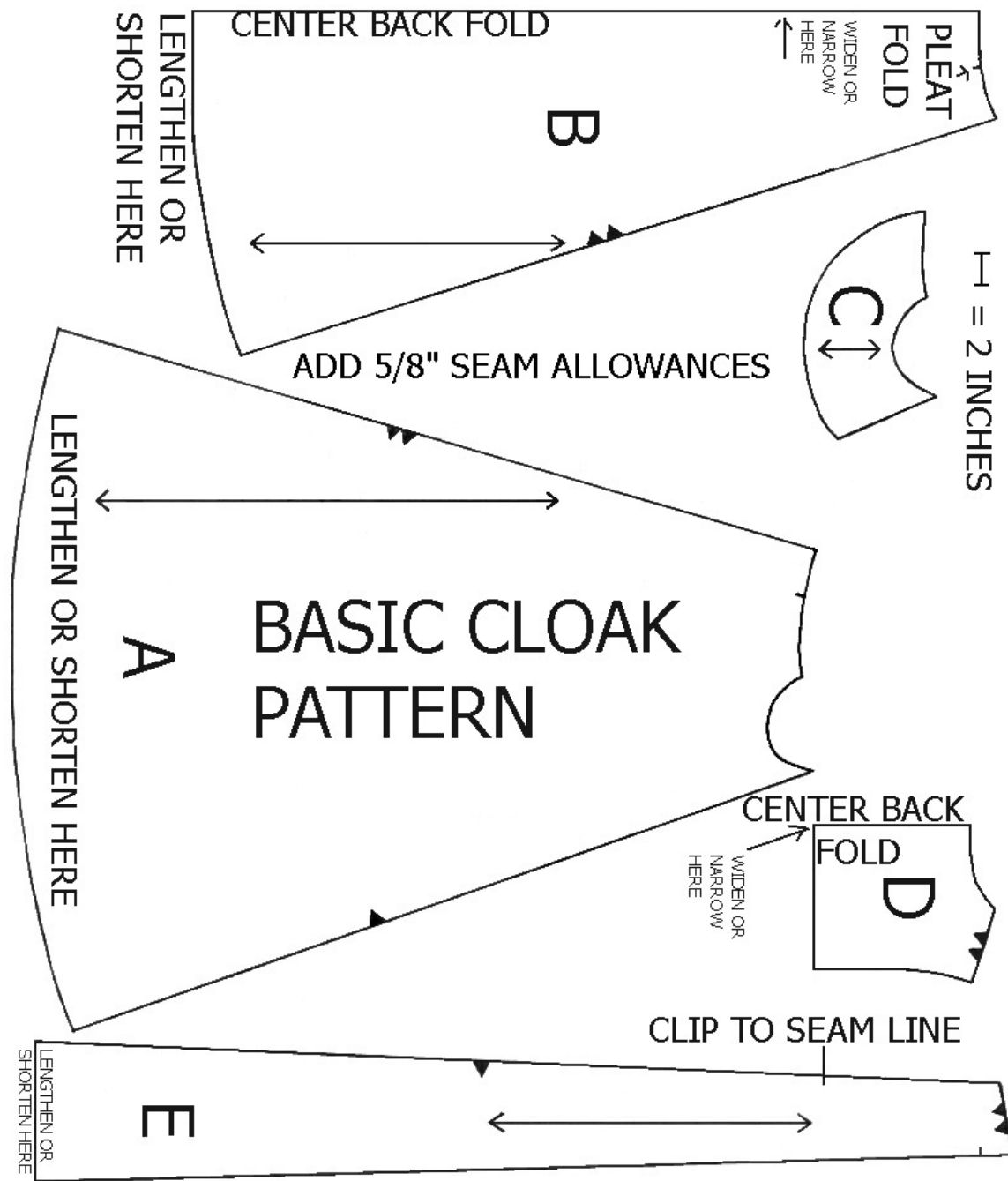
MATERIALS

FABRICS— I usually need at least 6 yards of 60-inch wide fabric to make a single fabric cloak. Pants weight twill, lightweight denim, leather or suede look fabrics (knits may be used if they don't stretch too much) work for the body of the cloak. Brocades, metallics, suede looks, and soft vinyls may be used in the contrasting quilted areas. I prefer to use a heavy pre-quilted lining material to add bulk for quilting. The pre-quilting adds stability and becomes its own facing.

NOTIONS— decorative snaps (4 large, 4 medium, 3 small, for optional pockets and hood), matching thread, contrasting thread for quilting and topstitching, double needle for topstitching (optional) 1/4yd iron on interfacing for pockets.

CUTTING THE FABRIC— Unless noted, all pieces are to be cut from the body fabric.

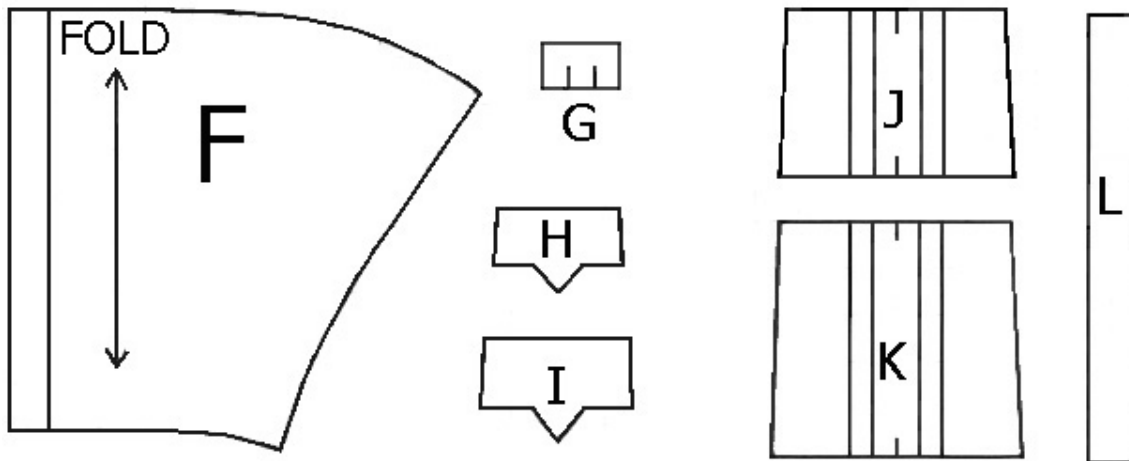
- A SKIRT SIDE—Cut 2
- B SKIRT BACK—Cut 1 on center back fold.
- C ARMHOLE OUTER FACING—Cut 2 of body fabric, or contrast fabric, and cut 2 of quilted lining fabric.
- D BACK YOKE—Cut 1 on center back fold of body fabric or contrast fabric, and cut 1 on center back fold of quilted lining fabric
- E FRONT PANELS—Cut 2 of body fabric or contrast fabric, and cut 2 of quilted lining fabric.



The following pieces are optional, and used for the battle cloak style:

- F HOOD—Cut 1 on fold
- G HOOD SNAP TABS—Cut 1 on fold of body fabric, and 1/2 at fold of interfacing.
- H, I POCKET FLAPS—Cut 4 of each of body fabric, and 2 each of interfacing.
- J, K POCKETS—Cut 2 of each
- L POCKET INTERFACING STRIP—Cut one the length of all the pockets.

OPTIONAL CLOAK PIECES



H = 2 INCHES ADD 5/8" SEAM ALLOWANCES

ASSEMBLING THE YOKE AND FRONT PANELS

- 1) Clip the outer edge of the front panels where the armholes will attach.
- 2) Sew the yoke to the two front panels at the shoulder seam. Press open the seam allowance. Repeat with the quilted lining pieces, but zigzag the finished shoulder seam open, and trim off the excess seam allowance.
- 3) Pin the right sides of the yoke/panel pieces together, and sew the sides facing the neck, the panel bottoms and the outer armhole area of the yoke and the panels to the clipped mark. This leaves the yoke bottom and the outer edge of the front panel below the clipped mark open.
- 4) Turn the yoke/panel piece right side out and topstitch 1/8" from the finished edges. Serge or zigzag the open areas shut, trimming as little seam allowance as possible.
- 5) This is the point at which to mark and quilt these parts. You might even want to add the pockets and hood at this point. It is much easier to do it now, before you have to wrestle with the large bulk of the fabric. I'll discuss the quilting process itself and illustrate quilting designs in the next article.

ASSEMBLING THE ARMHOLE OUTER FACING

Since the armhole facing is a decorative element on the cloak, it is sewn to the outside of the cloak to finish the armhole. This is reverse to a normal open, faced armhole, so pay careful attention to directions:

- 1) Using a long stitch, sew along the edge of the larger curve on the armhole facing (C).

- 2) Place the outside of the facing to the inside of the armhole, and the quilted lining piece C on top of the facing, pin, then stitch down the armhole along the seam allowance.
- 3) Clip and trim away the excess, then turn the facings to the outside of the skirt side and topstitch 1/8" from the finished edge of the armhole.
- 4) Trim away the seam allowance on the outer curve of the quilted lining piece C. Using the gathering stitch, ease the outer facing piece C around the quilted lining to capture it, pin it down to the skirt side, and topstitch it in place.
- 5) This is the point when you mark and quilt the armhole facing. I'll deal with the quilting and the pattern next time.
- 6) Serge or zigzag the quilted areas shut at the raw edges, trimming as little as possible.

ASSEMBLING THE CLOAK

- 1) Pin the skirt sides to the skirt back and serge together, or French seam (This means to sew the seam twice, once insides to insides with a 1/4" seam, then outsides to outsides with a 3/8" seam to finish the edge).
- 2) Use the two previous seams as the corners of a big box pleat. If all the proportions are correct, the front edges of the box pleat will meet the quilted armhole facing, and the resulting edge will be the same length as the bottom of the quilted yoke. Do any adjustments necessary, pin the pleat down and finish the edge by serging or zigzagging the raw edge.
- 3) Pin the back of the skirt to the yoke and stitch together. Fold both seam allowances up and topstitch on the quilted part 1/8" from the seam, extending the topstitching up onto the armhole edge of the yoke to capture the seam allowance there.
- 4) Finish the raw edges on the front of the skirt with serging or zigzag. Be careful not to stretch the fabric—it is on the bias there. At this point, you may want to run an easing stitch down the front edges of the skirt. Starting at the top of the skirt, pin it to the front panel so the armhole meets the panel at the clipped mark. Because of the bias in the skirt, use lots of pins, and ease as necessary. The hem allowance of the skirt should extend below the bottom finished edge of the front panels. Starting at the top of each seam, sew down to the hem. Fold the seam allowances toward the front panels and topstitch on the panels 1/8" from the seam line.
- 5) Put on the cloak and check the skirt hem for even length. Adjust as necessary, and then stitch a rolled hem using the 5/8" hem allowance.

There! The basic cloak is done! The bells and whistles will be added next time.