

Project: Handmade Backpack

INSPIRED BY ITTY, BITTY BOOK BAGS FROM DESIGNER LAURA JAQUINTO  
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Make a great back-to-school gift: Sew a handmade tote bag using fun fabrics and a bit of rope. Stitch a bunch of these small backpacks to complement a special outfit or to celebrate school colors. Fabrics are from The Big E Group for Michael Miller Fabrics ([michaelmillerfabrics.com](http://michaelmillerfabrics.com)).

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## Materials

- $\frac{5}{8}$  yard red print (bag pockets, bag lining, side patches)
- $\frac{5}{8}$  yard teal print (outer bag, lining pocket)
- 3 yards  $\frac{3}{8}$ "-diameter cotton rope

Finished bag: 18x15 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

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

Measurements include  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowances. Sew with right sides together unless otherwise stated.

## Cut Fabrics

Cut pieces in the following order.

## From red print, cut:

- 1—28 $\frac{1}{2}$ x18 $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle
- 1—10 $\frac{1}{2}$ x9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle
- 2—2" squares

## From teal print, cut:

- 2—17 $\frac{1}{2}$ x18 $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangles
- 1—5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle

## Assemble and Add Pockets

1. Fold red print 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ x9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle in half crosswise to make a 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " rectangle. Sew together raw edges, leaving a 3" opening along one edge for turning (**Diagram 1**).
2. Turn right side out through opening. Press flat and slip-stitch opening closed to make a pocket. Fold pocket in half crosswise to find center; press and unfold.
3. Fold one teal print 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ x18 $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle in half lengthwise to find center; press and unfold. Position pocket center on centerline on right side of teal print rectangle 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " from bottom edge; pin. Topstitch pocket side and bottom edges and centerline to make bag front

with two pockets (**Diagram 2**). Reinforce upper pocket corners by stitching as shown in white.

4. Fold teal print 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle in half crosswise to make a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x6 $\frac{1}{4}$ " rectangle. Sew together raw edges, leaving a 3" opening in one edge for turning (**Diagram 3**).
5. Turn right side out through opening. Press flat and slip-stitch opening closed to make a pocket. Fold pocket in half lengthwise to find center; press.
6. Fold red print 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ x18 $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle in half lengthwise to find center; press. Position pocket center on centerline on right side of red print rectangle 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " from top edge; pin. Topstitch side and bottom edges of pocket to make lining unit with a pocket (**Diagram 4**).

## Assemble Outer Bag

1. Place bag front wrong side up on flat surface. Measure 5" from top edge on both sides; make  $\frac{1}{4}$ " clips (**Diagram 5**). From  $\frac{1}{4}$ " clips to top edge, fold edges to wrong side; topstitch. Fold top edge  $\frac{1}{4}$ " to wrong side; press (**Diagram 6**).
2. Fold top edge of bag front 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to wrong side and topstitch  $\frac{1}{8}$ " from pressed edge to make bag front with casing (**Diagram 7**).
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 with remaining teal print 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ x18 $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangle to make bag back with casing.
4. Layer bag front and bag back; sew together bottom edges to make bag unit (**Diagram 8**). Turn right side out.

5. Cut rope in half and thread one section. Referring to black arrows on **Diagram 9**, thread one section through bag unit casings. Even ends and knot rope if desired (see photo, *page 1*). Pin and baste both ends of cord just above seam of bag unit (**Diagram 9**). Thread remaining rope section through casings in opposite direction (**Diagram 9** white arrows). Turn bag unit right sides together.
6. Beginning at clips, sew bag unit side edges together, making certain rope is tucked inside bag so it is not caught in stitching (**Diagram 10**). Turn right side out; press.
7. Turn edges of a red print 2" square under  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Center square over top of bag unit side seam; topstitch in place (**Diagram 11**). Repeat with remaining red print 2" square and other bag unit side seam to make outer bag.

## Assemble Bag Lining

1. Place lining unit wrong side up on flat surface. Measure 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " from a short edge on both long edges of lining unit; make  $\frac{1}{4}$ " clips (**Diagram 12**). From  $\frac{1}{4}$ " clips to short edge, fold edges to wrong side; press and topstitch.
2. Fold short edge of lining unit  $\frac{1}{4}$ " to wrong side; press and topstitch (**Diagram 13**).
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 with remaining short edge of lining unit.
4. Aligning short edges and beginning at clips, sew together side edges of lining unit; press to make bag lining. Do not turn right side out.

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**Finish Bag**

Insert bag lining into outer bag, matching side seams. Align top and side edges of lining with hemmed edges of outer bag. Slip-stitch top and side edges of lining to inside of outer bag to complete bag.



DIAGRAM 1

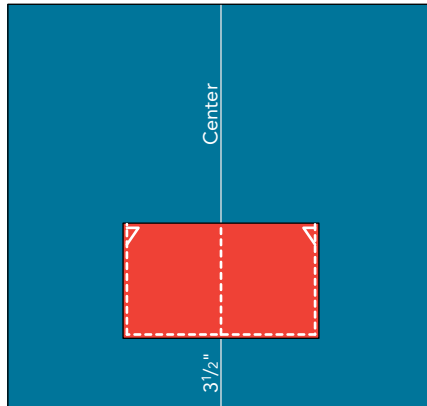


DIAGRAM 2

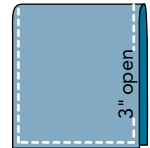


DIAGRAM 3

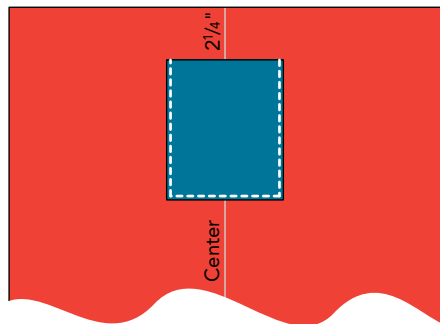


DIAGRAM 4

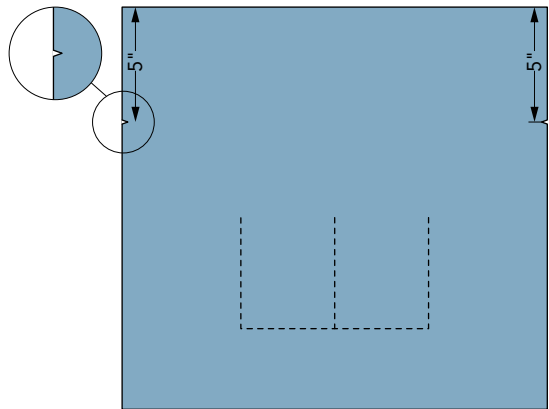


DIAGRAM 5

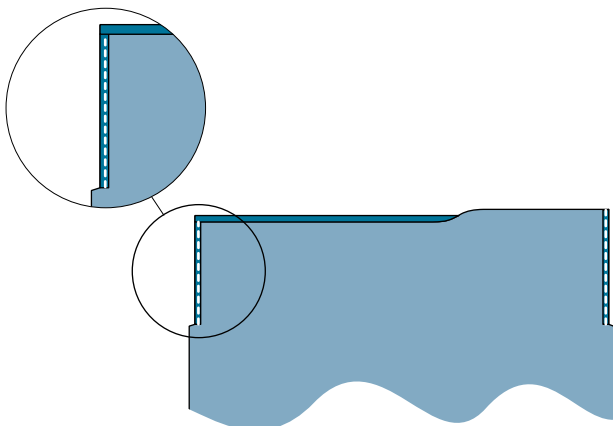


DIAGRAM 6

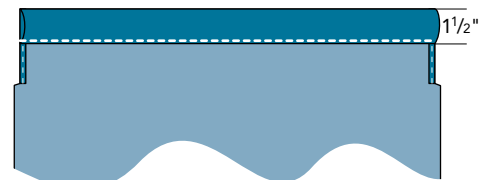


DIAGRAM 7

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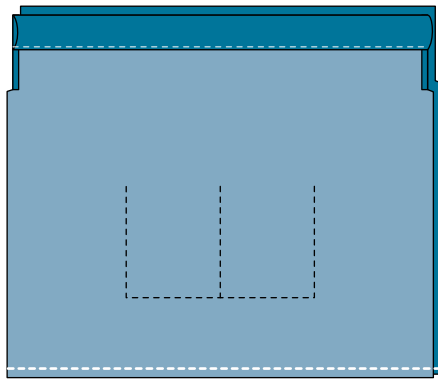


DIAGRAM 8

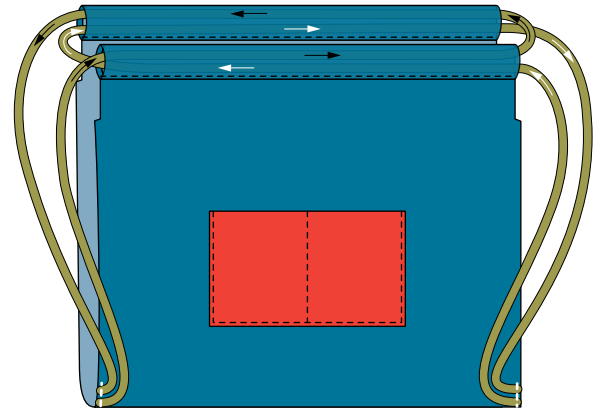


DIAGRAM 9

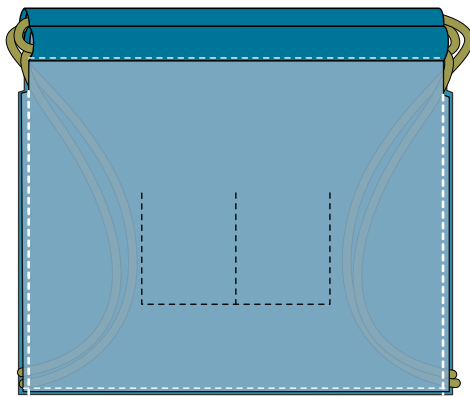


DIAGRAM 10

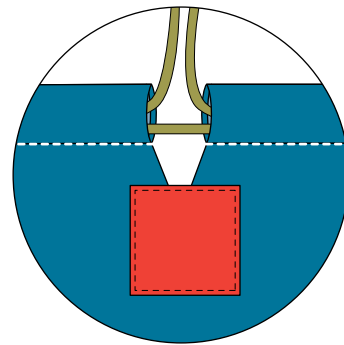


DIAGRAM 11

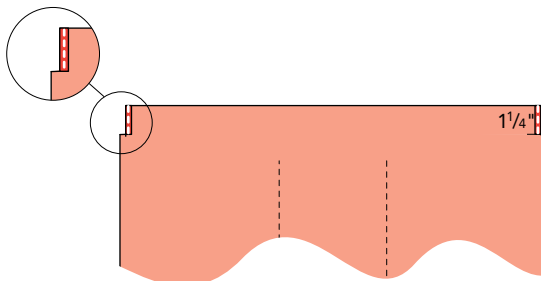


DIAGRAM 12

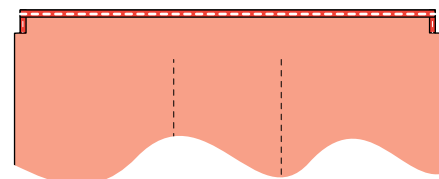


DIAGRAM 13