



Effortless Tote Bag Lesson Plan

Step-by-step guide to offering this project as a class

Suitable for a 3 or 6 hour class depending on experience level of students.

The Effortless Tote Bag teaches foundational skills of rotary cutting simple shapes, cutting large shapes, accurate seam allowances and top stitching.

Make a Sample:

This tote bag can be easily cut & sewn in a couple of hours by an experienced maker. Make a sample or two to market the class.

Get Organized: Order notions and review schedule provided in Marketing Plan. Adjust as needed for your students and schedule.

Day of Class:

- Welcome students to class. Either individually as they arrive or in the group setting, poll students to determine experience level.
- Highlight that this is EASY sewing. The goal of the class is to ensure people are comfortable understanding how to set up a seam allowance and adjust stitch length on their machine; how to accurately rotary cut simple shapes; how to cut large shapes; how to top stitch; how to create add a lining and straps to a tote bag.
- Start by covering fabric selection.
 - For tote bags, one question is always “what color should I make the interior?” A lighter color makes it easier to see what’s in the bag. A darker color shows less use or staining.
- This tote bag uses twill tape for the straps to make this the easiest possible beginner bag. Review how available twill tape colors impact fabric choices.
- All seams in this tote bag are ½”. Work with students to set up an accurate ½” seam allowance on their machine. Seam tape can be used to set a guide to the right of the presser foot.
- The first step with this tote is constructing the exterior pocket. After stitching, show students how to clip the corners and turn the pocket right side out.

- Review topstitching the top edge of the pocket. For shops that carry machines, consider demonstrating a decorative stitch for the topstitch element.
- Cut the fabrics for the interior and exterior of the tote. Demonstrate how to fold the fabric in half and cut the two rectangles at 15" x 18", aligning with the fold to yield the 15" x 36" rectangle when the fabric is unfolded. If your students don't have access to a large ruler that has a 15" or larger marking, demonstrate how to use the measurements on the cutting mat to cut the correct sized pieces.
- Demonstrate how to measure the pocket positioning on the outer fabric. Topstitch in place.
- Cut the twill tape to the required lengths. Demonstrate how to measure for positioning and stitch in place.
 - Carefully review positioning—the straps are stitched to the right side of the outer fabric.
 - Show students how to make sure the tote strap isn't twisted before stitching down.
- Prepare the lining and exterior fabrics for stitching as directed in Step 7.
- Stitch the outside piece. Then discuss leaving an opening in the lining piece for turning before stitching the lining.
- Turn the lining.
- Insert lining into the exterior and turn right sides out.
- Demonstrate technique for closing the opening.
- Press.
- Topstitch the top edge of the tote.