SEWING TUTORIAL

# understanding cutting layouts

THE CUTTING LAYOUT

Open your pattern envelope and pull out the guidesheet. On the first page, you will find a variety of cutting diagrams, or layouts. To locate the one you need, look for these three things.

- Pattern view you are making.
- The fabric width that is the same as yours.
- Your pattern size.

Once you have found the right layout, circle it so it is easy to locate as you look back and forth from guidesheet to fabric.

CUTTING LAYOUT SHADING KEY

RIGHT SIDE OF PATTERN	WRONG SIDE OF PATTERN	RIGHT SIDE OF FABRIC	WRONG SIDE OF FABRIC
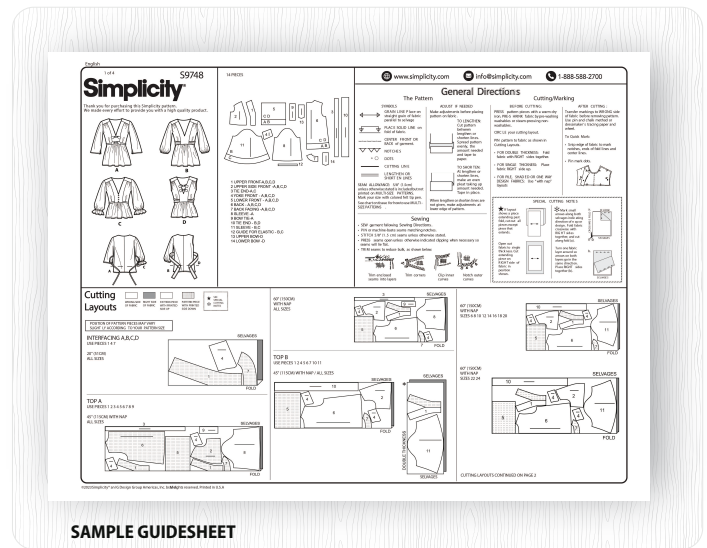
SAMPLE GUIDESHEET

FOLD THE FABRIC

Make careful note of how the fabric is folded in your chosen layout. The most common way of folding fabric for cutting is the lengthwise fold but, as pattern layouts are designed to make the most efficient use of the fabric, this is not the only way. For a detailed explanation of all the layouts you may encounter, see Types of Cutting Layouts.

Although fabric can be folded with either the right or wrong sides together, most sewist prefer to fold it right sides together because it makes it easier to transfer the pattern markings to the fabric and center seams are automatically matched and ready to sew once the pattern tissue is removed. For more information on folding fabric see Special Layouts.

LAY OUT THE PATTERN PIECES

To make sure you don't miss any important information as you lay out and cut your pattern pieces, look over the pattern guidesheet before you begin. Start at the upper left-hand corner and, reading each section completely, work your way from left to right. This may sound too obvious to have to mention, but you'd be surprised at how many people just let their eyes wander over the guidesheet reading sections at random.

Check to make sure you have all the pattern pieces you need for the view you are making. You will find them listed at the beginning of each view's cutting layout.

Before laying out pattern, it is a good idea to press the pieces with a warm, dry iron to remove any creases. This will ensure that your garment sections are accurate in size and shape.

The cutting layout not only shows you how to fold your fabric, but also shows you where to place the pattern pieces. Examine your cutting layouts carefully for any special notations and be aware of the shading key that tells you how to place the pattern (see Cutting Layout Shading Key). If your pattern includes interfacings or linings, these cutting layouts are usually grouped with the fabric layouts for each view.

45" (115CM)
WITH NAP
ALL SIZES
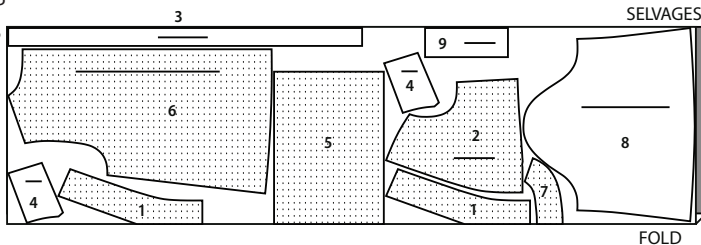
60" (150CM)
WITH NAP
ALL SIZES
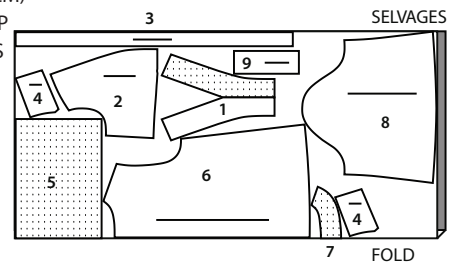
TIP

If your fabric has a bold design or one that requires matching, it is easier to fold it wrong sides together so you can readily see the design as you pin and cut.
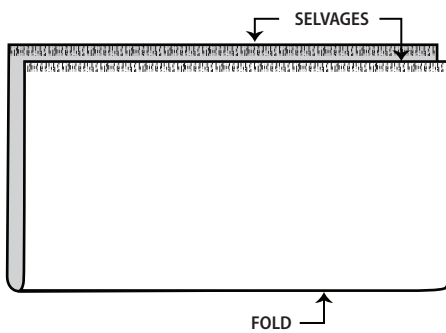
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types of fabric layout
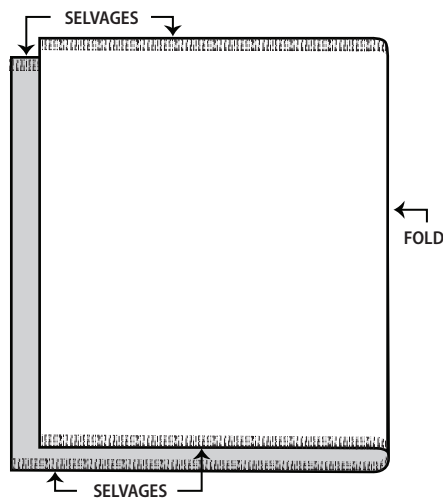
☐ (gray) **RIGHT SIDE OF FABRIC**   ☐ (white) **WRONG SIDE OF FABRIC**

LENGTHWISE FOLD

The most common way of folding fabric for cutting is in half lengthwise, with the selvage edges matching.

SELVAGES

FOLD

CROSSWISE FOLD

This is used only for fabrics that do not have a nap or one-way design.

SELVAGES

FOLD

SELVAGES

DOUBLE THICKNESS

This type of "fold" is used for fabrics that have nap, such as velvet or corduroy, and for fabrics that have a one-way design. The fabric is folded in half along the cross-wise grain, and then cut along the fold (A). Next, the top layer is turned around so that the nap is running in same direction on both layers (B).

TIP

Mark small arrows along both selvages indicating direction of nap or design.

A.

DOUBLE THICKNESS FOLD

SELVAGES

SELVAGES

B.

SELVAGE

SELVAGE

TURN THIS LAYER AROUND
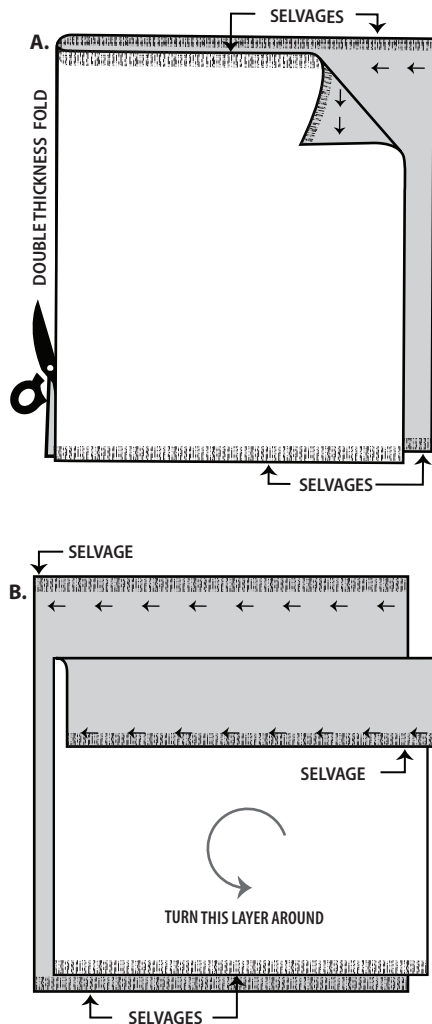
SELVAGES

SINGLE THICKNESS

Fabric is placed right side up; often used for thick nap fabric as layers might shift as you pin and cut.
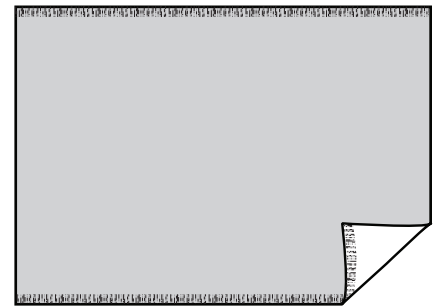
COMBINATION OF LENGTHWISE FOLD AND SINGLE THICKNESS

The fabric is folded along a lengthwise grain so that the selvages are parallel to each other but not matching.

SINGLE THICKNESS

EQUAL DISTANCE
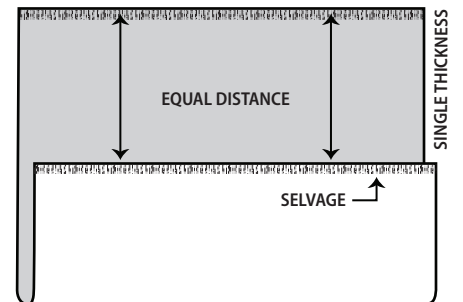
SELVAGE

TWO LENGTHWISE FOLDS

The fabric is folded so that the selvages meet in the center.

FOLD

SELVAGE

FOLD

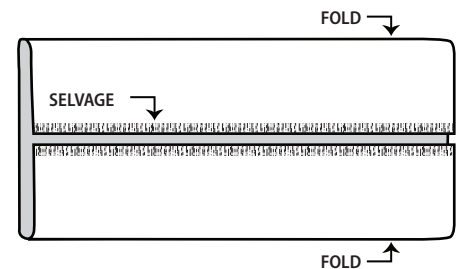| CUTTING LAYOUT SHADING KEY			
RIGHT SIDE OF PATTERN	WRONG SIDE OF PATTERN	RIGHT SIDE OF FABRIC	WRONG SIDE OF FABRIC

STEP 1

Position the larger pieces first, beginning with those that should be placed on the fabric fold.

STEP 2

Position all other pattern pieces so that the grainline arrow is parallel to the salvages or to the lengthwise fold. To be sure each piece is parallel, measure form each tip of the grainline marking to the salvage or the fold. Both measurements should be the same. If they do not match, shift the pattern piece a bit until the measurements are equal.
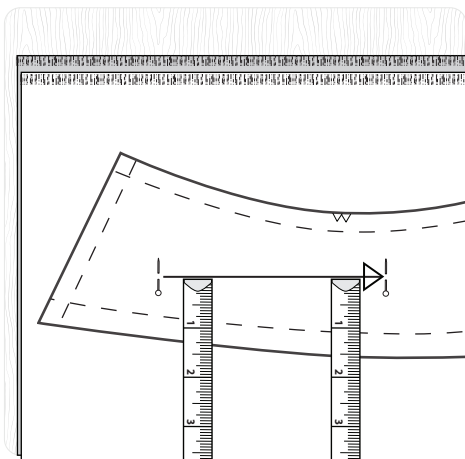
STEP 3

Once a pattern piece is properly positioned, pin it in place at each end of the grainline, as shown above so it will not shift off-grain.

USING A CUTTING BOARD

As your sewing skills progress, you may want to invest in a cutting board. This heavy-duty cardboard surface opens up to 36" x 69" (91.5cm x 173cm) and accordion folds for easy storage. It is marked with a 1" (2.5cm) grid, as well as special markings to aid you in cutting circles, scallops and bias strips. Align the selvage edges with one of the lines on the board. Use pushpins to hold the selvages in place.
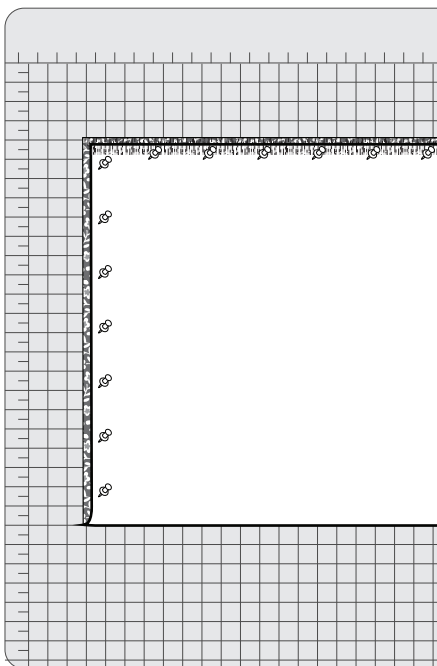
PINNING

Pin through all the layers of pattern and fabric. First, position the pattern piece on-grain, anchoring it with pins at both ends of grainline arrow. Next, pin diagonally at the corners, smoothing the pattern out from the grainline arrow as you go. Then add pins around the edge of the pattern. These pins should be placed parallel to the cutting line, at 2" – 3" (5cm – 7.5cm) intervals. Do not let the pins extend beyond the cutting line.

Depending on the size of your cutting surface, you may want to position all the pattern pieces on-grain first. Once they are all positioned, you can go back and finish pinning each piece. If your cutting surface is small, you may have to work in sections. As you pin, check to make sure none of your cutting lines overlap. And unless you are following a special layout or your layout requires several different folds, don't do any cutting until all your pattern pieces are in place. Cutting as you go means any miscalculations in your layout will be permanent.
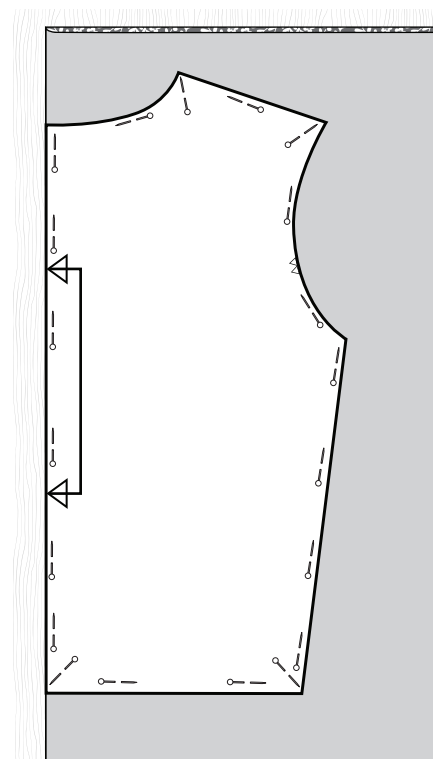
SPECIAL LAYOUTS

With most fabrics, you can confidently follow the layouts printed on the pattern guidesheet. However, there are a few fabrics that require some special planning. Some need to be laid out so that the design either matches at the seamline or is attractively spaced on the body.

If your fabric requires a special layout, it will be easier to plan if you choose a simple pattern with a limited number of seams.

NAP

Some fabrics will change the way they look depending on which way you hold them. Sometimes the difference is obvious, as in the case of one-way designs. At a other times, the difference might be a very subtle variation in color. Take another look at your pattern instruction sheet. Note that the words "with nap" are printed next to each fabric cutting layout. All interfacing and lining layouts are without nap.

Pile Fabrics: Such as velvet, velveteen, velour, and corduroy. If you hold the fabric with the nap going down, it feels smoother and the color is lighter. If the nap runs up, the color is darker. For deeper color, the nap should go up; for better wear, the nap should go down.

FUZZY-SURFACED FABRICS: Such as brushed flannel and fake fur. Cut with the nap running down.

KNITS AND SHINY FABRICS: Such as satin and damask. These reflect the light differently depending on which way you hold them. You can choose either direction, but make sure all pattern pieces run in the same direction.

PLAIDS AND STRIPES: For those with an uneven repeat you will need to plan the placement of the pattern pieces so that the colors bars match.

PRINTED OR WOVEN MOTIFS: With a "this end up" look. For example, all the flowers should "grow" in the same direction and every part of your garment.

DESIGNS THAT MUST BE MATCHED

Garments made from plaids, bold stripes, big and medium-sized checks, border prints and large design motifs must match at the seams. To accomplish this, you must first mark the seamlines on your pattern tissue. Unless otherwise indicated on the pattern tissue or guidesheet, seamlines are 5/8" (1.5cm) in from the cutting line. Next, you will have to make some adjustments to the cutting layout provided on our guidesheet. In general, you will find it easier to work with fabrics folded right side out or on a single thickness with the right facing up.

• - - - - - - - - - **NOTE** - - - - - - - - - •

Extra yardage is required to allow for this pattern matching. How much extra will depend on the size of the motif and the frequency of the repeat. Small, even plaids and stripes require ¼yd – ½yd (25cm – 50cm) extra; large, even designs require ½yd – 1yd (0.5m – 1m) extra.
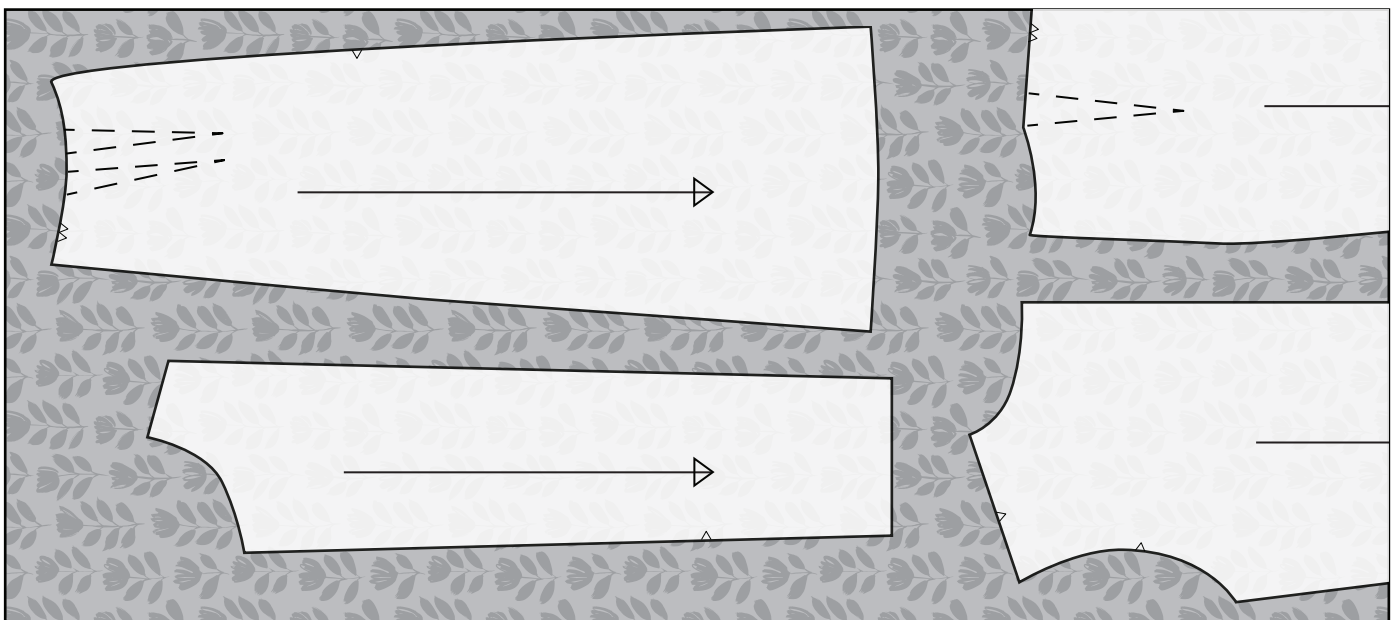
Printed or woven motifs have a pattern, often floral, that must run the same way on all pattern pieces.

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conversion chart

WHAT IS THE CONVERSION CHART

The chart below is a guide to estimate the amount of fabric needed when selecting a fabric width not listed on the pattern envelope back. Note: Unusal pattern piece shapes, pattern adjustments and fabrics with one-way design may affect amount of fabric needed.

HOW TO USE

A pattern calls for 2¼ yards (2.10m) of 45" (115m) wide fabric. The fabric you selected is 35" (90cm) wide. Find 2¼ yards (2.10m) under the 45" (115m) column, then read across that line until you reach the 35" (90cm) column. The number in this column is the amount of 35" (90cm) wide fabric to buy: 2⅞ yards or 2.65 meters. Conversion chart is designed for estimating yardage for apparel and craft patterns.

Information courtesy of Cooperative Extension Service, Rutgers University, The State University of New Jersey.

FABRIC WIDTHS															
35"	90cm	**39"**	100cm	**42"**	107cm	**45"**	115cm	**50"**	127cm	**54"**	140cm	**60"**	150cm	**66"**	168cm
yard	meter	**yard**	meter	**yard**	meter	**yard**	meter	**yard**	meter	**yard**	meter	**yard**	meter	**yard**	meter
1¾	1.60	**1½**	1.40	**1½**	1.40	**1⅜**	1.30	**1¼**	1.15	**1⅛**	1.05	**1**	0.95	**⅞**	0.80
2	1.85	**1¾**	1.60	**1¾**	1.60	**1⅝**	1.50	**1½**	1.40	**1⅜**	1.30	**1¼**	1.15	**1⅛**	1.05
2¼	2.10	**2**	1.85	**2**	1.85	**1¾**	1.60	**1⅝**	1.50	**1½**	1.50	**1⅜**	1.30	**1¼**	1.15
2½	2.30	**2¼**	2.10	**2¼**	2.10	**2⅛**	1.95	**1¾**	1.60	**1¾**	1.60	**1⅝**	1.50	**1½**	1.40
2⅞	2.65	**2½**	2.30	**2½**	2.30	**2¼**	2.10	**2**	1.85	**1⅞**	1.75	**1¾**	1.60	**1⅝**	1.50
3⅛	2.90	**2¾**	2.55	**2¾**	2.55	**2½**	2.30	**2¼**	2.10	**2**	1.85	**1⅞**	1.75	**1¾**	1.60
3⅜	3.10	**3**	2.75	**2⅞**	2.65	**2¾**	2.55	**2⅜**	2.20	**2¼**	2.10	**2**	1.85	**1⅞**	1.75
3¾	3.45	**3¼**	3.00	**3⅛**	2.90	**2⅞**	2.65	**2⅝**	2.40	**2⅜**	2.20	**2¼**	2.10	**2⅛**	1.95
4¼	3.90	**3½**	3.20	**3⅜**	3.10	**3⅛**	2.90	**2¾**	2.55	**2⅝**	2.40	**2⅜**	2.20	**2¼**	2.10
4½	4.15	**3¾**	3.45	**3⅝**	3.35	**3⅜**	3.10	**3**	2.75	**2¾**	2.55	**2⅝**	2.40	**2½**	2.30
4¾	4.35	**4**	3.70	**3⅞**	3.55	**3⅝**	3.35	**3¼**	3.00	**2⅞**	2.65	**2¾**	2.55	**2⅝**	2.40
5	4.60	**4¼**	3.90	**4⅛**	3.80	**3⅞**	3.55	**3⅜**	3.10	**3⅛**	2.90	**2⅞**	2.65	**2¾**	2.55

Row label (left, vertical): CONVERSION MEASUREMENTS

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cutting layout terms & labels

SELVAGE	Machine finished edges of fabric created in the weaving or knitting process. Can be abbreviated in the guide sheet layouts.
SEL	Single selvage edge
SELS	Both selvage edges
FOLD	This is a lengthwise fold created when the fabric is folded with the selvage edges together.
CROSSWISE FOLD	This is created when the fabric is folded widthwise, bringing cut edges together
PIECES	Guidesheet will list the pattern pieces used at the beginning of the layouts for that view.
FABRIC WIDTHS	Fabric widths used for the layouts are based on the fabric suggestions provided by the Designer. The following are the most common fabric widths.
20" (51cm)	This is the width that most lightweight fusible interfacings are available in. Interfacing width may vary on your guide sheet. This is based on Designer requirements. For instance, knit interfacing is often given in 60" (150cm) widths.
45" (115cm)	This indicates that the layout was created for 45" (115cm) fabric. If your fabric width is less or more than 45" (115cm) you can find a conversion chart in the back of the catalog. For instance, the fabric you select may come in 42" (107cm) widths.
60" (150cm)	This indicates that the layout was created for 60" (150cm) fabric. If your fabric width is less or more than 60" (150cm) you can find a conversion chart in the back of the catalog. For instance, the fabric you select may come in 54" (140cm) widths.
SIZES	Indicates what sizes that layout was created for. That being said, it is good to note that Position of pattern pieces may vary slightly from the layout picture due to your pattern size.
WITH NAP	This means that the layout was created to work with fabrics that have a NAP. All fabric layouts on current guide sheets will be made for fabrics with NAP.
WITHOUT NAP	This means that the layout was created to work with fabrics that do not have a NAP. All lining and interfacing layouts on current guide sheets will be made without NAP.