

# CRAFTING WITH AUNTIE AMBER Activity 1a

**CULTURE 365 - GETTING CREATIVE SERIES**  
Presented in partnership with Dream Brokers

## Sewing a Stuffed Animal With Auntie Amber

### WHAT WE ARE MAKING TODAY

Sewing is as old as humankind. Early sewing tools were made from available materials, such as animal sinew for thread, animal bones for needles, and animal hides for fabric; we now have computerized sewing machines.

Today Auntie Amber leads you through the basics of hand sewing a stuffed animal, which can be used for storytelling or puppetry or a gift to a loved one, while sharing nêhiyaw/nakoda stories and teachings.

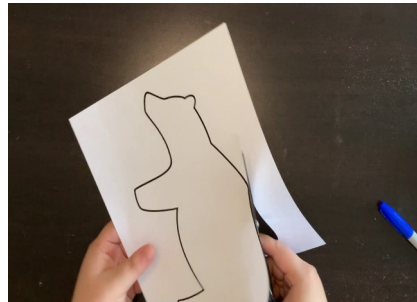


**Supplies Needed:**  
Pins, premade patterns (or blank paper), scissors, markers or pen, two felt sheets, sewing needle and thread, and stuffing (cotton batting or cotton balls).  
Optional: buttons, googly eyes, pompoms, or coloured yarn to personalize your animal.

### STEP 1

Decide whether you are making your own pattern or choose a template. If you are making your own pattern, fold a piece of paper in half. On the folded edge, draw one-half of your animal; cut out carefully and unfold.

If you are using a template, choose one and carefully cut it out.



### STEP 2

Lay the pattern on one piece of felt. Hold securely with one hand and use a pen or marker to carefully trace the outline on to the felt.



### STEP 3

Take the second piece of felt and place it under the first piece of felt - make sure the marker outline will face the inside.



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** By attempting this activity, you accept responsibility for your actions and indemnify SaskCulture, Sask Lotteries, contracted artists and/or its partners, officers, directors, employees, contractors, agents, volunteers against all claims, actions, suits, demands, losses, expenses, costs or damages of every kind.



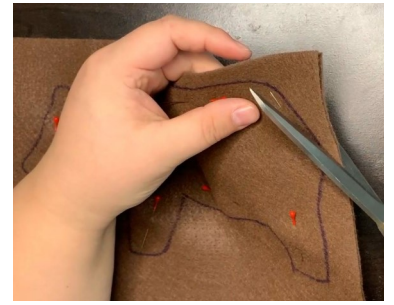
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#### STEP 4

Pin the pieces of felt together carefully. Place the pins just above or below the traced line – not on top of it. Ask an adult for help, if needed.

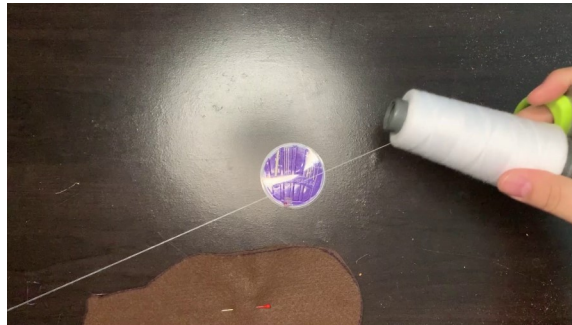
Carefully cut out the animal outline with your scissors. TIP: Use smaller scissors



#### STEP 5

Carefully remove all but one pin from the felt and put them away safely. Take the last pin and use it to pin the two pieces together in the middle.

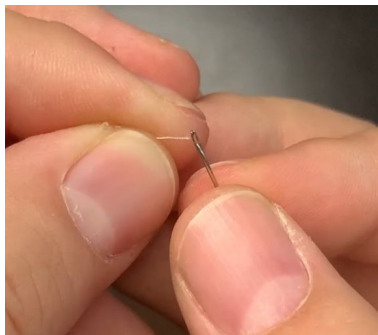
Measure some thread so it's as long as your forearm and cut it. Don't use a really long piece of thread because it will get knotted.



#### STEP 6

Take one end of thread and put it through the eye (the little hole) of the needle, and pull it until it's even with the other end.

Tie a small knot at the end of the two threads; then tie two more knots on top of the first knot.



#### STEP 7

Place your threaded needle between the two pieces of felt just inside the edge, and push it through that one piece of felt and pull the needle until the knot reaches the inside of the felt and stops. Push the tail of the knot down, so that it won't poke out between the edges of the felt.



#### STEP 8

Then, poke your needle to the right or left of your first stitch, pulling it through both pieces of the felt. Repeat this back and forth action around the edge of your felt outline (this is called a running stitch), until you almost reach your first stitch - leave a gap big enough to stuff cotton through.



### STEP 9

If the thread runs out before you finish sewing the pieces together, push the needle through one piece of the fabric and pull it out between the two pieces.



### STEP 10

Then, make a loosely knotted loop in the thread as close to the fabric as you can, and push your needle through the middle of the loop and gently pull it while holding the knot as close to the felt as possible. Repeat this twice to make sure the knot doesn't pull through the felt; trim the tail so that it doesn't poke up between the felt.



### STEP 11

Repeat steps 8-10 to thread your needle and continue your running stitch around the outline of the animal pattern.

### STEP 12

Stop sewing when you're close to where you began – the gap between the beginning and the end should be about two fingers-wide. This gap is where to add the cotton stuffing.



### STEP 13

Tie off the thread, like Step 10, and remove the pin from the middle of the felt and put it away.



### STEP 14

Take a small piece of cotton batting or balls, and gently push it through the open gap of the felt. Push the cotton into smaller areas with a marker tip if needed – go slow so that you don't tear the felt or stitches.



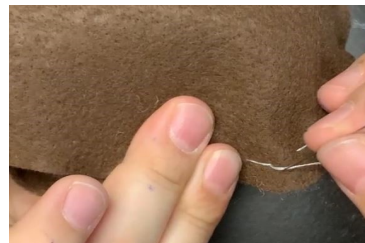
## STEP 15

Continue Step 14 until the animal is stuffed, making sure to not over-stuff or you won't be able to sew it closed. If parts of your animal are folding over, remove some cotton and then add a smaller piece - this should help.



## STEP 16

Once your animal is stuffed, sew the gap closed. Follow Steps 7 through 11, starting from where you finished your running stitch, and ending where you started, and tie off your knot one last time.



## STEP 17

Personalize your stuffy or not...it's up to you!



## NEXT STEPS

Now that you have learned the basics of sewing, you can try Activity 1b - ***Sewing a Medicine Bag with Auntie Amber***. Once you have completed your sewing projects, take photos of your completed work and send it to your Dream Broker. The artist would love to see your work, and SaskCulture would love to add it to a showcase of student expression.

If you have any questions about these projects, please contact your Dream Broker. Ask about trying another Getting Creative Project.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Amber Bellegarde is a nêhiyaw/nakoda woman from the Little Black Bear First Nation in Treaty 4 territory, who lives in Saskatoon in Treaty 6 territory. She grew up on her First Nation surrounded by ceremony, and learning to design, bead, and sew thanks to her kôhkom (grandmother), mom, and older sister.

Amber takes enormous pride in being an Auntie as it is a very important role in Indigenous communities and families. She is passionate about sharing her culture and she incorporate personal stories in her creative projects that highlight themes of kinship and First Nations traditional knowledge.



SaskCulture's work and support reaches lands covered by Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dakota, Dene, Lakota, Nakota and Saulteaux peoples, as well as the homeland of the Métis.



