

Creative craft



From their endearingly large boots to the tips of their cosy hats, Hannah, with the bunches, and Jessica, with the plaits, are sure to light up the face of a little girl. They're so beautiful, you may not want to give them away, though!

● Gulliver chair, £8.99, Ikea. Gift-wrap and bows, from a selection at Paperchase. Red gift box, £3.50, cream Mongolian cushion, £45, and Jonelle rainbow tab-top curtains in cherry, £80, John Lewis.



Christmas boelles

These gorgeous girls, traditional-style rag dolls, would make perfect gifts for almost any age

You will need

For each doll:

- 5cm-squared graph paper
- Chalk pencil
- 40 x 20cm piece of red-check cotton fabric
- 20cm square of striped cotton fabric
- 20cm square of peach calico fabric
- Matching sewing threads
- 50g washable toy stuffing
- White buttonhole thread and long needle
- 40cm of 1.5-2cm wide broderie anglaise trimming
- 15cm of 6mm-wide elastic
- Stranded embroidery thread in black, red and peach
- Red coloured pencil
- Two skeins of beige cotton perle embroidery thread
- 50cm of 3.5mm-wide red and white ribbon
- Wooden spoon
- Long tweezers

For Hannah, you will also need:

- 40 x 25cm piece of red-and-white spotted cotton fabric for dress
- 30cm square of white fleece
- 15cm of 7mm-wide red grosgrain ribbon
- One 1cm white button
- 33 x 3cm strip of red fleece

For Jessica, you will also need:

- 40 x 20cm piece of red-and-white cotton fabric with a tiny motif for skirt
- 30cm square of red fleece
- 30cm of 7mm-wide red grosgrain ribbon
- Two small heart-shaped red buttons
- 33 x 3cm strip of white fleece

A memorable holiday in Scandinavia was the inspiration for our dolly duo, Hannah and Jessica, from the creative hands of designer Alan Dart. Red-checked, striped and tiny motif fabrics give them a traditional and festive appearance, although you can, of course, use any colours and fabric you like. Only small amounts of material are needed, so it could be a good chance to use up any pretty remnants. Start now and you could stitch them in time for Christmas, to give to someone who would love to find one of these lovely dolls under their tree.



Finished doll size: About 60cm tall.

Making the patterns

1 Following pattern diagram on page 52, copy outlines, square by square, on to graph paper, or enlarge on a photocopier by 200% so that each square measures 5cm (the pattern will fit an A3 sheet of paper). Cut body, arm, head and hat from folded paper, placing broken lines on fold.

2 Mark dots, triangles and direction of grain arrows on pattern pieces. Make holes at dot points with a large knitting needle, and cut a notch in the edge of the arm and head at each triangle. Open out the pattern pieces. Also cut out a 20 x 7cm leg pattern, and a 17 x 5cm hat cuff pattern.

Cutting out

1 Use chalk pencil to draw round the pattern pieces on to the wrong side of the fabric. Mark the body and arms on to checked fabric. Mark legs on to striped fabric, with stripes running across the legs. Mark the head and hands on to calico fabric.

2 Mark the hat main piece, hat cuff and boots on to white fleece for Hannah, and on to red fleece for Jessica, reversing the pattern to draw the second half of each pair of boots. Transfer dots and cut out all pieces.

To make the doll

Note: Take 6mm seams throughout, right sides together and edges level. Clip seam turnings on curved sections and sharp corners on cotton pieces, before turning right side out.

1 Sew boot pieces together in pairs from A to B. Join top edge of each boot to a short end of a leg piece from C to A to C. Then fold the leg and boot in half lengthways and stitch the leg seam and remainder of boot seam from C round the foot to B. Turn right side out and stuff firmly, using the handle of the wooden spoon to push the stuffing into place.

2 Join body pieces from D round body and neck to D on other side, leaving lower edge D-E-D open. Turn body right side out. Fold top edge of each leg flat with seam down the centre. With seams uppermost and edges level, pin and stitch the legs side by side to the lower edge of one half of the body. Stuff the neck and body firmly, turn under the lower edge of the second body half and pin and stitch over previous stitching at top of the legs. Pinch each leg about halfway

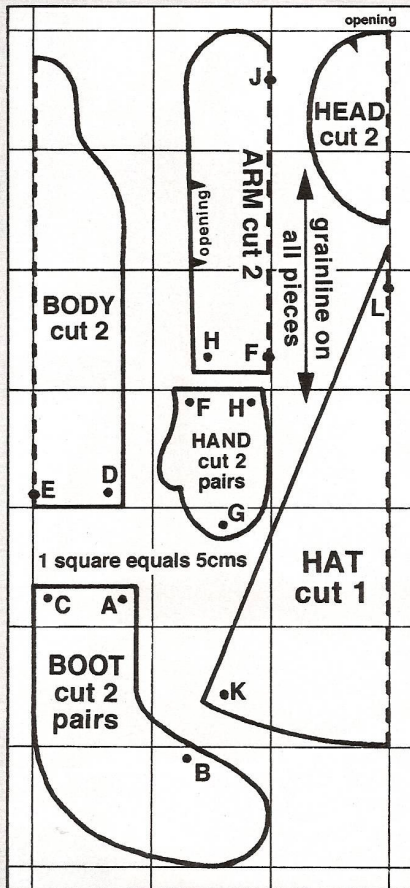
up and rub together between thumb and forefinger. This will create a space in the stuffing, so that legs bend at the knees.

3 Sew hand pieces together in pairs from F round thumb to G. Join each hand and arm from H to F to H. Fold each hand and arm piece in half lengthways and stitch side seam from G to H, then round top of arm to J, leaving opening unsewn. Carefully turn hand and arm right side out. Use tweezers to stuff firmly and slip stitch opening closed.

4 Using a long needle and buttonhole thread, fasten on 1.5cm down from top edge of right underarm and insert needle into body side seam 13cm up from lower edge. Take needle through the body and withdraw at the side seam on the other side, 13cm up from the lower edge. Take a tiny stitch on the left underarm, 1.5cm down from the top edge, then insert the needle back through the body and withdraw at the first underarm point. Repeat once more, then pull up thread to draw arms close to body and fasten off securely.

Continued overleaf

Pattern Diagram



Each square equals 5cm or simply enlarge by 200% on the photocopier



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5 Join head pieces, leaving opening unstitched. Turn right side out, stuff very firmly and slip stitch opening closed. Pin neck

of body to centre back of head, with top edge 4cm down from the head seam. Stitch firmly in place and remove pins.

6 For Hannah's dress:

Work zigzag stitch along lower and side edges of 40 x 25cm dress piece. With right sides facing and edges level, stitch broderie anglaise trimming round lower edge, then press turnings upwards to form a hem and top stitch close to fold. Join side seam and press open. Fold down 6mm, then 12mm along top edge and stitch to form a casing, leaving a 2cm opening. Use a bodkin or small safety-pin to thread elastic through casing. Overlap ends and sew together securely. Stitch opening to close. Fit dress on Hannah with seam at centre back. Fold 15cm of grosgrain ribbon in half diagonally, and tack to hold. Pin fold behind casing at centre front of dress, and sew in place. Take ribbon over doll's shoulders and sew ends behind casing at back of dress. Sew button to front top edge of dress at the "V".

7 For Jessica's skirt: Zigzag stitch lower and side edges of 40 x 20cm skirt piece. Attach broderie anglaise trimming, join side seam, and make and thread casing with elastic as for Hannah's dress (see Step 6). Fold 30cm grosgrain ribbon in half diagonally, tack and pin behind casing at centre back of skirt. Bring ribbon over doll's shoulders and stitch ends behind casing at front of skirt. Sew buttons to top front edge to correspond with straps.

8 Work features, using two strands of embroidery thread throughout, fastening on and off securely at back of head. Use tiny pencil dots to mark eye positions, 3.5cm up from head seam and 1.5cm apart. Using black embroidery thread, bring needle out at first eye point and work a circle of six tiny chain stitches for eye. Insert needle and withdraw it at second eye dot. Work a

second eye and fasten off. Using peach thread, bring needle out in centre of face, 1cm below eyes, and work a group of tiny satin stitches for nose. Carefully draw a smiling mouth in pencil. Using red thread, embroider mouth in stem stitch. Use red pencil to colour cheeks, working gently in a circular motion to build up colour gradually.

9 Stitch back seam K to L on hat piece. Join short ends of hat cuff. Fold cuff in half lengthways, wrong sides facing. Then, with right sides facing, edges level and seams matching, pin and stitch cuff to lower edge of hat. Use pencil to mark points on cuff seam turning, 1.5cm each side of back seam. Cut both skeins of perle embroidery thread into 45cm lengths for hair.

10 Thread a needle with two strands of perle thread. Take a tiny stitch through seam turning, just inside the machine-stitching and close to a pencil mark. Remove needle and pull thread through fabric to level the ends. Continue attaching remaining perle lengths, two at a time, stitching them close together. Work from the back round to the front of the hat, across the front and round to the second pencil mark. Turn hatband down and with "hair" hanging, position hat on doll's head with seam at centre back. Pin in place. Back stitch hat to head over original stitching, then remove pins and turn up hatband.

11 Divide hair into two equal bunches.

For Hannah: Use matching thread to bind each bunch at chin level. Cut narrow ribbon in half and tie a bow round each bunch to cover thread. Trim bow ends and bunches neatly. **For Jessica:** Divide each bunch equally into three, plait neatly and secure plaits with matching thread. Trim ends of plaits and tie with ribbon bows.

12 Make 1.5cm cuts at each end of the fleece strip for scarf fringing. Tie red scarf loosely round Hannah's neck, and white scarf round Jessica's.



STOCKISTS' DETAILS

- **Ikea** 0845 355 1141; www.ikea.co.uk
- **Paperchase** 020 7467 6200; www.paperchase.co.uk
- **John Lewis** 0845 604 9049; www.johnlewis.com