

# The Way-Too-Big Tote Bag

## Materials Needed:

- Fabric (probably a yard or so total, but you will want different prints, so it's hard to say)
- Stabilizer (I used Pellon 926 Extra Firm Stabilizer)
- Thread
- Cutting tools (matt, rotary cutter, rulers or good ole fashion hand cutting scissors)
- Thread scissors (I had a bad experience once with fabric scissors...)
- Iron and ironing board
- Sewing machine
- Space to work (this is not always available in my home)

## What To Cut:

### Fabric:

Main Panel	36 in x 17.25 in	cut 1
End Panel	12 in x 12 in	cut 2
Main Pocket	20.75 in x 7.75 in	cut 2
End Pocket	16 in x 7.75 in	cut 2
Main Bottom Panel	17.25 in x 16.25 in	cut 1
End Bottom Panel	12 in x 2.5 in	cut 2
Outside Strap	47 in x 3 in	cut 2
Inside Strap	47 in x 3 in	cut 2

(If same fabric as outside strap just cut 4)

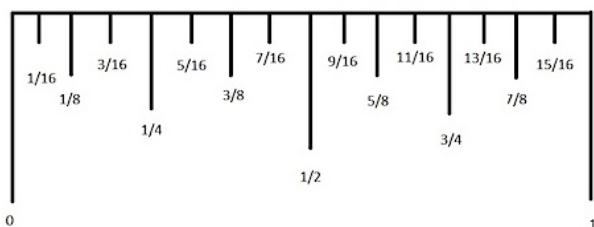
### Inner liner

- Main Liner Panel	36.5 in x 17.25 in	cut 1
- End Liner Panel	12.5 in x 12 in	cut 2

### Stabilizer: (I used Pellon 926 Extra Firm Stabilizer)

Main Panel	36 in x 17.25 in	cut 1
End Panel	12 in x 12 in	cut 2
Main Bottom Panel	17.25 in x 15.75 in	cut 1
Straps	47 in x 1.5 in	cut 2

\* .25 = 1/4      .5 = 1/2      .75 = 3/4



Total-ish size: 16.5 L x 12 H x 11 D

# Lewis & Irene Dragons Collection:

## **Pink Tote:**

Main Panel – Ink Splats on Red  
End Panel/Outside Strap – Flying Dragons on Cream  
Main Pocket/Inside Strap – Dragon Castle on Cream  
End Pocket – Dragon Eyes on Jade  
Main/End Bottom – Ink Splats on Light Jade  
Main Liner – Dragon Patches  
End Liner Panel – Flying Dragons on Blue



## **Blue Tote:**

Main Panel/Inside Strap – Flying Dragons on Light Jade  
End Panel – Dragon Eyes on Jade  
Main Pocket – Dragon Castle on Dark Blue  
End Pocket – Flying Dragons on Dark Blue  
Main/End Bottom/Outside Strap – Ink Splats on Blue  
Main Liner – Dragon Eyes on Midnight  
End Liner Panel – Dragon Eyes on Cream



## Instructions:

Cut all pieces. I made two bags out of the Lewis & Irene Dragon fabrics, SO many to choose from, they are all adorable and they all matched. So, to showcase most of this collection, I made two tote bags.

Optional, but strongly suggested, zigzag or baste the stabilizer and its matching piece of fabric to keep the edges down and the fabric straight. I used a spray baste (Sullivan's Quilt Basting Spray), which worked fine.

Let's start with the most tedious part, the handles. Now, I used two different fabrics for my straps, one for the outside strip and one for the inside strip. Since the fabric is only 40-42 inches wide, and I needed 47 inches, I cut a second piece (about 10 inches long) and attached it to the long piece. I am a quilter, so I just attached the two pieces together like I would a quilt binding. With right sides together, place the end of one piece on top of the end of the other piece like so:



Then rotate the fabric clockwise 45 degrees so the corner is at the top and sew from diagonal to diagonal. You can mark a line if you like, or just eyeball it, but straight from the top corner down to the bottom corner.



Trim the threads and then trim a quarter inch seam allowance from the excess triangle of fabric:



Open and iron the back seam open and flat:





For the strap stabilizer, I used scraps so I had to piece them together to make long enough pieces. I just used a small zigzag stitch to join them.



I placed the stabilizer strip on the wrong side of my outside strap and ironed the outside edge to the middle, then repeated on the opposite side. For the inside strap, repeat the ironing but leave out the stabilizer, it will make a stabilizer strap sandwich.





Match the ends of the straps with wrong sides together, stabilizer incased in the outside (or inside strap, as long as it's in there) and secure (I use Wonder Clips because let's face it, they are WONDERFUL!):





Sew each long side of the strap using a 1/8 inch seam allowance (fabric switch! Better pictures with these straps):

\*Note, once you sew on the right hand side of the strap, sew down the other side by positioning the strap to the right and use the 1/8 seam allowance mark on the left side of your pressure foot. This will keep the direction of the strap the same. When I did the first one, I just got to the end, turned the strap around and sewed back the other direction. This caused a ripple effect in the fabric because I was sewing in the opposite direction. When I sewed down the other side after starting from the same end as the first trip down, there was no ripple effect because the fabric was going in the same direction. I hope that makes sense, the fabric was pulled through the sewing machine in the same direction as opposed to opposite directions, which caused it to stretch in the opposite way.





Straps are done, set aside for later!

Now, let us finish some edges. On the main and end pockets, we are going to finish one of the long edges by folding over a 1/4 inch, ironing it down, folding over a 1/4 inch again, ironing it, then top stitching it down so it looks pretty.











Take the main bottom panel, fold the long side edge over the edge of the thinner cut piece of stabilizer and iron: (This will make it easier to sew later and have a finished edge)



\*\*I am switching to the blue bag now for all pictures, in case it is confusing. These pictures turned out better

Now let's start sewing some stuff together!

Start with the end panels and their end pockets. Fold over each of the end panels and the end pockets to find the middle, I just "finger press" the center to create a crease so I can match them up. Place the center of the end pocket to the center of the main end panel and line up the bottom edge, secure.





Sew down the center crease of the end pocket:



Now line up the edge of the end pocket with the edge of the end panel, creating a hump in the fabric, sew a 1/4 seam allowance:





Repeat for the other side:







Now the tricky part is the pocket pouch itself. I just tried to make my creases as symmetrical as possible and match both sides of the pouch. Create a fold on each edge of each pouch and secure.







Sew along the bottom at a 1/4 in seam allowance:



Take the two end bottom panels, on one of the long sides, fold over 1/4 inch and iron down.

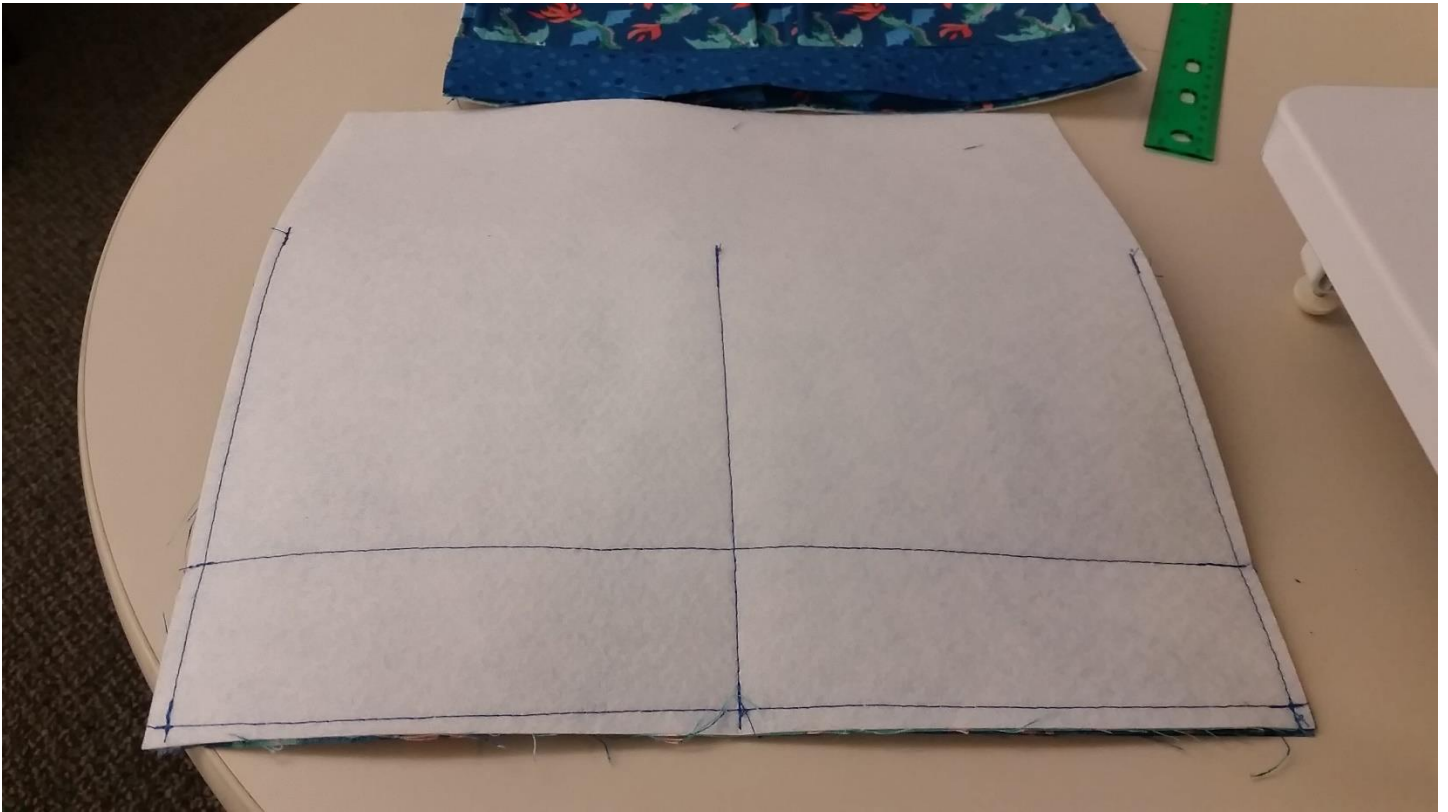
Place the end bottom panel on top of the end pocket, lining up the bottom edges. Make sure the finished turned under edge is not the bottom edge. Top stitch the finished edge along the length of the end panel and pocket.







What the backside looks like



Repeat with the other end panel, there are two. Set them aside, maybe keep the straps company.



Lay the main panel down and lay the main bottom panel on top, centering it. Place the two main pockets so the edge seam is 1/2 in under the main bottom panel.

\*Note – if you are using directional fabric, meaning there is only one direction that the print will be right side up as opposed to upside down; this is the place to keep that in mind. I had to remember to make sure my castles would be right side up when the tote bag is finished. Besides, I hate seam ripping, so I triple checked my fabric placement.



Remove the main bottom panel so just the pockets are laying where they need to be.





Leaving 1 1/2 inch overhang on each side, secure the pocket panels to the main panel, again creating a hump in the fabric.







Place a strap 4 1/2 inches from the outside edge of the main panel and pin in place (Wonder Clips don't work for this one).







Sew the straps down using 1/8 seam allowance, only sewing the length of the strap that covers the main pocket. Repeat on all four ends of the straps.





Next, line up the main pocket edge with the edge of the main panel and sew a 1/4 seam allowance. Repeat on both sides of both pockets.





Just like on the end pockets, create and secure the pleats in these three pouch pockets you just made. Sew the bottom edge at 1/4 inch seam allowance.





Add the main bottom panel back to where you had centered it before on the main panel. Sew the edges down at 1/8 inch topstitch to secure.







Lay the main panel down, center an end panel, right sides together and secure.



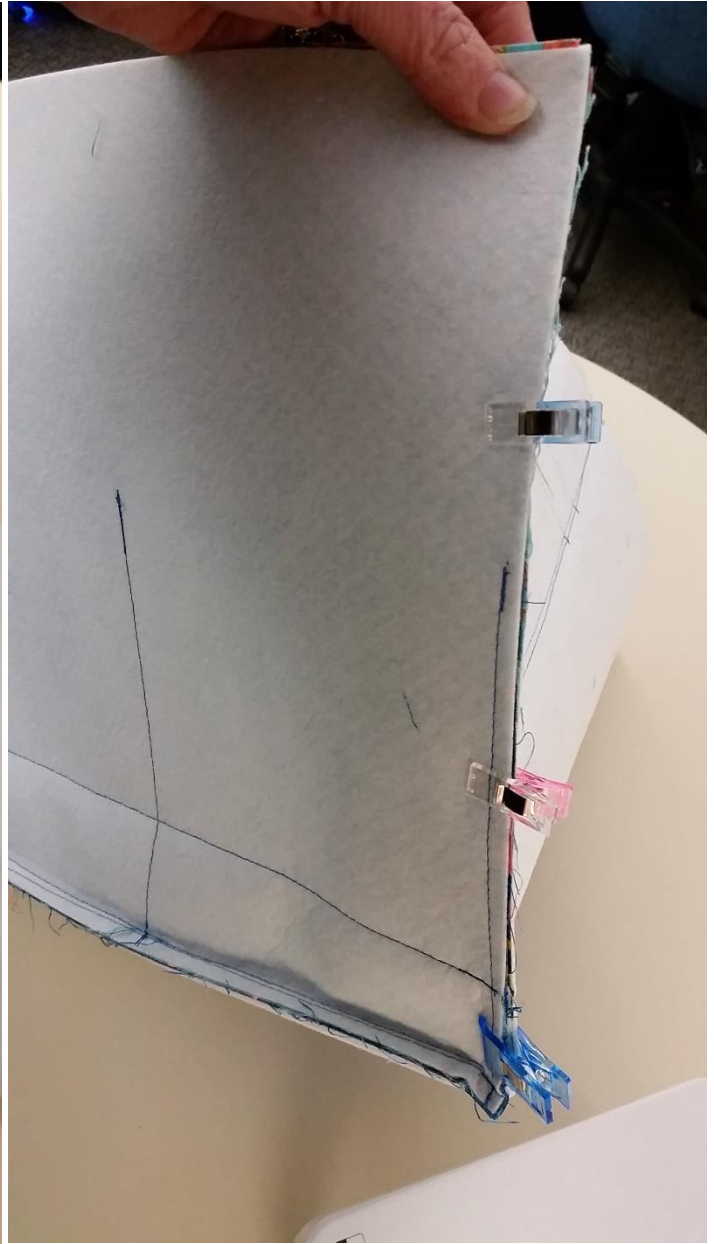
When you sew the bottom of the end panel, start stitching 1/2 in from the edge and end 1/2 in from the end. This will allow the two sides to be sewn down without any puckering or extra bulk when the seams meet up.



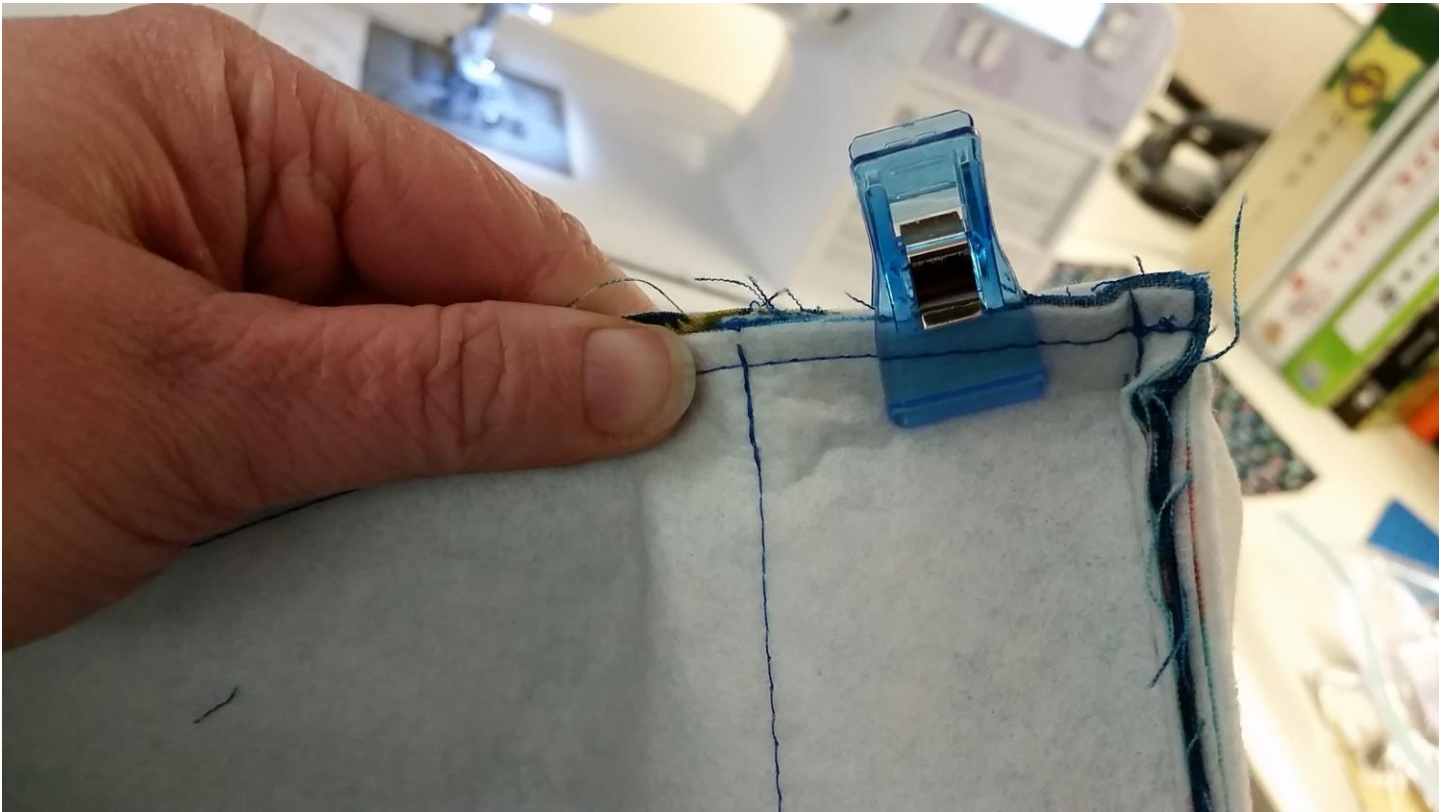




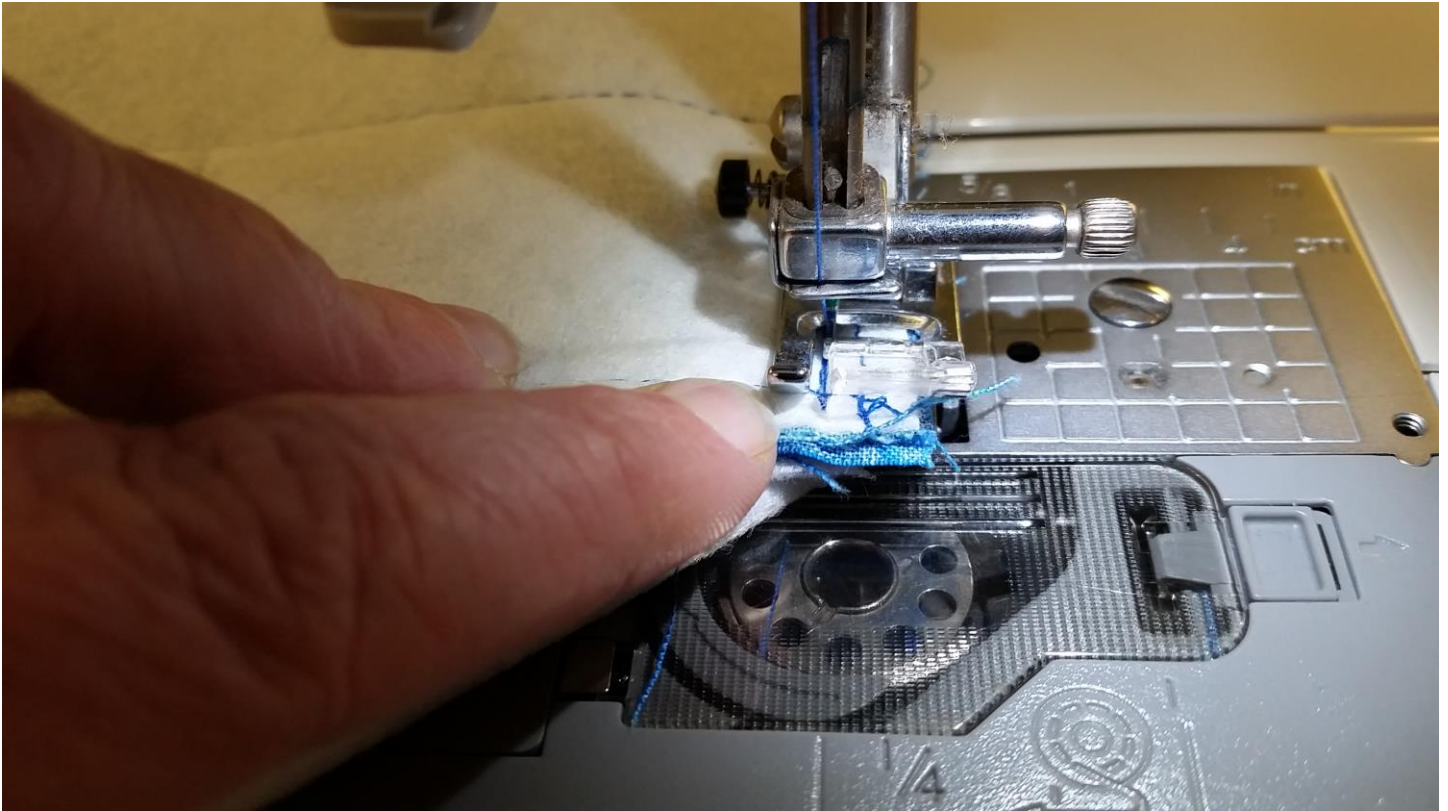
Line up the top corner of the end panel with the corresponding top corner of the main panel and secure. Make sure your main bottom panel lip and the end bottom panel lips match.







Start at the top edge of the tote and sew down to the bottom. When you get to the bottom, again stop the seam 1/2 from the end, the edges should match up and create a nice corner without having to sew through all the bulk of so many layers. Backspace to secure the stitching. Repeat the other side, and then repeat for the other end panel.









Turn the tote back right side out.



Now the liner. This one is pretty easy, and we are almost finished!

Take an end panel of the liner and mark the center, mark the center of the main liner panel, line them up.



On one of the ends, mark about 2 inches in from the edges. We will be sewing to these marks and leaving an opening. This will be used later to turn the tote bag inside out so be sure to reinforce the stitching by backstitching. I usually backstitch a couple of times. Sew at 1/2 inch seam allowance and starting/ending 1/2 inch from the edges to allow for the side seams, just like on the main end panels of the tote bag.





Match up the sides of the end panel with the sides of the main panel, secure and sew at 1/2 inch seam allowance.





Repeat on the other end liner panel, but don't leave the opening at the bottom, just sew straight across.



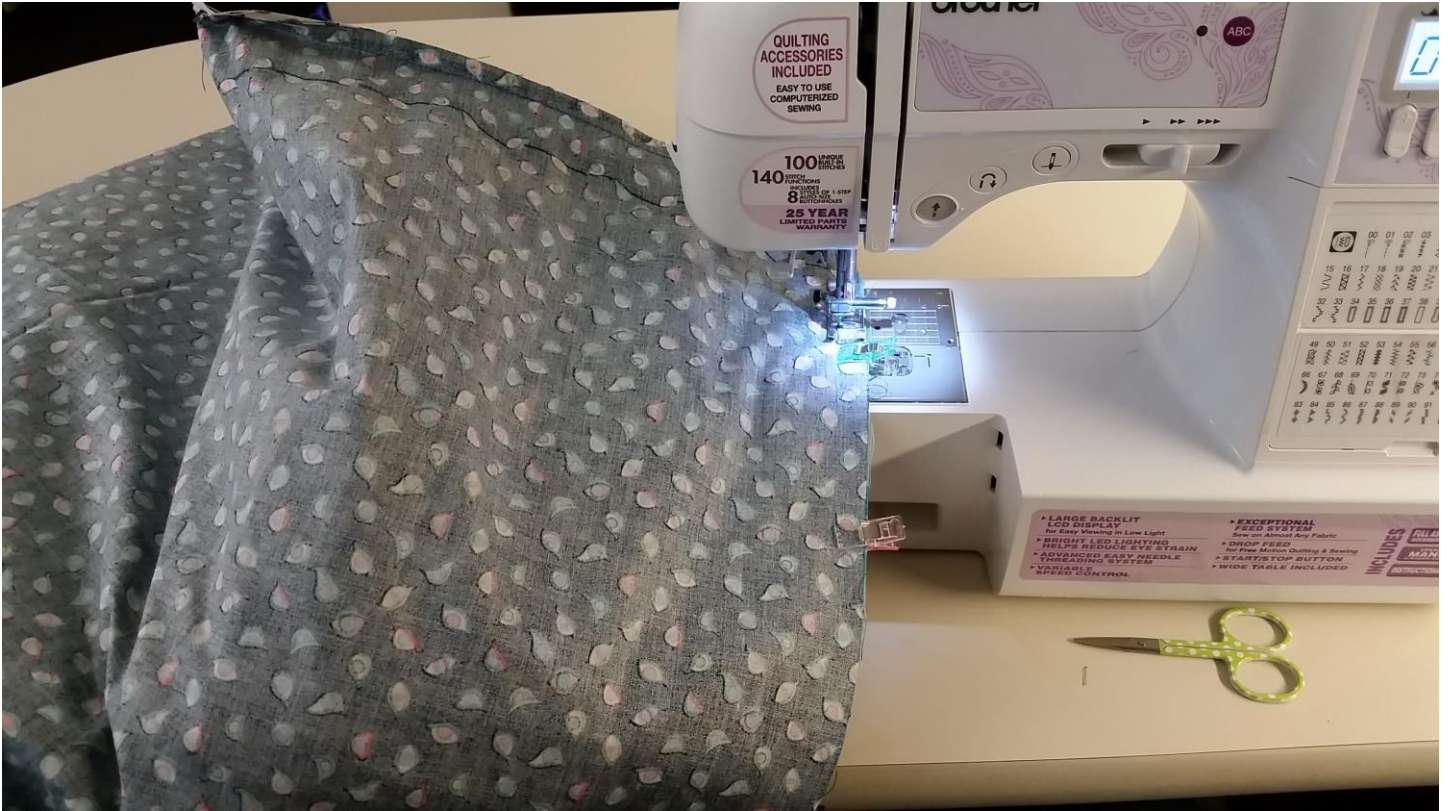
With right sides together, put the tote bag inside the liner. Yes, INSIDE the liner. The inside is the outside but will be the inside again in a moment.







Sew the liner to the tote back at 1/2 inch seam allowance, all the way around.





The hardest part of this whole process is turning the tote inside out to make the now outside the proper inside. Using the opening in the end of the liner, work the tote back through. This will entail a lot of squishing and careful manipulating, as you don't want to rip the sides of the opening.





WhhaaLAA!!



Take the end of the liner with the opening and being careful to fold the raw edges in, line up the edges, secure and sew closed at 1/8 inch.









Push the liner to the inside of the tote bag and straighten it out. From the outside edge of the tote bag, top stitch the liner in place.







The last finishing touch will be to secure the straps to the outside with an X. Make sure the liner underneath the strap is flat, sew the strap down by starting at the top of the strap by the edge of the tote, sew across the strap, then diagonally to the opposite corner, turn and sew across the bottom of the X near the pocket, pivot and sew diagonally back to the starting point, creating the X. Back stitch to secure, clip the threads and you are DONE!















THE WAY-TOO-BIG TOTE BAG - 2018







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Main Liner – Dragon Patches  
End Liner Panel – Flying Dragons on Blue



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