

Colette
PATTERNS

1031
PLAID OR STRIPE
DAHLIA



INSTRUCTIONS



YOU WILL NEED:

- *[Dahlia pattern](#), by Colette Patterns*
- *Plaid or striped fabric, with extra yardage to allow for matching*
- *Pencil or pen*
- *Straight ruler*
- *Curved ruler*

ABOUT DAHLIA



When we designed Dahlia, one of the features that excited me most was how great it would look in plaids and stripes.

The use of small gathers instead of darts, the raglan sleeve, and the inset waist all really enhance the effect of plaids and would look equally awesome in striped fabric. But there are a few things to keep in mind when making any garment in a striped or plaid fabric.

Here's version 1 of Dahlia in a soft, lightweight wool flannel with a large plaid pattern. I did my best to match the plaid wherever I could.



Stripe and plaid matching seems tricky, but almost all of it happens in the cutting phase, giving you a chance to play around with your pieces until things look exactly right.

Use these tips, whether you're sewing up Dahlia or anything else.

PURCHASING FABRIC



Because plaids and stripes require exact placement of the pattern pieces, you almost always need a little extra fabric.

The rule of thumb is that for small plaids, get at least an extra $\frac{1}{2}$ yard, and for large plaids go with up to an full extra yard. This is usually enough to cover you, but I like to be safe instead of sorry.

DECIDE ON PLACEMENT



Before you start, make a decision about where it's most important to have your plaids match.

It's often impossible to match every single line. For example, depending on the size and scale of a stripe or plaid, it may be impossible to match your plaid both at the armhole and also at the side seams, just due to the way you must lay and cut your pieces.

I rank the importance of seams by how visible they are. Here's a rough idea of how I'd rank the importance of matching some common dress seams:

1. **Center front and center back.** If there is a seam going up the front or back, these should always be matched. Thankfully, this is extremely easy because the pieces are mirrored. All you have to do is lay your fabric correctly (see the laying section below).
2. **Armhole and sleeve.** This is trickier to match because of the curves, but it's highly visible.
3. **Waistline.** This is also highly visible. It's usually not difficult to match both the waistline and the armhole. If your garment has an inset midriff (like the Dahlia dress), another alternative is to cut the midriff on the diagonal (bias). This creates a cool effect and obviates the need for matching several pieces at once.
4. **Side seams.** If there are no sleeves, you might want to match the side seams so that the stripes or plaids go around the body in a continuous line.
5. **Shoulders.** Matching a plaid at the shoulder can provide a nice little detail.

For this dress, I'll be concentrating on matching the sleeve, since there is no center front or center back seam. Once you've decided on a main seam or seams to match, decide if you want to change the direction of any pattern pieces.

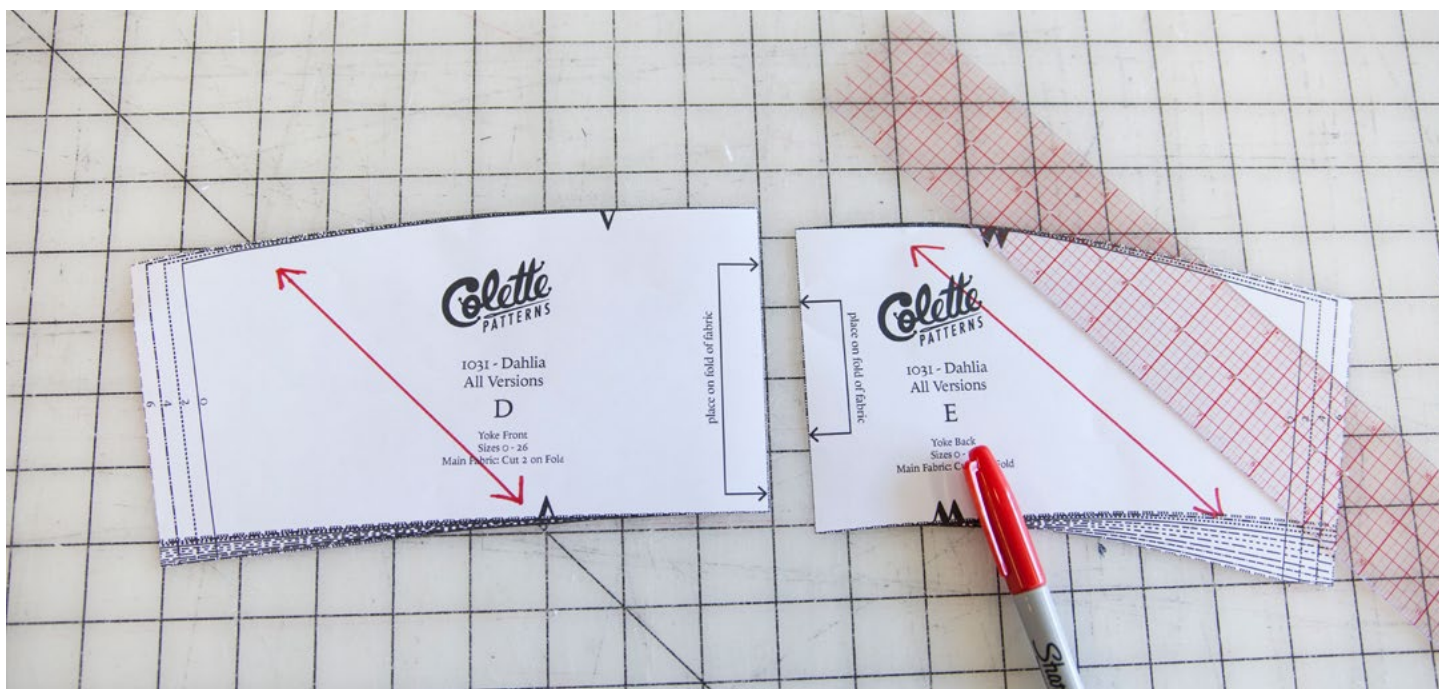


If you're using plaid and your pattern has a lot of pieces, cutting some of them on the bias instead of straight will look good and keep you from going insane trying to match multiple seams at once.

If this seems like cheating to you, take a look at almost any man's plaid shirt. Often, the back yoke, pockets, and plackets are cut on the bias. It just looks better, and draws attention to the lines of the garment instead of obscuring them.

The same goes for stripes, except you have even more options. You can cut some pattern pieces on the bias, or change the direction of the stripes for another effect.

For the Dahlia, I've cut the front and back midriff on the bias, which I highly recommend. If you're making the sleeveless version with the paneled skirt, you may want to change the direction of the center skirt panels too.



Draw in a new grainline on these pieces, at 45 degrees to the original grainline.

You will need to cut these pieces on a single layer, then flip them along the center, since you are no longer cutting on the fold.

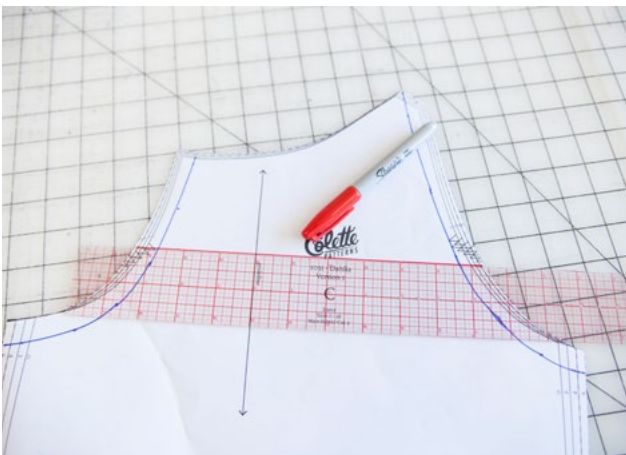
DRAW MATCH STRIPES

So now we've decided that the main seam to match on this dress is the sleeve.

Dahlia has a raglan sleeve, but this works with a set in sleeve as well.



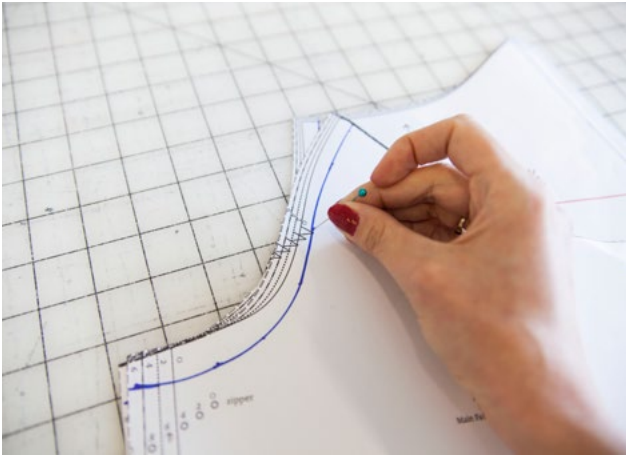
1. First, draw in the seam allowance on all the pattern pieces, including the sleeve. The reason for this is that you want your stripes to match at the seam where they are sewn, NOT at the raw edge. With curved and diagonal seams like this, a stripe can easily match at the raw edge, but not at the actual seam.



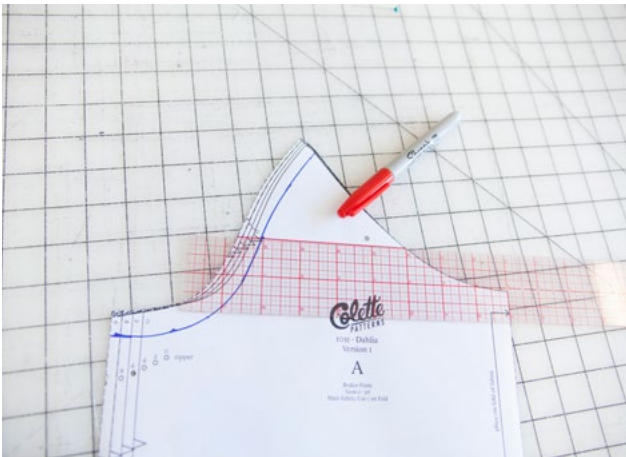
2. Mark a point along the seamline of the front of the sleeve where you would like to have a stripe meet the bodice. Usually about halfway up the sleeve cap is good, because it's a visible spot.
3. Use a pen and a ruler to draw a line on the sleeve from this point all the way across to the other side. Make sure the line is perpendicular (90 degrees) to the grainline.



4. Walk the bodice front with the sleeve along the seamline, beginning at the underarm.



5. When you get to the point you marked on the sleeve seamline, stop. Stick a pin through to mark this point on the bodice as well. On my pattern, this is where the red line meets the blue line.

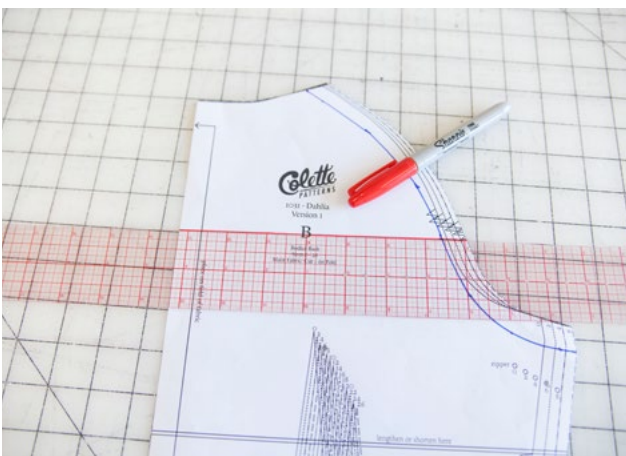


6. Draw another line from the point you marked with the pin across the bodice front. Again, this should be perpendicular to the grainline.



7. Now, you're going to repeat this for the bodice back. Walk the sleeve and bodice back together, beginning at the underarm.

8. When you reach the match stripe, mark again with a pin.



9. Draw another match stripe across the bodice back, from the point through to the other side. Again, this should be perpendicular to the grainline.
10. Now your sleeve is all nicely marked for cutting.

LAY YOUR FABRIC



1. Lay your fabric out and align the selvages, as usual.
2. You may want to adjust the fold of the fabric if you are using a plaid and will be cutting any pieces on the fold. You probably want your plaid to be symmetrical on the bodice, so make sure the fold is in a spot you're comfortable with. Cutting a plaid dress only to realize your stripes aren't centered is frustrating.



3. Carefully pin the selvages together, matching the stripes. Smooth out the fabric to make sure there are no lumps. If you've adjusted the fold, the selvages may not be exactly lined up, but the stripes should still be.

LAY YOUR PATTERN PIECES



1. Lay the bodice front and back pieces on the fold, aligning the match stripes with a prominent line on the fabric. Make sure the match stripes on each piece align with the same type of line in the plaid.
2. Cut these pieces out.



1. Next, lay the sleeve piece. Again, align the match stripe carefully with the same type of line in the plaid. You may need to play around with the placement, which is why this can take a little extra fabric to get right.



2. If you're just matching horizontal stripes, you can skip this step. But if you're matching a medium or large plaid, you might want to mirror the plaid at the armhole. Otherwise, the horizontal stripes of the plaid will match fine, but not the vertical ones. To do this, lay your front bodice on top of the sleeve piece, matching up the armhole edges.
3. Now slide the sleeve left or right, until the plaids form a continuous pattern. Notice how the plaid looks unbroken?
4. Once you have that sleeve in place, you can remove the bodice piece and cut the sleeve. You'll get a nice mirrored look at the front armhole seam now. You can use this same trick on any seam where you want to mirror the plaid! I did the same thing to match the plaids at the side seams.



1. Sew your garment together as usual, but take special care to align the stripes while sewing.
2. It can be helpful to hand baste areas with matching stripes before sewing the final seam, to prevent seams from shifting. Often, pins aren't enough to keep things perfectly on track, especially with curved areas.



That's it! Make sure to cut other pieces like the midriff with the new grainlines you drew in, and you are all set. That wasn't so hard, was it?

STILL NEED YOUR PATTERN? PICK IT UP AT [COLETTEPATTERNS.COM/SHOP/DAULIA](https://colettepatterns.com/shop/daulia)