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# Envelope Knit-and-Felt Bag

## by Sue Parker of Sheepfold



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This small bag is knitted loosely, in a single piece, then felted in your washing machine. During the felting process the bag will shrink considerably and become much sturdier. Any embellishments must be added after this felting stage.

The exact size of your finished bag will depend on wool and felting temperatures used, but an indication is given below.

The photographed example is made using Black Welsh Mountain wool, available from Sheepfold's online shop: <http://www.sheepfold.co.uk/online-shop/natural-wools-type/rapidcart-35/index.html>.

### You will need:

- Approx 100g aran weight pure wool (not machine washable or superwash varieties)
- 1 button, for fastening
- 1 pair of 5.5 mm straight needles
- 1 safety pin
- 8 stitch markers
- Wool needle to sew bag together and attach button, loop and fringing

### Approx finished size:

*Before felting:* width 17 cm, height 20 cm

*After felting:* width 16 cm, height 17 cm

### Instructions:

#### Body of bag:

Using the 5.5 mm needles and the pure wool, cast on 3 st. Knit 1 row. Next row, k1, make 1 stitch by picking up the loop between the two stitches (m1), k1, m1, k1 (5 sts). Knit 1 row. Next row, k1, m1, k3, m1, k1 (7 sts). Knit 1 row.

Place a safety pin on the right side of your work to ensure that all increases are made on the right side rows, then continue knitting and increasing 1 st either end of alternate rows until you have 29 sts on your needle. Knit 1 row. Attach a marker thread at each end of the last row.

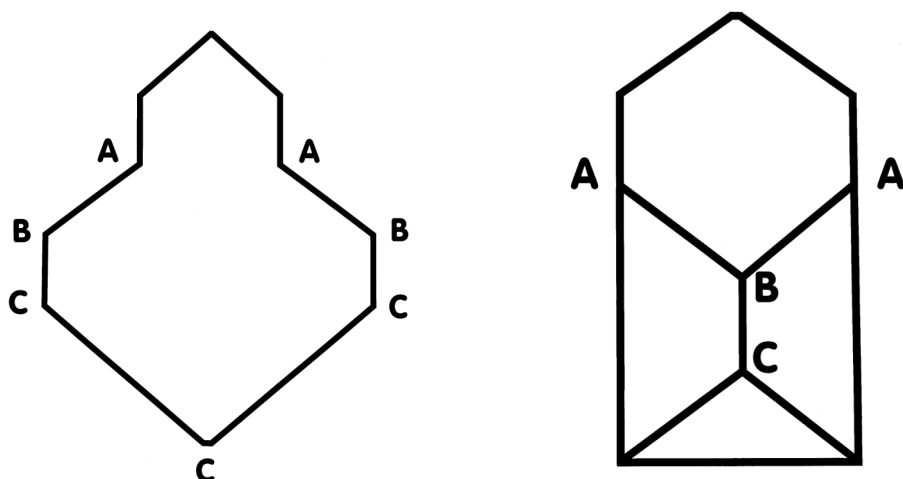
Keep working straight for 6 more rows (no increases). Place marker threads either end of the last row (A), then continue shaping by increasing 1 st at each end of alternate rows, as before, until there are 55 sts on your needle. Knit

1 row and mark the ends of the rows (B). Keeping the work straight, knit 6 more rows. Mark the ends of the rows (C).

Next row, k1, k2tog, k to the last 3 sts then k2tog, k1. Knit 1 row. These 2 rows set the pattern for decreasing at each end of alternate (right side) rows. Continue to decrease in this way until you have 5 stitches left. Next row, k1, k2tog twice. Next row, knit. Next row k1, k2tog. Next row k2tog then fasten off by pulling the yarn through the loop.

### Sewing together:

Using the marker threads to assist accurate placing, join the centre seam (BC) and diagonal seams (joining the 3 C's together) to the lower corners, as shown in these diagrams:



### Handle:

Cut 3 lengths of yarn, each 4 metres long and, holding the threads together, fold in half. Tie this loop to a door handle or back of chair and, working with 2 threads in each strand, plait to make a length approx 1.5 m long. Attach the handle to the bag about 1 cm from in from the edge at the upper fold of flap by threading in between the stitches. Make a knot in each end.

### Finishing:

Finish off all ends of yarn by weaving into the work, along the handle or seams where possible, before felting.

**Felting:**

Felt your bag in the washing machine by placing the knitted bag in a zippered mesh bag in your machine, with a couple of towels or pairs of jeans to give the necessary agitation. Add a small amount of washing powder, but no fabric conditioner. For the photographed bag, I used 2 washes on a 60° cycle with the time saving option and 500 spin cycle. A low level spin, if an available option on your machine, reduces the risk of crumpling your bag. When felted to the desired level, remove from your washing machine and place a plastic bag inside your felt bag. Stuff the plastic bag with crumpled newspaper to give a good shape and leave somewhere warm to dry out completely.

**Decoration:**

Make a button loop with three lengths of yarn, each 30 cm long, plaited and looped through at the point of the flap. Attach the button to the bag to align with the loop. Decorate the bag with a fringe made by wrapping yarn around a book to make equal lengths about 15 cm long. Sew these through the flap edges, knotting to keep in place.