

We Dress Bleurette

Dress with a Bib-Front – 1926 – Robe á Gilet

First are Suzanne Rivière's suggestions as to the fabrics for the dress: she recommends the dress be made of fabrics that are checked, striped, dotted, or even plaid. The bib-front is to be made of crêpe de Chine, but some alternatives she suggests are linen, batiste, organdy, cotton tulle, or silk voile. It should be white or a color that matches one of the colors in the dress fabric. Silk braid or ribbon is the trim. [Narrow commercial bias tape or bias strips of fabric would also be suitable.]

Suzanne tells us that this little dress should not be trimmed with lace, as it is not the right trim for a dress of this type—it is meant to be very tailored.

Cut the front of the dress on the straight grain fold of the fabric, and cut the back either on the fold as well, or on the straight grain with a seam allowance down the center back.

Sew the shoulder seams, finish them as you wish, and press open or to the back. Make the center back opening by one of these two methods, depending on which way you cut the dress back (none is specified in the original pattern):

- 1) cut along the fold of the center back to make a slit about $\frac{1}{2}$ the length of the back, and finish the opening with a continuous lapped placket
- 2) make a short seam from the hem up to about $\frac{1}{2}$ the length of the center back, and above the seam, turn under the seam allowances and make a narrow hem. Sew your choice of snap or hook closures to the center back opening, lapping the right back over the left.

Apply the trim around the neck and bib opening according to what sort of trim you are using and how you have finished the shoulder seams. If using braid, you can turn under the raw edge about $\frac{1}{8}$ " and apply the trim on top, or, if your shoulder seams are well finished, turn the raw edge toward the outside, and apply the trim on top. If you are using bias tape or strips, put right sides together, stitch it on, and then turn it to the inside, turn the raw edge under, and catch-stitch it to the inside, covering the seam. Finish the ends off by turning them in as you sew.

The sleeve edges are finished this way as well. You may finish the edges and then sew the side seams, or vice versa, whichever you choose.

Next make the *gilet* or bib-front. In the original directions it is pleated according to one's own ideas of how to do that, as if it were the bib of a nightgown or chemise. This was a common design of this time period and earlier. If you wish to use pressed pleats or stitched down pleats or tucks, begin with a rectangle of fabric, pleat or tuck it as desired, and then from it cut the bib-front piece as shown.

You could also use a bit of striped fabric to simulate tucks, cut the bib from a pre-tucked bit of vintage lingerie, or cut the bib as a flat piece of contrasting fabric. Trim the top neckline of the bib with the same trim used for the neck and bib opening and sleeve ends. Add a tiny ribbon or braid bow at the center front top, and tiny buttons or beads to simulate buttons down the center front.

Arrange the bib front behind the dress front opening, pin, and stitch (invisibly by hand or top stitch on the machine) it in place.

Sew the side seams. Press open or to the back.

Hem the dress (and sleeves, if you have not already). Suzanne suggests that you may want to cut the dress shorter by a little bit, and sandwich the raw edge of the hem between a strip of horsehair braid on the back and decorative braid or trim on the front. [You could also make a narrow dress hem and apply the trim over it.]

Bleurette is cautioned against admiring herself too much in the mirror wearing this dress, since being good is more important than the latest style of dress.