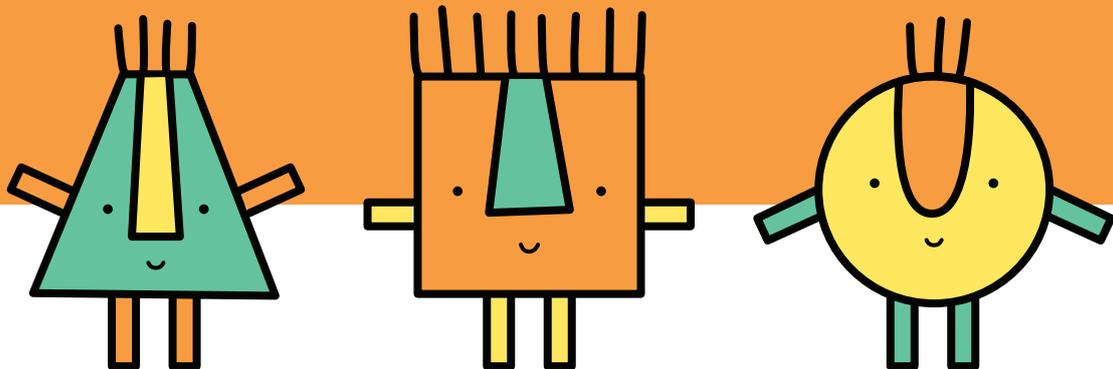


A WORKSHOP BY
Sew a Softie

**EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED
TO TEACH KIDS TO SEW**



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www.sewasoftie.com

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SEWING SUPPLIES



Needles

Avoid thick or blunt needles. They make sewing frustrating!

Chenille needles have a large eye and are easy to thread.

All needles are numbered: the higher the number, the smaller the needle. I use Chenille 20, 22 or 24.

Needle threaders

Not a necessity, but they are simple to use and can be helpful. There are lots of brands. I like Lo Ran threaders.

Thread

A wide range of threads are available.

Embroidery threads are thickest followed by Perle cotton. The thinnest thread is ordinary sewing thread.

I prefer ordinary sewing thread. It allows kids to use a smaller thinner needle which means it passes through fabric very smoothly and easily and this makes sewing an easy relaxing experience.

Also, ordinary sewing cotton is thin enough to double over and knot at both ends so the thread can't slip from the needle.

Felt

Felt is great to use with kids. It comes in bright colours and doesn't fray.

There are three basic kinds: wool felt which is usually expensive, wool blend which can be reasonably priced but not always easy to find, and acrylic which is usually the most economical and widely sold.

Always check out the felt you are buying. Quality varies from poor products that are hard, scratchy and may even tear to really soft strong products that are lovely to work with.

Scissors

Never use kiddy scissors! You'll need a good pair of scissors that can cut fabric cleanly!

Also, tell kids that we don't use our fabric scissors to cut paper! Paper blunts scissors. I always keep my fabric scissors separate from those I use to cut paper and I tie a piece of coloured thread to all my fabric scissors as an identifier to avoid mix-ups.

Again, lots of good brands. I like Kai and Fiskars.

Pins or sewing clips

These hold two pieces of fabric together so they don't shift while being sewn.

I use pins with coloured ball heads. They are sometimes called berry pins. They are easy to pick up and to insert and remove from fabric.

If you don't want to use pins, sewing clips are a great alternative. They look like tiny colourful washing pegs. Odd but true: some of the zenkis have started wearing them as accessories.

Wax pencil

Soft lead pencils will draw on felt but white wax pencils rub off more easily and stand out far better on dark felts. Staedtler market white wax pencils as white Lumocolor permanent glasochrom pencils.

Stuffing

There are lots of recyclable possibilities and each kind of stuffing will give a different feel to the project.

Polyester fibrefil is a good commercial option: it's economical, widely available and easy to use in a classroom situation.

Weighting material

Any dry non-perishable granular material can be used to fill softies instead of or together with soft stuffing. I use a weighting material like rice grains when I want a softie to sit up by itself without falling over or just to give it a bit more presence when you hold it.

Beware: weighting materials can be messy. Funnels can help to channel them into the softie with minimal spillage.

Glue

Not all fabric glues adhere well to felt so you will have to experiment with the options available to you.

Thick white glues like Aleenes usually work well on felt.

I use Bostik Glu Sticks. Unfortunately, they're not available in all countries.

TWO RULES I ALWAYS FOLLOW:

1. Use good quality supplies.
2. Check out supplies before using them.

STITCHES AND TECHNIQUES

Running stitch

A running stitch is quick and easy to master.

Think of this stitch as diving in and out of water like dolphins do. We go down and up in a single motion for a few stitches and then pull our thread through.

To see this again, go to my Youtube running stitch tutorial.

Starting and ending a line of stitches

To start or end a line of stitches I always use a backstitch. This acts as an anchor to prevent the thread being pulled through the fabric. You can go to my Youtube running stitch tutorial to see this again.

OTHER USEFUL TUTORIALS

How to thread your needle

How to make a knot in your thread

How to sew on a button (Great for kids who want to use buttons for facial features and decorative ideas)

How to sew a cross stitch (Another basic stitch with lots of uses. I often use them to make belly buttons)

How to make a French knot (A great way to make the pupil of eyes)

And if you want to try some other stitches:

How to sew a backstitch (A backstitch will give a continuous line rather than the broken dashed line of a running stitch)

How to sew an overstitch

CREATIVE SEWING SUPPORT

Sew a Softie's Facebook group is an active friendly forum in which you can seek advice. You can also contact me directly at trixi@sewasoftie.com.

Sew a Softie runs global sewing events every year. The Global Kids Sewing Party is particularly suitable for teachers and schools. It kicks off every March with thousands of kids from around the world sewing their own softies to gift to a person or group in their community.

My last book, *The Zenki Way*, is also especially suitable for teachers wanting to show their students how to design and make simple fun creative softies. In addition, it includes a useful section on how I organise and run my own sewing workshops.

You can find me at:

[Sew a Softie blog](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Youtube](#)

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