Step 1A The first step when draping the bustier is to apply style tape to your dress form to establish your guidelines and neckline styleline. Start by taping across the bust level from the left apex across to the right apex.
Step 1B Tape the desired neckline from center front to center back. At the side seam don’t drop lower than 1” from the armplate.
Step 1C For beginners, it is a good idea to apply your bust level tape from center front to the side seam. This will make it easier when balancing the side front panel. Be sure the tape is level to the floor.
Step 1D We will be using the princess lines of the dress form both front and back as the princess stylelines for this bustier.
Step 2A For the skirt, measure down 7” from the bottom of the waist tape. Apply the hip style tape horizontally around the right half of the dress form. You must be sure that the hipline is parallel to the floor.
Module 1 – Prepare the Dress Form

Step 2B You can check this by resting an L Square on the table and find the number on the ruler that corresponds to center front at the bottom of the hip tape. Your style tape should align at that number as you turn the dress form from front to back. Make any adjustment to the tape as needed so that the hipline is parallel to the table and the floor.
Step 1A Next, you need to record measurements to prep your muslin panels. Begin by measuring from the neckline/princess intersection to the bottom of the waist tape then add 3”, this will be the length of both your center front and side front panels.
**Step 1B** Then, measure from apex to center front plus add 3”. This is the width of your muslin center front panel.
Step 1C Measure across at the widest part of the side front panel from side seam to apex then add 3”. This is the width of the side front panel.
Step 2A At the side seam, measure from the neckline/side seam intersection to the waist and add 3”. This will be the length of both the muslin center back and side back panels.
Step 2B For the width of the side back panel, measure across the widest part from princess to the side seam and add 3".
**Step 2C** For the center back panel measure across the widest part, from center back to princess, and add 3".
Step 3A Determine the length of the front and back skirt blocks by measuring from the waist to the desired length of the skirt, and then add 4”. Record this measurement.
Step 3B The width of the front and back skirt blocks will each be half the width of the muslin or 24” wide by the desired length. In this case, each skirt will measure 24” wide x 26” long.
Module 3 – Prepare Muslin Blocks

**Step 1A** Prepare your bustier panels and skirt panels by referring to your recorded measurements. Always tear off the selvage edges of your muslin yardage first.
Step 1B For each of your required panels you will measure, clip and then tear the muslin. Make sure that you tear each of the muslin blocks on the correct grain. The length measurement of a panel should be torn in the muslin’s warp or lengthgrain and the width measurement of a panel should be torn along the weft or cross grain of the muslin.
Step 2 Press your front and back muslin blocks, without steam, to flatten the edges. Always press in the direction of the grain. Turn the blocks over and press the other side.
Module 3 – Prepare Muslin Blocks

Step 3A Use your L square to check your front & back muslin pieces, so that the corners and your grains are at right angles to each other. Pull the corners to get the pieces to block perfectly.
Step 3B Flip the blocks over and check that the other edge is at a right angle. It is very important that your grainlines are straight when draping. Continue this process until you edges align with the right angle of the L Square.
Step 4A Once your pieces are perfectly blocked give a final pressing, this time using steam. Again, remember to press in the direction of the grain. Do this for all of the bodice and skirt muslin block pieces.
Step 4B For the bustier you will have, a center back, a side back, and side front and a center front panel.
Step 4C For the skirt you will have a front and a back.
Step 1A For draping purposes you will need to mark guidelines on all of your panels. Begin on the center front panel, come in 1” from the right side length grain edge and draw a guideline down, this is center front.
Step 1B Find the midway point of the front side panel and draw a guideline down the length of the panel, this is your side front panel balance guideline. Come down from the top approximately 6” and draw a guideline across the width of the panel. This is the bust level guideline.
**Step 1C** Find the midway point of the side back panel and draw a guideline down. This is your side back panel balance guideline. Come in 1” from the left side of the center back panel and draw a guideline down, this is the center back.
Step 2A Next, prepare the skirt blocks. Come in 1” from the left and right side of the muslin and draw a guideline down the length grain on each side. One side will represent the side seam and the other will be the center line.
Step 2B Measure down 9” from the top of the each of the skirt blocks, then draw a guideline across the width of the muslin, this denotes the hip guideline.
Module 5 – Draping & Marking Bustier Center Front Panel

**Step 1** Begin the bustier drape by bending back the center front panel’s 1” extension then fingerpress the edge. Never iron this fold as it can cause the grain to stretch.
Step 2A Align the center front panel to the center front of the dress form. Pin at the neckline/center front intersection with approximately 2” of excess muslin above the pinning.
Step 2B Continue to pin along center front, trapping bust ease above and below the apex.
Step 2C Add pins along center front and then secure a pin at the center front/waistline intersection at the bottom of the waist tape.
Step 2D Smooth the muslin along the neckline to the princess line of the dress form and secure it with pins.
Step 2E Pin along the princess line feeling the ridge of the dress form’s princess seam with your fingers.
Step 2F As you pin under the apex, continue to smooth the muslin from center front to the princess seam.
Step 2G Finish pinning the center front princess by securing a pin at the princess/waistline intersection.
Step 3A Looking through the muslin, use your pencil to begin the marking process. Work in a counterclockwise direction, starting with a dash at the center front/neckline intersection. Then, continue marking using a series of dots along the top of the neckline tape until you reach the princess line. Using dots while marking will make it easier for trueing you lines later.
Step 3B Place a crossmark at the neckline/princess intersection.
Step 3C Now, dot along the princess style line in between the pins until you reach the apex. Add a crossmark at the apex and then continue to dot along the princess from the apex to the bottom of the waist tape. Place a crossmark at the princess/waistline intersection.
Step 3D Dot along the bottom of the waist tape until you reach the center front where you will place a dash mark.
Step 3E Make sure that you have captured all of your markings and then unpin the center front drape from the dress form.
Module 6 – Draping & Marking Bustier Side Front Panel

**Step 1** In preparation for aligning the side front panel’s balance guideline, use your tape measure to find the midway point between the side seam and the apex at bust level. Sink a pin into the dress form at that point. If you decide to tape the bust level from apex to side seam do that now. Place a pin on your side front muslin panel at the midway guideline/bust level intersection and align it with the midway bust level/style tape of the dress form.
Module 6 – Draping & Marking Bustier Side Front Panel

Step 2A Align the muslin’s midway/bust level intersection with the midway/bust level intersection on the dress form. Secure a pin at the princess/neck style line intersection.
Step 2B Looking through the muslin, level the muslin’s bust level guideline with that of the dress form’s, then place a holding pin and another pin at the neck/princess intersection.
Step 2C Once you know that the bust level guideline aligns with the bust level tape of the dress form, smooth the balance guideline down to the waistline. Pick up a pinch of ease at the waistline here and secure it with a pin. Balancing the grain here will allow you to match a plaid or horizontal stripe at the side seam.
Step 2D Slash into the balance guideline below the waist to within 1/4” of the waist tape. This releases the muslin over the high hip.
Step 2E Pin along the balance guideline from the waistline to neckline.
Module 6 – Draping & Marking Bustier Side Front Panel

**Step 2F** Now we will pin the muslin along the dress form’s princess line. Begin by smoothing the muslin across the waist and then placing a pin at the princess/waist intersection.
Step 2G Feeling through the muslin with your fingers, place pins along the princess line from waist to apex. Make sure that the muslin’s bust level guideline is level with the bust level style tape of the dress form. Notice how you will be trapping ease between the pins as you get near the apex.
Step 2H Continue pinning and feeling the princess line with your fingers as you go. Smooth the muslin flat as you pin. Place a pin at the neckline/princess intersection and along the neckline until you reach the balance guideline.
Step 2I Level the bust guideline at the side seam and secure it with a pin.
Module 6 – Draping & Marking Bustier Side Front Panel

Step 2J Smooth the muslin at the neckline and secure it with pins to the side seam.
Step 2K Smooth the muslin below the bust level to the side seam and place a pin at the waistline/side seam intersection.
Step 3A Looking and feeling through the muslin, begin marking the side front panel in a counterclockwise direction starting with a crossmark at the princess/neckline intersection and then a series of dots along the princess line to the apex.
Step 3B At the apex, in the middle of the style tape, place a crossmark.
Step 3C Continue to dot along the princess from the apex to the waistline. Place a crossmark at the princess/waist intersection below the waist tape.
Step 3D Dot along the bottom of the waist tape until you reach the side seam then place a crossmark at the side seam/waist intersection.
Module 6 – Draping & Marking Bustier Side Front Panel

**Step 3E** Place a crossmark at the side seam/neckline intersection then dot along the neckline until you reach the princess line crossmark.
Step 3F Make sure that you have captured all of your markings and then unpin the side front drape from the dress form.
Step 1 Begin draping the center back panel by folding back and fingerpressing the 1” extension. Again, never iron this fold as it will stretch the grain.
Step 2A Align the center back panel to the center back of the dress form. Pin at the neckline/center back intersection with approximately 2” of excess muslin above the pinning.
Step 2B Continue to pin along center back from the neck to the bottom of the waist tape.
Step 2C As we did for the front, we will be using the dress form’s princess line for the back drape.
Step 2D Smooth the muslin over from center back. Place pins along the neckline style tape and down along the princess line, feeling the line with your fingers as you pin.
**Step 2E** Pick up ease at the center of the panel at the waist and secure it with a pin. Finish with a pin at the princess/waistline intersection.
Step 3A Begin marking the center back panel in a clockwise manner beginning with a dash at the center back/neckline intersection.
Step 3B Dot along the top of the neckline style tape, looking through the muslin as you mark until you reach the princess line.
Step 3C Place a crossmark at the neckline/princess intersection and then continue to dot along the princess line, feeling for and ending with a crossmark at the princess/waistline intersection at the bottom of the waist tape.
**Step 3D** Dot along the muslin at the bottom of the waist tape until you reach center back, then place a dash.
Module 7 – Draping & Marking Bustier Center Back Panel

Step 3E Check to be sure that you have captured all of your markings then remove the center back drape from the dress form.
Step 1 In preparation for aligning the side front panel’s balance guideline, use your tape measure to find the midway point between the princess line and the side seam. Sink a pin into the dress form at that point.
Step 2A Align the balance guideline of the muslin block with the midway pin. Make sure that you have approximately 1 1/2” worth of excess muslin above the neck styleline so that you have enough for seam allowance at the side seam/neckline intersection. Pin at the balance guideline/neckline intersection.
Step 2B As you smooth the muslin down to the waistline along the balance guideline, make sure that the line is perpendicular to the floor and not shifting to the front or back. Place a pin at the balance guideline/waistline intersection at the bottom of the waist tape.
Step 2C Pin along the balance guideline from the waist to the neckline. It is important for the guideline to be at a right angle to the floor especially when matching a plaid or horizontal stripe.
Step 2D Place a holding pin at the top of the muslin block and then slash into the balance guideline within 1/4” of the waistline. This releases the hip.
Step 2E Now we will pin the muslin along the princess line. Feeling through the muslin with your fingers, place pins along the princess line from the waist to the neckline.
Step 2F Continue to pin along the top of the neckline style tape to the side seam. Smooth the muslin down along the side seam and secure a pin at the side seam/waistline intersection at the bottom of the waist tape.
Step 2G Secure a pin at the princess/waistline intersection and another between the side seam and balance guideline at the bottom of the waist tape.
Step 3A Mark the side back panel with a crossmark at the side seam/waistline intersection at the bottom of the waist tape.
Step 3B  Continue to dot the muslin along the bottom of the waist tape until you reach the princess seam where you will place a crossmark.
Step 3C Feeling for the dress form’s princess line with your fingers, dot along the princess line from the waist to the neckline. Crossmark the neck/princess intersection.
Step 3D Dot along the back neckline until you reach the side seam where you will place a crossmark.
Step 3E Make sure that you have captured all of your markings and then unpin the side back drape from the dress form.
Module 9 – Trueing the Bustier Drape

Step 1A Start with your center front bodice drape face up on the table with the fold facing you. With your styling curve, true the neckline from center front to the princess crossmark.
Step 1B With your hip curve, true the princess seam. Flip the curve over to connect the dots for a nice smooth line.
Module 9 – Trueing the Bustier Drape

Step 1C Use your clear plastic ruler to add 1/2 inch seam allowance to the neckline and princess seam, pivoting the ruler as you mark.
Module 9 – Trueing the Bustier Drape

**Step 1D** Trim away the excess fabric around the neck and princess line with your fabric shears.
Step 2A Next we will true the side front panel. Use your clear plastic ruler to connect the side seam crossmark to the waist crossmark. Always draw the lines a bit beyond the crossmarks.
Step 2B Use your hip curve to true the neckline from side seam to princess line.
Step 2C With your styling curve, true the princess seam of the side panel. You will have to readjust the styling curve and flip the curve to connect the dots and to get the best possible line.
Module 9 – Trueing the Bustier Drape

Step 2D Add ½” seam allowance with your clear plastic ruler at the neckline.
Step 2E Add 1” seam allowance to the side seam and 1/2” seam allowance to the princess seam. In the fashion industry you would use 3/8” seam allowance for production but here we are using 1/2” in case we need to make fit adjustments.
Step 2F Trim the excess muslin with your fabric shears along the neckline, the side seam and the princess seam.
Step 3A With the center back panel face up and the fold positioned away from you, square a line off the neckline at center back with your clear plastic ruler for about 1".
Step 3B Then, true the rest of the back neckline with your hip curve, connecting the dots.
Step 3C Use your hip curve to true the back princess seam from waistline to neckline.
Module 9 – Trueing the Bustier Drape

**Step 3D** Add 1/2” seam allowance to the neckline and the princess seam.
Module 9 – Trueing the Bustier Drape

Step 3E Cut away the excess muslin at the neckline and princess seam.
Step 4A With the side back panel face up, use your clear plastic ruler to connect the side seam crossmark to the waistline crossmark.
Module 9 – Trueing the Bustier Drape

Step 4B Use your hip curve to true the side back panel’s neckline and the princess seam.
Step 4C With your clear plastic ruler, add 1/2” seam allowance to the neckline and to the princess seam neckline to waistline.
Step 4D Then add 1” seam allowance to the side seam from waistline to neckline.
Step 4E Cut away the excess muslin at the neckline, side seam and princess seam.
Step 1 Once all of your bustier panels have been trued, you will begin the process of pinning them together in preparation for trueing the waistline.
Module 10 – Bustier Final Steps

Step 2A Start by joining the side front panel over the center front panel beginning at the apex. Fingerpress the seam allowance and pin the side panel over the front panel.
Step 2B Fingerpress, match-up and pin the neckline/princess intersection together and then the area above the apex. Your pins should be inserted exactly on the seam line fold and at a right angle to the seam.
Step 2C Next, fingerpress the side front waistline seam allowance, match up the crossmark to the center front waist crossmark and pin them together.
Step 2D Continue pinning the princess side front seam over the princess center front panel by cupping the apex in your hands. This makes it easier to pin since this area is curved and has some ease between the pins.
Step 2E Complete the pinning of these panels, side over the front, on the table.
Step 3A Next, fingerpress, match-up and pin the center back panel over the side back panel at the neckline.
Step 3B Then fingerpress, match-up and pin the center back waist crossmark over the side back waist crossmark.
Step 3C Fingerpress the center back princess seam and finish pinning the back princess seam over the side back panel princess seam.
Step 4A Join the side seams, back over front. Fold back the seam allowance on the side back panel, match-up the neckline and pin them together.
Step 4B Match-up the crossmarks at the waistline and pin the side back panel over the side front panel. Add more pins to complete the seam.
Step 5A Now that the panels are all connected, we can true the waistline. Begin by squaring a line off the center back waistline with your clear plastic ruler for about 1”.
Step 5B Square a line off the center front waistline for about 1” with your clear plastic ruler.
Step 5C Using your hip curve, connect the back waistline from the squared line at center back, connecting the dots, until you reach the side seam.
Step 5D Flip the hip curve and connect the front waistline from the side seam, connecting the dots until you reach the squared line at center front.
Step 5E Add 1/2” seam allowance to the waistline with your clear plastic ruler, from front to back.
Step 5F Trim away the excess muslin at the waistline and at the side seam with your fabric shears.
Step 5G The last step in draping a bustier is to add notches to the princess seams.
Step 5H Transfer the apex notch from the center panel to the side panel on the princess seam.
Step 5I Place a notch 1 1/2” above the apex and another at 1 1/2” below the apex, using your clear plastic ruler. Notch marks are always drawn at a right angle to the seam.
Step 5J On the back princess seam, measure down 2” from the neck stitching line and place a notch. Place a second notch 1/2” below the first.
Step 5K Now, you use your sewing machine to sew a holding stitch along the bustier’s neck-line to keep it from stretching. Set your machine to between 9 – 10 stitches per inch and begin stitching along the neck stitching line from the back princess seam to the front princess seam. This will help stabilize the bias area between the princess seams.
Step 5L Put the bustier drape back on the dress form the way you draped it, pinning along center front, the side seam and along the center back, to check it for fit.
Step 5M This is the finished bustier portion of the dress.
Step 1 In preparation for draping the skirt, you will first need to gather the hipline on both of your skirt blocks.
Step 2A At your sewing machine, switch your machine foot to a shirring foot. Using a shirring foot will be much faster than trying to create gathers manually.
Step 2B Line up the skirt’s hip guideline with the sewing machine needle. Place your left finger behind the shirring foot and apply a bit of pressure against foot as you sew gathers along the hip guideline. This will help create even more gathers. You will need to release and then reapply pressure every few inches as you stitch from one end of the hipline to the other. Gather both skirt blocks, front and back.
Step 3A Now you are ready to join the 2 skirt blocks together at the side seam. With the 9” down from the top end of the muslin to your right, bend back the 1” seam allowance on the block that is farthest away from you. That block will be your skirt back.
Step 3B Join the back skirt over the front beginning at the hip guideline. Place your pin at a right angle to the seam.
Step 3C Continue to fingerpress the 1” seam allowance and then pin from hip to waist.
Module 11 – Skirt Prep

Step 3D Complete the side seam pinning from hip to hem. Make sure that you are pinning exactly on the fold.
Step 1 Bend back and fingerpress the 1” extension on both front and back skirt in preparation for draping.
Step 2 Align the center front hip guideline of the muslin to the hip style tape on the dress form. Secure it with double pins.
Step 3 Pin the muslin to the form at the center front/waist intersection.
Step 4 Place a temporary holding pin on the skirt at the back in order to drape the front. Secure the muslin with a pin at the center front/torso intersection.
Step 5 Release the temporary holding pin and align the muslin’s side seam/hip guideline to the side seam/hip style tape intersection of the dress form. You will need to double pin this area due to the weight of the skirt.
Step 6 Smooth the muslin up and over the hip. Pin the muslin to the waist/side seam intersection.
Step 7 Secure a pin at the side seam/torso intersection.
Step 8 Align and double pin the muslin’s center back/hip intersection to the dress form’s center back/hip style tape. Be sure that you are pinning at the same place on the style tape. Choose either the top of the tape or the bottom but be consistent. Pinning at the top on the front and at the bottom on the back will throw off the balance of the skirt.
Step 9 Smooth the muslin up from the hip and secure a pin at the center back/waist intersection.
Step 10 Secure the muslin at the center back/torso intersection with a pin.
Step 11 Before pinning the back hip you must first evenly distribute the shirring across the back from center back to the side seam then align and double pin the hip guideline of the muslin to the hip style tape of the dress form.
Step 12 Continue to the front skirt. Evenly distribute the gathers then align and double pin the muslin’s hip guideline to hip style tape of the dress form, from side seam to center front.
Step 13A With a 20” long piece of non-adhesive style tape, pin one end of the style tape to the center front waist of the dress form. Then, as you distribute the skirt fullness at the waist with your fingers, from center front to the side seam, pull on the style tape to hold the gathers in place and secure the tape at the side seam/waist intersection with a pin.
Step 13B Repeat this process on the back, distributing the skirt fullness as you hold the style tape tight against the waist. Once you have evenly distributed the gathers, secure the style tape to the center back/waist intersection.
Step 14 Now, go back in and make sure that you gathering folds are vertical and not diagonal. Spend time to even out the gathers along the waist and avoid creating any large size folds. Pull on the top edge of the muslin to insure that the muslin in the high hip area doesn’t bag.
Step 1 Begin marking the waistline with your pencil and place a dash at the center front/waist intersection.
Step 2 Place a series of dots along and in between the folds on the waistline from front to back. It is a good idea to make as many dot marks as possible so that later, when trueing the waistline, it will be that much easier to true. We are using a soft 6B pencil for this lesson instead of a #2, so that the markings will more easily visible. If you choose to use a 6B pencil, you will need to sharpen the pencil point more often.
Step 3 Once you have finished marking the waist, unpin and remove the waist tape from the dress form.
Step 4 Then unpin the skirt drape and remove the skirt drape from the dress form.
Step 5 Place the skirt drape flat on the table and remove the shirring stitching at the hip guideline. Do this by pulling on the stitches from back to front, snapping the threads as you go.
Step 6 Pull out the shirring threads, alternating directions from front to back, until all of the shirring thread is removed.
Step 7A Start the trueing process by first squaring a line off the center back waist for about 1” with your clear plastic ruler.
Step 7B Use your hip curve to true the back waistline. Reposition the hip curve and connect the dots until you reach the side seam. You may not be able to connect each and every dot exactly and that is fine, as long as you create a nice smooth line with your hip curve.
Step 7C Square a line off center front for about 1” with your clear plastic ruler. Reposition the hip curve and connect the dots until you reach the side seam. Again, you may not be able to connect each dot exactly but the goal is to create a nice smooth line with your hip curve.
Step 7D Add 1/2” seam allowance to the waistline from back to front.
Step 7E Reposition your side seam pins at the waist in preparation for cutting the excess seam allowance at the waist. Cut the excess from back to front.
Step 8 With the iron, use steam to press the hip guideline shirring line flat, front to back.
Step 9A Now, with the skirt drape flat on the table, measure up 2” from the bottom edge of the skirt and draw in the hem fold line, from back to front, using your clear plastic ruler.
Step 9B Pin the 2” hem up starting from center back to center front. Your pins should be placed at a right angle to the hem fold.
Step 1 Using your shirring foot, run a shirring stitch with your sewing machine along the waist stitching line from back to front. Remember to use the finger behind the foot technique to achieve maximum gathers while stitching.
Step 2A Next, you will join the bustier to the skirt. Fold the bustier’s seam allowance under and pin in a horizontal direction, parallel to the waist seam, beginning at the side seam.
Step 2B Join the bustier’s center front waist over the center front skirt next, then continue to parallel pin the waist together until you reach the side seam. Continue to ease the gathers as you pin.
Step 2C Now pin the bustier’s center back waist over the center back of the skirt. Ease the gathers between the pins as you parallel pin the bustier to the skirt.
Step 3A Add a front waist notch with your red pencil, 2” away from the side seam, marking both the bustier and the skirt.
Step 3B Add double notches on the back waist. The first notch is measured 2” away from the side seam and the other 1/2” away from the first, marking both the bustier and the skirt.
**Step 4A** Pin the dress back on the dress form the way you draped it, pinning along the center front, apex, waist, hip and torso, on the side seam and along the center back neckline, bodice, waist, hip and torso.
Step 4B This is your finished bustier dress.