

Pencil Toppers © Colleen Babcock 2008

These pencil toppers are quick and easy to make with so many variations. Here are the three characters that I came up with.

Beryl is a graduate student in creative writing. Her father thinks her degree is a waste of time. Not a day goes by that he doesn't tell Beryl to get the lead out and finish with school. But Beryl isn't ready to write off academia yet, after all she works as a supermodel and that more than pays for her tuition. However, Beryl's mother worries that she is thin as a pencil. Only Beryl's grandmother is as proud of her degree as she is of her modelling career and brags that Beryl is 'such a sharp girl'.



Leda is one of Beryl's model friends. Leda loves designer labels and luxury items. But Leda only wears fake fur as she is the face of PETA (Pencils for the Ethical Treatment of Animals).

And this is Tracey. Tracey loves modelling the bridal wear at the end of the catwalk shows. She fancies herself a bit of a comedian but as her memory is a bit sketchy she tends to forget the punch lines, so her jokes go down like a lead balloon. Bless.



Supply List (for one pencil topper)

- Piece of high thread count cotton fabric for flesh, approx. 4" x 9" (10cm x 23cm)
- Loose hair fibre such as mohair
- Standard sewing equipment: sewing machine, pins, sewing shears etc.
- Mechanical pencil
- Cotton wrapped polyester thread (such as *Gutermann*) to match fabrics
- High Quality stuffing (I prefer *Fairfields*)
- Haemostats
- Strong thread to match skin colour fabric for sculpting
- Hand sewing needles including; a doll sculpting needle (I prefer *John James Long Darners #7*) and a long (approx 5") doll needle
- *PrismaColour* Pencils – the colours you use will depend on the skin colour you choose, see instructions for some suggestions

- *Zig Millennium Pens* – nib size 0.005 in brown and black
- White Gel Pen for highlight on pupil
- Fabric glue (*Fabric TAC or Hi-Tac Fabric Glue*) or Tacky Glue
- A pencil to glue the head to
- Spray fixative (*Krylon or Winsor & Newton*)
- Various items for embellishment such as: felt for a hat and a ladies sock for a scarf (Beryl), a piece of fur trim (Leda), a scrap of lace and miniature fake flowers (Tracey) or anything else you can imagine to make a headdress/hat or trim around the neck.

General Directions

Read the pattern through before beginning.

Pattern pieces should be copied onto card stock and cut out exactly on the line. Trace the pattern using a mechanical pencil especially for the head pieces. If you prefer, you may use a purple fade-away marker. When the fabric is particularly dark, a gel pen can be used to trace lines, but the lines will not be removable, so be sure the lines cannot be seen if you choose this option!

Note that a solid line on the pattern pieces indicates that you trace and sew directly on this line. Then you cut out around the pattern leaving a 1/8" seam allowance. A solid line with a dotted line indicates that a seam allowance has been included meaning that you cut out the pattern piece directly on the outer solid line. All seam allowances are 1/8" unless otherwise stated.

Change your sewing machine needle before sewing.

I also use an open toe foot on my sewing machine.

Your stitch length should be set to 1.5 which is 15 stitches per inch. Remember to backstitch at the beginning and end of every seam so that your seams don't come apart except when sewing a gathering stitch.

Let's get started with the fun part!

Tracing, Sewing, Turning and Stuffing the Head

1. Fold your piece of flesh fabric so that one end has right sides together on the straight of grain, the other half of the length should be folded on the diagonal. Lay the head back pattern on the bias on the straight folded end and lay the head front pattern so that the part of the pattern marked 'fold' is lying on the diagonal fold of the fabric. Trace the head front and back onto



the wrong side of the flesh fabric using a mechanical pencil. Be sure to transfer the mark at the bottom of the head front.

2. Sew the curve of the head-back leaving the tab at the back open. Sew down the front of the face from the forehead to the end of the nose (right at the fold). Then sew from fold at the chin to the mark on the bottom of the head front.

Cut out both pieces. When you cut out the face front and back leave a $\frac{1}{8}$ " seam allowance along the seams.

Refer to the picture to the right to see how to cut out the face front. Notice that there is a distinct notch in the chin area where the seam ends on the face front and the cut line starts on the face back. This notch is important as without it the chin shape will not be nearly so cute and pointy.



You'll notice the fabric colour I've used here is different. This step is harder to see on darker fabrics, so I used a different fabric to show this step.

3. Turn the head front right side out. Slide it into the head back with right sides together. Match the seams at the top and bottom of the head and pin.



4. Machine sew all the way around the head. Note that the head piece is small but you can do it – flatten the bit around the needle and just let the rest bunch. If you struggle with machine sewing small things, hand baste the head pieces together and then machine sew (getting rid of the pins makes it easier).
5. Using your haemostats, reach into the head through the opening and pull the head right side out. You need to spend a little time coaxing out the nose and chin.



6. Stuff head firmly through the opening. Push stuffing up to nose and chin. Once the head is stuffed, use the tip of a John James Long Darnier #7 to scoop stuffing into the nose and chin areas. Just stick the tip of the needle into the fabric near the tip of the nose and dig gently into the stuffing to pull it into the nose area. Warning: be gentle or you could create a hole. Lastly, take smaller pieces of stuffing and stuff the cheeks using the haemostats and a rotating wrist action to shape the cheek area

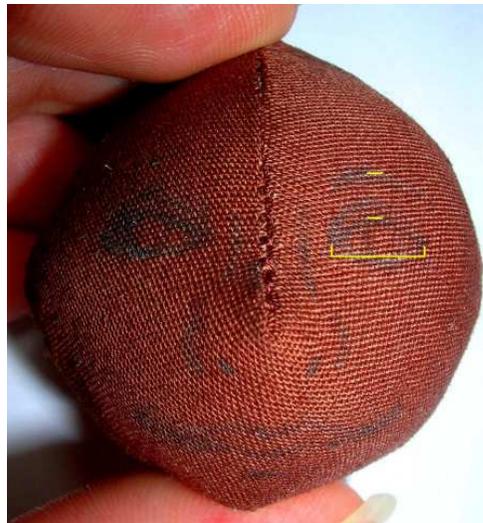
Drawing, Sculpting and Colouring the Face

7. The front seam running down the face divides the face in half lengthwise for you. Now very lightly with your mechanical pencil, draw a line at the halfway point, horizontally.

Divide your pencilled-in horizontal line into equal fifths. I measure these to make sure they are all even. If you get the proportion wrong now it will come back to haunt you later. I mark clearly with my pencil where the actual eyes will rest.

Measure the width of the eye.

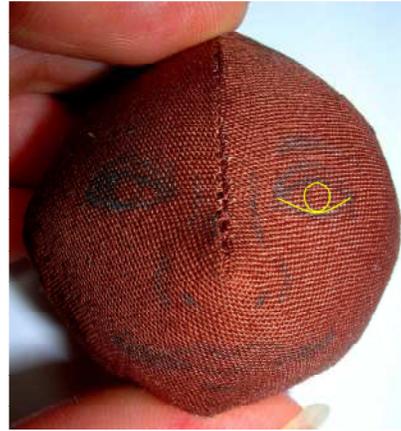
That same measurement taken from the base line of the eye up is approximately where the eyebrow would sit. So now you have a mark for the base line of the eye and the height of the eyebrow. Half way between these marks is where the bottom of the eyelid would sit.



Mark this point.

In the pictures you will see a completely drawn face with the marks I use along the way given in yellow on the right hand side.

8. Next take the straight line you drew for the eye's base line in the step above and curve it up slightly at both ends. Then you can pencil in the shape of the iris as I have done at the right. The top of the iris should hit your eyelid mark (halfway between the baseline of the eye and the eyebrow mark). The eyelid will partially cover the top of the iris as the full round shape of the iris is not usually seen (unless someone is REALLY surprised)

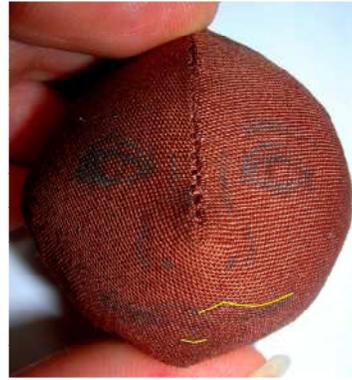


9. Draw in the top curve of the eye. Draw in your eye creases and eyebrows. Think about how wide you want the eyelid to be. To get a pretty arch to the eyebrow, the highest point of the arch should line up with the outside edge of the iris.



10. Dot in some nostrils. I drew these in just slightly less than $\frac{1}{8}$ " to either side of the centre seam just below the nose 'bulge' where the seam ends. Then draw in the flares of the nose, making sure they line up with the inside corner of the eye.
11. The outside corners of an unsmiling mouth line up with the pupils of the eye. So put a little mark on either side of the face just past the pupils (we like smiles, right?). Draw a straight line in the middle of the bottom third of the face between these two marks. Then soften this line so that it dips in the middle (the bit just under the nose) and turns up slightly on the ends.

12. Draw a distinct V shape for the cupid's bow and curve the line of the top lip down so it meets the middle line. Draw a small curved line indicating the bottom of the bottom of the lip. We are going to create the look of the lip with shading rather than drawing in the full line for the bottom lip.



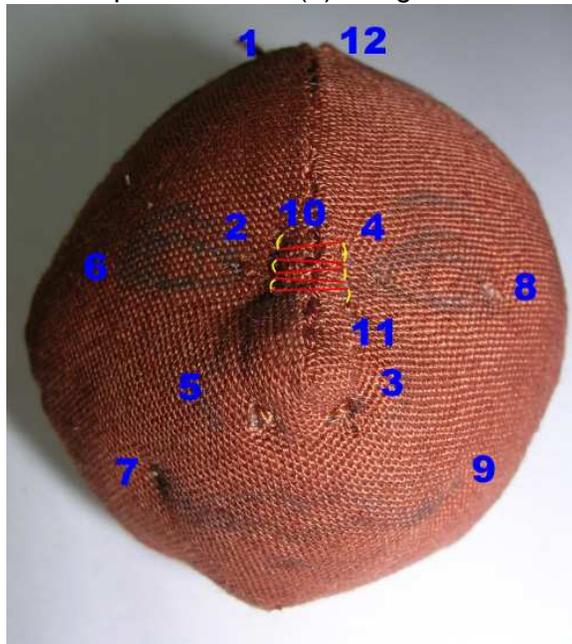
13. Pencil in the bridge of the nose. Do not pencil in the bridge of the nose all the way to the nose flares. I also like to use the tip of a needle to scoop stuffing into the flares of the nostrils and into the tip of the nose at this point.
14. To sculpt the face start off with a James Long Darner #7 needle threaded with about ½ yard (or metre) strong carpet or upholstery thread. Anchor the thread at the top of the head (1). Angle the needle down to 2 at the inner eye.

Please note that all stitches are taken inside the head except when otherwise stated. When you come out at a point, move over a few threads and re-enter, travelling to the next point.

Move from 2 and go across to 3 at the nostril. Pull on the thread gently to pull the nostril up into shape. From 3 go up to 4 at the

inner eye. From 4 go down to 5, again, pulling as evenly as possible so that the nostril matches the first one you sculpted. Then travel across to 6. Here you are shaping the eyes so pull on the thread gently to give just slight shaping.

From 6 travel down to 7 at the outside corner of the mouth, pulling up slightly to give a small smile. Then, up to 8 which is the opposite outer eye, then back down to 9 at the other side of the mouth, again pulling on the thread slightly to create an evenly matched smile. From 9 travel to the top of the marked lines for the bridge of the nose.



From where you exited at 10, take a stitch down a few threads on the outside of the fabric. When you re-enter, take the needle to the other side of the bridge of the nose beneath the fabric surface, scooping under some stuffing to create a more distinct shape for the bridge of the nose. Then take a stitch down a few threads on the line that you've drawn for the bridge of the nose. Again, take the needle to the other side of the bridge, scooping under some stuffing to create a more distinct shape. Continue down the bridge of the nose in this way. I find it easier to pinch the bridge of the nose as I go, this helps take the tension off the thread and the fabric as you pull the thread when creating the shape. Also, try to keep your stitches even. I've done a little diagram to assist the more visual people. The yellow lines indicate the stitches on the outside of the fabric (try and keep these small – I have shown them slightly bigger so you can actually see them). The red lines indicate where you will cross under the bridge of the nose travelling through the head, under the fabric.

When you are done the bridge (point 11), go back up to the top of the head (12) and anchor off. Just to be safe, I 'bury' the tail of my thread in the head.

15. Now on to colouring the face. You can make your pencil toppers with any colour of skin you'd like, so I've given some suggested colours for white and for black skin. These are not the only colours you can use, they are just suggestions.

Black skin:

Shading – Dark brown

Midtone – Terracotta

Highlight – Peach

Blush – Orange/Poppy red

Iris – 3 colours such as Spanish Orange, Burnt Sienna, Dark Brown or Lime, Sienna Brown, Dark Brown

Lips – Pink with Burnt Sienna over top, Peach as highlight

White Skin:

Shading – Burnt Sienna

Mid-tone – Cream

Highlight – White

Blush – Pink or Scarlet Lake

Iris – 3 colours such as 3 different blues or greens, maybe mix in some lavender or use colours given for black skin for brown eyes

Lips – Peach with Pink or Pink with Scarlet lake, white as a highlight

For any skin colour:

White – for the whites of the eyes

Lavender or Eggplant – optional for eye shadow colour

Plus: *Zig Millennium Pens* – nib size 0.005 in brown and black

16. The diagram at right shows where the shading and highlighting should go.

Red = the shading colour – the darkest area of shadow and the most recessed areas of the face.

Yellow = the mid-tone colour – the lighter areas of shadow

Peach = the highlights – the lightest areas and the most raised parts of the face



17. Blush the cheeks, using one or two shades of pencil.

Next take out the three colours of pencil you have chosen for the eyes. With the lightest of the three colours fill in the whole iris. Then using your mid-tone eye colour darken the side of the eye that is in shadow. With your third and darkest eye colour, colour in a line just at the top of the iris, just under the eyelid.

Using your white pencil, fill in the whites of the eyes. Using a black gel pen draw in a circle for the pupil. Using your black or brown *Zig Millennium* pen draw in the eyebrows (I use black pen for black skin (I use black pen for black skin and the brown pen for white skin)). With the black *Zig Millennium* pen outline the bottom of the lid just above the iris – these

eyes are so small that we don't want to overwhelm the face with outlining features. For the same reason, I haven't drawn in eyelashes. I shadowed the crease of the eyelid with an eggplant colour (if you don't want the look of eye make-up, use a brown shade instead).

Using the black *Zig Millennium* pen for black skin and the brown for white skin, dot the nostrils. Using the brown *Zig Millennium* pen draw in the flare of the nostrils.



Next colour in the whole of the lips with the lightest lip colour pencil. Then darken the top lip and the outer corners of the bottom lip with a darker lip colour *PrismaColour* pencil. Use the highlight colour pencil to add a touch of highlight to the middle of the bottom lip. With a brown *Zig Millennium* pen trace over the centre line of the lips again.

With a white gel pen dot the side of her pupils that should be in light. If you fancy it, add freckles or beauty marks with a brown *Zig Millennium* pen, like I did with Leda.

Spray the face with spray fixative. Remember to do this outside so you don't breathe in too many fumes. As the pencil will be handled a lot, spray the face 3-5 times, letting each coat dry before doing the next.

18. When the last coat of spray fixative is all dry put some glue on the back of the dolls head. Apply some loose hair fibre and tack the hair down with needle and thread in various places over the head.



If you want a parting like Leda's, weft the hair. I do this by spreading the loose hair out on a piece of copier paper or tissue, making sure the weft will be the length of the forehead to the bottom of the skull. I machine sew a seam $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the cut ends of the hair. I then rip the paper off the hair, turn the cut ends under on the seam and glue the seam to the head where I want the part. I glue the rest of the hair down to the head.

19. Now that your basic head is done, you can start really letting your imagination loose! By all means use some of my ideas, but you are not limited to these suggestions. Let's start with the head covering options. For Beryl's beret, trace the circle pattern for the beret onto a doubled piece of felt. Machine sew around the whole circle. Cut out using a $\frac{1}{8}$ " seam allowance. Cut a slash through one layer only of the felt circle and turn the circle right side out through the slash. Tack the beret to the doll's head with needle and thread.



20. For Tracey's bridal look, take a piece of lace approximately 3" x 4" (7.5cm x 10cm) and gather it on one 3" (7.5cm) side, either by machine or by hand. Tack the gathered end to the top of Tracey's head with needle and thread.



21. If you prefer you can leave the head bare, like Leda's.

Once the head and hat are finished, dip the end of the pencil you wish to adorn in some tacky glue. Slip the glued end into the neck opening of the head and let dry completely.

Once dry you can start looking at things to wrap around the doll's neck. For Leda at right, I cut a piece of fur trim long enough to encircle the pencil and overlap itself slightly. I glued the underside of the trim to the pencil and then hand sewed the ends together where they overlapped to hold them in place.



22. For Tracey's bridal bouquet, take 3 miniature flowers and glue them under her chin. If the flowers have a wire, cut them so that the wire wraps around the pencil once and glue the wire down.

23. For Beryl's scarf, cut a piece of a lady's sock approximately 1 1/2 " x 6" (4cm x 15.5cm). For one end of the scarf, use the top of the sock, that way you'll have a finished end. .



Wrap the scarf around Beryl's neck with the finished end sticking out. Tack the scarf in place with a needle and thread. Be sure to tack the scarf to the bottom of the doll's head in several places so it stays put.

24. There are so many other ideas for headdresses:

- A turban
- A felt cloche hat
- A toque (that is a knitted winter hat for those of you who aren't Canadian)
- A mob cap
- A shower cap
- A witches hat



And neck wraps:

- A gathered piece of lace for a ruff
- A ribbon gathered down the centre for a ruffle
- A bow
- A towel wrapped around the neck
- A piece of marabou for a boa

The list goes on.....

I can't wait to see what you come up with; remember "A pencil and a dream can take you anywhere."

Joyce A. Meyers

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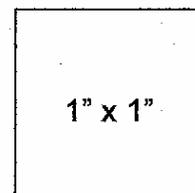
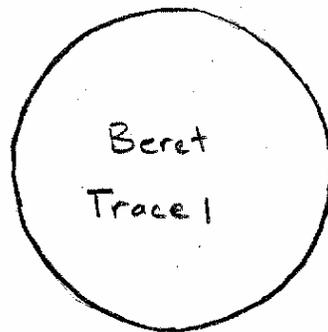
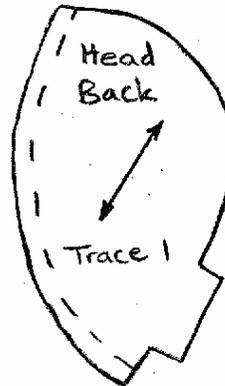
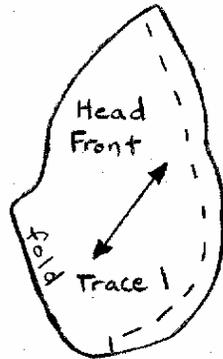
You may make and sell as many dolls as you would like from this pattern. Be sure to give Colleen Babcock credit for design on any tags and accompanying literature.

I'd love to hear from you:

Stop by and read about my latest cloth doll adventures on my blog:
www.themagicbean.typepad.com

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This box should measure 1" x 1". If it doesn't, please enlarge or reduce the pattern accordingly.