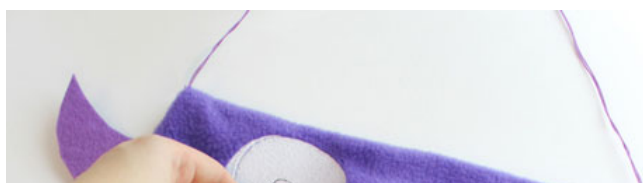


Monster Chore Chart

Shocking fact: Kids know chores are a bore. Parents know kids won't do them for just that a reason, but parents also know you can't just let your kid pile their clothes up until the idea of a floor is just a distant memory, or ignore their homework in favor of, well, anything else. For little ones especially, getting them used to the idea of chores and a checklist can be a great tool for later in life.

Adults know the satisfaction of checking off something from a to-do list. Heck, you know you've gone so far as to write something down you did already just for the satisfaction of marking it off. Sometimes it's the only way to feel productive at 9 a.m. on a Monday. So, how do we teach kids this great skill of feeling accomplished? By making that "checklist" oh so much cooler.

How about a fun little monster that sits on your wall to remind you of what you need to do, and you get to feed him cookies for all his hard work! This is proactive and much better for your health than feeding yourself



Steps To Complete



The key to making a list on your monster is this neat stuff called blackboard cloth. It's pretty much exactly what it sounds like -- it's a shiny, vinyl like cloth that lets you write on it with chalk just like a blackboard!

Oh, science. What can't it do?

This means your monster's tummy can be constantly updated with new chores, doodles, or checklists for world domination. Hey, this might be for kids, but it's never too early to get those little tikes to aim high.

So, here are the basics of your monster, since we have some fun folds and layering to do to get him right. (Translation: I stitched this guy inside out and backwards twice. Pay attention.)



Depending on the size you use for your face, you'll want to add about two inches past your mouth width, so you have enough room for seam allowance. For length, I'd recommend around 24 inches or so, to give plenty of room for your chores and lists. You'll also need an extra 6 inches to fold over each piece -- this will become the eyes, and in the case of the back, the pocket to catch your cookies. You'll understand as we go along...



This is kinda what he'll look like when put together. His mouth will overlap his eyes, creating a pocket for the cookies to go into, i.e. his big ol' monster mouth. The flap at the back catches them for easy retrieval. He'll have another pocket at the front for the cookies he needs to eat for his chores. Got all that? Good! Cut your two long purple pieces of fabric (the back and the front of your monster) and get them ready to hoop.



You're going to stitch your mouth at the top of one of your fabric pieces, and your eyes on the fold of the other. See the drawing above to get an idea. Have fun choosing your favorite [mix-and-match monster face embroidery designs](#)! Hoop your fabric up with some cutaway stabilizer and set your machine to stitching.

In addition to your monster face, I used my machine's software to add the text "My Chores" underneath the mouth. You could also use this as a chance to personalize it, like "Ben's Chores," or "Craft Bunny's 10 Easy Steps to Taking Over the World."

Your choice.

While it's stitching, we can go about making monster's cookies!



In order for these to hold a little weight and drop easily into your monsters tummy, I'm adding some little glass pebbles inside. This is not recommended for especially little ones, just in case they manage to get them out. They would have to be really trying, but still. I've seen toddlers get into more impressive things when unsupervised for .4 seconds.

You'll need your felt, your weights, and your fabric marker.



Lay one of your weights on your fabric and cut a circle around it, leaving enough room for you to sew a seam without hitting the weight. Once you've cut one circle, use it as a template for the other side. Sandwich your weight in between the two layers, and carefully hold it in place as you sew all the way around your circle, sealing it in.



Once your cookie is stitched, it just needs some chocolate chips to finish it off!

Not raisins. Raisins don't belong in cookies, and monsters don't like them anyway. It's true. I saw it on the Nature Channel. Draw your chocolate chips on with your fabric marker.



Make a whole bunch! Yum.

Remember, you'll need one cookie for each "chore" on your little one's list, so it's good to make extra. I'd say 5 or 6 at least, probably more if you think they might be prone to getting lost, or you're really mean and give your kid a lot of chores.



So, your embroidery all done? Good!

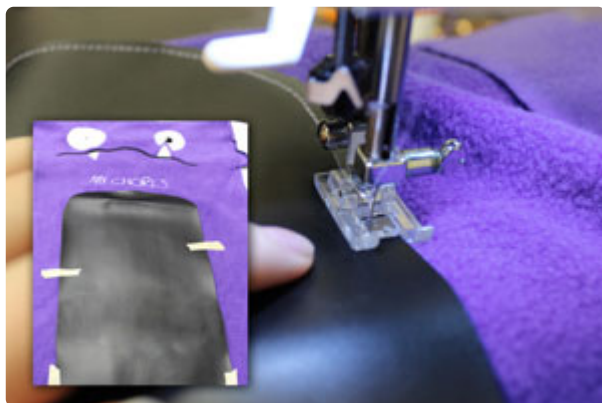
Let's start on the piece with the eyes. We want a nice finished edge on this piece (since you'll likely see it when you're feeding him) so fold the raw edge under and sew a seam across it.



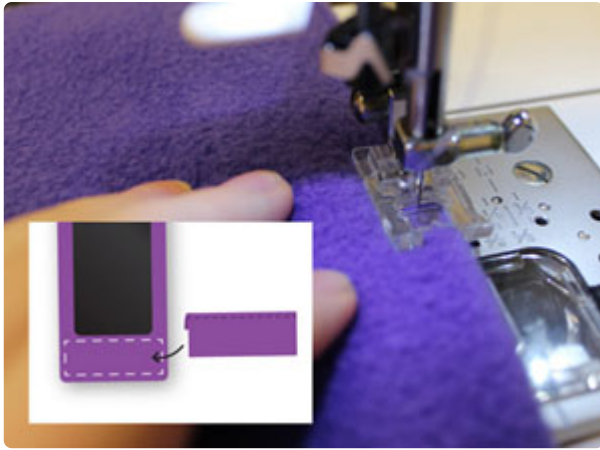
For your mouth, carefully cut away everything above the embroidery (you can leave a little bit of felt around it).

You can now overlap your mouth with your eyes to see your goofy monster taking shape. He looks hungry already.

Underneath his mouth and text is where we'll want to put our blackboard fabric. Cut it long and lean, about two inches narrower than your monster fabric, and about 16 inches long (if you used the 24 inch measurement from before). Cut it in a rounded rectangle to make it look like his tummy.



Since my blackboard fabric is so stiff, I didn't want to ruin it with pins. I taped it in place and then sewed a seam all the way around to secure it to the monster. A new note-taking tummy! Kinda like a teletubby but more low-tech. And less scary. Forget I said anything about teletubbies.

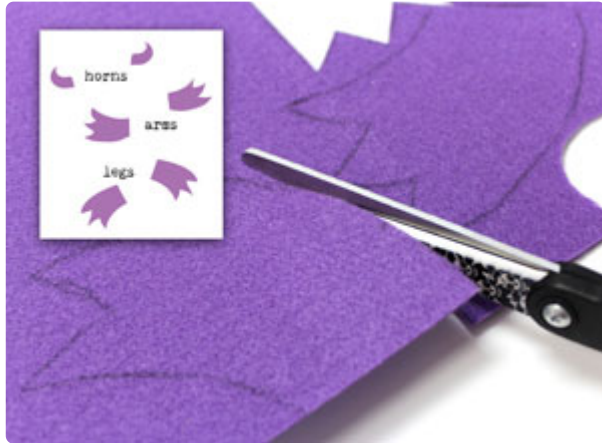


Underneath the blackboard tummy, we're going to make a pocket that will hold the cookies needed for each chore. This should be at least an inch smaller than the width of your monster fabric, and about 6 inches tall. Fold one long side of your fabric under and sew a seam to get a finished edge.



Now fold the rest of your raw edges underneath and pin everything in place. I pinned this in place with the back folded under, so I could be sure of my placement. Just make sure if you do this you don't pin through both layers! Not that you'd do that. That would be silly. I never do that.

Sew a seam around the three sides of your pocket to hold it in place. Monster now has a place for his cookies.



Before we stitch the two sides of our monster together, we're going to want to make some appendages for him. Grab your stiff felt and cut out some arms and legs, as well as some horns if you're feeling fancy. I'm always feeling fancy where monsters are concerned.

Perhaps this is a good time to ask your little one what kind of monster they want. Do they want claws? Paws? Horns or ears? What your monster looks like is totally up to you.



We're also going to want to cut a piece of string to hang your monster from. I had a lot of embroidery floss around (surprise, I know), so I doubled it up. Cut a large loop (long enough to hang your monster from) and tie a knot in the end, so it's a complete circle.



Allrighty ... the order in which things overlay in this step is pretty important, so follow along unless your great joy in life is ripping seams. Start with the front of your monster (the one with the mouth, tummy and pocket). Place him facing up. Take your legs and point them inwards, with the edges overlapping the seams. There should be about 6 inches of extra fabric below your pocket. Fold this up on top of your pocket, covering up your legs. Next, lay the back piece of your monster (the piece with the eyes) right side down. The bottom flap should fall a couple inches shy of the bottom. This is so your back pocket has plenty of room for your cookies to fall and be retrieved at the back.



For the top part of your fabric, the eyes should fold back under the front piece, so the mouth overlaps them, like shown. It kinda ends up being one big loopy thing. Technical term.

Make sure you place your string inside along the top of his head (at the fold) and that your arms and horns or whathaveyou are all facing in, overlapping the seams a bit.

Pin all of this very carefully in place down both sides, paying extra attention to where the fold of the pockets and the fold of the mouth will be, and making sure your monsters appendages are positioned so your seam will catch them.

Sew two seams down either side, about 1/4 of an inch in, making sure to backstitch a bit at the beginning and the end of each side.

Once your monster is stitched, you can turn him right side out through his big ol' mouth. The blackboard fabric might be a bit stiff, but it'll fit through, I promise.





Yay! Your monster is ready to assist with chores and get fed lots of cookies.

So, how exactly does Chore Monster work? Like so...



Start by writing a couple of chores on your list....



For each chore you write, drop a cookie in his front pocket.



Every time you complete a chore, you feed your monster one of his cookies and cross your chore off the list.



Once you've fed your monster all of his cookies, your chores are done!



When your monster is full you can retrieve the cookies from the back pocket to do it all again.



Striking something off a to-do list always feels good, but I personally think feeding my accomplishments in the form of cookies to a big purple monster is better. I and many 8-yea-olds share this in common.

Besides, they HAVE to get their chores done now, or monster goes hungry. You don't want a hungry monster hanging around in your room. Before you know it they'll have eaten all your pillows. True fact. Saw it on Discovery Channel.

So for goodness' sake, get your chores done, and give the monster the cookie he deserves.