BIKES AND BLOOMERS

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S
CONVERTIBLE CYCLE WEAR

SEWING PATTERNS

#3 THREE PIECE CYCLING SUIT

A cycling costume inspired by
Henrietta Müller's 1896 UK Patent #8766

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A Victorian convertible cycling costume inspired by HENRIETTA MÜLLER'S 1896 UK Patent #8766

PATTERN #3

THREE PIECE CYCLING SUIT

(JACKET, LOOPED SKIRT & ALL-IN-ONE BLOOMER)

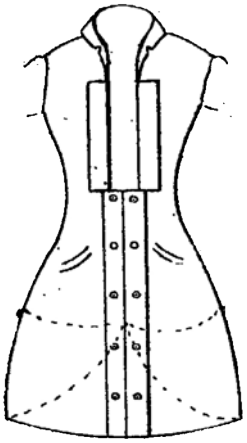
DESIGN FEATURES

This is an unusual patent because the inventor addresses an entire cycling suit. Her three-part design features a tailored jacket, an ordinary A-line skirt that can be raised in height via loops sewn into the hem that catch at buttons on the waistband and an all-in-one undergarment, which combines a blouse and bloomer.

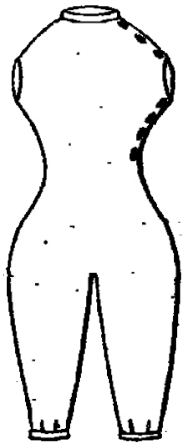
THE INVENTOR: HENRIETTA MÜLLER

(Frances) Henrietta Müller of Meads, Maidenhead, in the County of Berks, Gentlewoman, registered a patent for 'Improvements in Ladies' Garments for Cycling and other Purposes' on 30th May 1896. She was 50. Born in Chile, Henrietta was educated at Girton College, Oxford, spoke six languages and was a passionate women's rights activist. She devoted her life to the advancement of women's freedom of movement in many spheres; such as agitating for equal pay for equal work and contraception to free women from continual child-bearing. She was once arrested for refusing to pay council tax in protest about women's inability to vote. She is also renowned for founding the 'Woman's Herald: Women's Penny Paper', the first newspaper written by women for women.

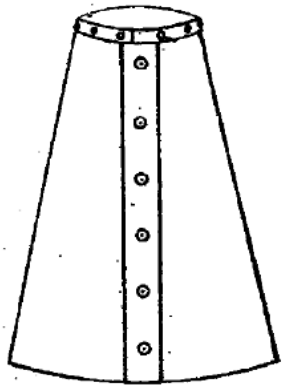
Given the breadth of her interests it is easy to see why Henrietta focused not just on a single item, but on an entire three-piece costume. She was committed to the idea of progress for women, and not content with trying to fix one element when she could see problems with the entire system. Notably, this cycling suit features nine pockets (and Henrietta encourages the reader to add more). She was acutely aware of the politics and practicalities of pockets for independent mobile women.



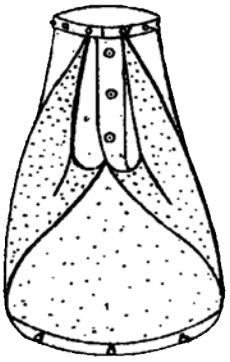
(Tailored Jacket)



(All in one bloomer-suit)



(A-line skirt)



(Looped skirt)

"These improvements consist in the form and combination of three separately constructed articles of ladies' costumes, so made as to afford special faculty and convenience when cycling."

Henrietta Müller (1896)

Patent illustration: Accessed at the European Patent Office Online Database, www.epo.org/index.html.

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S
CONVERTIBLE CYCLE WEAR

SEWING PATTERNS

Victorians enthusiastically took to the bicycle. Yet women had to deal with many social, political and material challenges to their freedom of movement. Cycling in 'ordinary' dress could be dangerous as it wrapped around pedals and caught in wheels. Wearing more 'rational' cycle wear, such as shorter skirts and bloomers, was more comfortable, but not necessarily safer as some parts of society were threatened by the sight of this progressive 'New Woman' carving new modes of gendered independence in public space. Onlookers sometimes hurled abuse and stones! However, nothing was going to stop women from cycling. In response, some creatively protested against restrictive ideas of how a woman should act and move in public through their clothing, by designing **convertible costumes** that enabled wearers to switch from street wear to cycle wear when needed. Luckily for us, these inventive women not only imagined, made and wore radical new forms of cycle wear - they also patented their designs!

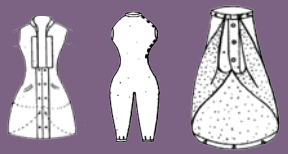
Six sewing patterns in this collection (comprising a total of nine different garments) are inspired by convertible cycle wear patents lodged in the 1890s by inventive British women. They form part of an ESRC funded **Bikes & Bloomers** sociology project led by Dr Kat Jungnickel at Goldsmiths, University of London, with Rachel Pimm, Nadia Constaninou, Alice Angus and Britt Hatzius. More about the lives of these fascinating inventors is in *Bikes & Bloomers: Victorian Women Inventors and Their Extraordinary Cycle Wear* (Goldsmiths Press). Along with the book, these patterns bring to life some of the inspiring cycling, sewing and suffrage stories that have helped shape how we cycle today. They also (still) provide useful ideas for functional clothing that works on and off the bike. We look forward to seeing what modern sewing cyclists make with them.

PATTERN COLLECTION

PATTERN #1
PULLEY SKIRT

PATTERN #2
SEMI-SKIRT

PATTERN #3
CYCLING SUIT



PATTERN #4
SKIRT/ CAPE

PATTERN #5
SIDE-BUTTON SKIRT

PATTERN #6
BLOOMERS I, II

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S CONVERTIBLE CYCLE WEAR

SEWING PATTERNS

PATTERN #3

THREE PIECE CYCLING SUIT

(JACKET, LOOPED SKIRT AND ALL-IN-ONE BLOOMER)

Pattern #3 is a three-part design featuring a tailored jacket, A-line skirt that can be raised in height via loops sewn into the hem that catch at buttons at the waistband and an all-in-one undergarment, which combines a blouse and bloomer. **Requirements:** See individual patterns.

This pattern is approx UK size 12 and will need to be customised to fit as required. Minimal instructions are provided. See our mistakes, workarounds and suggestions at: bikesandbloomers.com

RESEARCH PROJECT
Kat Jungnickel
SILK LINING ARTWORK
Alice Angus
COVER PHOTO
Charlotte Barnes

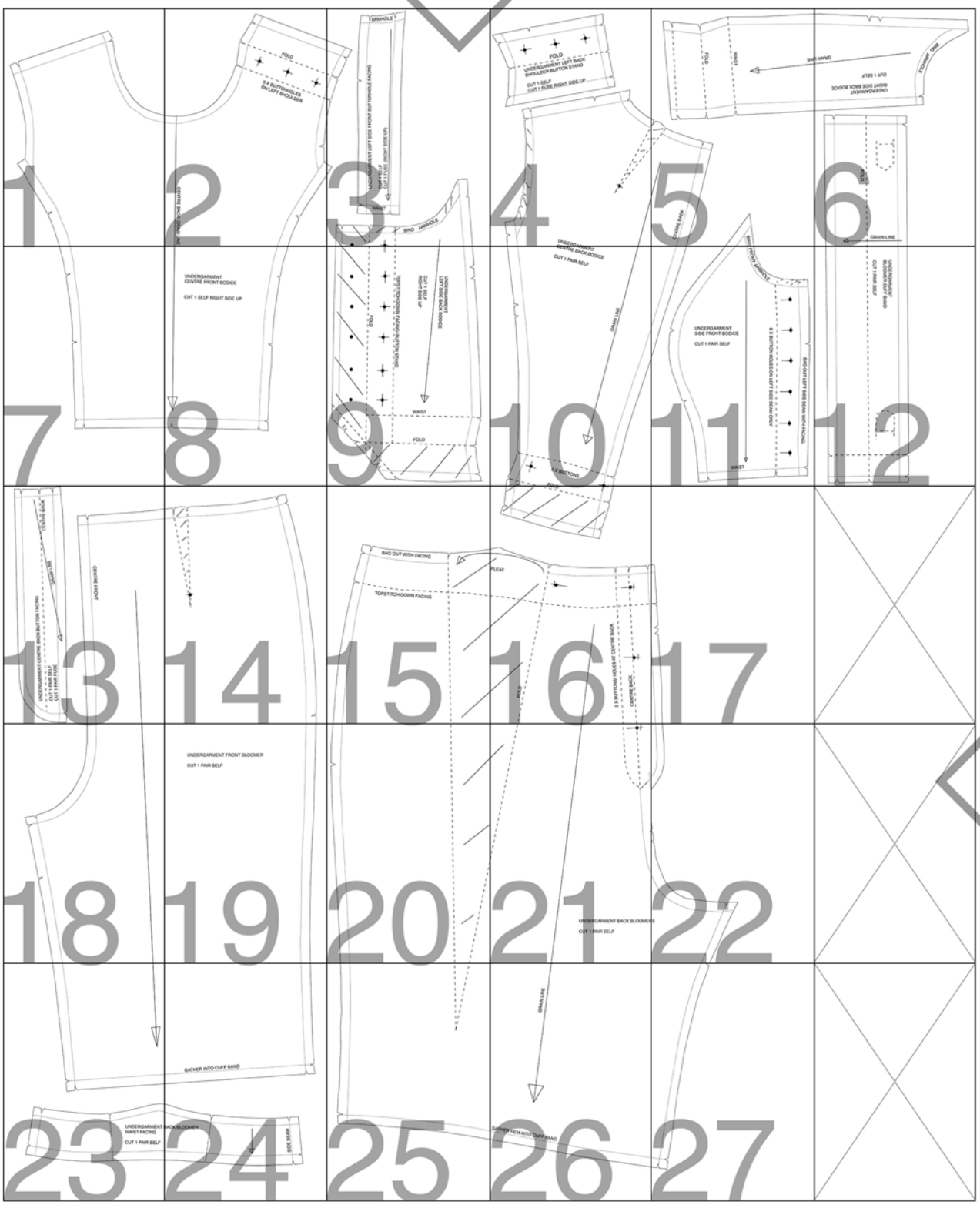
BIKES & BLOOMERS CONVERTIBLE CYCLE WEAR SEWING PATTERNS:

#1 – Pulley cycling skirt
#2 – Cycling semi-skirt
#3 – 3-piece cycling suit
#4 – Cycling skirt/cape
#5 – Side-button skirt
#6 – Cycling bloomers I, II

All sewing patterns are free to download. Profits from the sale of printed patterns go to the London Bike Kitchen, a DIY workshop. Please share your cycle wear creations with us on #bikesandbloomers & www.bikesandbloomers.com

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
Goldsmiths UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

CC BY NC SA



VICTORIAN WOMEN'S
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SEWING PATTERNS

#3 ALL-IN-ONE BLOOMER

17

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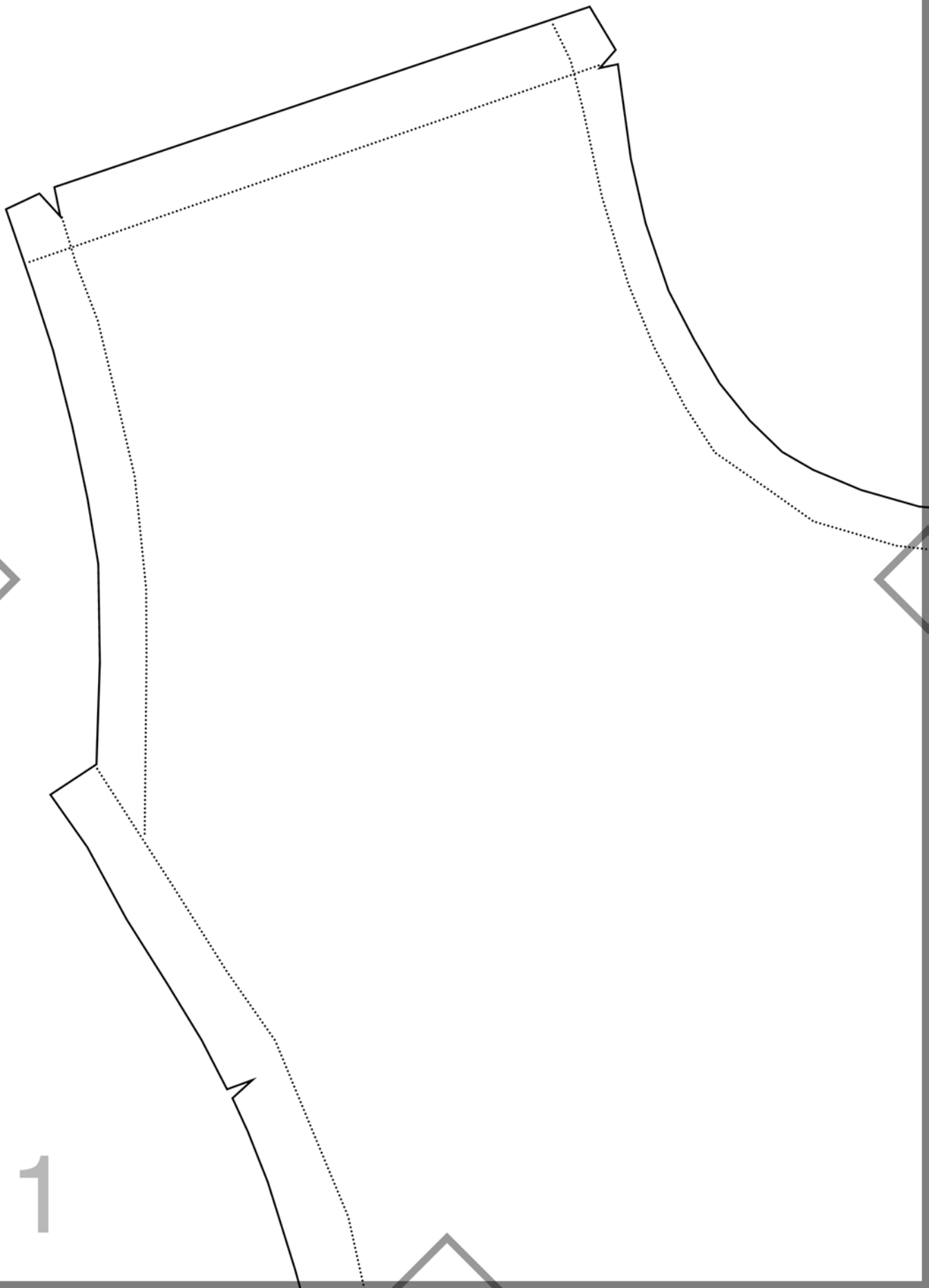
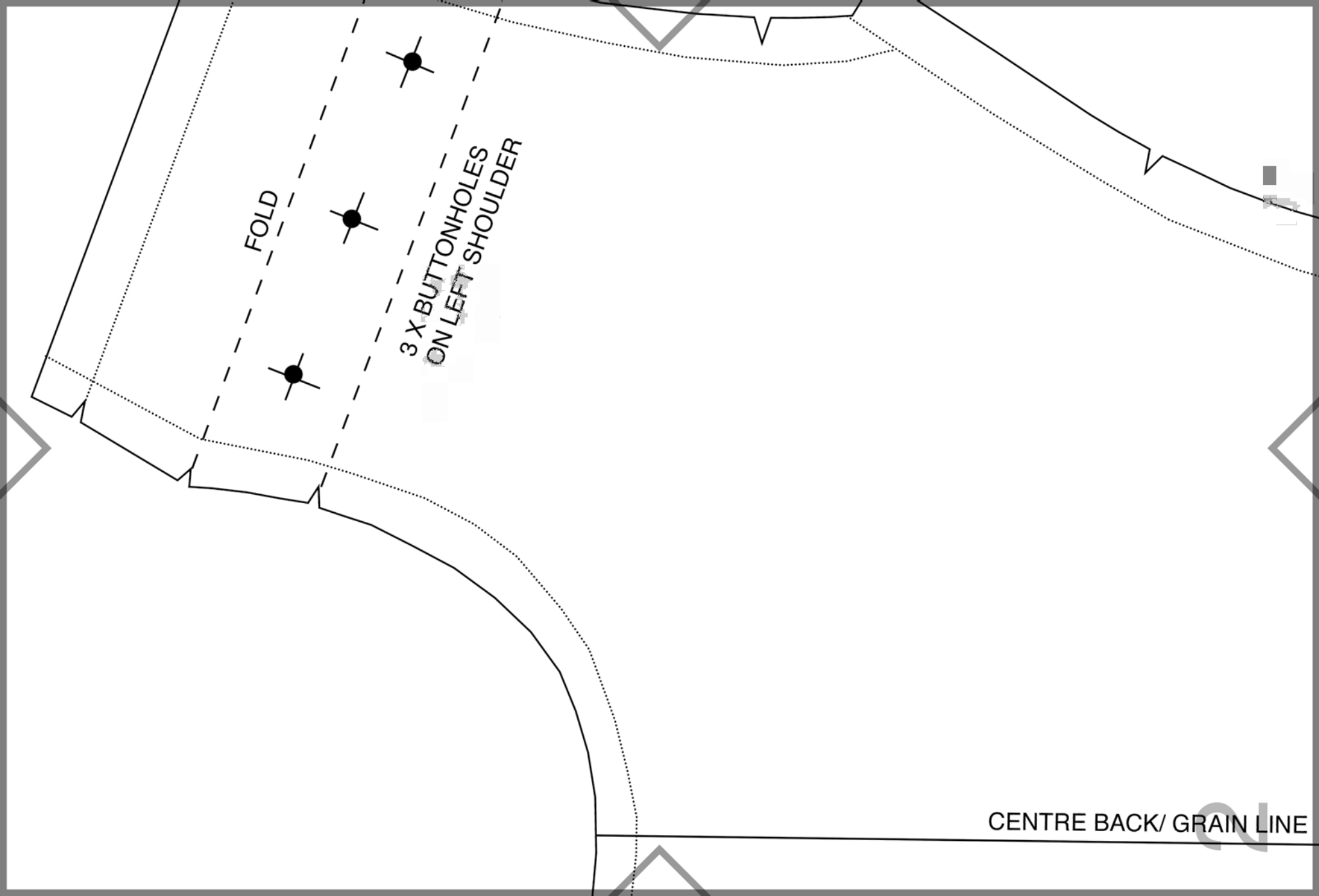
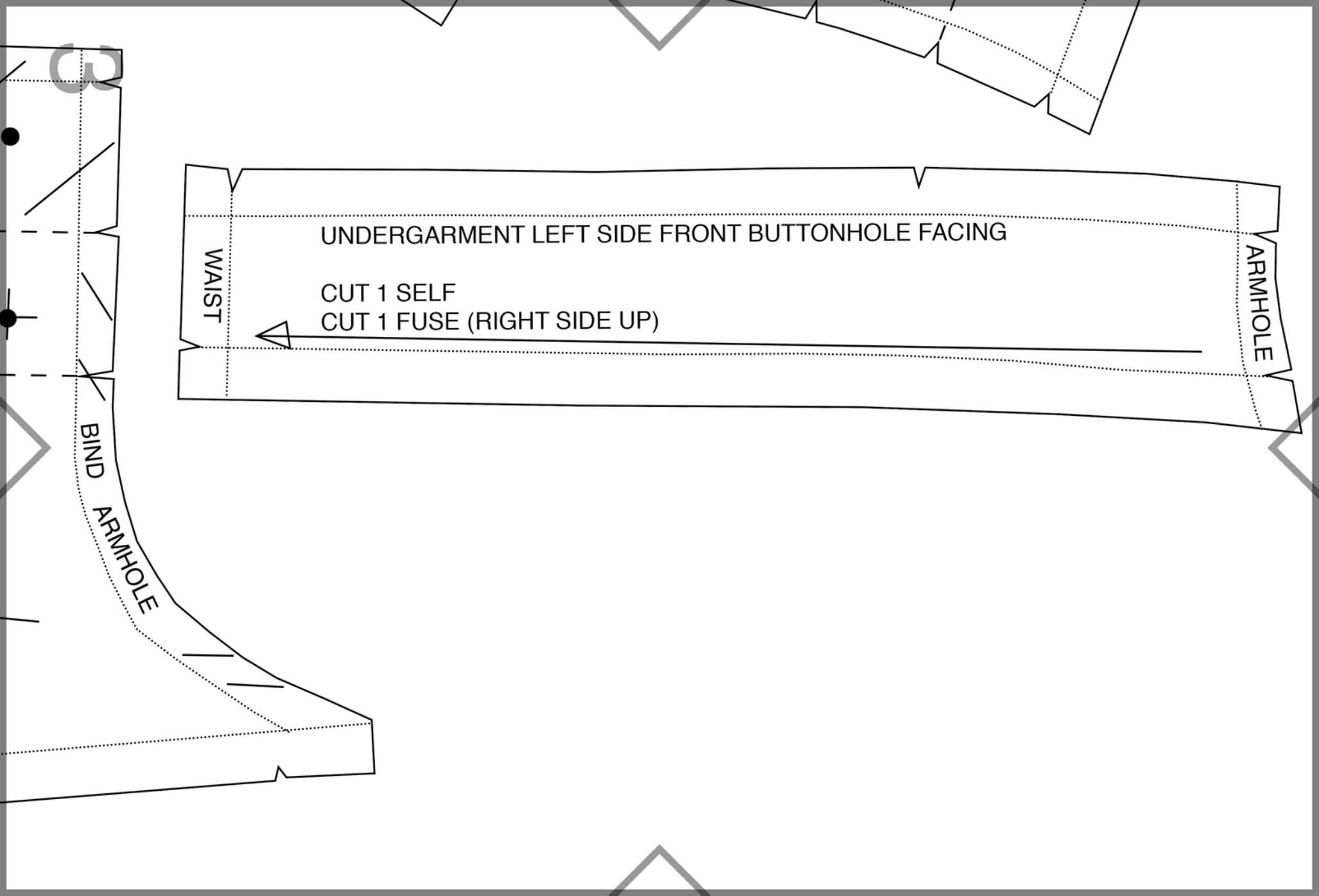
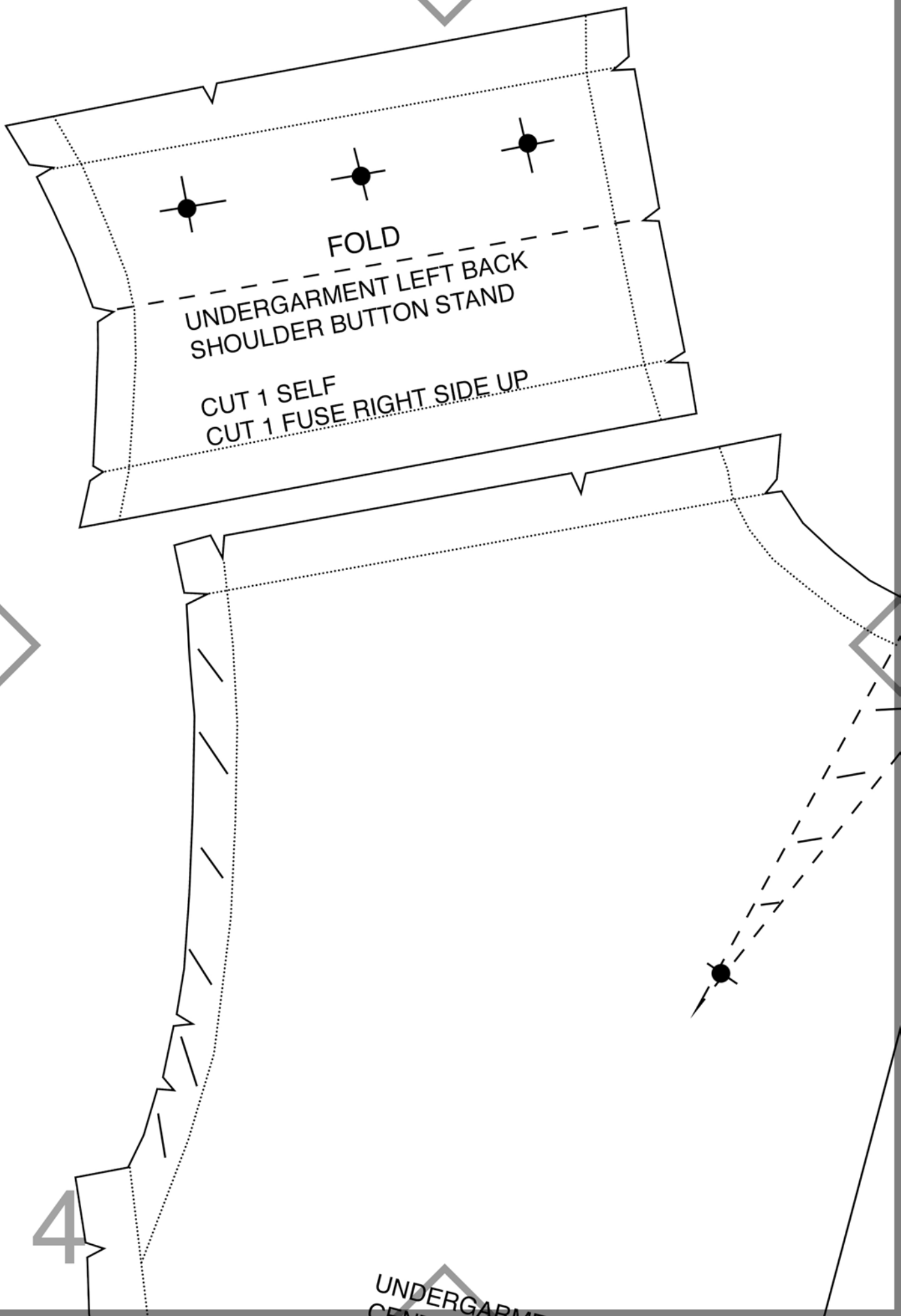
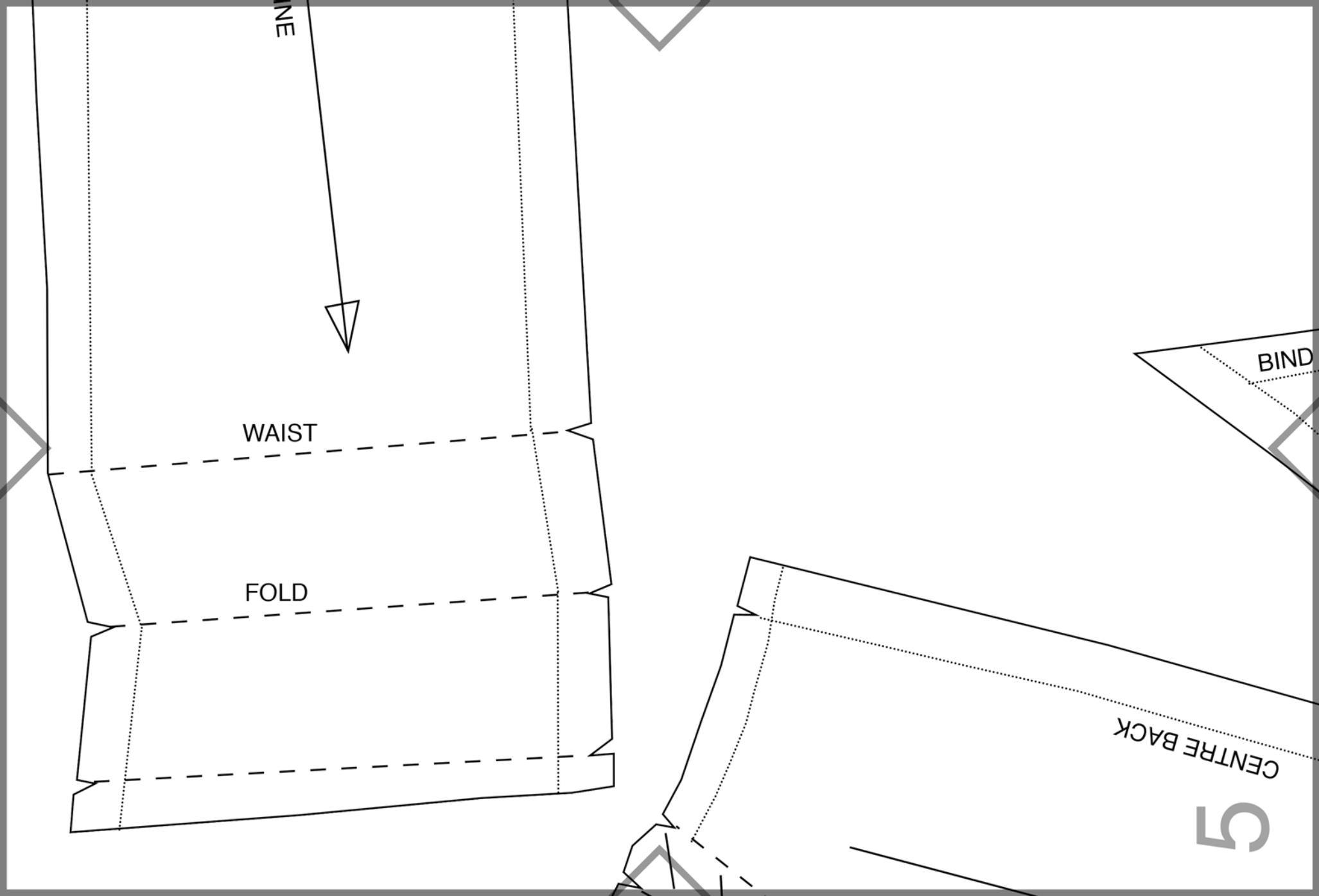



FOLD
3 X BUTTONHOLES ON LEFT SHOULDER
CENTRE BACK/ GRAIN LINE


C3
BIND ARMHOLE
WAIST
UNDERGARMENT LEFT SIDE FRONT BUTTONHOLE FACING
CUT 1 SELF
CUT 1 FUSE (RIGHT SIDE UP)
ARMHOLE


FOLD
UNDERGARMENT LEFT BACK
SHOULDER BUTTON STAND
CUT 1 SELF
CUT 1 FUSE RIGHT SIDE UP
4
UNDERGARM


WAIST
FOLD
BIND
CENTRE BACK
5

GRAIN L

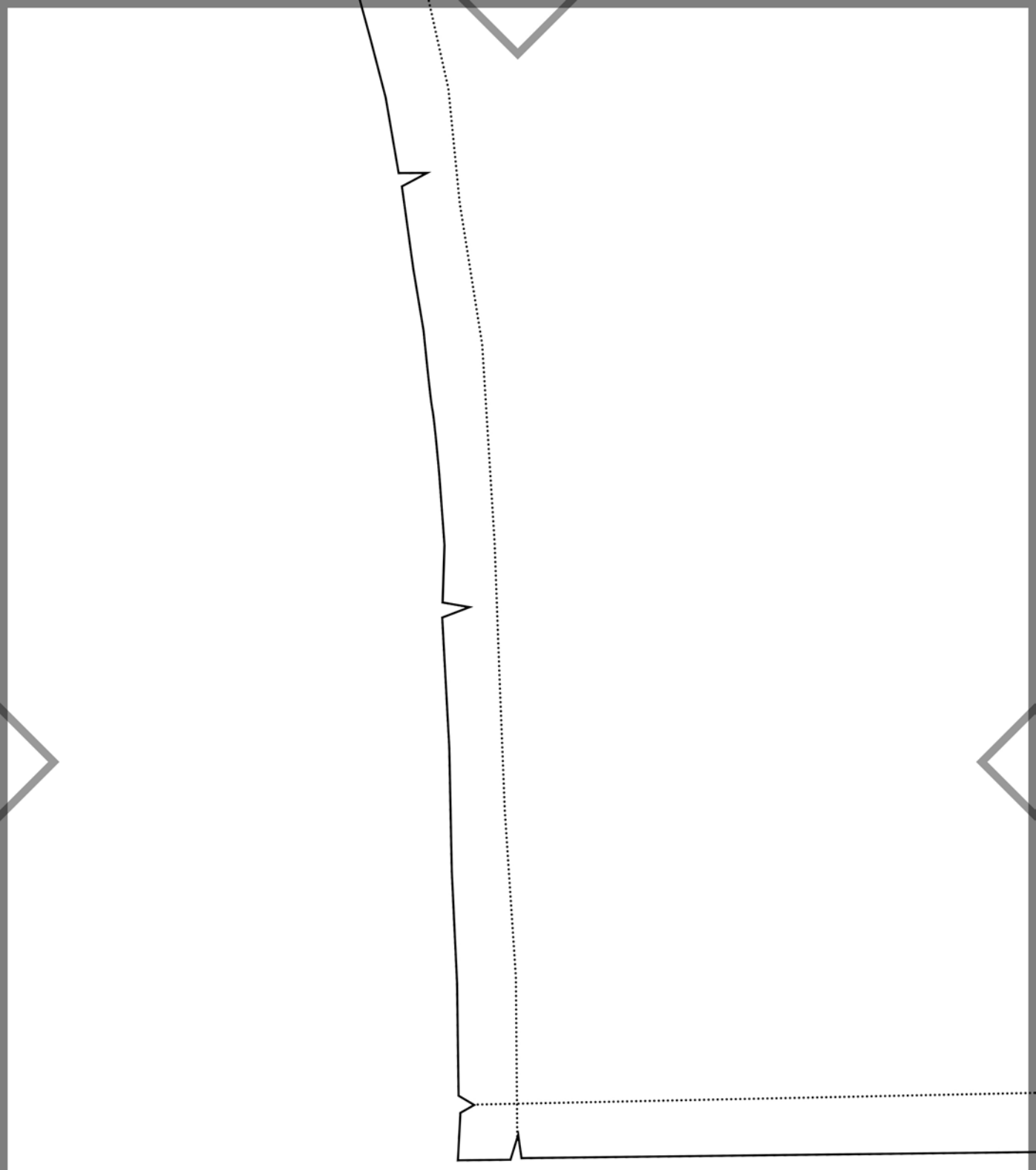
BIND ARMHOLE

CUT 1 SELF

UNDERGARMENT
RIGHT SIDE BACK BODICE

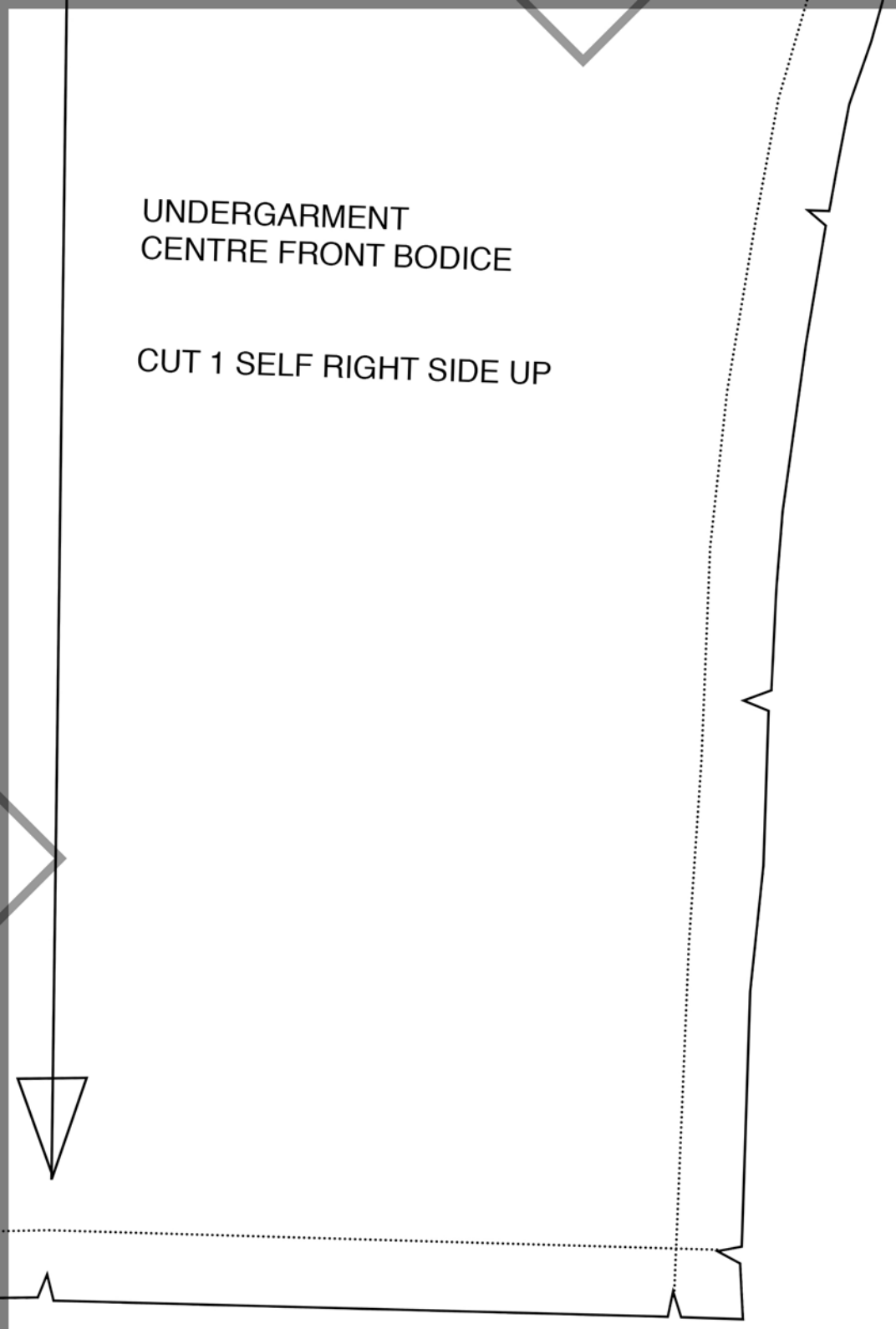
FOLD

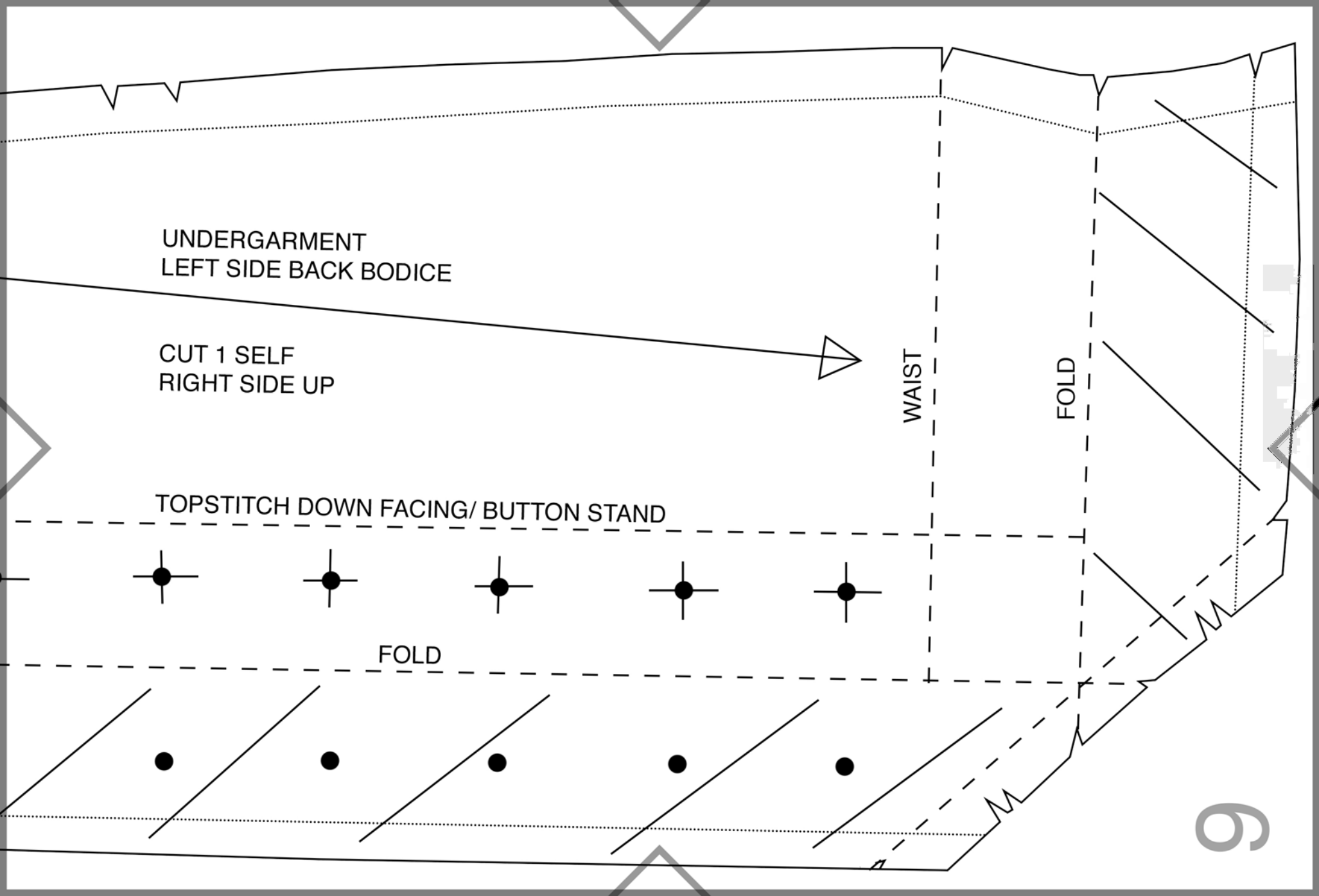
GRAIN LINE

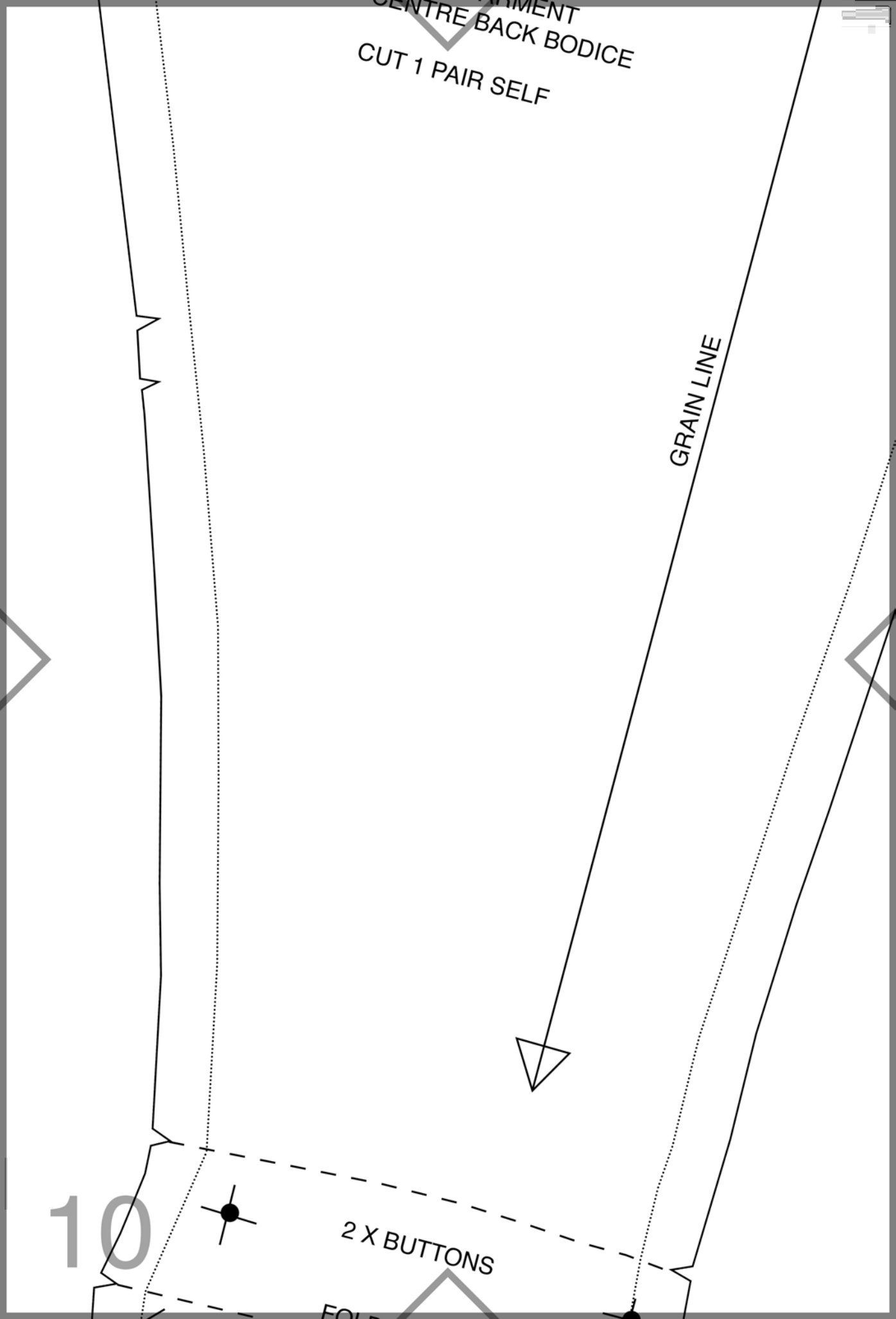


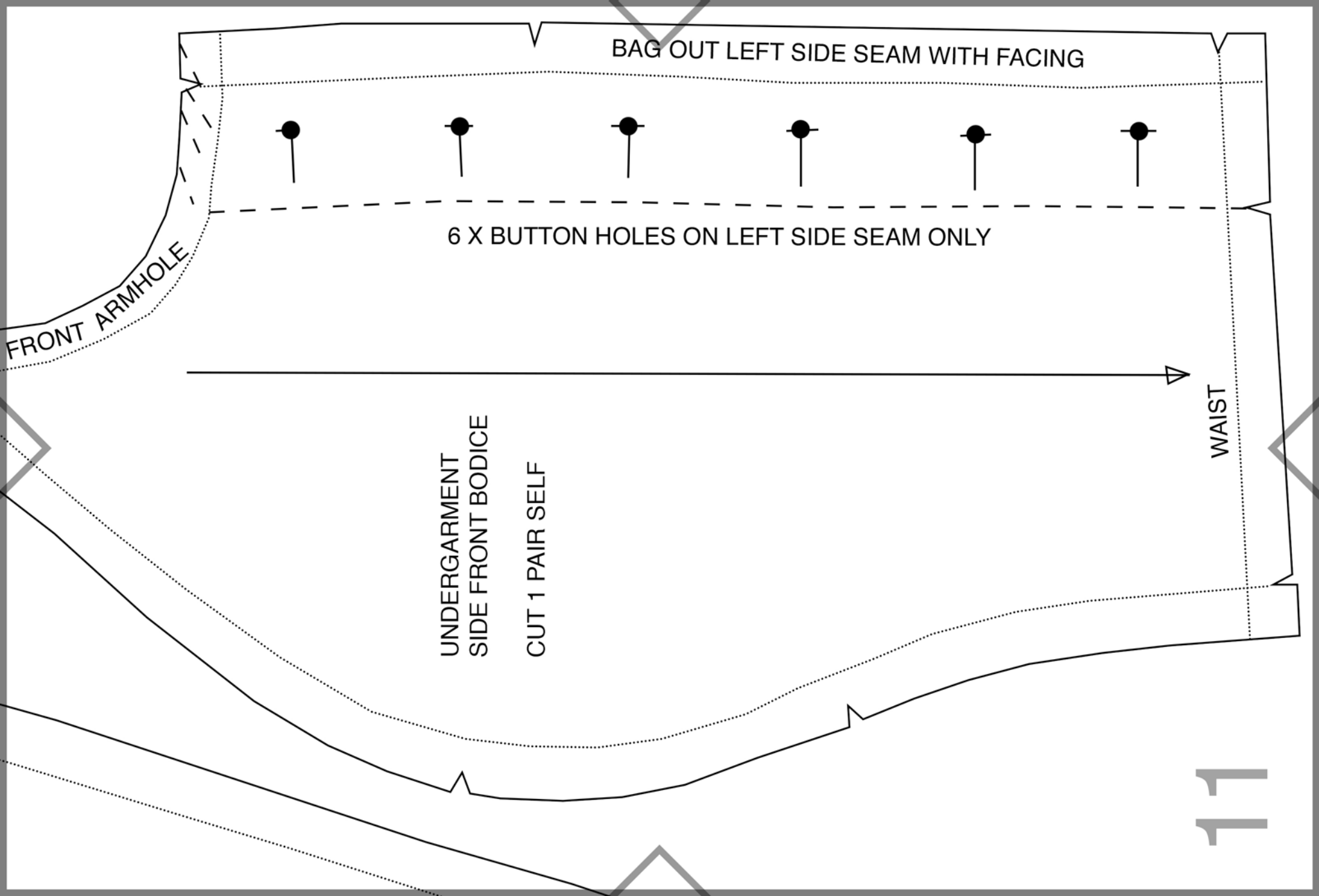
UNDERGARMENT
CENTRE FRONT BODICE

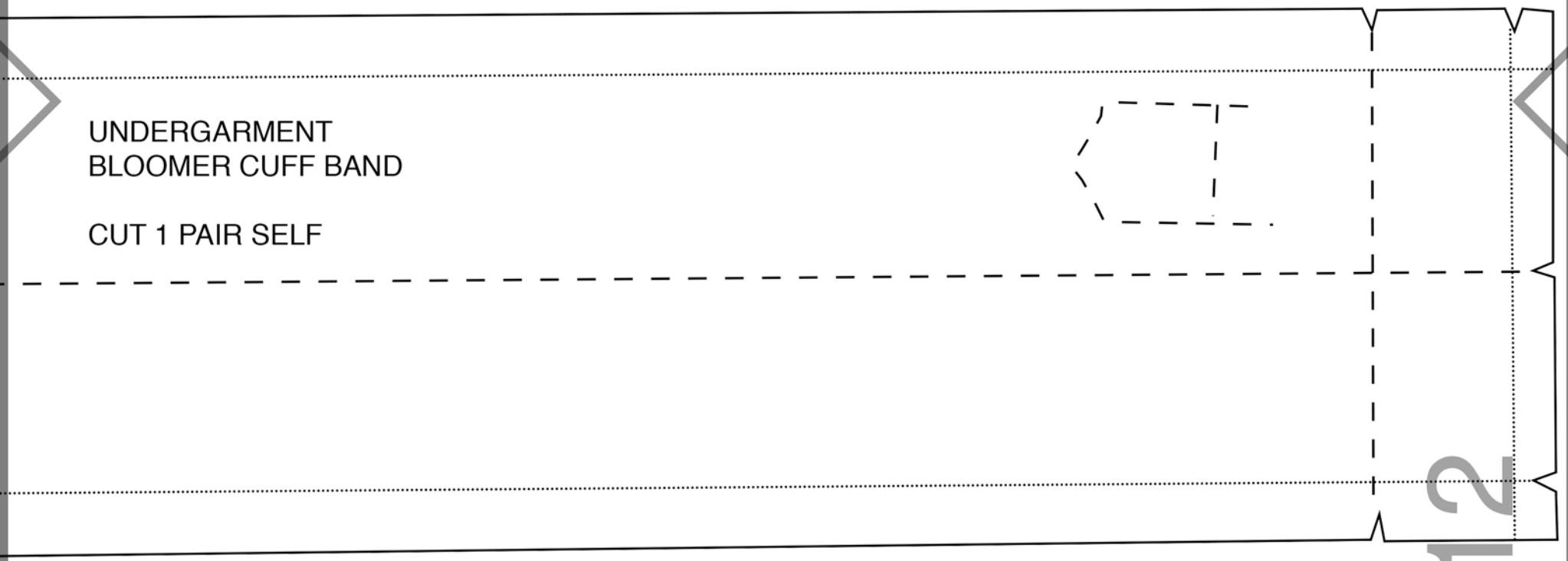
CUT 1 SELF RIGHT SIDE UP



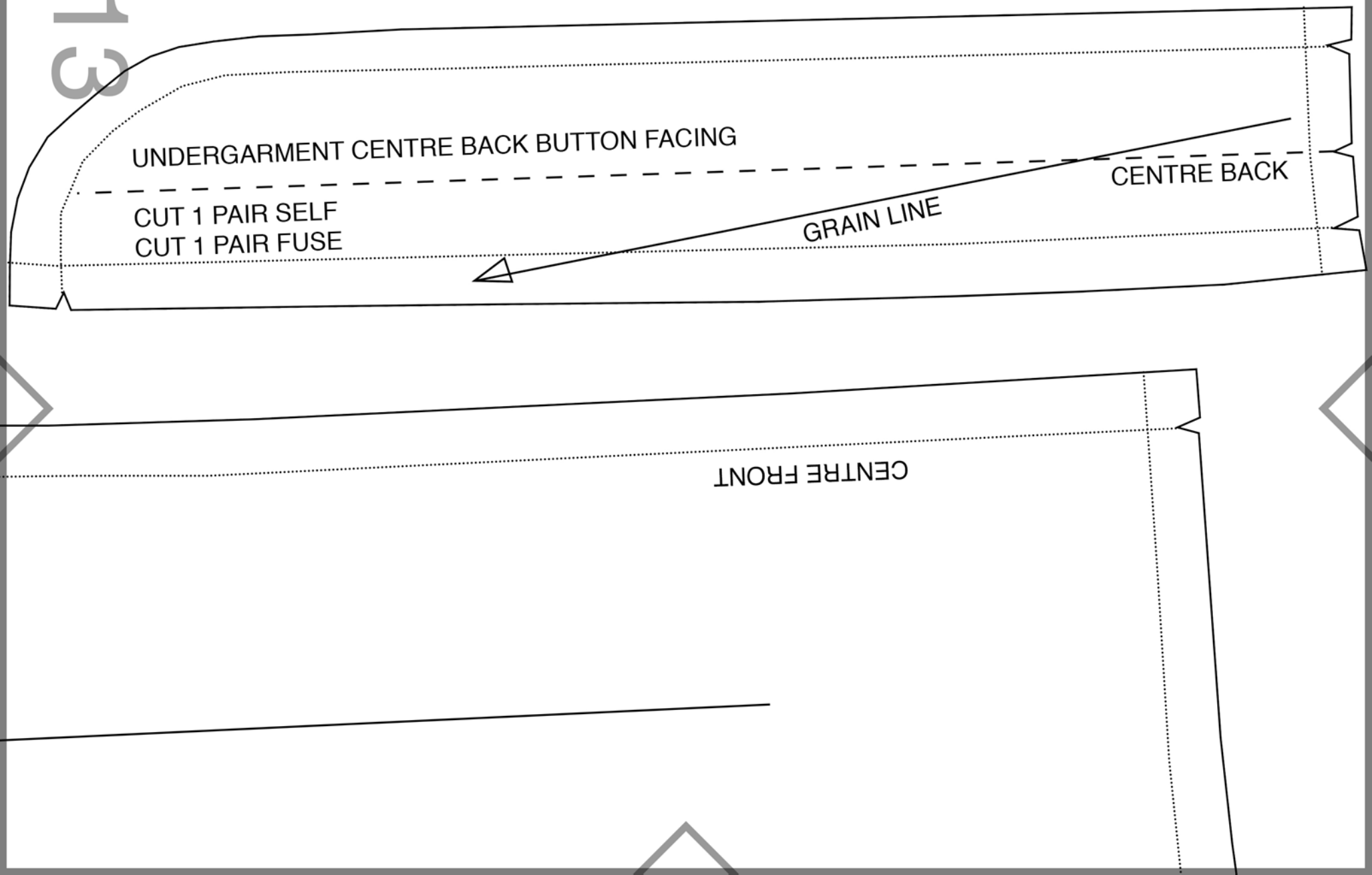

UNDERGARMENT
LEFT SIDE BACK BODICE
CUT 1 SELF
RIGHT SIDE UP
WAIST
FOLD
TOPSTITCH DOWN FACING/ BUTTON STAND
FOLD

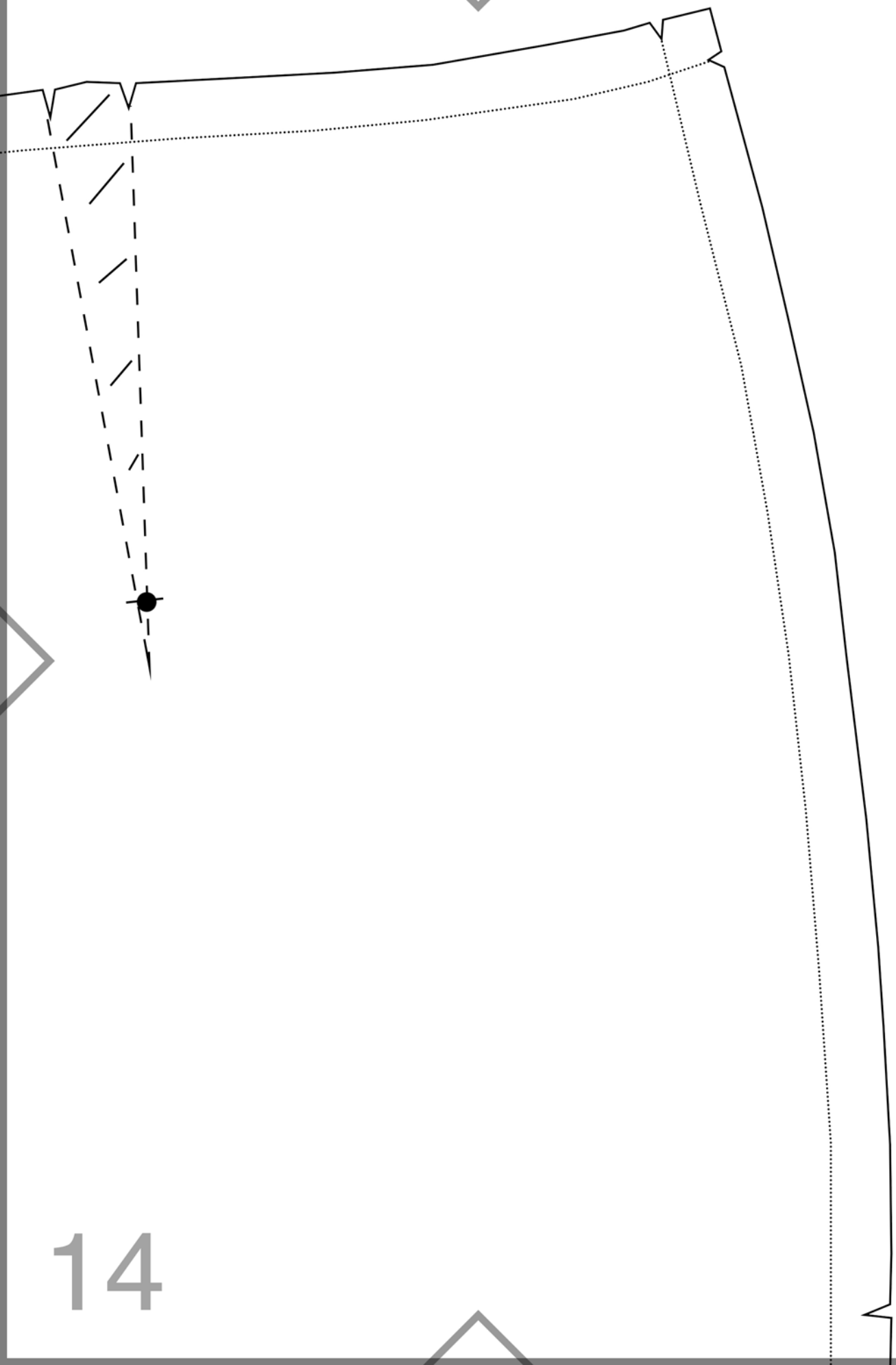

CENTRE BACK BODICE
CUT 1 PAIR SELF
GRAIN LINE
2 X BUTTONS

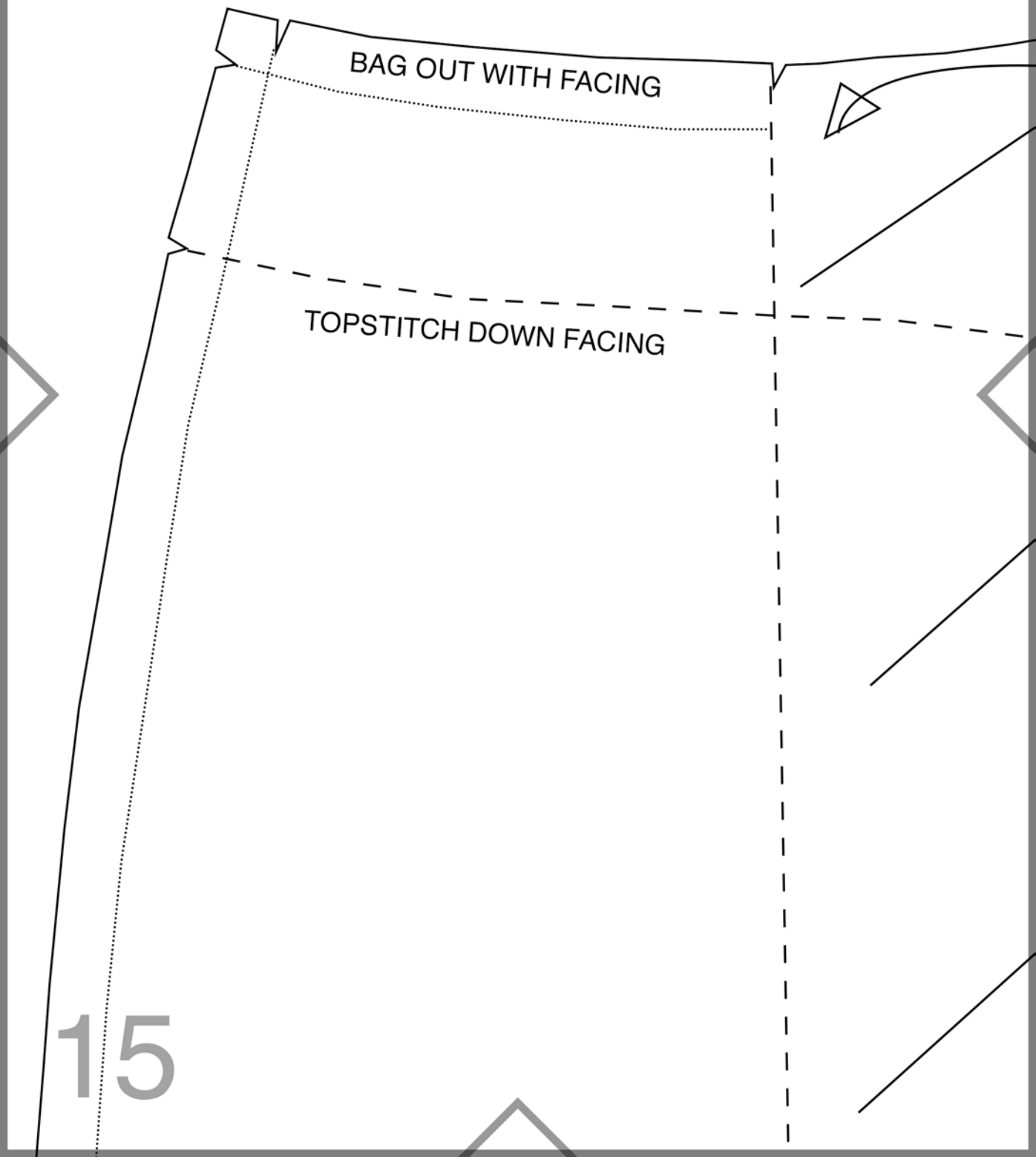

BAG OUT LEFT SIDE SEAM WITH FACING
6 X BUTTON HOLES ON LEFT SIDE SEAM ONLY
FRONT ARMHOLE
WAIST
UNDERGARMENT
SIDE FRONT BODICE
CUT 1 PAIR SELF
11

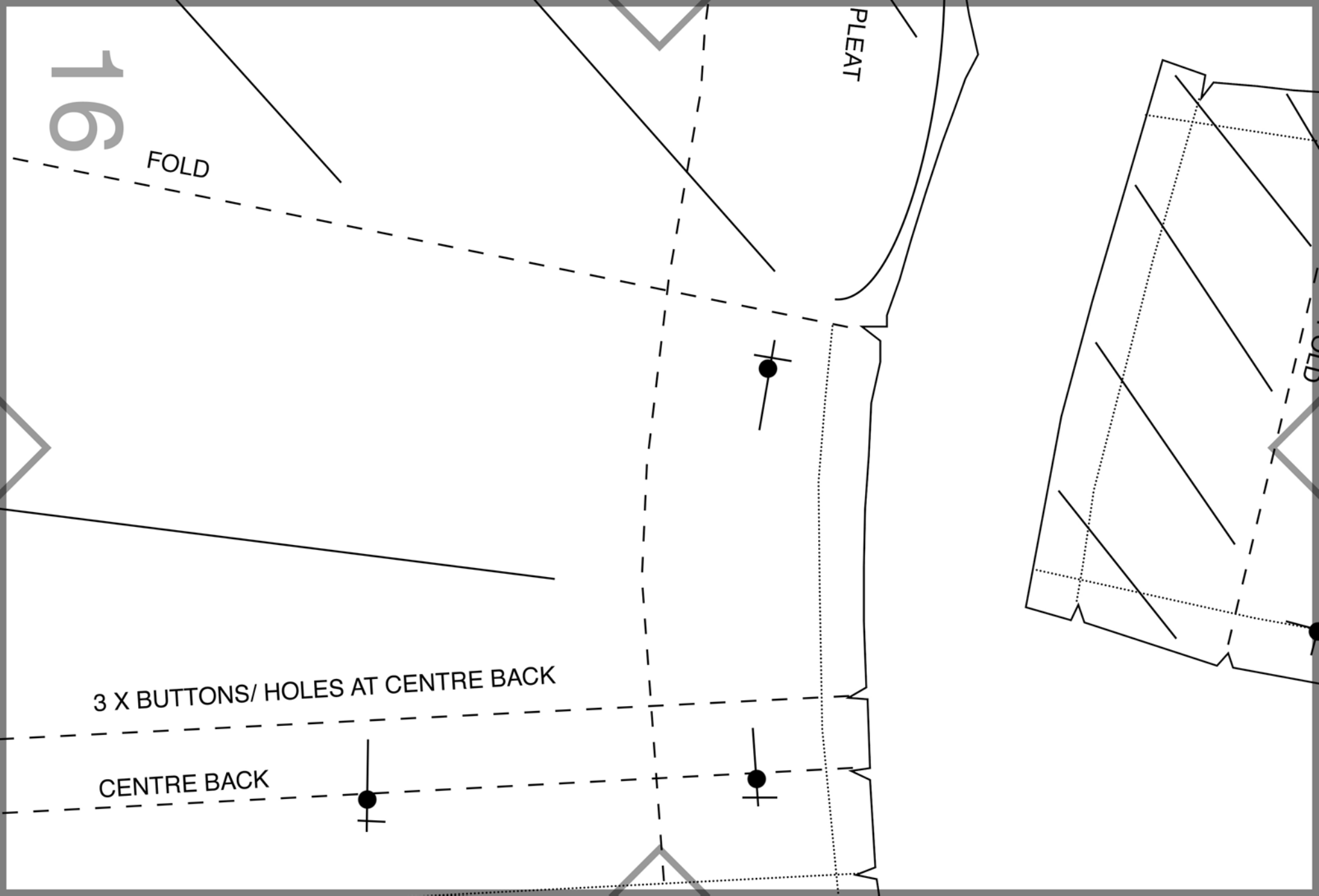

UNDERGARMENT
BLOOMER CUFF BAND
CUT 1 PAIR SELF

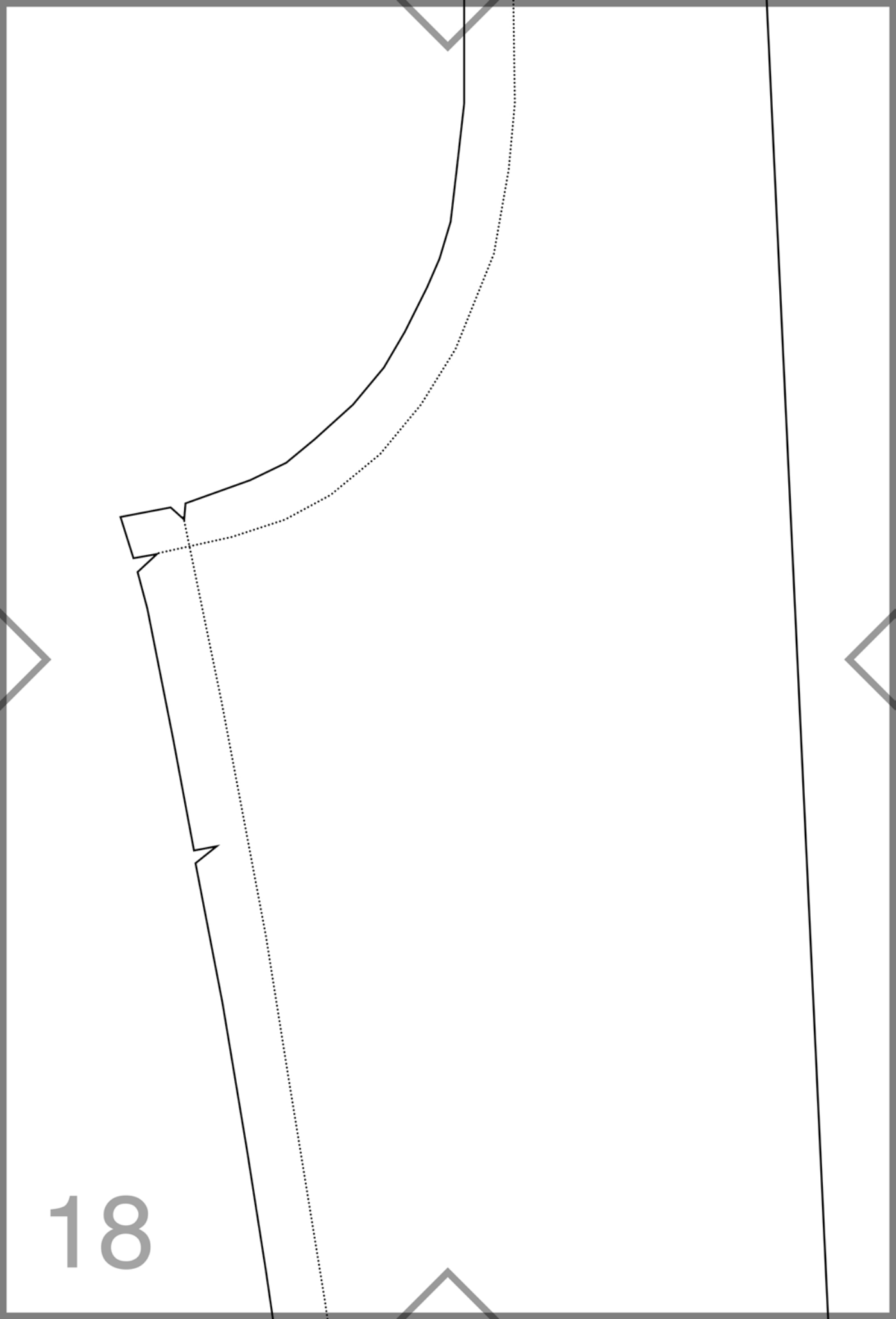
13


UNDERGARMENT CENTRE BACK BUTTON FACING
CUT 1 PAIR SELF
CUT 1 PAIR FUSE
GRAIN LINE
CENTRE BACK
CENTRE FRONT



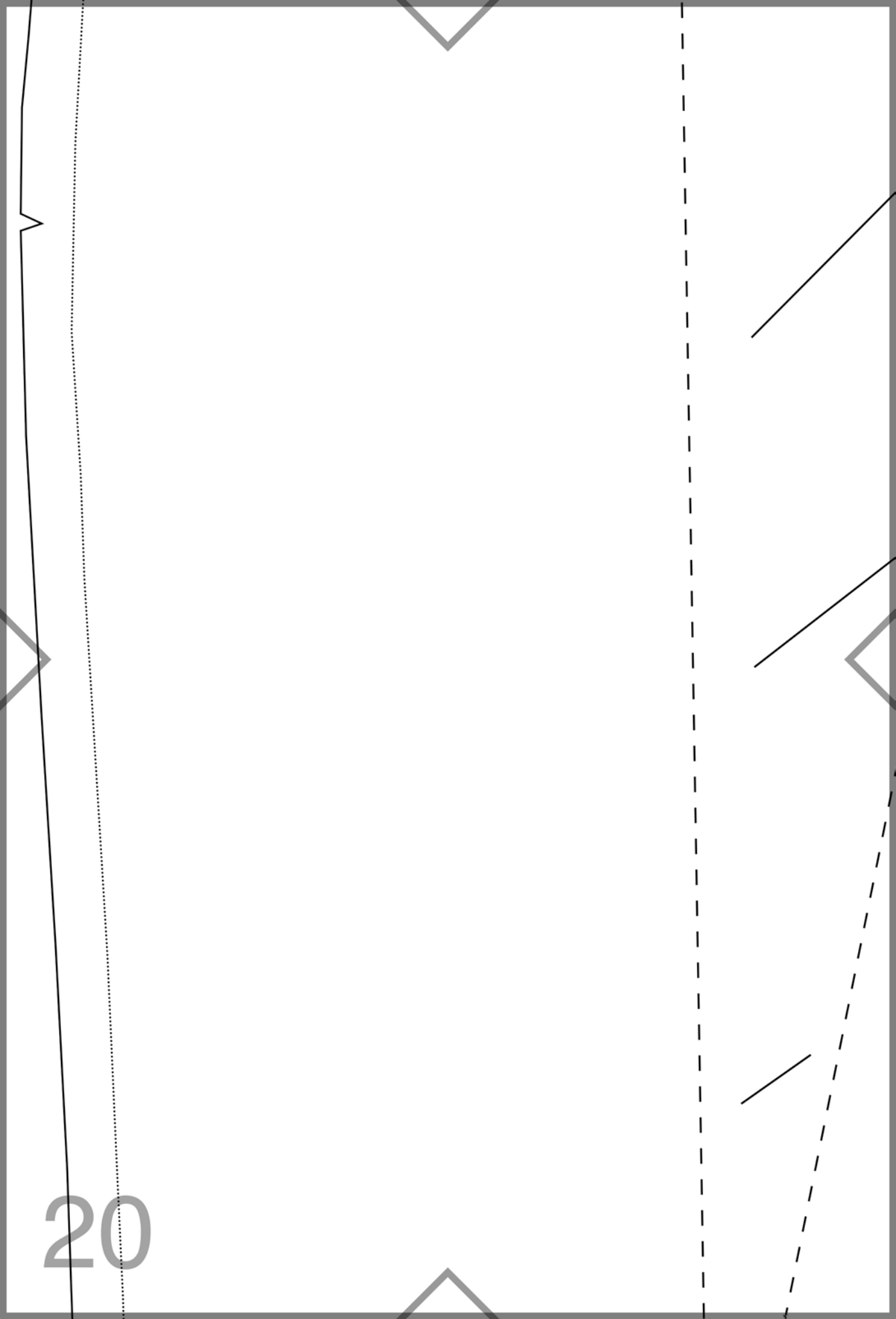

BAG OUT WITH FACING
TOPSTITCH DOWN FACING

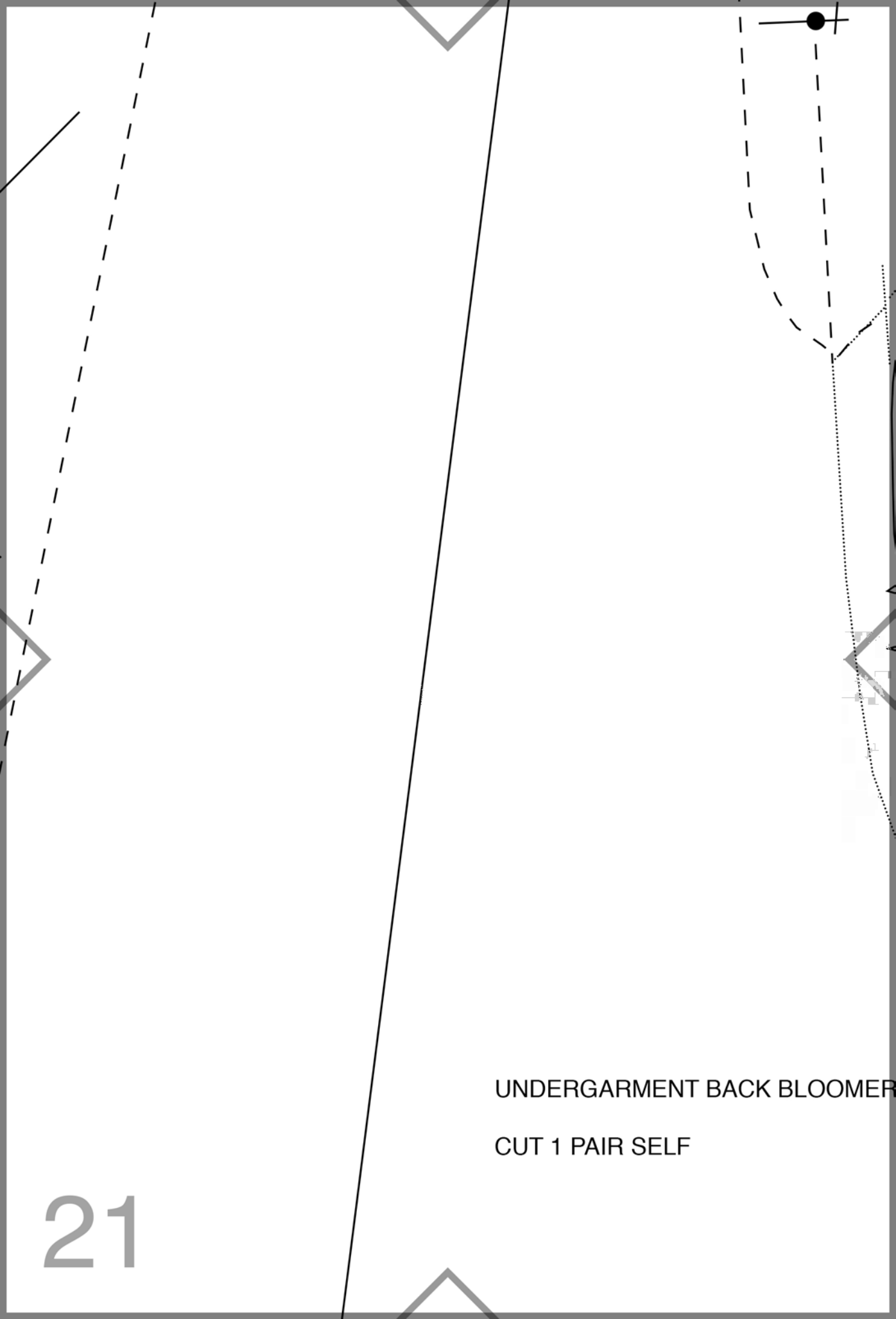

16
FOLD
PLEAT
3 X BUTTONS/ HOLES AT CENTRE BACK
CENTRE BACK



UNDERGARMENT FRONT BLOOMER

CUT 1 PAIR SELF



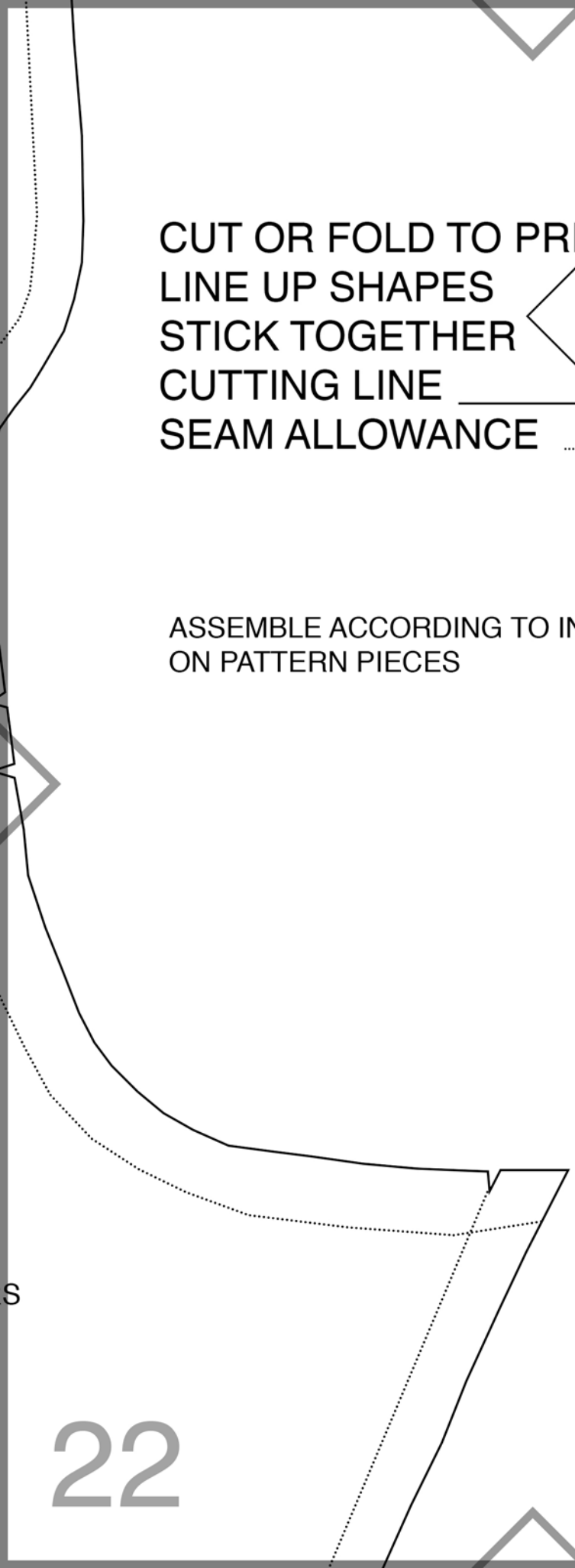


UNDERGARMENT BACK BLOOMER

CUT 1 PAIR SELF

CUT OR FOLD TO PRINT SAFE BOX
LINE UP SHAPES
STICK TOGETHER
CUTTING LINE
SEAM ALLOWANCE

ASSEMBLE ACCORDING TO INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTES ON PATTERN PIECES



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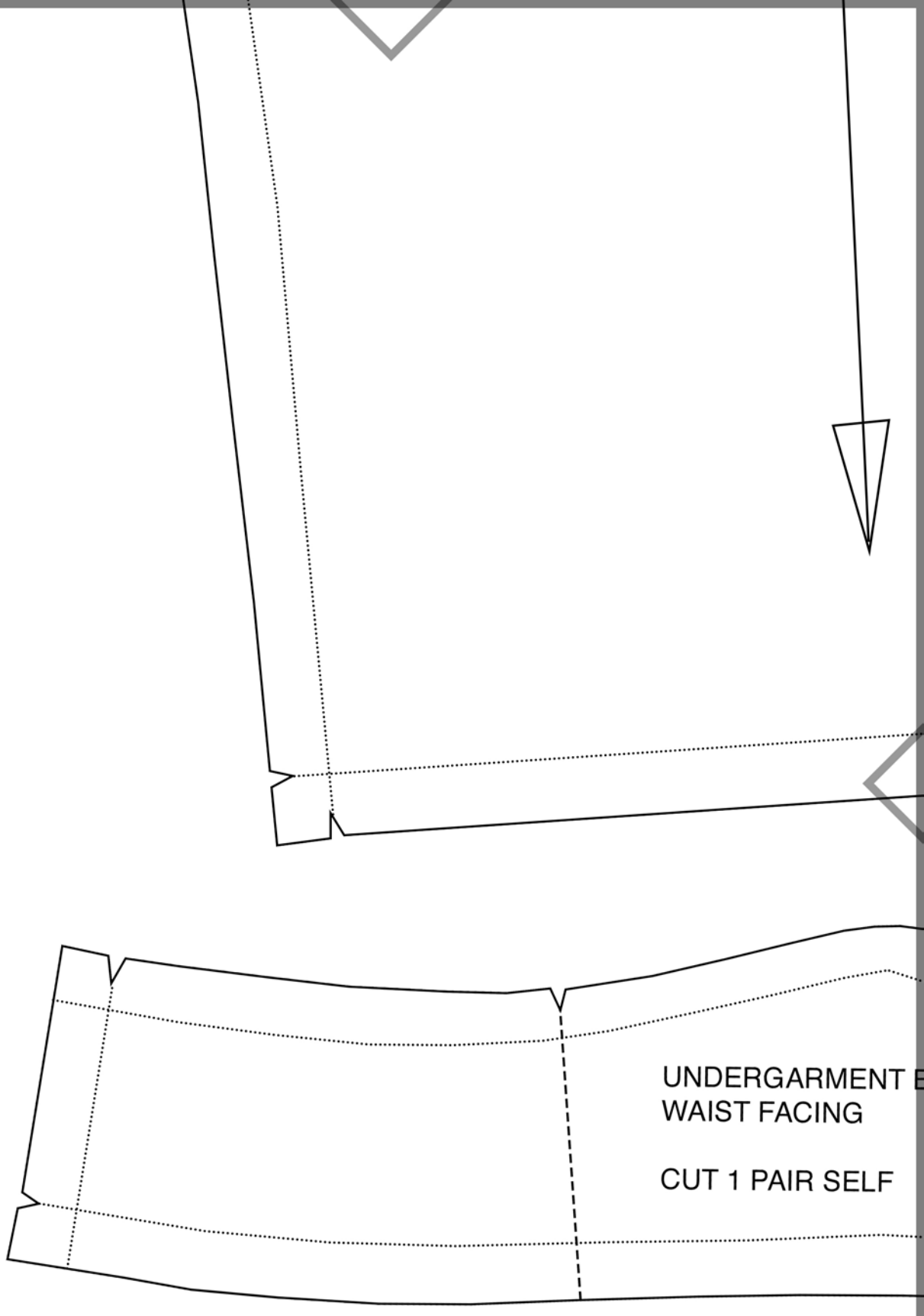
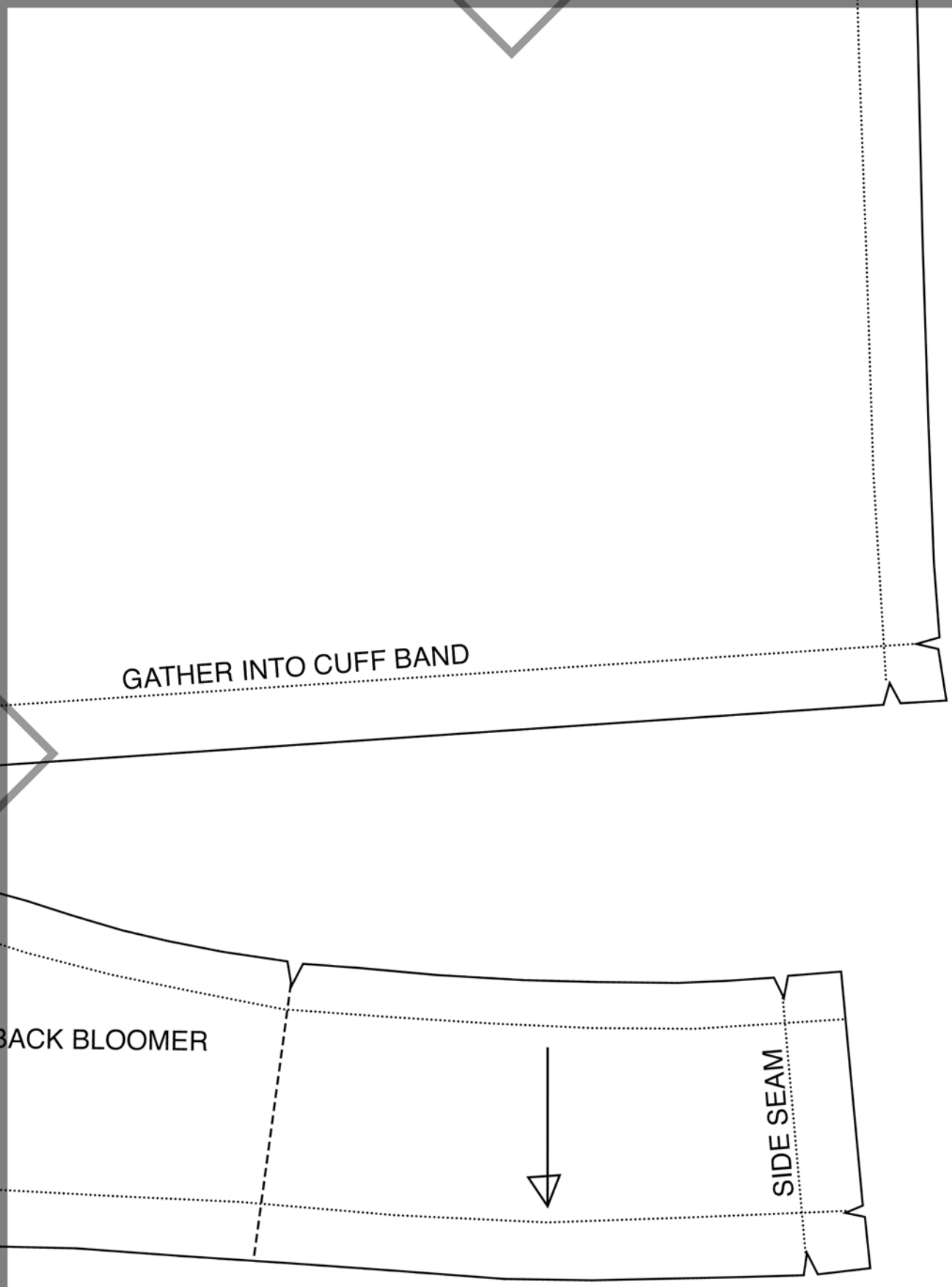
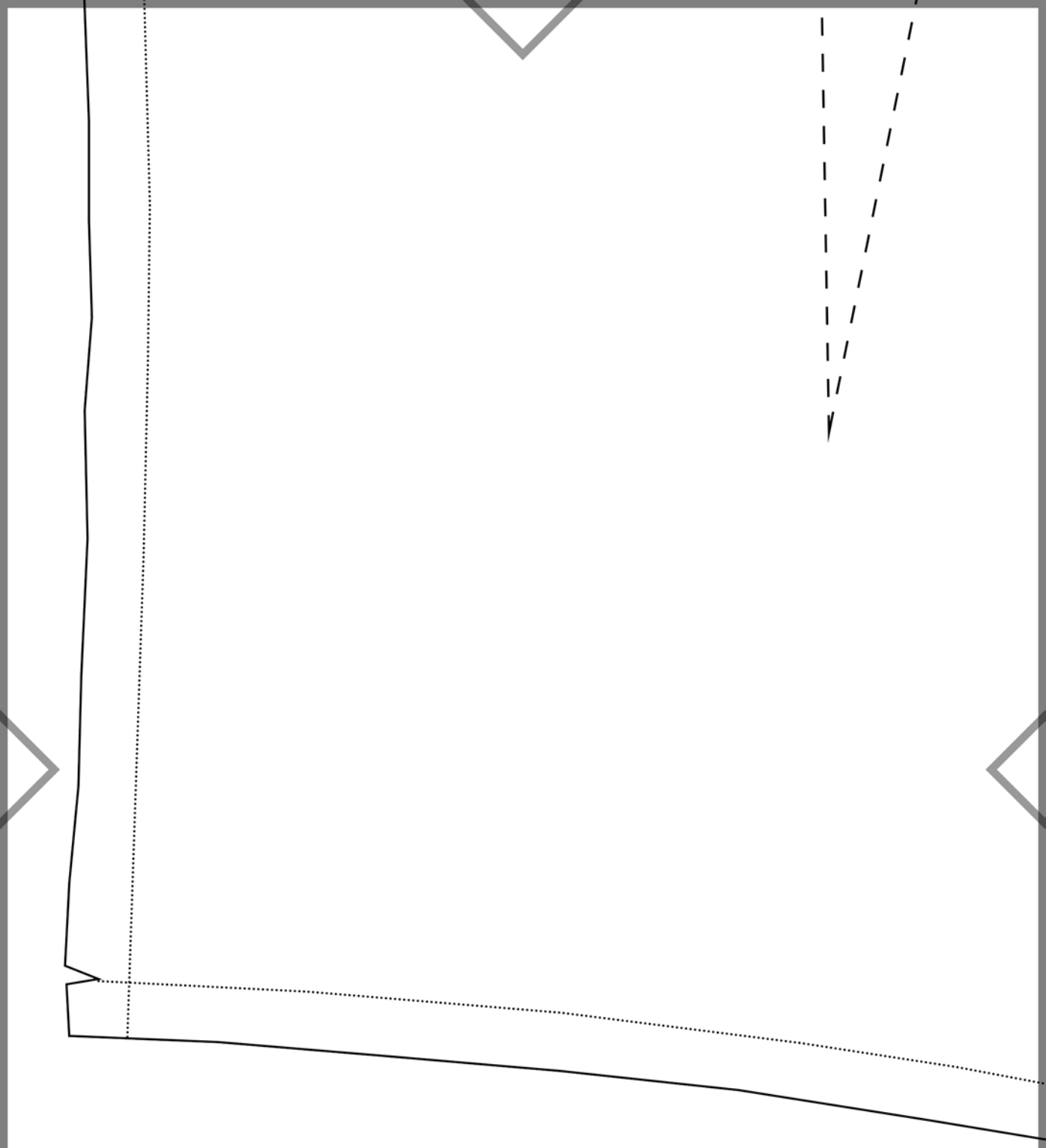
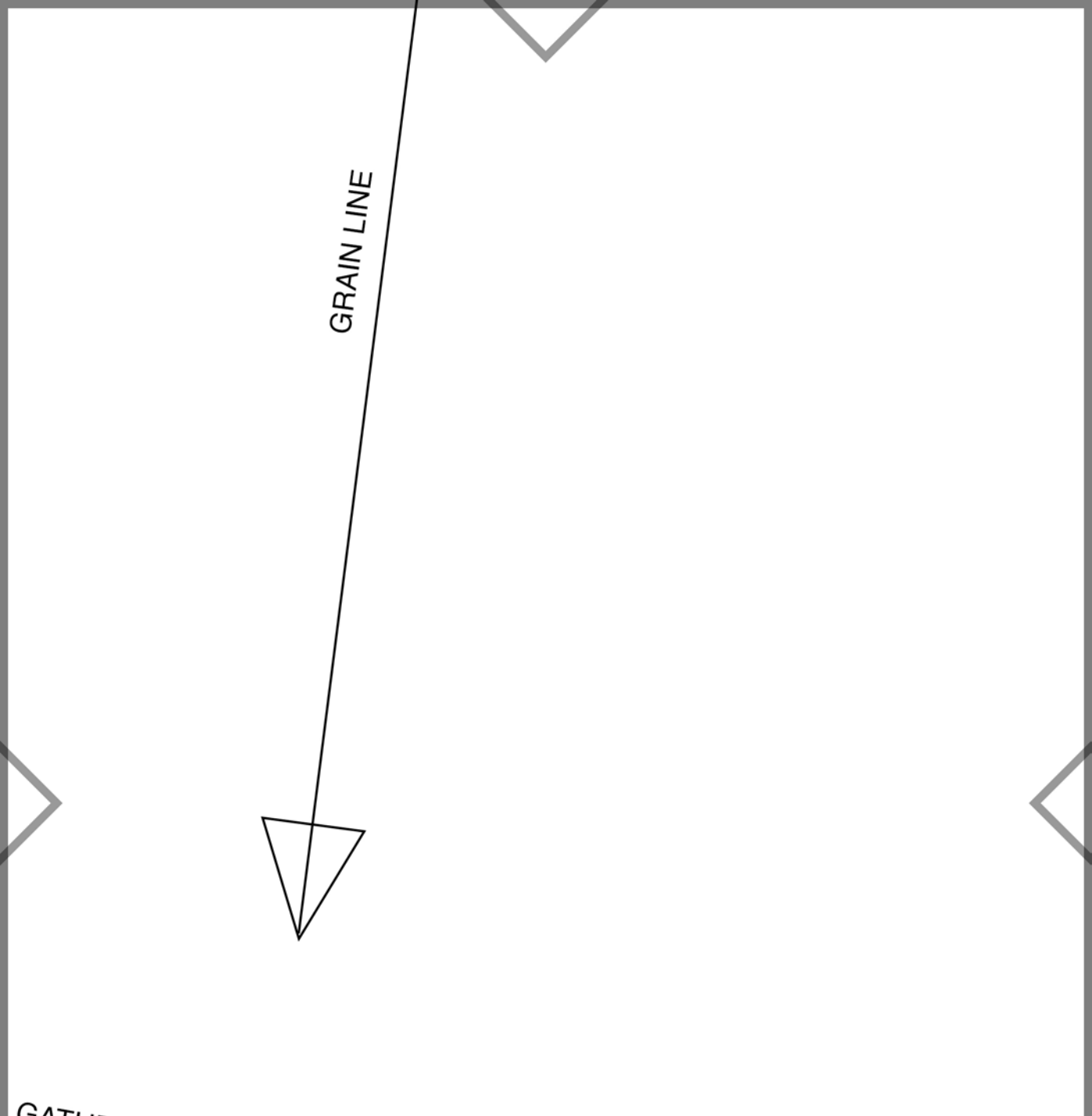
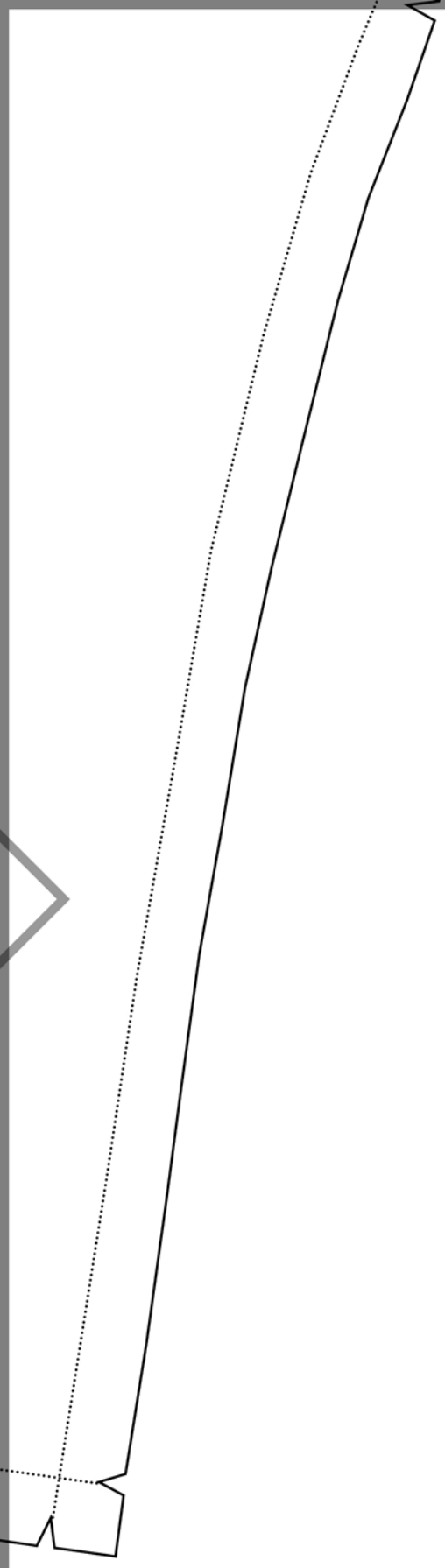

UNDERGARMENT B
WAIST FACING
CUT 1 PAIR SELF


GATHER INTO CUFF BAND
BACK BLOOMER
SIDE SEAM




GRAIN LINE
GATHER HEM INTO CUFF BAND