Pretty Slouchy Bag

A cute and roomy slouchy bag with a useful reinforced interior pocket to keep papers flat.

Materials:

- ½ yard of fabric for the main part of the bag
- 1 yard of a heavier weight fabric, like linen, for the lining
- 1 yard fusible interfacing
- 1/3 yard complementary fabric for top panels and straps

- 2 buttons
- 9 x 12 piece of cardboard

Step 1: Cut pattern pieces

From the main fabric cut: 2 pieces, 18"x 18", for the front and back.

From the lining fabric cut: 2 pieces, 18"x 18", for the front and back interior.
Also cut 2 pieces, 10"x13" for the interior pocket.

From the complementary fabric cut: 4 pieces, 5"x14" for the top panels.
Also cut 2 pieces, 3"x36" for the straps.
Also cut 1 piece, 2"x10", for the button strap.

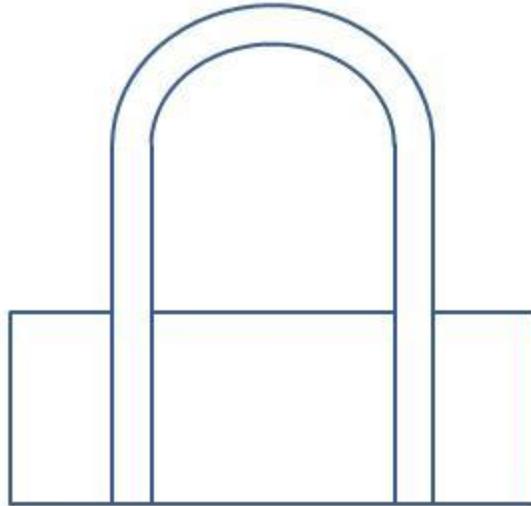From the interfacing cut: 2 pieces, 5"x14" to match top panels.
Also cut 2 pieces, 3"x36" to match straps.

Step 2: Apply interfacing and prepare pieces

Iron the fusible interfacing to the wrong sides of both handle straps, and the wrong sides of 2 of the top panel pieces. With each strap, fold and iron in half lengthwise, then open up the piece, and match each raw edge to the middle, ironing as you go. Fold the strap so that both raw edges are enclosed, and pin.   Topstitch around the entire strap to give it a finished look. Repeat with the second strap. Prepare the button strap in the same way and set aside.

Step 3: Prepare the front and back of the bag

Take one of the top panel pieces without interfacing and measure 2 ½" from each side, placing a mark on the right side of the bottom edge. Pin one end of the handle strap to the inner side of the mark, and pin other end of the handle strap to the inner side of the other mark. Baste strap in place. Your piece should look so:

Now, do this to the other top panel without interfacing, and other handle strap.

Next, gather the top edge of each front and back main panel with a basting stitch.
With right sides together, pin the main panel to the top panel at the edge where the straps are attached, adjusting gathers as you go to fit. Sew a ¼" seam across this edge. Press the seam allowance towards the top panel. Topstitch 1/8" from the seam on the right side of the top panel, catching the handle straps as you go. Repeat for the other top and main panels. Match the front and back with right sides together and pin, making sure not to catch the handles. Stitch a ¼" seam around the sides and bottom. Keep the wrong sides out. Now, you are going to square off the corners so your bag has a nice flat bottom. Take one bottom corner, and match the bottom seam to the side seam to form a triangle at the corner and pin.   It should look something like this:

Measure from the point down 2" and make a mark. Measure 3" from the point out along each side and make a mark. Connect these three marks

with a pen, and stitch along this line. Trim to a ¼" seam allowance; it should look something like this:

Now repeat these steps for the other corner, and turn right side out. Your front and back are complete!

Step 4: Make the lining and pocket for your bag

Take the two pocket pieces and pin them right sides together. Sew around the edges with a ¼" seam, leaving an opening along one edge for turning. Turn piece right sides out and press, pressing out the corners and sides for a nice rectangle. Pin this piece to one of the main lining panels where you want your pocket (I would suggest about 2-3" from the top and about 3-4" from each side). Now topstitch around the sides and bottom, to attach the pocket and close the opening that was left.

Now, gather the top edge of the two main lining panels with a basting stitch. Attach the top panels to the main panels as you did with the front and back, adjusting gathers to fit. With right sides together, match front and back of lining around sides and bottom, and sew a ¼" seam, leaving a 4" opening along the bottom edge of the lining (you will use this opening to turn your almost completed bag right side out). Square the bottom corners as you did with the outer purse layer.

Your lining is complete!

Step 5: Attach lining and button strap.

With the lining turned right side out, and the outer purse layer turned wrong side out, slip the lining inside of the outer layer, matching the side seams, and pin around the top edge. Make sure the handle

straps are placed down inside the bag so they don't get caught in the top seam. Find the center of one side of the bag and mark with a pin. Take the button strap and fold in half, then slip this down at the center you've just marked with a pin (the folded edge should be facing down into the bag, with the two raw edges of the button strap matching the top raw edges of the bag and lining). Pin this in place, and stitch around this top edge with a 1/4" seam; the button strap will be stitched into place once you stitch this seam. Using the opening left in the bottom of the lining, turn the bag right side out. Close the opening in the lining by turning the raw edges under and topstitching across the opening. Now stuff the lining down inside of the bag. Press the top edge of the bag, and pin. Topstitch around this top edge to give it a nice finished look. Now pin around the bottom edge of the top panel, where you've already topstitched, and topstitch around this again. This will catch the lining in your stitching and help hold the lining in place.

Step 6: Finishing details.

Take the button strap and sew a short seam to split it in half widthwise, essentially creating two large buttonholes. Place your buttons on the front so that it closes as desired and stitch them in place.

If you want a pocket to keep 8 1/2 x 11" papers flat, cut a piece of cardboard to measure just smaller than 9 x 12" and slip this into your inside pocket.

Go out and enjoy!

Please consider adding a picture to my Flickr group here, http://www.flickr.com/groups/1311496@N24/, if you make a *Pretty Slouchy Bag*, and do email me with any problems or questions! bibliosophy@gmail.com.