The bag is made from one pattern piece. It's just like the plastic shopping bags and in fact the pattern is made from the shopping bag. The following picture shows the bag full (with three 2 litre drinks inside - and, BTW, carried them perfectly without the fear of the bag falling apart like the plastic ones).

You start by making your pattern using.....ta da.... you guessed it, a plastic bag. Cut off the fused ends at the bottom and both top handles:

Open out the gusset and cut in half on both sides:

Discard one piece and fold the remaining piece in half:

Place this on the fold of your fabric and pin. You will need to cut 2 of the main fabric and 2 of the lining fabric:

Place one main fabric piece and one lining fabric piece right sides together and sew the middle "U" shape. Then sew the other curved seams **BUT ENDING APPROXIMATELY 1 1/2 INCHES BELOW THE TOP OF THE HANDLES**. This allows you to sew the top of the handles later. Clip the corners and turn right side out and press. Don't topstitch at this stage:

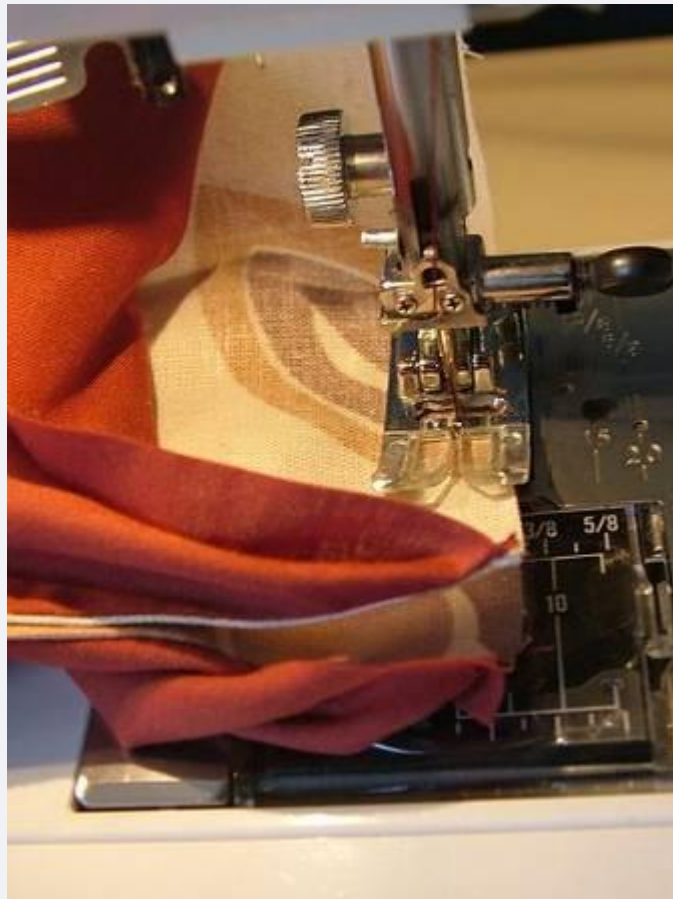This is what you should now have:

Place the two pieces together, right sides together:

Now we are going to work on the top of the handles. Push the lining back and pin the main fabric together:

Keeping the lining away, start sewing across the main fabric:

Keep sewing and continue on into the lining:

Continue to sew along the lining:

And get to the end:

Push all that fabric into the handles and this is what you will get - an opening in the side of the handles:

This is what you bag should look like now. If you don't want to topstitch, handsew the openings closed on each of the handles. If you do want to topstitch, just ignore the openings for the time being.

Now we are going to go onto making the pocket to allow the bag to fold up into itself. This is optional. If you don't want to do this, just skip the next few steps. The pocket piece size will obviously depend on the size of your plastic bag though. To get this size, I folded it up as I would fold it then measured that size and added some more. It gets quite bulky as when it is folded up into the pocket, the whole thing is turned inside out. My pocket piece is 6.5" x 17". To make the pocket, fold in half (right sides together) and sew the two side seams. Turn right sides out and press.

Find the centre of the bag and the centre of the pocket's raw edge:

Line up the two centres, then pin and sew down the **two** sides to the *main fabric only – NOT the lining*:

Now put the two main pieces together and the two lining pieces together (right sides together) and sew the side seams:

Turn right side out and place the lining in the main bag. Press side seams and topstitch around the handles and the bag's opening (if you didn't handstitch openings closed before). The topstitching will close the openings. The next picture doesn't show the topstitching but the picture after does. However, now is the time to do it:

Now to make the gusset. Fold the handles in half and place the side seam parallel with the handle fold, like this:

The following picture is a cross-section of the bottom of the bag:

Repeat for the other side.

Sew across the top of the handles to keep in place. I sewed in the seam so the stitching is almost invisible:

Now we are going to sew a french seam across the bottom of the bag. With right sides out, sew across the bottom of the bag (making sure to catch the gusset in the bottom seam):

Trim the seam allowance then turn inside out. Sew across the bottom encasing the seam allowance:

Turn your bag, right side out and it is now finished:

To fold the bag into itself, start by placing the side with the pocket downwards. Fold one side edge in (use the pocket as a guide to make this fold):

Repeat for the other side:

Turn handles down:

Fold in half:

Put your hand in the pocket, with this hand also grab the fabric (including the bag on the outside) and turn inside out.

Well done. You have finished your shopping bag. You can keep this handy little bag in your purse when you need it.

As always, any questions? Please feel free to ask. 😊