

PAPER PIECING CONCEPTS

The process for all paper piecing never varies, i.e., **Trim**, **Sew**, and **Press**. It takes a little practice to get the hang of it; some claim it's like working in a mirror. Quilters either hate it or love it! My best advice is to not over think the process. Consider the benefits; a perfectly pieced block every time.

Paper piecing requires one paper pattern for each block or for each unit of a block. The ink side (marked side) of the paper is the **right side** of the paper and the sewing side. The numbers identify the piecing order. The lines between numbers are the sewing lines (see illustration).

1. Hold the **right side** of the paper pattern facing you. Place the **wrong side** of fabric **#1** on the **wrong side** of the paper covering the **#1** area printed on the **right side** of the paper.

Make sure the fabric edges extend a minimum of $\frac{1}{4}$ " beyond the sewing lines (see illustration). Holding the paper and fabric up to a light helps to place the fabric correctly.

2. Pin the fabric in place. Position the pin away from the sewing lines on the **right side** of the paper (see illustration).
3. Repeat step 1 for fabric **#2**.
4. Flip fabric **#2** over onto fabric **#1** (**right sides** facing) and re-pin to hold the assembly in place.
5. With the **right side** of the paper facing up, **Sew** on the line between **#1** and **#2** (see illustration). Begin sewing a few stitches before and after the sewing line.
6. Fold the paper back onto itself on the stitched sewing line to expose the seam allowance.
7. **Trim** the exposed seam allowance to $\frac{1}{4}$ " being careful not to clip the paper.

NOTE: My favorite tool for folding (step 7) and trimming (step 8) seam allowances is the Add-A-Quarter Plus® ruler. Otherwise, a postcard, an index card or a piece of template plastic are all great alternatives to fold the paper back onto itself and expose the seam allowances (step 7). Use a quilt ruler to measure seam allowances before trimming (step 8).

8. With the fabric side facing you, flip fabric **#2** up into place to cover the **#2** area and **Press** with a hot dry iron.
9. Following the numbered piecing order, repeat steps 1 through 8 to complete the block.
10. Trim the finished block around the paper pattern leaving the $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance printed on the paper pattern and clip any remaining threads on the block.

You may choose to leave the paper attached to the fabric when sewing blocks together. Or, mark connecting points on the fabric for adjoining pieces, remove the paper, line up marks, sew the pieces together, and press the seam open for a flatter block. This appears to be a personal preference. You choose what works best for you. To prevent distortion, carefully remove the paper beginning in the center of the pieced block. Use a stiletto to score the paper to get the tearing started.

TIPS:

- ▲ For oversized paper patterns that print on multiple pages, consider basting along the registration marks instead of taping them together. Helps to avoid a sticky iron.
- ▲ Place a piece of muslin on your ironing surface to protect against ink transferring to your ironing surface.

