

Paper Piecing

Materials needed:

paper pattern
strips or pieces of fabric larger than the sections on the pattern
large index card or piece of mylar plastic
glue stick
Add-a-Quarter ruler or a clear plastic ruler
rotary cutter
and your usual sewing tools such as your sewing machine, thread, etc.

Tips:

Set your sewing machine stitch length to 1.5.
Sew the pieces in numerical order.
Check to make sure the fabric piece will be large enough for the section with the seam allowance by holding it up to the light.
Sew on the printed side of the pattern. It's okay to go one stitch beyond the end of the line. Your fabric will be on the plain side of the paper.
Generally, you will leave at least 1/4" border around the entire pattern for the seam allowance. For our Opportunity Block, please trim around the outside of the gray border, approximately 1/2".

Procedure:

1. Select a piece of fabric larger than section 1 on the pattern. Place the fabric on the back of the paper pattern, right side showing up. Use a little glue to hold in place.
2. Prepare the seam for sewing section 2 to section 1. On the printed side of the paper, align the index card or mylar along the seam line and fold the paper back over it.
3. Place your Add-a-Quarter ruler against the fold or place the 1/4" mark of a clear plastic ruler on the fold. Use your rotary cutter to trim the excess fabric to create a 1/4" seam allowance.
4. Select a fabric for section 2 and line the edge up with the edge you just trimmed up, right sides together. Turn the entire piece over and sew on the line between sections 1 & 2.
5. On the fabric side, press the new piece out flat.
6. Prepare the seam for sewing section 2 to section 3 with the index card, following the above procedure in steps 2 and 3.
7. Continue until you have sewn all the sections. Trim off the entire paper pattern leaving a 1/4" seam allowance.

Option:

After placing one piece and sewing it in place, trim all 3 remaining sides to 1/4" instead of just the side for the next seam. This removes all the extra fabric that you have to deal with as you sew.

Review of the Steps:

Place the fabric for the next section.
Sew in place.
Iron the fabric out flat.
Fold the paper back on the seam line for the next seam.
Trim the excess fabric down to 1/4" in preparation for placing the next piece of fabric.
Repeat in numerical order.