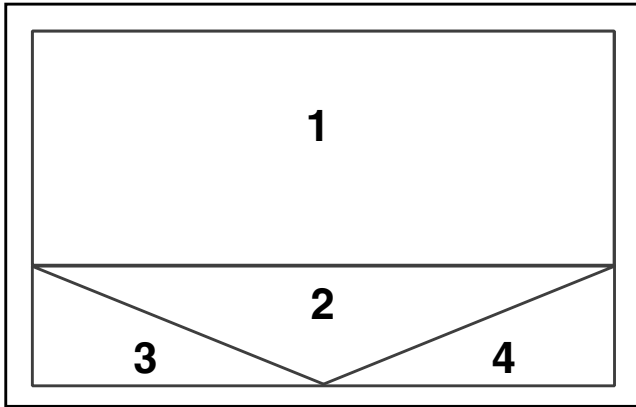


Basic Paper Piecing Tutorial and Practice Block

We will use this example block to show the paper piecing technique.

Paper piecing is useful for piecing odd angles and small shapes. It adds stability for bias edges and it is generally more accurate than traditional piecing. The fabric pieces are sewn to paper in a specified order. Each seam is trimmed, sewn, and the fabric then pressed open. The final block is trimmed to an exact size including the final seam allowance.

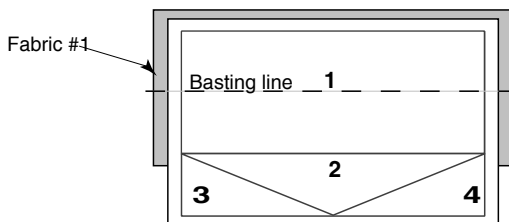


The **Bold** numbers indicate the order in which to sew the pieces.

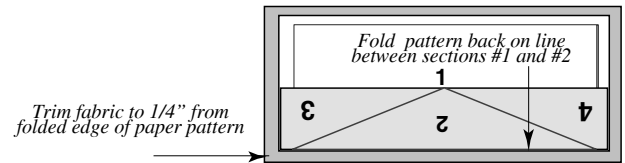
If you are making a large number of blocks from the same template, you may wish to rough cut all of the same fabric type for each part of the block at one time. But you should first cut just one and sew it to make sure it is the right size. In general, you will rough cut the fabric about 1/2 inch larger than the final piece on each side. Pretend you are cutting 1/2 inch seam allowances. Cutting even larger is OK too.

Make a copy of the sample block above.

1. Rough cut a rectangle that will cover the #1 section with 1/2" seam allowances on all 4 sides. Place fabric 1 right side down, under the #1 section of the paper pattern with at least 1/4" extending beyond the sewing lines. Pin the paper to the fabric. You may wish to hold the fabric and paper combination up to a light source to make sure the #1 paper section is covered. Now baste across the paper/fabric to hold piece #1 in place.



2. Fold the #2,3,4 section up on sewing line between #1 and #2 sections. Trim fabric 1/4" beyond folded paper. (See hints for folding* and trimming**.)



*Hints for making folding easier and more accurate.

1. Line up a postcard on the line to be folded and fold the fabric back over the card. This method was introduced by Carol Doak. Her books on paper piecing are highly recommended.

2. Use a dressmaker's tracing wheel and your rotary cutter ruler to score (partially perforate) the paper. It will be easier to fold and easier to remove later.

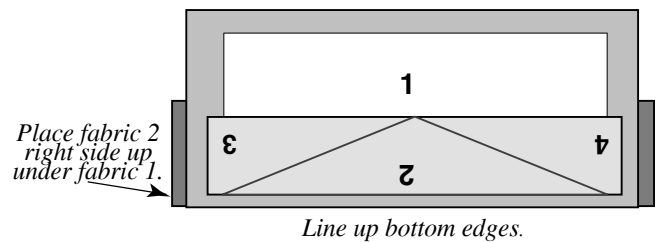
**Hints for trimming 1/4" seam allowances.

1. Use an Add-a-Quarter ruler. Line up the lip of the ruler against the folded paper edge and cut. You will automatically have a 1/4" seam allowance. We think the Add-a-Quarter ruler makes the trimming much faster.

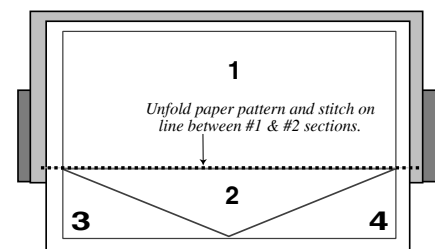
2. Or use your rotary cutter ruler and trim the seam to 1/4" beyond the folded paper.

3. Rough cut a triangle of fabric large enough to cover section #2 of the paper pattern plus 1/4" for seam allowances.

4. Place fabric #2 face up under fabric #1 lining up the bottom edge with the previously cut edge.



5. Unfold paper and stitch on line between sections #1 and #2. See notes on selecting needle and stitch length.

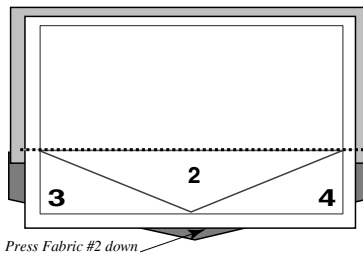


A note on stitch length and needle size

1. **Stitch length.** You get to make a choice here. For those of you who want to make paper removal easier, stitch at 18 to 20 stitches per inch. Be careful not to sew anything incorrectly because removing those tiny stitches can be very tedious. For those you who just hate to remove stitches, use a larger stitch (10-12 stitches per inch) and put up with working a little harder at removing the paper. It is up to you, but remember, never stitch a seam that you are not willing to unstitch if necessary.

2. **Needle size.** The larger 90/14 sewing needle also helps to make paper removal easier.

6. Press #2 fabric open. Be sure to press on the fabric side. Put a piece of paper on your ironing board to protect it from ink transfer from the paper pattern.



7. Continue adding fabric pieces following steps 2 through 6.

- Fold back on next seam line to be stitched
- Trim fabric to 1/4" beyond folded paper
- Align next fabric piece with cut edge
- Pin if needed and unfold paper
- Stitch on previously folded line
- Open fabric and press.

8. Once all fabrics are sewn onto the paper, trim the paper 1/4 beyond the outside sewing lines.

