

ENGLISH PAPER PIECING

Learn the technique to piece each block

TOP TIP

Starch can help to keep the fabric really flat and prevent it from stretching when basting your pieces.

EPP PAPERS

1 English Paper Piecing (EPP) is the art of hand sewing fabric shapes together, wrapped around paper templates, to create a geometric design.

2 Use a thin card to trace or print your templates. Cut out using a quilting ruler and rotary cutter for accuracy. Make sure you use an old blade in your rotary cutter, as the paper will dull the blade.

3 Once you've completed one block, you can then reuse the pieces for the next block. This will mean you won't need to make as many templates in order to complete all the blocks.

BASTING

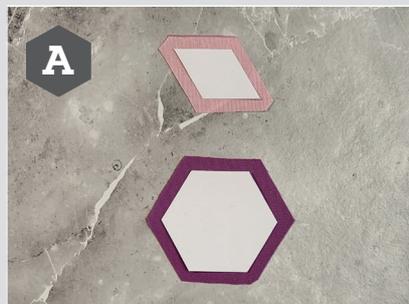
4 When basting shapes, Karen uses glue basting. You can use any washable glue stick, but you may find it helpful to use a commercially available glue basting pen. These pens are smaller and help get glue just in the seam allowance, but you can use any method you prefer, including corner tacking and thread basting.

5 Place one of your templates on the wrong side of a piece of fabric, securing with a dab of basting glue. Trim the fabric, adding a seam allowance all the way around (Fig A). You can use a conventional pair of scissors, as the seam allowance doesn't need to be exact. Aim for a seam allowance between $\frac{1}{4}$ in– $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

6 Swipe a line of glue along one edge of the paper piece, then fold the fabric over the edge. Repeat for each edge, until the entire shape is basted (Figs B–E). Take care to keep the glue away from the outer edge of the paper. If there is dried glue along the edge, it can be difficult to stitch through.

7 When basting diamonds, or other shapes with sharp outer points,

BASTING



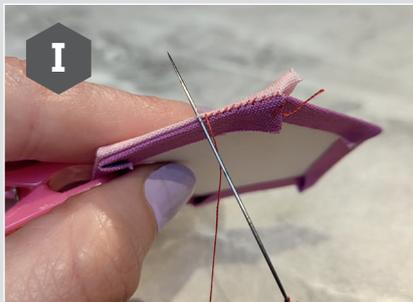
If you prefer a different basting method, such as corner tacking or thread basting, you can also choose to use one of those for this BOM series!

there will be little 'dog ears' of fabric hanging over at the points. These should be left in place, as shown in Fig F.

8 When basting shapes with curves, carefully ease the fabric along the curve as you baste, smoothing with your

fingernail (Fig G). Alternatively, you can sew a running stitch through the curved seam allowance, using a knotted thread. Gently pull the thread to gather the curved edge around the template. Then secure the remaining straight edges of fabric down with basting glue.

JOINING THE PIECES



GET TO GRIPS WITH THE EPP TECHNIQUE SO YOU CAN GET STUCK INTO THIS BOM SERIES!

JOINING THE PIECES

9 When stitching the pieces, use a thread that matches your fabric closely. If you're working with lots of colours, use a neutral shade such as grey or taupe that will act as a shadow and sink into the fabrics without showing up. A fine thread, such as a 50wt or 80wt, and a thin, flexible needle such as a milliner's needle are recommended for achieving small, invisible stitches.

10 To join the pieces, place two pieces right sides together, aligning the edges to be joined. Bring a needle with knotted thread through the seam allowance and then through the first corners to be joined, as shown in Fig H.

TOP TIP

We've used a contrasting thread so you can see our stitches, but you'll want to use a more neutral thread.

11 Whipstitch along the edge, picking up only a few threads from the seam allowance of each piece (Fig I). Stitches should be about a needle width apart across the seam. Knot the thread when you reach the end of the first edge.

12 Repeat step 11 to join the pieces as required, until the shape is complete. As you work, you may need to fold joined sections to align the next edges for joining.

13 To knot off your thread securely, as you make your last stitch, leave a small loop of thread. Then pass your needle through the loop two times, before pulling the thread tight, as shown in Fig J. Pass the thread through the seam allowance and then snip.

14 Once you've joined all the pieces, press well, and then carefully remove the templates. Press again, taking care that the seam allowances remain pressed under around the outer edge.

TOP TIP

Binding clips are an easy way to keep pieces held together as you stitch.

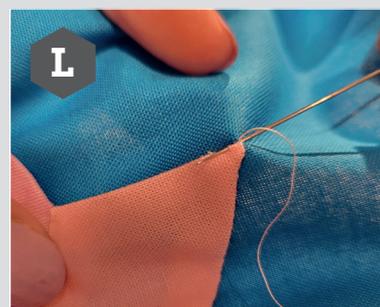
APPLIQUÉ

15 To join the EPP shape to the background fabric, first fold the background square in half both vertically and horizontally. Then gently finger press to mark out the square's centre.

16 Centre the EPP shape on top and pin in place. Pin from the centre outwards to avoid any puckers. Neatly slip stitch around the outer edges to finish.

17 When appliquéing points with dog ears, tuck the ear out of the way to stitch up to the point, as shown in Fig K. Then tuck the ear underneath, before stitching down the other side (Fig L).

APPLIQUÉ



If necessary, you can trim away the dog ear a bit to reduce bulk.

18 If you don't want to appliqué by hand, you can use your machine to topstitch around the edges. When you reach a point, stop with the needle down, lift your presser foot and pivot the block before you continue sewing.

TOP TIP

- For more info on EPP visit gathered.how/epphexagons/
- For more info on appliqué visit gathered.how/applique