



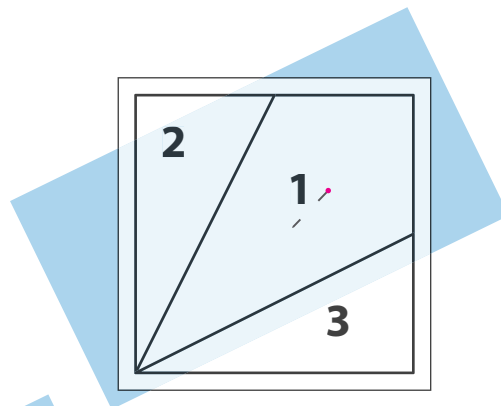
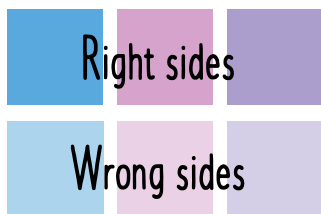
Basic Paper Piecing

This guide provides basic paper piecing instructions. A sample 4" finished kaleidoscope block is included here, but this technique is the same no matter what block you are working on.

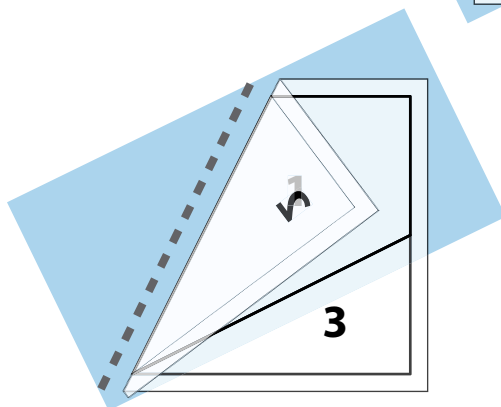
Materials

- Copies of your paper piecing templates, cut out (roughly is fine)
 - Plain copy paper is fine; newsprint, tracing paper, or a specialty paper such as Carol Doak's Foundation Paper will be easier to tear away
 - If printing from a .pdf, make sure that your printer is set to 100% (rather than, for example "scale to fit"), otherwise your blocks will end up being an incorrect size.
- Fabrics
- Basic quilting supplies (piecing thread, ruler, rotary cutter, mat, iron)
 - You probably know that cutting paper dulls your fabric scissors; it will also dull your rotary blades. Consider keeping a second rotary cutter for paper piecing and move your old blade into it when it's time to replace your regular cutting blade.
 - If you enjoy this technique, look for a specialty Add-A-Quarter ruler at your local shop. This makes trimming a lot easier.

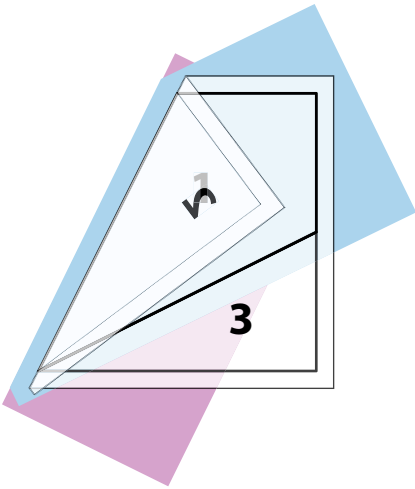
Paper Piecing



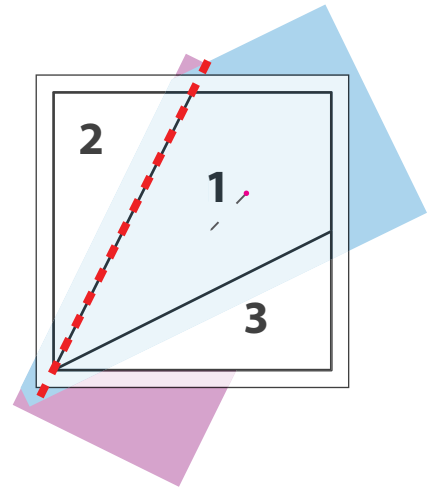
1. Place a piece of fabric underneath the section marked 1 on your pattern, with the right side facing outwards and the wrong side facing the back (non-printed) side of your foundation paper. The fabric should be large enough to comfortably cover the first shape, plus a little extra to account for seam allowances. Pin the fabric to the paper, or adhere it with a dab of water-soluble glue.



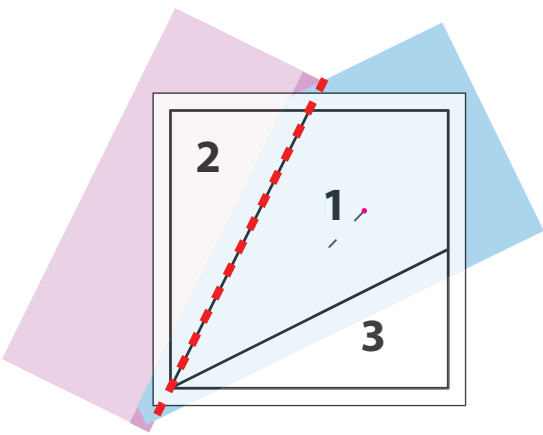
2. Fold the foundation paper back towards you along the line between pieces 1 and 2. You can make this easier by lining up an index card with the fold line and folding against the edge of the card. Trim $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge of your fold line using a ruler.



4. Line your next piece of fabric up along this line. The two pieces of fabric should be right sides together. Make sure your fabric covers the #2 section fully, and has a little room around the edges for seam allowances.

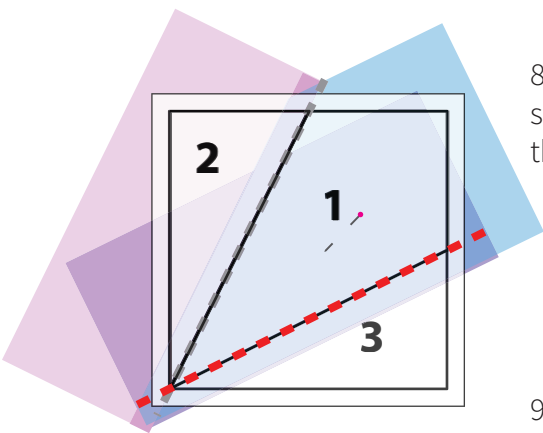
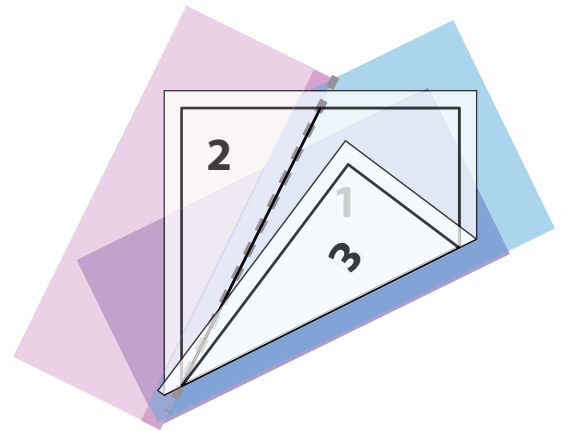


5. Keeping your fabric in place, flatten out your paper and sew through the paper and both pieces of fabric with a shortened stitch length (1.5mm or 20 stitches per inch).

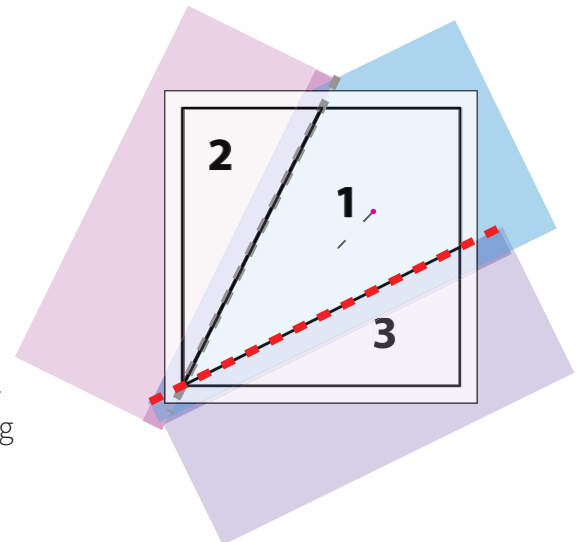


6. Press your second piece of fabric outwards. It should still cover the paper completely; if it doesn't or just barely does, remove the stitching and re sew the seam.

7. As you did before, fold back the #3 section on your paper. Trim to 1/4" if necessary and align your next piece of fabric, again with right sides facing together.



8. Flatten the paper and sew your next seam along the marked line.

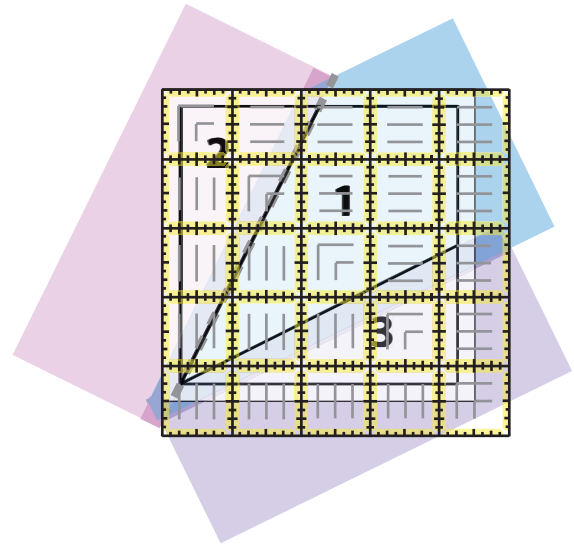


9. Press the third piece outwards. If your block has additional pieces, continue joining them in this manner.

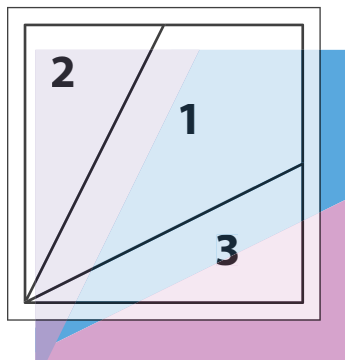
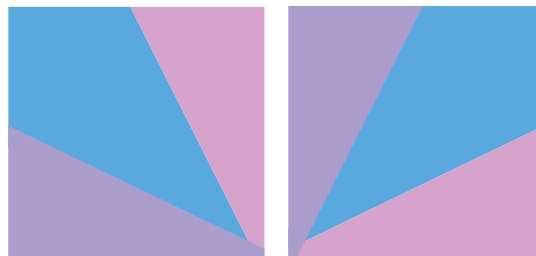
10. For our sample block, the reverse side will now look something like this:



11. Trim the piece to size along the outside lines using a ruler and your rotary cutter.

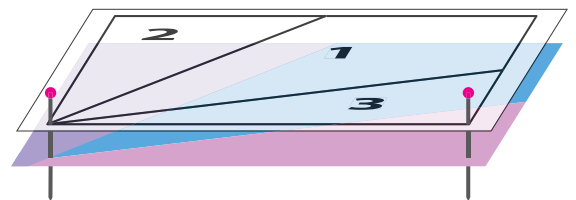


Voilà, your first block! Make a second one, and we'll learn how to join them accurately! This is also how you would join units within a block that is broken up into multiple sections.

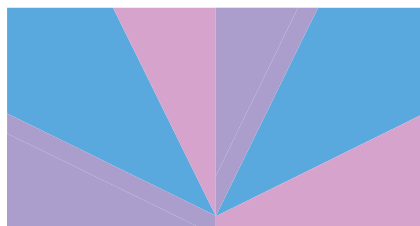
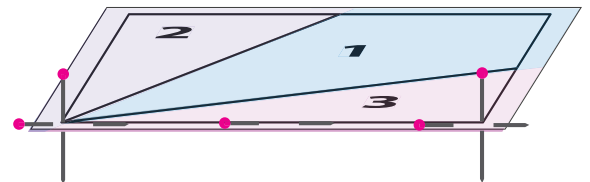


1. To join multiple blocks, place them right sides together.

2. Insert two pins vertically through the corners, through both blocks.



3. Keeping the vertical pins in place, insert pins along the seam line to pin the two blocks together.



4. Remove the vertical pins and sew your seam. You can now remove the paper in the seam allowance, but keep the rest of the paper on until the remaining outside seams have been sewn in order to stabilize any bias edges and help you align other blocks.

Q. My fabrics don't completely cover my paper!

A. Are you folding back the paper before every section? It's easy to think that this is just an annoying extra step, but it really will help you align the fabrics correctly. If you are doing so and still having difficulty getting the fabrics to cover the paper, you may need to use larger pieces of fabric. Nobody likes to waste fabric, but unfortunately paper piecing is inherently a slightly more wasteful technique.

Q. My blocks aren't aligned after sewing them together.

A. If you inserted your vertical pins, then shifted them to pin the blocks together, this probably also shifted the fabrics. Try using additional pins to pin the block together, and leave the vertical pins in place until the blocks have been securely pinned. You may also want to consider investing in finer pins if you are using regular dress-maker's pins.

Q. My paper doesn't tear away easily.

A. Your stitch length may be too long. The thicker your paper, the shorter your stitch length needs to be in order to perforate the paper enough that tearing away is easy.

Q. How do I know what size my fabric pieces should be?

A. If you're precutting your fabrics, measure each piece on your foundation and determine what size rectangle it would fit into. Then add about $\frac{1}{2}$ "- $\frac{3}{4}$ " on both sides to account for seam allowance and wiggle room. If you have an oddly-shaped scrap, place it over the section in question face down to determine whether or not it will fit.

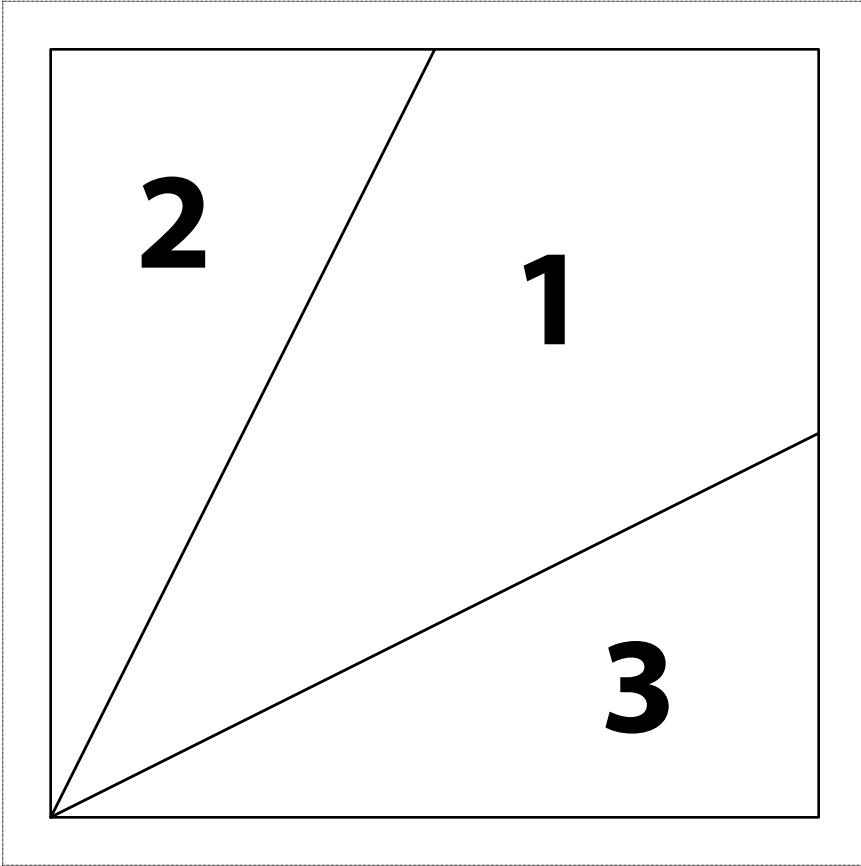
Q. My oddly-shaped scrap doesn't fit and I was sure it would!

A. Keep in mind that paper piecing foundations are always printed backwards. It might have been the right shape for the foundation, but not the final reversed image! You should always place scraps over the foundation face down when trying to determine whether or not it will fit.

Q. I like the look of paper piecing, but I don't like picking out the paper afterwards.

A. There are several techniques for paper piecing, not all of which involve sewing through paper. You can use muslin or stabilizer instead of paper, which can be left in your finished project. If you use freezer paper instead of copy paper, you can sew along the folded edge rather than flattening out your paper. The freezer paper will hold the block in place when pressed with your iron. Paperless paper piecing is another technique that doesn't involve picking out paper, but is a little more laborious as you'll need to press folds into the edges of your fabrics with starch.

Paper Piecing Templates



The box should measure exactly 1" square on your printout. If it isn't, try printing again, ensuring that your printer is set to 100% (no scaling).

