

PROJECT: Fireworks Pillow
English paper-pieced hexagons are the perfect on-the-go
summer stitching project.





Fireworks

MATERIALS

½ yard solid blue
(hexagon unit, pillow top,
covered button)

¼ yard each of multicolor
stripe, solid white,
and red zigzag print
(hexagon unit)

½ yard red-and-white
print (hexagon unit,
backing)

17" square muslin (lining)

Polyester fiberfill

⅞"-diameter covered
button kit

Water-soluble glue stick
(optional)

FINISHED PILLOW:

15" diameter

Yardages and cutting
instructions are based on
42" of usable fabric width.
Measurements include

¼" seam allowances
unless otherwise
indicated. Sew with right
sides together unless
otherwise stated.

CUT FABRICS

Cut pieces in the following order.

Patterns are on *page 6*. To make a
template of Pattern A circle (for pillow
top, lining, and backing), see
“What Are Templates?” on *page 7*. Cut
out Pattern A fabric pieces on outer
lines following pattern directions for
placing fabric on the folds.

From solid blue, cut:

- 1 of Pattern A
- 7—2½" squares
- 1—1½" square

From multicolor stripe, cut:

- 6—2½" squares

From solid white, cut:

- 12—2½" squares

From red zigzag print, cut:

- 6—2½" squares

From red-and-white print, cut:

- 1 of Pattern A
- 6—2½" squares

From muslin, cut:

- 1 of Pattern A

MAKE BASTED HEXAGONS

You will need a paper template for
each hexagon (37 paper hexagons
total). Precut paper templates for
English paper piecing are available
at quilt shops and by mail order; for
this project, purchase hexagon-shape
templates that have 1"-long edges.

If you wish to make your own
templates, trace Pattern B (see *page 6*)
onto sturdy paper 37 times. Cut out
paper templates on traced lines
carefully and accurately.

Designer Diane Gilleland sometimes
uses a water-soluble glue stick to
temporarily adhere fabric to the
hexagon templates.

- 1) Pin a paper hexagon template to wrong side of a solid blue $2\frac{1}{2}$ " square (**Diagram 1**). Cut out fabric hexagon, adding a $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowance to all edges. (Your seam allowance does not have to be exact because the paper hexagon will be an accurate guide.)

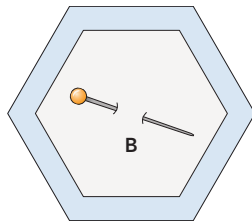
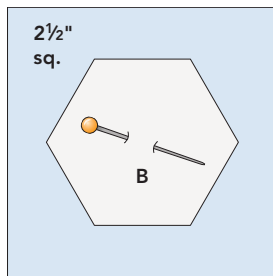


DIAGRAM 1

- 2) Fold seam allowance over one template edge. Hand-baste or use a water-soluble fabric glue stick to baste fabric in place. To hand-baste, hand-stitch through fabric (but not the paper) with a long stitch (**Diagram 2**). Finger-press basted edge.

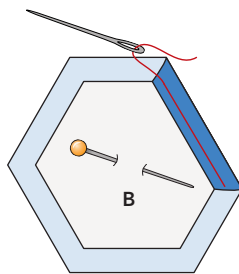


DIAGRAM 2

- 3) As you approach a corner, fold next seam allowance over template and take a stitch or two to tack the corner in place (**Diagram 3**). Repeat folding and basting process with remaining seam allowances to make a solid blue basted hexagon. Remove pin; do not remove paper.

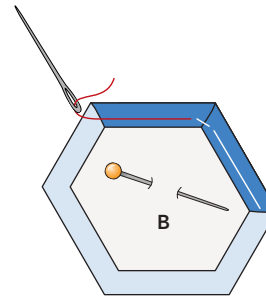


DIAGRAM 3

- 4) Repeat steps 1–3 to make seven solid blue basted hexagons total.
- 5) Repeat steps 1–3 to make six multicolor stripe, 12 solid white, six red zigzag print, and six red-and-white print basted hexagons.

ASSEMBLE HEXAGON UNIT

For English paper piecing, the quiltmaker decides the order of construction because the paper stabilizes the fabric, making it possible to work in any direction. The instructions that follow are for starting at the center and working outward.

- 1) With right sides together, layer a solid blue and a multicolor stripe basted hexagon, aligning edges to be stitched. Hold pieces together with your fingers or a clip.

- 2) Thread a hand-sewing needle with matching thread. Begin stitching at one corner using tiny whipstitches and catching a few threads of both fabric folds (**Diagram 4**). You'll feel the templates with your needle, but do not stitch through them. Backstitch to secure seam and stitch to opposite corner.

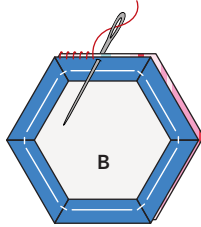


DIAGRAM 4

- 3) When you reach opposite corner, take a backstitch, then knot thread by making a tiny backstitch in fabric and passing needle through thread loop.
- 4) Lightly press open the joined pieces and check seam from right side; stitches should not show. If they do, take smaller whipstitches through fabric folds as you sew.
- 5) Referring to **Diagram 5**, continue in the same manner to join six multicolor stripe basted hexagons total to solid blue center hexagon, setting in seams as necessary.

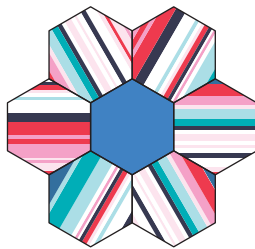


DIAGRAM 5

- 6) Referring to **Diagram 6**, add solid white and solid blue basted hexagons to Step 5 unit.

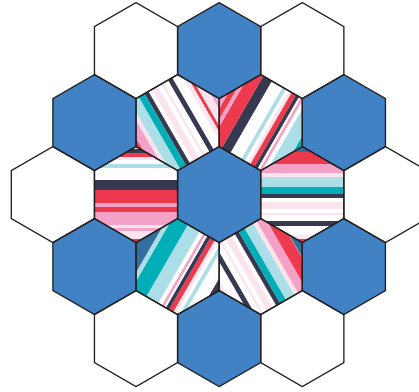


DIAGRAM 6

- 7) Referring to **Diagram 7**, add solid white, red zigzag print, and red-and-white print basted hexagons to Step 6 unit. Press, then remove paper templates. Press again to make hexagon unit.

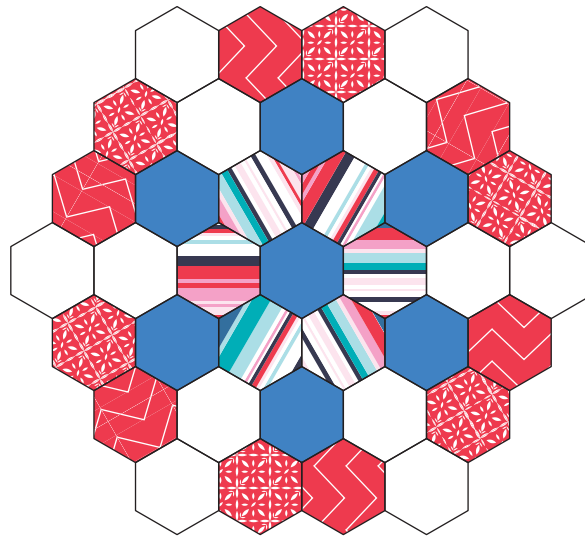


DIAGRAM 7

ASSEMBLE LINED PILLOW TOP

- 1) Center hexagon unit on solid blue A pillow top circle; pin in place.
- 2) Stitching $\frac{1}{8}$ " from hexagon unit edges, topstitch hexagon unit to solid blue A circle to make appliquéd pillow top.
- 3) With right side up, layer appliquéd pillow top atop muslin A lining circle; pin. Using a $\frac{1}{8}$ " seam allowance, baste pieces together to make lined pillow top.

FINISH PILLOW

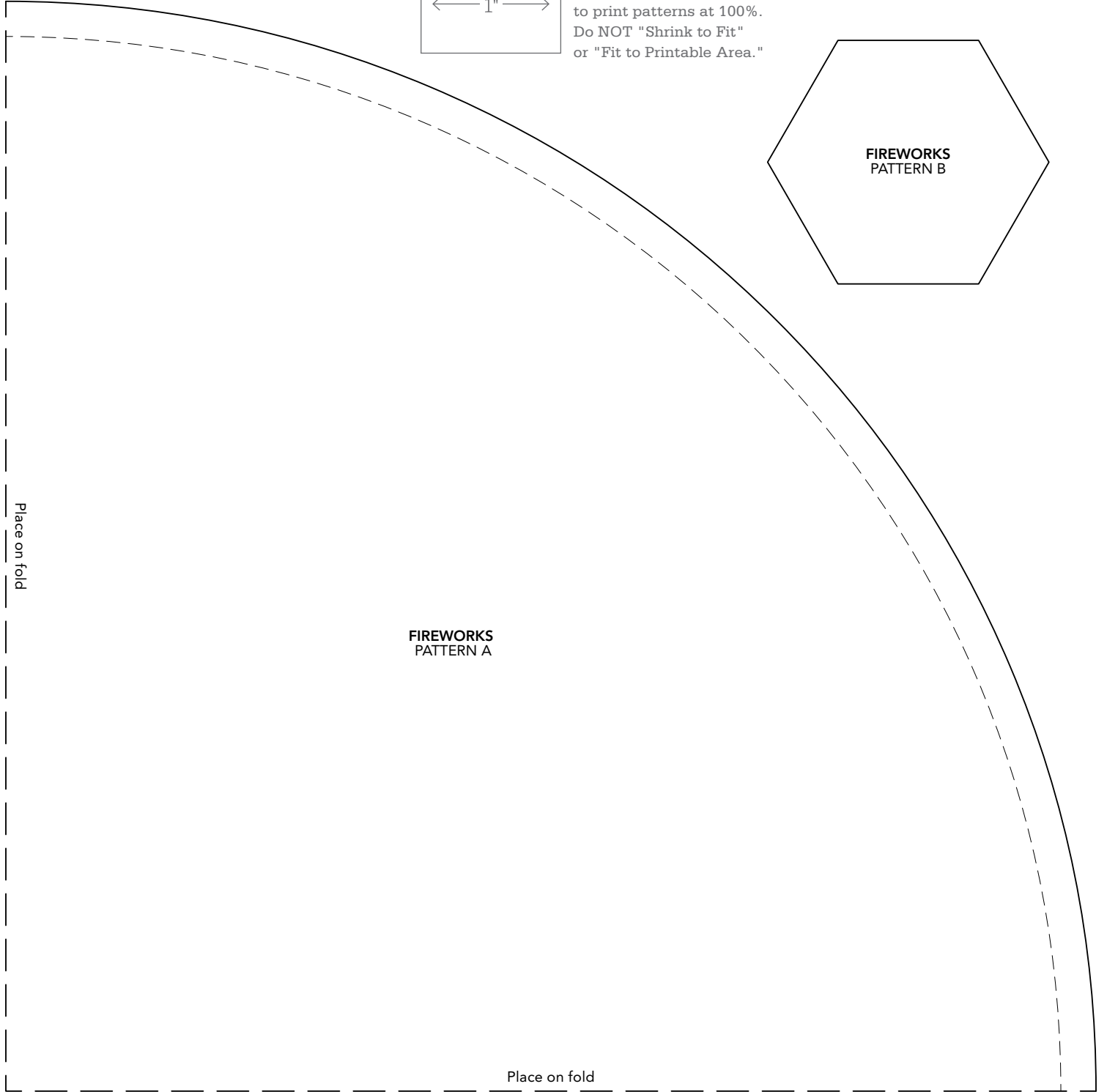
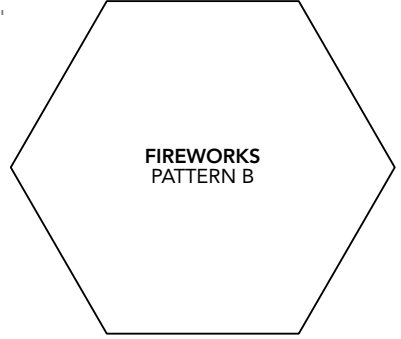
- 1) With right sides together, layer lined pillow top and red print A backing circle.
- 2) Sew pieces together around curved edges, leaving a 4" opening for turning. Turn right side out through opening to make pillow cover; press.
- 3) Stuff pillow cover with fiberfill and hand-stitch opening closed.
- 4) Using solid blue $1\frac{1}{2}$ " square and button kit, follow instructions on button kit to make a covered button.
- 5) Thread a needle with heavy thread. Sew covered button to the solid blue hexagon at center of pillow top, making several stitches through all layers and pulling thread taut as you sew. Knot and trim thread to make a tufted center and complete pillow.

This box should
measure 1".

← 1" →

*** NOTE:**

When printing a
downloadable pdf, set Page
Scaling preference to NONE
to print patterns at 100%.
Do NOT "Shrink to Fit"
or "Fit to Printable Area."



MAKE TEMPLATES

A template is a pattern made from extra-sturdy material so you can trace around it many times without wearing away the edges. Acrylic templates for many common shapes are available at quilt shops. Or you can make your own by duplicating printed patterns on template plastic.

To make permanent templates, purchase easy-to-cut template plastic, available at quilt shops and crafts supply stores. Lay the plastic over a printed pattern. Trace the pattern onto the plastic using a ruler and a permanent marker to ensure straight lines, accurate corners, and permanency.

For hand piecing and appliqué, make templates the exact size finished pieces will be (without seam allowances). For piecing, this means tracing the patterns' dashed lines.

For machine piecing, make templates that include seam allowances by tracing the patterns' solid and dashed lines onto the template plastic.

For easy reference, mark each template with its letter designation, grain line (if noted on the pattern), and block name. Cut out the traced shapes on their outside lines. Verify each template's shape and size by placing it over its printed pattern. Templates must be accurate; errors, however small, will compound many times as you assemble a quilt. To check templates' accuracy, make a test block before cutting the fabric pieces for an entire quilt.

USE TEMPLATES

To mark on fabric, use a pencil, white dressmaker's pencil, chalk, or a special fabric marker that makes a thin, accurate line. Do not use a ballpoint or ink pen; it may bleed if washed. Test all marking tools on a fabric scrap before using them.

To make pieces for hand piecing or appliqué, place a template facedown on the wrong side of the fabric and trace. Then reposition the template at least $\frac{1}{2}$ " away from the previous tracing (**Diagram 1**), trace again, and repeat. The lines you trace on the fabric are sewing lines. Mark cutting lines $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the sewing lines, or estimate the distance by eye when cutting out the pieces with scissors. For hand piecing, add a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance; for hand appliqué, add a $\frac{3}{16}$ " seam allowance.

Because templates used to make pieces for machine piecing have seam allowances included, you can use common tracing lines for efficient cutting. Place a template facedown on the wrong side of the fabric and trace. Then reposition the template without a space between it and the previous tracing (**Diagram 2**); trace again and repeat. Using a rotary cutter and ruler, cut pieces out, cutting precisely on the drawn lines.

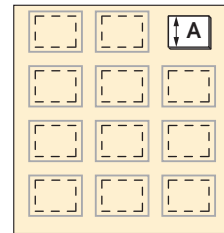


DIAGRAM 1

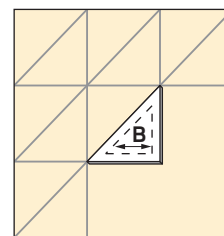


DIAGRAM 2