

Project: Life's a Circus Mobile

DESIGNED BY KIM KRZUCH OF RETRO MAMA (RETRO-MAMA.BLOGSPOT.COM)



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Materials

- 12×18" blue wool-blend felt (hoop)
- 9×12" wool-blend felt in teal, yellow, gold, orange, white, gray, and pink (elephants, balls, bunting)
- Scraps of assorted 100% cotton polka dots in assorted colors to match (elephant ears)
- Lightweight iron-on fusible web (such as Steam A Seam)
- Polyester fiberfill
- Heavyweight thread (such as hand-quilting thread)
- Embroidery floss: black and orange
- 2—34"-long pieces of yarn
- Narrow masking tape
- 9"-diameter, 5/8"-wide wood embroidery hoop (you'll only use the inner hoop)
- 4—2 cm felt balls in assorted matching colors (available at crafts store)
- Flexible tape measure
- Pressing cloth
- Chopstick

Finished mobile: 9" diameter

Yardages and cutting

instructions are based on 36" of usable wool-blend felt fabric width.

Editor's note: Circus mobile is for decoration only. It is not a toy and should be kept out of reach of young children and infants because it contains small parts.

Cut Fabrics

Cut pieces in the following order. Patterns are on download.

Wool blend doesn't fray, so there is no need to turn under the edges of the ornaments.

To use iron-on fusible web for ornaments, complete the following steps.

1. Lay fusible web, paper side up, over patterns. Use a pencil to trace each pattern the number of times indicated in cutting instructions, leaving 1/2" between tracings. Cut out each fusible-web shape roughly 1/4" outside traced line.
2. Following manufacturer's instructions, press fusible-web shapes onto wrong sides of wool-blend felt; let cool. Cut out fabric shapes on drawn lines. Peel off paper backings.

From polka dot scraps, cut:

- 8—Pattern B (4 sets of 2 matching pieces)

From assorted felts, cut:

- 2 each of patterns A, C, D, E, and F (elephant)
- 4 each of patterns G, H, I (two matching sets of two colors each) (balls)
- 24 of Pattern J (bunting)
- 1 of Pattern K (flag)

From blue felt, cut:

- 8—1 1/8×18" strips (hoop)

Assemble Elephants

1. Referring to photo on download, arrange matching B ear pieces atop C ear pieces. Following manufacturer's instructions and using a press cloth between felt and iron, fuse shapes in place with hot iron. Zigzag-stitch around curved edge of each B piece.
2. Place two A body pieces that match Step 1 C ears on table with trunks facing (so they are mirror images). Place matching D saddle pieces in position on each A body. Using

matching thread, edgestitch saddles in place along curved lower edge only (**Diagram 1**). Do not sew top curve of saddle.

3. With matching threads, edgestitch an E star piece onto far side of saddle (away from head) and an F cheek piece near trunk. Repeat for opposite side.
4. Place fused ear on elephant and attach by zigzag-stitching only the straight edge to create a dimensional ear. Hand-sew a French knot for elephant eye. Repeat for opposite side (**French Knot Diagram**).
5. With wrong sides together, pin elephant bodies together, then sew around 1/8" from outer edge with contrasting thread, leaving a 1" opening. **Note:** Designer Kim Kruzich used triple-stitch function on her machine to highlight stitching.

Tip: Many sewing machines have a triple-stitch function; it may be marked with three dashed lines on the machine. Check manual to find out if machine has this stitch.

6. Stuff elephant lightly with fiberfill through opening. Use a chopstick to help push stuffing into narrow trunk

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and leg areas. Stitch opening closed in the same manner as before to make an elephant.

7. Repeat steps 1-6 to make four elephants total.

Assemble Balancing Balls

1. Referring to photo on download for color placement, place H stripes piece atop G ball piece. Using matching thread, edgestitch H piece in place. Position matching I tip piece over center intersection of H stripes piece and edgestitch in place. Trim any excess felt overhanging edges to make one ball body. Repeat to make a second matching ball body.
2. With wrong sides together, pin balancing balls; then sew around $\frac{1}{8}$ " from outer edge, leaving a 1" opening. Stuff ball lightly with fiberfill. Stitch opening closed to make one balancing ball.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 to make a second balancing ball.

Assemble Bunting Strips

1. Align short edges of six assorted J bunting pieces. Leaving needle and bobbin threads at least 10" long, sew across short edges of triangles, very close to edge, allowing needle to sew a couple of stitches between each triangle to make a bunting strip (**Diagram 2**). Leave needle and bobbin threads 10" long before cutting bunting strip from machine. Repeat to make four bunting strips total.

Finish Mobile

1. Using a flexible tape measure and a pencil, measure and mark four lines on top edge of embroidery hoop (inner hoop only), evenly spaced around hoop. Then mark four dots, evenly spaced between drawn lines (**Diagram 3**).
2. Wrap one end of a 34"-long piece of yarn around hoop on one marked line, secure in place with masking tape on inside and outside of hoop (**Diagram 4**). Wrap other end of yarn on marked line on opposite side and tape in place as before. Repeat with remaining piece of yarn, securing it at remaining two marked lines. **Tip:** Make sure no masking tape extends beyond top or bottom of hoop so you don't have to pass needle through when sewing around hoop.
3. Place hoop on a flat surface, hold two pieces of yard centered and taut above hoop, and tie a knot 6" from top. Fold K flag piece in half around yarn above knot and edgestitch along raw edges (**Diagram 4**). Tie a second knot just above flag.
4. Hang embroidery hoop from top yarn loops. Referring to photo for placement and using an 18"-long piece of heavyweight thread and a hand-sewing needle, stitch an elephant and a balancing ball onto string. Upper and lower part of string should attach to elephant at hanger positions marked with X on pattern piece. Repeat to make a second string with an elephant and balancing ball. Repeat using remaining elephants and felt balls, to make two more strings, each with an elephant and two felt balls.

Make sure strings are evenly weighted. For maximum visibility, position elephants at different heights (in photo, elephants are 4", 5", 7", and 8" below hoop).

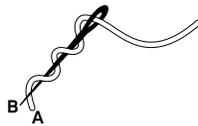
5. Tie four stings of elephants at marked dots (in photo, strings are 12" and 14" long below hoop); secure with tape, making sure hoop is balanced so it hangs straight.
6. Attach four bunting strings so they drape between strings of elephants with flags on each end approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " below hoop, tying them at same points as elephants, and secure with masking tape.
7. Using matching thread, abut short ends of two $1\frac{1}{8} \times 18$ " strips and sew together with a zigzag stitch to make one long strip that lies flat (**Diagram 5**). Wrap felt strip around outside of hoop and trim to size, again abutting raw ends. Remove remaining felt and zigzag short ends together to make a loop. Repeat with remaining two felt strips, measuring inside of hoop instead, to make a second loop.
8. Place felt loops on inside and outside of hoop. Using a running stitch (**Running Stitch Diagram**), hand-stitch together with five strands of orange embroidery floss around top and bottom of hoop, $\frac{1}{8}$ " from edges of loop, to complete mobile.

Tip: If you accidentally pull or cut one elephant string off, just sew it back in place to the felt on the inside of the hoop.

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French Knot

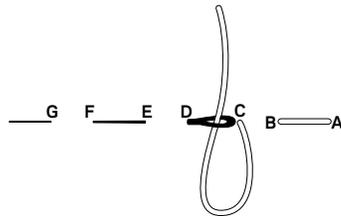
To make a French knot, pull threaded needle up at A (the point where knot is desired) and wrap thread around tip of needle two or three times. Insert thread-wrapped needle back into fabric at B, about 1/16" away from A. Gently push wraps down needle to meet fabric, then pull needle and thread through fabric smoothly.



FRENCH KNOT DIAGRAM

Running Stitch

To make a running stitch, pull threaded needle up at A and insert it back into fabric at B. Continue in same manner, loading several stitches on needle at a time.



RUNNING STITCH DIAGRAM

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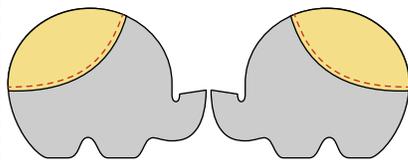


DIAGRAM 1

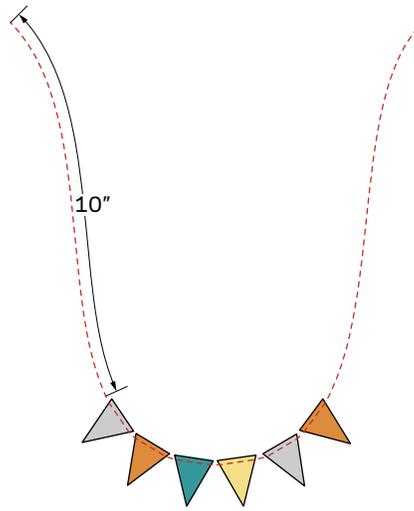


DIAGRAM 2

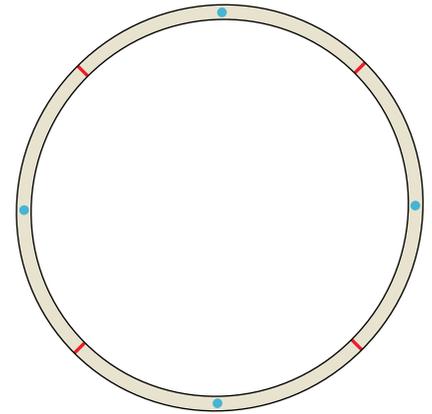


DIAGRAM 3

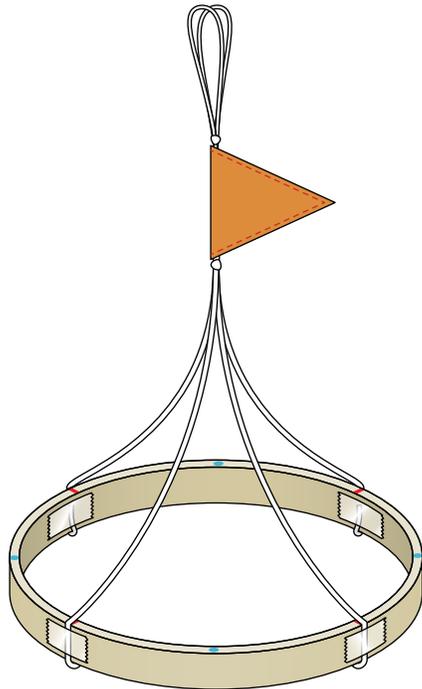


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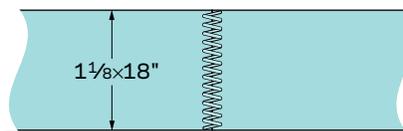
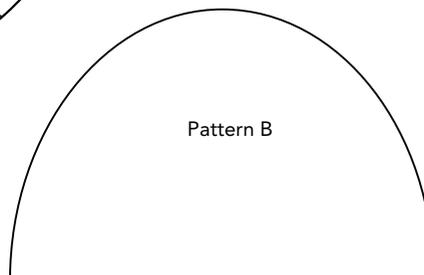
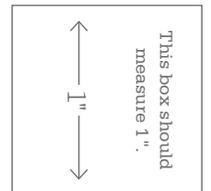
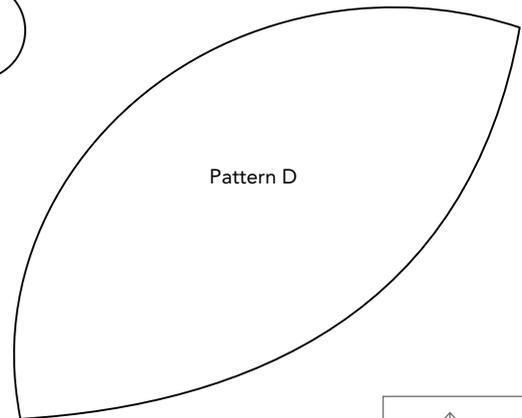
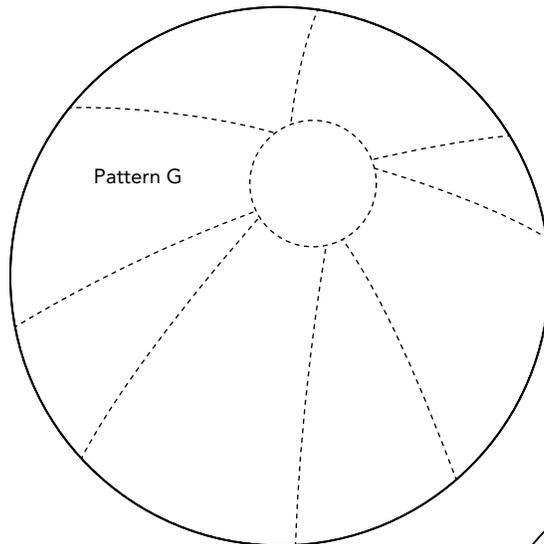
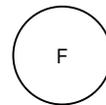
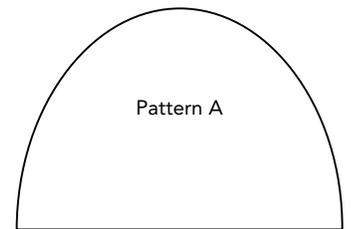
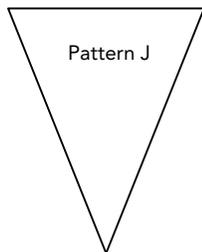
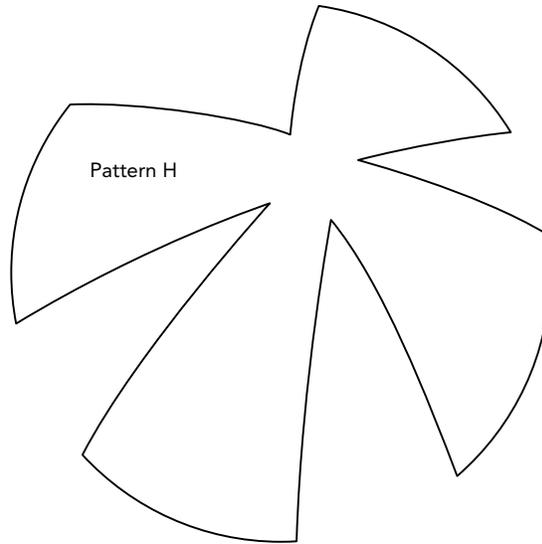
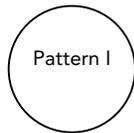


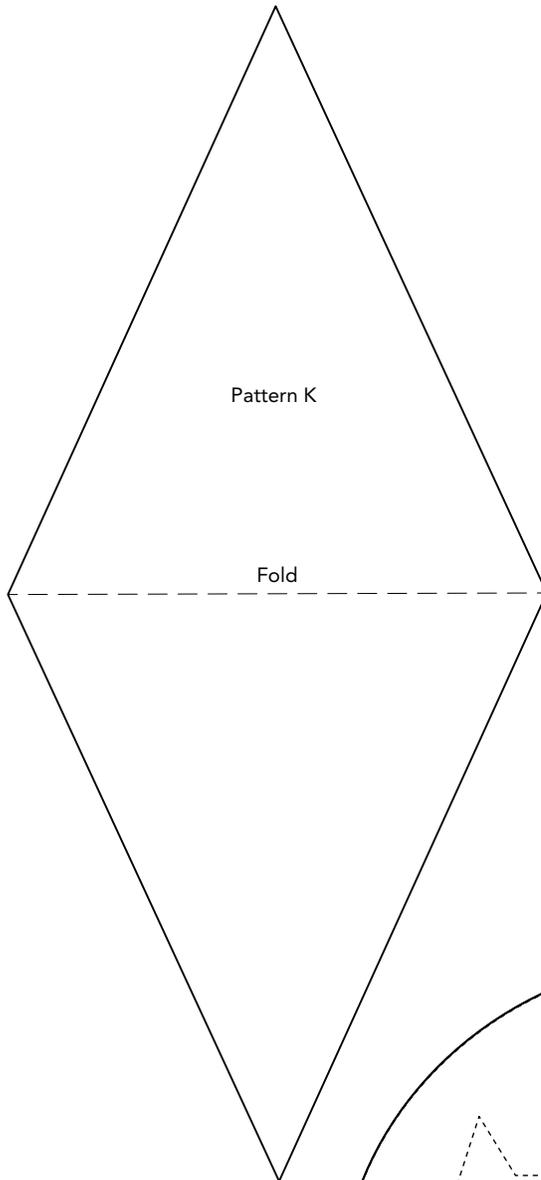
DIAGRAM 5

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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."

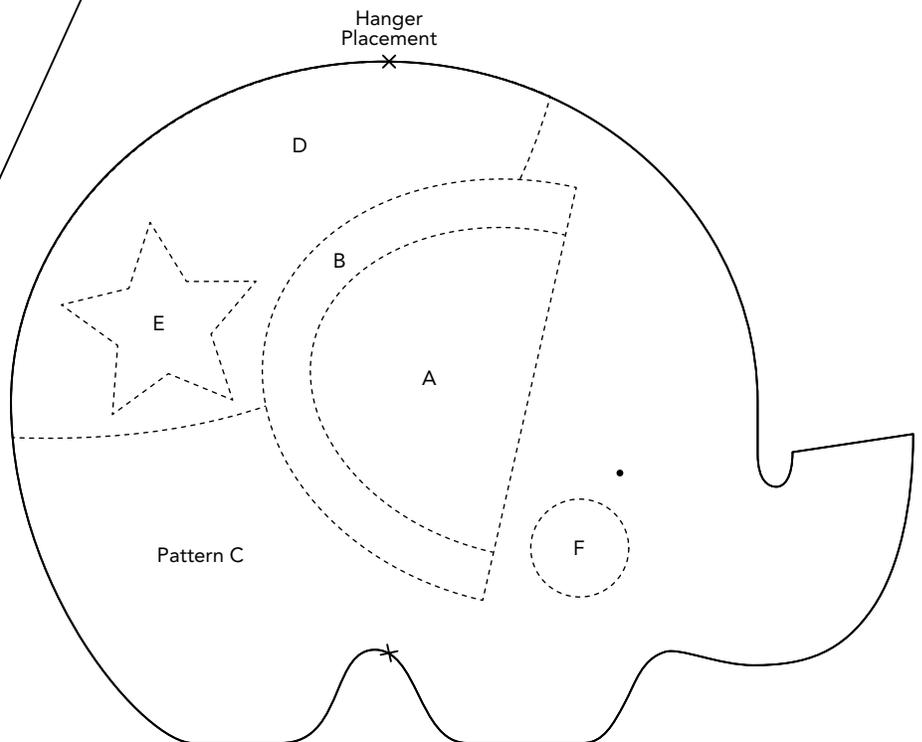
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This box should measure 1".

← 1" →

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Make and Use Templates

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.

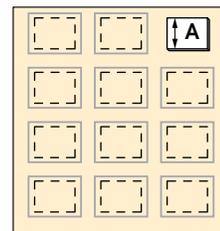


DIAGRAM 1

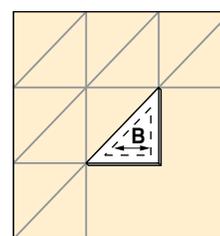


DIAGRAM 2