

Project: Foundation-Pieced Arcs

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Foundation and curved piecing pay off on a star-studded wall hanging. Our tips and tricks prove it's possible to master these easier-than-they-look techniques.

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Materials

- 1¼ yards total assorted purple and green prints (blocks)
- ½ yard gold print (blocks)
- 1⅞ yards dark purple print (border, binding)
- 1¼ yards backing fabric
- 40" square batting
- Lightweight tracing paper

Finished quilt: 34" square

Finished block: 12" square

Quantities are for 44/45"-wide, 100% cotton fabrics.

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

Cut Fabrics

Cut pieces in the following order. Because block units are foundation-pieced, fabric pieces are cut larger than necessary. Trim them to the correct size after stitching them to the foundation.

Patterns are on pages 6–9. To make templates of patterns C and D, see Make and Use Templates on page 10. Be sure to transfer dots marked on patterns to templates, then to fabric pieces. These dots are matching points, which are used when joining pieces.

From assorted purple and green prints, cut:

- 24—5×7" rectangles (4 sets of 6 matching rectangles)
- 4 of Pattern D
- 4 of Pattern C

From gold print, cut:

- 20—3×7" rectangles

From dark purple print, cut:

- 4—2½×42" binding strips
- 2—5¼×34" border strips
- 2—5¼×24½" border strips

Prepare Foundation Papers

1. Use a pencil to trace Foundation Pattern A four times onto lightweight tracing paper or foundation material of your choice, tracing all lines, numbers, and dots. Or print pages 6 and 7 directly onto your foundation material.
2. Using Foundation Pattern B, repeat Step 1 to make four total Foundation B pieces.
3. Cut out foundation A and B pieces roughly ¼" outside dashed lines. Match A and B pieces on position 6 dotted lines. Tape pieces in place to make an arc foundation paper. Repeat to make four arc foundation papers total.

Assemble Arc Units

To foundation-piece, stitch fabric pieces to a foundation paper with the marked side of the paper facing up and the fabric pieces layered underneath. The resulting pieced units will be mirror images of foundation papers.

1. For one arc unit, gather six matching purple or green print 5×7" rectangles and five gold print 3×7" rectangles.
2. Aligning long edges, layer a purple or green print 5×7" rectangle atop a gold print 3×7" rectangle.

3. Place an arc foundation paper atop layered purple and green rectangles, positioning it so that rectangles' aligned edges are ¼" beyond stitching line between positions 1 and 2 and at least ¼" beyond arc's top and bottom stitching lines (**Diagram 1**). Check placement; pin on the line between positions 1 and 2, then flip gold print rectangle open. Make sure it completely covers position 2 and extends into position 3 at least ¼". If it doesn't, reposition and recheck until it does.
4. Working with marked side of arc foundation paper up, sew on stitching line through all layers, extending stitching past beginning and end of the line by a few stitches (**Diagram 1**).
5. Press rectangles open, pressing seam toward gold print rectangle (**Diagram 2**). Trim gold print rectangle to about ¼" beyond stitching line between positions 2 and 3 pieces (**Diagram 3**).
6. Align a matching purple or green print 5×7" rectangle with trimmed gold print piece so their right-hand edges are about ¼" beyond stitching line between positions 2 and 3 (**Diagram 4**). Sew on stitching line. Trim seam allowance if needed; press seam toward purple or green print rectangle (**Diagram 5**). Trim just-added rectangle to about ¼" beyond next stitching line.
7. Continue adding gold print rectangles and matching purple or green print rectangles in an alternating pattern, trimming in the same manner, until you have pieced an entire arc (**Diagram 6**).

Project: Foundation-Pieced Arcs

8. Trim all fabric layers and foundation paper on dashed lines to make an arc unit (**Diagram 7**).

9. Repeat steps 1–8 to make four arc units total.

Assemble Blocks

1. With right sides together, place a purple or green print C piece atop an arc unit; align marked dots and pin at center (**Diagram 8**). Pin pieces together at each end, then smooth C piece along arc until edges are aligned; pin approximately every 1", picking up only a few threads at a time (**Diagram 9**). Sew pieces together, removing each pin just before needle reaches it. Press seam toward C piece.

2. Aligning marked center dots, pin Step 1 arc unit to a purple or green print D piece (**Diagram 10**). Pin edges and stitch as in Step 1 to make a block (**Diagram 11**). Press seam toward D piece. The block should be 12½" square including seam allowances.

3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 to make four blocks total.

4. If temporary foundation material was used, remove foundation with tweezers or the blunt edge of a seam ripper.

Assemble Quilt Top

1. Referring to **Quilt Assembly Diagram**, lay out blocks in pairs, rotating blocks as shown.

2. Sew together blocks in each pair. Press seams in opposite directions.

3. Join pairs to make quilt center. Press seam in one direction. The quilt center should be 24½" square including seam allowances.

4. Sew short border strips to opposite edges of quilt center. Add long border strips to remaining edges to complete quilt top. Press all seams toward border.

Finish Quilt

1. Layer quilt top, batting, and backing; baste. Quilt as desired.

2. Bind with dark purple print binding strips.

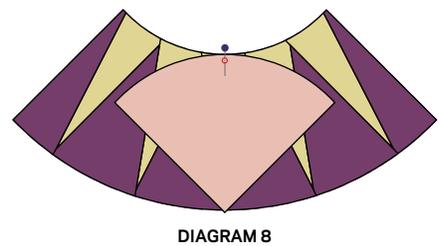
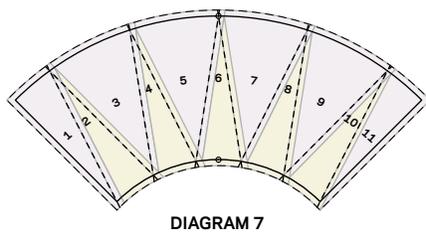
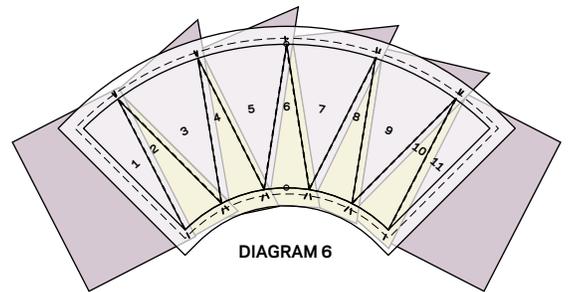
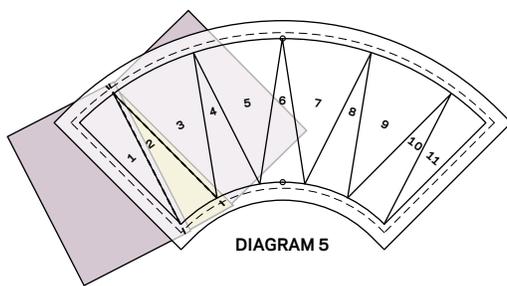
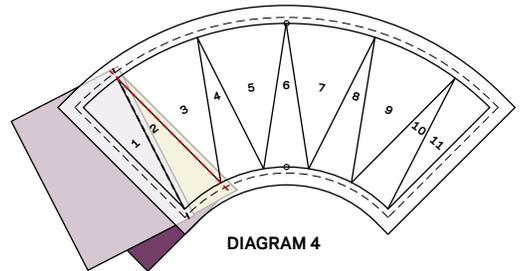
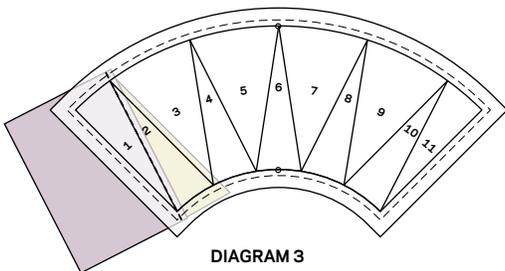
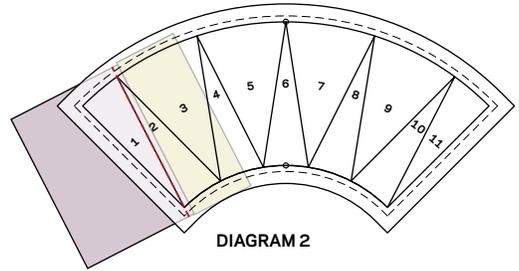
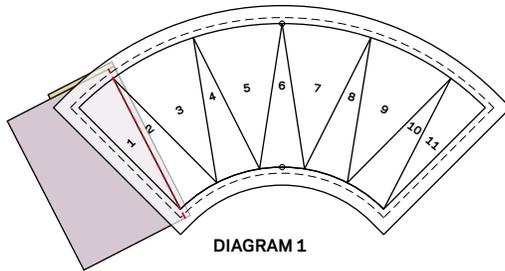
Foundation Materials

- A foundation material can be permanent or temporary. Permanent foundations remain part of the quilt, while temporary foundations are removed before the quilt is layered for quilting.
- Permanent options include muslin, flannel, and sheer cut-away stabilizer. Tracing paper, freezer paper, lightweight newsprint, translucent vellum, wash-away foundation paper, tear-away stabilizer, and typing paper are examples of temporary foundation materials.
- The pattern for the arc can be drawn or printed on any foundation material. If you are new to foundation piecing, test different materials to determine what works best for you.

Needle Tips

- When foundation piecing, use a tiny stitch length (12–16 stitches per inch) and a larger needle, such as a size 90/14, so the foundation will easily tear away from the assembled block. Return to a regular stitch length to join rows of blocks.
- Sewing through multiple layers (including your foundation material) dulls a needle quickly. To avoid sewing with a blunt tip, change your needle every 6 to 8 hours of sewing.

Project: Foundation-Pieced Arcs



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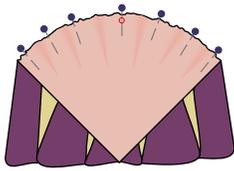


DIAGRAM 9

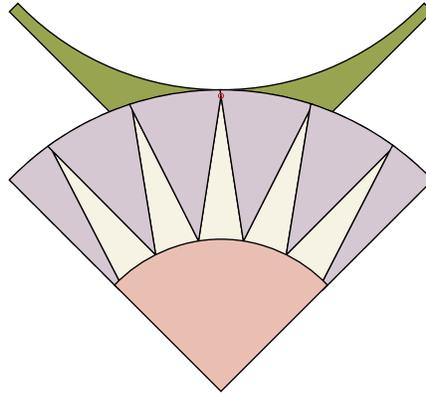


DIAGRAM 10

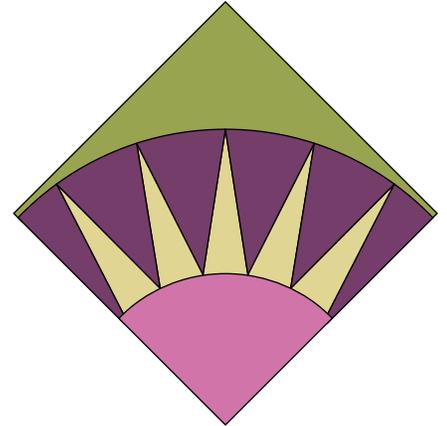
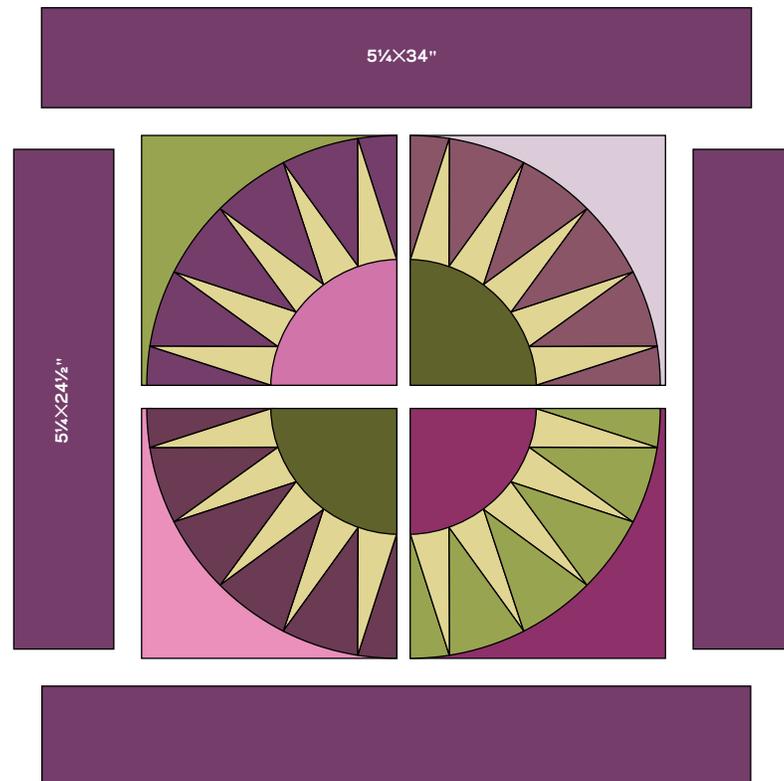
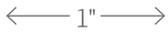


DIAGRAM 11



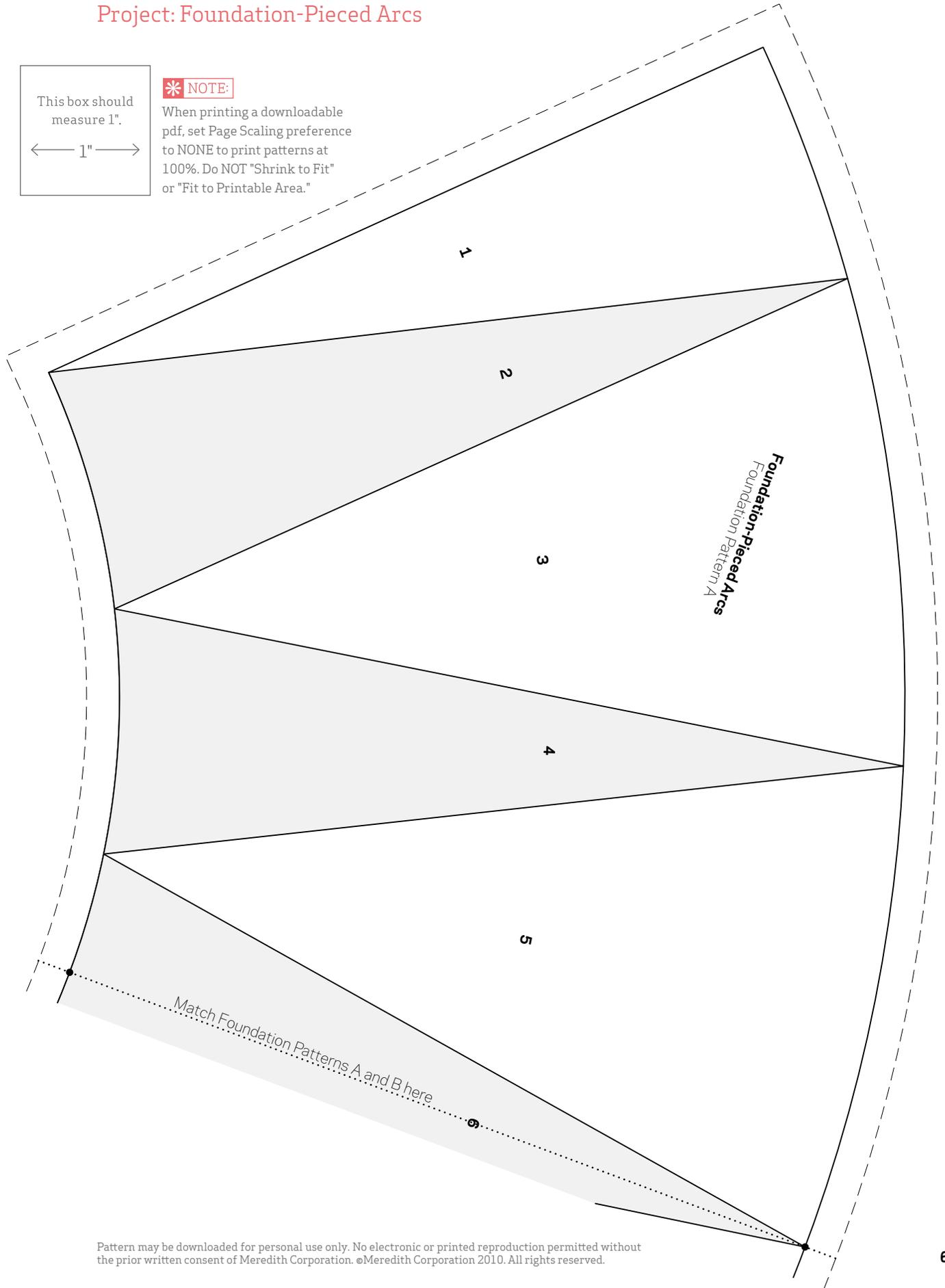
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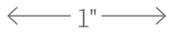
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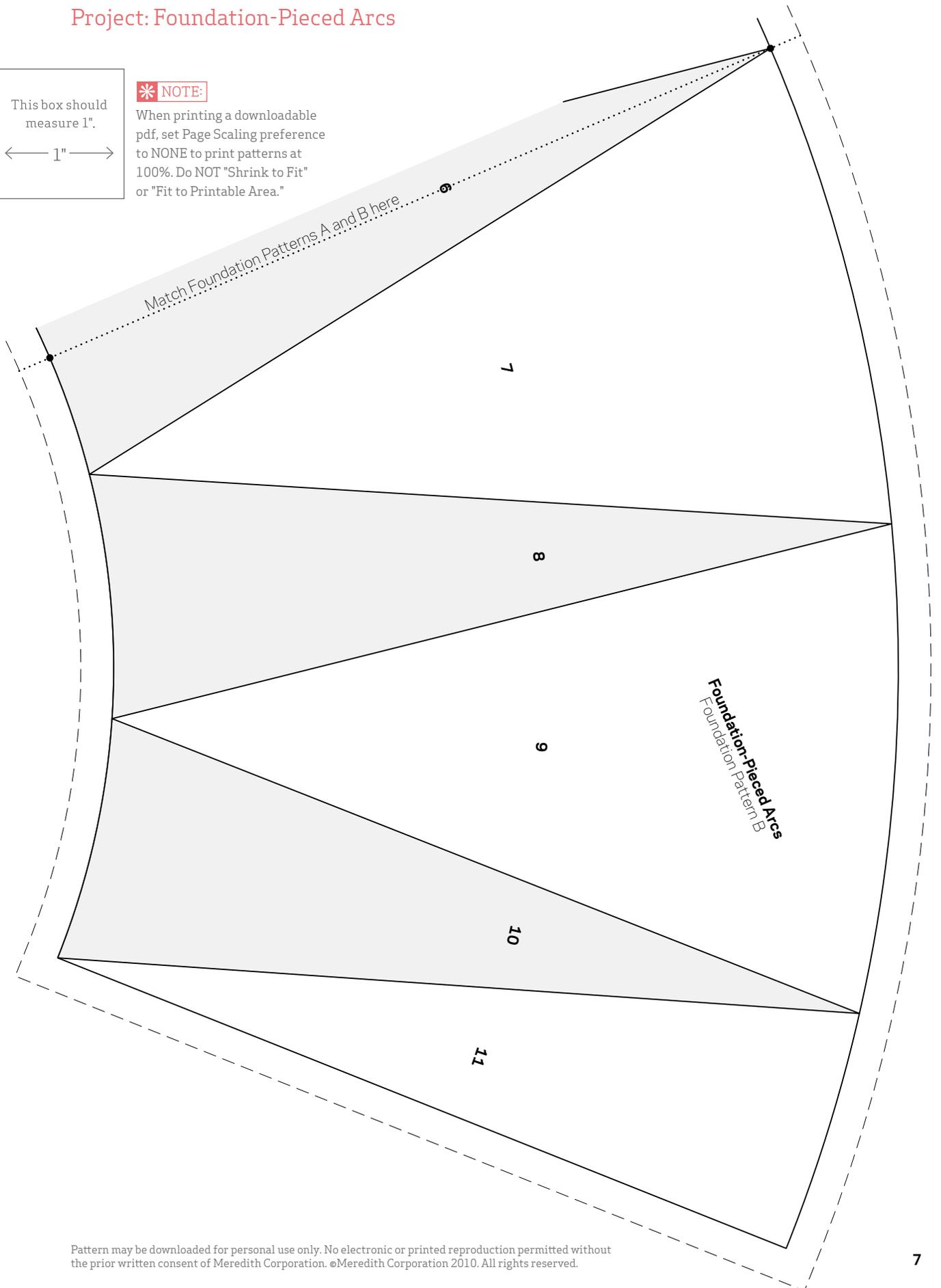
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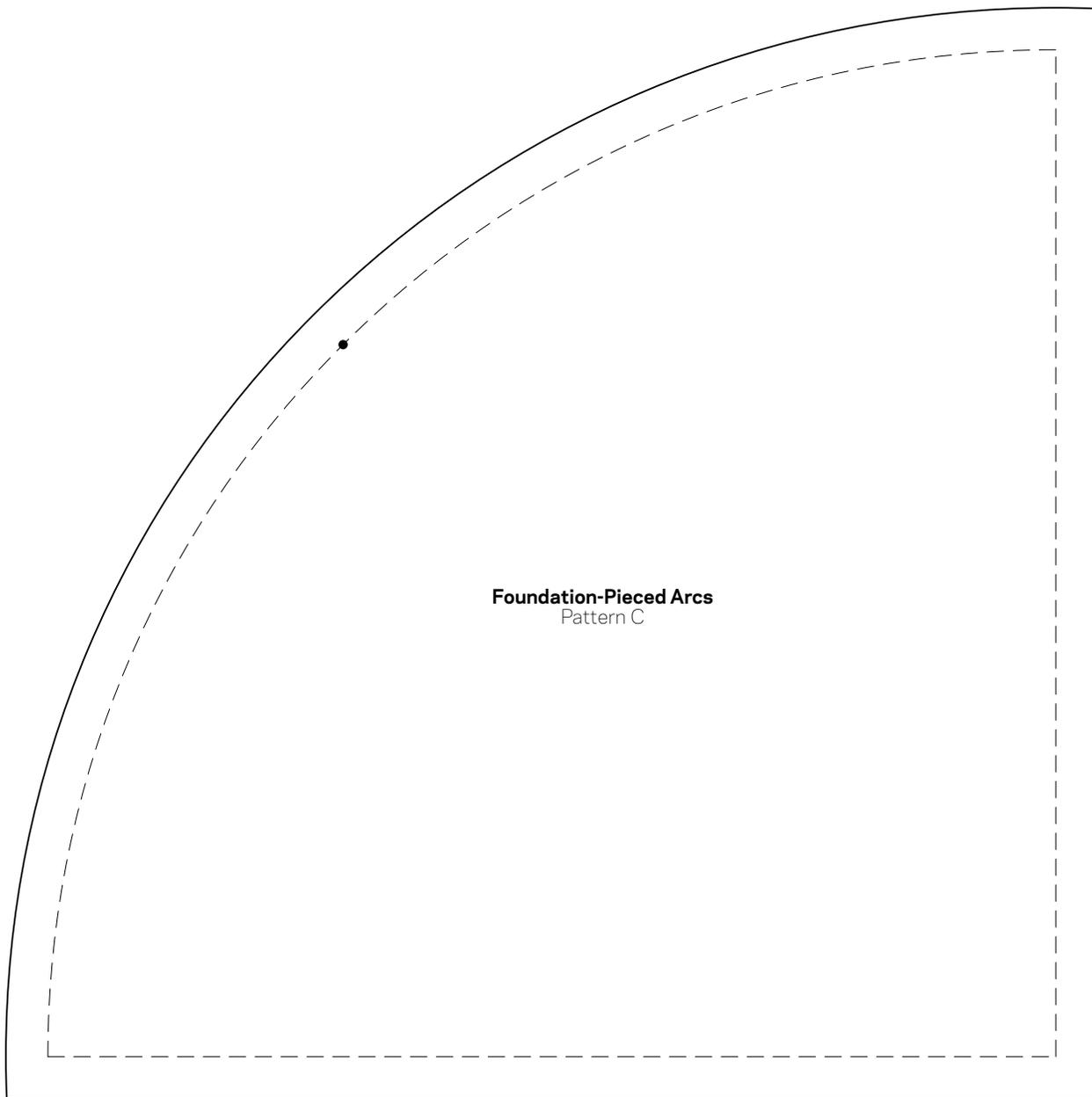


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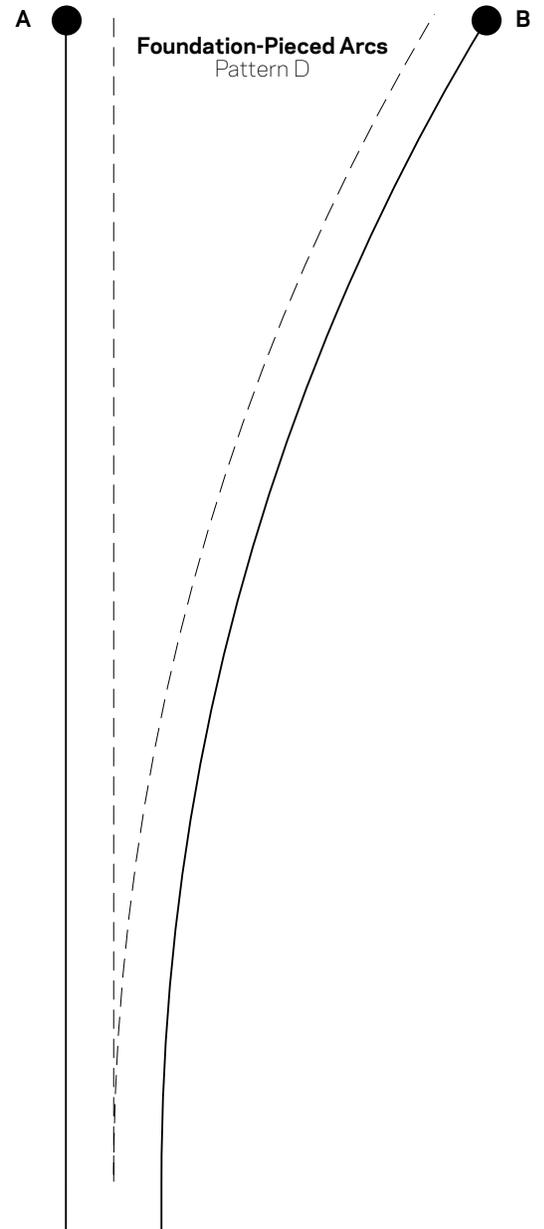
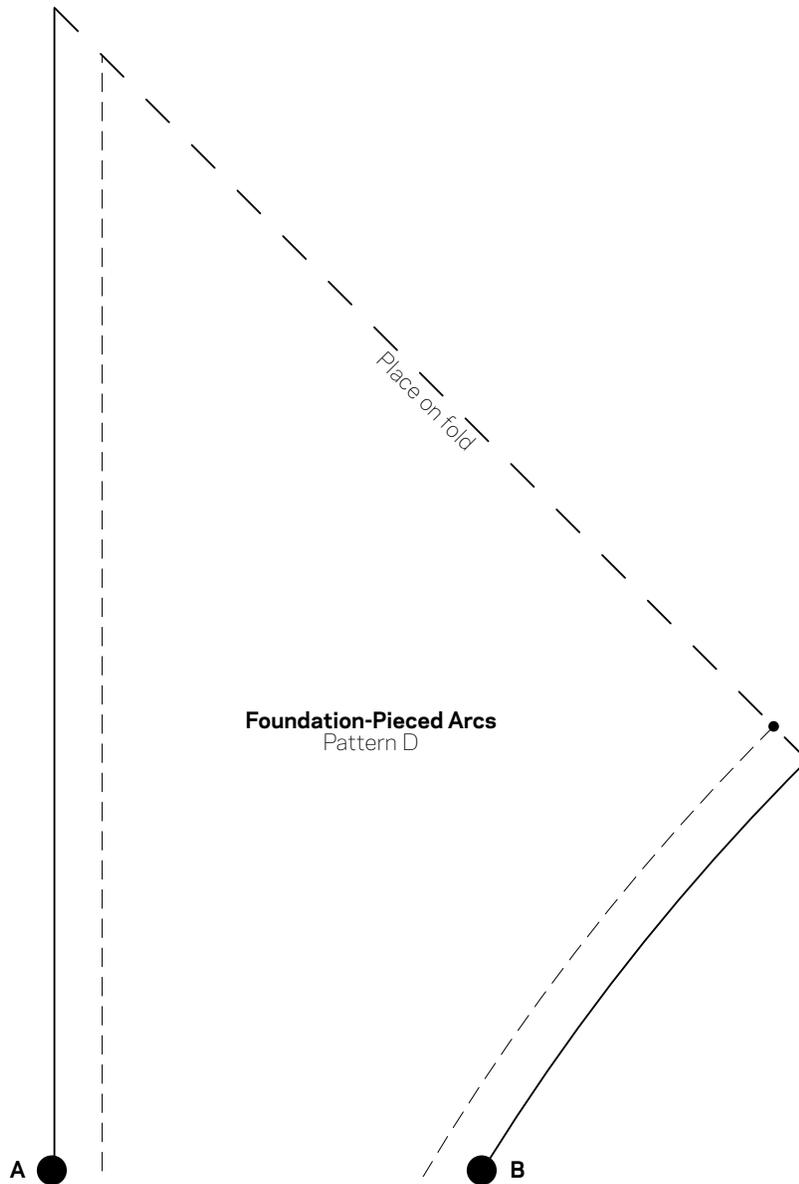


Foundation-Pieced Arcs
Pattern C

This box should measure 1".
← 1" →

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This box should
measure 1".

← 1" →

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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 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, 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.

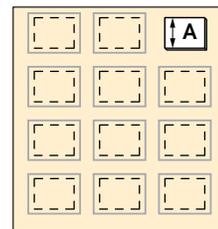


DIAGRAM 1

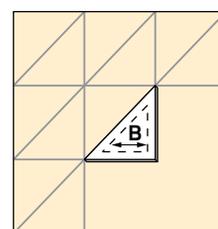


DIAGRAM 2