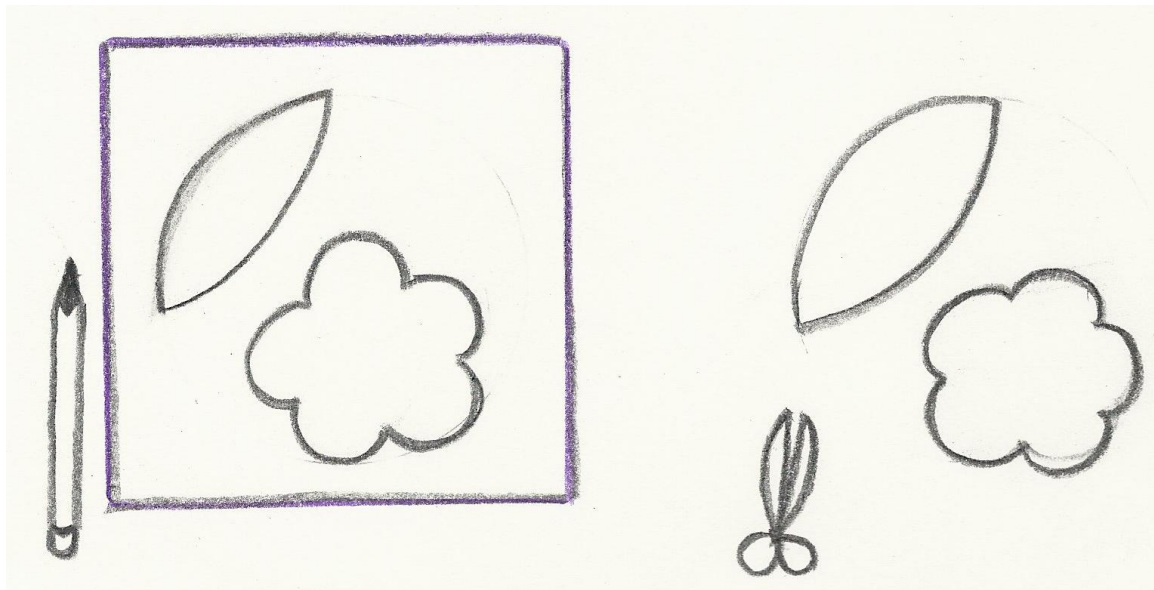


Needle Turn Applique

Preparing the pattern piece using freezer paper:

Creating pattern pieces from freezer paper:

- Trace each pattern piece onto the dull side of freezer paper.
- Leave a little space between the individual pieces for cutting.
- When multiple pattern pieces are very similar or identical, it is recommended to draw one paper pattern for each unit rather than reusing the same one.
- Mark the pieces in the orientation that they will be appear on the final layout (right side up). Do not reverse unless directed to do so.
- For complex pattern it is recommended to number the pattern pieces in a system that corresponds to the pattern layout.
- Cut out each piece on the line maintain smooth cutting lines. (Choppy cutting lines may interfere with marking lines in the following section.) Make sure to use paper scissors.



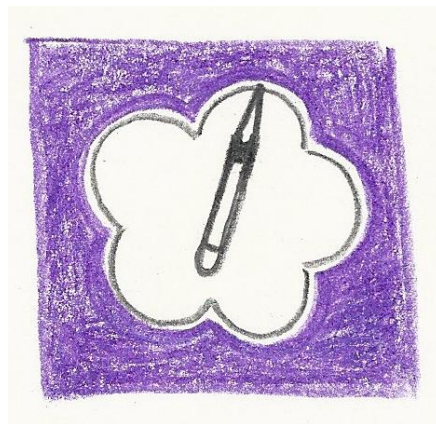
Attach the freezer paper pattern to the appropriate fabric:

- Prewashing the fabric is personal preference. Unwashed fabric is crisper and easier to handle in appliqué. (Spraying washed fabric with Magic Sizing has a similar effect.)
- Some homespun fabrics will fray a lot when used in appliqué. Fray check can help.
- Iron the freezer paper to the right side of the appropriate fabric. Make sure to leave space around each piece to cut the seam allowance.

- When placing the pattern piece on the fabric, it is best to lay it on the bias.
- Bias cuts are easier to needle turn than straight cuts. (Shapes like circles and flowers do not matter.)
- Sometimes the bias layout leads to fabric waste. It is up to the quilter to make the decision whether to use a straight or bias layout.



Marking the pattern pieces on the fabric:



- Mark AWAY from the pattern piece (not toward it) to assure only marking in the seam allowance.
- Use pencil (fabric or regular) or pigma permanent pen on light fabric; white/silver/yellow fabric pencil on dark fabric.

- Clover white pen draws a liquid that first appears clear but will dry white. It washes out.
- Chemical marking pens (disappearing or iron off) are personal preference. The problem can be that the line disappears before the piece is done or the iron may set the line.
- Make sure the marking line is thin because the line has to be turned under.
- Make sure the marking pen does not bleed. **DO NOT USE SHARPIES.**
- For a primitive look do not mark the pattern line. Instead, estimate the $\frac{1}{4}$ " distance to turn.

Cutting the fabric:



Cut each fabric piece approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ "- $\frac{1}{4}$ " (a little less than $\frac{1}{4}$ ") away from the paper outline.

- When using homespun fabric do not cut the seam allowance too narrow.
- Regular woven cotton can handle a slightly narrower seam allowance.
- Keep track of each piece and where it fits in the full composition.
- Pull off the freezer paper after attaching the piece to the background. It helps to stabilize the layout.
- When the pattern is complex, it is best not to remove the numbered pattern piece paper until it is placed on the background.

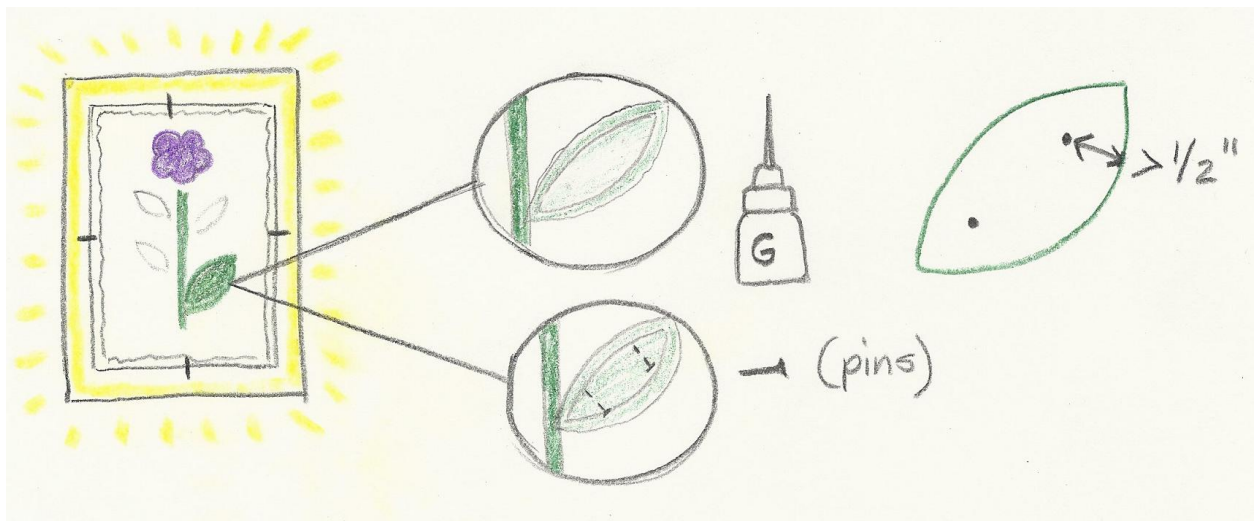
Preparing the background fabric:

Cut the fabric piece to the size indicated in the directions.

- It is acceptable (and personal choice) to cut the background piece oversized and cut it down. That approach works best when there are no pieces to match up between blocks.
- It is desirable to mark the background fabric to indicate placement points. Press the piece in half twice to mark the center lines or use pins.

Attaching the pattern pieces to the background:

- Non-specific patterns can easily be eye-balled for layout. (It doesn't matter if the leaf is 1" or 1.5" off the bottom.)
- Use small dots of washable glue to place the pattern pieces in place. When using the glue, It is important to keep the dots inside the body of the piece at least $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the edge. It must not interfere with the turned under seam allowance.
- If a pattern piece is in the wrong place, it can be pulled off and repositioned. (Small dabs of water can help to loosen the glue.)
- Appliqué pins can also be used instead of pins or to supplement. These are small pins with small heads that don't interfere with the thread.
- Depending on the complexity, all of the pattern pieces can be attached to the background at one time. It is also possible to add one pattern piece at a time. The choice is personal preference.



Transferring the pattern layout

Many patterns provide a pattern layout – some do not.

- To create a pattern layout, draw the pieces in their final position marking overlaps and order of the pieces.
- Mark the center points and lines for alignment on the background fabric.
- Complex patterns benefit from the numbering of pattern pieces that needs to be matched to the numbering of the individual pattern pieces.

Light box or Window transfer:

- Tape the pattern to the light box or window.
- Lay the fabric over the pattern, aligning the center placement lines.
- Attach the pattern piece(s) and sew them down.

It is impossible to see through the first layer of pattern to add the overlapping pieces.

Therefore the light box alone may not be sufficient. It does work well with the overlay (next section) to show the pieces on top.

Overlay:

Create an overlay from the entire pattern marking all pertinent overlaps and positioning marks.

- Use sheet vinyl (for larger pieces), sheet protectors (for small pieces), or an inexpensive sew-on interfacing.
- Use a sharpie to mark on the right side of the vinyl to avoid getting marking smudges on the fabric AND to avoid reversing the pattern by accident. Suggest writing something on the pattern to tell right from reverse.
- Some quilters attach the overlay to the top of the piece and flip it out of the way while appliquing. (It can get too bulky and awkward to maneuver with the extra layer attached.)
- Tissue paper can also be used but it must be handled with much more care than the other options.
- Place the pieces on the fabric and overlay the layout to verify placement. Fine tune as needed.

Marking the Front of the Background Fabric:

- Trace the basic outline of the design on the front of the background fabric using a marker that shows up and can be erased. **DO NOT USE PERMANENT MARKER!**
- Using that method is potentially problematic because the pattern piece may not align perfectly and the marking line could remain visible.

Marking the Back of the Background Fabric:

- Mark the reverse of the layout on the back using a marker.
- Use a contrasting thread and a running stitch, follow along the drawn line.
- As the pattern pieces are attached on the front side, remove the running stitch.
- This method is a lot of extra work.

Supplies

The following are the supplies not mentioned in previous sections.

Needles:

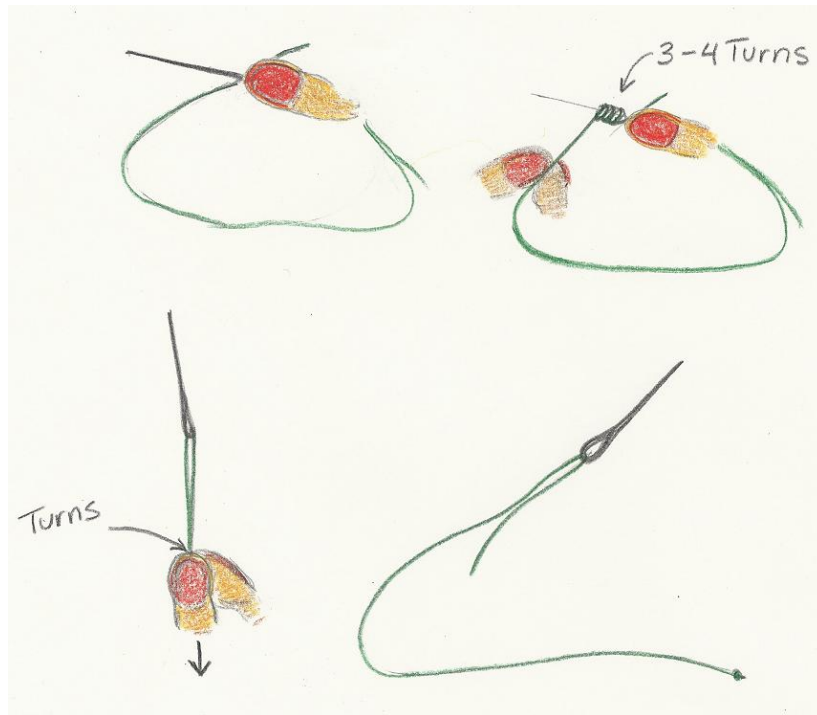
Thin and long needles are best for needle turn appliqué

- Recommended: #9 Straw Needles
(because they have a punched hole which is smoother than most other needles).

Thread:

Thread is another personal choice. Some quilters only use cotton, some use silk. Both silk and polyester are thin and strong and bite into the fabric. It can create a crisp line but also be too sharp for the cotton fabric.

- Recommended: Cotton DMC 50 wt embroidery thread.
- Match thread color to the applique motif. For multi-color fabrics, match the color of the background in the pattern.
- Do not use thread that is too long. 12-18" is plenty.
- Thread the needle from the end that comes off the spool. Knot the cut end. (Thread is directional.)
- Use single thread – not double and make a small knot.



- When the thread gets twisted, let the thread relax and continue sewing.
- Work out tangles as they happen. If the knot won't come undone, cut the thread, tie off, and start over.

Task Light:

A good task light and possibly a magnifying glass can make the appliqué job easier.

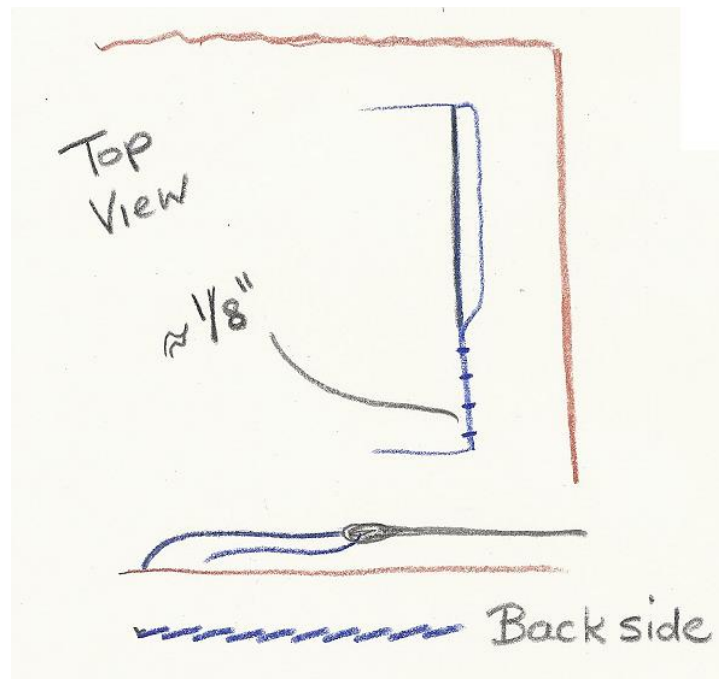
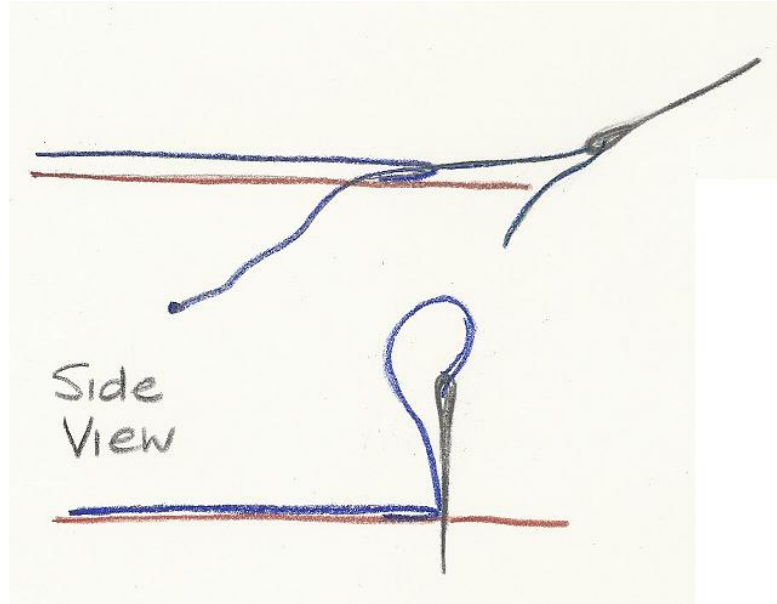
Applique

Turning the seam line – general guidelines:

- When possible, start on a straight side of the piece.
- Only turn a small amount at a time (1/4"-1/2")
- Start in the middle of the turned area to avoid bumps and peaks.
- Do not start in a corner or at a point.
- Small stitches create smooth shapes. This is particularly true for curves.
- Fold or scrunch up the fabric to get a good angle for the needle turn sewing.
- Continued handling can wrinkle the piece. Iron from the back to smooth it out. (Ironing from the front would flatten the appliqué.)

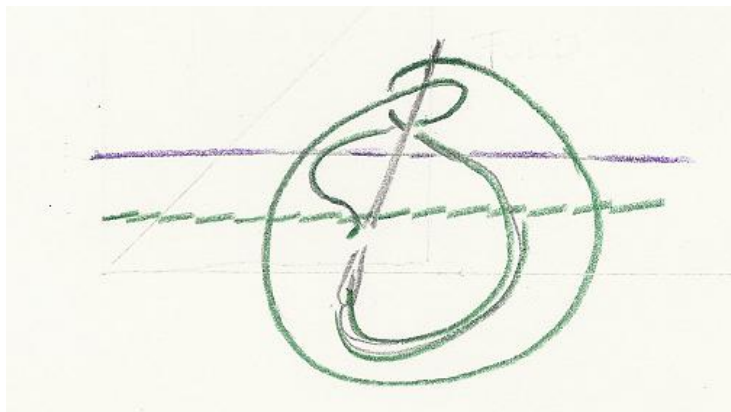
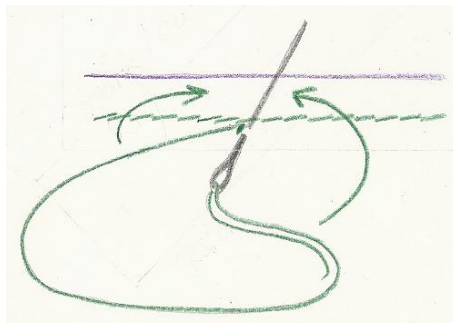
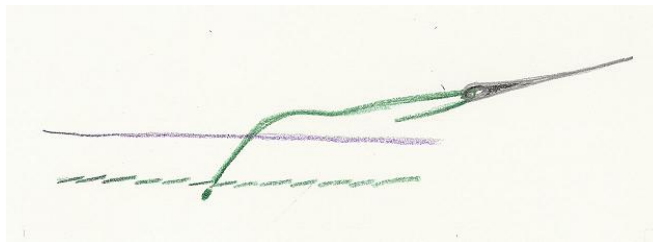
Basic Stitch:

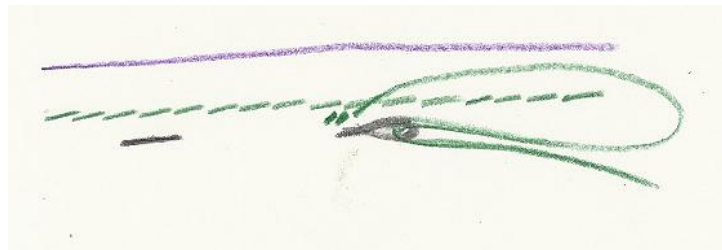
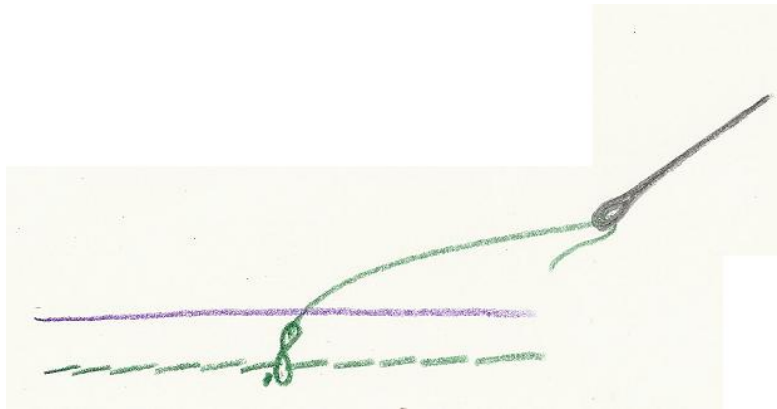
- Start from the back and come up into the fold.
- Put the needle into the background right next to the point where you come up.
- Take a small ($\sim 1/8''$) stitch and come up into the fold again. Large stitches can allow the seam allowance to pull back out.
- Repeat.



Tying off thread:

- Take a tiny stitch on the back side inside the pattern area.
- Take another stitch in (or close to) the first one but do not pull the needle through.
- Separate the thread into a left and a right tail.
- Wrap one side behind and under the needle.
- Wrap the other tail behind and under the needle going in the opposite direction.
- The two tails form an X behind the needle.
- Now bring the thread to the front and pull the needle through. The Figure 8 will form when all threads come together.
- Control the pull so the thread does not prematurely tie off.
- At the fabric, tuck the Figure 8 closed to set the stitch.
- Pull the thread under the pattern piece to bury it.
- Trim thread.





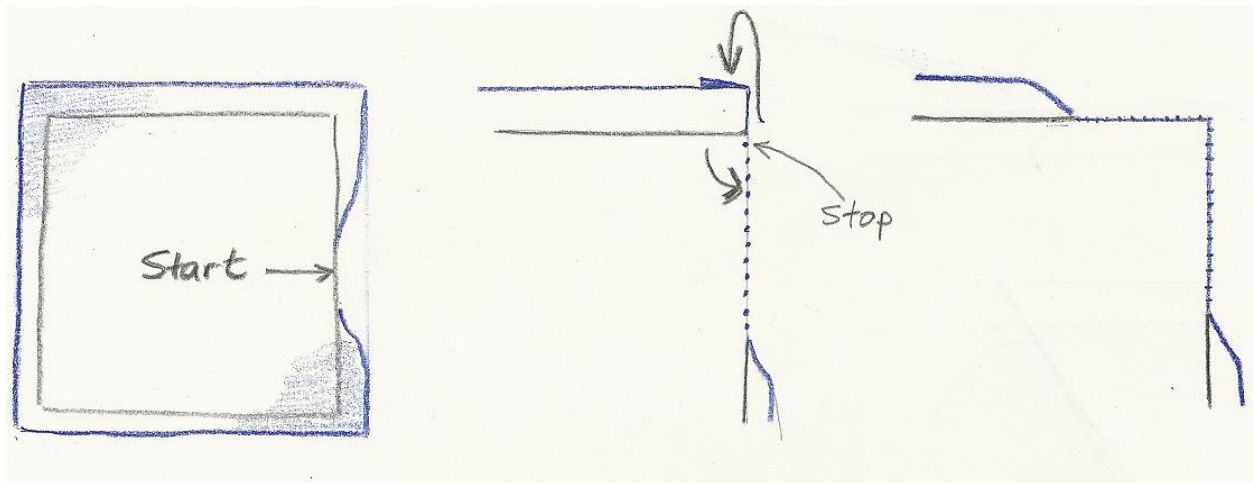
Details on Applique Shapes

Square

The square or rectangle consists only of straight lines and sharp corners. It is unlikely that this shape is cut on the bias and it may require a little help from the thumbnail to get turned properly.

Corner of a square (basic turn):

- Sew to the intersection point of the first corner.
- Sweep the seam allowance under neatly so the corner forms and the fold line of the seam allowance lays on the underside against the already sewn line.
- There is generally no need to trim any excess fabric because the angle is wide enough to accommodate the seam allowance as is.
- There is no need to take an extra stitch in the point because there is no tension on the corner; it just goes around a sharp bend.
- Continue in the same manner to the other 3 corners.

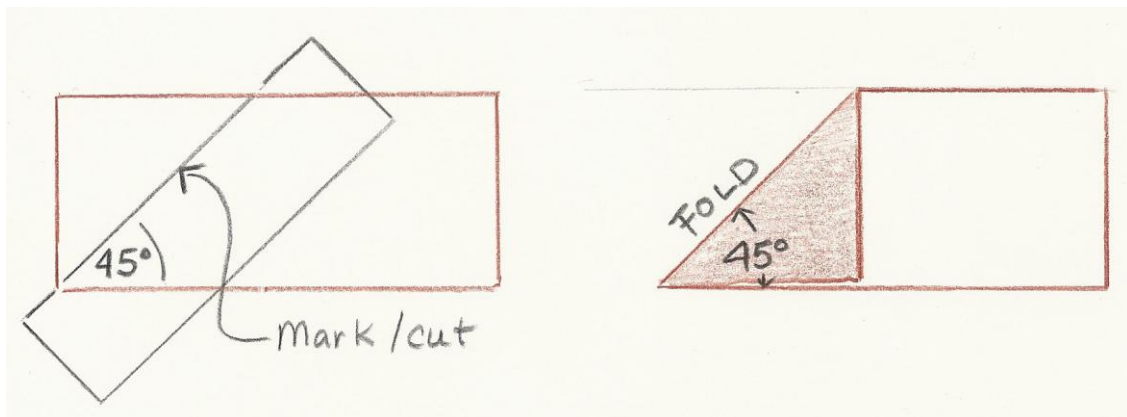


Stems

Straight Stem:

- Straight stems can be cut on the straight of grain. (However, cut on the bias turns easier.)
- Some involved stems, vines, or scrolls can be cut out like a regular pattern piece.

Bias cut:



Bias Stems:

Any curved stem or vine must be cut on the bias. At least a Fat Quarter is required to get a large enough stem for beginning work.

There are two ways to make stems using Bias Bars or Bias Makers. Both are available in many sizes.

Bias Bars make a rather thick stem because the seam allowance is hidden on the back side of the stem. They work with straight and bias cuts of fabric.

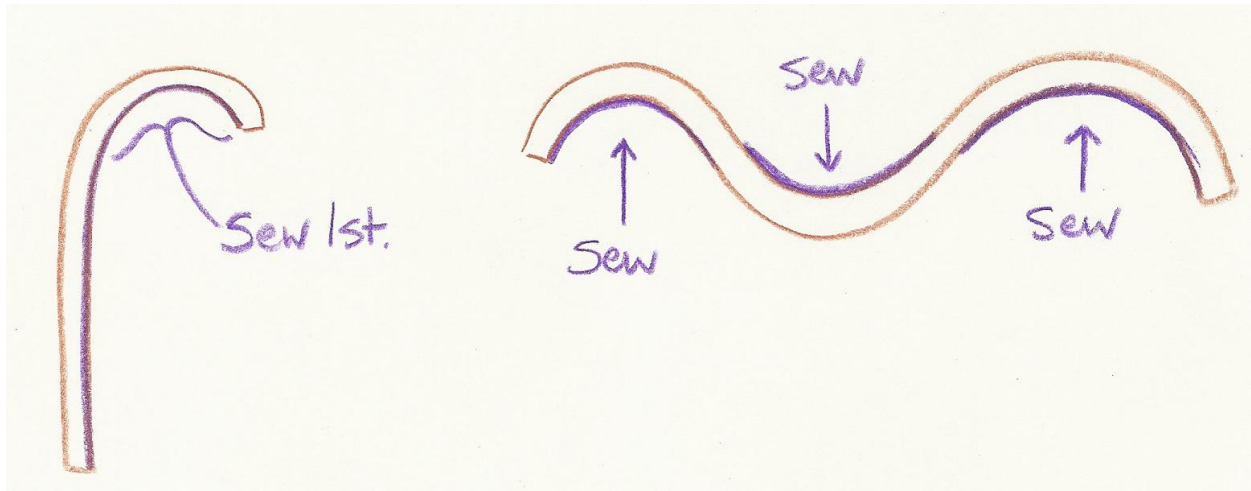
- Select the size you need and follow the instructions with the tool. It requires a width of $2x \text{ width} + \frac{1}{2}''$
- Fold the piece in half wrong sides together and sew along the raw edge.
- Trim the exposed seam.
- Pull the tube over the bias maker and iron the seam allowance down.

Bias Maker pulls the bias-cut fabric through the clip and pulls the seam allowance to the back – evenly distributed on each side.

- For a $\frac{1}{4}$ " stem, the piece must be cut at $\frac{1}{2}$ " to provide $\frac{1}{8}$ " seam allowance on each side.

Important:

When sewing curved stems or vines, ALWAYS sew the inside curve first.



- The outside curve can easily be stretched and adjusted to fit.
- If the outside curve is sewn first, then there is too much fabric to ease into the inside curve and it will pucker.
- If a curve or vine repeats or undulates, sew all inside curves first. Stop as soon as the direction changes.
- Irregular Stem (primitive and irregular)
- Cut the pattern out like a regular pattern shape – using freezer paper, seam allowance, and marking the outline. Make sure to place it on the bias!

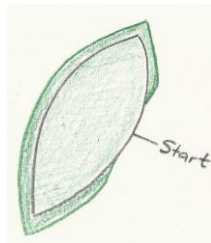
Very thin stems:

- When the stem, scroll, or vine is very thin and irregular, it is possible to trim only a small piece at a time and needle turn that part down. Then cut some more until the piece is sewn down.
- If the seam allowance is too wide, trim it back from the underside once the piece is sewn down on one side.

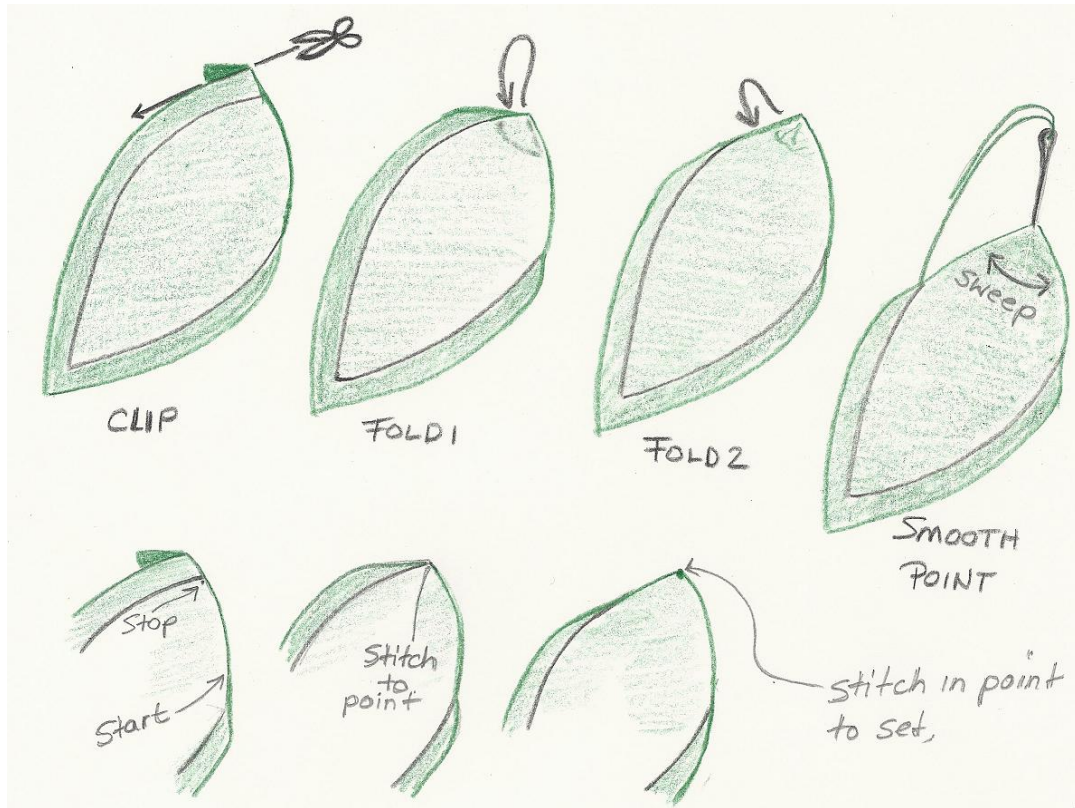


Leaves

2-part turn in the point:

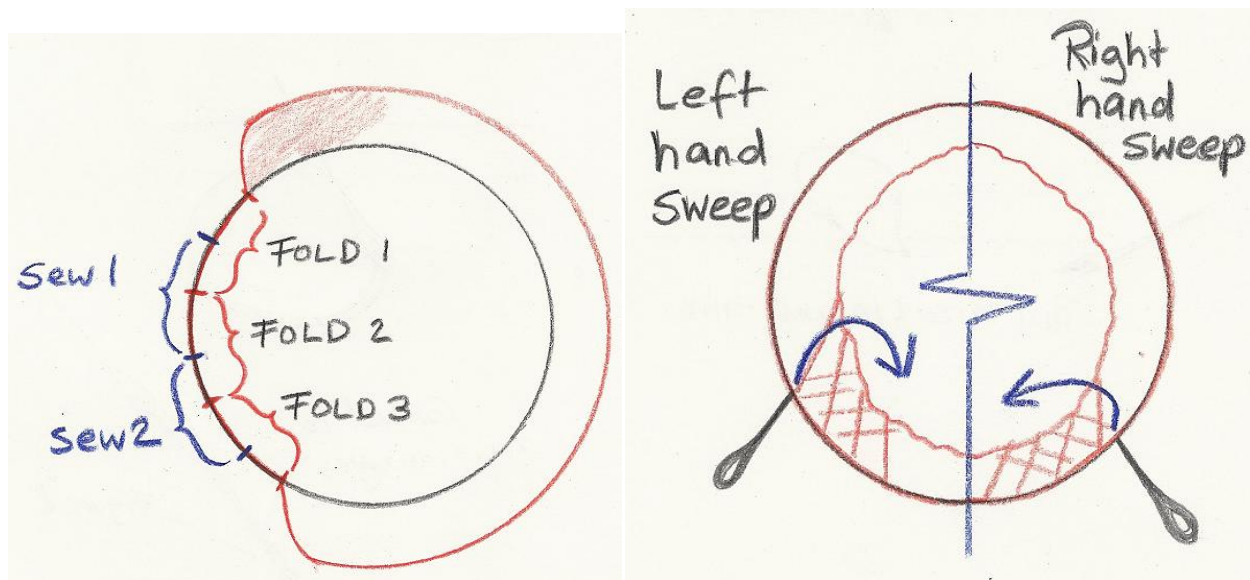


- Start along the side but not close to the point.
- Stop just before the point.
- Trim the little ear that pokes out of the turned seam allowance.
- Tuck the point under so the folded seam allowance lays against the sewn line.
- Take one stitch into the point and secure it to the background piece.
- Turn the piece and hold the corner with your thumb.
- Tuck the side piece into the same area that the point occupies.
If the point is bumpy, stick the needle in the point and adjust the bulk as needed by wiggling.
- Audition the leaf to see that it is still somewhat symmetrical (if it is supposed to be)
- Come up by the point and keep sewing to the other point.
- Repeat.



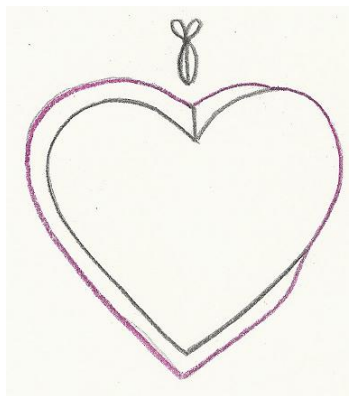
Outside Curves and Circles

- Turn under a small part of the curve.
- Take small stitches.
- To avoid jigs and jags (bumpy starts and stops) start stitching in the middle of the turned under area – not at the beginning.
- Turn under another section and only sew to the middle of that section.
- Repeat until the circle is complete. If there is a slight bump at the beginning, take another stitch to that place and even it out.
- The seam allowance on a circle has a natural direction. If you just keep going into that direction you will create bulky folds.
- Use the needle to sweep the fabric toward the already sewn part. That will smooth it out.



Hearts

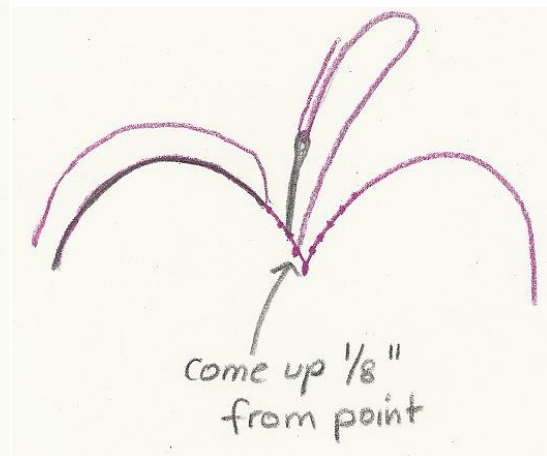
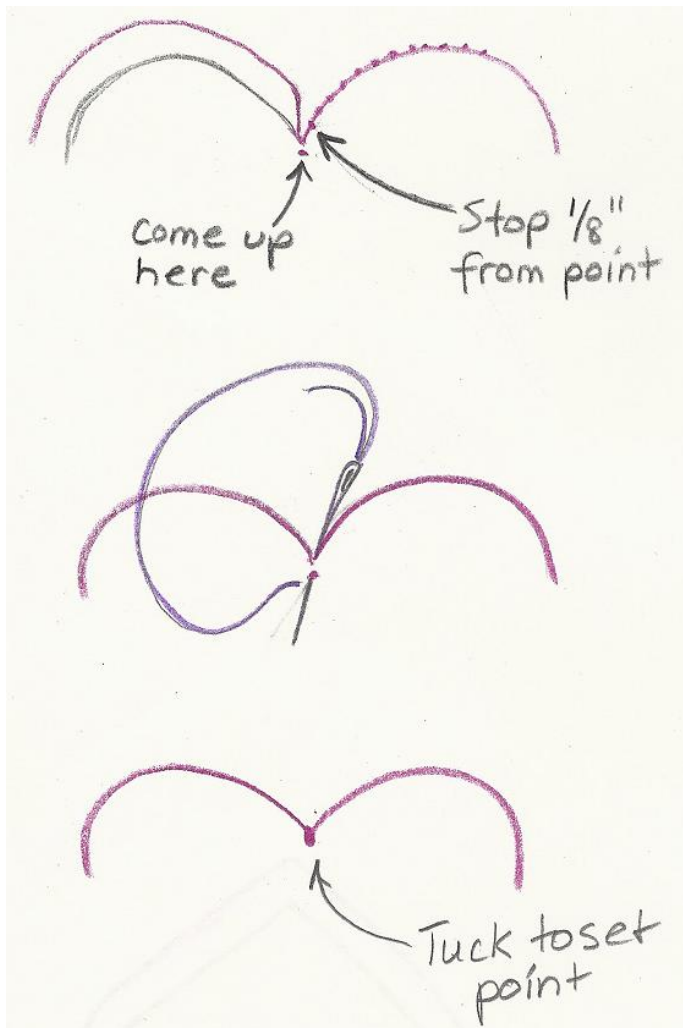
Parts of the heart follow the same guidelines as a curve or circle (see above)



To sew the inside point:

- Sew on the curve until the seam allowance becomes almost irregular.
- Using sharp, small fabric scissors, clip a single line into the inner point – all the way to (but not past) the drawn line.
- Turn the seam allowance under making sure not to manipulate the edge much. (It will fray easily).
- Stop about 1/8" before the point or you will risk pulling the seam allowance up. There is little to do if the piece frays.
- Come up about 3 threads below the point.

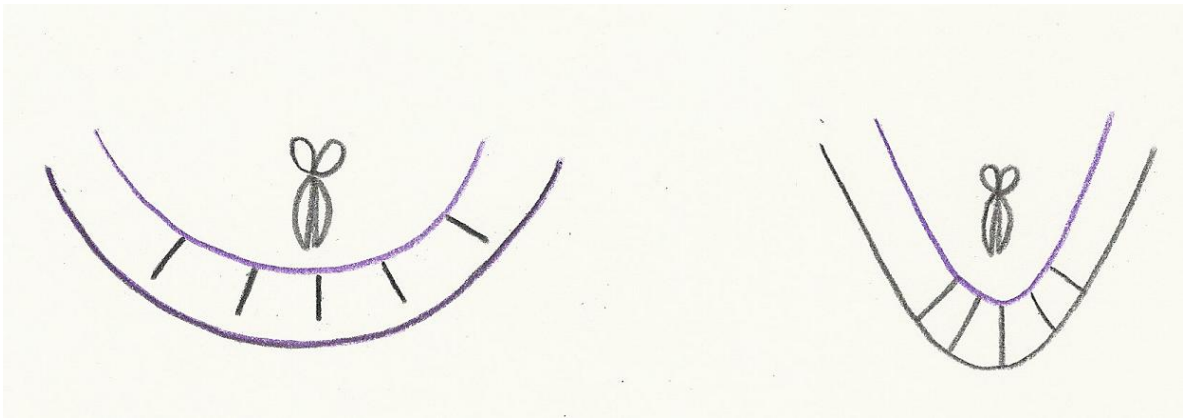
- Bring the needle around the backside of the point (DON'T sew through the backing) and come back into the same starting point. Tuck at the thread to secure the point.
- Tuck under the opposite side of the bow.
- Stitch down into the edge (same distance from the point as on the other side) and pull the thread through.
- Bring the thread (carefully) up into the fold without disturbing the edge.
- Continue along the curve.



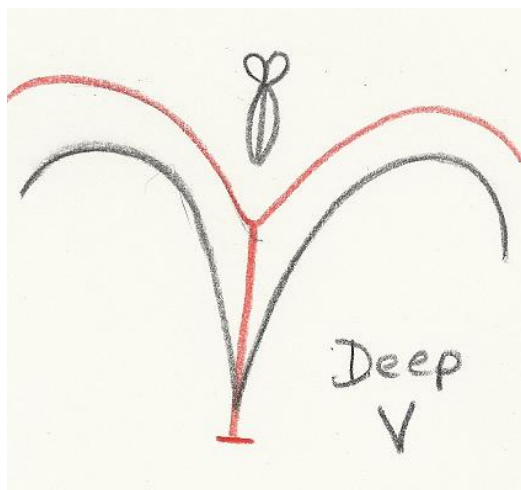
Inside Curves and Flowers

Clipping guidelines:

- Most curves need clipping so the seam allowance will lay flat.
- Deep points require a single clip. Generally, this clip will go to the drawn line, but a narrow V may need to be clipped past the drawn line to allow enough seam allowance for a decent turn under.
- Shallow/wide curves require shallower clips that can be further apart.
- Tight/narrow curves require clips that are closer to the drawn line and closer together.



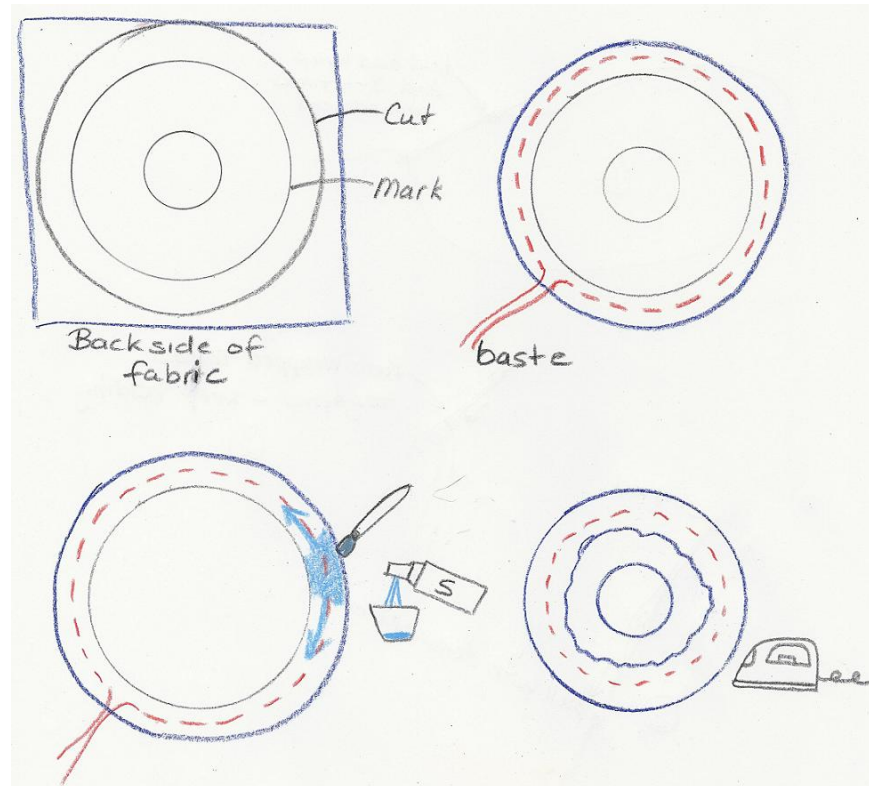
Deep V's may need to be clipped past their drawn line to grab enough seam allowance to turn under.



Circles Using “Perfect Circles”

Perfect Circles are Mylar circle templates that come in various sizes, and can be purchased; one set of small and one set of large circles. They can withstand the heat of the iron.

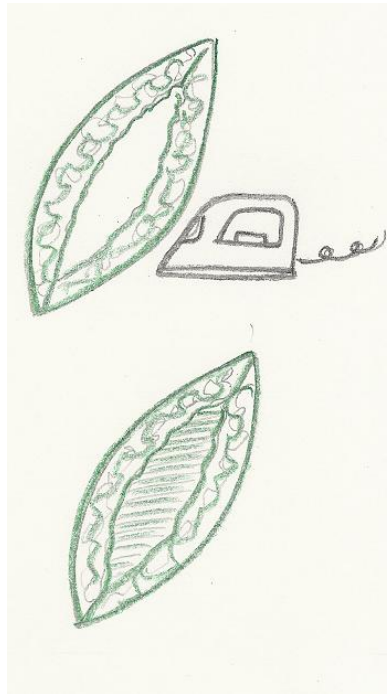
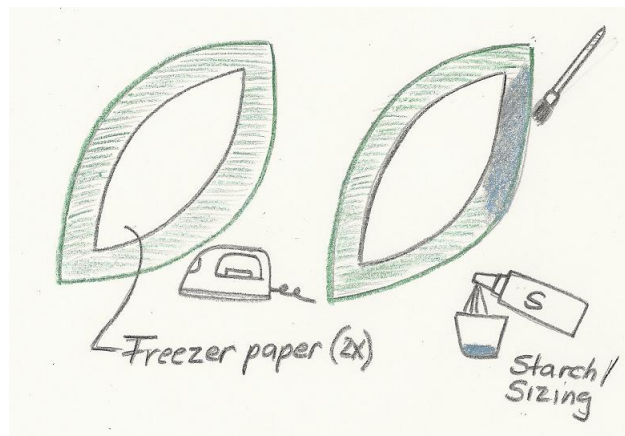
- Select a size and mark the outline on the wrong side of the fabric.
- Cut the fabric approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " outside the line.
- Using a contrasting thread, baste around the circle in the middle of the seam allowance. Make sure to leave a tail at the start and the end of the basting to pull later.
- Spray some Magic Sizing in a cup to liquefy (or use liquid starch or Best Press).
- Place the Mylar template in the center of the fabric and use a stiff bristle brush to wet the seam allowance with the liquid.
- Tug on the thread tails to tighten the seam allowance around the template.
- Press with a hot iron to set until the piece is dry.
- Let it cool and pull the template out of the center.
- It is personal preference whether you want to take out the basting stitch or not. Make sure that the contrasting thread does not show through to the front.
- The circle will be perfectly round and is now ready to appliqué.



Another Use for Freezer Paper

It is possible to use freezer paper as a template with starch. These pieces will have a crisper and flatter appearance compared to basic needle-turn.

- Prepare the pattern piece as if using it for a basic pattern. Use 2 layers for each pattern piece.
- Iron the piece to the back of the fabric and cut with the standard seam allowance.
- Dampen the seam allowance using starch or sizing.
- Press the seam allowance around the freezer paper until fabric is dry.
- Remove paper.



English Paper Piecing

In this method you baste fabric around symmetrically- shaped paper/cardboard patterns (Hexagon, Triangle, Diamond) and whip-stitch these pieces together along the connecting lines. Grandmother's Flower Garden is a typical English Paper Piecing pattern.

I found a method that does not sew through the paper and there is no need to pull the basting thread. You can use freezer paper or heavy paper/light cardboard for the pattern pieces.

Preparing the individual pattern pieces:

- Cut out the pattern and a piece of fabric that is a generous $\frac{1}{4}$ " larger than the pattern piece. (It is possible to use a square piece of fabric that is larger than the pattern but that adds a lot of unnecessary bulk in the seam allowance.)

When using freezer paper iron the piece to the center of the fabric

When using heavy paper or light cardboard, punch two holes close together in the center of the pattern piece and pin the piece to the fabric.

- Select thread to match the color of the fabric piece. It will be used to baste AND sew the pieces together.
- Fold the fabric over the pattern and baste by ONLY securing the corners. Use a double whip stitch on the corner then pull the thread to the next corner on small pieces.
Do not stitch through the paper!
(If the pattern piece is large, take another small stitch in the center of the seam allowance before moving to the next corner.)
- Tie off the basting thread.
- Baste a second unit the same way but do not tie off.
- Use the thread to sew two pieces together.

Sewing the pieces together:

- Lay two basted pieces right sides together. (Since the shapes are symmetrical they will match up easily) One of these pieces will be the one with the thread not tied off.
- Take tiny stitches along one edge using a whipstitch – tug snugly.
- Make sure to catch only a small part of the fold.
- Do not sew through paper.

- Remove the paper before the assembled piece is appliquéd to a background piece.
(Before removing the paper from the larger pieces, you first need to clip the basting stitches. ONLY the middle stitches need to be clipped because the basting thread will pull to the back when the pattern is removed. No need to pull any thread out.)

