

Paper Piecing using freezer paper

this method is taught by Judy Mathieson as a precision method in sewing Mariner's Compass blocks.

Detailed instructions can be found in the October 2000 issue of Quilter's Newsletter magazine.

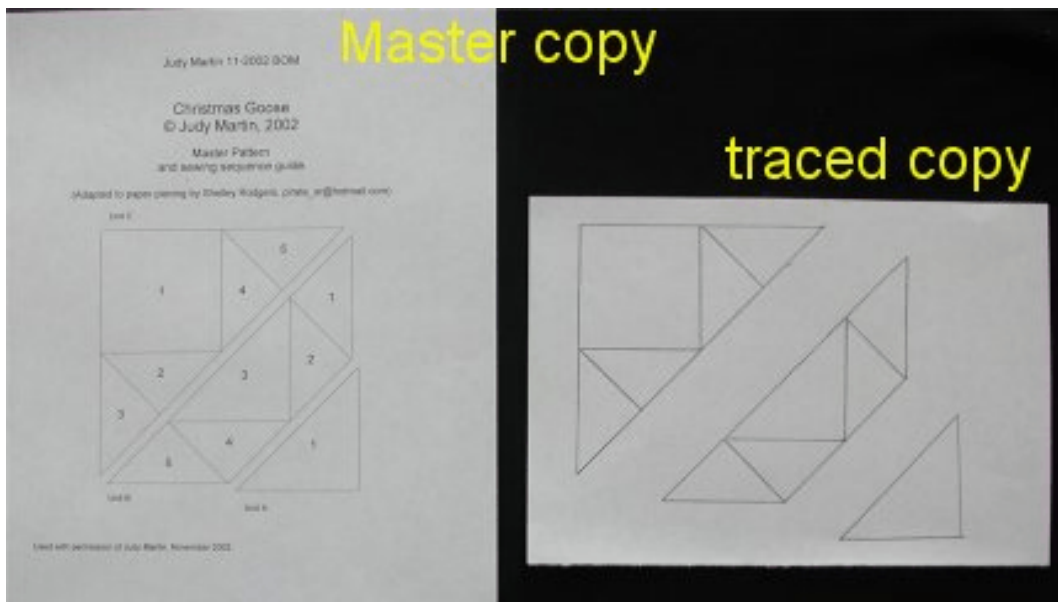
The notes below are from Shelley Rodgers (pirate_sr@hotmail.com).

This page is a 1-page guide/synopsis. Subsequent pages will have more detailed information plus photos to look at.

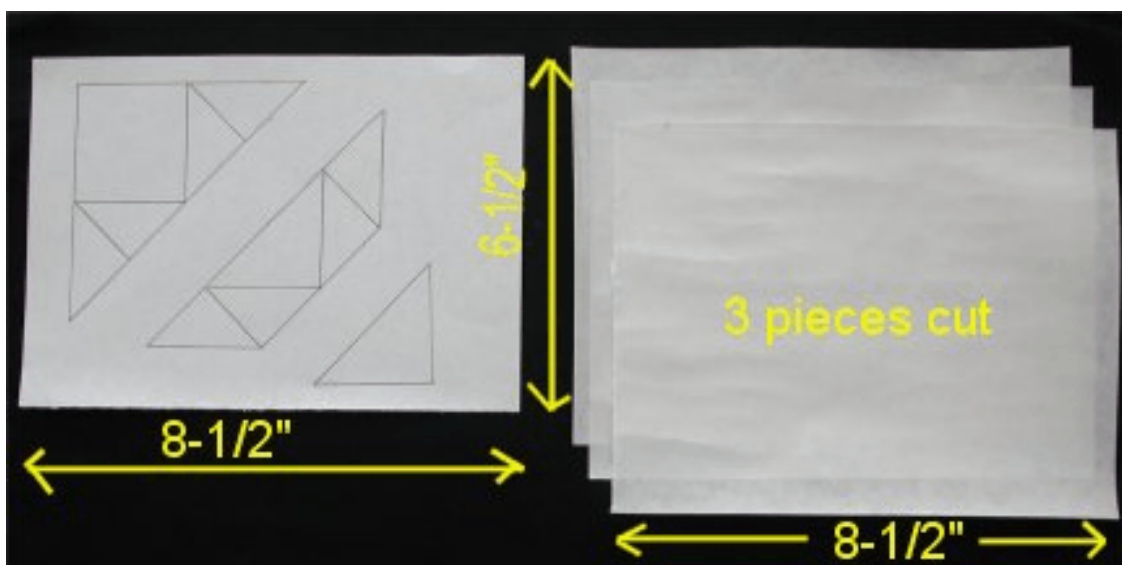
1. **MAKE A COPY OF EACH FINISHED PATTERN:** trace exact (finished) paper piecing pattern onto another sheet of paper. Computer paper is fine. You'll have an easier time if you do not include the outer seam allowance. [I've included a second copy of the master pattern for you, so you don't have to do this step]
2. **CUT FREEZER PAPER TO PATTERN SIZE:** cut several pieces of freezer paper to approximate (slightly larger than) size of pattern. Stack all the pieces with the shiny side up.
3. **ADHERE PAPER PATTERN TO FREEZER PAPER STACK:** with shiny side up, put the paper pattern on top of the freezer paper stack. Tack all the layers together, using the tip of a **DRY HOT** iron. And I do mean **HOT** iron!
4. **NEEDLE-TRACE PATTERN TO FREEZER PAPER:** with unthreaded needle, stitch through all paper layers along all **seam** lines.
Important: the SEAM lines!
5. **MAKE INDIVIDUAL SEGMENT TEMPLATES:** from the back of the stack, remove ONE freezer paper pattern. Label the segments (unit id & sequence number) or label with what fabric is to be used with the segment. Cut along all perforated lines. Set aside and save individual pieces. These are the templates for cutting the fabric in step 7.
6. **MAKE BLOCK PATTERN TEMPLATE:** remove the top master pattern from the freezer papers. Save for possible future use. Keeping the rest of the freezer papers tacked together, cut on all the along **OUTER** perforated lines ONLY, i.e. **do not cut the individual pieces apart.**
7. **MAKE INDIVIDUAL SEGMENT FABRIC STACKS:** (See next pages for specific information on what segments need what colors.) For each freezer paper piece cut from step 5, rough cut 4 pieces of fabric bigger than the freezer paper. Be generous: at least 3/8" bigger all the way around. Stack the fabric pieces, right sides up. Iron the freezer paper template to the top fabric. Don't trim the fabric at this point; you will trim later on. Each freezer paper piece cut in step 5 should be on the top of its own little stack of fabric pieces.
8. **CONSTRUCTION METHODS:** Unit C: construction from the middle of the block to the outside edges. Unit B: construction from one end to the other. Unit A: single piece (no construction).
9. **START SEWING BLOCK UNITS:** use the block paper pattern from step 6 to sew block unit C:
 - a. iron segment 1 **ONLY** to wrong side of fabric.
 - b. fold back paper along seamline 1-2.
 - c. put segment 2 fabric, right sides together, to segment 1 fabric. Stitch **ALONG** fold line, **NOT** thru paper! Trim seamline fabric to 1/4". [If your presser foot seems to "stick" to the freezer paper, slip a small piece of regular paper between the presser foot and the freezer paper.]
 - d. open out and iron segment 2 fabric (only) out flat.
 - e. open out and iron freezer paper template to wrong side of section 2 fabric. Use a dry **HOT** iron. This stabilizes the fabric unit.
 - f. repeat steps b-e with segment 3, 4 & 5 fabrics. If desired, when finished trim "inner" fabric seamline edges to 1/4"
 - g. do **NOT** trim outer edges of block. Trimming is done when block units are sewn together.
 - h. peel paper template from fabric and reuse for next block.
10. **SEW BLOCK UNIT B** in the same manner as for unit C, in step 9.
11. **SEW BLOCK UNITS TOGETHER TO MAKE COMPLETE BLOCK:** sew block unit C to block unit B. Sew block unit A to block unit B-C. Press flat. Now you can trim the outer edges to a 1/4" seam allowance.

Here's the more detailed steps with pictures to look at.
These steps correspond to the steps on the 1-page synopsis.

1. trace exact paper piecing pattern onto another sheet of paper. Computer paper is fine. (Normally you would only have one copy of your pattern to work from - your master copy. You don't want to destroy it; that's why you need to trace an exact copy. However, I've given you 2 copies of the master pattern .. one for you to keep as a master and the other to use for this lesson.) The picture below shows the master copy being traced ... which is what you're going to have to do in the future. Make sure you have a good amount of space around each section.



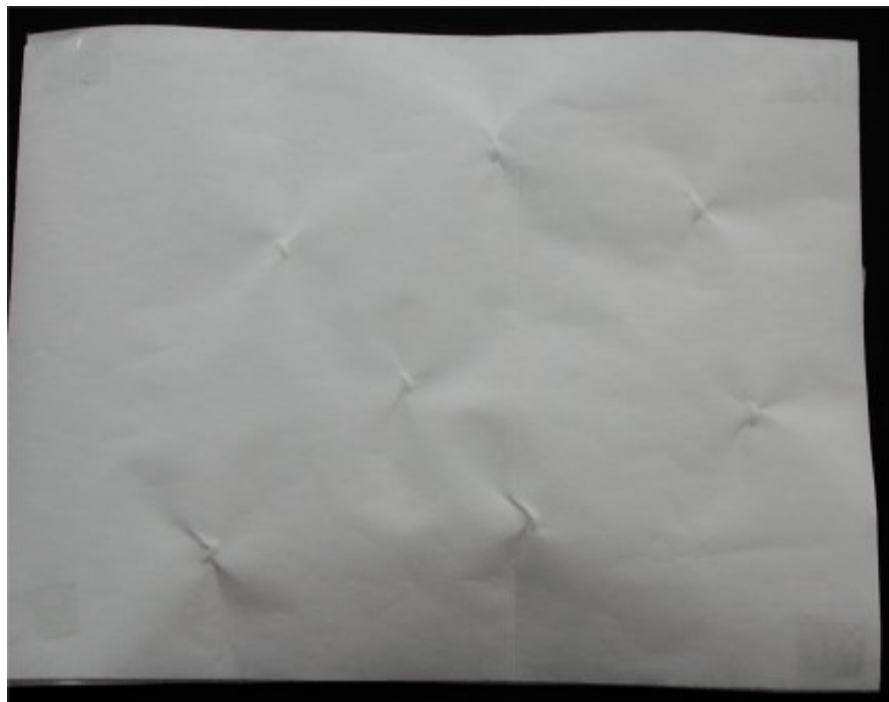
2. cut several pieces of freezer paper to approximate size of pattern that you just traced. In this example, the traced copy and the freezer paper pieces are 6-1/2" x 8-1/2". Stack the freezer paper with the shiney side up in a nice pile and have all edges even.



3. tack paper pattern to freezer paper, shiny side up. Use a dry HOT iron.

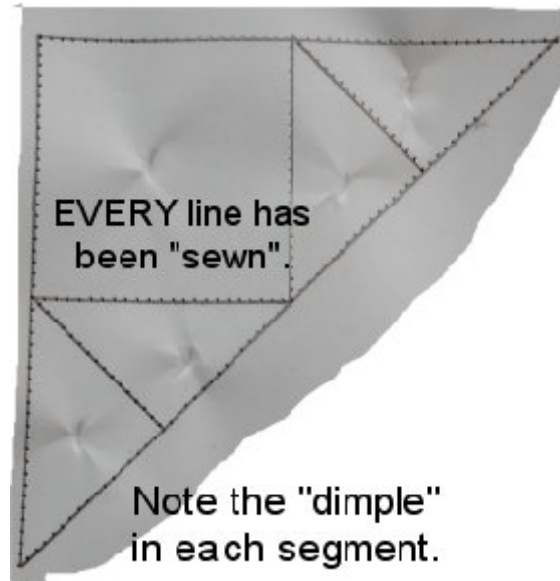
This is one of the nifty tricks to Judy's method. Put the traced paper pattern on the top of the freezer paper stack, with the shiny side of the freezer paper facing up. Press the tip only of the iron into the stack of papers, to the count of 5, in each segment. You are simply using this as a way to hold all the papers together at this point without pinning them. (Pinning them won't hold them securely enough; they'll slip around when you get to the next step.)

Be sure and press the tip hard into the papers .. you should be able to feel a "dimple" on the back side; that way you'll know all the papers are sticking together.

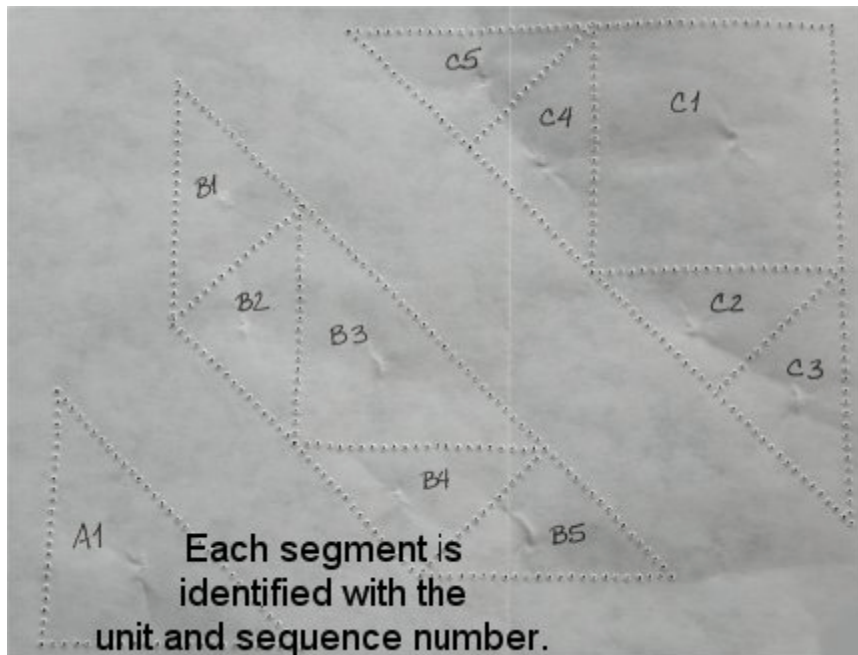


Back side, showing the dimples

4. with unthreaded needle, stitch through all paper layers along all seam lines. "Sew" all around the outside lines AND the interior seam lines. **All the lines should be perforated with little holes.**

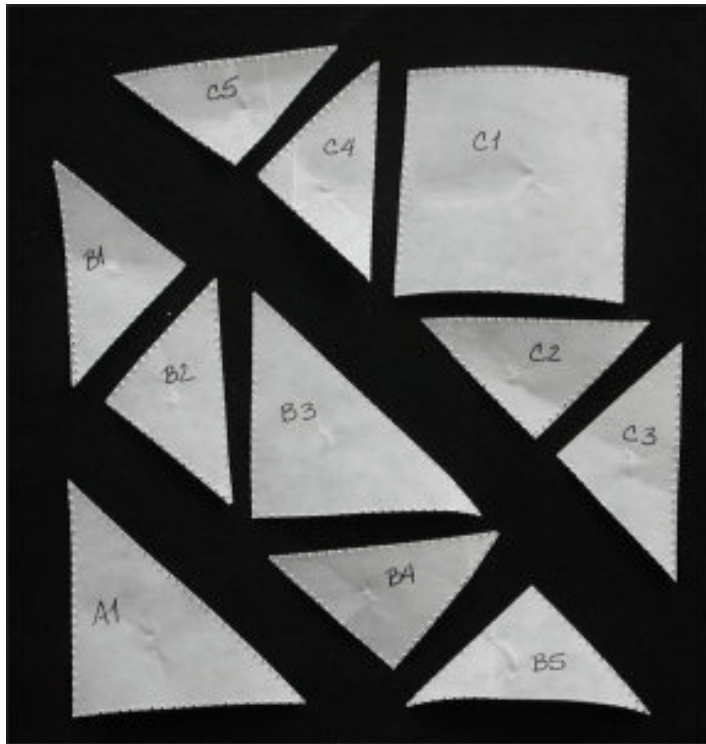


- 5a. remove ONE freezer paper (from the back, so you don't disturb the others). On the paper side of the paper, write the unit and sequence number of the segment.



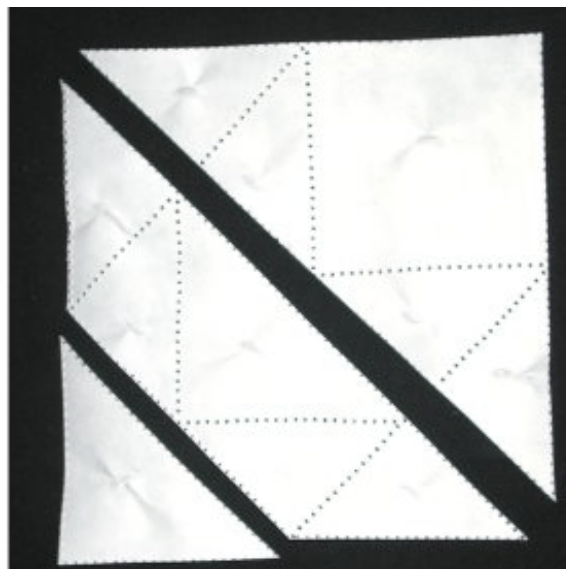
- 5b. Cut along all perforated lines. Save individual pieces and set them aside. These are the templates for cutting the fabric in step 7.

Leave the rest of the papers intact (i.e. tacked & perforated together)



6. remove the top (the traced copy) pattern from the freezer paper stack. Save for possible future use. Keeping the rest of the freezer papers tacked together, cut on all the along **outer seamlines** **ONLY**, i.e. do not cut the individual segment pieces apart.

(I don't advise separating the rest of the freezer papers because one thick stack of papers is easier to keep track of than many separate pieces of paper.)



7. For each freezer paper piece cut from step 5, rough cut pieces of fabric slightly bigger than the freezer paper. You will need one piece of fabric for every block you are going to make; if you are making 4 blocks, then each fabric stack will have 4 pieces of fabric in it. Stack the fabric pieces, right sides up. Iron the freezer paper template to the top fabric. Each freezer paper piece cut in step 5 should be on the top of its own little stack of fabric pieces. Don't bother to trim the fabric at this point; the seam allowances can be trimmed later, if you want to trim them. Pieces C1, C3, C5 are cut from background fabric. Pieces B1, B3, B5, C2, C4 are cut from flower color fabric. Pieces A1, B2, B4 are cut from leaf color fabric.



8. use paper patterns from step 6 to sew the block. These are the pattern pieces that were NOT cut apart into individual segments.

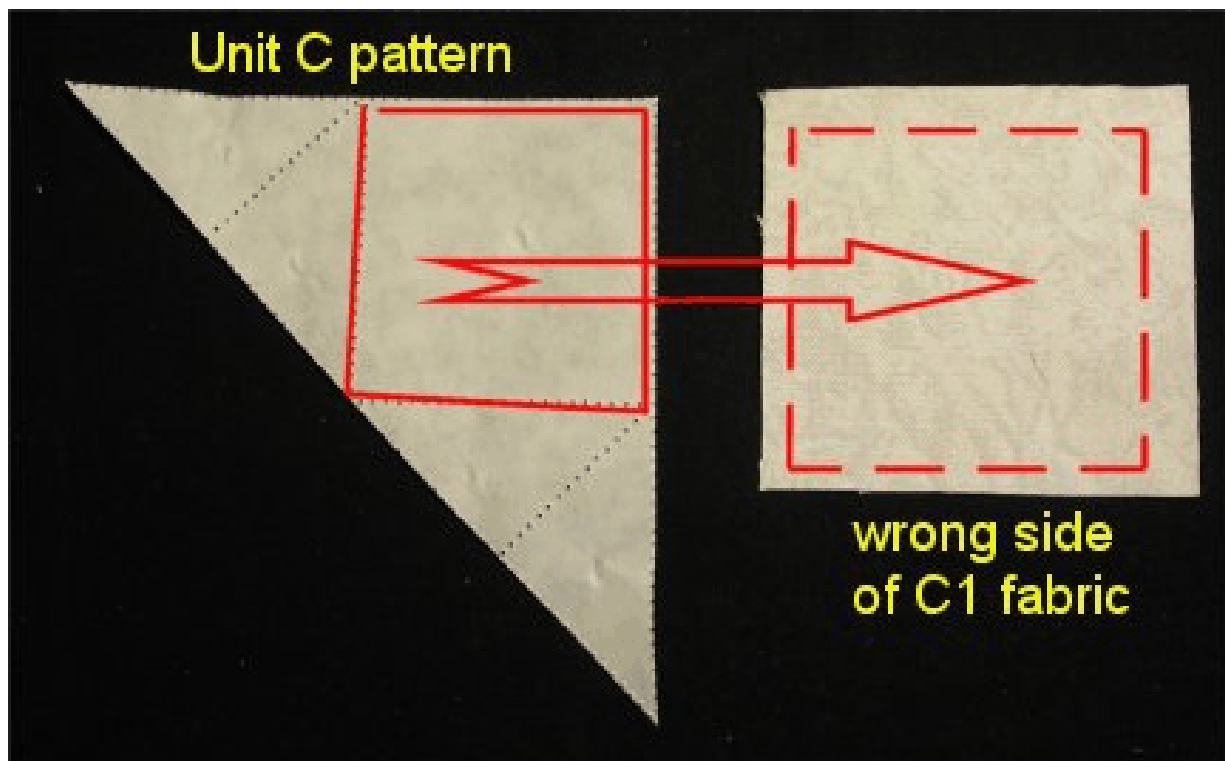
In this series of steps, you are going to construct Unit C. This unit is sewn from the center square outwards, first on one side then on the other.

Remember, you have already marked on the individual pattern pieces (the ones on top of the fabric stacks) the unit identification (A, B, C) and the sequence number. Gather up all the Unit C fabric pieces and the uncut Unit C piece and put them in front of your sewing machine.

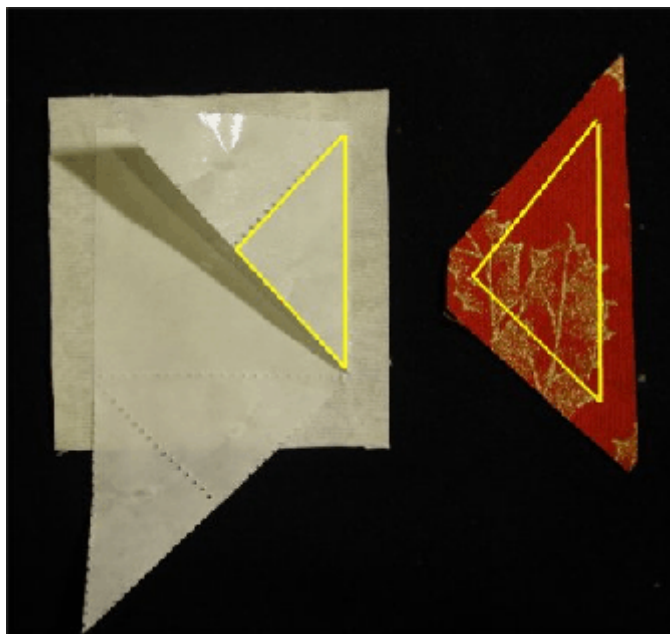
a. the first fabric piece is always the one that is the exception to the rule: because you need to sew all the fabric pieces right sides together, the very first fabric piece must be ironed onto the freezer paper pattern on the wrong side.

Get one piece of fabric from the C1 pile (I just take it from the bottom of the pile so I don't disturb the freezer paper piece on top). iron the shiny side of the freezer paper to just this section (C1) to wrong side of fabric. At this point, I usually try to align one side with a 1/4" seam allowance. This eliminates trimming later on. Don't worry about the other edges; they will be trimmed at the appropriate sequence.

Do not iron the side segments to the fabric, **JUST THE CENTRAL SECTION (C1)** of the freezer paper to the wrong side of the C1 fabric, as shown by the red arrow below



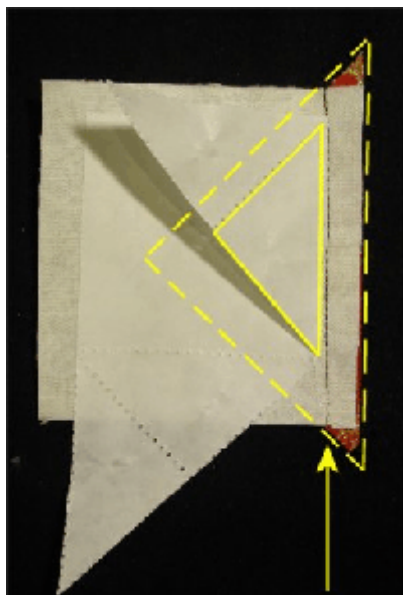
8b. fold back the C2 pattern side section along seam line. Put the C2 fabric along side of the C1 section, so that it's in the same orientation as the pattern side section, as shown in yellow below.



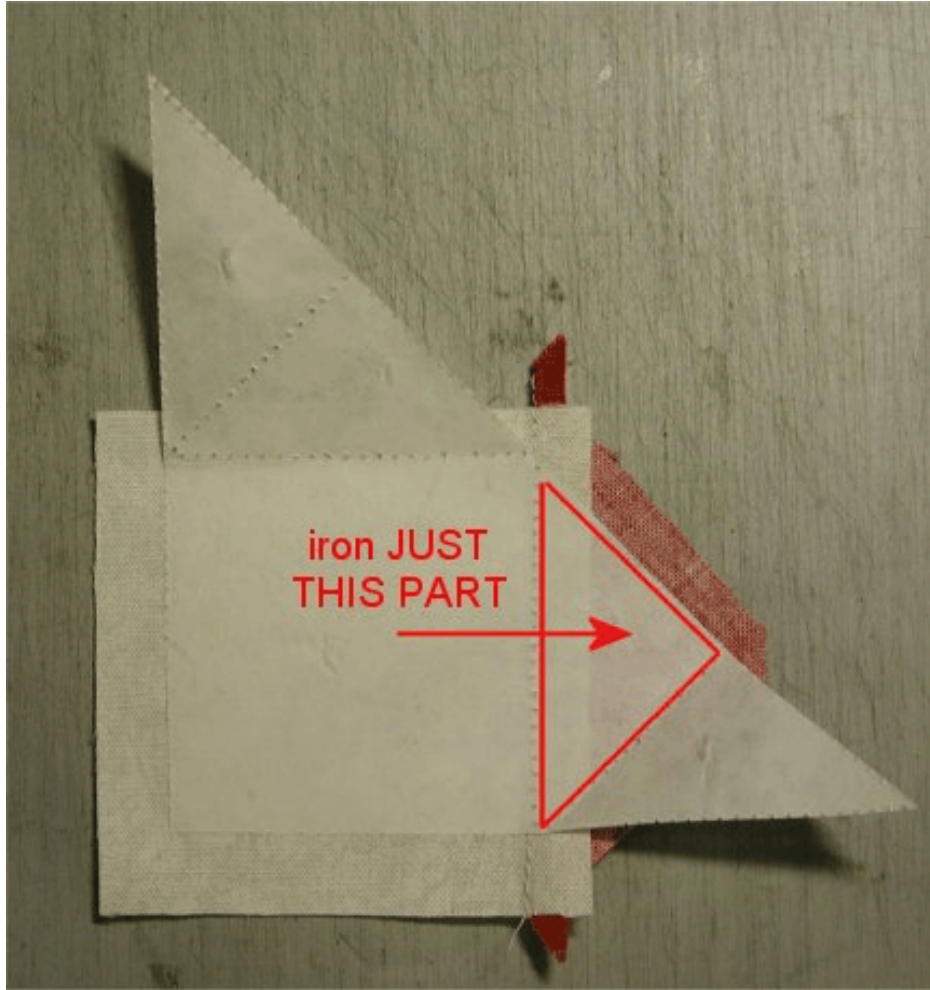
c. put the C2 fabric, right sides together, to C1 freezer paper/fabric. The triangle outlined in solid yellow is the pattern piece; the triangle outlined in dashed yellow is the fabric for that pattern piece. The fabric is placed right sides together to the fabric C1 piece. Stitch ALONG fold line, as shown by the black thread below and also the yellow arrow.. (Note: *You* will use matching thread; I used contrast so you could see it.). Do NOT pierce the freezer paper.

Because you pre-cut the section fabric to roughly the same size as the pattern piece, you **know** it will be big enough after you sew it. And because you can fold back the freezer paper section before you sew the new fabric, you can reassure yourself that you have the right piece of fabric in the right place.

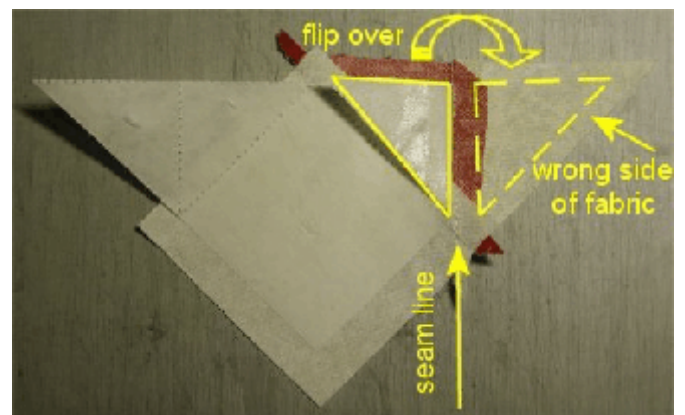
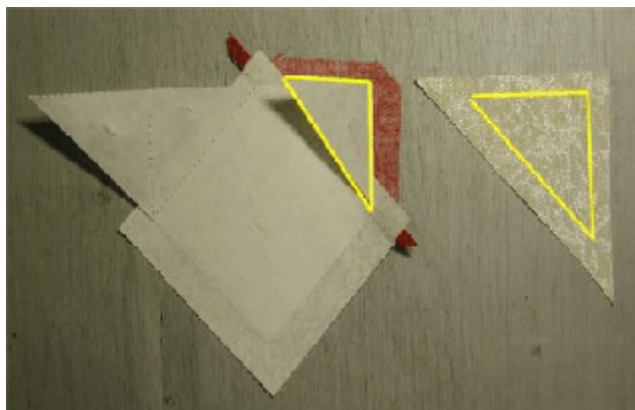
If the seam allowance is really big at this point, you can trim it back to ¼" from the sewn seam line.



- 8d. Flip out the C2 fabric and iron it flat. Then unfold the freezer paper section and iron paper template to wrong side of side fabric. Note that the fabric has NOT been trimmed along the outside edge yet. That will come later.



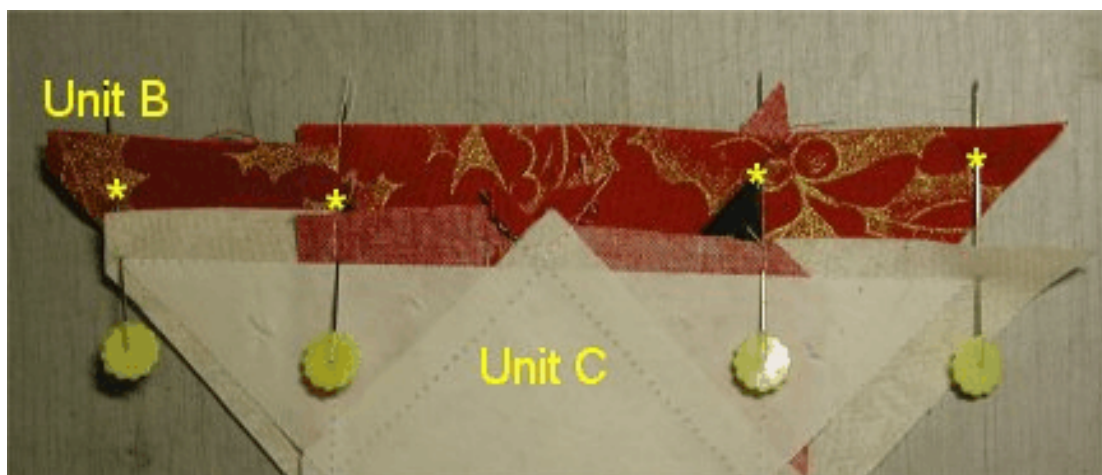
- 8e. repeat steps 8b-8d with pieces: fold back the freezer paper pattern section along the seam line to be sewn; align the new fabric in the same orientation as the freezer paper pattern piece; put the freezer paper unit on top of the fabric piece; sew along side of the fold; flip out the fabric so the wrong side is facing up; iron the freezer paper section to the fabric.



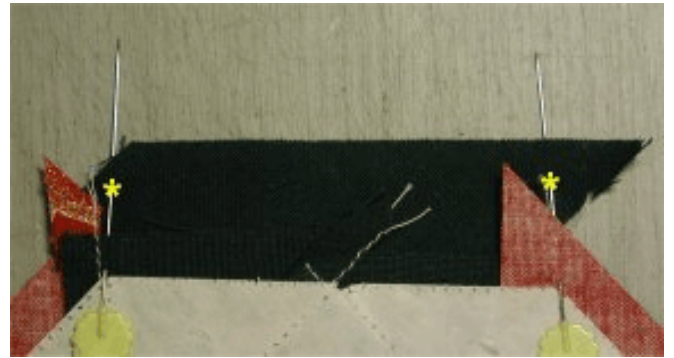
9. Repeat steps 8a-8d for Unit B. The construction sequence for Unit B is very easy ... it's from once side to the other. Unit A is a single piece and therefore has no construction.
10. Now that you have Unit B and Unit C completed, it's time to join them. To see where the units will line up, put both of them face up in front of you. The yellow X's (below) show where you are going to be joining the two segments. (Once you become familiar with sewing the freezer paper pieced section together, you can eliminate this step.)



11. Put those two segments right sides together. Push a pin from the wrong side of either segment at each of the X's above. Slide the segments together, using the pin to align them correctly at each point and secure them with the pins. The yellow asterisks below show the spot on the Unit B seamline where the pin from Unit C enters. Sew the two units together on the seamline.



12. Do the same thing with the joined Units B & C and the remaining Unit A.



13. The finished block.



14. Trim the outer edges of the completed block so there is a 1/4" seam allowance all around, using the freezer paper on the wrong side as a guide. Peel off the freezer paper patterns carefully! .. from all 3 units. The freezer paper patterns may be used many, many, many times. You'll know when it's time to use a new one when it stops "sticking" to the fabric when ironed. I have been able to use some freezer paper patterns as many as 25 times before it just wouldn't stick any longer ... so don't be quick to throw them away.