

English Paper Piecing

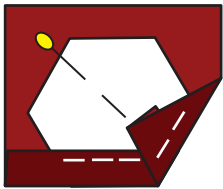
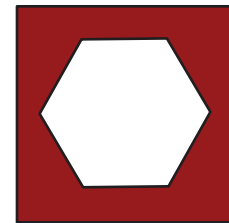
English paper piecing is an old quilt technique. Honeycomb quilts originally started in England using a random overall design. The earliest known English paper pieced quilt was dated 1770.¹ During the 1930's, quilters started to produce a more controlled floral layout known as Grandmother's Flower Garden. Some quilters used newspaper inside their unfinished quilt top, which has allowed the age of their quilt to be identified.

Since the fabric is basted around the pattern, quilters are almost guaranteed perfect results. Designs such as baby blocks, diamonds, hexagons, stars, and triangles are good candidates for English paper piecing since they have short sides with corners that are set-in. These hand projects are very portable and can be worked on while waiting in a doctor's office, sitting in an airport or spectating at your child's sports game.

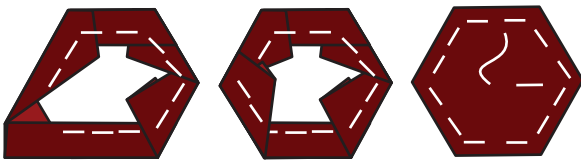
Try your hand at a smaller project first, before attempting a full-size quilt. Have fun piecing Nana's Flower Garden or consider making a single floret for a pretty coaster.

¹[Illinois State Museum: Keeping us in Stitches: Quilts and Quilters: Pieced Quilts: Hexagon](#)

To create a hexagon floret using the English Paper Piecing method, take a square of fabric and pin a paper hexagon to the wrong side of the fabric making sure to center the hexagon.
(Note: You may wish to trim your fabric square to 1/4" beyond the hexagon shape before basting.)



On one side of the hexagon, fold the fabric over the edge of the paper hexagon and begin to baste the fabric to the hexagon. When basting, stitch through the paper hexagon.



Continue around the hexagon until all sides have been basted. You do not need to knot your thread at the end - just baste a stitch toward the center of the hexagon and cut your thread. In this way, make the required number of hexagons for your project.

To stitch the floret, place two hexagons right sides together, and using a small whip stitch, catch only the edge of the fabric along one matching side. Be careful not to catch the paper template when stitching the pieces together. Continue sewing the remaining hexagons around the center piece, stitch all sides that meet. Press slightly.

