



Foundation Paper Piecing Tutorial

Foundation paper piecing is an easy technique for piecing small pieces very accurately, but it's more easily taught in person than through print. If you have the opportunity to take a class or watch a video, do so. If not, read this and a few other tutorials written by other quilters, then study the diagrams or photos until the lightbulb of understanding shines brightly. Once you "get it" you'll have lots of fun putting this technique to use.

Step 1: Print your pattern in reverse of what you want the finished block to look like. Print on thin typing paper, newsprint, tracing paper/vellum, or one of the products created especially for foundation paper piecing. This tutorial has three simple patterns you can use for practice.

Step 2: Notice how each piece of the pattern is numbered. All purchased patterns for foundation piecing should be pre-numbered for you. You will be sewing these pieces in numerical order. Find the piece that is numbered 1. Find a piece of fabric that is about 1" larger. Place the fabric on the back side of your printed pattern with the back side of the fabric against the paper. Hold the paper and fabric up to a light source to make sure the fabric covers the # 1 spot completely with at least a 1/4" extra on all sides. See Fig. 1. When satisfied, pin or use a dab of glue stick to keep fabric in place.

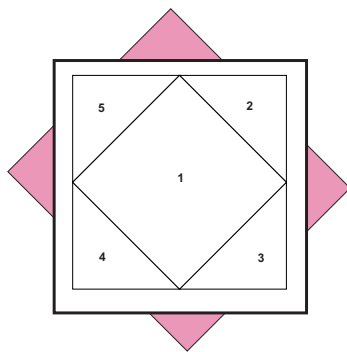


Fig. 1

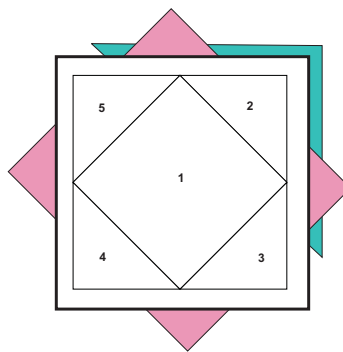


Fig. 2

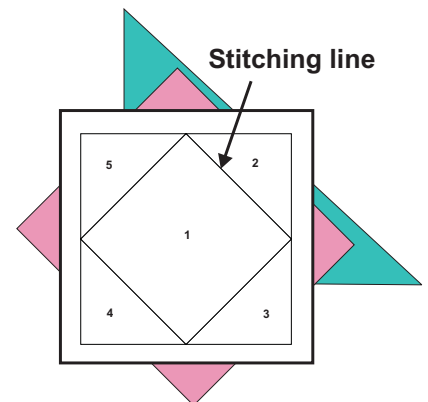


Fig. 3

Step 3: Locate #2 on your pattern and find a piece of fabric about 1" larger - see Fig. 2. For triangles, it's best to make the piece larger than you think you need.

Step 4: Flip fabric piece 2 over fabric piece 1, right sides together as in traditional piecing - see Fig. 3. Pin in place. With paper on top, slip under presser foot and stitch on the line indicated by arrow in Fig. 3. You will need to stitch 1/4" beyond each end of the line for the seam allowance. Stitch with a short stitch of about 15 stitches per inch.

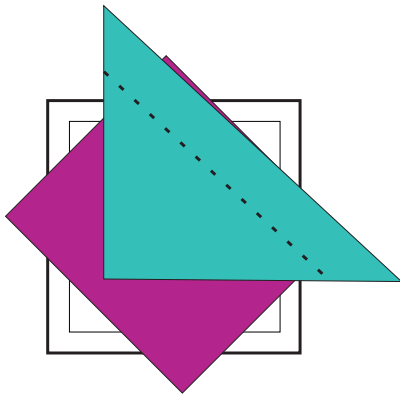


Fig. 4

This is what the back side should look like at this stage (Fig. 4).

Step 5: Flip corner of paper back on itself along stitching line. Trim seam allowance to 1/4 inch. Flip fabric piece 2 over and press (Fig. 5). Don't worry about the extra sticking out beyond the seam allowance - that will be trimmed after all pieces have been sewn in

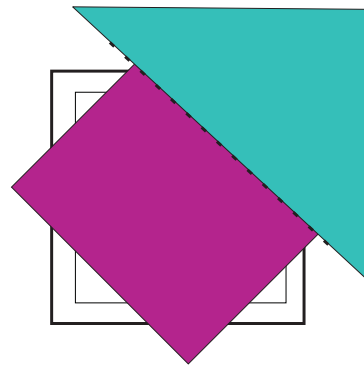
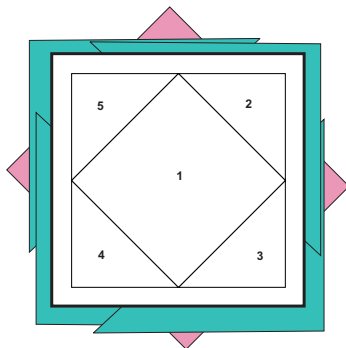
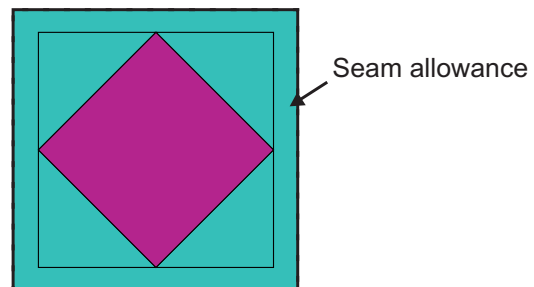


Fig. 5

Repeat steps 3-5 for each remaining numbered piece. After all pieces are sewn and pressed in place, trim outside edges to 1/4" seam allowance. Remove paper.

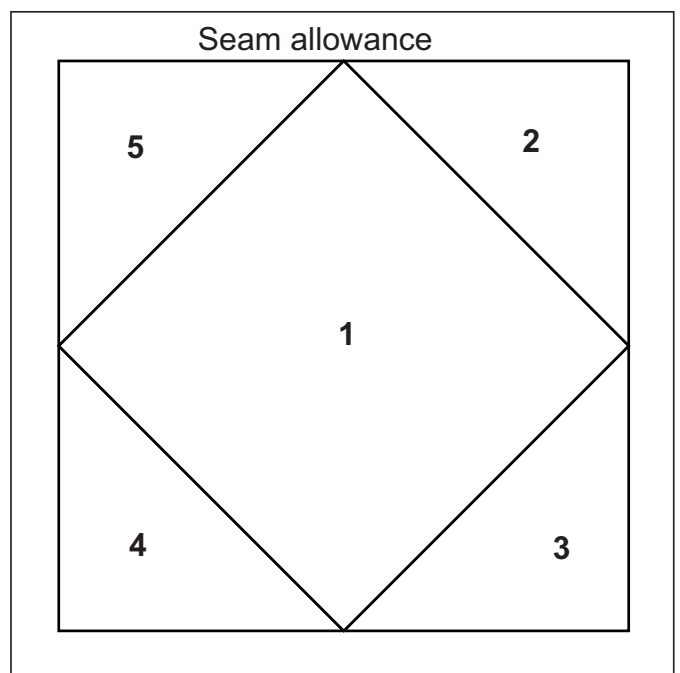
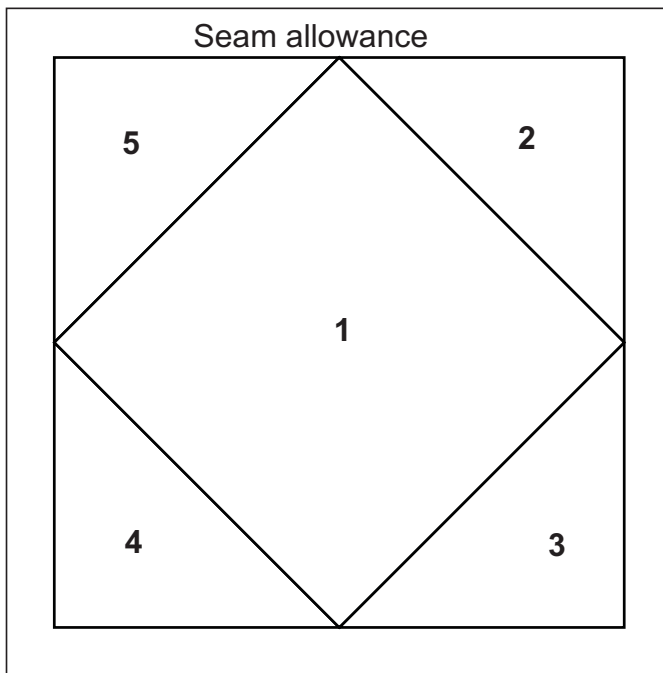
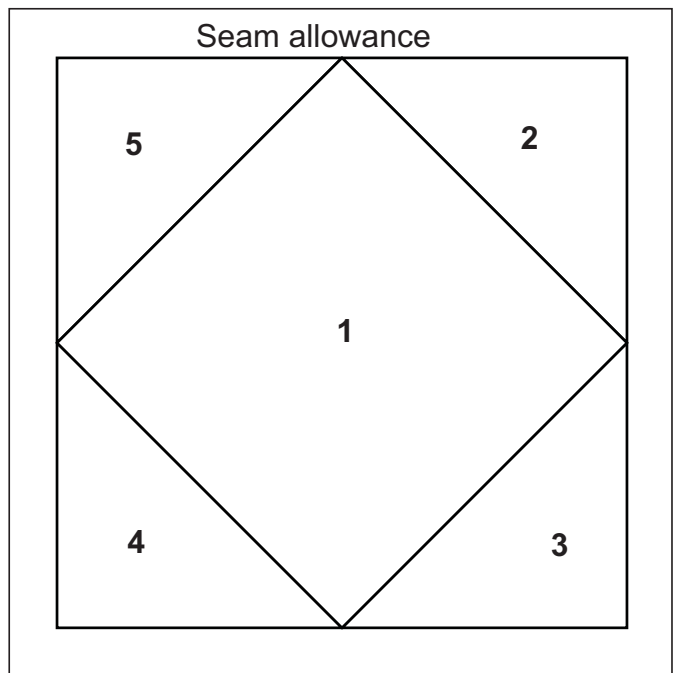
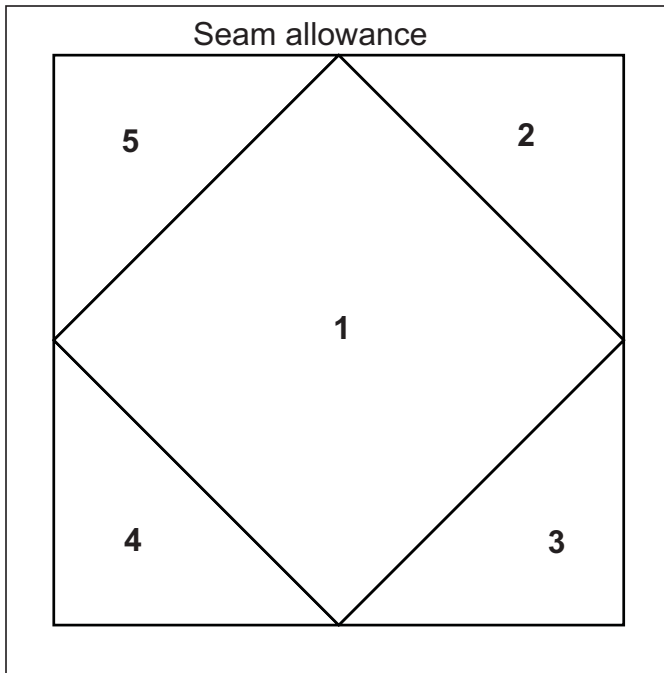


View of paper side



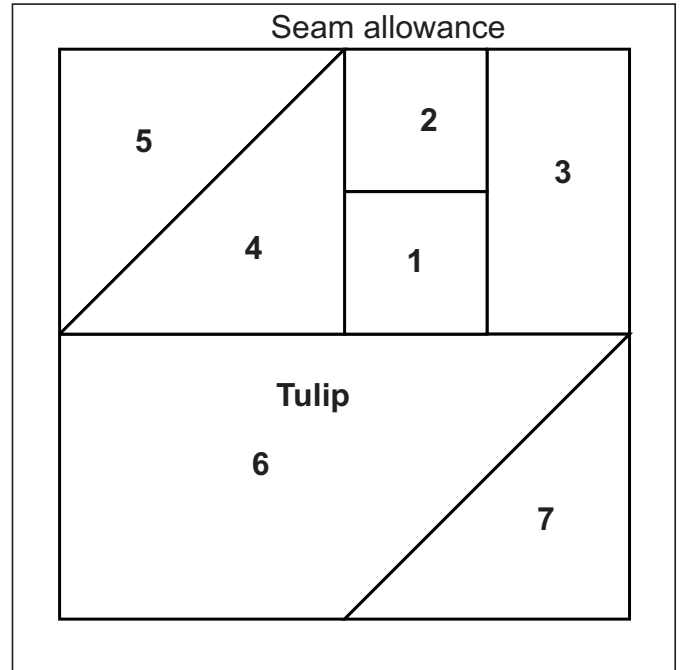
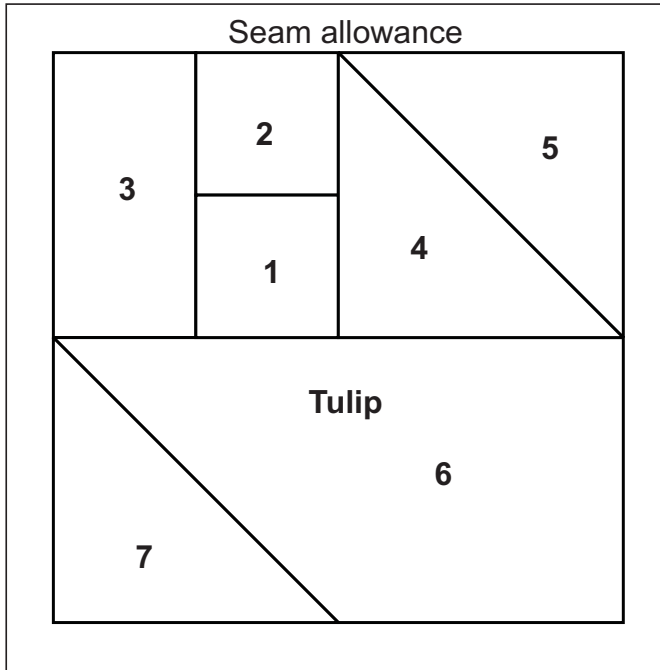
View of finished block

Square in a Square

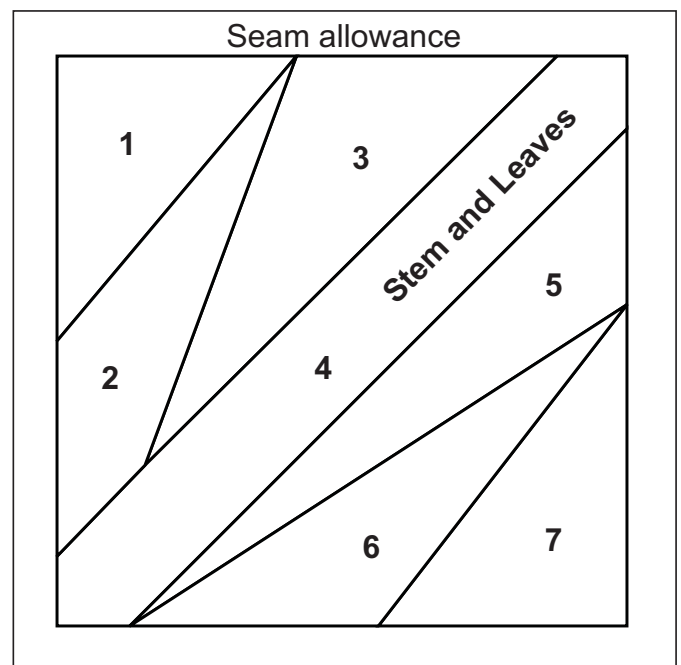
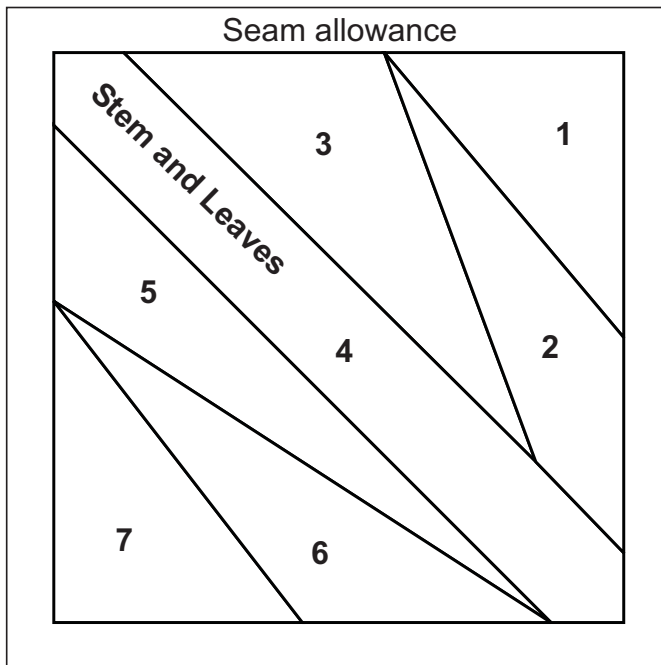


Print patterns on the easiest-to-tear paper you have available. Cheap typing paper and plain newsprint are two choices readily available to most people. Tracing paper is nice, but can be expensive. If your printer balks at thin paper, you might have to tack a sheet of thin paper to a sheet of regular printer paper and run them through the printer together.

Tulips and Stems



Note: these two blocks don't fit together - they were chosen as examples to practice with.



The stem/leaves block is the easier of these two - do it first before trying the tulip flower. These blocks demonstrate how the end result will be opposite to what you see on the pattern. The stem/leaves block shows how some fpp patterns are worked from one side over to the other side. The tulip flower block uses the method of starting with a small, central piece and gradually working outward.