

## Patch-Work

This is old-fashioned too; and I must allow it is very silly to tear up large pieces of cloth, for the sake of sewing them together again. But little girls often have a great many small bits of cloth, and large remnants of time, which they don't know what to do with; and I think it is better for them to make cradle-quilts for their dolls, or their baby brothers, than to be standing round, wishing they had something to do. The pieces are arranged in a great variety of forms: squares, diamonds, stars, blocks, octagon pieces placed in circles, &c. A little girl should examine whatever kind she wishes to imitate, and cut a paper pattern, with great care and exactness.

*The Girls Own Book* by Lydia Maria Child 1833  
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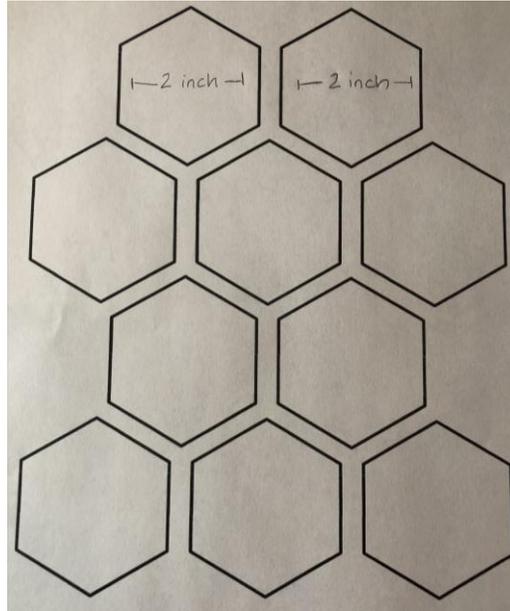
## Hexagonal Paper Piecing Step-by-Step Guide By Sarah Ramsey

The hexagonal paper piecing that is practiced at Old Sturbridge Village has been called many different names throughout its long life: English paper piecing, hexagonal paper piecing, patchwork, and by the modern quilter's term "grandmother's flower garden" due to its tendency to form multicolor flowers on a white background.

No matter what name you use, the process is the same and requires these readily available materials:

Scissors	Sewing Needle
Cotton Fabric	Thread
Pencil	Ruler
Pins (optional, but they make the process easier)	Paper (normal printer paper will do fine)

### Step 1: Making the Hexagons



Using your pencil, paper, and ruler, draw at least 6 hexagons.

**Tip:**

- If you don't have anything to go by, start by drawing a square that is 2 inches square. From there you can clip off the corners to make the 6-sided hexagons.
- There are also tons of quilting resources that allow you to print paper hexagon patterns online!

**Step 2:** Cut Out the Hexagons; try to keep the sides even.



### Step 3: Trace the Hexagons



On the back of the fabric you have chosen, use a pencil and trace the outline of your hexagons. Make sure you leave about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch between the pieces you trace to allow for a seam allowance when cut out. Trace as many hexagons as you have paper patterns.

**Tip:**

- 19th century quilts had a lot of fun patterns and colors so don't be shy about choosing lots of fun fabrics!

### Step 4: Cutting Your Fabric



Cut out the fabric pieces; making sure to leave at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of fabric all the way around. The extra fabric is crucial for the next step in the process.

**Tip:**

- If you're worried about cutting too close to the lines, use a ruler to measure  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch all the way around your traced hexagon.

**Step 5:** Pinning the Paper into the Fabric (optional, but it makes things easier!)



Take one of your paper patterns and place it on the back side of one of your fabric pieces. Then, fold over the  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch seam allowance (extra fabric) and pin it to the paper.

**Tip:**

- Have all of your pins running in the same direction so you don't have to worry so much about being stabbed.

**Step 6:** Basting the Fabric and Paper Together



Using the needle and thread, sew straight through the paper and fabric to secure it in place. The stitches should be large; making them easy to pull out later.

**Tip:**

- Remove the pins as you sew around the hexagon. This will make the fabric and paper easier to maneuver.

### Step 7: Putting it all Together



Take 2 of your basted hexagon pieces and place them together with the fabric sides touching. Line up any of the 6 and sew together using a whip stitch. Make sure that you are just sewing through fabric and not paper for this step. Try to make the stitches small.

Here is a finished example:



The pieces should open up like a book when they are sewn together. Your aim is for the pieces to lay flat and not pucker at the seam.

### Step 8: Just Keep Sewing!



Once you get started its smooth sailing from here! Keep adding hexagons to your pair in the same manner shown in step 7. Line up the side of a new hexagon to one of the pairs and sew that together. Then line the other side up with the second of the pair and sew it together. You can continue adding on to these three pieces and work this into an entire quilt if you so choose!

### **Step 9: Taking the Paper Out**

Once you've sewn to the point where one of your hexagons is completely surrounded by other pieces you can cut the big basting stitches that hold the paper to the fabric. Generally, the paper is just for keeping the fabric stable while you sew the pieces together; therefore it is taken out before you add batting and a backing to a quilt made of these pieces.

