

Schoolgirl Sampler Sew Along

Week 13

This week we'll be working on the appliquéd center section of the Schoolgirl Sampler quilt (see directions for the appliquéd center beginning on p. 12). I created a fairly simple appliquéd design (in keeping with the "schoolgirl"/learning theme) to give those who might be new to appliquéd a chance to try it and succeed. It may be too easy for some of you and if that's the case, choose another design as long as it fits within the 14 ½" x 14 ½" space (appliquéd square with ½" sashing strips). The size of the square without the blue frame measures 12 ½" x 12 ½". Add the blue frame and it measures 13 ½" x 13 ½". So, keep in mind that if you choose something different, you'll need to calculate whether you want to include the frame and/or sashing too. My personal opinion is that the frame allows the center to stand out a bit and separates it from all of the busy blocks so it doesn't just blend in. Setting the design on point also gives a little more of an interesting look to the simple shapes.



If you prefer not to make an appliquéd center, one option is to repeat nine 4" blocks, set them in three rows of three with sashing and sew that section together. This option will be explored further when we get to the sashing next week (Week 14). But if you think that's what you'd like to do, then just make the blocks this week while others are working on the appliquéd.

One other option is to make a 12" x 12" pieced block of your choice and use that for your center. Then add a frame and sashing around it to make it fit (see pp. 13-14).

I am not going to go through all the different appliqué methods here. Choose the one you're most comfortable using. You'll find the method I prefer below - hand appliqué with starch and template. You'll also need to follow the directions in the book on pages 12 - 13, trace the shapes that are on page 17 and read the Appliqué section under Quilting Basics on pages 76 - 77. **Also, read through all of the directions here before you begin.**

Appliqué - Starch and Template Method

Supplies

- Sheet of **heat-resistant** (or no-melt) Mylar plastic for templates. My preferred plastic is called Templar. It has a matte finish on one side to make it easy to trace shapes with a pencil and also does not slip when that side is placed on the fabric. The plastic sheets that are shiny make it difficult to trace unless you use a Sharpie. I checked recently and saw that the Templar brand is rather expensive right now and not easy to find. Check your local quilt shop or the shops that are listed in the files. The package comes with six sheets so if you share with a friend or two you can cut the cost. Some people also use freezer paper with this method but I can't say I've tried it myself. You might also be able to find heat-resistant plastic at craft or hobby shops.
- Utility scissors to cut the templates
- Liquid starch or Magic Sizing
- A small paint brush or stencil brush (a Q-tip will also work)
- Water soluble glue or a fabric glue pen with a fine tip to hold appliqué pieces in place (I use Roxanne's Baste-it glue with the fine tip but Elmer's School Glue in a tube with a fine point works too). Or, you can thread baste or use appliqué pins instead.
- Appliqué needles (I like John James Gold 'n Glide size 10 or 11 appliqué needles)
- Thread that matches the colors of the shapes. If I don't have a color that matches, I will use a neutral (tan or gray) colored thread. I like to use a 50 wt Aurifil thread for my appliqué. It's very thin (but strong) so your stitches nestle nicely into the fabric.

Prepare the Shapes

1. Trace your shape onto no-melt template plastic. Cut out the shape on the drawn line. Actually cut the line off the template.
2. Place template on wrong side of fabric and trace all around.



3. Cut slightly less than 1/4" around fabric shape. If you use a pair of applique scissors with a serrated edge, they'll grip the fabric around your shape so it doesn't fray. Mine are made by KAI but there are other brands.



4. Set your iron to medium heat. Place template on wrong side of fabric shape. Hold it on the fabric and “paint” one side **lightly** with starch.



5. Press the edge (seam) over the template, holding the iron down for a few seconds. But not too long - high heat will warp the plastic. **Remember, you must use no-melt plastic!**



6. Paint and press the other side of shape in the same way, overlapping the points. Hold the iron down for a few seconds and then press the entire shape. Flip the little tails back and press into the seam to hide. You may need to dab a bit of starch on it. Let cool. Don't worry if a little bit of the tail shows. You can shove it under with your needle or a toothpick later.

7. After cooling, carefully remove template and place the pressed shape onto your background fabric. Your shape should have a nice, smooth edge that will make it easy to stitch down.



8. Baste the shape onto your background fabric with thread, small dabs of fabric glue or pins. I place a few tiny dots of glue along the inside seam and then also pin with small applique pins to make sure the shape doesn't shift.



Appliqué Placement

1. For the applique appliqué design in the book, fold your 9" background square into quarters to get fold lines or draw two diagonal lines with a washable marking pen.



2. Pin your first prepped peel on the line with the point touching the center where the fold or lines intersect.



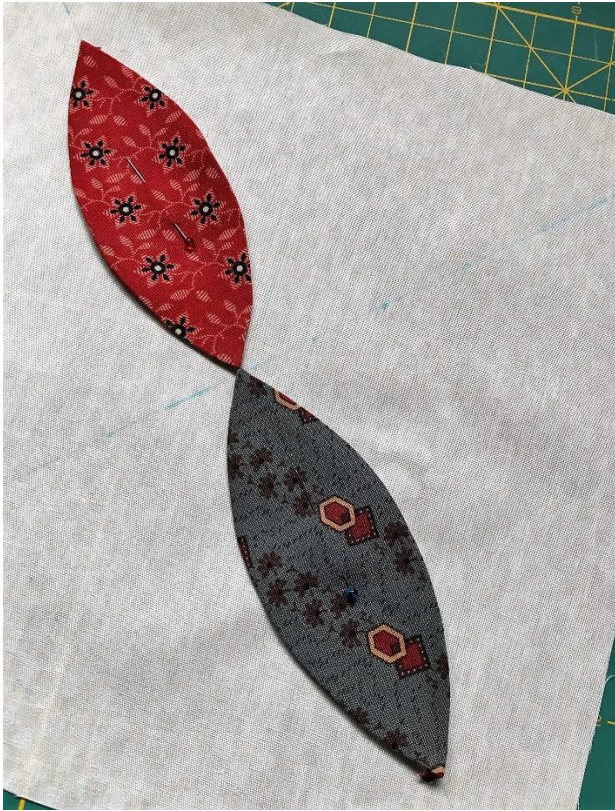
3. Dab a few dots of fabric glue along the inside seam to hold the piece in place.



3. With matching thread, take a stitch in each point to hold it in place.

4. After you've completed appliquéing the shape, place the next peel opposite the first one, again placing it on the line with the point at the center. Glue in place and stitch the point.

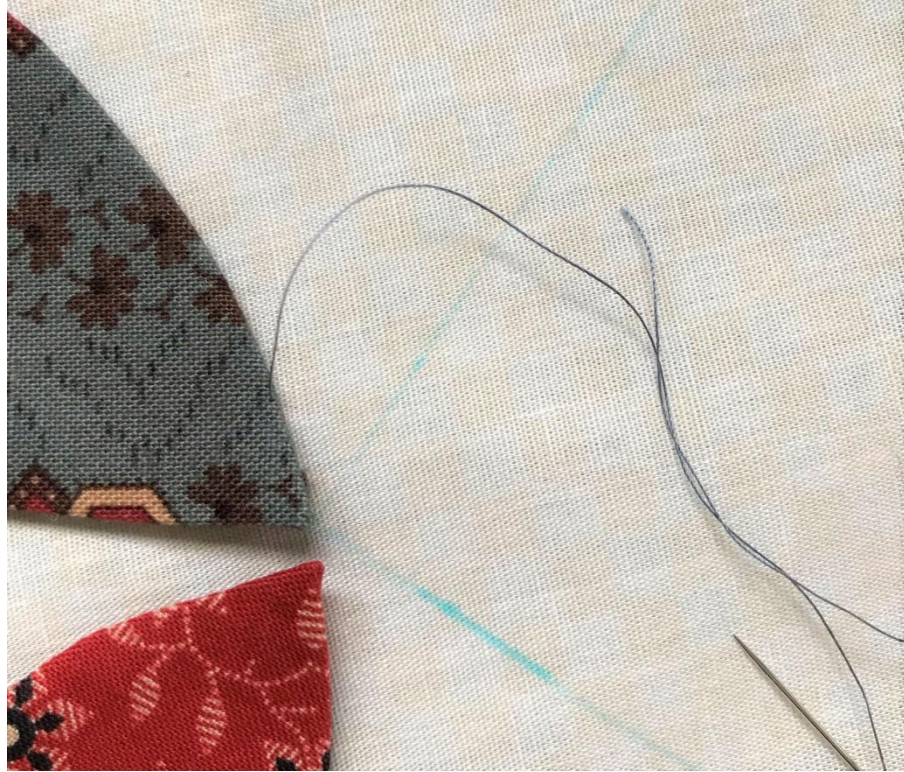
5. When you've stitched all four peels to the background, place the four prepped hearts in between the peels. Place the tops of the hearts 3/4" away from the background edge to make sure there is enough room all around and then 1/4" left for the seam.



Appliquéing the Shapes by Hand

1. Cut an 18" length of thread and knot your needle. Come up with your needle from underneath the background fabric and catch the edge of the applique, getting as close to the edge as you can. Pull the needle and thread all the way through.

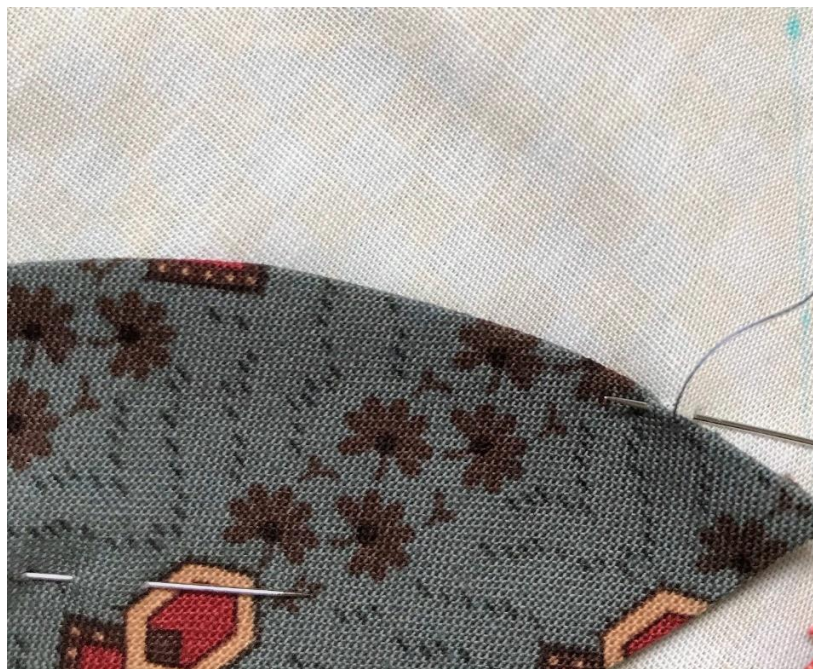




2. Stitch straight down **into the background fabric** near the place you came up with the needle.



3. Come up with your needle again a little farther away from the first stitch (1/8" or so) and catch the edge of the peel. Again, stick the needle straight down into the background fabric and come up into the edge of the peel. Continue to stitch all around the shape this way. I try to keep my stitches about 1/8" apart.



When you prepare the heart shape, clip a few threads of the inside point at the "cleavage" to make it easier to turn the edges under. See the Toothpick Trick on page 12 of the Schoolgirl Sampler book for help with inner points. ❤️

Press from the back when you're finished and then follow the directions in the book to add the triangle pieces and the rest of the appliqué.

This leaf from one of my Peony blocks was stitched down with a 50 wt green Aurifil thread. You can see that the stitches hardly even show. And the starch makes the edges quite crisp and smooth. Conquering leaves or peels is a great start to having fun with appliqué.





There's no rush to complete the appliqué before next week. Work at your own pace and see how it goes. Practice appliquéing a few leaves. If this seems too difficult or time consuming, look at some appliqué videos on YouTube. Maybe you'll find a method that works better for you.

We'll begin working on the sashing for your blocks next week. After that, you'll be able to easily follow the directions in the book for sewing your borders. If you save these files on your computer or print them out you'll have them when you get to a certain point. You've come so far! Give yourself a nice pat on the back. I'll continue to upload files on Fridays and you'll have the guidance if you need it.