

Schoolgirl Sampler Sew Along

Week 8

Work on Blocks **43 through 48** on pages 61 - 63 of the Schoolgirl Sampler book.



(Blocks by Sue Bennett)

Some fun blocks this week. I always love sorting through my small scraps to make the blocks that include a few different prints, like Whirlybird. Now don't get discouraged this week but you are going to have to slow down and take your time with that little log cabin block. The little logs can easily come out looking wonky. The strips are very narrow and you have to cut accurately. If you have trouble, you can try using starch or use Best Press before you cut the pieces to add a little crispness. When sewing, go slowly and check to make sure your stitching is perfectly straight and does not veer off to the right as you get to the end of the piece. If you find that this happens, rip out the last few stitches and re sew to get it straight. Then, after you sew, press to set the seam first before you open and press again. To avoid having your pieces

stretch or come out distorted, try not to move the iron back and forth too much - place the iron straight down on the fabric and let the heat and weight of the iron press the pieces flat. Trim and measure as you add each log and before you sew the next log.

Louisiana is one of my favorite blocks and a great block for practicing flying geese.



If you get stuck at all, it may help to review some of the tips from previous weeks -

Try using a non-slip ruler. This can be a game changer for some of you. If your pieces are not cut accurately in the first place, your blocks will be off. Even a tiny bit makes a difference.

Hey - is your rotary cutter blade sharp?

Have you changed your needle? Try using a 70/10 or 75/11 Microtex Sharp needle for making the smaller blocks.

Aurifil 50 wt. 100% cotton thread works well if you're using a finer needle. It's very thin (but strong), takes up less room in the seam and generates very little lint so your machine stays cleaner.

And, by the way, have you cleaned the lint out of your machine bobbin area lately?

Always press your fabric before you cut your pieces. Some quilters like to use starch or Best Press to get accurate results and less fabric stretching. I do not personally use starch often (except for applique) since I hand quilt most of my quilts and it's more difficult to do that with fabric that's been starched. I keep a small bowl of water and a spray bottle on my cutting table and dab or spray water when needed. Got an annoying wrinkle or fold? Instead of using a shot of steam, which can distort the whole block, a dab or spray of water along the line works. Placing a bit of water along the seam is also helpful when pressing seams open. Use your fingers (or a stiletto) to open the seam, place a bit of water on it and run the point of the iron up along the open seam to press it flat. Then turn over and press the block from the front as well.



My stiletto is one of my favorite tools. Thanks, Robin McGuire!

Pin your pieces before sewing. Remove the pins before sewing over them.

See tips for Week 6 on making Flying Geese units and suggestions for Flying Geese rulers.

See tips for Week 1 on making half-square triangles (HSTs).

Remember to try sewing with a scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam if your blocks are coming out too small.

Keep sewing those half-square triangles for your border. The next six blocks will be posted on **Friday, February 26.**