

En Pointe

inspired by Collection Artist MJ Kinman

Quilt by: MJ Kinman



Featured Artist: MJ Kinman

MJ Kinman



For more information, visit MJ's website and social media sites:

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MJ likes to say she makes the biggest diamonds in the world. But instead of using the hardest substances in the world, she uses the softest – fabric. She describes the technique she uses to create her giant gem portraits as traditional piecing using freezer paper for templates.

MJ's work has been exhibited in national competitions, galleries, and museums, including the National Quilt Museum and the International Quilt Museum. Her work is included in private and public collections, including Maker's Mark Distillery and the National Quilt Museum.

Her gems have been featured in *American Quilter*, *Quiltfolk*, *Quilting Arts Magazine*, *McCall's Quilting*, *France Patchwork* and others. You may also have seen MJ on *Quilting Arts TV* and *The Quilt Show.com with Alex Anderson and Ricky Tims* over the past few years.

MJ's first pattern series, the Birthstone series, is a collection of 12 blocks representing the traditional birthstone gems. Her Diamond Divas series features large diamond quilt patterns. Her first book, *Gemstone Quilts*, was released by C&T Publishing in 2020.

MJ is a BERNINA Brand Ambassador and is always delighted to share her techniques with new and experienced quiltmakers alike. She presents her classes and trunk shows both in person and online.



Inspiration

"Char #4" by MJ Kinman

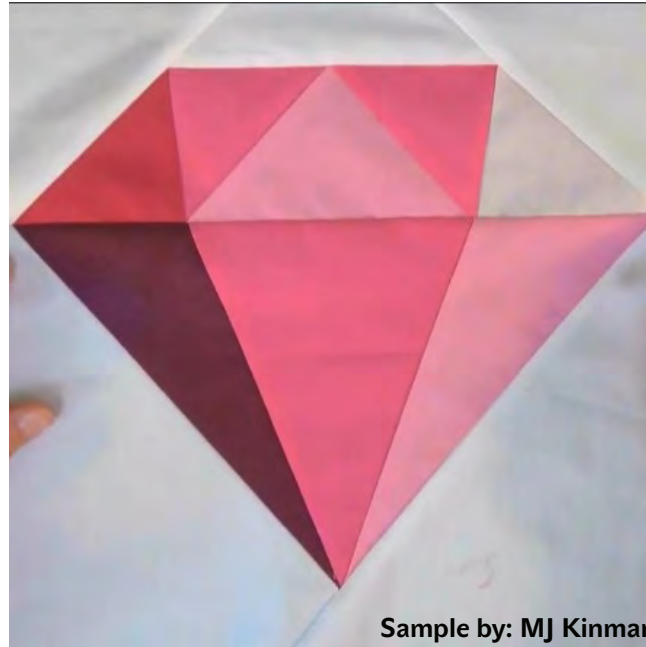


Char #4 celebrates Old Forester heritage of crafting their own barrels, a process that requires setting the new oak aflame. It is part of MJ's *Bourbon Diamonds* series which captures the fire and brilliance of Kentucky's iconic spirit and joined the Museum Collection in 2020.

I created the En Pointe pattern specifically for quiltmakers who may not be familiar with [freezer paper piecing, the same technique I use to create my giant gem quilts. This is NOT foundation paper piecing. Instead, this is traditional piecing using freezer paper as your templates. If you can put two pieces of fabric together with a quarter-inch seam allowance, YOU CAN DO THIS!



Sample Block



Sample by: MJ Kinman

Supplies:

- Freezer Paper (4 sheets 8.5" x 11") – You have several options for sourcing freezer paper:
 - You can find freezer paper in the paper goods section of your grocery store. It typically comes in rolls of either 15" or 18" widths. Be sure you select freezer paper and not wax paper or parchment paper. The magic of this product is that you can write or print on one side, but the other side has a waxy substance that adheres to fabric when you touch it with a hot iron. You can cut 8.5" x 11" sheets from the roll which you'll feed into the printer so that it prints onto the NON-waxy side. These self-cut sheets are sometimes a bit tricky to feed through a home printer. However, I usually have better luck holding onto the top edge of the sheet and guiding it through.
 - You can also purchase pre-cut sheets of freezer paper in packs of 30 or 70 sheets. My favorite brand is Quilter's Freezer Paper by C&T Publishing. You can find Quilter's Freezer Paper on Amazon.
- Home Printer
- Regular copy paper
- 2 Highlighters, different colors
- Double-sided tape or Washi tape
- ~1 fat quarter of background fabric
- 5 shades for gem – perfect for scraps
- 12" ruler with a 1/4" measurement
- Basic sewing supplies, including a seam ripper and a pair of tweezers
- Fabric marking pencils for light and dark fabric



Selecting Your Fabric Colors

1. This block is a great stash buster. Identify 6 fabrics in a range of values to use in your block. I've provided a Color Play Chart on page 6 so you can experiment with your gem's colors. This gem has only 5 colors, plus a background. As you select your colorway, keep in mind that gems come in all the colors of the rainbow. There is no "wrong" color for a gemstone. I've provided several suggestions – ruby, sapphire, emerald & white diamond – to get your creative juices flowing. However, you can select any hue you want.

The key to my gem patterns is value contrast. As you decide on your fabrics, be mindful to select fabrics in a range of values from light to dark.

Tip: I suggest using white or black as your background color for the most dramatic effect. Your background color should only be used for the facets with the "A" color code on it. If you use your background for any codes B through F, the edge of that facet that is next to the background will disappear, creating the appearance of a gap in your gem.

2. Attach a snippet of fabric next to each code of the corresponding value (i.e., light, medium, dark) OR label your fabric by writing the code on the selvedge edge or corner of the corresponding fabric.



Color Play Chart

COLOR PLAY CHART

A – White | Background

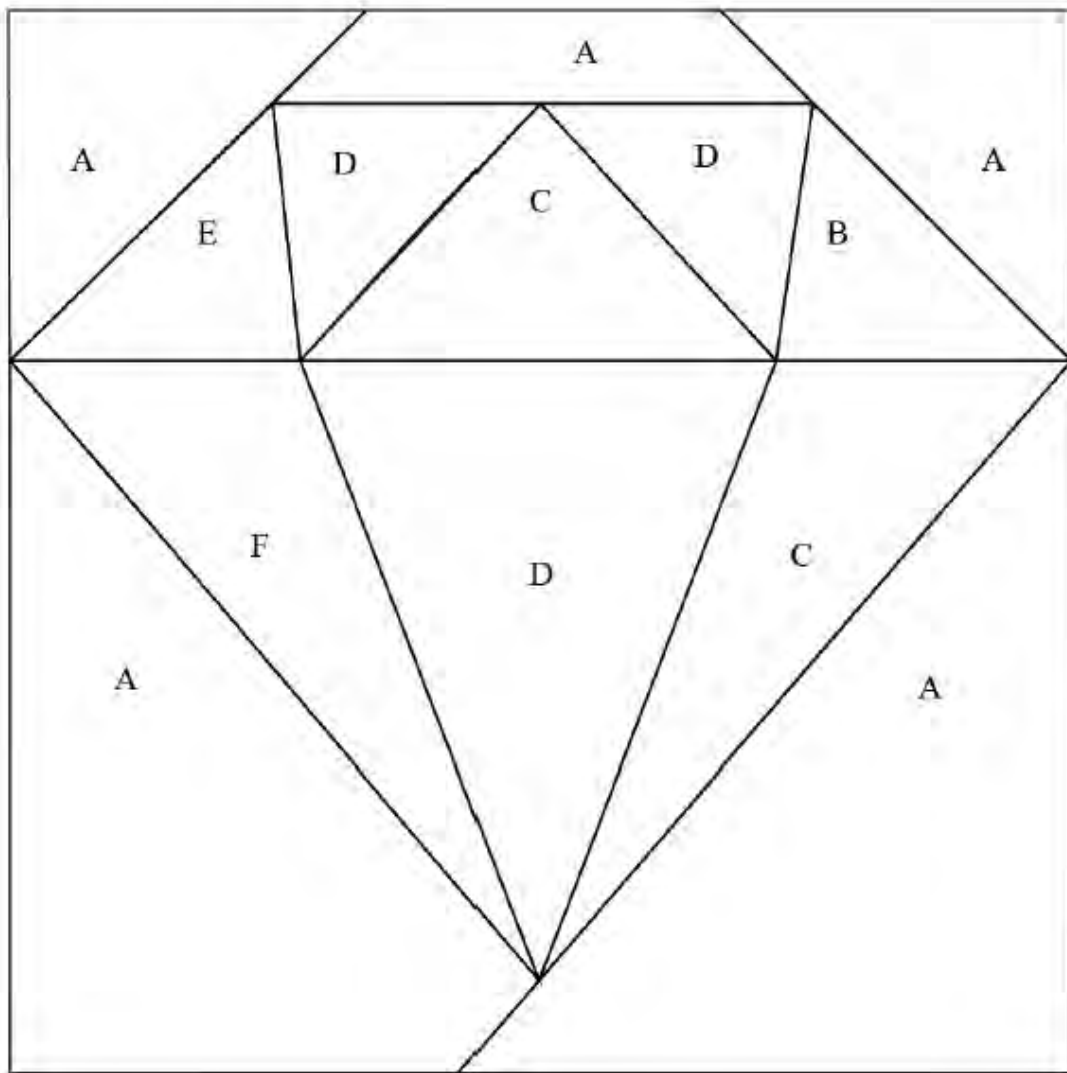
B – Lightest Light

C – Light

D – Medium

E – Dark

F – Darkest Dark or Black





Color Suggestions

RUBY



A



B



C



D



E



F



SAPPHIRE



A



B



C



D



E



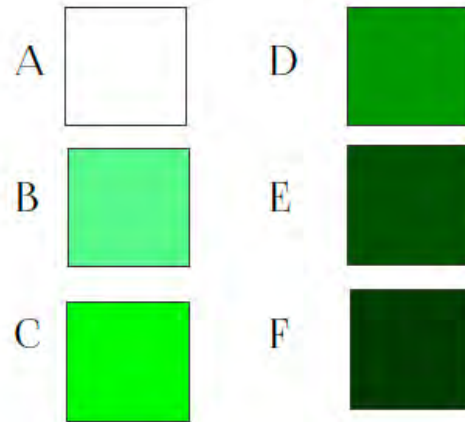
F



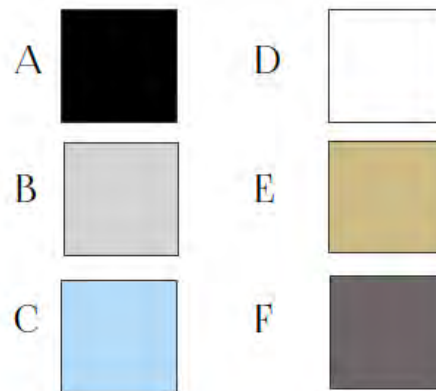


Color Suggestions

EMERALD



DIAMOND





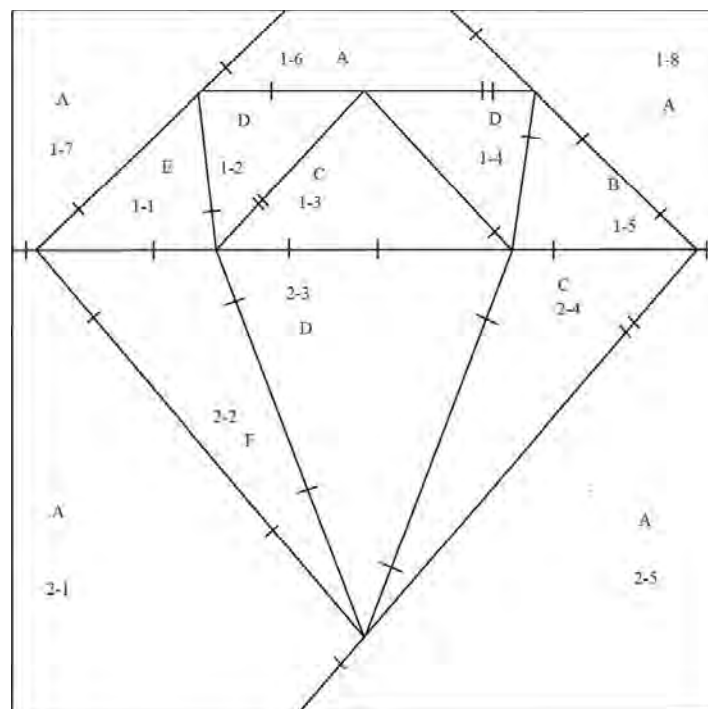
Introduction to the Pattern

I love using freezer paper to piece my giant gemstones and I hope you'll enjoy using it to create your own sparkling creation.

Freezer paper is that amazing product that allows you to iron your pattern templates onto the right side of the fabric. Yet you can remove them without leaving a residue. Moreover, you can re-iron it to fabric several times.

Each piece includes two codes and random hash marks along the facet lines:

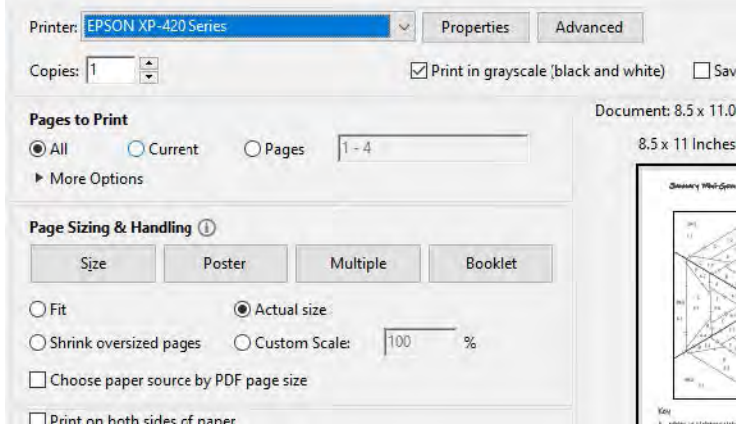
- The 2-digit code is the Unique Identifier Code. No two pieces have the same Unique Identifier. The first digit is the section number. This pattern only has two sections, so the first digit of the codes is either a "1" or a "2". The second digit is the facet number within that section.
- The letter code is the Color Code. This tells you onto which fabric you'll iron this piece. This pattern requires 6 different fabric colors.
- The randomly spaced hash marks will give you confidence that you're piecing the correct two pieces together, as well as help you piece units to other units.





Assembling the Pattern

Photo 1



Visit the link below to download the quadrant document for this block.

<https://quiltmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/page2thru5.pdf>

1. Download the quadrant document linked on the Block of the Month page. With the “Actual Size” print option selected, print the document onto 8.5"x11" freezer paper sheets (Photo 1). Print the pattern on the paper side, NOT on the shiny, waxy side.
2. Print the quadrant document onto regular copy paper. This will be the copy you will pin or tape to your quilt room wall. It will be your key – your treasure map to help you put your block back together.



Assembling the Pattern

3. Assemble the freezer paper quadrants in either one of two ways:

A. Use double-sided tape. This tape can be placed between the quadrants of the freezer paper, so that it won't melt on your iron when you iron your facets to your fabric.

- Cut out the 4 quadrants including the tab on Quadrants #2, #3 & #4.
- Place double-sided tape on the tabs.
- Place the edge of Quadrant #1 over the tab on Quadrant #2, aligning the facet lines.
- Place the edge of Quadrant #3 over the tab on Quadrant #4, aligning the facet lines.
- Place the edge of the top quadrants (now joined with double-sided tape) over the tab of the bottom quadrant (now joined with double-sided tape). Use the facet lines to properly join the two halves.

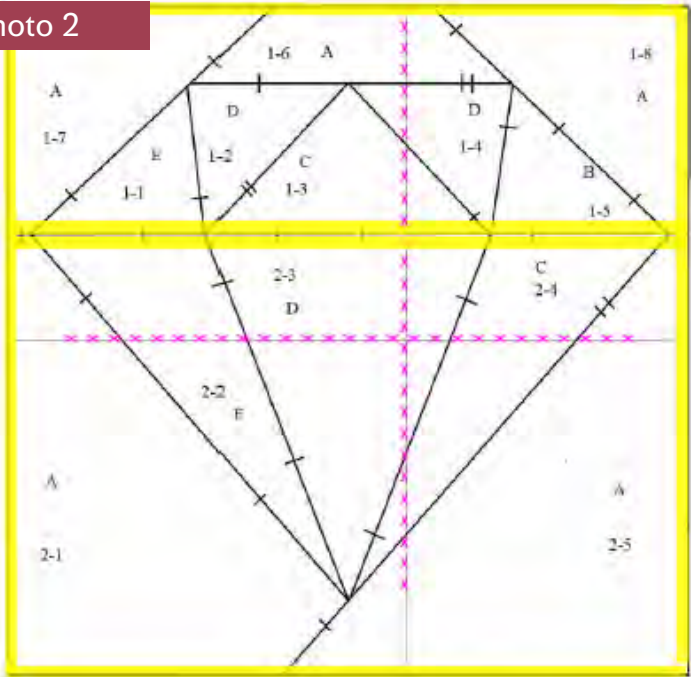
B. Use Washi tape. This tape can be placed on top of the freezer paper, because it won't melt onto your iron when you iron your facets to your fabric.

- Cut out the 4 quadrants, but you can leave off the tabs on Quadrants #2, #3 & #4.
- Join the top two quadrants by aligning the facet lines; place the Washi tape over the seam where they come together.
- Join the top two quadrants by aligning the facet lines; place the Washi tape over the seam where they come together.
- Join the two halves of your freezer paper pattern by aligning the facet lines; place the Washi tape over the seam where they come together.



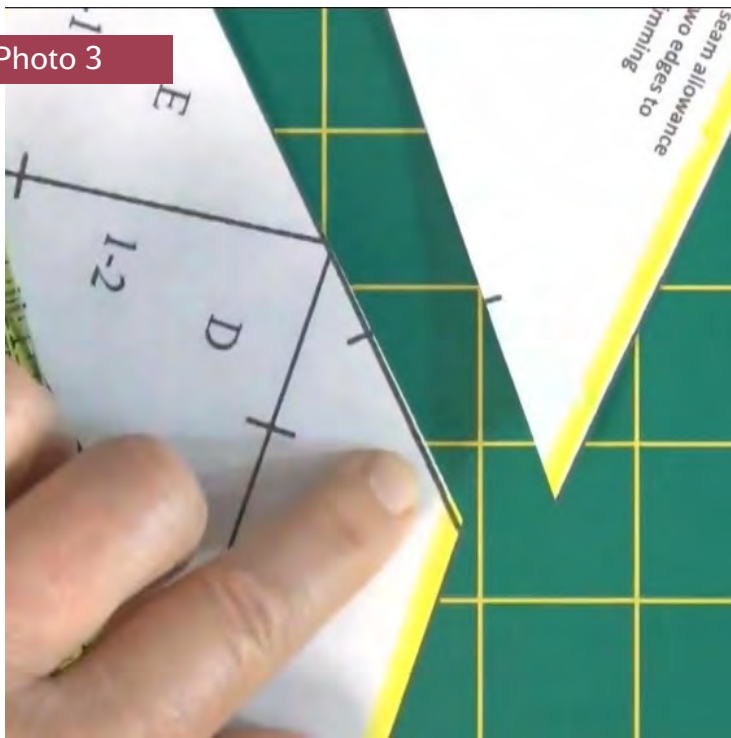
Cutting Facets

Photo 2



1. On the freezer paper, highlight the inside perimeter of the block AND both sides of the line that separate Sections 1 & 2 with your first highlighter (Photo 2). This is your visual clue to consider whether to place these edges on the straight of grain. (Note: you do not need to mark these lines on your regular paper copy.)
2. If you used double-sided tape to join your quadrants, use a second highlighter to draw little "x" marks across the lines where the quadrants are taped together. This is your visual clue that you will NOT cut on these lines. (Note: you do not need to mark these lines on your regular paper copy nor do you need to do this step if you used Washi tape to join your quadrants. The Washi tape itself is your visual clue not to cut on that line.)
3. With a ruler and rotary cutter you reserve for cutting paper, cut apart the freezer paper template along the facet lines (Photo 3). Sort by color code.

Photo 3



Note: If your ruler slips off the line a little bit, no problem! Just don't trim it up. Be sure that you can still see any hashmarks on either side of the cut.



Cutting Facets

Photo 4



4. Starting with the largest facets first, arrange facets on the RIGHT SIDE of the fabric that corresponds to their color code with enough space between each facet to allow you to cut around each piece with a 1/4" seam allowance.

Exception: Cut a 3/4" seam allowance on the highlighted edges of all "A" facets. This will provide enough background fabric when trimming the finished block.

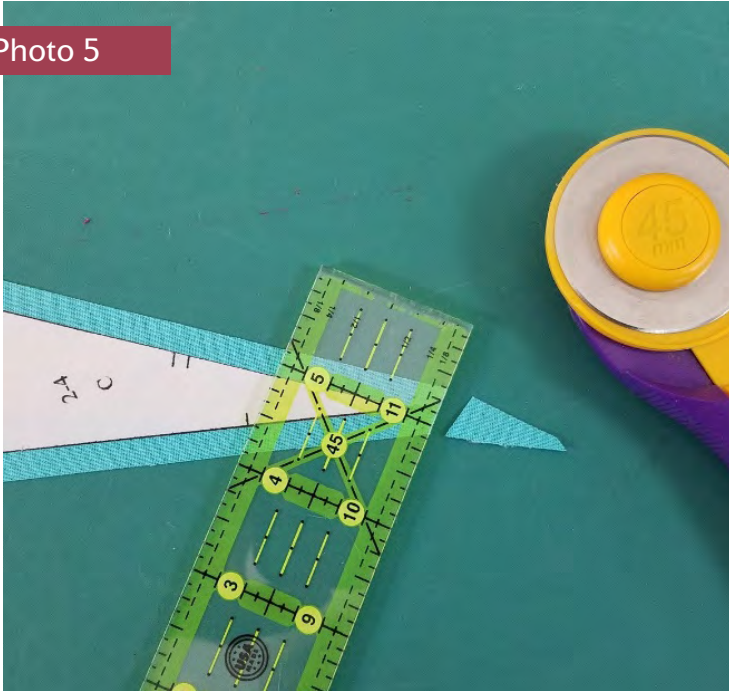
Position either the edges highlighted with the first color OR the long, straight edges of the facets on the straight of grain – whichever is longest and will need more support of the straight of grain.

Press with a hot iron, no steam. If the freezer paper isn't adhering very well to the fabric, try heating the fabric first and then laying the freezer paper piece on top of it and press it down. If you have lots of sizing or dye in your fabric, you may want to pre-wash your fabric. Extra processing chemicals sometimes prevent freezer paper from sticking to fabric.



Cutting Facets

Photo 5



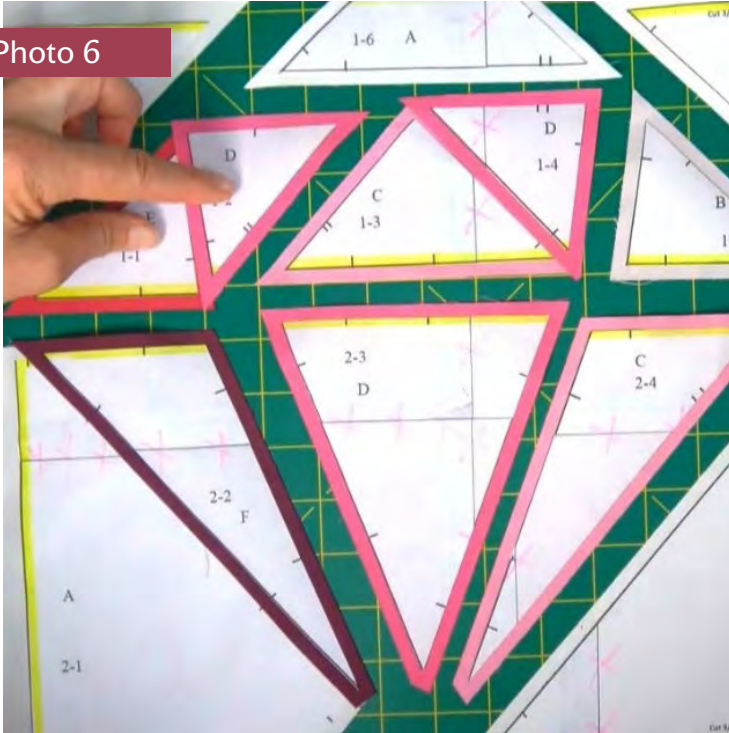
5. Using a rotary cutter and small ruler reserved for cutting fabric, cut out each facet with a 1/4" seam allowance (Photo 5). Take care to make these 1/4" seam allowances as accurate and consistent as possible.

Tip: To reduce bulk on the back of your block, snip the long ends of the needle-nose facts to within a 1/4" of the tip of the freezer paper point.



Piecing Your Gem

Photo 6



1. Arrange facets into their piecing order using the chart you put up on your quilt room wall as your guide (Photo 6).

Join each section in numerical order:

Section 1

- Sew together 1-1 and 1-2 (to create Unit 1:2)
- Sew together 1-3 and Unit 1:2 (to create Unit 1:3)
- Sew together 1-4 and Unit 1:3 (to create Unit 1:4)
- Sew together 1-5 and Unit 1:4 (to create Unit 1:5)
- Sew together 1-6 to Unit 1:5 (to create Unit 1:6)
- Sew together 1-7 to Unit 1:6 (to create Unit 1:7)
- Sew together 1-8 to Unit 1:7 (to complete Section 1)

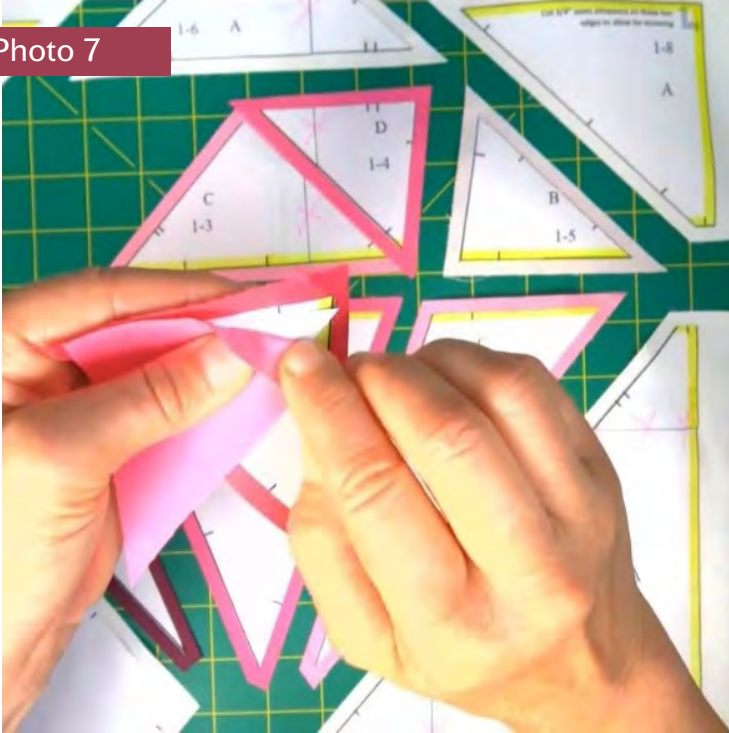
Section 2

- Sew together 2-1 and 2-2 (to create Unit 1:2)
- Sew together 2-3 and Unit 1:2 (to create Unit 1:3)
- Sew together 2-4 and Unit 1:3 (to create Unit 1:4)
- Sew together 2-5 and Unit 1:4 (to create Unit 1:5)
- Sew together Section 1 and Section 2



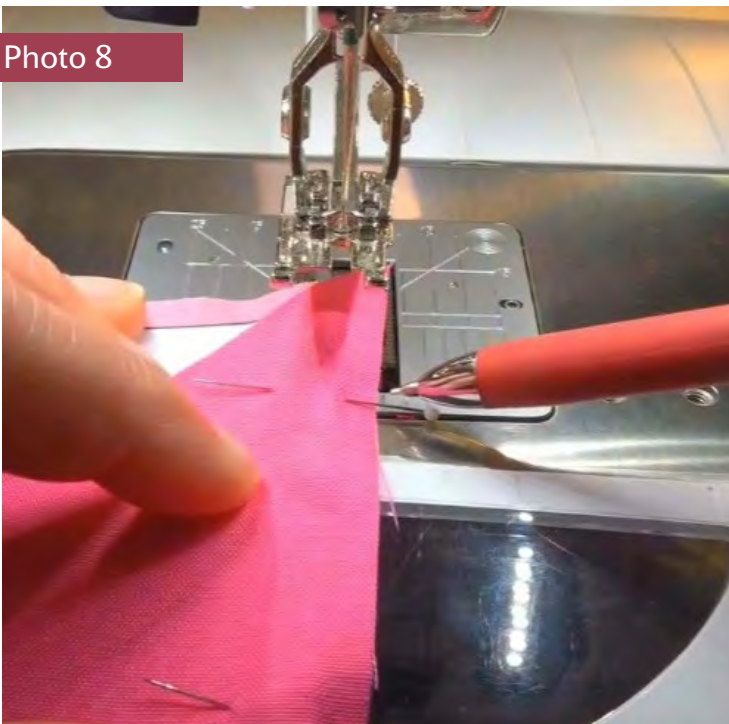
Piecing Your Gem

Photo 7



2. To piece your facets, place **RIGHT SIDES** together so the freezer paper will be inside the fabric sandwich (Photo 7).
3. Peek inside the seam allowance and line up the hash marks on each side of the two pieces. Ensure that the corners of each facet line up.
4. Pin carefully along the seam **OR** use a clip **OR** use a glue product to secure the 2 pieces together.
5. Identify the 1/4" seam guide on your machine's plate (Photo 8).
6. Position the pair of pinned facets under the presser foot so that the edge of your fabric sandwich is just a needle-width to the left of the 1/4" seam guide. This will prevent you from sewing into the freezer paper on the inside.

Photo 8





Piecing Your Gem

Photo 9

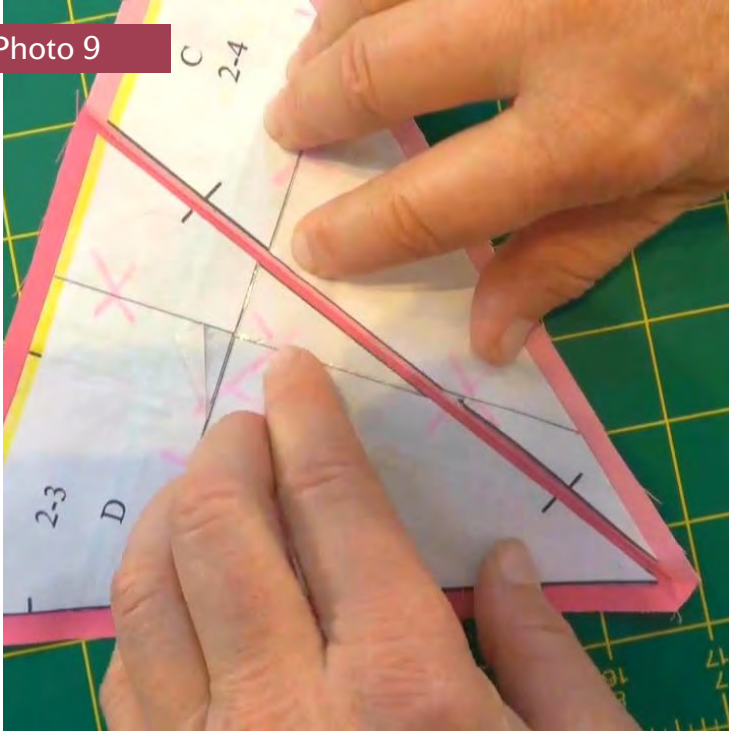
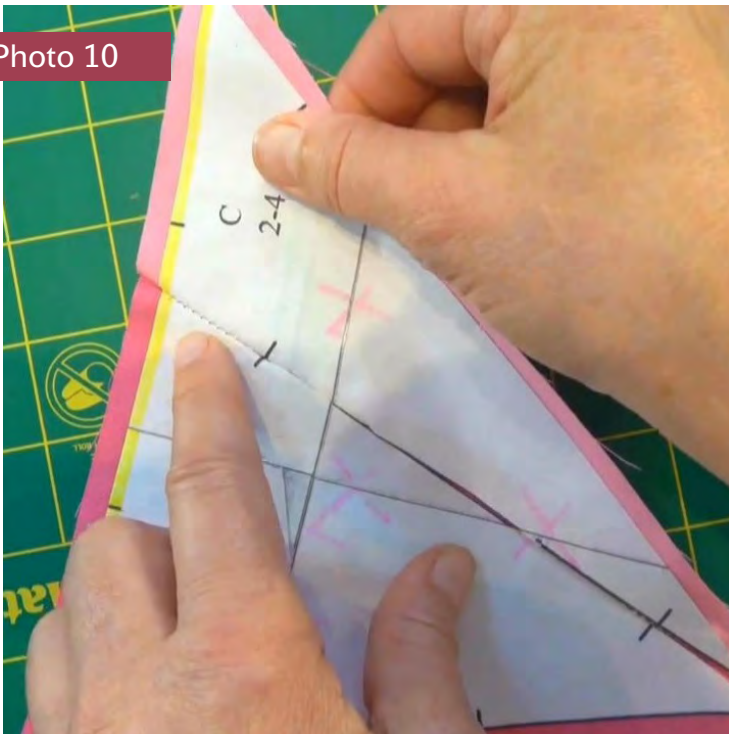


Photo 10

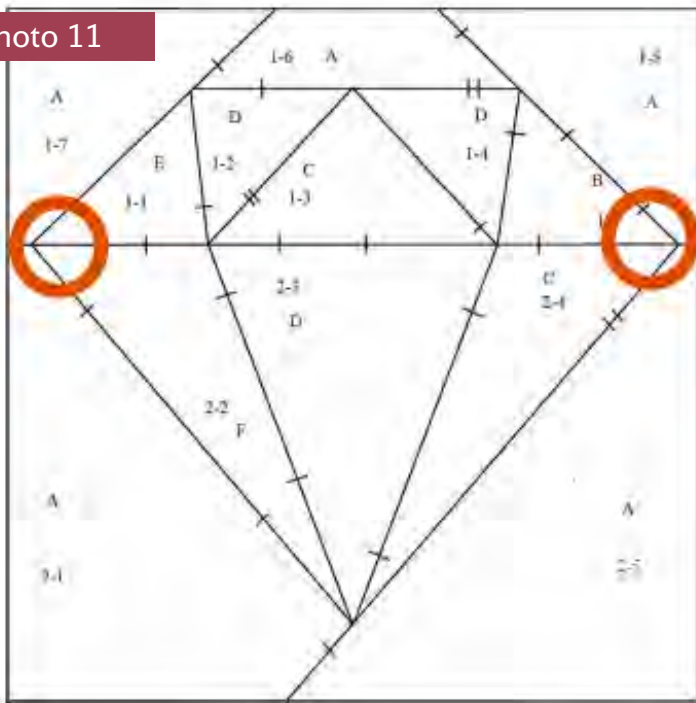


7. Stitch the seam line using a regular stitch length (i.e., 2.5).
8. Open the facets with both seams to one side. Press to the darkest side OR the side that has the fewest intersecting seams.
9. If there is a gap between the edges of your freezer paper, you can either re sew a little bit closer to the $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam guide OR you can pick up one of the templates and iron it next to the seam. Just be sure to trim the seam allowance down to $\frac{1}{4}$ " (Photo 9).
10. If you have sewn into the freezer paper, give the two pieces a little tug to see if this frees the freezer paper. However, if you've really munched the freezer paper, consider ripping that section and resewing (Photo 10). Gaps and tucks change the position of the hashmarks along the sides of the 2 facets, which makes it a bit confusing when trying to match it up to its adjoining unit. In the end, though, perfection is NOT a priority and, once you've removed all the paper from your gem, no one will know the difference!



Piecing Your Gem

Photo 11



11. Continue to stitch the facets together, retaining the freezer paper on the front of each piece. If facets come loose, simply iron back on.

TIP: If you want to remove the freezer paper after piecing major sections together, be sure to draw the hash marks onto the seam allowance before removing the freezer paper.

TIP: When you sew Section 1 and 2 together, focus on aligning the seams at the edges of your gem (Photo 11).

12. Once the gem is complete, remove the remaining freezer paper pieces and store them by color code if you plan on using them again. You can typically get 2 uses out of regular freezer paper (Photo 12).

13. If little bits of freezer paper are stuck in the seam line, use a pair of tweezers to remove. If they are stubborn, try using seam ripper to remove them by pushing the bit of paper from the front to the back side of the fabric. Use tweezers to pull from between the seams.

Photo 12





Quilting Your Gem

Photo 13



Photo 14

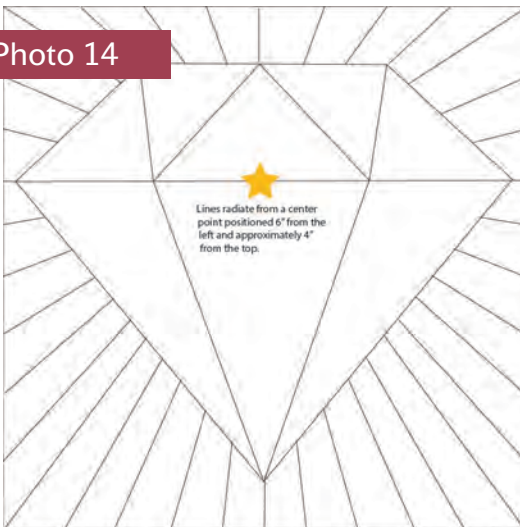


Photo 15



There are many ways to quilt your sparkling gem block. I love using Sulky's 40-weight rayon to quilt my gems, but you can use any thread that you feel most comfortable using. Another option is to use a very thin thread like a 80-weight or 100-weight in a neutral color so that your thread practically disappears into your design. Enjoy!

In addition to using parallel lines, "matchstick" lines, stipple, or simple random squiggles, I've created two additional quilting options for your consideration.

1. The first design is a simple outline of all the facets plus quilting lines radiating from the center of the gem (Photo 13).

Note: The "center" I use is positioned 6" from the left side and approximately 4" from the top (Photo 14).

2. The second design replaces the straight lines with angled "beams" that shoot from the center (Photo 15).

Finished?
Fantastic!