

Evening Star Block

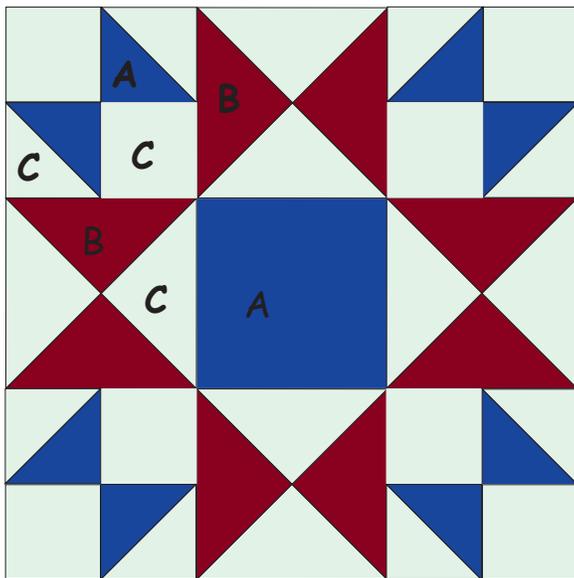
A traditional quilt block

Instructions by Kelly Ashton / Kellyquilter Designs

Block size: 12" *finished*

The Evening Star block is made of three distinct units: a square , a blue and cream pieced unit that contains half-square triangles , and a red and cream pieced unit made of quarter-square triangles .

One of the reasons I chose this block, aside from its beauty, is because it provides an opportunity to work with squares, half-squares, and quarter-squares. All of these pieces are very commonly found in patchwork blocks, and each has unique characteristics that, once understood, are valuable in your quilt-making!



Fabric Requirements:

Fabric A (blue in my block): 1/4 yard or a fat 1/8

Fabric B (red in my block): 1/8 yard or a fat 1/8

Fabric C (light background): 1/4 yd. or a fat 1/8

Because we will be working with bias edges, I recommend preparing your fabric prior to cutting by generously spritzing it with Mary Ellen's Best Press then pressing to dry with a dry iron on the cotton setting. This adds some stability to the fabric, helping to diminish the likelihood of distorting the patchwork pieces- especially the bias edges - while working with them.

Though there are a variety of methods that can be used to make half-square triangle squares and quarter-square triangle squares, I am going to take you through the traditional method, including the math (yes, that four-letter word!!). Even if you never make half-square or quarter-square triangle squares this way, understanding the basic math and characteristics will be of value in helping you deliberately achieve the results that you want in your blocks and quilts.

Quilter's Math: Truly, there's not a lot of math that you need to know in quilt-making, however, these next few "math facts" can make a quilter's life easier over the long haul!

1. When cutting squares for patchwork, to the finished size of the square, add 1/2" for seam allowances.
2. When cutting squares for half-square triangles for patchwork, add 7/8" to the finished size of the half-square triangle square for seam allowances.
3. When cutting squares for quarter-square triangles for patchwork, add 1 1/4" to the finished size of the quarter-square triangle square for seam allowances.

Cutting: The cutting instructions assume the strips are cut from a fat quarter. Therefore, to get an 18" (approximately) length strip, the strip is cut parallel to the selvage. This will conserve fabric. If you're cutting from yardage, please cut width-of-fabric strips (cutting from selvage to selvage).

From Fabric A (blue):

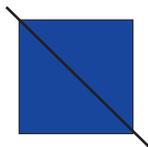
- 1) Cut one fabric strip, $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 18''$; sub-cut one $4\frac{1}{2}''$ square.

This is the square for the center of the quilt block. $\frac{1}{2}''$ has been added to the finished size of the patch (4") to account for seam allowances.



- 2) Cut one fabric strip, $2\frac{7}{8}'' \times 18''$; sub-cut four $2\frac{7}{8}''$ squares.

These $2\frac{7}{8}''$ squares will be cut in half (on the diagonal) and used to make half-square triangle squares (finished size: 2") in the blue and cream pieced unit. Therefore, $\frac{7}{8}''$ has been added to the finished size to account for seam allowances.



Cut all four $2\frac{7}{8}''$ squares in half, on the diagonal, as shown.



Now, you have eight "half-square triangles" from Fabric A!

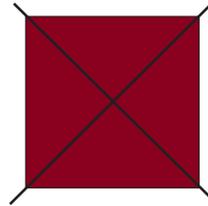
From Fabric B (red):

- 1) Cut one fabric strip, $5\frac{1}{4}'' \times 18''$; sub-cut two $5\frac{1}{4}''$ squares.

These $5\frac{1}{4}''$ squares will be cut in half on the diagonal in both directions yielding four quarter-square triangles from each square. These quarter square triangles will be used to create the red and cream pieced units, which have a finished size of $4''$, so $1\frac{1}{4}''$ has been added to the finished size to account for seam allowances.



Cut 2



By cutting each square in half on the diagonal in both directions, the square has been "quartered".

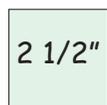


After "quartering" the two $5\frac{1}{4}''$ squares, we have eight "quarter-square triangles".

From Fabric C (light background):

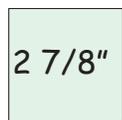
- 1) Cut two fabric strips, $2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 18''$; sub-cut eight $2\frac{1}{2}''$ squares.

These squares will be used to create the blue and cream pieced units.

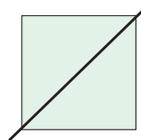


Cut 8

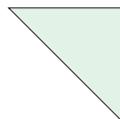
- 2) Cut one fabric strip, $2\frac{7}{8}'' \times 18''$; sub-cut four $2\frac{7}{8}''$ squares.



Cut 4

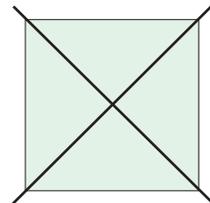


Cut all four squares in half on the diagonal yielding eight half-square triangles.



These half-square triangles will be used to create the blue and cream pieced units.

- 3) Cut one fabric strip, $5\frac{1}{4}'' \times 18''$; sub-cut two $5\frac{1}{4}''$ squares.

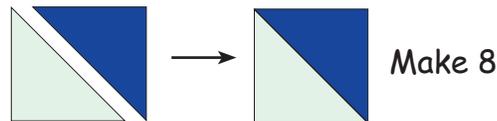


Cut both $5\frac{1}{4}''$ squares in half diagonally in both directions, creating eight quarter-square triangles. These will be used in the red and cream pieced units.

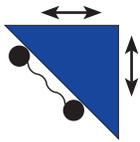
Construction: All patchwork construction is done using a scant 1/4" seam allowance.

Blue and Cream unit: Gather two blue half-square triangles, two light background half-square triangles, and two light background squares.

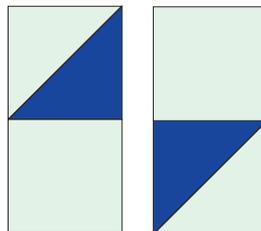
1. Piece together one cream and one blue half-square triangle into a half-square triangle square, as shown, taking care to not distort the bias edges. Press the seam toward the darker triangle. Make 8 half-square triangle squares. These squares should measure 2 1/2" on each side.



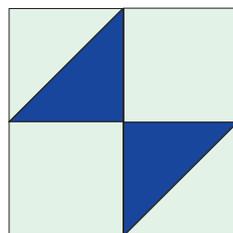
Note: When a square is cut from a width-of-fabric or a length-of-fabric strip, every side of the square is "on the grain" (either widthwise or lengthwise) of the fabric. The side created from the diagonal cut is "bias" (cut across the grain) and very stretchy. By sewing the two bias edges together to create a half-square triangle square, we have restored "on the grain" edges all the way around the pieced square, making the pieced square block stable.



2. Piece together the two half-square triangle squares and the two 2 1/2" background squares, as shown, pressing seams toward the background.



3. Now, piece together the two segments. Press the seam to one side.



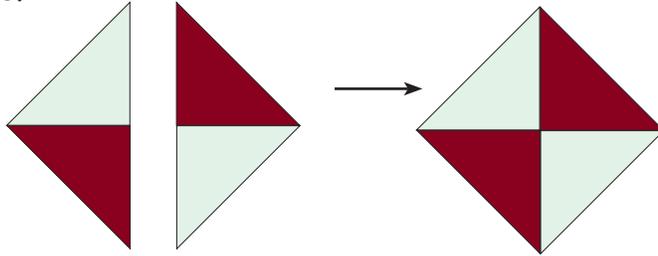
Make a total of four blue and cream pieced units.

Red and Cream pieced unit: Gather two red quarter-square triangles and two cream quarter-square triangles.

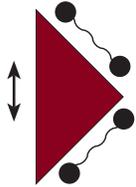
1. Piece together one red with one cream quarter square triangle (QST), as shown. Repeat with the second red and cream triangles. Press seams toward the red triangle.



2. Now, with right sides together, nestle the center seams and sew the two sections together, creating a quarter-square triangle square. This square should measure 4 1/2" on each side.



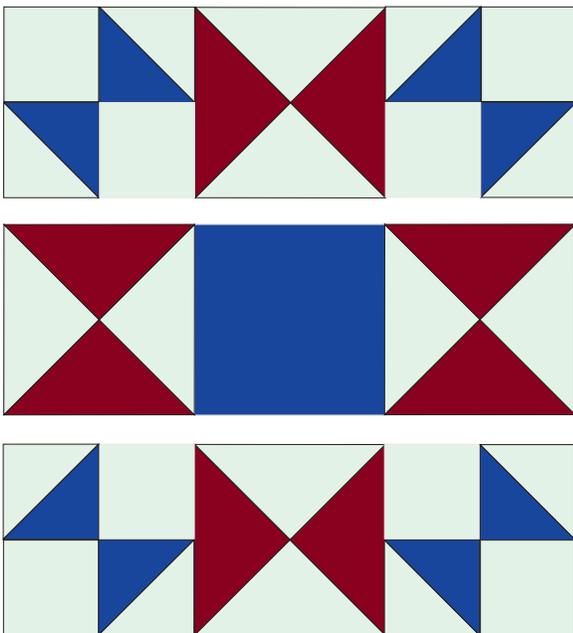
Make a total of 4 red and cream quarter-square triangle squares.



Note: When we "quarter" a square by cutting it in half diagonally in both directions, we create four "quarter-square triangles" that each have one side "on the grain" and two sides that are "bias". Therefore, when we sew four quarter-square triangles together to create a pieced square, each outside edge is "on the grain", making the pieced square block stable.

Creating the Evening Star Block:

1) Lay out the units and sew them into rows, as shown. Press the seams between the units of rows 1 & 3 toward the blue and cream units; press the seams of row 2 toward the center square.



2. Join rows, as shown, and press seams to one side. Your Evening Star Block is complete!

