

# What is pattern?

Pattern is all around us, from tree branches silhouetted against the sky to raindrops on a window pane, from bricks in a wall to the ripples on a lake. And the number of patterns available in fabric form is colossal: spots, stripes, zigzags, florals, birds, spirals, webs, wax prints . . . all in a glorious array of colors, sizes, and complexities.

## Combining Patterns

Putting patterned fabrics together to make a quilt can be one of the most rewarding—and frustrating—creative processes. New fabric ranges are usually launched with a variety of different patterns in a coordinating palette, which is a great way to ensure that your fabrics work together. But what if you want to combine fabrics from your stash with something new? Or what if your budget will only allow for a quarter of the new designer fabrics you love along with more classic patterns and colors? Anything is possible once you understand the different effects that can be achieved by using certain patterns together.



*This Spring 2012 range from Tilda has lots of different patterns within it, but they are anchored in the fresh, simple palette of pinks and turquoises.*



*Both of these fabrics are from Amy Butler's "Midwest Modern" range, but the scales are completely different. It's easy to see that the effect of the large flower pattern would be lost if only using a 2-inch square of fabric, whereas the small-scale pattern would retain the same look.*

## Pattern Scale

The scale of a pattern is easy to overlook, but it is in fact crucial when planning a quilt. Large-scale prints are fabulous for large-scale uses, but bear in mind that when only small amounts of fabric are needed for a quilt block, the pattern

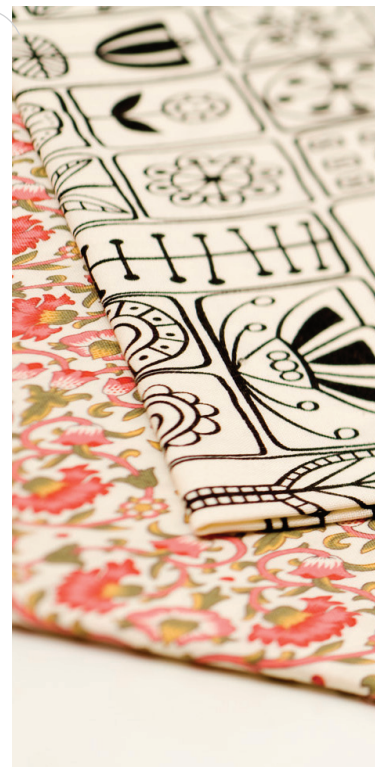
that you see on the fabric bolt can take on a very different character. Though a potential problem, this can also be used to advantage—for example, you can choose certain areas of the pattern that best suit your needs, allowing the individual sections to take on a new character of their own.

*The cream background and black pattern outlines in "Summersville" by Lucie Summers create a simple pattern of stylized shapes. By contrast the classic Liberty print fabric uses three tones of pink to give flower petals a more realistic, albeit stylized look.*

## Color and Pattern

Patterns in fabric are made up of different combinations of colors. These can be used to create realistic three-dimensional looking elements, such as flowers or animals. This will normally entail using lots of tones of each color, and the fabric will have a complex palette. At the other end of the

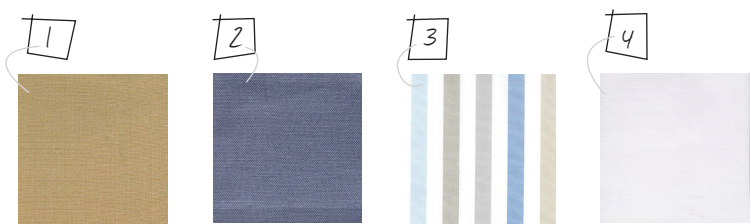
scale colors can be used to create a more stylized effect of outlines or silhouettes, and this will typically involve far fewer tones. At its simplest, a pattern will involve just two colors—the background and the pattern. In general, the more complex the pattern, the more careful you need to be when combining it with other fabrics.





# 24 Fresh Oyster

Whether you like oysters or not, there’s something magical about seeing them in their shells, with the rough gray-brown exterior cracked open to reveal the creamy white oyster tinged with bluey gray, nestling in the smooth mother-of-pearl shell interior.



The fabrics we chose

- 1 plain warm beige
- 2 plain lead-gray
- 3 blue and neutrals candy-stripe (Emmie Rand by Ikea)
- 4 plain off-white

## Nine Patch

This straightforward block allows the colors of the palette to take center stage. Interest is added by using the striped fabric on the diagonal, and aiming the stripes inwards gives a strong directional feel. See page 176 for block-making instructions.



## Pinwheel

Half-square triangles can be used to great effect with fabrics that have a big difference in tone. Here the pale stripes stand out well against the dark gray and warm beige. The white fabric from the original palette hasn’t been used in the block, but would look great as sashing between the blocks. See page 184 for block-making instructions.

## Snail’s Trail

The square-within-a-square setting used here makes the most of the two pale and two mid-tone fabrics used, creating the optical illusion of the center of a spiral. The pattern could be continued using further rounds of triangles. See page 192 for block-making instructions

## Further ideas

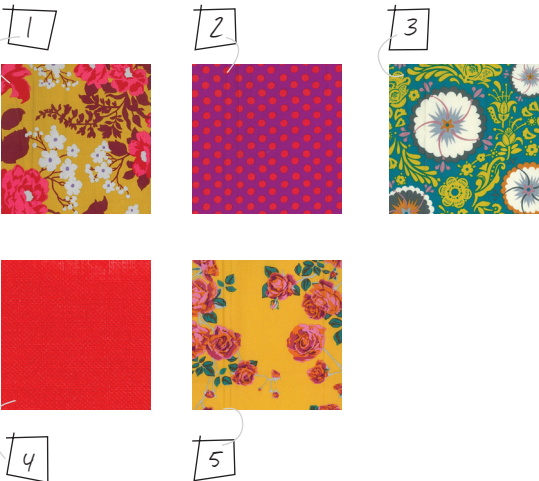
This palette would adopt a whole new feel if stripes and plains were replaced with curvaceous florals or subtle textures. Hunt around for soft patterns in these shades and you’ll end up with a much subtler visual effect, no matter which blocks you choose.





# 31 Treasure

The bright richness of jewel colors means they always look great together, so you can really go wild with the patterns you put together. In this palette the deep reds, hot pinks, and rich golds are balanced with the deep turquoise and purple, and the odd glimpse of paler shades within some of the patterns acts as a good foil for the main colors of the palette.



## Rail Fence

This quick-to-sew block looks really effective with heavily patterned fabrics, especially when you group your strips in the same order for each block. Here four of the five fabrics in the palette have been used so the strips didn't get too narrow, but there are no strict rules apart from keeping the widths even. See page 181 for making instructions.



## Windmill

Mixing half-square and quarter-square triangles makes for a lovely effect here, and by only using the plain red and the red/purple polka dot fabrics for the half square triangles the patterns work with the colors to create the visual effect of windmills. See page 185 for block-making instructions.

## Further ideas

You don't need to limit a jewel-color palette to five fabrics, and in a sense the more of the rich-toned, deep-colored patterns and plains you can bring together the better. Just be sure to choose a mixture of warmer and cooler colors for balance.

## The fabrics we chose

- 1 gold, burgundy, and pink floral (Rose Bouquet by Joel Dewberry)
- 2 purple/red polka dot (Spot by Kaffe Fassett)
- 3 deep turquoise, gold, and green print (Fortune by Anna Maria Horner)
- 4 plain red
- 5 gold, deep turquoise, and pink floral (Social Climber by Anna Maria Horner)



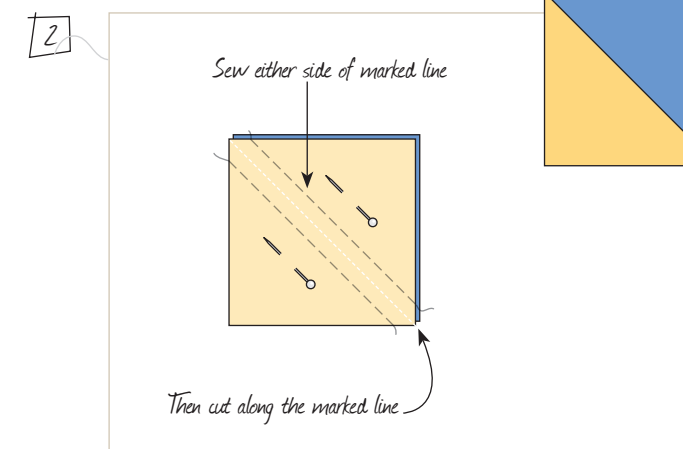
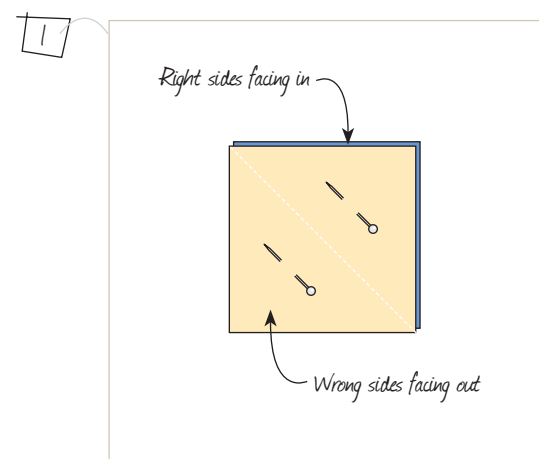
## Six-sided Star

Made up of six diamonds, this star within a hexagon block would make a great centerpiece to a quilt made from cut hexagons, or if you don't mind lots of piecing you could make a whole quilt from blocks like this, alternating the colors from the palette. Here just the gold patterned fabrics have been used for the diamonds, set off by the surrounding deep turquoise. See page 197 for block-making instructions

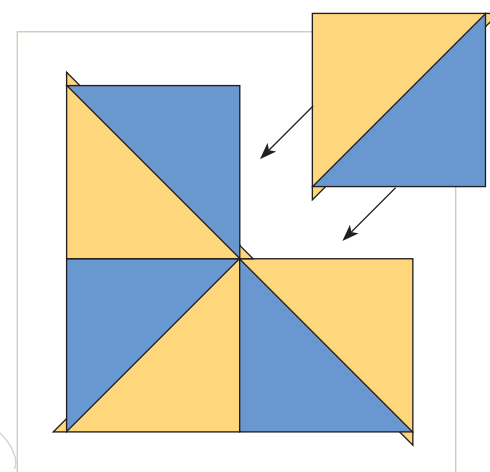


## Pinwheel

Pinwheels are made from four squares, each square containing two right-angled triangles. The simplest way to create the required half-square triangles is to use a method called sandwich piecing, as shown in the diagram below. You need to cut your initial squares  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. larger than your finished size.



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*For the best results, press the square open so that the seam allowance is against the darker fabric.*

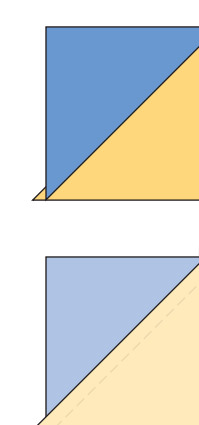
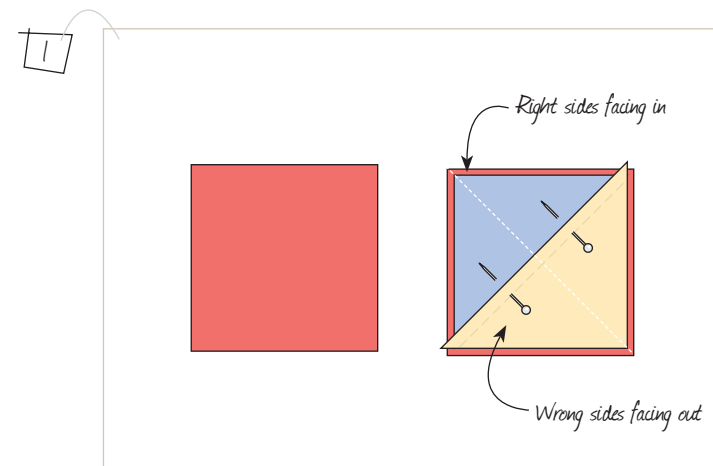
1 Place two squares of fabric right sides together and mark a diagonal line from corner to corner. Pin the fabric to hold it in place.

2 Sew a seam  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. either side of the marked line. Cut along the marked line and press each resulting square open.

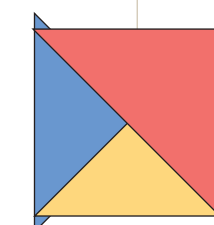
3 To make a pinwheel, arrange your half-square triangles as shown. The effect will be more apparent if contrasting colors or tones are used.

## Windmill

Just slightly more involved than the pinwheel, the windmill uses a combination of half- and quarter-square triangles. Your fabric choices will determine the optical effect created here, and you can play around with stripes and swirls to create eye-popping designs.



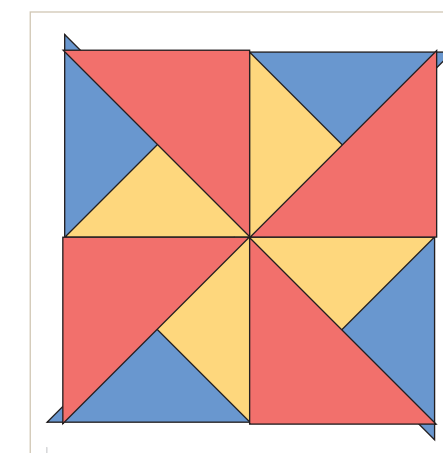
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1 Take a square of fabric and a square made up of two half-square triangles. They must be the same size. Place right sides together, pin and mark a diagonal from corner to corner that is perpendicular to the seam in the half-square triangle block.

2 Sew a seam  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. either side of the marked line. Cut along the marked line and press each resulting square open.

3 To make a windmill, arrange your combination half-square/quarter-square blocks as shown. The effect will be more apparent if the colors in the larger triangles are different from those in the small quarter-square triangles.



*For this combination, start off with the pinwheel pieces, as shown on the previous page.*