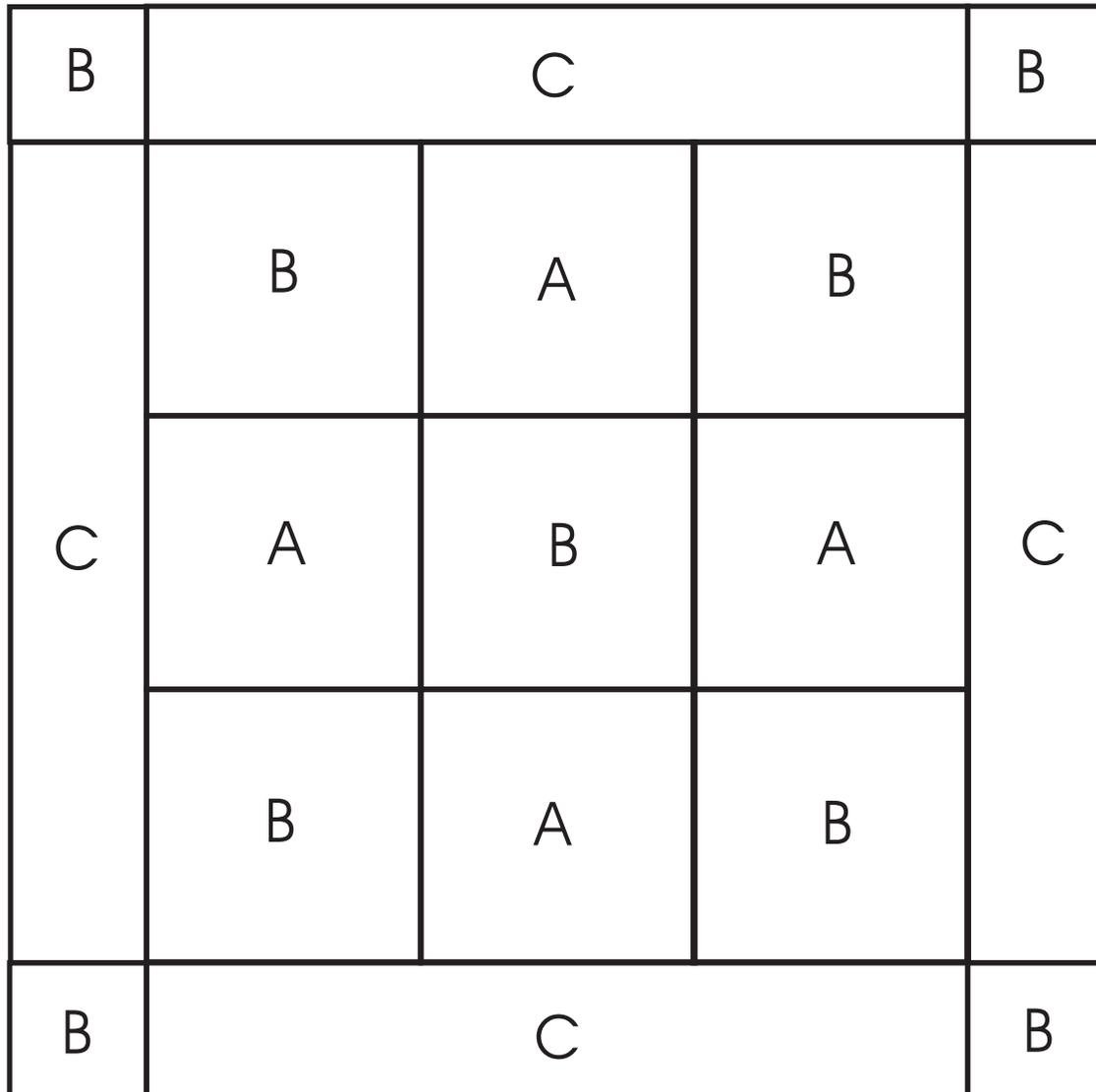


## Machine Quilting 101: Class Project Instructions

In this class we will be experimenting with different machine quilting designs and techniques. The following pattern is designed to provide various areas to experiment with these techniques. For the best results, choose solids or textures that read as a solid. This is a practice project and will not likely be something you will wish to display on your wall. Though the fabric need not be the most expensive, **buy good quality** fabric. Cheap bargain fabric will yield poor results.

To make your top, you will need  $\frac{1}{3}$  yard of fabric 'A',  $\frac{1}{2}$  yard of fabric 'B', and  $\frac{2}{3}$  yard of fabric 'C'. Cut four  $8\frac{1}{2}$ " squares of fabric 'A', five  $8\frac{1}{2}$ " squares of fabric 'B', four  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " squares of fabric 'B' and four  $4\frac{1}{2}$ "x  $24\frac{1}{2}$ " strips of fabric 'C'. Sew them together as shown in the diagram below to make your top. For the best effect choose solids or textured fabrics that read as a solid in three different colors so that your quilting stitches show well. Use a basic good quality sturdy cotton (particularly for the backing), thin fabrics shift more during machine quilting and have a tendency to ripple and pucker. Finished top measures 32"x 32" so you will need 1 yard of fabric for the backing and a 34"x 34" piece of thin cotton batting. **Important: Press all seams to one side.**



## Layering and Pinning a Quilt

Make sure your backing and batting are slightly larger than your quilt top; the batting should extend at least an inch beyond all four sides of the top and the backing should extend a little beyond the batting.

Choose a fabric for your quilt back that is the same weight or slightly heavier than your top. This will make your back more stable than the top and reduce the puckers and tucks that can occur on the backside of the quilt while you are machine quilting. Iron the top and the back before layering to remove any wrinkles or creases, steam iron if necessary to get it nice and flat. Piece the back if necessary making sure the lengthwise grain (parallel to the selvedge) runs in the same direction on all the pieces. Remove the selvedges before piecing and press the seams open to minimize bulk.

Secure the back (wrong side up) to a work surface such as a table or floor with tape or clamps stretching the back just enough to ensure it lies flat and even without overstretching it. When the quilt back is secured, check the batting and pick off any dark threads that may be clinging to it as they can show through to the top or back if you used light colored fabric.

Spread the batting over the quilt back and smooth it out carefully. Do not stretch it artificially tight or it may contract after your quilt is pinned and create puckers in your quilting. If the batting has any areas that 'balloon' up, pat them down gently to flatten them. If the quilt is large, pin the batting to the backing along the edges in several places along the edges. After the batting is in place, position the top (right side up) in the center of the batting. Smooth it out carefully as you did with the batting making sure the blocks, sashing and borders are well aligned and straight, this may require a bit of adjustment, tugging and scooting the fabric as needed to make the seams as straight as possible.

Pin the top in a grid pattern with safety pins spacing them about 5"-6" apart in each direction. If the quilt is large and has been spread on the floor, start pinning along the center horizon and work up and down in rows towards the top and bottom. Don't forget to pin the edges too. If the quilt is smaller and has been clamped to a table, it may be easier to start along one edge working your way up the quilt. **Note:** If layering on a table that is not big enough to secure the entire quilt at once, you may work on sections at a time, securing, layering and pinning one area before shifting and securing the next area. Take extra care when shifting and securing if working in sections as there is a greater chance of developing slackness in the quilt back during these shifts and you must be careful to secure the next area with as much consistency as the first.

**DO NOT STITCH OR SEW THE EDGES OR ANY OTHER PART OF YOUR QUILT AT THIS TIME.** If you have an excessive amount of batting and backing extending well beyond the edges of your top, trim it down to a couple of inches; ideally, you want your backing and batting to be just a little larger than your top so that you don't run out of backing as you approach the edges of your top.

**If you prefer to use a basting spray in lieu of pinning that is fine but remember that basting adhesives will gum up your needles faster than regular pinning and there are other issues such as overspray and getting your quilt straight on the batting/backing with no 'bubbles'. Follow the manufacturer's directions on the canister for the best results.**