



Quilting Glossary

The Letter A

- **AAT (At A Time)** - As in 2AAT or 4AAT, etc.
- **Appliqué** - Both a noun and a verb.
 - As a noun, appliqué is a piece of fabric sewn onto a background, usually to make a predetermined picture.
 - As a verb, appliqué is the act of sewing down the appliqué piece of fabric onto it's background.
- **Art Quilt** - A quilt intended to be viewed as art. Art Quilts may combine many different fiber art techniques, and hang on the wall, not intended to be used or washed.
- **Attic Window Quilt Pattern** - A quilt pattern that uses an optical illusion to make it seem as if you're looking at each quilt block through a window.



The Letter B

- **Backing** – The bottom layer of fabric in a quilt. Quilt backing can be one piece of fabric or pieced from two or more fabrics.
- **Bargello** – A quilt pattern using strips of fabric sewn together, cut cross-wise to make strips of squares, then offset and sewn back together to create a wavy design to mimic movement or motion.
- **Basket** – A quilt block pattern that uses half square triangles pieced to resemble a basket.
- **Basting** - Securing the quilt "sandwich" of backing, batting, and top together before quilting the quilt. Basting can be done using pins, a running stitch, or starch.



- **Batik Fabrics** – Fabrics hand printed by covering an area of fabric with wax, typically using a large stamp, to prevent that area from being dyed. After the fabric has been dyed, the wax is melted off with hot water, leaving the design intact.
- **Batting** - Cotton, wool, or other fibers pressed into a flat sheet of varying thicknesses. Batting is used as the middle layer of a quilt.
- **Bearding** – Fibers from the batting coming through the needle holes in the fabric to the top or bottom of the quilt.
- **Bias** – Bias grain runs at a 45 degree angle to the selvages. Pieces cut along the bias have more stretch to them versus the straight of grain sometimes making them tricky to piece with, but ideal for binding curved edges.
- **Binding** - A method of finishing a quilt by sewing fabric around the raw edge of the quilt. Binding can be stitched by hand or machine, and can be a separate fabric or a continuation of the backing.
- **Block** – A unit of a quilt top. Most quilts are made by first making a block, then putting the blocks together. The Basket pattern above is an example of a block.
- **BOM (Block of the Month)** – Typically a scheduled program in which a new block is created each month. These programs can run for a variety of months; 6, 8, 10, or 12. In the final month, the blocks are stitched together for a final layout.
- **Border** – Strips of fabric, either continuous or pieced, that run along the sides of a quilt.
- **BSK (Basic Sewing Kit)** - Basic Sewing Kits vary but may include items of basic necessity for that craft. Examples; scissors, thread, pins, rotary cutter, measuring tape, etc.



The Letter C

- **Cathedral Window Quilt Pattern** - A traditional quilt pattern where the fabric is folded and stitched to create a three-dimensional look.
- **Charm Pack** – A term for 5 inch pre-cut squares of coordinated fabric.



- **Chain Piecing** - A method of stitching pieces of fabric together for a quilt. The quilter stitches in a continuous chain, without stopping the sewing machine in between blocks. Once the "chain" is completed, the threads between the pieces are clipped. This method is used to save time and thread.
- **Cheater Cloth** – Fabric that has been printed to look like a finished pieced quilt top. A manufacturer may make cheater cloths to showcase a new pattern, or an artist may include a cheater fabric print in their collection that could be a standalone whole cloth quilt.
- **Coin Quilt** – A classic quilt pattern consisting of fabric arranged in 'stacks' to look like stacked coins viewed from the side. These stacks can be slightly irregular to help convey the idea of a stack of coins.
- **Crazy Quilt** - A patchwork quilt made from varying sizes, colors, and textures of fabric.



The Letter D

- **Design Wall** - A wall-covering such as batting or felt that is attached to a wall. Fabric and/or blocks can then be placed on the design wall to keep organized and view different layouts.
- **Die-cutting** – Rolling fabric through a die-cutting machine to cut precise shapes from multiple layers of fabric at once.
- **Disappearing Nine Patch** - A common quilt block made by cutting a nine patch into quarters, changing their positions, and piecing the blocks back together. Also referred to as "Magic Nine Patch".
- **Dog Ears** – Long points that extend beyond the edge of the block after pieces are stitched together – typically the points of triangles. These should be trimmed off to make block assembly more accurate.
- **Double Wedding Ring** – A classic quilt pattern of interlocking rings. The sides of this quilt may be rounded along the wedding rings instead of the typical rectangle of a quilt.
- **Drape** – The way a quilt will hang and feel after it's quilted. The batting fiber type and density of quilting directly affects a quilt's drape.



- **Dresden Plate** – A classic quilt block made by piecing "petals" together in a ring. Traditionally, a circle is then applied to the center.
- **DSM (Domestic Sewing Machine)** – A tabletop sewing machine for the home sewist.



The Letter E

- **Ease** - Distributing the fabric evenly, while sewing, so the piece lays flat. Borders of quilts will need to be "eased" in when they are slightly larger than the quilt, or if the quilt edges are not completely straight.
- **Echo Quilting** - Also called Shadow Quilting. Quilting around an outline of a piece of applique or around a design of a pattern. Then, another echoed line is quilted again and again around the previously stitched line until desired effect is achieved.
- **English Paper Piecing** - A specific type of paper piecing where templates are cut to the desired finished size, then traced onto fabric with added seam allowance. Once the fabric is cut, the template is placed in the center of the fabric, the seam allowance is folded over, and the shape is then pressed with an iron to set the seams. The paper template can then be removed and reused.



The Letter F

- **F8 (Fat Eighth)** – An eighth-yard cut of fabric that is cut 9" x 22". Fabric cut this way generally allows for more options when cutting pieces.
- **FQ (Fat Quarter)** - A quarter-yard cut of fabric that is cut 18" x 22". Fabric cut this way generally allows for more options when cutting pieces.



- **Feed Dogs** – Metal teeth on the throat plate of a sewing machine that pulls the fabric through.
- **Finger Pressing** – Using a finger or fingernail to press seams.
- **Flying Geese** - A common patchwork made by piecing two triangles onto the sides of a larger triangle creating a rectangle.
- **Foundation Piecing** - A style of piecing where the quilter sews the pieces directly onto a foundation fabric or foundation paper.
- **Freezer Paper Appliqué** – An appliqué method using freezer paper (found in most grocery stores) by drawing the design on the paper side, cutting it out, then ironing the waxy side onto the fabric using a warm dry iron.
- **FMQ (Free Motion Quilting)** – Quilting done by machine that is fully hand-controlled. There is no computerized control or feed dogs to help move the fabric, all of the movement is controlled by the quilter. As the quilter moves their hands, they can create different designs. This can be done on a domestic machine by moving the fabric, or on a long arm machine by using the handles attached to the sewing arm.
- **Fusible Appliqué** – An appliqué method using fusible interfacing to adhere the appliqué pieces to the background. Also known as iron-on appliqué. The appliqué pieces may then be stitched around the edge.
- **Fussy Cut** - Cutting a printed fabric so that a specific desired image is centered on the piece.



The Letter G

- **Glass Head Pins** – Pins that have glass heads that are heat resistant and won't melt when pressed with an iron.
- **Grain** - Reference word for the directional threads in a woven fabric.
- **Greige Goods** (Pronounced "Gray Goods") - Raw, unfinished fabric, before any printing process.
- **Grid Method** - A system of dividing quilt blocks into smaller units to organize a design.



The Letter H

- **Hand Appliqué** – An appliqué method in which the appliqué piece is hand stitched to the background fabric.
- **Honey Bun** – A term for 1 1/2" x 43"/44" pre-cut strips of coordinated fabric. This term is copyrighted by Moda Fabrics.
- **HST (Half-Square Triangle)** – A commonly used piece of a quilt block made from cutting a square in half from corner to corner.
- **Hanging Sleeve** – A tube or sleeve sewn to the back top of a quilt in order to hang the work on a wall.



The Letter I

- **Ikut** – A fabric that instead of being printed, the yarns have been resist-dyed prior to weaving.
- **I Spy Quilt** – A quilt made from fussy-cut fabrics so that a specific image can be "spied" when looking at the quilt.
- **Invisible Thread** – Also called "Monofilament," it is a nearly invisible thread that seems to melt into the fabric when sewn.
- **Ironing** – Moving a hot iron across fabric. Often ironing can stretch, distort, and move fabric.





The Letter J

- **Jacob's Ladder** – An easy quilt block involving squares and HST's. It is a nine patch block, which is one of the most commonly used quilt block styles.
- **Jacquard** – Textured fabric woven with colored threads. Named after it's French inventor, Joseph M. Jacquard.
- **Jelly Rolls** – A term for 2 1/2" x 43"/44" pre-cut strips of coordinated fabric. This term is copyrighted by Moda Fabrics.



The Letter K

- **Kaleidoscope** – A quilt block pattern that looks like an image seen through a kaleidoscope. Six or eight triangles may be used to create this block.
- **Knee-Lift Presser Foot** – A device attached to a sewing machine that allows the quilter/sewer to raise and lower the presser foot with the knee. This leaves the hands free to hold the fabric.
- **Knife Edge Binding** – The extra fabric at the edge of the quilt top and bottom are turned under to create a neat seam. This is often seen on antique quilts, and is traditionally hand-sewn. This type of finish is not as durable as a traditional double-fold binding.



The Letter L

- **Landscape Quilt** – An art quilt specifically depicting landscape. They may be created with fabric, fabric with decorative thread, or multi-media.



- **Lap Quilting** – A hand quilting technique that involves holding the quilt loosely in your lap, without the use of a hoop.
- **Layer Cake** – A term for 10 inch pre-cut squares of coordinated fabric. This term is copyrighted by Moda Fabrics.
- **LAQ (Long Arm Quilting)** – The process of using a Long Arm Quilting Machine to stitch all three layers of the quilt together.
- **Loft** – The thickness of the batting.
- **Log Cabin** – A quilt pattern that involves “logs” of fabric being sewn around a center square. As the cabin block is built up around the center square, the logs get longer.
- **Long Arm Quilting Machine** - A special sewing machine used for quilting. The fabric layers are held stationary on a large frame while the sewing machine head moves across the fabrics. Long Arm Machines may be manually operated or computerized.
- **LQS (Local Quilt Shop)** – Brick and mortar quilt shop in a local community.



The Letter M

- **Machine Appliqué** – An appliqué method using a sewing machine to attach an appliqué piece to the background fabric.
- **Matching Points** – Making sure the corners of blocks or points of stars match at the seam line and the points are not cut off by the sewn seam.
- **Medallion Quilt** – A quilt design that involves a series of decorative borders surrounding one central block or design.
- **Metallic Thread** – A special synthetic shiny thread. Metallic Thread has specific requirements regarding the tension and type of needle used.
- **Mitered Borders** – Border strips that meet at a 45 degree angle at the corners.



- **Muslin** – A plain cotton fabric that is naturally unbleached. Muslin can be found in a wide range of qualities from light to medium weight and delicate to coarse.
- **Mystery Quilt** – A quilt pattern that is written in steps and revealed bit by bit to hide the final appearance of the completed quilt.



The Letter N

- **Needle-Turn Appliqué** – A method of appliqué in which the seam allowances are turned under with the tip of the needle as the appliqué pieces are sewn.
- **Nine-Patch** – A quilt block comprised of nine blocks in a 3 x 3 grid.
- **Notions** – Small sewing supplies such as; pins, scissors, rulers, seam rippers, fabric markers, rotary cutters, etc.
- **NQR (Not Quilt Related)** – A topic that has nothing to do with quilting.



The Letter O

- **OBW (One Block Wonder)** – A quilt top made using only one Kaleidoscope block.
- **On Point** – Quilt blocks that are turned 45 degrees. The blocks are placed on their points like a diamond.
- **One Patch** – Any quilt pattern that uses a single shaped patch; this may be squares, triangles, hexagons, etc.
- **Orphan Blocks** – Quilt blocks that are left over from a project.



The Letter P

- **Panel Quilt** - A quilt designed around a pre-printed fabric panel.
- **PhD (Projects Half Done)** – Projects that are not yet finished.
- **Pivot** – Turning your fabric while the sewing machine needle is down.
- **PP (Paper Piecing)** – Sewing fabrics onto a foundation paper to stabilize the block. This is generally needed due to unusual geometric shapes, small pieces, or odd angles.
- **Pre-Cuts** – Coordinating fabric pre-cut to a standardized size and sold as a bundle. Example: 5", 10" 1 1/2" strips, 2 1/2" strips, Fat Eighth bundles, Fat Quarter bundles, Half Yard bundles, and One Yard Bundles.
- **Presser Foot** – An interchangeable part of the sewing machine that holds the fabric down onto the feed dogs. Different presser feet are used for different techniques. Example: Walking foot, zipper foot, buttonhole, etc.
- **Pressing** – Using a warm iron to press seams by putting the iron directly down on the area, pressing, and lifting straight back up.
- **Puckered Seams** – Seams with uneven or pulled spots. This can be caused by pushing or pulling fabric through the sewing machine, having unbalanced thread tension in your machine, or holding the thread too tight when hand-sewing.



The Letter Q

- **QAYG (Quilt-As-You-Go)** – A method which involves quilting blocks of the backing, batting, and top individually. The individually quilted blocks are then joined together to make the finished quilt.



- **QAL (Quilt Along)** – Much like a BOM, a quilt along is a scheduled quilting/sewing program led by an organizer.
- **Quilt Guild** – An organization of quilters that provides space and opportunities to share projects, instruction, and/or community service.
- **Quilt Sandwich** – The layers of a quilt before it is quilted. A quilt sandwich is made of the quilt top, the batting, and the quilt back.
- **Quilting Stencils/Templates** – Sturdy reusable pieces of plastic, acrylic or plexiglass, that can be used for tracing or sewing.



The Letter R

- **Rag Quilt** – A type of quilt that has exposed seams so that as the quilt is used and washed the seams fray and look ragged.
- **Raw Edge** – An unfinished fabric edge. Sometimes raw edges are left showing intentionally as a decorative element.
- **Reverse Appliqué** – A method of appliqué that sews the fabric to the back of the background fabric. The background fabric is then carefully cut away to reveal the appliqué beneath.
- **Rotary Cutter** – A cutting tool used to cut fabric. A sharp circular wheel on a handle, almost always including a safety mechanism.
- **Repeat** – Repetitions of a pattern or design on fabric, or in a quilting design. Typically this comes with a unit of measure, as in “the repeat on this fabric is 6 inches” or “the repeat in this quilt is every three blocks”.
- **RR(Round Robin)** – A program where a group of quilters get together, each making their own center block of a new project. The center blocks are then passed around the group with each quilter adding to the project.
- **RST (Right Sides Together)** – An instruction for sewing to put the right sides of the fabric pieces together.



The Letter S

- **SA (Seam Allowance)** – The area between the stitching and the raw cut edge of the fabric.
- **Sashing** – Strips of fabric used to separate or off set block designs.
- **Self-Binding** – Using excess backing fabric as binding by bringing it over the top, folding in the raw edge, and stitching it down.
- **Self-Healing Mat** – A cutting mat used with a rotary cutter to protect surfaces. The self-healing aspect is a rubberized portion that allows it to be used multiple times before showing any wear.
- **Selvage** – The edge produced on woven fabric during manufacturing that prevents it from unraveling. They are printed with the name of the collection, manufacturer, print design number, and code of colors used in the print.
- **SID (Stitch in the Ditch)** – A sewing method that involves quilting on top of or very near existing patchwork seams.
- **SnW (Stack n Whack)** – The technique of layering several large pieces of identical fabric in a stack, pinning them together, then cutting them all at once with a rotary cutter. If the layers are stacked exactly, this creates precise identical fabric pieces without the need to fussy cut each one. This method is common for Kaleidoscope and One Block Wonder blocks.
- **Squaring Up** – The action of straightening the edges of a piece of fabric, a quilt block, or an entire quilt top before moving forward.
- **Stash** – A term used in regard to a quilter's collection of fabric.



The Letter T



- **Table Topper** – A small quilt used to decorate a table.
- **TBQ (To Be Quilted)** – Finished projects that are waiting to be quilted.
- **Template** – A piece of cardboard or plastic cut to a desired shape used as a pattern for tracing in either piecing or appliqué patches. Templates can also be used to mark quilting lines on a quilt top.
- **Tied Quilt** – A method where the quilt sandwich layers are tied at intervals using small pieces of decorative string, yarn, or ribbon. This secures the quilt without stitching through it.
- **TGIF (Thank Goodness It's Finished)** – A statement for the end of a project.
- **Throat Plate** – The metal plate beneath a sewing machine's needle and presser foot. The throat plate has an opening for the needle to pass through and the feed dogs to emerge from below and help move the fabric forward during sewing.
- **TOT (Tone on Tone)** – Different shades of the same color being used together.
- **Trapunto** – An Italian method of creating a raised surface by putting extra stuffing (typically batting, fabric, or yarn) into an area then sewing around it.
- **Tufting/Tying** – Taking thread or yarn through all three layers of the quilt and knotting it on the quilt surface. Ties are placed in even intervals throughout the quilt to keep the layers together.



The Letter U

- **UFO (Unfinished Object)** – Projects that are not yet finished.
- **Unbalanced Borders** – Borders of different widths resulting in an asymmetrical look.
- **Unit** – A combination of two or more pieces sewn together to form part of a block.
- **Universal Needle** – A sewing machine needle that is made for use for multiple sewing and quilting applications.



The Letter V

- **V Clip** – A notch taken out of a seam to reduce bulk, or to help curved seams lay flat.
- **Value** – How light or dark a color is. Value is very important when considering the fabrics going into a quilt. Pieces of fabrics cut from colors of the same value blend when side by side, where contrasting color values have clearly defined edges side by side.
- **Variegated Thread** – Thread in which the color changes through the strand.



The Letter W

- **Wall Quilt** – A quilt made specifically for hanging on a wall. These can be made more artfully with more delicate methods that couldn't be used on a quilt meant for use.
- **Water-Soluble** – Threads, stabilizers, or marks that dissolve when wet.
- **WIP (Work In Progress)** – A current unfinished project.
- **Whole Cloth** – A quilt made from a single large piece of fabric that is quilted. There are no pieced blocks in a whole cloth quilt.
- **WOF (Width of Fabric)** - The distance between selvage edges.
- **WOW (White on White)** – White ink printed on white fabric.
- **WST (Wrong Sides Together)** – An instruction for sewing to put the wrong sides of the fabric pieces together.



The Letter X

- **X-Ray Film** – Quilters used to use X-Ray film to make templates.



The Letter Y

- **Yard** - A unit of measure that fabric is sold.
- **Yardage** – The amount of fabric needed to complete a project.
- **Yo-Yos** – Three-dimensional gathered fabric circles that may be sewn into quilt tops or used for decorative embellishments. Yo-Yos are made by using a running stitch around the edge of a circle of fabric and pulling the thread. The Yo-Yo is then pressed into a flat, circular shape.
- **Y-Seams** – Sometimes called “Inset Seams,” this is where three seams of three fabrics meet at one point.



The Letter Z

- **Zigzag Stitch** - A machine stitch that works side to side.
- **Zipper Quilt** – A quilt design that is pieced together to mimic a zipper.