

English Paper Piecing 101

Hexagon Needle Book¹

History - English Paper Piecing originated in England in the 1770's and experienced a surge in popularity in the early 1800's. Eventually EPP spread to America with the earliest known hexagon quilt dating back to 1807. Paper being a "luxury" in the 1800's, ladies reused letters, catalog pages and newspapers for their templates which has given historians a glimpse into everyday life in the 1800's as the paper was often left in the quilts as an added layer of insulation. EPP's popularity resurfaced again in the 1920's and 1930's, especially during the Great Depression as small scraps of fabric are often utilized in the construction of EPP quilts.² I find it interesting to note that once again, 100 years later from its second resurgence, we are again seeing the revival of the centuries old craft.

Ingredients -

- (7) ½" hexies for your flower (½" hexagon paper templates and fabric to cover with ¼"-¾" overlap)
- (2) 2" background hexagons for behind the hexie flower (2" hexagon paper template with cream solid fabric)
- (2) 2" batting hexagons (use same 2" paper template as was used for background hexagons)
- (2) 2.75" hexagons for the inside of the front and back covers (2.75" hexagon paper templates with printed fabric)
- A piece of felt 7.5 inches by 4 inches
- General sewing supplies: scissors, thread (50wt or higher is best) , needle, glue pen or glue stick, wonder clips or pins, optional seam roller.

¹ Pattern courtesy of Emma Jones www.vintagesewingbox.co.uk and YouTube: Emma Jones Vintage Sewing Box

² Faithandfabricdesign.com

Directions -

1. **Make your hexies.** Begin by placing $\frac{1}{2}$ " hexagon paper template on the fabric for your hexie flower. Cut around the paper template leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ " - $\frac{3}{8}$ " extra fabric around the edge of template. (you will use this "extra" fabric to wrap around the edge of template and glue on the back of the template).
2. Place a thin line of glue along one edge of the hexagon template leaving a small space between the line of glue and the edge of the template.
3. Wrap the "extra" fabric around the edge and press to adhere to the line of glue. Continue around the hexagon applying a line of glue and wrapping the fabric one edge at a time until all 6 sides of the hexagon have been glued and wrapped taking care NOT to pull the fabric tightly. Continue until all (7) $\frac{1}{2}$ " hexagons have been covered with fabric. (one of the hexagons should be made with yellow fabric for the flower center)
4. **Make the hexie flower.** Choose (2) $\frac{1}{2}$ " hexies that have been covered with fabric and place them right sides together lining up the edges (if you have a different color for the "center" of your flower this should be one of the two that you begin with). Take your needle that has been threaded with 12" - 18" of thread that has been knotted at the end (you really don't want to use thread longer than 12" - 18" as the process of the thread continually gliding over the edge of the paper template has a tendency to weaken the thread) and at the corner of the hexie, run the needle under the edge of the fabric (in between the fabric and the paper) having the point of the needle coming up at the very corner of the edge of the hexie template (this hides the knot under the fabric). Take the needle and just nipping a few of the threads from each hexie run the needle from the corner of one hexie to the next taking care to not go through your paper template. After you pull your thread through return your needle back to the same point of entry you just made and go through both hexies again, this time before pulling the thread all the

way through when you are left with a small loop run your needle through the loop 2 or 3 times then pulling it all taught (this secures the beginning of your row). Continue running your needle from one hexie to the next just nipping a few threads from each hexie. Try and keep your stitches small and close together taking about 12 to 16 stitches per inch. When you reach the end of the edge of the hexies, take your last stitch the same way you did your first making the loop and running the needle through 2 or 3 times before pulling taught (this secures the end of your run insuring that if your stitches happen to come apart your whole piece will not fall apart just the space in between your knots). Open up the 2 hexies, grab the next hexie to be added and place the third hexie in between the 2 previous hexies (think of the Olympic podium with 1st, 2nd and 3rd place-you are now putting the 1st place winner). Fold over the new hexie matching up the edges and stitch the edges together just as you did the first seam remembering to secure the beginning and end of each run. Continue until all 7 hexies have been sewn together. Set aside.

5. **Attach the hexie flower.** Take a 2" background hexie and a 2" batting hexie and put them together, taking care to line up the edges. Taking the hexie flower, carefully remove the papers from inside each hexie. (If this is done carefully, you can reuse your paper templates a few times) I like to use the end of my small sewing scissors to help get under the edge of the paper. Once all the papers have been removed, notice the edges of the hexie and finger press or use a seam roller (or small iron) if necessary to keep edges turned under. I like to add a small amount of glue to the underside of the flower center and then place hexie flower in the center of the 2" background/batting hexie sandwich. (If you need help finding the center of the background hexie you can fold it in ½ finger press, open then fold in ½ in the other direction and finger press again for a center mark) Stitch in place using your needle and thread. Set aside.

6. **Complete the needle book front.** Take the 2.75" hexagon fabric and lay it right side down (so the wrong side is facing up). Place the 2" hexagon sandwich with the hexie flower in the center of the 2.75" hexagon taking care to center it. Take one side of the 2.75" hexagon and fold over the edge $\frac{1}{4}$ " and finger press or use your seam roller, then fold over again on top of the hexagon sandwich. Secure with a pin or wonder clip. Continue around the hexagon until all sides are folded in and secured with pins or clips. Stitch in place with needle and thread.
7. **Complete the needle book back.** Take the second 2.75" hexagon and lay it right side down. Next take the 2" background hexagon and 2" batting hexagon and layer them together and place in the center of the 2.75" hexagon. Fold each edge over $\frac{1}{4}$ " and then fold over again, finger pressing or using a seam roller and pin in place continuing until all sides are done. Stitch in place with needle and thread.
8. **Sew book covers together.** Take the back and the front and place them together with the 2.75" hexagons touching each other and the background hexagons facing outwardly. Secure together along the "spine" with needle and thread using the ladder stitch.
9. **Make your pages.** Take your felt and fold it in $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Take your 1.75" template and place on felt $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the folded edge of felt. Cut around the template taking care NOT to cut off folded edge. You should end up with 2 hexagon pages attached in the middle.
10. **Assemble your needle book.** Open the needle book cover and lay your pages inside. Stitch up the center of the two pages taking care to just catch the fabric from the needle book and not going all the way through the whole cover.

The June Program Meeting was held on June 26th at the Kiln Library. Jill Lombardo taught members and guests how to make a needle book with English Paper Piecing. You can go to Emma Jones' free pattern and needle book tutorial:

<https://www.vintagesewingbox.co.uk/needle-book.html>

Vintage Sewing Box

[Home](#) [About](#) [Shop](#) [In Person Workshops](#) [Block of the Month](#) [Stitch School](#) [Free Patterns](#) [Video Tutorials](#) [Blog](#)

Cart (0)

Hexagon Needle Book Templates



You can find the tutorial to make the needle book [here on my blog](#)! Below are the templates so you can cut your fabric into hexagon shapes. There is also a step by step video on my Youtube channel. If you make a needle book and share online, please tag me as I'd love to see it!

 [needle_book_hexagon_templates.pdf](#)
[Download File](#)