



Hip Line Media

Essential Glossary of Sewing and Related Words for Quilters

APPLIQUE is the process of sewing shapes to a background fabric using a satin stitch or by hand..

BASIC WEAVE of a fabric is the way the yarns are interlocked. The weave gives the fabric its characteristics and strength. The three basic weaves are plain, twill and satin.

BASTE refers to long, temporary stitches that hold layers of fabric together. You can machine or hand baste.

BATTING is made of polyester, or combinations of polyester/ cotton, wool or silk and is used in the middle layer of quilts and home décor projects such as pillows, placemats or bed coverings to give loft or fullness.

BIAS is the diagonal direction of fabric. True bias is at a 45° angle to grainlines.

BINDING is the fabric used to cover the edges of a quilt when it is finished.

BLOCK refers to the pieces of fabric that are sew together to form one design element.

BOLT is the typical unit of fabric that is packaged and sold by manufacturers. A bolt usually consists of 12-20 yards.

BORDER refers to the pieces of fabric sewn around a finished quilt top to make it larger, frame it or add design elements.

CLIP is to make small cuts in fabric to allow ease on curves or corners.

CUT LENGTH is the total length measurement that includes all seam allowances.

DECORATIVE STITCHES are available on some sewing machines and are used to embellish projects.

DRESSMAKER SHEARS are scissors that are 8"-10" in length with bent handles. These shears are used only for cutting fabric.

EDGE STITCHING is topstitching placed very close to a finished edge.

FABRIC GRAINLINES are the lengthwise threads in a fabric.

FABRIC WIDTH is the width of a specific bolt of fabric. There are basically three width categories for garment fabric – 36", 45" and 54/60". Most quilting cottons are 45" wide.

FABRICS WITH NAP are fabrics that have a texture or a definite “one-way” pattern to them, like suede, corduroy, velvets and velours. When using these fabrics, the pattern should always be placed on the fabric using the “with nap” layout.

FAT QUARTER is a quarter yard of fabric that is cut in a particular way: first a ½ yard piece is cut and then cut across the length so it ends up 18” by 22”. This is a convenient size for appliqué projects or for incorporating many different fabric pieces in your quilt project. Or heck, just adding to your stash!

FIBER CONTENT is the type of natural or man-made material that makes up the fabric. The fiber content gives you a key to how comfortable the garment will be and what kind of care it needs.

FIBERFILL is a loose material, usually polyester, used for stuffing home décor projects such as pillows. This is not a good choice for your quilt interior.

FINGER PRESS is utilizing your thumb and forefinger to flatten or press small fabric sections without an iron.

FINISH refers to any means of completing the raw edge of the garment.

FINISHED SIZE refers to the measurement of a completed block or quilt.

FRAY CHECK™ is a colorless liquid plastic solution made by Dritz® that prevents fabric from fraying. Common uses include strengthening buttonholes and securing thread ends. It is washable and dry cleanable.

FUSIBLE WEB is a special fabric used to bind two pieces of fabric together. The fusible web is placed between the two fabrics and ironed to adhere the fabrics together.

FUSSY CUT is when you cut a piece of fabric for a quilt so that a feature of the print is on the center of the piece.

GRAIN is the lengthwise and crosswise yarns in fabric, woven at right angles to each other (making up the grainlines of the fabric).

GRAINLINE is the lengthwise thread in the fabric parallel to the selvage and the lengthwise arrow on the pattern.

HANGING SLEEVE is a tube of fabric sewn to the wrong side of a finished quilt so a dowel can be slipped inside the sleeve and the quilt can be hung easily onto a wall.

INTERFACING provides support and shape in key areas of your sewing projects. Choose from a variety of interfacings such as fusible or non fusible depending on your need.

LAYOUT is the cutting chart on the pattern instruction sheet that shows placement of the pattern pieces on the fabric.

MARKING is the transfer of various pattern symbols from the pattern to the fabric.

MITER is a diagonal seaming at a corner. This is done at the corners of quilt borders to make them look like the corner of a picture frame.

NEEDLES are used both for hand sewing and machine sewing. Needle size is determined by the weight of the fabric and the type of thread. Generally, thicker fabrics require a heavier, larger size needle. Always start a new project with a new needle.

NOTIONS are items other than fabric or a pattern that are used to complete sewing projects. Common items include quilting pins, needles, thread and chalk.

PATCHWORK is fabric that is cut up and sewn together in various ways to form the top of a quilt.

PAPER PIECING is fabric sewn onto a paper pattern specially made for this technique. The pieces will come out sharp every time and there is no matching of corners. Also called Foundation Paper Piecing.

PIECING is the act of sewing patchwork pieces together.

POINT TURNER is used to push out points on collars, pockets, pillows etc. It is usually made of plastic or wood and one end is pointed and the other rounded to open seams as you get ready to press.

PRESSING CLOTH helps protect the fabric from the shine that can be associated with ironing. It is also used to fuse interfacing.

QUILTING refers to the small running stitches that hold the quilt top, batting and bottom fabric together.

RAW EDGE is the unfinished edge of the fabric.

RIGHT SIDE also called the public side, is the finished side of the fabric.

ROTARY CUTTER is a round, very sharp blade attached to a handle and is used to cut out fabric. It should always be used with a rotary cutting mat.

SASHING refers to strips of fabric that are sometimes put between blocks of a quilt to form a pattern or make the quilt larger. They are often made of patchwork.

SEAM ALLOWANCE is the width of fabric beyond the seamline. For quilting, the typical seam allowance is $\frac{1}{4}$ ".

SEAM RIPPER has a curved blade with a sharp point on one end and a small plastic ball on the other end that prevents it from slipping. It is used to remove stitches and to open up machine stitched buttonholes.

SELVAGE is the bound edge in a length of material. It secures the threads and keeps them from raveling. The selvage is always on the straight of the grain.

SEWING GAUGE is a small metal or plastic ruler with a sliding marker used for marking and measuring.

STASH is your fabric collection. We hope you have lots of it! The more the merrier!

STITCH IN THE DITCH is a technique for quilting the quilt top, batting and fabric back together by stitching very close to a seam or appliquéd edge on the top of the quilt.

STRAIGHT STITCH is a utility stitch on a sewing machine which creates a nonstretch seam.

TENSION refers to the amount of pull on the thread or fabric during the sewing and construction.

TRIM is to cut away excess fabric.

UTILITY STITCHES are the basic stitches found on a sewing machine that are used to sew seams, hem, insert zippers and elastic. Examples of utility stitches are the straight stitch and zig zag stitch.

WALKING FOOT is a special foot that insures uniform material feed when sewing multiple layers of fabric. This is the best foot to use when quilting and sewing on your binding.

WARP YARNS are the lengthwise threads in a fabric.

WONDER TAPE is a double faced transparent tape that eliminates pinning and thread basting. It is especially helpful for positioning your quilt binding to the back, zippers, pockets and trims. Wonder Tape disappears after washing and won't gum up your needle when you sew.

WRONG SIDE is the side of the fabric that is unfinished and on the inside of the project.

ZIG ZAG STITCH is a utility stitch on a sewing machine which allows seams to stretch. It may also be used on the raw edge of fabric to prevent fraying.