SEPTEMBER

September Quilt Block

The school bell has rung and it's back to ABCs and 123s! Let's hit the books and get busy with this month's block.

Look through your fabric stash or take this opportunity to do a little fabric shopping. And if you're short on time, no problem! It's possible to assemble one of these blocks in a weekend.

Materials (12" x 12" finished block):

fabric selection - Use any desired fabrics. We selected 100-percent cottons in these prints:
- tiny blue star and leaf print fabric for sky
- white floral print on green fabric for middle background
- light green floral fabric for the foreground
- red/cream checkered fabric for house
- red/orange print fabric for door and chimney
- cream background with white stars for the dormer
- red, white and blue print fabric for house windows
- marbled brown fabric for the tree trunk
- blue/green marble fabric for tree top
- white print on black fabric for the tire swing
- tiny gold vine print for the sun
- muslin for "School" sign
translucent template plastic
buttons - seven various-sized red buttons, blue heart button, apple bushel basket button
Steam-A-Seam 2 double-sided fusible web
embroidery floss - green, black
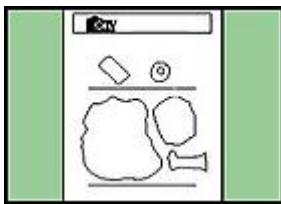rotary cutter and mat
craft scissors

Steps:

Creating templates
You can make templates from various materials, including pieces of heavy card stock, cardboard, freezer paper or template plastic. Some of the patterns in this block will be reused in future blocks, so it's recommended that you use a translucent template plastic due to the durability factor. Keep in mind the finished fabric shape will be the mirror image of the template pattern.

1. Print out the patterns (**figures A and B**). The house, windows, dormer and door are the same templates used in all the blocks up until now, so there's no need to print or re-cut figure A if you've kept those. The new templates are in figure B. Also in figure B, the tree (top and trunk) and sun are templates originally introduced in March. These are clearly marked in figure B, so there's no need to re-cut those if you've saved them from the March block.

2. Place a piece of template plastic over the printed patterns and trace the outline of each using a permanent, marking pen (ultra fine Sharpie works great).

3. Cut out and label each template piece. Some templates will be re-used in other blocks so plan to store them flat for future use.

PDF
Figure B - Click the image for a full-size pattern. You'll need Adobe Acrobat Reader software to see the pattern. If you don't have it, you can download it for free from the Adobe Web site.
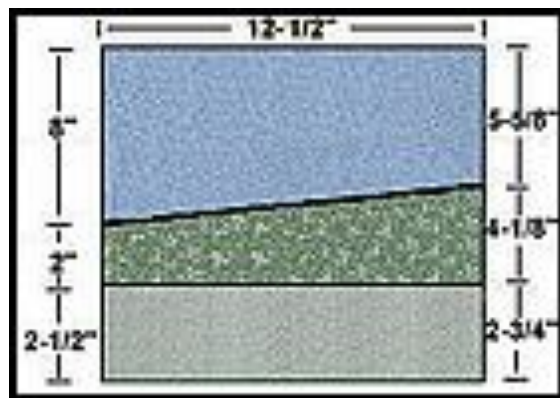

Figure C

Background
The finished background consists of three colors of fabric and will measure 12-1/2 inches square when finished. You can assemble it using a fusible webbing technique or a machine-piecing technique. Decide on your method then follow the directions below. One helpful extra step is to make a template square measuring 12-1/2 inches then mark or cut it into three sections as shown in **figure C** to provide a cutting guide and indicate the look of the finished background piece.

Fusing Method

1. If you wish to use fusible webbing to create the background piece, cut fabric pieces as indicated in **figure D**.
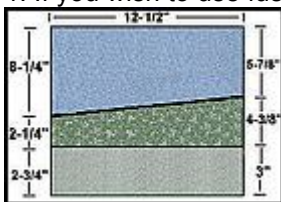

Figure D

2: With right sides up, place a 12-1/2" x 1/4" strip of fusible webbing (or any desired fusible product) along the bottom portion of the sky section. Next, overlap the middle (grass) fabric a 1/4-inch; making sure the fabric covers the fusible webbing. Fuse the fabrics together, using a pressing cloth to protect your iron from any exposed webbing. Follow the same process to fuse the final (ground) section to the background piece.

3. Trim the finished background piece to a 12-1/2-inch square (**figure E**).

Machine-Piecing Method
1. If you wish to use a sewing machine to create the
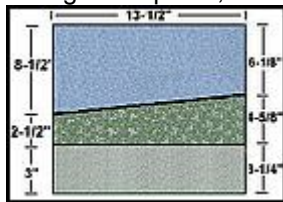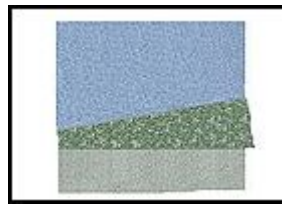background piece, cut the fabrics as illustrated in **figure F**.

Figure F

Figure G

2. Begin by placing the sky and grass fabrics right sides together, matching the raw edges across the bottom. Due to the diagonal cut, the sides will be out of alignment but that's how it should look. With the sky fabric on the bottom, use a 1/4-inch seam to stitch the sky and grass pieces together. Press and trim away the excess fabric.

3. Add the ground fabric by placing it right sides together with the piece sewn in step 2, matching raw edges across the bottom sky/grass section and ground fabric. Use a 1/4-inch seam allowance; stitch the grass fabric to the middle fabric. Again, press and trim away the excess fabric. The background piece will still be lopsided at this point (**figure G**).

4. Trim the finished background piece to a 12-1/2-inch
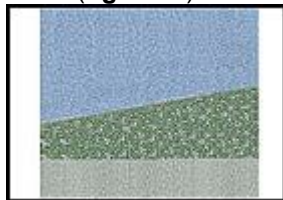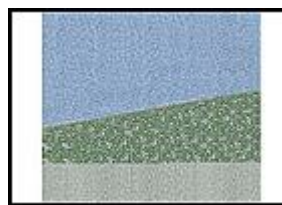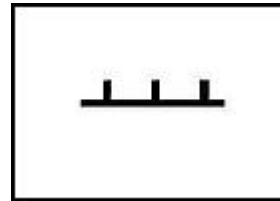block (**figure H**).

Figure E

Figure E

Applique
A quick word about fusible web--follow the manufacturer instructions for whichever type you decide to use. For this project, we use a double-sided type because it allows us to reposition the pieces if desired. Double-sided fusible comes sandwiched between two pieces of paper. Here's how to use it with this pattern:

1. Cut the fusible into smaller, manageable pieces that will accommodate each template size, keeping the protective paper of the fusible intact.

2. Using a pencil, trace around each template onto one of the paper-covered sides of the fusible.

3. Peel away the opposite paper side of the fusible (the one without the tracing) and adhere it to the wrong side of the desired fabric.

4. Cutting along the traced lines, cut out both the fusible web and fabric for each pattern piece.

5. Next, position the pieces onto the background square. There's a lot of room to customize the block with this step. Plus, you don't have to fuse anything until you're sure you like the design. Here's how we did it:

- Position the house fabric on the background square. Tuck the chimney fabric (small side down) so it stands out behind the house.

Tuck the treetop slightly behind the left-hand side of the house. Position the sun underneath the edge of the treetop. Place the tree trunk at the bottom of the treetop (**figure I**) and the tire swing to the left of that.

Figure J

- Our objective is to place everything slightly off kilter in order to give the block a bit of a folk art feel. To accomplish this, position the windows, door and dormer at a slight tilt. Refer to the first picture for placement.
- Use two-strands of black embroidery floss for the word "school" on the muslin sign. Position the "school" sign on the same diagonal as the top of the door (**figure J**).

Once you're pleased with the design, follow the manufacturer directions to press the pieces into place. Avoid fusing any pieces in the 1/4-inch perimeter edge of the block to allow for the addition of sashing.

Finishing
Cover the raw edges of the applique pieces with blanket-stitching (**figure K**). To do this, use two-strands of black embroidery floss outlining the house, windows, dormer, door, tree, sun, and the tire of the tire swing.
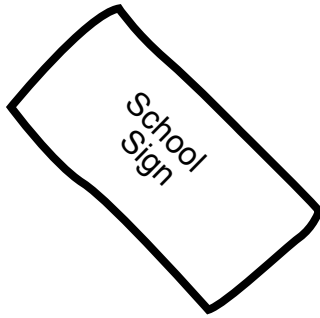

Figure M

Figure L

1. Using green floss, stitch and tie various sized-red buttons to the tree top (**figure L**).
2. Add a blue heart button as a door handle to the house (**figure M**).
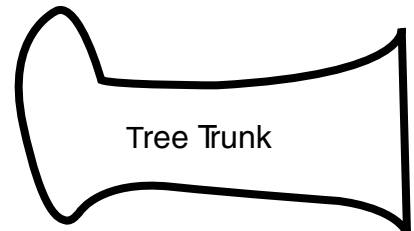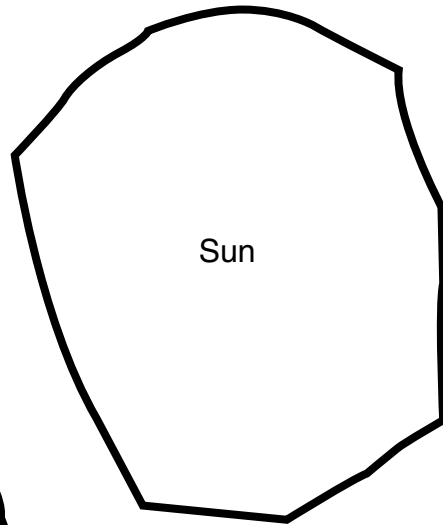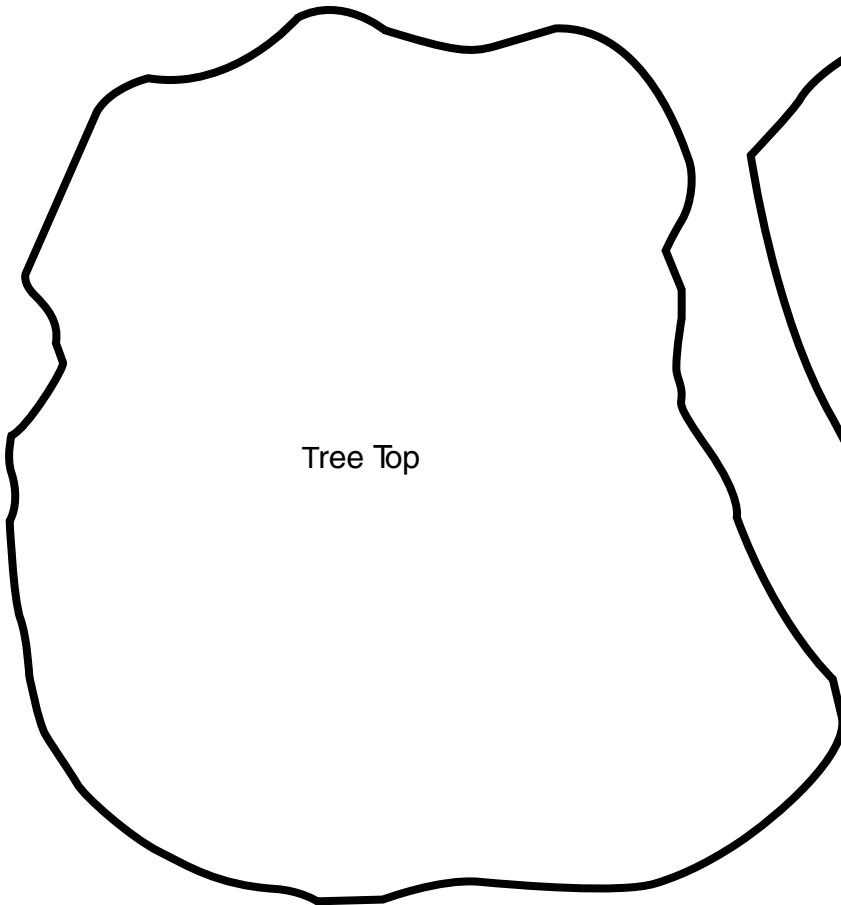

Figure N

3. Add a "bushel of apples" button to the corner of the house (**figure N**).

4. Use a chain stitch to create a simple rope from the treetop to the tire of the tire swing.

September

School Sign

Tire Swing

Re-use from March

Tree Top

Sun

Tree Trunk