
Make the Rainbow Road Mini Quilt with Annabel Wrigley

Chapter 1 - Make the Rainbow Road Mini Quilt

Overview

(sewing machine whirring) (playful music) - When I'm designing quilts, I'm really inspired by traditional and antique quilts. I absolutely love taking those designs and making a more modern interpretation of them. And that is what I've done with our Rainbow Road Mini Quilt. It's a spin on a Rocky Mountain Road or sometimes called New York Beauty quilt design, but it was a vintage quilt that I saw online and fell in love. I had to find a way that I could come up with a more modern version of it. So I took that design, and I enlarged it. I made the blocks really bright, beautiful sherbet colors. And I made it pretty easy to make with paper piecing. And I'm gonna teach you how to do that. I'm Annabel Wrigley. I'm an author, a textile designer, and a modern quilter. And I live in Richmond, Virginia. We're gonna be making a super graphic and gorgeous mini quilt, and we'll be using techniques, such as sewing curves and paper piecing. It may seem complicated, but believe me, you are gonna be able to do it, and I'm gonna show you how. (playful music)

Materials

- The supplies that you need for this project include your printed templates, a pair of paper scissors, a pair of fabric scissors, and a selection of fabrics that you'll be using for your quilt top, an iron and an ironing surface, some glue for basting, your thread of choice, an optional quarter inch quilting foot, this one has a little quilting guide, a quilter's ruler. If you have a 10 and a half inch square ruler, that's great, if not, not a problem, but I'll be using this to square up my blocks, a regular quilter ruler, some spray starch or ironing spray of your choice, a strip of cardboard or a little specific folding ruler. This one's just made of plastic, but you can use just a strip of thin cardboard, a seam ripper, a rotary cutter, and a cutting mat, pins, and of course a sewing machine.

Cut fabric

- Before we can get started making our Rainbow Road Mini Quilt, we have to prepare all of our templates. There's gonna be two main paper piecing patterns, this straight one and this curved one. The curved one is in two pieces. We will be taping that together to make one large curve. Then we have these traditional pieced curves. Now for the straight paper pieced one, we're gonna be making 16 of those so we wanna make sure that we print out enough for 16 paper piece patterns. And since this one is gonna be two pieces put together to make one, we're gonna need to print out four copies of this one to make four complete large curves. For cutting, we're gonna start off cutting these main pattern pieces. And for these, we're just going to join this one to this little piece because we couldn't fit that when printing. So, if you just cut along this straight line right here, the line that's marked, and then if you put the cut line up against the line on this page, you'll see that they line up perfectly. And then just use whatever tape you have on hand to tape them together. For the non-paper pieced patterns, we're gonna be cutting on this outer line. And if you're confused about the inner line and outer line, this is just showing that you have a 1/4 inch seam allowance around the piece. So go ahead, cut these out. Remember, you only need to cut one of each of these. We're gonna be cutting the paper pieced pieces a little bit differently. We wanna cut outside at the second line because when we're finished piecing this, we'll be trimming it down to that second line. So, if you just rough cut about 1/2 an inch away from that outer line. Now, we wanna make these two

small curved pieces into one large curve. So if we lay it out, we're gonna be joining B1 to A6. So how are we gonna do that? Let's just trim along this end line here at the start of B1. We're gonna line that up to the A6 line. And you can see, it fits perfectly and we're just gonna tape that. Once you've cut your 16 straight ones and your four curved ones, and your one of each of your inner curve and outer curve pattern pieces, we can go over and get our fabric ready. We're gonna pin this main template onto this pink fabric. Remember, we're gonna be cutting four of this one. And this is the inner curve of one of the blocks, and we're pinning it to Fairy Floss. Cut three more of this Fairy Floss inner curve. And then, go ahead and cut four of the outer curve from Blush in the exact same way. There's nothing worse when you're paper piecing than cutting your little strips way too small. So I've chosen a size for these strips that's gonna work really, really well for both the curve and the straight panel. Because we're sewing some angles here, it's nice to have a strip that's wide enough and tall enough. So I've cut a full length of fabric, which is about 44, 45 inches into a 4-inch strip. And then I'm gonna be cutting 2-inch strips from this strip. And I'm doing both paper piecing pieces with the same size, so that's gonna make it really easy for cutting. As far as this straight one, because we are gonna be cutting 16 of these, one full-width 4-inch strip of fabric is gonna yield two of these. So, we're gonna need to cut eight 4-inch strips of the blue, eight 4-inch strips of the Blush. And then for the curve, we're gonna need two 4-inch strips for four of these. So cut two of the orange strips and two of the Blush strips. And it's pretty easy to cut your pieces. You can have a stack of a few right here 'cause it doesn't have to be too precise. Just cut off any rough end or selvedge end. And you're just gonna measure 2 inches. It doesn't have to be perfect. But cutting a stack like this makes it fast and you can get all your pieces cut and set aside so you can start working. Try and make sure that you cut enough for all of your pieces so that when you get into the groove of sewing, you don't have to stop to cut more. You can go ahead and cut all your Blush and Provence Blue strips in the exact same way. You've cut out all these pieces, your paper piecing pieces and your inner and outer curves. And all that's left is to cut out our red strips that you'll see go in between our blue and Blush paper piece strips right here. There's gonna be four of them at 1-inch wide by 10 1/2 inches long. Then you're gonna need four small Perfect Pink squares, and they're the ones we're using in the corners of the border. They're measuring 3 inches by 3 inches. You're gonna need four side rectangles. You'll see them here. And they're measuring 3 inches by 6 inches. And then one central Perfect Pink square, and this one is measuring 6 inches by 6 inches, this one right here. I have all my pieces cut. Let's put this quilt top together.

Paper-pieced curved blocks

- When I'm paper piecing, I really like my work area to be set up a particular way. I like to have my machine, my cutting surface, and my ironing surface really close to each other, so I don't have to keep getting up and down to iron and cut. You'll see that the pieces that I've cut are a little wider than the paper, and that's totally fine. We wanna make sure that we have enough hanging off both ends. Also, when we're paper piecing, it's gonna come together on the back side of the paper, and we'll be sewing on the printed side of the paper. And it may sound confusing, but it will all make sense as it comes together. So to get started, we're gonna start with a Blush piece, and we're gonna be piecing between A1 and A2. So to get started, we're going to turn it over, and use a tiny little drop of glue just to hold it in place, and position your first Blush piece on top of that. Now flip it over, and fold back the line between A1 and A2. Then we wanna make sure that this edge is trimmed to a quarter of an inch. It pretty much looks perfect as it is right now, but if it didn't, you could just trim along that edge. So you're going to open it out again, and we're gonna add our orange piece,

and we're gonna line up this edge of the orange on top of the Blush. You wanna make sure it's hanging out a little bit on each side, and not placed irregularly, just like that. And then you're gonna hold those pieces together, and take it to the machine. I'm gonna be setting my machine on a straight stitch, and I'm gonna wanna decrease my stitch length down to about 1.5. And the reason for that is that you'll be tearing the paper off your piece at the end. The small stitch makes it really, really easy to tear the paper off. So you're gonna put it under the machine. I like to start sewing before this line, and end a little bit past the end of the line. And basically it's just like tracing on the line with your needle. (machine grinding) You don't need to back stitch a beginning and end for this at all. So we've sewn this. We're gonna open it out and iron it, trim it, and then attach the next one. Then you're gonna bring it back, and you'll see you've sewn the line between A1 and A2, so now we need to do the line between A2 and A3. And as you can see, we need to add a Blush piece right here. So using your little folding ruler, you can use a USPS envelope piece of cardboard, or a FedEx envelope piece of cardboard. I like to use this flexible plastic ruler. I'm gonna fold it back, and then using my quilter's ruler, I'm gonna trim it one quarter of an inch away from that fold. Now we have that edge ready to attach our next piece. We're gonna put that on there, carefully hold it together, flip it over, and then we're gonna stitch it in the exact same way. (machine grinding) We're gonna move on to the line between A3 and A4. You'll see that as we're paper piecing, we're just following the numbers. It makes it a lot easier for you. It's less confusing than having no numbers there at all. And you'll see, we're up to adding orange again. We're just gonna be adding orange and Blush, and orange and Blush. (machine grinding) (paper whooshing) (machine grinding) Continue adding pieces in the exact same way. And when you've finished, it's gonna look like this one. Before I trim this one down, I wanna give it a really good press with some ironing spray. You can use a spray starch or any kind of pressing spray, but I find it gives it a nice stiffness, and holds everything in place really nicely. So give that a good iron. And then remember, I told you we're gonna be cutting on this second line. So with your rotary cutter, I usually cut, use a ruler, and cut my ends first. And then I cut just free hand with my rotary cutter the rest of it. So, go slowly for this part. (cutter snipping) Now this is where the fun part starts. We get to tear away the paper. You can either sew all your curves, and then tear all your paper at the same time, but I kind of like to do it as I go. So I like to hold the top. I'm just not gonna rip it like this, 'cause I don't wanna affect the seam. But if I hold the paper at the top, make my first little tear, and then you'll see how easily it comes off. And that's the benefit of a really small stitch length. Gonna move on to my next one. Remember, you're kind of stabilizing the end with your finger, and then pulling it off. This part is quite therapeutic. (paper ripping) Go ahead and prepare all four of these, iron them, trim them, and tear off the paper, and then set them aside for now. The curved paper piece panel that we just finished is part of one of our blocks. Our mini quilt has got four main blocks in it, so we're gonna go ahead and complete those four, these ones. We're gonna be sewing a curve, which sounds super daunting, but I'm gonna show you a simple, pretty foolproof way of doing that. Here are the three main parts of that block. We have the inner curve, the paper pieced curve, and then the outer curve. So to prepare all these pieces for sewing, we're gonna fold them exactly in half. So I'm folding this inner curve in half, and then I'm using my fingers to press a little crease at the center like that. And I'm gonna do the same with the outer curve. Make sure that it's perfectly halved. You don't have to press the entire half, just at the point where we're gonna be attaching it. Now the great thing about this paper pieced curve is that the halfway point is actually a seam as you'll see. So this is the seam right here. So what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna flip this seam on top of this crease, and I'm going to add a pin right there. So it's gonna look like this. Then I'm gonna go to my end, one end, and I wanna line up those edges as

best as I can. And I like to use a couple of pins here, because sometimes when you're sewing, it can shift, and we want to have a straight line when this is attached. We want it to all be very straight. So I might do just a couple of pins there, one here holding that edge up here. And then one at the end right here. I'm gonna do the same on this other end. This double pinning is almost like a little safety measure to make sure that everything stays straight. Now we have this in between area here that we need to deal with. You could pin it if you wanted to, but I really like to glue baste these curves, which means using just a little strip of glue, and pressing it down, it holds everything in place, and I find that it doesn't shift as much as it does with pins, although this is a personal preference. I have this really great glue baste that has this really long tip, so you can have a really fine application. So starting right at the very end, we're just gonna put a really little bit just running right along close to the edge of the fabric. Try not to get it any lower than the seam allowance, because you don't want the fabric to get stuck. But what I do, I kind of let it get a little bit tacky for a minute, and then I'm just gonna slowly glue that down, and it should fit pretty nicely right there. And look how great and even that is. Also a little messy, so prepare for that. We're gonna do the same with the other side. Really take your time with this. I think it's just a really nice clean way of doing things, not clean for your hands, but clean in terms of a nice curve. I usually prepare all of these before I sew them. It gives them a chance to dry a little bit. Give that a couple of minutes, and then you can take that to the machine, and sew it. You'll find it really easy to not have to deal with pins all the way around. I'm gonna set my machine for a quarter inch seam allowance, and then I'm gonna increase my stitch length to just my regular, which is usually about 2.4. I changed out my foot to my quarter inch foot that has a little guide on the side. You might not have one of those, and that's totally fine. Just make sure that you sew this with a quarter inch seam allowance. (machine beeping) Start with a little back stitch, and take your time with this, because we are sewing a curve, and we want it to be super neat. (machine grinding) See how nicely everything holds together with that glue? (machine grinding) Take your pins out, and then you could take it to the ironing surface. So when I'm ironing it, I'm gonna be ironing my seam allowance towards the Fairy Floss. And see how nice that curve is right there? It can be a little bit tricky when you're sewing a pieced curve, but this one came together well. And you'll see how that extra bit of pinning that I did along the edge means that we have a really straight edge here, and a pretty straight edge here. I have a little trick if it's not 100% straight, what I like to do to sort of even that up, is I might spray it just with a little bit of ironing spray, and as I'm pressing it, I'm gonna give it just the tiniest tug. And that little bit of a tug can sometimes just straighten up, and even up that edge a little bit more. And then when it comes to sewing this little bit that's sticking out a little bit, we can just trim that off. So we're ready to attach this outer curve now. And remember, this was our central join point, and here's our crease. So start off again by pinning in the center on the crease. Again, we are going to pin these ends. I'm gonna do that double pinning. And then, we're gonna glue the in between. This one is gonna be a little bit easier, because we're attaching this plain piece of fabric on top. (machine grinding) Always make sure to back stitch a beginning and end when you're sewing both of your curved pieces. And you're gonna be ironing your seam towards the solid fabric. (spray spritzing) Complete three more of this block. When you finish your block, it should measure approximately 10 and a half inches by 10 and a half inches. I have this ruler that measures that. And if I look at it, it looks pretty good to me. You might just wanna trim up a bit of an uneven edge, but if you've got it pretty close to that, you can set it aside, and trim up all your other ones as well.

Paper-pieced straight sashing panels

- We're ready to start piecing our straight panels. And these are a little bit different because we'll be paper piecing on a slight angle. Remember we're gonna be completing 16 of these. So I'm gonna show you how. We're gonna be starting with A1. Remember we are going to be working from A1 through to A21. This is a really, really tiny piece. So pay close attention to that when you are applying your glue. Can kind of see through it. And again, we're just gonna put one tiny drop of glue here and add our first piece of fabric. Then flip it over. Oops. And because this is a tiny little angle, we just wanna take our time with this. Using your piece of cardboard or your flexible ruler, fold this line back between one and two and then trim at a quarter of an inch. And you'll see the fabric covers, hangs over the end here and covers up the pattern. That's exactly what we want. So onto the Provence blue color. Lay it along the edge here and then very carefully, pick it up and take it over to your machine. I've set my machine back to a small stitch, 1.5 again, and put my regular foot back on and I'm gonna sew these lines really carefully. (sewing machine beeps) (sewing machine whirs) Take that over to the iron. And then now we're going to fold back and trim and get ready to sew between A2 and A3. Lining that up and then back to the machine. (sewing machine whirs) I love how you can get such a tight and precise and sharp point with paper piecing. It's probably my favorite part of it. (sewing machine whirs) Look how amazing and sharp this point is right here. I love that. Give everything a good press. I really like to use a bit of ironing spray here or spray starch just to make everything just a little bit stiffer for when we peel that paper off. You can go through and trim all of those panels. Remember we are gonna be trimming on the outer line here. And look how neat that looks. Super sharp and super precise piecing here. If you remember from before where we were tearing the paper off, we wanna really stabilize it, the top of it with our fingers so that you're not pulling really hard and putting a lot of pressure on the stitching. So I'm gonna just hold it at the top and just slowly pull off each piece just one at a time. If you find that any little bits get caught in the points, you can definitely use a pair of tweezers to get those but everything should come off pretty cleanly. (paper rips) Trim down all 16 of your panels and then take eight of them and we'll be using them to create our sashing panels. Pin your red stripe to the raw edge of your blue and blush paper piece section and make sure that the widest part of the blue is against the red strip. We're gonna be sewing this with a quarter inch seam allowance. So you'll wanna switch out your foot back to your quarter inch foot if you're using one of those and set your stitch length back to a regular stitch length. (sewing machine whirs) Now as you're going along, you might feel a bit of a bump and that might be the seam on the other side pushed over to the wrong side because it should naturally, the seam should all be naturally in one direction. So if you need to put your finger under and just smooth that down and you'll be able to feel when it's flatter. I can feel it right here. So just push that down. Oops. Then I'm gonna open this out and give that a good press. And then we wanna attach this side to this side of the red. Now you can either put this panel on top like this or you can flip it over and run along the red. And I think I'm gonna pin it this way. So I'm sewing on the red. And if you find it's not exactly a match, you can definitely just give that a little tug and a little stretch. There you go. And then we'll take that back to the machine. Do a little back stitch. I often forget to do that. Try and remember to do that at the beginning and the end. (sewing machine whirs) Bring this over and iron it again. Give it a good bit of steam and then if you flip it over, now's a good opportunity to check and see if there's any paper left. Let's just take that out. A little bit's not gonna matter. But if there's any large pieces that you can take out. And then we have one of our sashing panels and you're gonna go ahead and make three more of these.

Sew the blocks together

- You've made all the panels and blocks for your mini quilt so now we're gonna put everything together. We're gonna start off by doing this center section which is the sashing panels and attaching them to the center pink square. Then we'll be doing the top strip and the bottom strip and then we'll be attaching all three together. Take your large pink center square and you're gonna lay it on top of one side of your sashing panel and pin that in place. We're gonna be sewing this with a quarter inch seam allowance. (sewing machine rattles) (sewing machine beeps) Give that a good iron and I'm ironing the seam towards the pink. Let's attach the other side. So we're gonna pin this other side in the exact same way. (sewing machine rattles) You're gonna iron that side towards the pink as well. That's our centerpiece done and we can set that aside and assemble the other blocks. We're gonna be starting by attaching this block to this sashing piece. So I'm going to flip this and line up our raw edges. I prefer to pin on the side that has less piecing. You see, this side has a lot of piecing to sew over so I prefer to go on this side because it's a little easier. And again, we're gonna be sewing this with a quarter inch seam allowance. (sewing machine rattles) (sewing machine beeps) You're gonna be ironing this towards the block. Let's attach the other side. And sew that in the exact same way. (sewing machine rattles) And that's our top strip done. You're gonna complete the bottom strip in the exact same way. Grab your center strip, and we're gonna be attaching this top one to the center one. I'm gonna lay this top piece on top of the center piece, and if you have a look at the center seams you'll see that they're ironed in different directions. This seam is ironed towards the pink and this one is ironed towards this Fairy Floss and that makes it easy to nest these seams. So they just kind of butt up to each other and we can pin there first. That's a great way to make sure that everything is lined up. When you open it out. You'll see this seam and this seam are just gonna come together and perfectly nest together. We're gonna sew this with a quarter inch seam allowance. (sewing machine rattles) Let's take a look. Those seams are perfectly lined up. And I'm ironing my seam towards this top row. And you're gonna attach the bottom row in the exact same way. We've sewn all our rows together and it's looking so fantastic. All that's left to do now is add the border.

Paper-pieced border

- It's time for the final step of our rainbow road mini quilt, and that is attaching the borders. We're going to be assembling the borders just for two sides to start off with, and then we'll be doing the other two sides with the addition of the little pink corner squares. And then we'll be totally done. Let's start off by attaching this side to our pink rectangle here. So we're gonna lay the pink rectangle on top of this panel, line up the edges right here, and we're gonna pin that. Like every other seam, we're gonna be sewing it with a quarter inch seam allowance. You're gonna be ironing towards the pink. Let's attach the other side. We're gonna attach it onto this side because the wider part of the blue is gonna be against the quilt. And again, we're gonna iron towards the pink. You're gonna be making three more of these border pieces in the exact same way, and then take two of them. and we'll be attaching a small pink square, the three inch by three inch square, to the ends of two of those little border strips. These longer strips are gonna be attached on opposite sides of each other, and we'll be attaching these ones after we've attached those ones that we just made before. Let's attach the other pink square to the other end in the same way. And as with all of the others, we're gonna be ironing that seam towards the pink. You're gonna have two border pieces with the corner squares on each end, and then you're gonna have two border pieces with no corner squares, and we can start attaching them to our quilt top right now. We're gonna start off by attaching this border right here, this is the one without the corner squares. So we're gonna put it

right sides together with the quilt front, and because I mentioned before I really like to pin and sew on the side that's not pieced, I'm just gonna flip it over here. Lots of threads back here. And remember, we were talking about how we're nesting those seams. This seam is ironed towards this solid here, and this seam is ironed towards the solid here, which is perfect because it means that our seams can be really nicely nested. And it really does ensure that everything is lined up well. So pin those seams first. Hopefully everything is fitting perfectly. That's, again, the great thing about paper piecing is that it's so precise that generally everything is gonna fit the way you want it to. And then continue pinning all the way along. Now, this is quite a long paper pieced section that I'm pinning on, so I wanna make sure that if I have to stretch it to make sure that it's the right length, so I'm gonna pin it at the end first, and then I'm gonna do the in betweens, but it looks like it's gonna fit really well. Take it to the iron. And again, we're ironing this seam towards this solid side. Really thorough ironing of this piece, it's like super important. We want everything to be really, really crisp and fit together nicely. And I feel like if you're on top of the ironing part of it, it's gonna make it a lot easier for you. You're going to attach the other border piece that's the same as this. You're gonna be attaching that to the opposite side next. We only have two more borders to attach and these are the ones with the pink corner squares. Make sure that you've got the widest part of the blue joining onto the main fabric here. So again, we're gonna put it on top of there. I'm gonna flip it over for the pinning. And we'll nest those seams first and pin them. We're gonna nest the center seams first, then we're gonna nest and pin the end seams, and then we're gonna pin the rest in between. And we're gonna be sewing this with a quarter inch seam allowance as well. You only need to add a border onto the bottom here and then you've finished with your quilt top. And it looks fantastic. I know that it was a pretty big and time-consuming project, but I really think that you'll be so happy with how it turned out. It's super graphic, it's gonna look amazing on the wall, or for whatever use you have for it. You could also make this into a really big, beautiful floor cushion, although I would feel a bit nervous sitting on it after all that hard work. I quilted one myself for the wall, and I wanted to show you how that turned out. And I did the binding in this Capsicum red color, which is the exact same color that I used on that sashing piece. I think it's really pretty how it's used twice in the quilt. And it finishes it really nicely. I did the backing in a really hot pink. I love mixing hot pink and red together, it's my favorite color combo. You can go ahead and quilt and bind this piece however you choose.