

# *Your First Adventure into Appliqué*

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Many of you have hesitated to do appliqué, because it seems too daunting to do such delicate and often intricate needlework. The Dragonfly block, presented June 2009, is an easy appliqué to try as a first adventure. It has no points to turn, and very gentle curves.

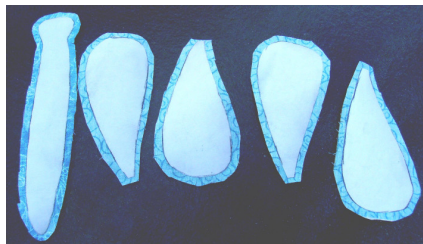
There are so many different ways to do appliqué. If you are trying it for the first time, there are three methods I would like to suggest. More pictures will be added when I have finished my samples to that point.

## **Method 1** (my preference, even though it does require more prep time)

1. Iron two pieces of freezer paper together, shiny side to dull side, so that after you have created your templates, you can iron the shiny side of the doubled piece to the wrong side of your fabric.
2. Lightly trace your templates on the freezer paper. Keep in mind that the design will be reversed, so if your design has direction, do it from the back of the pattern. So that the lines can be seen, my example shows the tracing much darker than it should be.



1 & 2



3, 4 & 5

3. Cut out the templates on the line you just traced.
4. Iron the templates to the wrong side of your fabric. Cut around the template, leaving a scant 1/4" for turning under. If you have points on your template, trim them at about 1/8".
5. Clip all curves almost to the template.
6. Spray a fair amount of spray starch or fabric sizing in a small container. I like to use a pill bottle for this.
7. Using a q-tip, generously coat the seam allowance with the starch. I like to do about 2" at a time.
8. Carefully bend the saturated seam allowance over the template (to the wrong side), use a hot iron to press it in place and completely dry the starch. The curved edges should be very smooth. If not, peel them back, recoat with starch, and do it again.
9. Continue around until all of the edges have been turned under. Edges that will be under another part of the appliqué should not be turned under. Once your appliqué piece is completely dry and cool, remove the freezer paper.

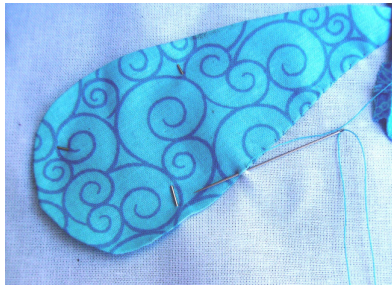
6 thru 9



10. Arrange the appliqué pieces on your quilt or block. Pin them in place from the right side. If you are machine stitching, skip to Step 12.

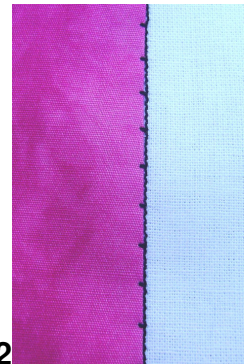


10



11

11. Pin from the back, and remove the pins on the right side. If your pins are on the top, your thread will catch on them. Stitch them with thread that matches your appliqué, using a blind stitch between 1/16" and 1/8" long. Stitch the pieces that are on top last. If your design does have sharp inside curves or points (as in a heart), whip stitch the inside to secure the fabric well.



12

12. Alternately, the appliqué may be stitched on the machine. Use invisible thread and either a very narrow zigzag, appliqué, or blind hem stitch for this. At the right, I am showing the appliqué stitch, but with black thread so that you can see the stitches. Adjust the stitch until it catches only 1 or 2 threads. For appliqué or blind stitch, the straight part of the stitch should be right at the edge of the appliqué.

**Method 2** (This method first came to my attention in an Eleanor Burns book.)



1 & 2

1. Buy the lightest fusible interfacing that you can find.
2. Trace the design on the non-fusible side (no bumps of fusing material). For this method, the designs should not be reversed.

3. Put the bumpy side of the interfacing against the right side of your fabric. Using a moderately short stitch (slightly smaller than you would use for patchwork), stitch completely around the traced design.
4. Trim around the design, a scant 1/4" from it. If you have points, trim them at about 1/8". Carefully pull the interfacing up and cut a slit in it.
5. Turn the appliqué right side out. Finger press the edges so that they are as crisp as you can make them without using an iron. The tiny little appliqué pins can help with this. Whip stitch the edges of the appliqué together. This will help the edges turn under

3 thru 5



properly.

6. Arrange them on your quilt or block, and press them lightly to fuse them.
7. Stitch them using the same processes in steps 10-12 of Method 1.

**Method 3** (A variation on Method 2)

Follow the instructions for Method 2, but with a used dryer sheet. Of course, this cannot be fused to the quilt or block. The dryer sheet has the advantage of being nicely scented, but is also not as substantial as the interfacing, so must be handled more carefully. I found for this, it is easier to trace the design on the wrong side of the fabric, which will reverse the design. Also, because this will not fuse, you can press the pieces before you appliqué them.