

## February 2015 Block



### Rail Fence

This block is an excellent block to begin with. Very beginner friendly! You can construct this block a few ways, via strip piecing, or cutting out the individual rectangles.

#### Brief History of the Block

The rail fence block was developed back in colonial times. This was one of the first blocks taught to children as they began learning how to quilt. It's commonly formed by using three fabrics, however some rail fence blocks can be made with two to five different pieces of fabric. In the United States, it's been theorized that quilts were used to direct escaping slaves who were using the Underground Railroad. If an escaped slave saw a quilt that utilized the rail fence block, it indicated that they were on the correct path. There's no written proof of this theory, however.

It is believe that the name of the block came from the similarity of appearance to a rail fence, pictured here:



Photo copyright Flickr user *Mike in Bama*, used with permission

# Directions for Assembly

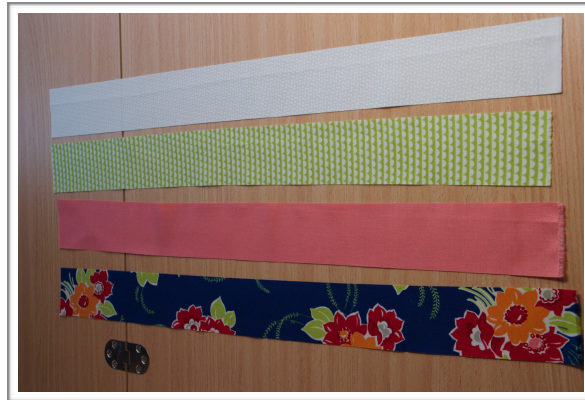
The Rail Fence block can either be assembled via strip piecing or as individual patches. Directions will be presented for both variations.

## Strip piecing

Select 4 fabrics

*Cutting:*

From each fabric, cut a 2 inch strip measuring 28 inches. This way you have some wiggle room to cut your blocks out.



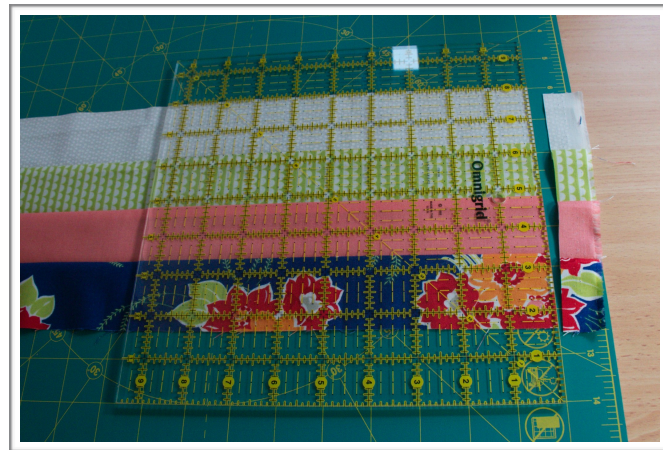
Sew these strips together, alternating the way you sew in order to prevent bowing.



Press seams in the same direction.



Trim edge off of strip set to have a straight edge.



From the set of strips, cut blocks out measuring 6.5 inches long.

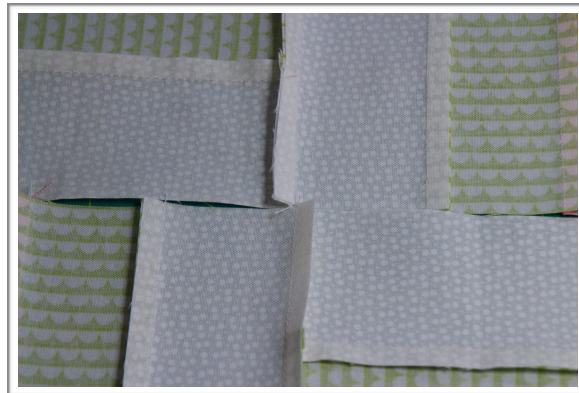




Decide how you'd like your fabrics to appear in finished block, then sew together the upper row, then the lower row.



Press these seams in alternate directions, and then sew these rows together.



Press your finished block





## Individual pieces:

If you'd like your block to appear more scrappy, you can use this variation to sew together your block. Attempt to use the same value in the corresponding sections of the block in order to maintain the appearance of the block. Taking a photo and making it grayscale is a good way to determine if you're using similar values in the similar areas of the block.

**VALUE IS DEFINED AS THE MEASUREMENT OF THE BRIGHTNESS OF A COLOR. THE BRIGHTER A COLOR IS THE HIGHER THE VALUE AND THE MORE LIGHT IT EMITS.**

*Cutting:*

You'll need a total of 16 pieces measuring 2" by 6.5"

Select the 4 separate fabrics you'd like to sew together into 4 groups.



Sew those 4 small strips together into units.



Sew those units together as directed in previous section.



Are you interested in seeing other ways to arrange this block? Or quilts made from the block?  
Check out our Pinterest website at:

<https://www.pinterest.com/southernbranch/>