

# Freezer Paper Fun

By Pat Sloan



**H**ave you been down the baggie aisle at the grocery store in search of freezer paper? Do you keep it hidden in your sewing room so your family won't use it? Have you ever wondered how quilters got started using freezer paper and what are the ways

Freezer paper has one side that is shiny. When ironed to fabric, the shiny side will stick. It can be removed and re-ironed several times before it becomes too fuzzy to stick anymore. Freezer paper has a nice weight. You can see through it for tracing designs, and it comes eighteen inches wide on a large roll.

I belong to an email group called The Quilt History List. (For information on subscribing, visit <http://www.QuiltHistory.com>.) Lots of topics relating to quilt history are discussed on this site, and recently someone asked when freezer paper was first used for quilting. Hazel Carter, from Virginia, told us that her friend Anne Oliver might have been first to use freezer paper for quilting! This is the story Hazel told.

"It began with sugar paper. Remember those little wrapped packages of loose sugar? One side of the paper was plastic. Anne used the plastic side of the paper to turn under her seam allowance for appliqué. The paper wasn't firm enough, so she and her husband looked for a heavier paper. The search continued until they heard about a wrapping paper used during deer hunting season. Reynolds® was the maker of this product, but it was only, at that time, available during deer hunting season. Today Reynolds® Freezer Paper is readily available in the grocery store, and quilting is even listed on the box as one of the uses for the product.

"Anne began teaching freezer-paper appliqué in 1979. In 1981, an article by Anne on this technique was printed in the magazine *Quilt*. Anne's method involves placing the freezer paper (shiny side up) on the wrong side of the fabric, then using the tip of a hot iron to press the seam allowance to the plastic side of the freezer paper. The fabric adheres to the plastic and can then be appliquéd with more design accuracy. When Anne won awards with her Painted Metal Ceilings quilt (*The Twentieth Century's Best American Quilts*, p. 67), she described her "freezer paper design work." Articles about freezer paper techniques have been published in nearly thirty magazines."

I started to wonder about other ways creative quilters use freezer paper. So I did some research and then turned to my internet group and asked how they use it. The following list is what I learned about freezer paper use.

## For appliqué

### 1 Use as an iron-on template that won't shift (on wool and cotton)

I like to trace around the shape and then remove it. See **photo A**.

### 2 Freezer paper template ironed to right side of fabric

The freezer paper is used as the guide for needleturning the seam allowance under. No marking is done on the fabric, and the paper is removed once the appliqué is complete. See **photo B** (next page).

### 3 Freezer paper template ironed to wrong side of fabric

In this method you prepare the appliqué in advance of the stitching. Lay the freezer paper template shiny side up on the wrong side of the fabric. Cut the fabric with a scant  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance larger than the paper template. Using the hot tip of your iron, press the seam allowance over the paper template edge so it sticks to the shiny side of the freezer paper. Those new tiny irons work well with this method. See **photo B** (next page).

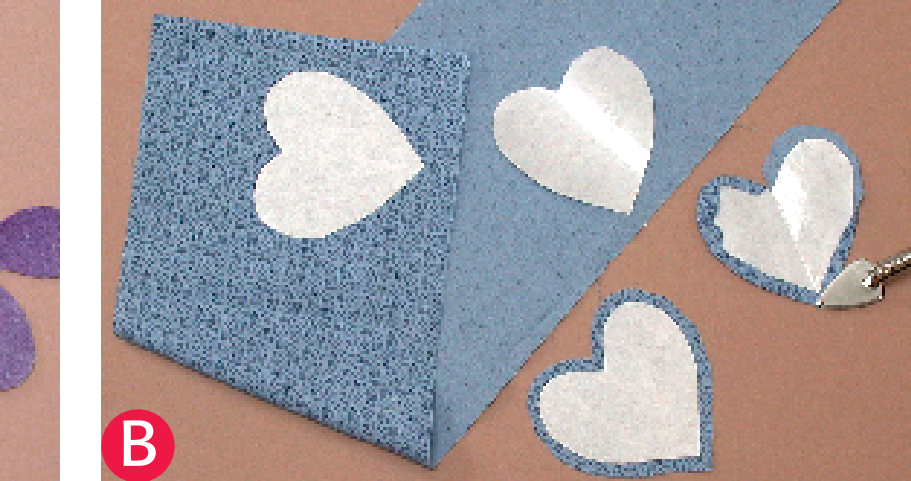
### 4 To create smooth circles

Iron the freezer paper circle to the wrong side of the fabric. Cut the fabric circle a scant  $\frac{1}{4}$ " larger than the freezer paper circle. Hand sew a running stitch in the seam allowance. Draw up slowly so the seam allowance folds around the freezer paper. Iron with a squirt of spray starch. Remove the freezer paper with a tweezers before stitching the circle down. This is a great technique for appliquéd berries.

## For English paper piecing

### 5 When using a freezer paper hexagon template, the template is ironed to the wrong side of the fabric

The seam allowance is finger-pressed over the paper template edge and basted. When several have been completed, a flower is formed by stitching six around a center hexagon. See **photo C**.



## For other sewing techniques

### 6 To stabilize quilt labels and signature blocks for writing on them

Iron freezer paper to the back of the label/block. Light lines may be drawn on the back of the freezer paper to help signers write straight. Remove paper when the writing is complete. See photo D.

### 7 As backing to stabilize fabric so you can run it through your printer

Cut the freezer paper so it is a bit smaller than your fabric. Iron the freezer paper to the back of your fabric and feed it into your printer.

### 8 For paper foundation piecing

### 9 As a template for piecing odd shapes

### 10 Tear-away stabilizer for machine embroidery and satin stitching

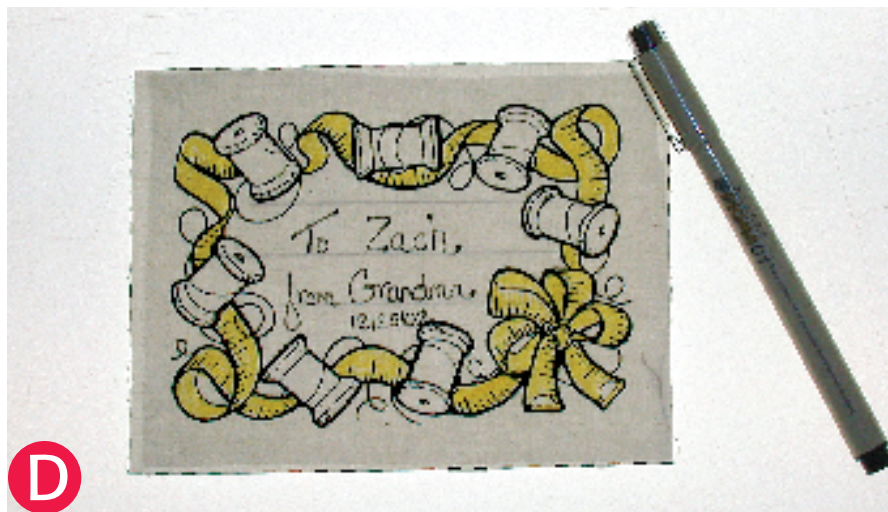
### 11 As quilting stencils—both for hand and machine work

Cut out your quilting motif (hearts, curves), then iron the freezer paper shape to the top of your quilt. Quilt around it by hand or machine. You can even slice out sections of the paper to quilt inside the motif. See photo E.

### 12 Use as a 'peel off label'

Write your notes on the freezer paper, then iron to fabric. There's no need for pins to hold the note in place. I use this one all the time! See photo F.

We quilters love our freezer paper! I suspect this list just scratches the surface. Have fun developing your own creative uses for this great product.



## Further Information

To see Pat's patterns, visit her web site, [www.quiltershome.com](http://www.quiltershome.com), or send a SASE for a list of patterns to Pat Sloan, 12444 Oliver Cromwell Dr., Herndon, VA 20171.