

Basic instructions for FOUNDATION PAPER PIECING by AitchBee

Foundation Paper Piecing (FPP) is a great way of reproducing complicated or pictorial blocks accurately as well as making blocks which might be very difficult or impossible by other techniques.

There are several methods of FPP, each with slight variations, it is worth trying different people's instructions to find the one that suits you best. The instructions I have given here can be applied to almost any FPP project, although most of the FPP patterns on my website include information on a method I have developed myself with additional tips and tricks

All FPP designs start with a line drawing of the block on a foundation; either hand-drawn or printed onto fabric or paper. This line drawing is always a mirror image of the finished block (it appears back to front) For speed and accuracy I print my designs onto cheap photocopier paper – the cheaper the better since it is easy to see through and tears away cleanly at the end of the project. My designs include an outer dotted line which gives an (approximate) $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance at the edge of the block

However experienced you are, remember the basic rules of foundation piecing:

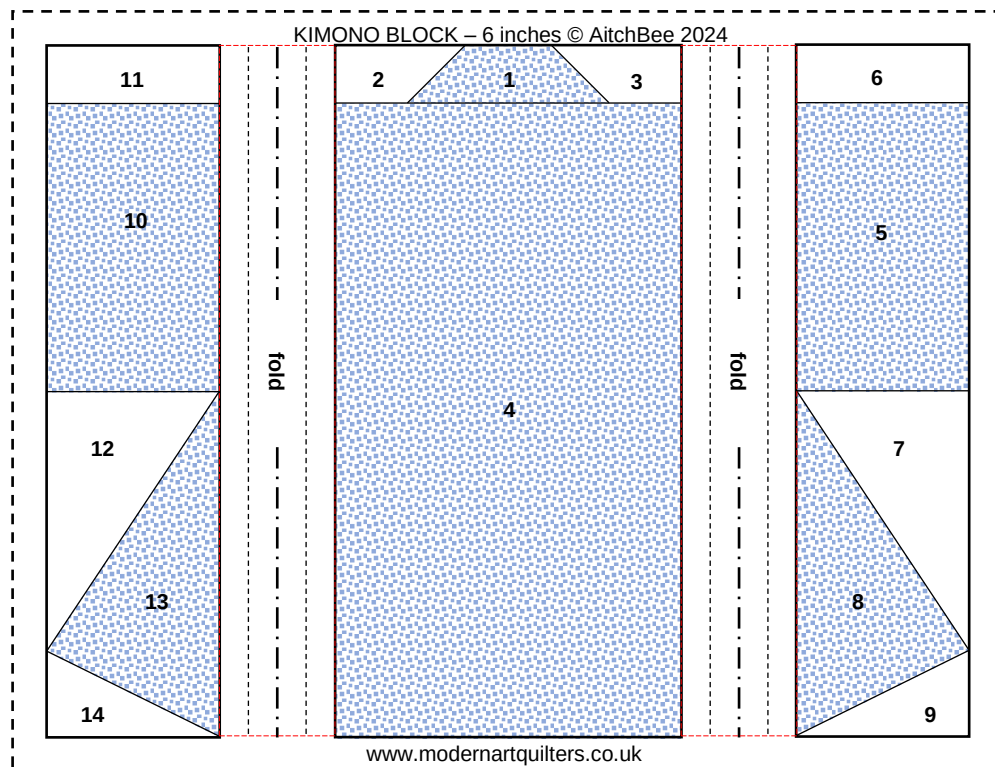
- The printed image is the reverse of the stitched one ie. it appears back-to-front
- Fabric goes on BLANK side of the foundation paper
- Only the first piece of fabric is placed right side up
- All other pieces of fabric are placed face down ie. Right Sides Together (RST)
- Set your stitch length very short (at least half the normal size) when sewing
- Always work in numerical order – noting which fabric is to be used in each section
- Stitch directly ON the line with a short stitch adding a few stitches to each end of the marked line
- Trim excess fabric and thread ends as you work
- Avoid steam pressing FPP blocks – it will make the paper soggy and unworkable!

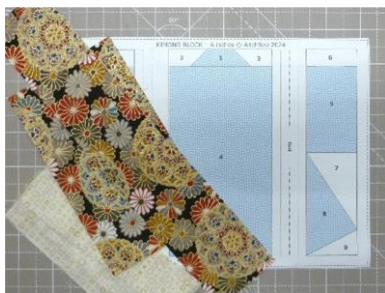
All FPP patterns (or templates as they are also known) include numbered sections as shown on the example below. The fabric is added to the foundation in numerical order, and each number is accompanied by an indication of what fabric to use. Sometimes a specific colour will be shown, but I like you to choose your own colours. In this case, since there are only two colours in the block, I have shaded all the parts where you are to use your kimono fabric and left all the background sections blank



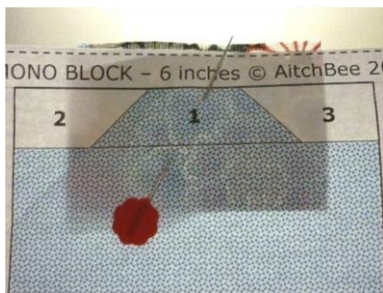
not to scale

Cut the foundation out just outside the outer dotted line so the three parts are still joined together

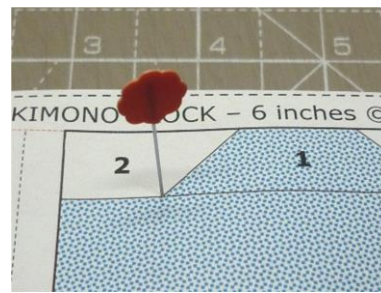




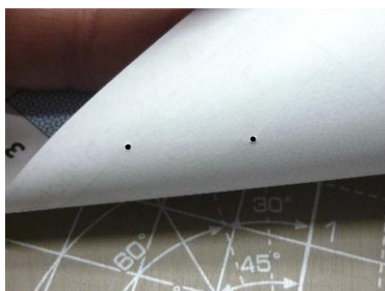
1. Cut the fabrics needed:
KIMONO FABRIC (blue shaded)
 one piece 6 x 3½ inches
 two strips 8 x 2¼ inches – *cut a 1 inch piece off one of these strips for section 1*
BACKGROUND FABRIC
 Three strips 7 x 3½ inches



2. Locate **section 1** and place the piece of fabric you have just cut face outwards on the **BLANK** side of the paper. View it from the printed side of the paper, with the light behind, to check all of **section 1** is covered with approx. ¼ inch extra all round. Pin fabric and paper together from the printed side.



3. Mark each end of the printed line between **sections 1 and **2**** with a pin hole – this will be your stitching line



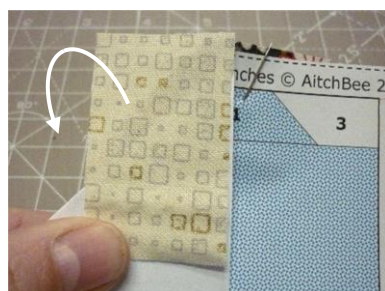
4. You can now see where the stitching line will be on the blank side of the paper



5. Fold the paper on a line between the marked holes. You will be able to see the outline of **section 2 through the paper (shown here in grey)**



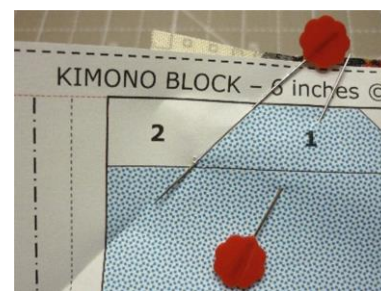
6. Trim the overhanging fabric ¼ inch parallel to the fold –



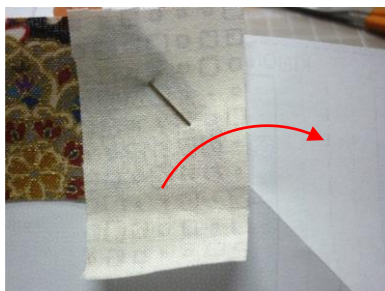
7. Check what fabric is needed for **section 2** and cut an oversized piece (at least ¼ inch bigger all round). Position it over the outline right side towards you



8. Move this second piece of fabric to the back; Right Sides Together (RST) with the pinned piece. Next we will check the position of this piece before stitching it in place



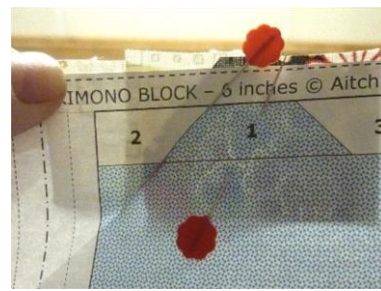
9. Keeping a good grip on all the pieces, carefully unfold the paper and place a second pin, through all layers, on the stitching line between **sections 1 and **2****



10. Turn to the blank side of the paper where you should see that the second pin is in line with the fold in the paper

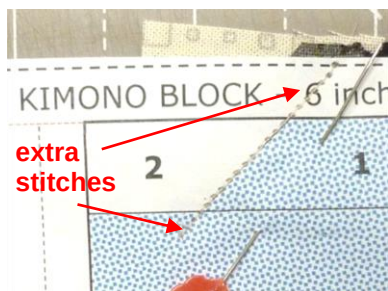


11. Finger press the second piece of fabric over the pin – also in line with the fold in the paper



12. Turn to the printed side and hold the paper up to the light to check all of **section 2 is covered with ¼ overhang.**

13. Reposition and re-check if necessary. Once it is in the correct place, unfold the fabric so it is flat again and re-position the first pin through all layers and remove the second pin altogether



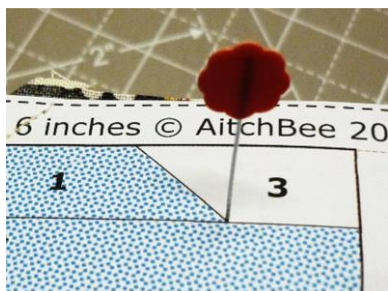
14. With your stitch length set to approx. half its usual length, sew directly on the line between **sections 1 and 2** adding 5 or 6 stitches at each end of the line



15. Unpin and trim away the excess fabric leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance. Make sure you are trimming on the correct side of the seam before cutting!



16. Finger press the fabric in position making sure the fold is right against the stitched seam otherwise your finished piece will not be accurate.



17. Mark each end of the stitching line between **section 2** and **section 3** with a pin hole, as before



18. Fold the paper on the marked line and trim the fabric to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch parallel away from the fold



19. Position, check, pin, stitch and press the next piece of fabric in place as before



20. Mark the paper with a pin hole at each end of the next stitching line.

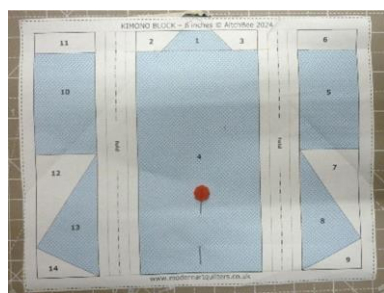
Before trying to fold the paper, pop the last few stitches of the previous two seams out of the paper – do not unpick them



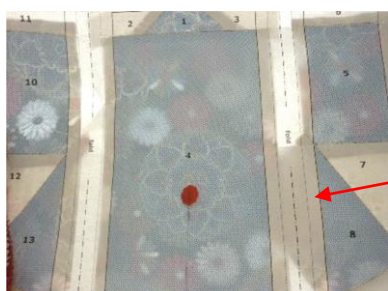
21. Fold the paper and trim the fabric $\frac{1}{4}$ inch parallel to the fold



22. Position, check, pin, stitch and press the next piece of fabric in place as before. Pin the fabric to the paper – from the printed side – to keep it from getting caught in the next few seams



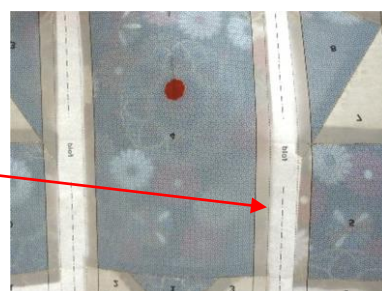
23. Complete the other two parts of the block on the same piece of paper – start with the lowest number each time.



24. Hold the paper up to the light and check all the fabric pieces are approx. $\frac{1}{4}$ inch clear of the two lines marked **FOLD**.

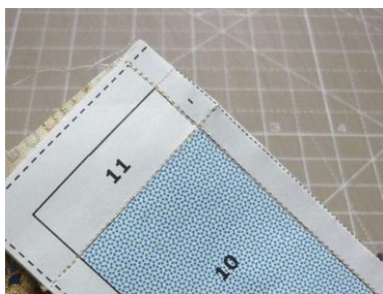
Trim back the fabric if necessary.

Press the block





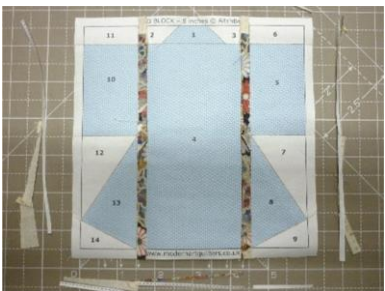
25. Fold the paper carefully on the **FOLD** line so the fabric is RST and stitch from edge to edge on the solid line $\frac{1}{2}$ inch away from the fold



26. Trim paper and fabric to the dotted line $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the fold.



27. Tear the paper away from the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance on both sides of the block. Repeat with the second **FOLD** line



26. Press both seams towards the middle of the block.

27. Trim the block, with a rotary cutter and ruler, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch outside the solid line at the edge of the block. Do not rely on the dotted line, it is there as a guide only.



Additional notes

I would advise, for this block, that you put a sashing and cornerstones between them so that they float

If you are making multiple FPP blocks, leave the papers in until you have joined the blocks together and keep your stitch length set short since this perforates the paper and makes it easier to tear out.

When you tear away the paper, make sure you get all the little bits out that get trapped under the seams – a pair of tweezers is useful for this

If you are making the small, 2-inch, blocks trim the fabric to $\frac{1}{8}$ th inch from the folded paper each time as you work from the sections or you will find they are very bulky. However you still need to trim to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch when you make the folds and at the edge of the block – $\frac{1}{8}$ th is too fiddly for joining blocks!

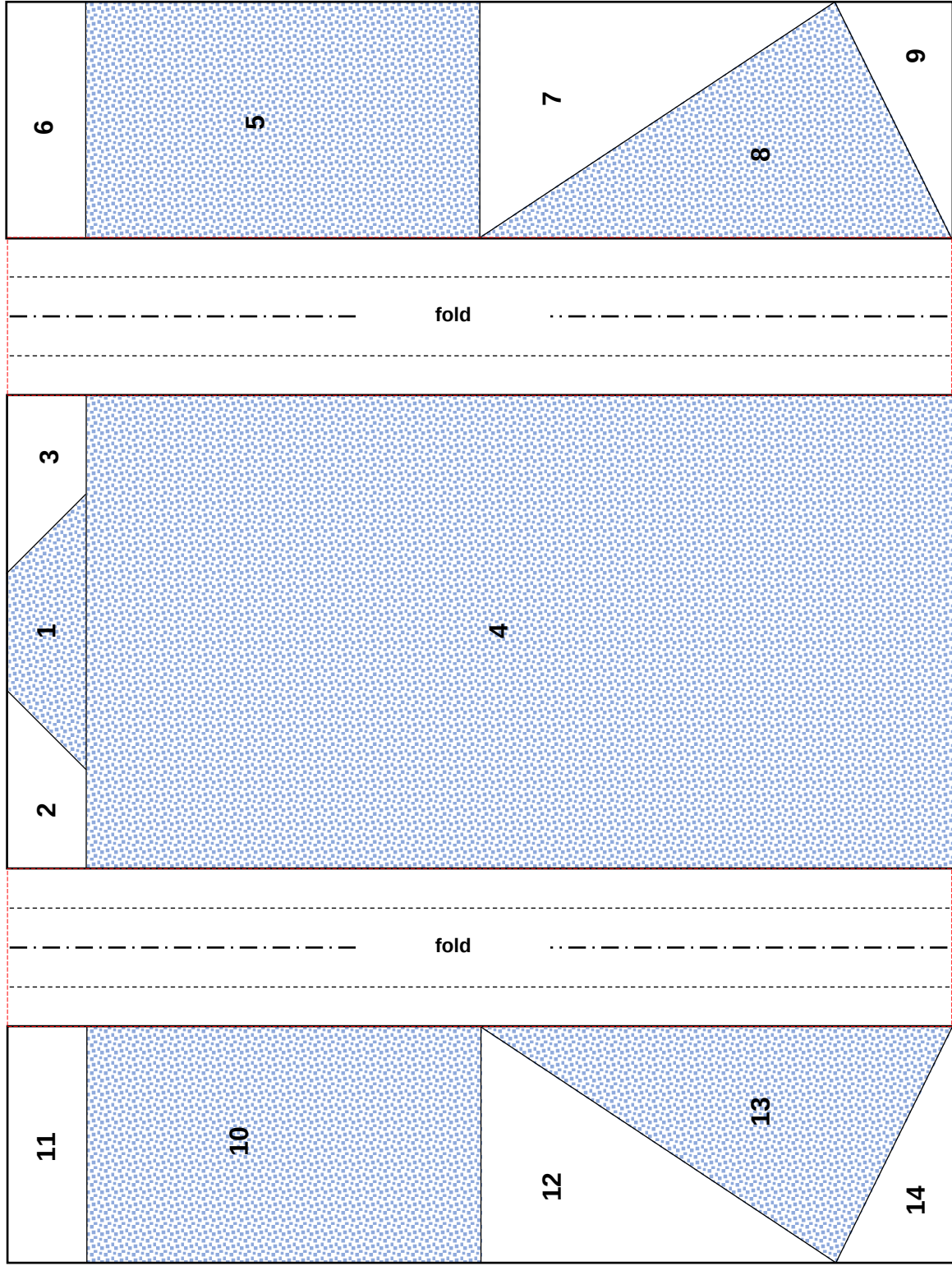
When you are trimming blocks, remember that square is more important than cutting accurately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the solid line. Depending on the accuracy of your folding and sewing the block may be slightly distorted when it is finished. In an ideal world these would trim to a perfect $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch or $6\frac{1}{2}$ -inch square, but nothing is ever perfect. It won't affect the overall look of the block, but it will be much easier to sew blocks together if they are trimmed to the appropriate size.

For the **large block** (finishing to 6 x 6 inches – trim to $6\frac{1}{2}$ x $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches) print **page 5** – one copy for each block required

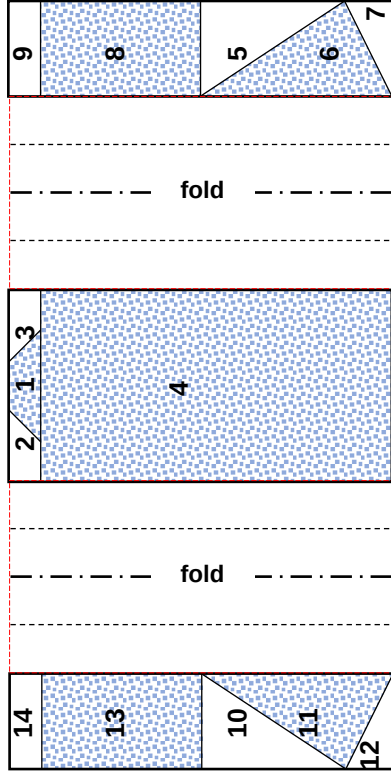
For the **small block** (finishing to 2 x 2 inches – trim to $2\frac{1}{2}$ x $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches) print **page 6** – one copy for every four blocks required



KIMONO BLOCK – 6 inches © AitchBee 2024

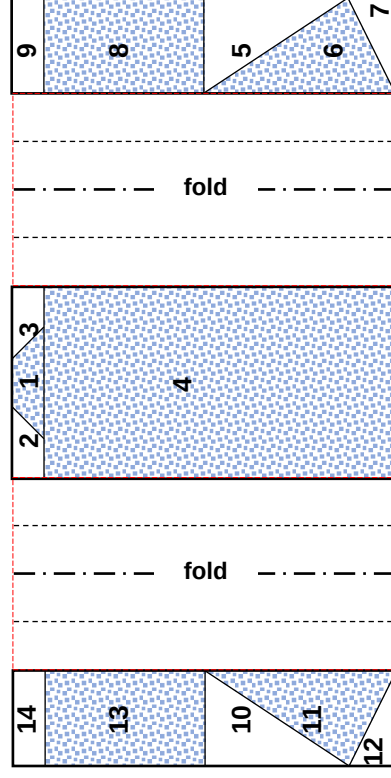


KIMONO BLOCK – 2 inches © AitchBee 2024



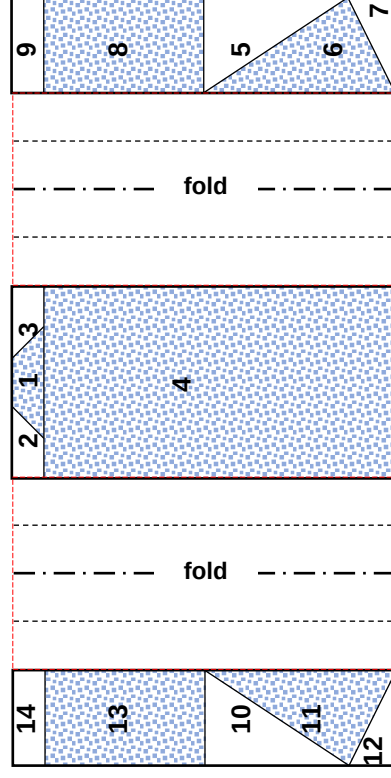
www.modernartquilters.co.uk

KIMONO BLOCK – 2 inches © AitchBee 2024



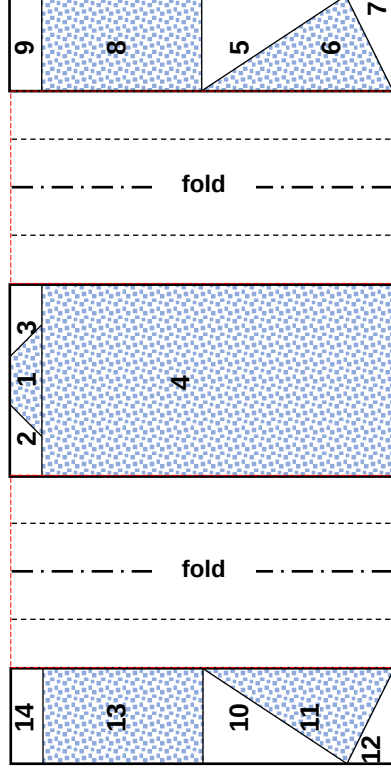
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KIMONO BLOCK – 2 inches © AitchBee 2024



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