



Art in the Mail: Quilted Postcards

1-2 Hours

What will you learn?

How to:

Pre-wash fabrics before using them
Fuse fabrics and cardstock with fusible web
Use the stitch and flip method of strip quilting

What will you need?

A sewing machine and basic sewing tools
Scraps of cotton quilting weight fabric (pre-washed without fabric softener)
Plain muslin for the postcard backing
Scraps of a very firm interfacing like Pellon® Peltex or Timtex™* (a piece 6" by 8 ½" for large postcards)
A paper-backed fusible web that can be sewn through like HeatnBond® Lite by Therm O Web** (an iron-on, paper-backed fusible web or adhesive, this product may be cheaper by the roll in the plastic bag than by the yard on the bolt, it is a relatively low-temperature bonding film that requires no steam to activate the glue)
Card stock, 8 ½" by 11"
A permanent bond paper backed fusible web like HeatnBond® Ultra by Therm O Web** (**Caution** - this permanent bond product cannot be sewn through.)

A collection of different colored all-purpose threads or decorative rayon or polyester threads (optional)

A small piece of muslin (plain off-white cotton fabric) to use as a pressing cloth, an 8 inch square will be large enough

Postcard back pattern to print on cardstock (See **Table of Contents** for back options)

Envelopes to protect your postcard in the mail (manila envelopes come 6 inches by 9 inches that will be perfect for large postcards, 5 ½ inches by 8 inches)

Directions to make this project:

1. Pre-wash all your fabrics in warm water on a gentle cycle with laundry detergent, rinse with cold water, and dry on warm until dry. High heat and over-drying your fabric will cause wrinkles to form that will be difficult to remove. It is best not to pre-wash or dry your fabrics with fabric softener because some of the glues used to make fusible webbing will not adhere to fabrics washed with fabric softeners. You will be using fusible web in this project.
2. Carefully press your fabric flat. Use steam if necessary.
3. Plan how you will arrange your fabrics. You may want to start by positioning a piece of picture fabric on the firm interfacing. You can have the picture fabric sitting straight on the interfacing or you can set it at an angle. Arrange strips of fabric around the picture block. Don't cut any strips narrower than 1 ¼" because the seam allowance will take up space and you want to see the fabric.



4. Once you decide on an arrangement, take a small piece of paper backed fusible web and fuse it to the back of your picture fabric. A small piece will work because you just want to hold your fabric in place. Follow the instructions written by the manufacturer. Peel off the paper and position your picture on the interfacing.
5. Place the muslin press cloth over the front of your postcard. Set the iron on the muslin and fuse according to the manufacturer's instructions. Don't wiggle or move the iron and don't press too long. If you press too long and use too much heat, you may ruin the glue on the fusible web. Lift the iron and let your fabric cool.
6. You will use the stitch and flip method of strip piecing to sew strips of fabric around your picture fabric to frame it and fill up the white spaces of the interfacing.
7. Start by placing your first strip face down on your picture fabric. Line up the cut edges of both fabrics. Make sure the strip is a little longer than the picture block on both ends. Using the edge of the presser foot as a guide, sew your strip to the

postcard, following the cut edges. Flip the strip to reveal the right side and press it flat. Position the next strip to repeat sewing, flipping, and pressing.



8. You can frame your picture block by sewing strips to opposite sides of your picture block:



Or you can make “L’s” and “7’s” as you sew strips around the center square:



9. When you have filled in all of the white spaces of the interfacing, press the front of your postcard carefully. If you have decorative stitches or interesting utility stitches on your sewing machine and you are able to sew really straight, you can use decorative thread to sew over the seams at this point (optional). Decorative and utility stitches are difficult to take out so don't make any mistakes.



10. Cut a piece of muslin and a piece of fusible web (light bond, you need to be able to sew through it without getting glue on your sewing machine needle) 6" by 8 1/2". Fuse

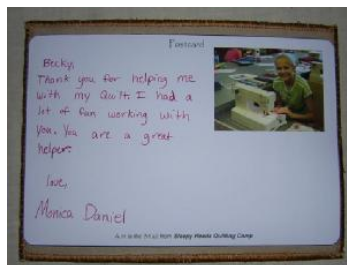
the fusible web to the muslin and then fuse the muslin to the back of your postcard following the manufacturer's instructions.

11. Next trim your postcard to 5 ½" by 8" with a rotary cutter, mat, and ruler.

12. Now you are going to zigzag the edges of your postcard. You can use all-purpose thread or fancy decorative thread in a color that goes with your fabrics. Wind a matching bobbin. Practice stitching to see what width and length of zigzag you like. Use scraps of the interfacing when you practice. The postcard should be positioned under the presser foot so the needle goes through the postcard and then swings over the edge without going through it as it picks up the bobbin thread. You will need to do a little bit of straight backstitching when the needle is in the postcard so the zigzag stitching does not come out when you cut your threads. You can go around the postcard with a 2.5 wide and a 2.0 long zigzag to start with and then make your stitch width wider and the length shorter. A zigzag of 4.0 width and .5 to 1.0 length will cover the edges nicely. You can go around the postcard several times to get nice coverage with the zigzag stitching if desired. Remember to do a straight backstitch like you did in the beginning when you finish zigzagging around your postcard.



13. You will need to use the computer with a printer to print the pattern template for the postcard-like back where you will write your thank you note. If desired, add a picture of yourself to the postcard template where the stamp would be positioned for mailing (see **Table of Contents** for links to template options). Print the pattern sheet for the postcard backs on card stock. Fuse a piece of permanent bond paper-backed fusible web to the back of the card stock. Be sure to cut it just a little smaller than 8 ½" by 11". Cut out the postcards, remove the paper backing, and fuse the card to the back of your postcard. When you fuse the card stock to the postcard, cover it with your muslin press cloth to protect the printing. The ink or toner in the printing may smear with the heat of the iron.



14. Write a nice message on the card. You may want to look at greeting cards for ideas for what you want to say.

15. Your postcard is done! Try some more. Be creative. These are little pieces of art. If you have access to an ink-jet printer, you might like to try printing pictures on [fabric](#)*** for the front side of your postcard. Someone special might like to have a picture postcard of you! ☺



Notes:

Pre-washing your fabric will take out chemicals left from manufacturing, remove excess dyes, and shrink the fabric. Don't use fabric softeners because some glues in fusible products cannot bond to fabrics treated with fabric softener.

* If you would rather work with a product that is fusible on both sides, **fast2fuse**™ is an alternative product: <http://www.timtexstore.com/fastinfo.html>

You will need an appliqué pressing sheet with a non-stick surface.

** For manufacturer information: <http://www.thermoweb.com/cpd-lite.html>

The **Lite** version can be sewn through. The **Ultrahold** permanent version cannot. It will gum up your needle. You need the **Ultrahold** to glue the card stock to the back of your postcard: <http://www.thermoweb.com/cpd-ultrahold.html>

*** The fabric store has special sheets of fabric that have been prepared for printing with ink-jet printers. You can also make iron on picture decals with especially prepared paper. Read the directions on the packages carefully. Use your computer to position pictures on the prepared sheets so you don't waste them. To eliminate waste, you may have to print the whole sheet.

There are lots of sites with fabric postcards on the internet (if you do your own search use "fabric postcards"). Have fun looking for ideas and more tips for making your postcards:

<http://www.joycehartley.com/postcards.htm>

<http://dollmakersjourney.com/fabricpostcards.html>

<http://www.art2mail.com/>

<http://www.virginiaspiegel.com/NewFiles/ACSFundraisersoldR.html>

<http://www.postmarkdart.com/>

<http://www.ctpub.com/productdetails.cfm?PC=989>

<http://www.watsonguptill.com/detail.html?session=68ab13931d3c03c17d8231fd725c6866&id=1-57120-332-X>

<http://www.quiltbug.com/postcards.htm>

<http://www.needlepointers.com/ShowArticles.aspx?NavID=1516>

Magazine: Fons & Porter's Love of Quilting, January/February 2006, **Be Mine** article:

<http://www.fonsandporter.com/fp/ourmagazine/backissues.asp>

Information on postcards and mailing restrictions: <http://postcalc.usps.gov/mailpiecedimensions.asp>