

Six Block Rail Fence

This is a super easy block, and honestly, doesn't look like much by itself. However, when put together with others, it makes a fabulous scrappy quilt with a "staircase" look to it. So, grab a cup of your favorite hot beverage on a snowy day and whip up some of these easy blocks.



Block basics:

- Finished block size is 6 1/2" square.
- Use a neutral beige color thread.
- All seams are scant 1/4" seams unless otherwise indicated.

Choosing your fabric:

- Squares in the block should be batiks, solids, or very small prints. The rule of thumb is they should read as solids or near-solids when viewed from a few feet away. Any colors will work except for pale pastels, which won't contrast well enough with the white blocks.
- The rectangle in each block should be white, either solid white or very small white on white print. The goal is to really contrast with the colors of the squares.
- Please stay away from any holiday or novelty prints.

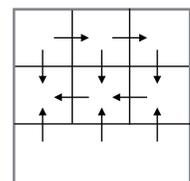
Cutting Instructions:

Cut the following fabric pieces:

1. Six 2 1/2" squares of colored fabric. For each block, use six different fabrics.
2. One 6 1/2" x 2 1/2" rectangle of white fabric.

Constructing the block:

1. Pick two squares of your colored fabric and lay one on top of the other, right sides together. Stitch along any side (they're squares).
2. Stitch any third square to the pair to create a row of three squares. Press to the RIGHT when viewed from the back. This is the top row of your block.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 to create a second row of three squares. Press to the LEFT when viewed from the back. This is the middle row of your block.



Pressing Diagram
(block viewed from the back)

4. Sew your top and middle row together to create the six square piece. They should nest nicely if each row was pressed correctly. TIP: If when you feed the block into your sewing machine the middle row of your block row is on top, top row of the block is on the bottom, all the seam allowances on the underside will face down (towards you) and you won't have to worry about them flipping over as you sew.
5. Stitch your white rectangle onto the bottom of your middle row to complete the block.
6. Press the top horizontal seam DOWN and the bottom horizontal seam UP.
7. Double check that your block is 6 1/2" square.

Constructing many blocks:

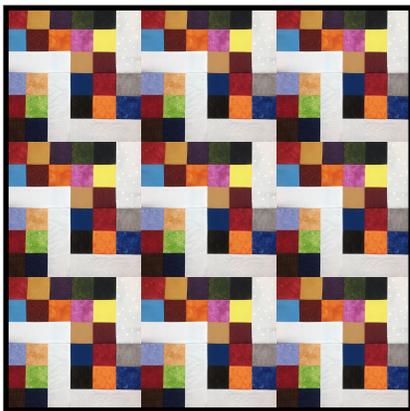
Would you like to create many blocks? This block can easily be created in multiples.

For starters, since you want a random mix, utilize chain piecing. Put aside 1/3 of your squares and put the rest in a pile. Grab two squares from the pile and start chain piecing them by stitching pairs together one after another. Once your done, add one square from the group set aside to each pair to complete your rows of three squares. Sew two of these three square rows together, add on your white rectangle and you're done. And yes, you can chain piece both these steps as well.

Another option would be to simply cut your colored fabric in 2 1/2" wide strips, sew three strips together, then cut your three strip block into 2 1/2" wide sections. Now you have several three-square sets completed. Put two different ones together, add on your white rectangle, and you're done.

If you go this route, please don't do more than 4 blocks at a time in one strip, we don't want to interfere with the randomness of the colors in the quilt. Also, mix up the same sets as much as possible. Flip one so the left and right squares are reversed, make one the top row of a block and another the bottom row, and don't pair up the same two rows in two different blocks.

See how the blocks look when you put a bunch of them together? Cool, huh?



(Yes, I admit I cheated by copying and pasting the same block over and over, but hey, you get the picture!)

Bring your finished blocks to the guild meeting on January 23 to participate in the drawing. Remember, you get one raffle ticket for each completed block, so the more blocks you complete, the more chances you have to win.

Questions? Comments? Suggestions for future blocks? Feel free to email me at smclarkson@gmail.com.