



Carolyn Gibbs Quilts presents:

Double Cat



This is a simple 12" machine stitched block, which, with the addition of four strategically placed buttons, suddenly turns into two cats peeping at each other. If you add a border to bring it up to 16" square, you could make this into a cushion for a cat-lover.



It would look good in two opposing "cat" colours; tan and cream, or black and white for example.

I have just referred to "Dark" and "Light" in these instructions, so you can choose the colours yourself.

If you are careful about which way the seams are pressed, two useful things can be achieved:

- If meeting seams are pressed in opposing directions, they can be "shuffled" flat between the fingers before pinning, giving a better line up at the seam junctions.
- If the intersection of seams already stitched (i.e. the triangle point) can be seen when adding a border or sashing, it is possible to aim for this point when stitching the border seam, and thus help avoid chopping off the triangle point.

- These instructions contain lots of tips like this to help you get a perfect result. I hope that even if you have been doing patchwork for some time, you will learn something new.
- **Clickable links** in red take you to the detailed guidance at the end of this pattern. Just skip anything you already know.
- You can see video demonstrations of all the cutting, stitching and pressing techniques marked with * used in this pattern, in the [Machine-stitched Patchwork Techniques](#) section of my website, or on my YouTube channel: [CarolynGibbsQuilts](#).

Requirements

You will need:

Dark Fabric	Fat Quarter
Light Fabric	Fat Quarter
Fabric for cushion back (optional)	Fat Quarter
Buttons (1 ½ - 2 cm diameter)	4
“Sludgy” coloured thread – this will blend with all your fabrics, and not show up against any of them.	

Cut out the following pieces:

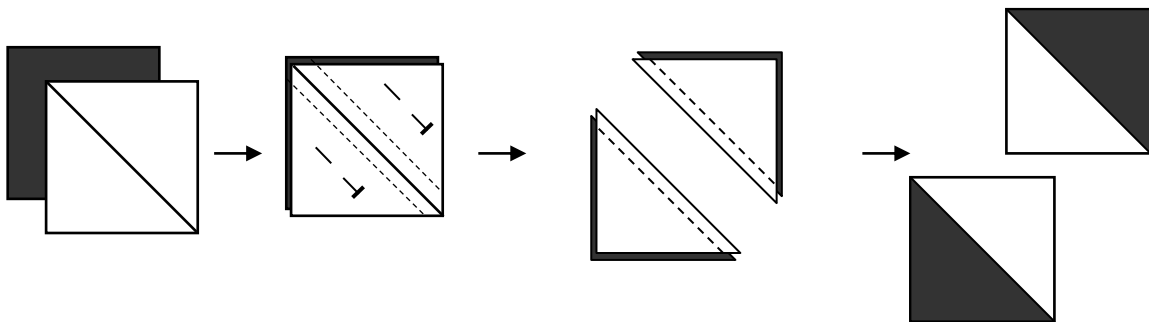
	<i>Colour of fabric</i>	<i>Size of piece</i>	<i>Number required</i>
Block pieces	Dark	4 ½” square	1
	Dark	4 ⅞” square	4
	Light	4 ½” square	1
	Light	4 ⅞” square	4
Optional Borders	Dark	12 ½” x 2 ½” strip	2
	Dark	16 ½” x 2 ½” strip	2
Optional backing for cushion	Dark	16 ½” x 10 ½” rectangle	2

*Half Square triangle units

Sort out the slightly larger squares – you should have 4 Dark and 4 Light. You are going to make half square triangle units with them – this is a common and versatile unit in patchwork made up of a square divided diagonally into two different coloured triangles.

Rather than cutting out triangle pieces and stitching them together, these units will be quick pieced – a method which is not only speedier, but more accurate, as it avoids the difficulties associated with the stretching of bias edges on pre-cut triangles.

- Take the four Light $4\frac{7}{8}$ " squares.
Work out which is the wrong side of the fabric, and with this side uppermost, draw a diagonal line across each of the squares, using a sharp pencil, and a ruler. Take care not to drag the fabric, as it will stretch.
- Now take one of these Light squares and one of the $4\frac{7}{8}$ " Dark squares.
- Place them with the right side of the fabrics together.
- Place two pins as shown – they will not need to be moved until after the lines are stitched, and will keep the squares exactly lined up.
- Now stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from each side of the line. Make sure that you don't stitch along the line – you must stitch two lines, on both sides of the drawn line.

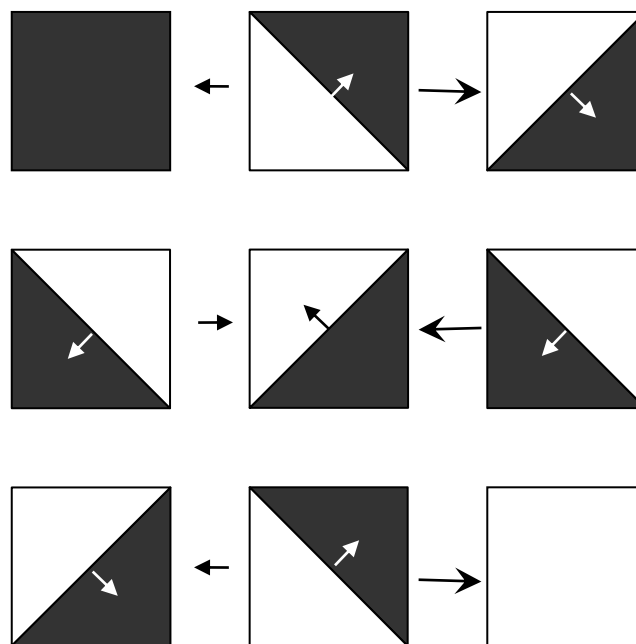


- Cut along this line to separate the completed half-square triangle units.
- Open them out – you will discover that you have made two units at once.
- Repeat with the other three pairs of $4\frac{7}{8}$ " squares, and then carefully press – see the **Pressing** tips at the end.
- Press six with the seams behind the Dark fabric, and one with the seam behind the Light fabric. The last half square triangle unit is spare, and will not be needed for this block.

- Don't worry that some of the seams are pressed behind the lighter fabric – this is correct, even though you may have previously been taught to always press behind the darker fabric. It will give you those “perfect points”!

Block assembly

- Arrange all the pieces into the block design, referring to the diagram.
- Make sure that the only half square triangle unit with the seam pressed behind the *lighter* fabric is placed at the centre – the arrows on the diagonal seams show which way the seam allowances go.



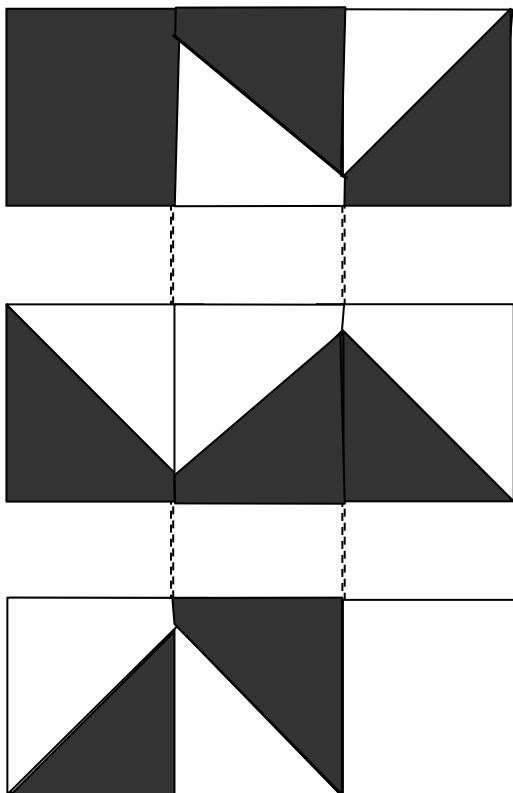
- Check that all the half square triangle units are the right way round – it is easy to turn them round without realising, and then the design doesn't quite look right.
- The pieces are now stitched together into this arrangement.

*String piecing

- When assembling blocks, the small units are assembled into rows first, and the rows are then joined together. A good way to keep the order correct (instead of the usual method of stitching all of the first row together, and then all of the second row etc.) is to stitch the row seams a column at a time, “string piecing” the rows together as you go. You may find this confusing at first, but it’s a technique worth persevering with, as it avoids mistakes in the long run.

Click to see the [String piecing](#) guidance at the end

- When joining the units, you should find that as the diagonal seams have been pressed in opposing directions, it is easy to “shuffle” the seam joins between your fingers so that they nestle into one another and lie flat. Secure with a pin before stitching. Click to see the [Perfect Points](#) guidance at the end
- Press the vertical seams “out, in, out” (in alternating directions), as shown by the arrows on the block diagram on the previous page.



- After string piecing the row seams, you will end up with the complete block held together – the vertical row seams stitched properly, and the complete rows held together with short threads. Don’t worry that the triangle points look “chopped off” – the part beyond the new point is the remaining seam allowance, and will disappear when the row seams are stitched as well.

- Once the entire block is linked, the rows can be stitched together with a $\frac{1}{4}$ ” seam to complete the block.
- As the vertical seams were pressed “out, in, out” (in alternating directions), these can be shuffled flat when the rows are stitched together, ensuring a perfect line up of the

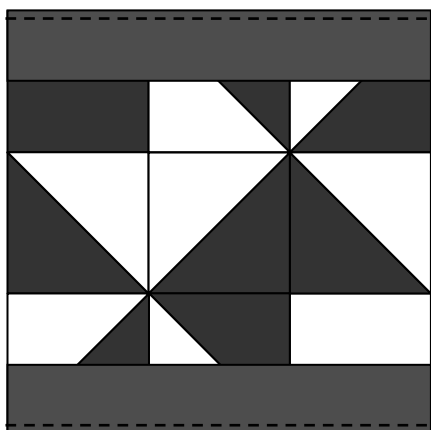
vertical seams. As the diagonal seams that meet now have *also* been pressed in opposing directions, these need to be shuffled flat *at the same time* as the vertical seams! This may take a bit of manipulation, but if you can do it, the finished patchwork will look much better.

- So, pin the row seams carefully, stitch, and press outwards.

- When you stitch, look forward to the intersection of any two seams already stitched (i.e. a triangle point), and then aim for this point. Stitch just to the seam line side of this point (so that the tip doesn't hide unseen in the ditch of the seam), even if this means that the seam is no longer $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide – it will look right on the front, which is what counts!

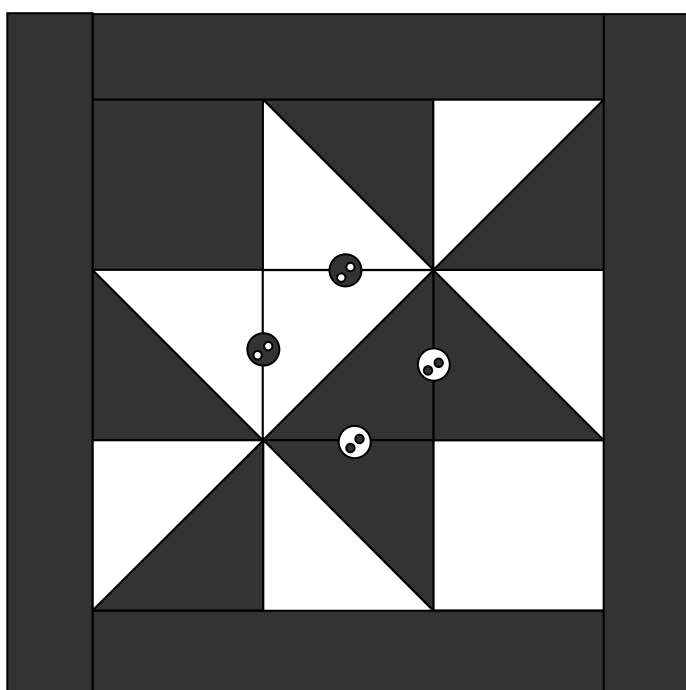
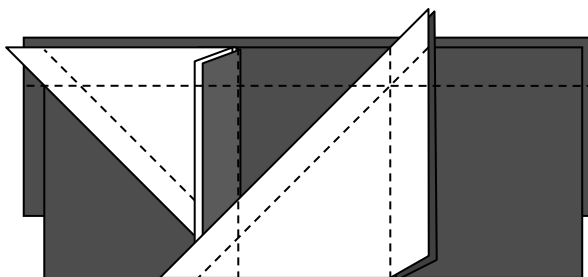
Now your block is complete, apart from the cat's eyes.

Add some borders first as follows if you want to make it into a cushion:



- Take the two $12 \frac{1}{2}$ " x $2 \frac{1}{2}$ " shorter Dark borders, and place them onto opposite sides of the block's edge, with the right side of the border fabric down onto the right side of the patchwork.
- Pin the two shorter borders onto opposite sides of the block from the patchwork side – this will mean that you can see the seam junctions forming the points at the edge, and aim to stitch through them.

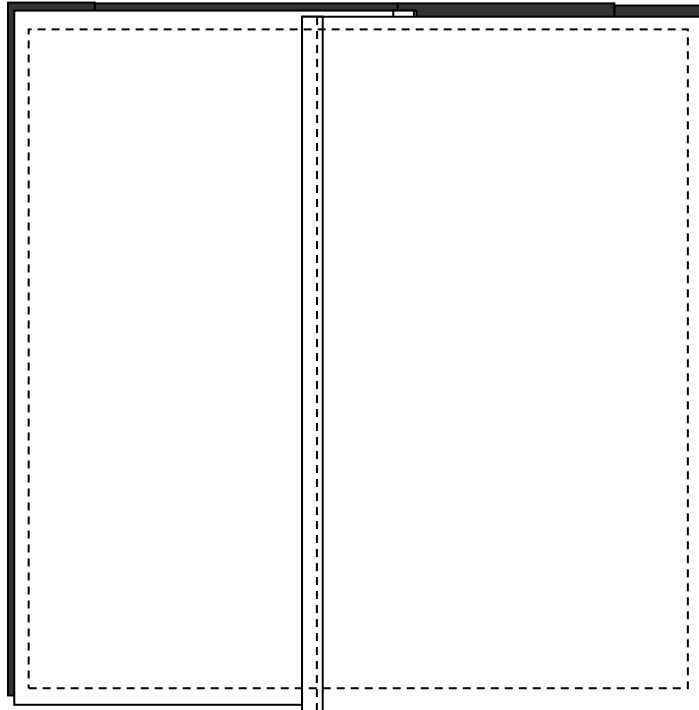
- Don't worry if this means that your seam is a little more or less than $\frac{1}{4}$ " in some places – this is unlikely to show, and will enable you to get perfect triangle points on the front.



- Stitch with $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam, and press with the seam towards the border.
- Similarly stitch the two longer borders onto the remaining sides.
- Position four buttons as shown, and stitch in place by hand to form the cat's eyes.

Cushion back

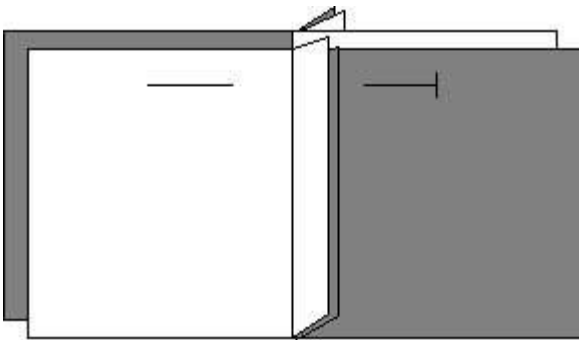
1. Take the two 16 ½" x 10 ½" rectangles.
2. Turn and press a narrow double fold along one of the *longer* edges of each piece.
3. Machine stitch along this to form a narrow hem.



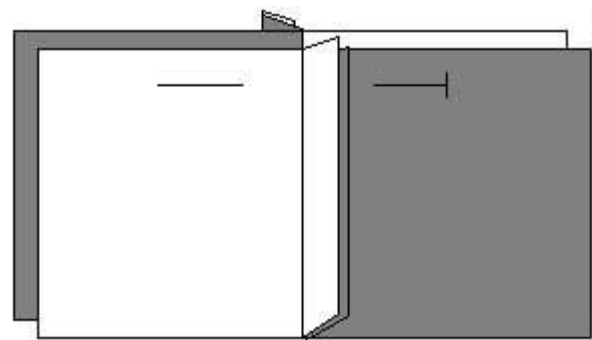
4. Lay these pieces right sides down onto the completed Double Cat cushion front.
5. Line one piece up with the left hand edge of the block, and one piece against the right hand edge of the block, as shown, overlapping in the middle.
6. Machine stitch all round the edge with ¼" seam.
7. Clip off the corners, close to the seam, to reduce the bulk.
8. Turn inside out through the envelope back, and insert a 16" cushion pad.

*Pressing

- Use a hot iron, with steam if necessary.
- Press each seam before you stitch the piece to anything else. If the stitching looks tight or uneven, press it as it is first, to settle the stitching. Then open and press again.
- Both the seam allowances are pressed to the same side in patchwork – usually behind the darker fabric to avoid a shadow showing. Sometimes I suggest that this law is over-ruled by the need to avoid too much bulk when further seams are sewn. If joins can be made to lie as flat as possible, by having the meeting seams pressed in opposite ways, the seams at the join will line up more accurately, giving a crisper appearance to your finished patchwork.



Seams pressed in the same direction produce a bulky joint, and a poor line up.



Seams pressed in opposite directions produce a less bulky joint, and a better line up.

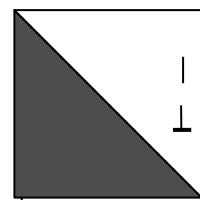
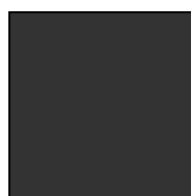
- Be very careful when pressing bias sewn seams. These are easily stretched, distorting what should be a square into a diamond.
- Try laying the unopened stitched triangles onto your ironing board, gently lifting up the top triangle, and pushing it away over the seam allowance all at once with the side of the iron. This avoids putting too much pressure from the iron on the ends of the seam, which are the most easily stretched places.
- Note that the fabric which is *on top* before being opened out will be the one that the seam allowance ends up pressed *behind*, so turn it over if necessary before pressing.



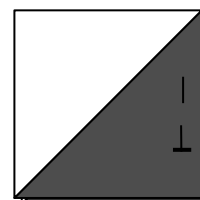
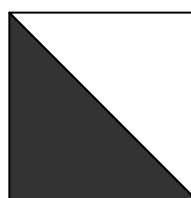
*String piecing

- When assembling blocks, the small units are assembled into rows first, and the rows are then joined together. A good way to keep the order correct (instead of the usual method of stitching all of the first row together, and then all of the second row etc.) is to stitch the row seams a column at a time “string piecing” the rows together as you go. You may find this confusing at first, but it’s a technique worth persevering with, as it avoids mistakes in the long run.

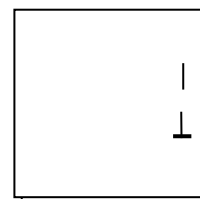
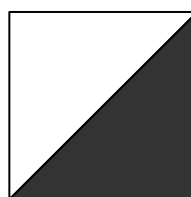
- Take the first piece on the right hand edge, and turn it over on top of the piece next to it, which you want to stitch it to. Pin the seam (at the right hand side). See diagram to the right.



- Do the same for each piece in this column. Flip them out to check that the pattern is still correct. Flip them back, and stack the pinned units in order, with the *top* piece at the *top* of the pile.



- Being careful not to turn any round, stitch the pinned seams in stacked order with an exact $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam; not stopping to fasten off or cut the threads between units, but feeding the next one under the machine foot just as you finish the previous one. Allow the machine to make a few stitches on nothing in between, so that a short twisted thread is left between the pieces -

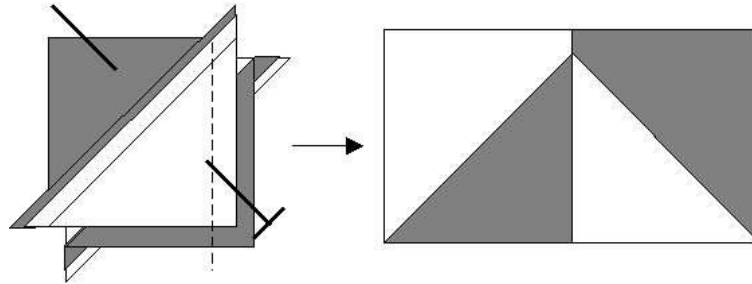


you shouldn't need to lift the presser foot up. This will give you a string of little flags. *Don't* cut them apart, as this keeps them in the correct order.

- Look at the original block diagram – you have not stitched all of one row across, you have stitched the *last seam in each row*. Identify which seams these are on the block diagram (they are shown with a bigger arrow in the diagram), press seams in the direction shown and return them to the arrangement. Check that you haven't turned the whole column upside down!

Perfect Points

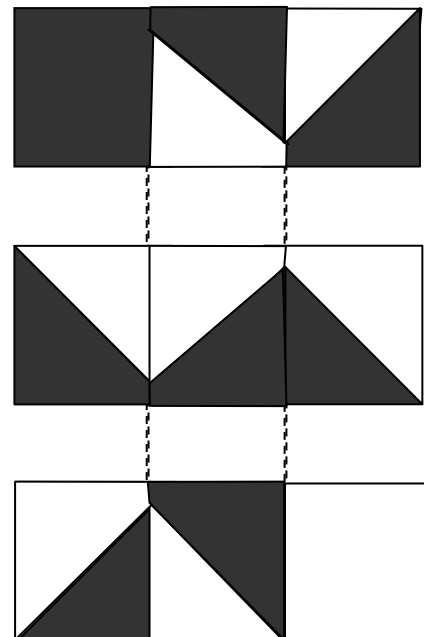
- Wherever two half square triangle units meet, the pre-planning has ensured that the diagonal seams will always be pressed in opposite directions.



- Before pinning, place them right sides together, holding the seams between your thumb and fingers.
- “Shuffle” the seam until it nestles together perfectly. If you are not sure whether it feels right, start with the seams visibly too far apart. It’s now easy to feel the gap before gently pushing together until it just closes up. Peel back the top unit a little to check the line-up. Pin across the diagonal seam to hold in place while stitching the seam at the side.

*String piecing continued

- Stitch and press the other column similarly, and you will end up with the complete block held together – the vertical row seams stitched properly, and the complete rows held together with short threads. Don’t worry that the triangle points look “chopped off” – the part beyond the new point is the remaining seam allowance, and will disappear when the row seams are stitched as well.
- Once the entire block is linked, the rows can be stitched together with a $\frac{1}{4}$ ” seam to complete the block.



If you are pleased with your final result, then why not try one of [my other patterns](#) using these techniques? Nelsons Victory, Provencal Sampler or Friendship Star would be good “perfect points” projects to try next.

If you are interested in purchasing any of the following, then do [contact me](#) direct via the website:

➤ *Basic Rotary Cutting*

- ✓ Fully inclusive instructions for choosing and using rotary cutting equipment.
How to cut strips and squares - ideal for beginners!

➤ *Nelson’s Victory*

- ✓ A 40” square wallhanging or table centre. Ideal beginners project with extra detailed instructions!
Fully inclusive instructions for patchwork and quilting.

➤ *Northern Lights*

- ✓ A cushion, 38” square lap quilt or bed quilt in a number of different designs can be made from this versatile little block.
An easy way of experimenting with scraps. Patchwork instructions only. Suitable for beginners.

➤ *Provencal Sampler*

- ✓ Ready for a bigger project? Fully inclusive instructions for fifteen different 12” blocks, with seams pressed to give perfect patchwork points. Includes outline guidance for Sampler Quilt assembly.

➤ *Friendship Star Quillow*

- ✓ A large wallhanging (52” square) or quillow. This lap quilt can fold up inside an integral pocket to make a cushion (the Americans call this a pillow – hence the term “quillow”) Fully inclusive instructions for both patchwork and machine quilting using a variety of methods.

➤ *Christmas Card Hanger*

- ✓ My most popular design by far. This Log Cabin design holds up to 28 cards, and can hang over a door.