


Parlez Vous Sewing?!

Sometimes sewing books or patterns can seem like they are using a whole other language!

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- Applique:** Stitched by hand or machine, appliqué is a method of applying a piece of fabric, usually a shape, on top of another piece of fabric.
- Basting:** Stitching used to hold two pieces of fabric together before sewing with a more permanent stitch. Usually done close to the fabric edge and then removed later. Often done by hand, or on a machine using the longest stitch setting. It is also used to make gathers by pulling one thread tight to gather up the fabric.
- Batting:** This is used in quilt making, and is the soft middle layer between the top and bottom of a fabric 'sandwich'.
- Bias:** Bias is the 45-degree angle that runs diagonally across the lengthwise grain of fabric. A piece of fabric 'cut on the bias' drapes well and can stretch. It is also used in narrow strips to make a bias trim or 'binding'.
- Fabric grain:** This is the lengthwise or crosswise thread in a woven fabric. Look closely at your fabric and you will see threads running in two directions. This is the grain. If you make a tiny cut in many fabrics, you can tear the fabric along the grain. It is important to lay out patterns on the grain correctly by matching the arrows on the pattern pieces.
- Fabric width:** The measurement of the fabric from selvage edge to selvage edge.
- Interfacing:** A layer of interfacing fabric is either sewn into or ironed between decorative fabrics to add structure and stability. Interfacing can be woven or non-woven.
- Lining:** The lining fabric is used on the inside of a project i.e. the inside of a bag.
- Notions:** A general term, mainly in the US, for sewing tools or accessories — pins, zips, thread, buttons or trims. Basically anything that is not the fabric.
- Right & wrong sides of fabric:** An easy one to remember. The 'right' side of a fabric is the nice side, or the patterned side, that you want to be seen on your finished project. The wrong side will be the plain, or faded side that will be on the inside of the finished project. Often you will be directed to pin and sew something 'right sides together' before turning it right sides out.
- Seam allowance:** This is the measurement that extends outside the sewing line. i.e. if a pattern has a 6mm seam allowance included, you cut out the pattern as it is, and sew 6mm in from the edge.
- Selvage:** The finished edge of the fabric, the selvage runs parallel to the lengthwise grain of the fabric. When you buy fabric, it will have two selvage edges down the sides, often with the manufacturer's name printed on it.
- Warp and weft:** All woven fabrics have a warp (the threads that run lengthwise in the loom) and a weft (threads woven in and out of the warp threads to create a width-wise grain).
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