

Northern Lights

Class Lesson Plan

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This lesson plan is provided to help you plan a class for *Northern Lights*. Use this plan as a guide for presenting the ideas and methods needed to make this quilt. This lesson plan does not have to be followed precisely. Make changes as needed. Also, your ideas and additions are important elements, so be sure to share your thoughts, methods, and advice with your students.

The Quilt Project: Northern Lights

Northern Lights can be made as a wall quilt, a lap quilt, a coverlet, or a twin-bed quilt. This class should be able to accommodate students who are interested in making any of these quilts, as the fabric selection and construction techniques are the same in all quilts.

The Class Schedule

This class has been designed to be taught in *three* three-hour sessions. If you think it will work better for you to offer a different number of sessions or a different class length, feel free to make this change.

Sample Brochure Class Description

A simple quilt with color magic! Make this quilt with its easy construction methods and its wonderful blend of colors. This strikingly beautiful quilt can adorn a wall, a bed, or even a lap. Skill level: beginner. Quilt sizes: wall, lap, coverlet, or twin-bed quilt.

Joen's Basic Sewing Basket of Tools

rotary cutter, gridded ruler for rotary-cutting (e.g. 6" x 12" or 3" x 18"), cutting mat, thread, extra-fine pins (eg. Iris or extra-fine glass-head pins), small scissors, seam ripper

SESSION ONE – GETTING STARTED

Students should bring to class the following items:

Northern Lights pattern, Joen's basic sewing basket of tools, sewing machine & equipment, sharp needles, and fabrics for quilt blocks.

Step 1 Fabric Selection

Be certain students have read the *Thoughts about Fabric* and the *Fabric Selection and Sewing Tips* on the pattern's front page. Discuss the idea of selecting fabrics for blocks that have value changes that move from light to dark. Stress the idea that the value changes do not have to be the same from block to block. The variations in value and color from one block to the next make this quilt's beautiful, yet simple, design vibrate with energy.

Have students separate the fabrics into block colors, using the inside cover color legend as a guide (certainly students may use different color groups than indicated in our guide). Number each block's fabric group.

Step 2 Cutting Strips

Demonstrate how to cut 1 ¾" fabric strips from selvage edge to selvage edge, using a rotary cutter, a gridded ruler, and the cutting mat. If you have extra tips or hints, please share here. For instance, I straighten my fabric and cut my fabric strips with a T-square for high accuracy. At this time I would demonstrate how to use a T-square, how to straighten fabric, and how I cut my strips with my T-square, ruler, and rotary cutter.

Have each student begin cutting the designated number of strips requested for each block used in her quilt.

Step 3 Sewing Block Strip Sets

Demonstrate how to sew together the four strips that make a block's strip set, beginning with the lightest-valued fabric and ending with the darkest-valued fabric. Remind students to alternate the edges from which to begin stitching the strips, so as to eliminate possible rippling of the strips.

Step 4 Work Period

Have students make strip sets from the cut fabrics.

Step 5 Cutting the Fabric Blocks

Demonstrate how to cut the strip sets into 5 ½" squares. These squares become the quilt's blocks.

Homework

Have students complete as many fabric blocks as they can.

SESSION TWO ASSEMBLING THE TOP

Students should bring to class the following items:

Northern Lights pattern, sewing machine & its equipment, *Joen's basic sewing basket of tools*, all blocks, and all other fabrics or fabric strips needed for the top.

Step 1 Questions & Review

Inquire if anyone has any questions or had any problems working on her project. Respond to any inquiries. Check on each student's progress.

Step 2 Sewing Blocks into Rows

Demonstrate how to use each quilt's block diagram to organize blocks into rows. Have students place the blocks in order for the first horizontal row. Give any pinning and sewing tips to students. Discuss setting seams and pressing seams in a direction that will accommodate seams setting into one another from row to row. These blocks are really easy to sew together because there are no matching points.

Step 3 Work Period

Have students sew the blocks into rows.

Step 4 Sewing Rows Together

Demonstrate how to sew rows together, pinning so corners match perfectly.

Homework

Have students finish their quilt tops.

SESSION THREE**THE FINISHING STEPS****Students should bring to class the following items:**

Northern Lights pattern, Joen's sewing basket of tools, basting materials and tools, backing fabric, batting, binding fabric, 3-5 pieces of tracing paper, pencil, eraser, sewing machine and equipment

Step 1 Questions & Review

Inquire if anyone has any questions or had any problems working on her project. Resolve any problems.

Step 2 The Quilt Design

Discuss the importance of the quilting design. Talk about the idea that there is no one idea that is perfect for a quilt. Many ideas may work equally well. Discuss using the quilting design to incorporate a secondary design rather than just reiterating the piecing design.

Step 3 Design Period

Let students play with different quilt ideas that may work on their quilts. Each student should create at least three design options, using the tracing paper over one of the colored pattern pictures.

Discuss how to mark the quilting design on the quilt. Demonstrate various quilting techniques. Give a demonstration showing how to machine quilt (simplified version). Discuss thread, needles, recommended feet, foot plate, etc.

Step 4 Preparing the Backing Fabric

Discuss how to sew the fabrics together to form the backing. Talk about piecing the fabrics from large scrap fabrics, if the quilter wishes to do so. Discuss cutting off the selvage edge before seaming the fabrics together. All seams should be set and opened. Have students piece their backing fabrics together. (I prefer using a ½" seam allowance for the backing seams rather than a ¼ " seam.)

Step 5 Basting

Discuss the different tools and methods for basting. You may wish to discuss pros and cons of the various basting methods and tools you discuss. Explain your favorite method.

Step 6 Binding

Demonstrate how to make the binding: how to cut the strips and how to sew the strips together, etc. Show your favorite binding method. Demonstrate how to hand stitch the binding to the back of the quilt.

Homework:

Have students finish the quilts.

Extra Credit

If there is interest, set a date for a *Northern Lights* quilt show & tell for the following month at the store for a celebration. This should be an informal gathering where the students bring their quilts to share—finished or not. A great dessert for this gathering would be a Baked Alaska, but if simplicity is your thing, then go for Eskimo Pies.