

Thematic • Units
• PRIMARY •

Reading Quilts

Joan Martin

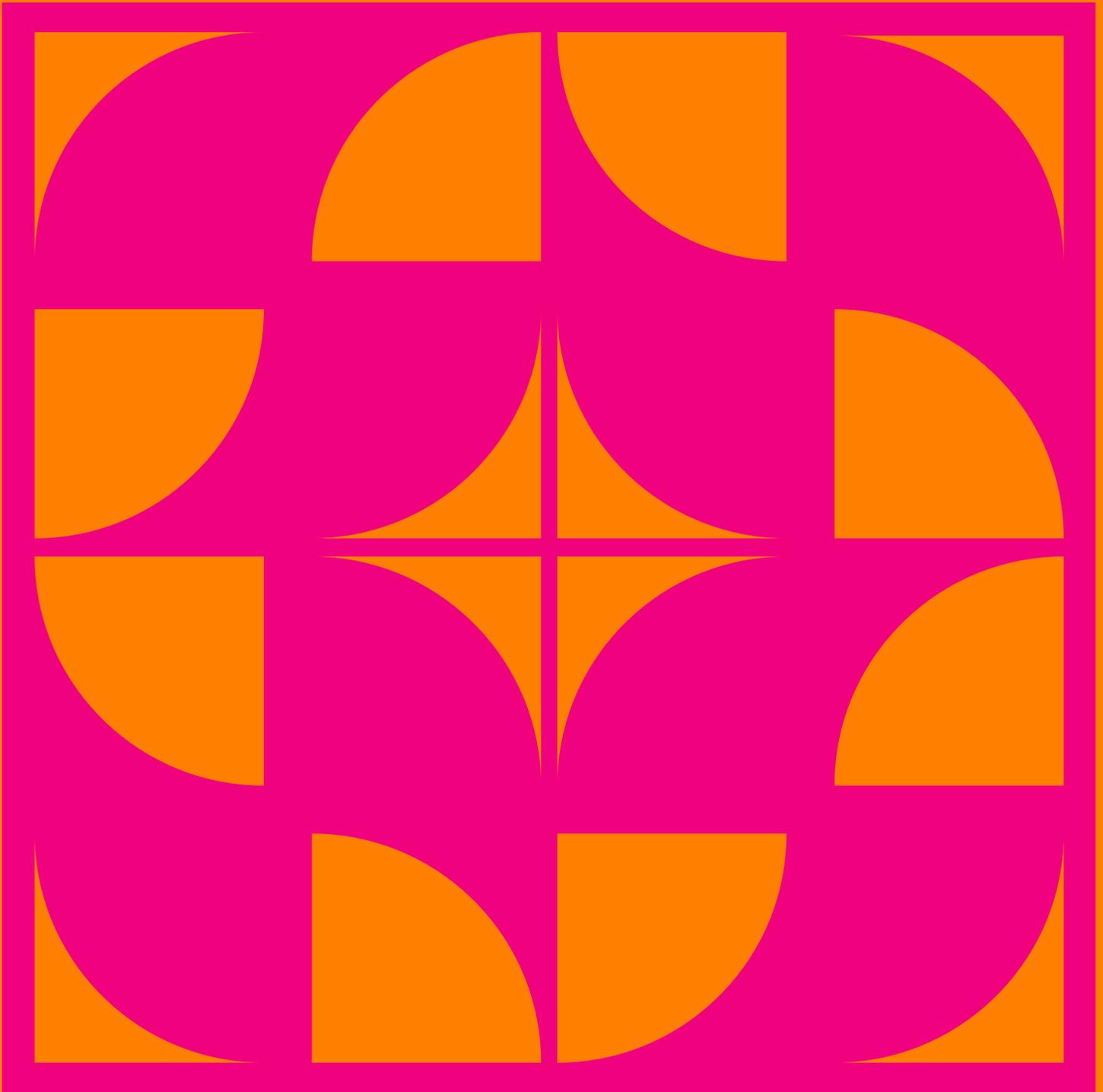


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HISTORY OF QUILTING

Historians are not certain where or when quilting began. It is known that Crusaders saw quilted garments in the Middle East. Memories of the quilted garments became the source for clothing and bed coverings designed by Europeans to combat cold winters. Cottage industries in quilting grew up in Spain, England, Germany, and Holland where quilts were made for the nobility. Chintz, imported from India, was the fabric of choice. Its colorful floral patterns, birds, and urns would be cut out and applied onto a large piece of cloth.

Patchwork and quilting were particularly popular in America from 1775 to 1875. To salvage beauty and usefulness from scraps was the everyday accomplishment of women. Born out of necessity, conceived in love, and brought to fruition by hours of work, quilts held the joys and sorrows of the quilt maker. They had stories to tell of westward expansion, friendships formed, and homes established.

When early settlers came to the New World, fabric was a precious commodity. Typically, a woman collected any scraps or fragments of fabric she might come across. When there was sufficient fabric, she would piece together her assorted colors and shapes into a crazy quilt. As fabric became more plentiful, she could coordinate the shapes and colors that were used.

A custom during colonial times was that each girl should have thirteen quilts by the time she was married. The thirteenth quilt was her bridal quilt and could not be started until she was properly engaged. The Rose of Sharon pattern was often used for this special quilt.

Quilt names were taken from everyday items (*Log Cabin* and *Bow Tie*), from the Bible (*Star of Bethlehem* and *Joseph's Coat of Many Colors*), from nature (*Pine Tree* and *Maple Leaf*) and from historical events (*Clay's Choice* and "*54'40' or Fight*"). Today they conjure up images of a country expanding westward.

Since women couldn't own land or cast a vote and were rarely educated, quilting became an important vehicle for expression. The "quilting bee," where several women gathered in one home to create a single quilt, became an important place to exchange news and socialize. Even today, with so many avenues open to them, women are finding new modes of expression through the medium of quilts. Women are using new techniques: painting, stencilling, sculptural decorating, and unusual shapes. Quilting Clubs of today are direct descendants of the quilting bees of earlier times.

Interest in quilts has ebbed and flowed over time. The Whitney Museum exhibition in New York City in 1971 prompted the American public to view the American quilt as an abstract art design. It awakened a disinterested America: quilts were taken out of the attic, washed, mended, and even hung on the wall. Today, quilting is enthusiastically embraced not just as a household craft but also as an expression of visual art.

UNIT 1 — THE PATCHWORK FARMER

Summary: In this wordless picture book a farmer rips his blue jeans every day when he goes to work. Fortunately, he has a big basket of patches. Every night he sews a patch on his jeans. By the end of the summer the farmer is delighted to see that his colorful jeans match his colorful fields.

Pre-Reading Questions and Activities:

1. Look at the cover of the book. Why is “ouch” an appropriate word for the farmer to be saying?
2. What are some jobs farmers do on a farm?
3. What is a barbed wire fence? Why do some farms have this kind of fence?
4. Look at a basket of varied fabric swatches. What could you make from these swatches?

Post-Reading Questions:

1. How did the farmer rip his jeans?
2. What did the farmer do every evening?
3. What tools did he use to mend his jeans?
4. By the end of the story, how were the farmer’s jeans like his farmland?

Extension Activities:

1. *Vocabulary* — Using a basket of varied fabric swatches, hold up one swatch at a time and talk about its design. Provide samples of polka dot, stripe, check, plaid, lace, and floral print. Ask children to identify these patterns in clothing and objects in the classroom.
2. *Vocabulary* — Cut out several 3-inch swatches of fabric for each of the six patterns: polka dot, stripe, check, plaid, lace, and floral print. Draw a life-size Patchwork Farmer on mural paper. (You may want to enlarge the figure in Black-line Master #1.) Review the names of the six designs and ask each child to choose one swatch to glue on the farmer’s overalls. Once the patches are in place, children can count how many there are of each design.

Name: _____

JOSEFINA'S JOURNEY

1. Measure the distance from your state to Missouri.

2. How many states do you pass through?

3. Measure from Missouri to California.

4. How many states do you pass through?

5. Measure from _____ to _____.

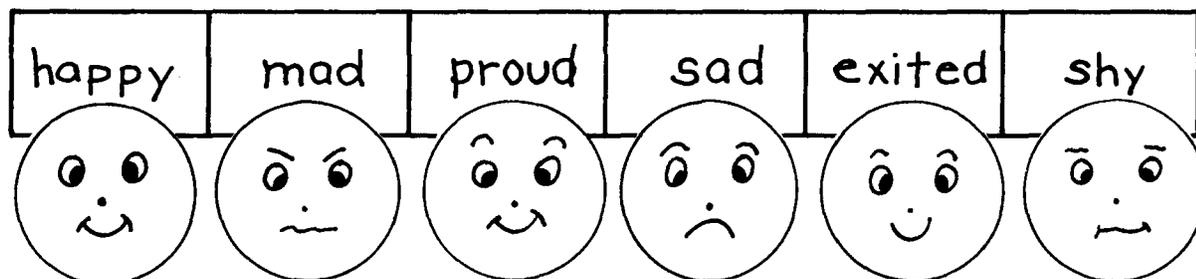
6. How many states do you pass through?

7. Make up your own word problem to measure distance on a map.

Unit 5 (cont.)

Extension Activities:

1. *Vocabulary* — Many different feelings were expressed in this story. Create a “feelings” chart showing each of the feelings below. Draw simple faces on paper plates that correspond to each feeling. Staple them under the appropriate feeling word. Write each of the following questions about the book on a disc of oak-tag or card stock. Read each question aloud and ask children to place each disc on the feeling chart. Some discs may be placed on more than one category.



- After Sam sewed the rip in the awning, how did he feel?
- After Sam told Sarah he wanted to join her quilt club, how did she feel?
- After the ladies laughed at Sam, how did he feel?
- When the men met in the barn, how did they feel?
- After the ladies peeked at the men in the barn, how did they feel?
- When the men and women took their quilts to the fair, how did they feel?
- After the quilts fell in the mud puddle, how did the quilters feel?
- When the Rosedale Men’s Quilt Club and the Rosedale Women’s Quilt Club worked together, how did they feel?
- When the Rosedale Quilting Club won a blue ribbon, how did everyone feel?