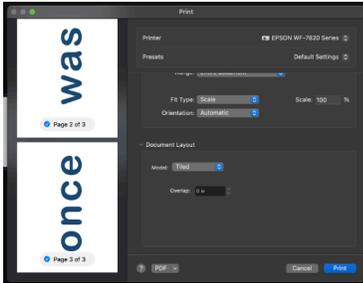
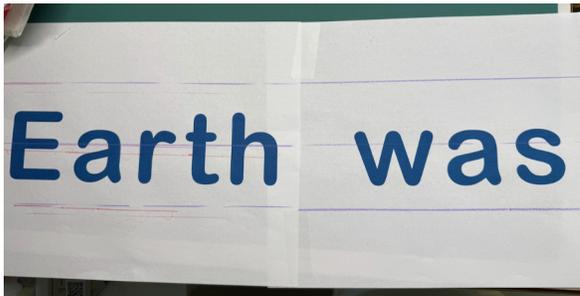
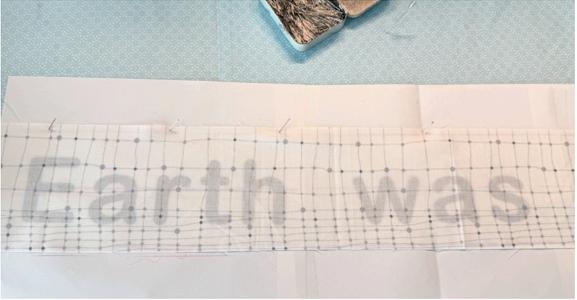


# Making Letters

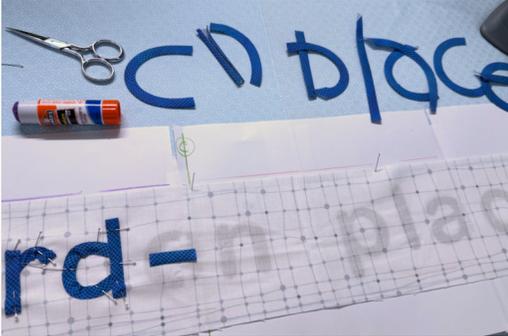
A few tips from Elizabeth of OPQuilt.com

1	<p>Bias Strips are made using the Dritz #9 tool. Cut your fabric <math>\frac{3}{4}</math>" wide on the bias. Run the strip through the tool with a light – very light – spritz of spray starch.</p> <p>I place a fat quarter on my ironing board and do my spray-starch pressing on there, so as to protect the cover.</p>	
2	<p>Decide on your letters/words. Print them out in large font, and tile them, so they'll print out properly, one word per page.</p> <p>Refer to the instructions for your printer. Trial and error is always a good way to learn.</p>	
3	<p>Mark off your baseline. I used the first capital of my phrase, an "E" as a reference, drawing my baseline right through the middle. Then I figured out the lower curve of the "a" as <math>1\frac{1}{4}</math>" lower than my baseline. I also marked the top/bottom of the planned border. My border was 4" finished, so the fabric was cut <math>4\frac{1}{2}</math>" wide. I marked this on the paper. This helps when aligning the letters next to each other.</p> <p>Tape your words together in a phrase, if you have one.</p>	
4	<p>Shape the bias tape to your letters: Begin the combination letters (with a straight section and a curved section – such as an "r") by cutting segment of bias tape for the straight section, leaving <math>\frac{1}{4}</math>" on either side for turn-under. Then estimate the length needed for the curved section, again, leaving extra to turn or to tuck under – <b>but don't cut yet.</b></p>	

# Making Letters

<p>5</p>	<p>Place the bias tape seam-side up on your ironing board and spritz with a bit of water. Using the tip of your iron, and applying tension on your bias tape, iron a curve into the tape, wiggling your iron to help coax it into a curve. For a letter like “r” the curved piece will be short. Place it on your printed paper, and if it is pretty close to the curve, cut, as described in step 4. Remember to “think backwards” so the curve is going the correct way.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>I use the section of printed paper to help me keep track of what I’ve shaped. Letters like a “o” will have one curved section, while a “g” will have one curved and one with both curved and straight.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Cut your fabric border, leaving a good foot on either end. Try to cut from one length, not piecing it together, if possible. Lay your printed words out, and layer the fabric on top. Center it, making sure the top and bottom edges are in line with your markings on your paper. Pin in place.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Mark the center of your curved piece of bias tape and center it on your curve (see the letter on the right, an “a”). Then ease in the curve bit by bit, using pins to help keep it in place. I dab a bit of glue under the tape as well. This is an inexact science.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Show to the far right is the narrow curve of the “a” – this is the hardest letter. You could always change the shape of your “a” if you wanted to.</p>	

# Making Letters

<p>11</p>	<p>The “a” has a partially curved and partially straight second part. Just shape the curve BEFORE you cut, and check often to make sure you are pressing the curve in the right way.</p> <p>It’s because you are ironing with the seam side up. You could try ironing it seam-side-down, but I had a harder time with buckling and pinching. Do what works for you. Pin, then tuck under the ends.</p>	
<p>12</p>	<p>I wanted to use some fancy appliqué glue, but my bottle was dried up (!). So a purple glue stick was pressed into service, by using the edge to put a bit of glue where needed. Give it a light press to “set” the glue, then you can remove some of the pins. I’m using appliqué pins: short, with a glass top.</p>	
<p>13</p>	<p>Still working. I’m starting now on the “e” by placing the straight bit first. Then the curved section will come: pin the center of the curve, then shape it around.</p>	
<p>14</p>	<p>Shaped, glued, pinned and ready for sewing. Work to have your needle go into the background just a thread or two behind the edge of the letter, then come out at the fold of the bias tape, for nearly invisible sewing. For really tight curves, stitch in the little pleats to secure.</p> <p>When finished with your section of border, place face down on a padded ironing surface and gently press with steam.</p>	

# Making Letters

Placement of letters around your quilt.



Here's a hot flash: my phrase on the top and bottom are centered to the quilt, but the side phrases are not. Because the "a" seems so tiny placed at the front of the right-side phrase, I moved the phrase upwards a very small amount to provide visual balance. This is why you need extra on either end of your border. Please take time to check and re-check your phrases visually.

The other tricky thing was my quilt center was off-center with the curved leaves on one side and the houses on the other, so I also visually checked the top and bottom phrases to make sure they were balanced, too.

Pin this a lot, then sew on the borders with an even-feed foot if you have one, to eliminate shifting. Miter the corners (there's a tutorial on my blog); press well and continue with your project.

## Final Thoughts.

I opted to use this "hand-written" alphabet look because it fit in with the organic theme of garden. My font for this project was Arial Rounded MT Bold.

I like the paper-pieced alphabets, but they are more precision and modern-looking. Please do evaluate the final effect of whatever alphabet you choose.

There are posts about making bias tape, and some about making these letters on my website.

*Elizabeth*  
OPQuilt.com 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Elizabeth Eastmond

Email: [opquilt@gmail.com](mailto:opquilt@gmail.com)

Web: [www.opquilt.com](http://www.opquilt.com)

Instagram: [occasionalpiecequilt](https://www.instagram.com/occasionalpiecequilt)

Please write if you have any questions.