Block of the Month - August  
Jeanne LaMoore, Kathie Simon Frank, botm@mnquilt.org

September Calendar Block—First Essays  
12 ½” square (unfinished)

The plan for 2018-2019: This is the first of 12 blocks we’re designing for a unique Minnesota Quilters Block of the Month Calendar. Each 12 ½” (unfinished) block will have a textural component, so the quilt can be used as a plaything for a baby. Or if you want a flat quilt, follow the alternate directions to use as a wall-hanging or banner as seasonal décor in your home. Blocks may be finished individually to hang on a dowel. Each month we’ll continue to have a drawing using an alternate (flat) block version. See directions below for entering the Block of the Month drawing.

Fabrics:
Muslin, cream, or pale tan for background  
Lined or striped fabric for notebook page  
Black and white mottled fabric for cover  
Plain fabric for inside of cover  
Primaries for pencils/crayons (or butterscotch for #2 pencils)  
Tan for point, brown for eraser—optional  
Black Perma-pen (permanent ink) to draw lead  
Two or three Velcro dots  
Optional: trim

Cutting directions:
Lined/striped Fabric:  
A: (1) 6 ½” x 9 ½”  
Mottled White/Black:  
B: (1) 6 ¾” x 9 ½”  
Muslin/Cream:  
C: (1) 6 ¾” x 9 ½” (inside cover of notebook; use other fabric, if desired)  
D: (1) 2” x 9 ½”  
E: (1) 5 ½” x 9 ½” (background for crayons/pencils) Will trim after assembling pencils/crayons  
F: (2) 2” x 12 ½”  
G: (1) 1” x 16” cut into (4) 1” x 4” pieces  
Primary or #2 Pencil Yellow:  
K: (1) 1” x 6” and (1) 1” x 7”  
Optional: H: white rectangle 1 ¼” x 3 ½” for “Composition” or “[subject]” label on notebook cover

Assembly directions:
1. If adding a label to notebook cover, prepare it now. Using perma-pen on H, letter COMPOSITION or subject name (e.g. BIOLOGY or ESSAYS or your choice). Machine- or hand-applique it to notebook cover B centered about 3” from top. If you wish to add trim to decorate your notebook cover, add it at this time.  
2. With B and C right sides together (RST), sew around three sides, leaving the side that will be the “spine” of the notebook open. Turn unit right side out, work the corners out, and press. Baste spine of notebook and backing closed to stabilize the unit.  
3. Lay A face up on the table. Stack BC (the cover) on top of A. A and C are RST. Baste these 3 layers together at the spine. Place D RST with B on the spine and sew over the basting with a normal-size stitch. Press the muslin out to form the left border.  
4. Make the pencils or crayons. Sew one G to each end of a K. Press seams toward colored fabric. They will be very long. One at a time, insert each GKG into E following directions for Halloween Sticks. See directions on page 8 of September 2016 MQ newsletter at http://mquilt.org/newsletter/pdf/2016Sep.pdf. The cuts you make in E should be slightly slanted. Bottoms of K do not have to be aligned. Place so pencils/crayons lie together and look natural. Trim EGK piece to 5” x 9 ½”.  
5. Pin cover BC out of the way. RST sew EGK to the right side of A, forming the block’s right border. Press flat.  
6. Attach one F piece to the top of the block, the second to the bottom. Trim block to 12 ½” square.  
7. Add small Velcro closures to secure the top and bottom of the notebook cover to the lined page.

Directions for the alternate flat block are on the next page.
Alternate Directions for “First Essays” September 2018 Calendar Block. In this block, the composition notebook cover is not separate, so the block will lie flat. Make up to 3 blocks to be entered in the September drawing.

Fabrics:
Same as above, but the backing for the notebook cover may be any solid color or reads-as-solid. The notebook “page” may be striped (like lined paper) or a print that looks like: writing, an alphabet, or a pen-and-ink drawing on a solid background. When choosing D fabrics, take into account the scale of the page. Keep the block background muslin, cream or tan. Choose pencil/crayon colors to coordinate with your other fabrics.

Cutting Directions:
Background – Muslin/Cream:
A: (1) 2” x 9 ½” left border
E: (1) 5 ½” x 9 ½” to be trimmed to 5” after adding crayons/pencils
F: (2) 2” x 12 ½” top and bottom borders
G: (1) 1” x 16” cut into (4) 1” x 4” pieces
Notebook “cover”:
B1: (1) 6 ½” x 5 ½”
B2: (1) 2 ½” x 4 ½”
Notebook cover back:
C: (1) 5 ½” x 5 ½” square
Notebook “page”:
D: (1) 5 ½” x 5 ½” square
Crayon or Pencil Yellow fabric:
K: (1) 1” x  6”  and  (1) 1” x 7”
Pencil tip, eraser, label for notebook (optional):
L: (1) 1 ¼” x 3 ½” rectangle for “Composition” or “[subject—your choice]” label on notebook cover
Cut small tan triangle for tip of pencil. Applique to top end of pencil. With perma-pen, draw dot representing lead. Cut small brown square for pencil eraser. Applique to opposite end of pencil.

Assembly:
1) Make two half-square triangles. Put C and D RST, draw a line diagonally across the 5 ½” square. Sew scant ¼” seam on each side of the line. Cut on line. Open the two half-square triangle patches you’ve made. Press seam toward darker fabric. Trim to 4 ½”. You’ll use one of these in the block. Save the second one for another block.
2) Sew B2 to CD (half-square triangle with C). Press open.
3) Sew B1 to B2CD
6) Sew one F to the top of the block and one F to the bottom. Press open.
7) Follow Assembly #1 directions above for notebook label L. Trim and letter label. Machine or hand applique label L on notebook cover, centered near the top of B1. If you want to add other trim to the cover, you may do so now.
8) Measure block and trim to 12 ½” x 12 ½”.

We hope you’ll want to make one, two or three of these blocks for the MQ Bock of the Month September drawing.

BOM GUIDELINES: Follow the alternate directions (see above) to make up to three blocks for our monthly drawing. Please include your name, address and phone number on your block(s). For ease attach your mailing label to each block’s back and add your phone number. Consider including leftover scraps with your block (pinned to the back or in an attached baggie) for the winner to use in a border or for other finishing touches.

If you cannot bring the blocks to the meetings, mail them to the MQ office allowing adequate time for them to arrive. Address: Block of the Month, Minnesota Quilters, Inc. 253 State Street, St. Paul, MN 55107.

We’ll have a drawing for the blocks at the Saturday meeting. Winners will be notified by phone if not present. Winning blocks may be mailed, picked up during the month at the MQ office, or claimed at the next meeting.