

Below are two ideas for setting your blocks together. Of course, there are dozens more!
Take your blocks out to play, and decide on a setting that makes you smile!

“STAR POWER” BOM/BOQ SETTING IDEA 1 - “TWIST & SHOUT”

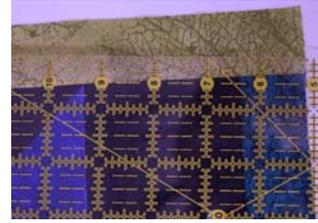
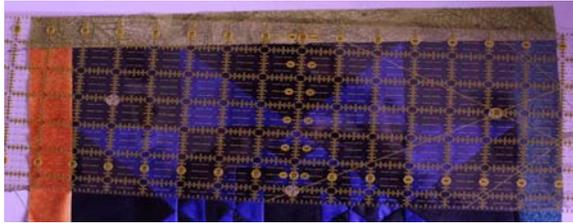
In this setting, you will be framing each of your blocks with colorful “power bar coping strips”* to make all 12 blocks the same size, and twisting the blocks to make them dance across your quilt. As you will see, this method is very forgiving - it doesn’t matter if your blocks didn’t come out exactly the right size. This is a fun way to set together blocks of various sizes. See suggestions at the end of the instructions for variations you could try.

I suggest you read through the instructions before you begin.

1. Cut 6 Black strips 1-1/2" wide, across the width of the fabric. Sew the strips end-to-end, using a straight seam. Cut 8 segments 13-1/2" long, and 8 segments 14-1/2" long.
2. Cut 6 Black strips 2-1/4" wide. Sew the strips end-to-end, using a straight seam. Cut 8 segments 12-1/2" long, and 8 segments 14-1/2" long.
3. Cut 6 Black strips 3" wide. Sew the strips end-to-end, using a straight seam. Cut 8 segments 9-3/4" long, and 8 segments 14-1/2" long.
4. Retrieve all of your scraps of colored fabrics from the 12 months of stars. Press the scraps and lay them out so you can see what you have left (which will differ from person to person depending on how you cut, whether you used FQs or 1/4-yd cuts, whether you made any mistakes and had to recut pieces, etc.). Pull out any scraps that are narrower than 1-1/2" wide, or shorter than 6-1/2" long, and put them in your scrap bag (or bring them to a meeting to donate to our charity quilt stash). Cut as many 1-1/2" strips as you can get from your colored scraps. Cut along the length of each piece so the strips end up as long as possible.
5. Begin with one of the 12" blocks (February’s Blue-Violet Modern Star, June’s Red-Orange Spinning Star, October’s Yellow-Green Pinwheel Star, or December’s Blue Midnight Star). Press the block thoroughly, checking the back to be sure you don’t have any twisted or crimped seam allowances. Select one of your colored strips (in any color) that is at least as long as your block. Lay the strip on top of one edge of the block, right sides together, matching the edges. Trim the strip to the same length as the block, and sew it to the block. Press toward the coping strip.
6. Place the block right side up on the cutting mat with the colored strip on the left-hand side. Select another strip, in any color (even the same color as the first strip - any color will work), that is at least as long as the block with the attached strip. Lay the new strip along the top edge, right sides together, matching the edges. Trim it to the same length as that edge (including the already-sewn strip), and sew it to the block. Press toward the coping strip. Repeat these steps for the other two sides of the block. Your block now should have a colored strip sewn to each side.
7. Now it’s time to twist and trim the block to 13-1/2" square. If you have a 14" or larger square ruler, you can use that. Angle the ruler on the framed block and trim to give it a twist, making sure you leave at least 1/4" seam allowance outside the corners of the star block. It doesn’t matter how much, or how little, of a twist you give the star, or whether you make it twist to the right or the left. (See diagram below.)

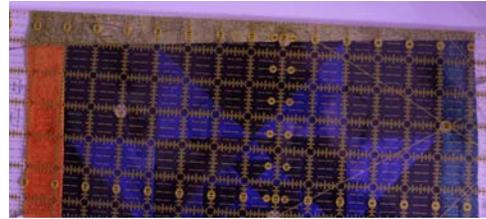
* The term “power bar coping strips” comes from “Setting Solutions” by Sharon Craig (C&T Pub. 2001). “Setting Solutions” includes lots of tips for setting together various-sized blocks, harmonizing clashing colors, and using up those random blocks hiding in your stash.

If you don't have a large enough square ruler, here's how to twist and trim your block. Begin on any side, and place your ruler so the 1/4" line is at one corner of the star block, and the ruler's long edge runs right through the opposite corner. (See photos below - photo on right is closeup of right edge.)



← 1/4" line at corner of star block

After trimming, that edge will look like this:



Align that cut edge with a straight line on your cutting mat, and trim the other three sides to square up the block to 13-1/2" (unfinished).

8. Retrieve 2 of your 1-1/2" x 13-1/2" Black strips. Sew them to two opposite sides of the block. Trim the block to 14-1/2" wide. **Note that you are not twisting the block this time; you are just trimming it straight, with the Black strip the same width across the entire side.**



Tip: You want your outer Black strips to end up the same width. For that to happen, you must trim the same amount from each of the two Black strips. Lay the block on your cutting mat with the Black strips on the sides. Measure from edge to edge, and subtract 14-1/2". Divide by 2, and cut that amount from each side. (Example: If your block measures 15-1/2" from side to side, and you subtract 14-1/2", you end up with 1". Half of that is 1/2", so you would cut 1/2" from each Black strip.

Next, retrieve 2 of your 1-1/2" x 14-1/2" Black strips, and sew them to the other two sides of the block. Measure and trim as described above, to make the block 14-1/2" square.

9. Repeat Steps 5 through 8 for the other three 12" star blocks. Note that you can twist the star in either direction; if you start at the left side, instead of the right, the block will spin the other way (so your ruler's 1/4" line would be at the upper left corner of the star block, with the ruler angling up and to the right, instead of up and to the left). Each of the four 12" blocks should be squared to 14-1/2".

10. Repeat the above steps to add colored strips to all four sides of a 9" block. Twist and trim as you did with the 12" blocks. After trimming to make the block twist, then add a second row of strips around the 9" block. When you're ready to twist and trim, use the same angle as before - in other words, if you started by lining up your ruler's 1/4" line with the right-hand corner, angling up to the left, do the same thing again. (If you angle the other way, you'll just bring your block back to straight up and down again, instead of having it twist to the side. Guess how I know. . . .)

After the second trimming, retrieve 2 of your Black 2-1/4" x 12-1/2" strips. Cut the strips to the width of the block using the same method you used for the colored strips. Sew the strips to opposite sides of the 9" block. Measure and trim the block to 14-1/2" wide as described above in Step 8. Then add one of your Black 2-1/4" x 14-1/2" strips to the other two sides, and square the whole block up to 14-1/2". Repeat for the other three 9" blocks.

11. The 6" blocks are finished in the same way as the other blocks, but this time, you will add three rounds of colored strips, twisting and trimming after each round. After the third trimming, retrieve 2 of your Black 3" x 9-3/4" strips; cut to size as before, and sew to opposite sides of the block. Measure the width and trim to 14-1/2" wide as described above in Step 8. Then add one of your Black 3" x 14-1/2" strips to each of the remaining sides, and square the whole block up to 14-1/2". Repeat for the other three 6" blocks.

12. Arrange the 12 blocks into 4 rows of 3 blocks each. Play with the arrangement - I like to lay out my blocks in different arrangements, and take photos. It's easier for me to visualize how the finished quilt will look in a photo than it is looking at the blocks. When you decide on an arrangement, join the blocks together in rows. Press joining seams in rows 1 and 3 to the right, and in rows 2 and 4 to the left. Then join the rows together, pressing all joining seams in the same direction.

13. Add borders as desired. I stitched some of my remaining 1-1/2" colored strips together end-to-end, to create a 1" inner border, and then had just enough Black remaining for a 3" outer border. This left me with a dilemma regarding what to use for binding. I elected to buy another 1/2 yd. of the Black for binding.

VARIATIONS - some different ways to change how you frame your blocks::

- ★ If you have lots of the colored fabrics left over, you might want to cut your coping strips wider than 1-1/2" to make the quilt larger.
- ★ You could vary the widths of the colored strips in any (or all) of several different ways, such as (1) alternating thin and thick strips; (2) placing thin strips on two adjoining sides, and thick strips on the other two sides; (3) using thinner strips on the largest blocks, and making the strips thicker as the blocks get smaller; (4) picking certain colors for thick strips, and certain colors for thinner ones.
- ★ Instead of attaching strips around the block Log Cabin style, you could sew strips to opposite sides first, and then the other two sides (in the same manner as the final Black strips are attached).
- ★ Start by framing the blocks with Black strips (with or without trimming to twist the blocks), and then add one or more rounds of colored strips. This would make the blocks "float" in the center of the colored frames.



“STAR POWER” BOM/BOQ SETTING IDEA 2 - “FLOATING STARS”

In this setting, you will be framing each of your blocks to make all 12 blocks the same size. Then you will add colorful triangles to the corners, and join the blocks with Black sashing. This is a super easy way to set together blocks of different sizes.

I suggest you read through the instructions before you begin.

1. Cut 48 squares 2-1/2" x 2-1/2" from your leftover colored scraps. On the back of each square, draw one diagonal line from corner to corner.
2. Measure your remaining leftovers of colored fabrics. Cut several 1"-wide strips from each fabric that is at least 11-1/2" long. If you have some colors that are shorter than 11-1/2", you can cut 1" strips and piece them together until they are at least 11-1/2" long.
3. Add a 3" Black strip to all four sides of each of your 6-1/2" (unfinished) blocks. Square the blocks up to 11-1/2". **Tip:** This is the perfect time to compensate for any differences in the sizes of your blocks. If your blocks ended up a little smaller than 6-1/2", then cut your Black strips a little wider. If your blocks ended up a little larger than 6-1/2", then cut your Black strips a little narrower.
4. Add a 1-1/2" wide Black strip to all four sides of each of your 9-1/2" (unfinished) blocks, compensating as you did for the smaller blocks for any variations in your block sizes. Square the blocks up to 11-1/2".
5. You now have 8 blocks that measure 11-1/2" square. Add a 1" colored strip to each side of these 8 blocks, choosing one of the two methods described below. In my sample quilt, I used Method 1 on the 6" stars, and Method 2 on the 9" stars, so you can see which you prefer.

Method 1: Cut 16 of the 1" colored strips to 11-1/2" lengths. Sew colored strips to two opposite sides of the 8 blocks. Then cut 16 of the 1" colored strips to 12-1/2" lengths. Sew these strips to the remaining two sides of each block.

Method 2: (a) Cut 8 of the 1" colored strips to 11-1/2" lengths. Sew these to one side of each of the 8 blocks. (b) Cut 16 of the 1" colored strips to 12" lengths. Use the "Log Cabin" method to add these strips to the blocks, sewing the strips either clockwise or counterclockwise around the block, always adding a strip to the side adjacent to the last strip you added. (c) For the final side of each of the blocks, cut 8 of the 1" colored strips to 12-1/2" lengths, and add these to the last side of each block.

6. Now all 12 of your blocks measure 12-1/2". Frame each of the 12 blocks with Black 1-1/2" wide strips.
7. Retrieve your colored squares, and select one of the star blocks to work with. Place a colored square in one of the corners, lining up the edges of the colored square with the edges of the block. The diagonal line drawn on the back of the colored square should run from one edge of the star block to the adjacent edge, rather than extending out from the corner of the block. Sew right on the drawn line. Before trimming, flip the lower half of the colored triangle up toward the corner to check placement. The edges of the triangle should line up with the edges of the block. If placement is correct, flip the triangle back down flat. Align the 1/4" line of your ruler just outside the stitching line (toward the corner), and trim. (**Take care** not to trim on the wrong side of the stitching line! You are trimming off two little triangles.) Press toward the colored triangle. Repeat for the other three corners of the block, and then for all four corners of each of the remaining 11 blocks.

8. Cut 8 strips 1-1/2" wide across the width of your Black fabric. Subcut 4 of those into 8 strips that are 11-1/2" long. Join the other 4 width-of-fabric strips to make one long 1-1/2" strip, and set aside.

9. Arrange the 12 blocks into 4 rows of 3 blocks each. Play with the arrangement - I like to lay out my blocks in different arrangements, and take photos. It's easier for me to visualize how the finished quilt will look in a photo than it is looking at the blocks. When you decide on an arrangement, join the blocks into rows using the Black 1-1/2" strips in between the blocks.

10. Measure your rows. If you're a "perfect piecer," they should measure 45-1/2", but yours could be a bit shorter or longer. Use the measurement of the shortest of your four rows, and cut three strips that length from your long Black 1-1/2" strip. Join the rows placing these 1-1/2" strips between the rows, easing as necessary if all rows are not an identical width.

11. Add one or more borders as desired. **Tip:** If you want the outer border of a quilt to end up a specific width, add an extra inch when you cut and apply the borders. This will allow for squaring up after any distortion caused by the quilting.

12. Quilt and bind as desired, and enjoy!

Variations: You could make your framing strips wider and the triangles larger. You could make the sashing between the blocks and rows wider or narrower. You could add a sashing row around the outside, adding triangles to complete the four-triangle units around the edges.

