

RADIANT HOME STUDIO

# Sewing Terms

**Baste** – (*by machine*) Use your longest machine stitch to temporarily join two pieces of fabric. (*by hand*) Use a needle and thread to loosely join two pieces of fabric. Usually the basting stitch is picked out later in the construction process.

**Bias** – Cut or position fabric at a 45-degree angle to the selvedge edge.

**Bias Binding** – Can be pre-made or made at home. A slightly stretchy, folded and woven ribbon designed to encase raw edges or add decorative touches. Usually ½ to 1 in. wide.

**Cross-wise** – The grain of the fabric across the width, from selvedge to selvedge.

**Directional fabric** (one-way design) – Fabric with a print that all faces one direction (e.g. arrows all pointing up) or with a texture that goes one direction (e.g. suede looks dark when you rub one way and light when you rub the opposite direction).

**Finish Seams** – Neaten raw edges by using techniques such as bias binding, overlocking, serging, or zigzag stitching.

**French Seam** – Place fabric wrong sides together, and stitch with a ¼ in. seam allowance. Press seam open and fold with right sides together. Stitch with 3/8 in. seam allowance to encase the raw edges. Used to create strong seams and to hide raw edges.

**Grain** – The vertical line that runs the length of a fabric bolt, parallel to the selvedge edge.

**Hem** – Turn up the raw edge toward the wrong side of the fabric, and press. Fold up again and press. Stitch in to place. This varies from pattern to pattern, so check your pattern for measurements.

**Interfacing** – A stabilizer, which comes in many different weights and thicknesses and can be ironed on or sewn in.

**Pivot** – At a corner, leave the sewing needle down in the fabric. Lift the presser foot and turn the fabric 90 degrees. Lower presser foot and continue stitching the next edge.

**Raw Edge** – The cut edge of a piece of fabric. Woven fabric will unravel if left unfinished.

**Right Sides Together** – Position fabric so that the printed or textured surfaces of the fabric are touching.

**Seam Allowance** – The amount of fabric between the raw edge and the stitching line; typically between  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 1 inch.

**Seamline** – The line where two pieces of fabric are joined by stitching.

**Selvedge** – The bound edges down the length of fabric bolts.

**Topstitch** – On the right side of the fabric, usually to reinforce a seam or add a decorative touch.

**Wrong Sides Together** – Position fabric so that the back, or unprinted/un-textured sides of the fabric are touching.