



Blackwork Journey Blog

October 2025

Creating texture in embroidery



Allium

Block 9 and 9a embroidery



Block

Super star!



Blackwork Journey Blog, October 2025

October marks the change from summer to winter in the UK. Leaves change their colours and fall in great numbers from the many trees around our house, so just about every day is spent clearing them up and whilst doing so my thoughts often turn to finishing my outstanding projects and completing the 'Stitch Along' 2025 before considering some Christmas embroidery projects.



However, before I leave summer completely behind, I have one last chart to offer to my readers.

PR0085 Dahlia Delight – one design, two projects!

Dahlia Delight is a blackwork and pulled thread work or it can be worked as a free style embroidery design. Both patterns are included! The choice of technique is yours or you may decide to combine different techniques.

Dahlias are one of my favourite flowers. There are 49 species of dahlia, in every hue (except blue) with hybrids commonly grown as garden plants. They are tuberous, herbaceous perennial plants native to Mexico and Central America. Its relatives include the sunflower, daisy, zinnia and chrysanthemum.

Dahlias were known only to the Aztecs and other southern North American people until the Spanish conquest, after which the plants were introduced to Europe.

Design 1 - Blackwork and pulled thread work embroidery is worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave 12 x 12 inches. This design is not suitable for Aida because of the number of split stitches.

Design 2 - A free style embroidery

This is worked on medium weight cotton or pre-washed calico 14 x 14 inches.

Both these designs use traditional embroidery stitches and a Stitch Dictionary, diagrams and photographs are included in the PDF.



Creating texture in embroidery - think it through first!

Much of this year has been spent in exploring different stitches through 'Stitch Along' 2025. Using the stitches you have learned and applying them to other projects is the next stage. Very simple line designs can be interpreted in many different embroidery styles, stitches and threads.

Plan your approach to a design using the following guidelines: -

For example, in this simple line pattern the larger flower is the starting point. Consider all aspects from the centre, lines, dots and petals. Question all your stitch choices and plan your approach. Ask the following questions: -

Centre of flower: Textured or smooth?

Select two different stitches

Stitches: a. _____ b. _____

Thread: Look at different types and thicknesses of thread.

Lay them out on the chosen fabric. Choose which ones to use and embroider the centres.

Lines and Dots:

Stitches: a. _____ b. _____

Thread: Use three or more strands for Colonia knots. Beads could also be used.

Petals: These depend on how the centre, lines and dots have been worked. Will the petals be outlined, textured or filled?

Stitches: a. _____ b. _____

Thread:

Leaves and stems:

Once you have decided how to embroider the flowers consider the leaves and stem.

Stem: - textured or smooth? One side textured, one side smooth to make a contrast.

Stitches: a. _____ b. _____

Thread:

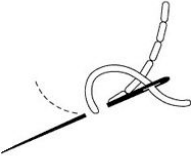
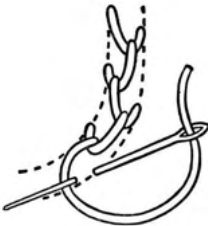
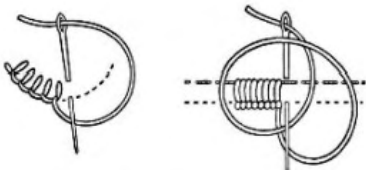
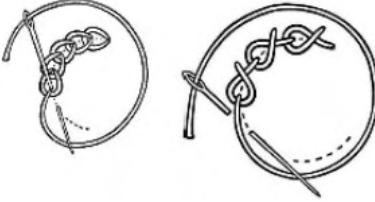
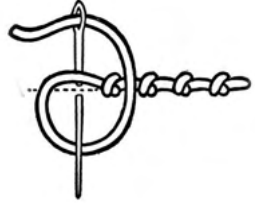
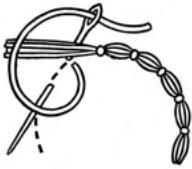
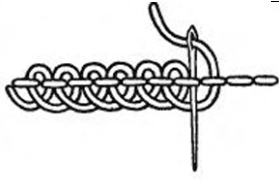
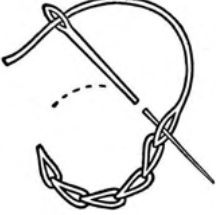
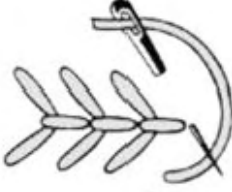
Leaves: There must be sufficient contrast in texture/colour/stitches between the flower and the leaves. Make the wrong decision and the balance of the embroidery can be wrong.

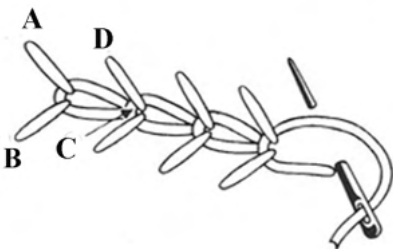
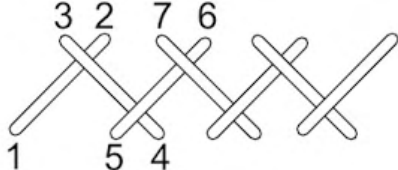
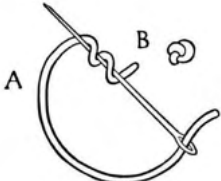
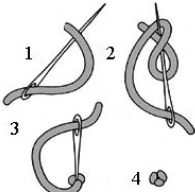
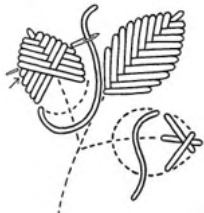
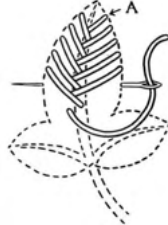
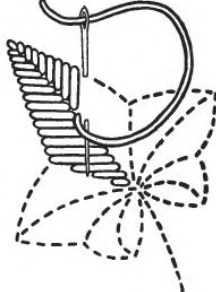
Stitches: a. _____ b. _____

Using the Stitch Dictionary select TWO different stitches for each element. Select the thread suitable for each stitch and begin! Free style embroidery is not as difficult as it may at first appear. It is about practise and experimenting and working outside your comfort zone.

Once you are confident about your approach look at a more complex pattern. Apply the same principals and see what you can create with just a few stitches.



Outline stitches:		
Back stitch 	Single feather stitch 	Buttonhole stitch 
Cable chain stitch 	Chain stitch Knotted chain 	Coral stitch 
Couching 	Trailing stitch 	Pekinese stitch 
Scroll stitch 	Split stitch 	Double knot stitch 
Stem stitch 	Whipped stem stitch 	Feather 
Band stitches:		
Braid stitch 	Fly 	Loop 

Fern 	Wheatear 	Herringbone 
Knots:		
French knot 	Colonial 	Bullion 
Leaves:		
Raised fishbone 	Open Fishbone 	Whipped back stitch 
Long and short 	Satin 	 Experiment, expand, explore!

There are alternative stitches, but this will give you a base to start from.



Netty's first embroidery

Netty has serious eyesight problems and thought that she would never be able to embroider, but by following the steps outlined above and a little encouragement she has stitched her first design. As her confidence has grown, she is now moving on to larger free style projects.

Netty, I am proud of you and all that you have achieved!

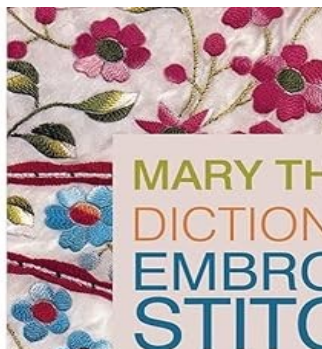
Eyesight problems?

Your optician can be your best friend. Show him/her what you do with embroidery and have your eyesight and glasses checked and updated annually. It is also important to use good lighting and if necessary, magnifying lenses.



Allium

Experiment, explore and expand your knowledge of embroidery stitches!



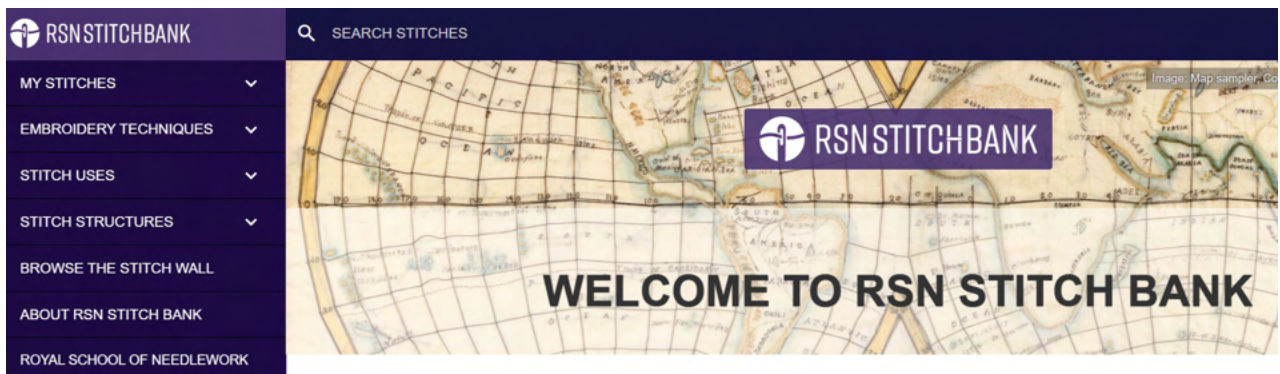
Buy a good stitch dictionary!

I have a number in my collection, but one of my favourites is Mary Thomas's 'Dictionary of Embroidery Stitches'. It was published in 1934 and has been updated many times. It is an invaluable resource for anyone looking to enhance their embroidery skills. With its comprehensive coverage of over 400 stitches and user-friendly format, it remains a favourite for the needlework community. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced embroiderer, this book is a good addition to your collection.

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There are also numerous sources available on the internet such as the site I use frequently namely the RSN Stitch Bank. <https://RSNStitchbank>.

It is a free resource designed to preserve the art of hand embroidery through digitally conserving and showcasing the wide variety of the world's embroidery stitches and the ways in which they have been used in different cultures and times. Now containing over 500 stitches, each stitch entry contains information about its history, use and structure as well as a step-by-step method with photographs, illustrations and video.



EB0002 'Save the Stitches'.

It is so rewarding to see yet another variation of this design. I like the way Mark has personalised the design with his initials.



Where possible all embroideries should be named and dated as these will inevitably become people's heirlooms in the future.

Many congratulations Mark and thank you for sharing!

*Hi Liz,
Thanks for the inspiration.
My slightly smaller take on
your brilliant design.
Best wishes,
Mark Loosemore*



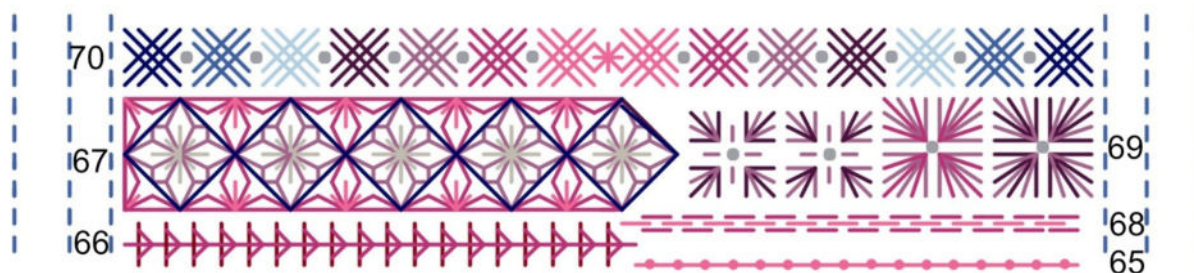
'Stitch Along' 2025 Block 9 & 9a plus project can be found at the end of this month's Blog.

If you have any queries, please contact me at lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching, *Liz*

Block 9.

Block 9. is worked in pinks, blues and purples or colours of choice. **Threads:** Use threads from earlier blocks plus metallic thread and beads. Two strands for cross stitch, decorative bands 2-3 strands.



Block 9 Numbered



Block 9 Embroidery

Instructions:

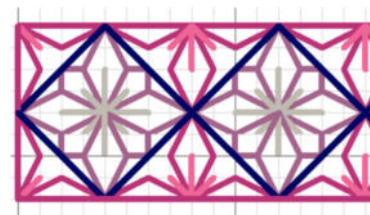
Start one row above the previous block with **Rows 66 and 65.** (See Block 8 for Double knot stitch).

Row 66. Raised chain band. Very attractive band stitch can be worked in different widths. Foundation: row of straight stitches over 3 x 2 blocks. (For diagram See Block 8). Using a second colour work a 'chain' stitch over each straight stitch. Pull gently.

Row 67. Blackwork stitch band using 1 strand of floss.

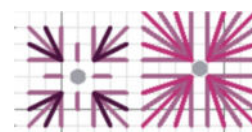
Row 68. Work two rows of running stitch over 2 blocks, one block apart. Add a third row in light pink between the two rows. Simple but pretty!

Blackwork band



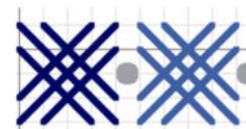
Row 69. Ray stitch - two different sizes. Use 2 strands of floss to create the group.

Ray stitch



Row 70. Banded cross over 4 x 4 blocks (2 strands).

Banded cross



There are 475 stitches in the RSN Stitch Wall to explore:

[rsnstitchbank.org/stitch wall](http://rsnstitchbank.org/stitch-wall)

This completes Block 9.

Block 9 and 9a embroidery



Block 9

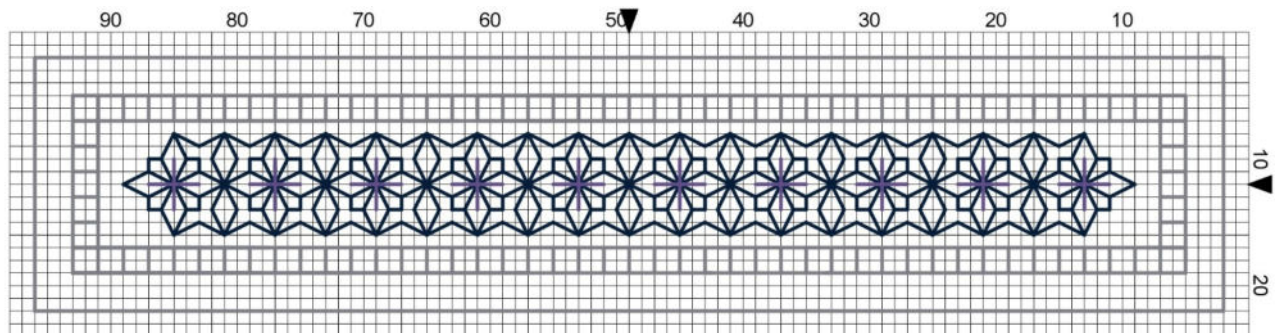


Block 9a

All these stitches can be used as bands in different projects, especially Row 66. Raised chain band.

By changing the thickness of the threads, the bands can be made heavier or lighter to suit the style of the embroidery. Use two colours, one for the foundation row and a different colour for the top stitches.

Go to the <https://rsnstitchbank.org/stitch/raised-chain-band-stitch> to see all the stages of this very useful stitch.



The variation of Row 67 Blackwork Band used to make a bookmark with four-sided stitch edging.
Design area: 1.43 x 6.71 inches 20 x 94 stitches.

Fabric: Zweigart 14 count Aida or 28 count evenweave, 3 x 9 inches.

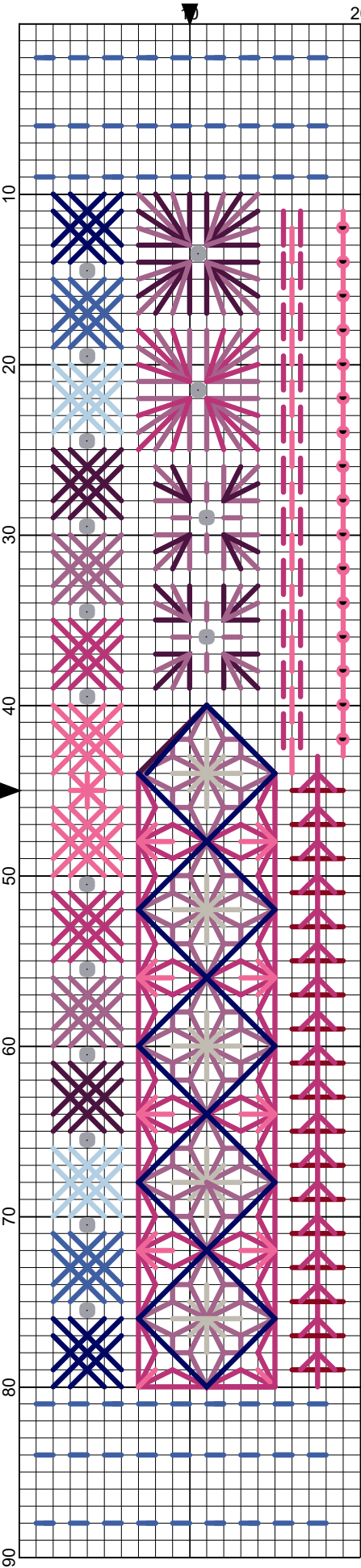
Stitches used: Four-sided stitch – 2 strands or cotton P rle No.12. Back stitch –1 strand.

Method:

Work the embroidery as shown on the chart. Count 3 blocks or 6 threads beyond the last embroidered line and fold the raw edges in. Trim off any excess. Press and tack.

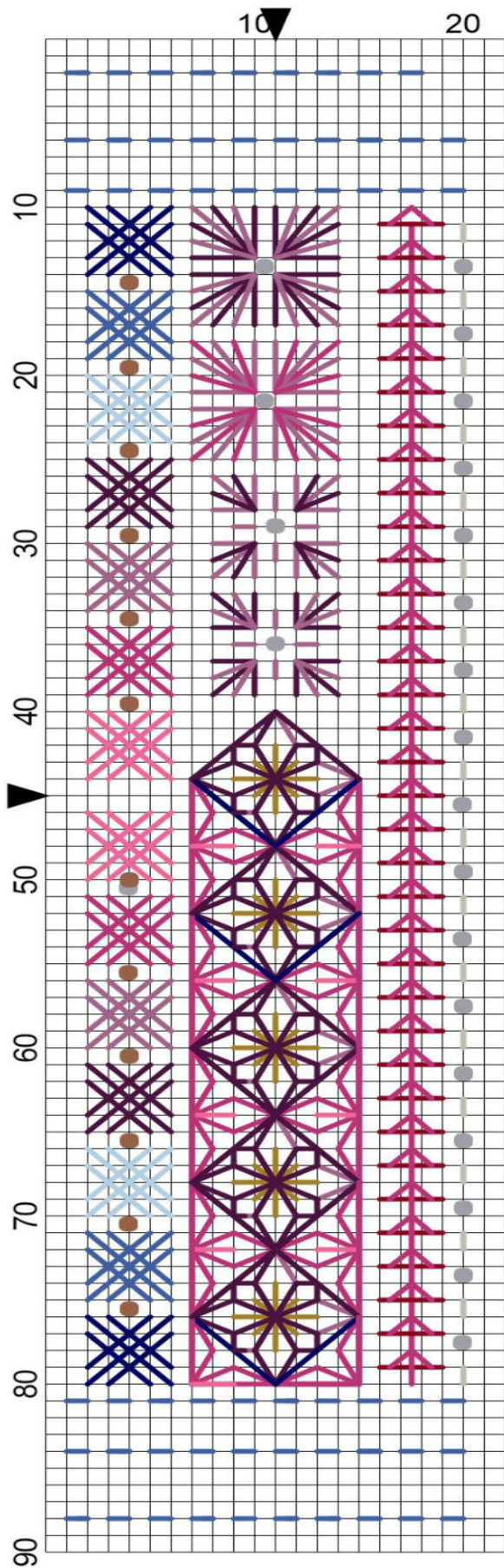
Cut a piece of fabric for the backing. Fold the raw edges in and slip stitch in place.

Place face down on a soft towel and press lightly. Add a tassel (optional).



- Backstitches:
- DMC-820
 - DMC-798
 - DMC-800
 - DMC-550
 - DMC-553
 - DMC-718
 - DMC-603
 - DLE-E168
 - DMC-815
- French Knots:
- DMC-603
- Beads:
- MHG-2022

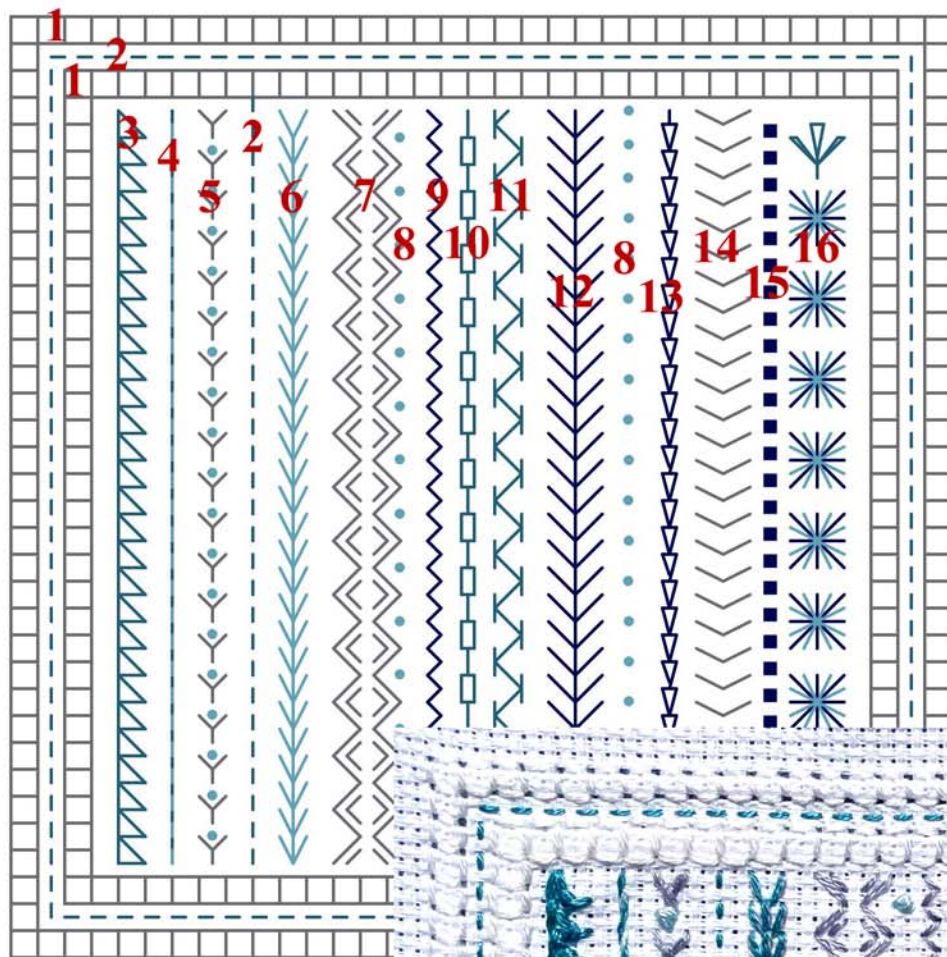
Block 9a Simple Stitches



- Row 1.** Running stitch and beads.
- Row 2.** Raised chain band. over 3 x 2 blocks.
- Row 3.** Blackwork stitch band using 1 strand of floss.
- Row 4.** Ray stitch in two sizes.
- Row 5.** Banded cross over 4 x 4 blocks (2 strands).

Raised chain band





Stitch Sampler

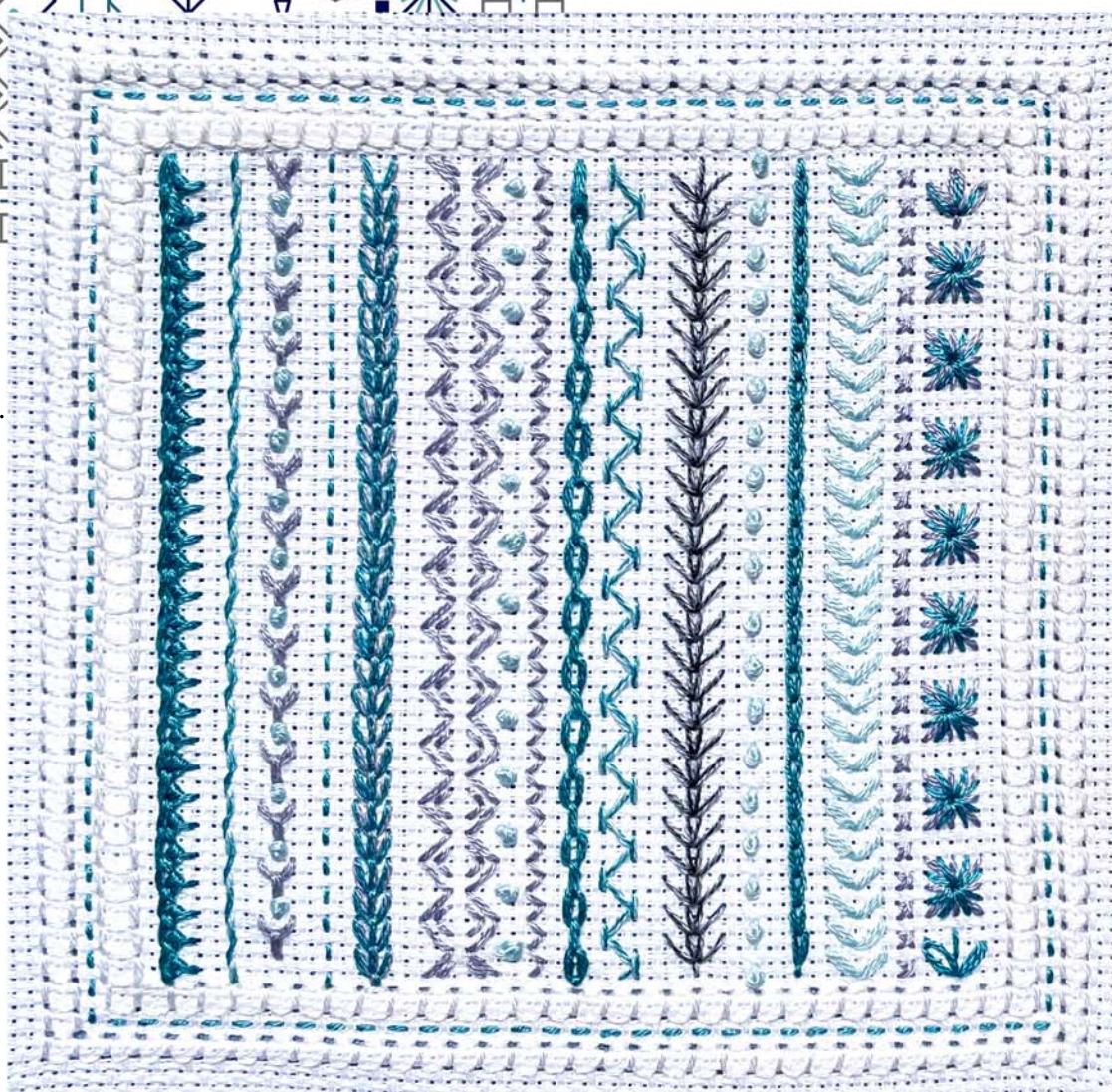
1. Four-sided stitch - 2 strands
2. Running stitch - 2 strands
3. Mountmellick stitch - 4 strands
4. Running stitch whipped - 2 strands
5. Fly stitch & Colonial knots - 3 strands
6. Fly stitch - 3 strands
- 7 Zig zag diamonds - 2 strands
8. Colonial knots - 3 strands
9. Zig zag - 1 strand
10. Cable chain stitch - 2 strands
11. Chevron stitch - 2 strands
12. Wheatear stitch - 3 strands
13. Chain stitch - 2 strands
14. Diagonal stitches - 2 strands
15. Cross stitch - 2 strands
16. Rhodes stitch - 1 strand

These can be worked as free style stitches on cotton or worked as counted thread stitches on Aida or evenweave. Work each line downwards.

Design area: 5 x 5 inches
70 x 70 stitches

Fabric:
Zweigart 14 count Aida,
8 x 8 inches

Choose at least 3 colours of floss.
Work the four-sided stitch in a pastel shade.



Legend:

■ [2] DMC-519 ANC-160 DLE- sky blue

■ [2] DMC-820 ANC-133 DLE- royal blue - vy dk

Backstitch Lines:

— DMC-414 steel gray - dk

— DMC-517 wedgewood - dk

— DMC-519 sky blue

— DMC-820 royal blue - vy dk

French Knots:

⊙ DMC-519 sky blue

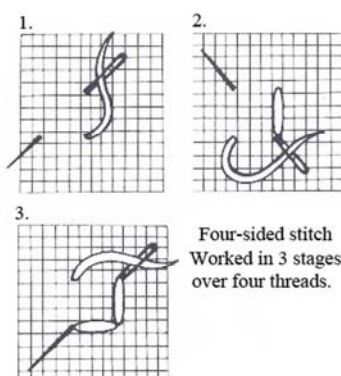


To make a brooch cushion take two pieces of Zweigart evenweave, or Aida 8 x 8 inches and worked the chart pattern on the front piece.

On the front and the back work two rows of four-sided stitch to frame the embroidery and to use for joining the two pieces together.



Decorate the plain back of the brooch cushion with an alphabet letter.



Four-sided stitch:

This consists of 3 straight stitches, to form the end, the middle and the top of the 'square'.

Work from right to left over 4 threads or two blocks. Always put the needle in at one corner and come out at the opposite one.

Follow diagrams 1-3. Turn the work and work the next part of the border.

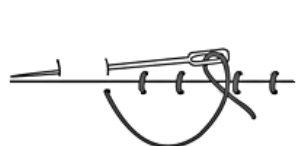
Pull tight to create the holes. If the stitch has been worked correctly there will be a row of cross stitches on the back of the fabric.



Slip stitch the two sides together adding a bead at each stitch. Work the beading round the openings in the same way.

There are several different alphabets which can be used to personalise the back of the brooch cushion. These can be found in 'Freebies' on the Blackwork Journey website.

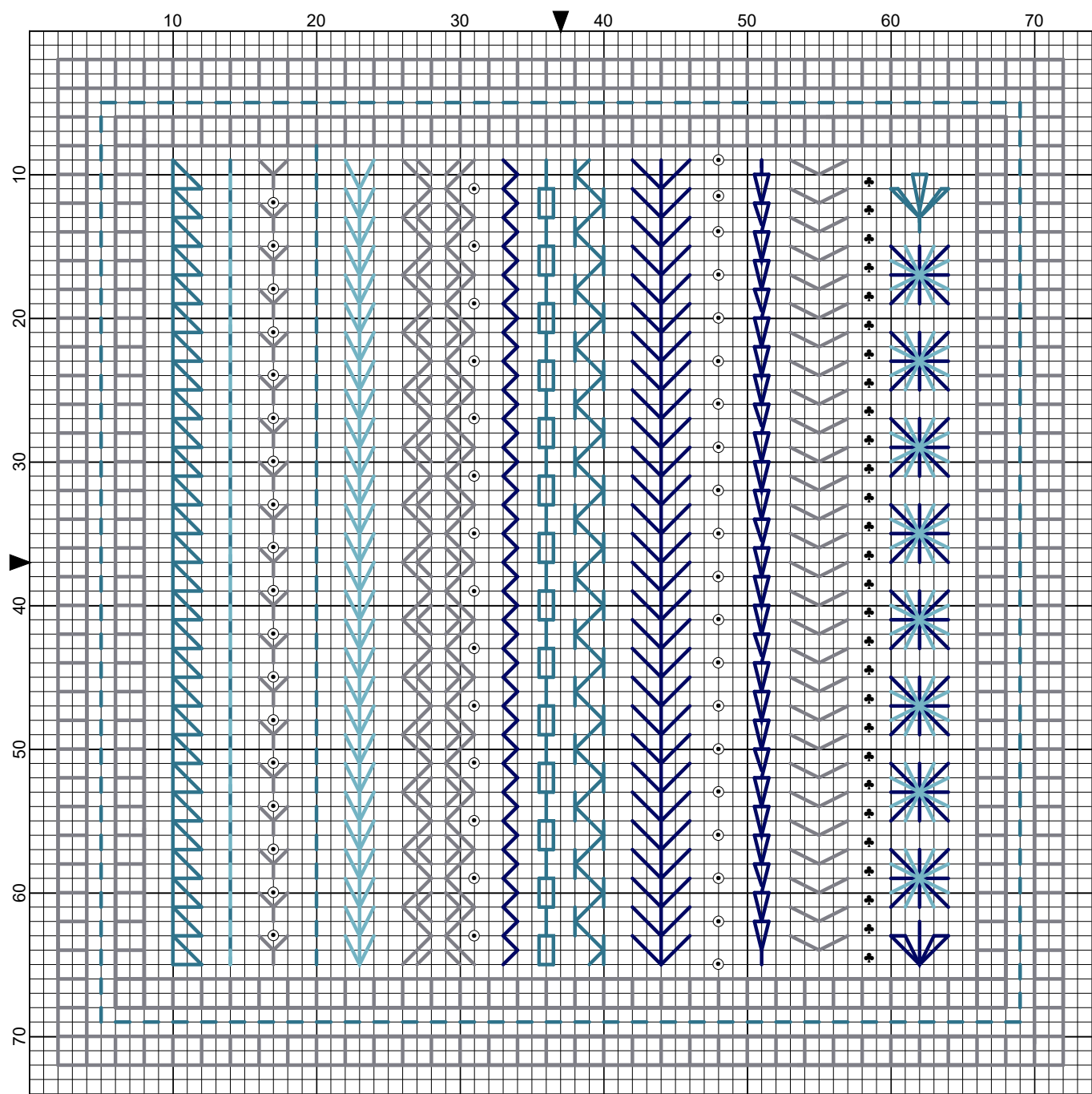
Mix and match the threads to create different combinations!



Slip stitch



Stitch Sampler



Elizabeth Almond

- Legend:
- DMC-820
 - Backstitches:
 - DMC-414
 - DMC-517
 - DMC-519
 - DMC-820
 - French Knots:
 - DMC-519