



Week Eleven



Canvas Work Christmas Decoration

Have fun learning a new craft and make some unique Christmas decorations – these cubes could make cute little handmade gifts for your friends. Canvas work is often called “tapestry”, as it is done using tapestry wool and tapestry needles. Strictly speaking, however, tapestry is woven on a loom; this project is stitched on a base of evenweave canvas fabric.





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Materials:

- A piece of evenweave canvas: for beginners, use canvas that is no more than 14 holes to one inch (2.5 cm). Finer canvas has more holes to the inch and is suitable for use with finer threads. If your canvas is 14 holes to the inch, you will need a piece 8 x 12 in (20 x 30 cm) for each cube. If you buy 20cm of 100 cm wide canvas, you will have enough for 3 cubes. Zweigart Twist 14 Thread Count Canvas White 100 cm is one brand readily available in craft stores.



Left: Zweigart Twist 14 Thread Count Canvas

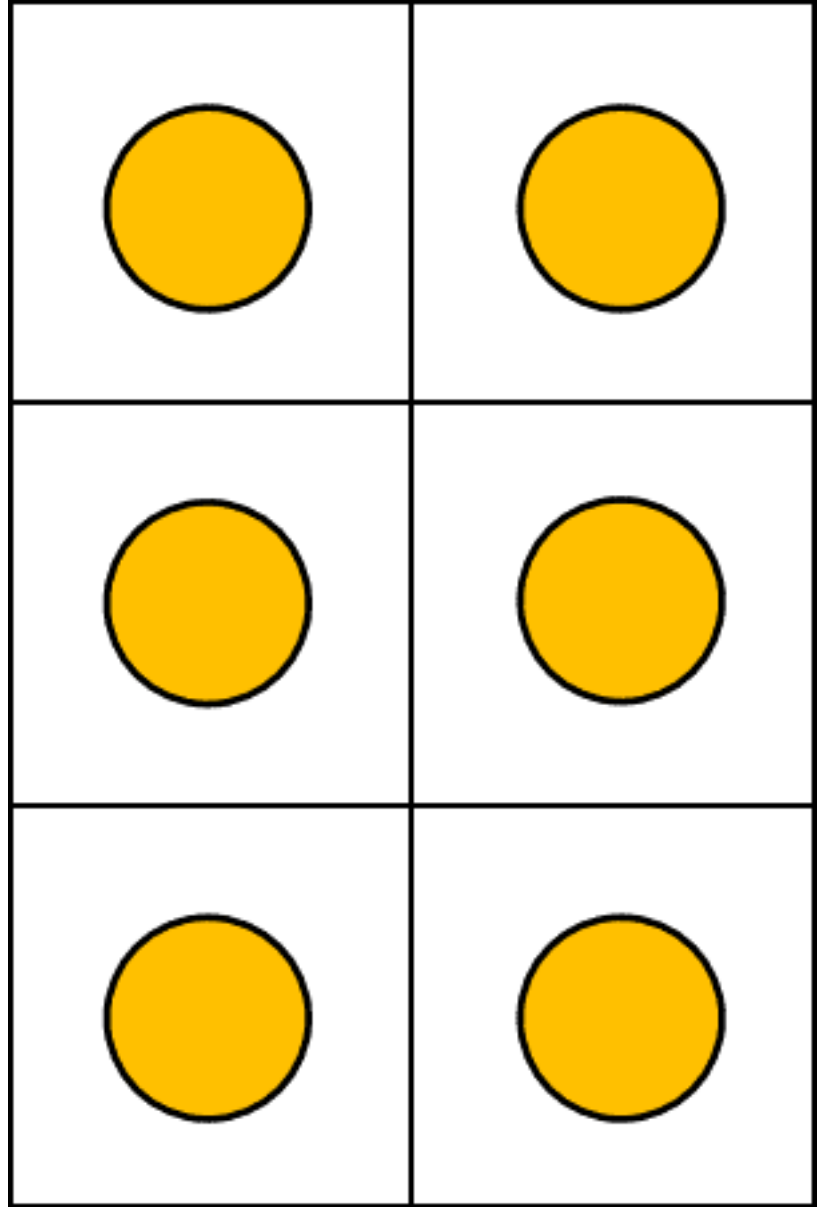
Right: Penelope (also called Double Mesh or Duo) canvas, 14 thread count

- Tapestry wool or 8 ply 100% pure wool in 3 colours of your choice:
- 2 x 8m skeins tapestry wool or about 10g (1/6th of a 50g ball) per cube for the background
- 1 x 8m skein tapestry wool or about 6m (1/16th of a 50g ball) per cube for the main colour
- ½ x 8m skein tapestry wool or about 4m (1/24th of a 50g ball) per cube for the contrast colour
- 2 x Size 20 tapestry needles (tapestry needles have a blunt point)
- some scrap cardboard and toy filling for stuffing your cube
- masking tape
- scissors



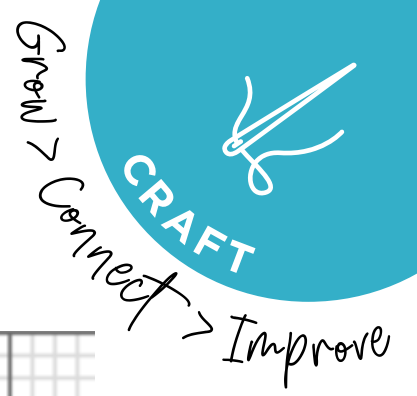
Preparing your materials:

- Cut your canvas into pieces 20 x 30 cm. Bind the edges of the canvas with masking tape, so that you do not catch your threads on the rough edges of the canvas. Cut strips of masking tape the length of each side, and lay the tape over the canvas edge, with half of the tape on the front side and half on the back side. Repeat on all four sides of the canvas.
- Find the centre of the shorter side of the canvas. Tack along the centre line with a running stitch to mark the centre. You will work three baubles on each side of the centre line. Leave two rows of canvas unworked, one each side of the centre line - you will be cutting your canvas into two strips later.
- Print the Baubles Pattern, preferably in colour. On the Pattern sheet, there are patterns for 8 different baubles. You can choose which ones to use. Each square on the pattern represents one stitch. On the pattern, the main colour is red, the contrast colour green, and the background white. In the photo, you will see I used yellow, light green and dark green - the colours are your choice.

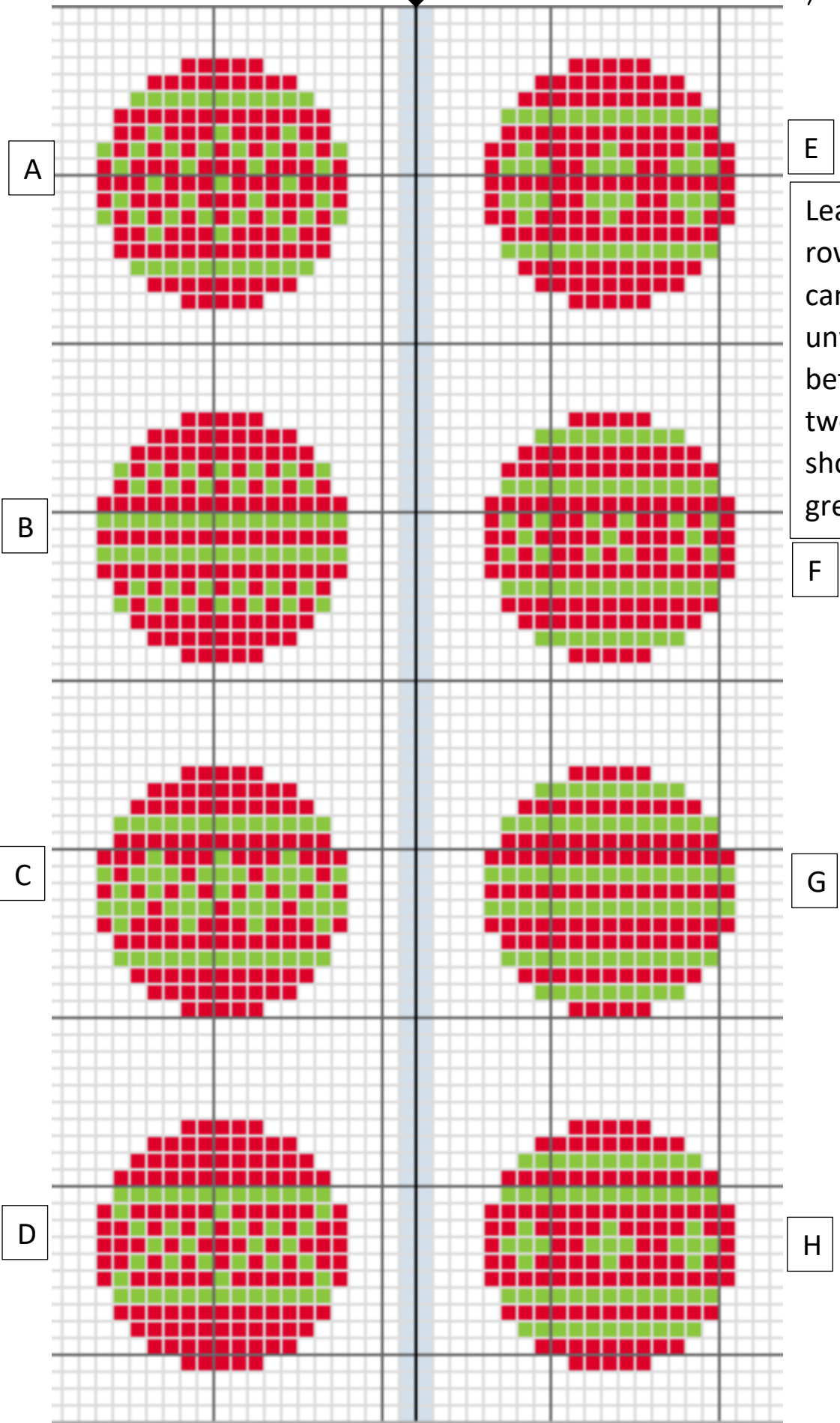




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centre line



Leave two rows of canvas unworked between the two halves: shown by grey squares.

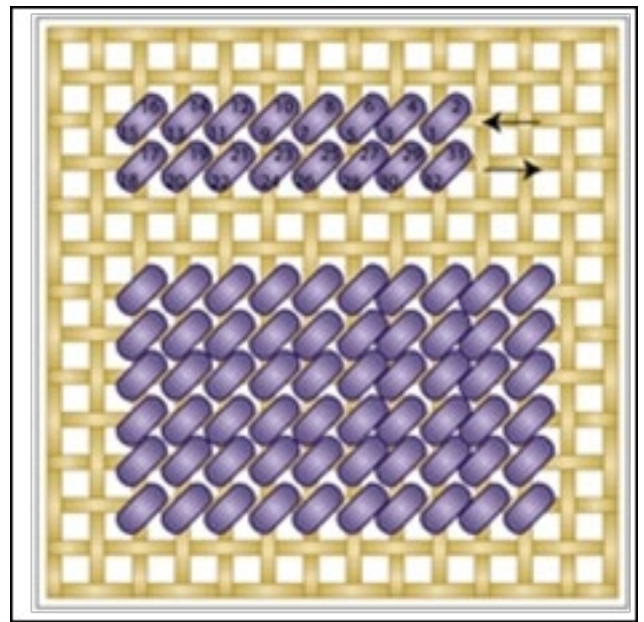


Starting to stitch

- Cut a length of your background colour yarn, about 40-50 cm long. Thread your tapestry needle with the yarn. To begin: knot the thread temporarily on the front of the canvas about 3 cm from where you want to start in the direction in which you will be working: ie. if working from right to left, the knot should be 3 cm to the left of where you begin. Take your thread down to the back of your canvas, and bring it up at your starting point. As you work your canvas, the stitches on the back will anchor the 3cm thread. When you reach the knot, cut it off and the thread should be quite secure. When you re-thread your needle to continue the same area, there is no need to knot the thread, simply run the needle through the work on the underside.

Continental Stitch

- Also known as the Tent Stitch, this is the most used needlepoint stitch.
- Starting at the upper right, work each row of stitches from right to left. Form each stitch by bringing the needle up at 1 and down at 2.
- Bring the needle back up at 3 and down at 4.
- Continue stitching.
- At the end of the first row, finish the last stitch, leaving the needle at the back of the canvas. Then you can work the second row as shown in the coloured diagram to the left, from left to right. However, this tends to produce a ridged effect on your work, and has the disadvantage that you are bringing your needle up where a stitch has already been placed, making it likely you will bring your needle up through it and split your yarn. This will spoil the look of your work. It is preferable to start again at the right, working always in the same direction.



Stitch sequence:														
	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	2						
15		13	11	9	7	5	3	1						

- If the row is quite short, you can run the thread under several stitches to take it back to the starting point for the next row. If the row has 25 or more stitches, finish your thread at the end of a row, and start the new row by running your thread under several stitches of the row above at the back of your work, bringing it out next to where your first stitch of the new row will be made.



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- Finish your thread by running it under several stitches at the back of your work. Always finish each thread before starting another, as if you leave threads hanging they may get caught in your work.
- Tip: The Continental stitch is prone to distorting the canvas so be sure that you don't tug your thread as you stitch.
- Work 3 rows of 21 stitches each in your background colour. The next row will be 8 stitches of background, 5 of main colour, 8 of background. Just work the first 8 stitches of your background, then return to the right hand end of your work, and work the next row: 6 stitches of background. Continue following the pattern, working the short background rows to the right of the bauble. Stop when you have completed row 18, the last row of the bauble.
- Change to your main colour. Work row 4: 5 stitches of main colour, then row 5: 9 stitches of main colour (except Baubles F and G, where row 5 is in contrast colour). Continue as shown on pattern, working all red squares on pattern in main colour, and green squares in contrast colour.
- Work the background rows to the left of the bauble. Work 6 full rows of background colour between each bauble.
- Work three baubles to the left of your centre line, and three to the right.

Finishing your cube

- Cut your piece of canvas down the centre line, so that you have two strips each with three baubles. Remove the masking tape. Trim the piece of canvas so that only one square of unworked canvas remains around the outside of your work. Fold this unworked canvas to the inside. The strips now need to be placed so that one strip forms the top, back and bottom of the cube, and the other forms the left side, front and right side. Using your background colour, oversew the two edges of the strips, covering the outside stitch on each strip. Before you sew all the sides closed, push squares of cardboard cut to match the size of each side of your cube against each inside wall of your cube, and fill the cube with toy filling.
- Make a twisted or plaited cord using some of your yarn, and attach it to one corner of your cube as a hanger.

