
Embroidered ABC Wall Hanging: A Daily Practice with Lauren from Lark Rising E

Chapter 1 - Embroidered ABC Wall Hanging: A Daily Practice

Overview

- [Lauren] Parents have been decorating nurseries for ages, and in many of those, they hang some sort of ABC poster or print or art piece. I've designed one that you can stitch yourself that is an embroidered ABC wall hanging, and we'll be going through each day with one letter at a time. I'm Lauren of Lark Rising Embroidery. I'm a fiber artist in the Pacific Northwest. I spend my time balancing my creative practice and mothering two young sons. It's a full life, but one that is full of joy. I wanted this design to feel classic and minimal, while still having a modern, fresh take. I've used just two colors on each one of my examples to get that modern feel. In this daily practice, you'll learn a variety of embroidery techniques. We'll use quite a few line stitches, such as stem stitch, split stitch, and back stitch, as well as a few fill stitches, like satin stitch and French knots. On the final day, I'll teach you how to take your fully embroidered panel and turn it into a beautiful, hangable piece of art. (light pop music)

Day 1 - Materials and preparation

- For this class, you'll need a few materials. You'll need some way to hold your fabric while you stitch, I prefer using this Q-Snap frame, which snaps together and then you can secure your fabric into it. You can also use a large embroidery hoop or a wooden frame that you staple your fabric to the back of. A small pair of embroidery scissors. A size five embroidery needle. You only need one needle for this project, but it's always good to have an extra on hand in case you lose it, and you'll need some embroidery thread. I used just two colors in this project, and I've done examples with this color palette and this one. You'll need two skeins of thread for whichever color you do the letters in, and four skeins of thread for the color you choose to do the little pictures in. It's also helpful to have some fabric sheers, so that you can cut clean edges on your fabric. You can also choose to print out your class supply guide, color guide, stitch library or the step-by-step process for each image, or you can choose to view them on your screen as you go. There are two different ways that you can choose to have your fabric ready for this class. My preferred way is to have pre-printed fabric with the whole design printed already onto the material that you can buy. I prefer this because tracing all the little pictures and letters with all the small details can be pretty tricky, but you can do either one and I'll show you how to trace if that's what you choose to do. If you just want the pre-printed fabric, that's all you need going forward. You can purchase this pre printed fabric on my website, larkrisingembroidery.com. If you choose to trace the design onto your fabric, you'll need a few additional materials. In your class PDF, you'll find these two pages with the design printed on them. You'll need to cut along the blue line here and here, and then tape them together like this so that the design matches up. You'll also need a light source to help you trace and see the design more clearly through your fabric. I prefer to use a light table like this one, but you can also tape both the paper and your fabric to a window and trace that way. You'll also need a piece of fabric that will fit the entire design, plus a little bit extra so that you can hold it in your Q-Snap frame or your hoop. I recommend about 26 inches by 17 inches. And I really like a thicker fabric, like a linen blend, so that it's a little bit more sturdy and will hold itself together more when you take it out of the frame. You'll also need an erasable fabric pen to trace the design. I really like a Pilot FriXion ballpoint pen, which you can erase at the end using a heat gun or a blow dryer that you already

have at home. I finished my embroidery project by making it into a wall hanging. If you would like to do this too, you'll need a few extra materials. You'll need a piece of white felt fabric in the same dimensions as your front embroidery. Two wooden dowels, 3/8 inches thick by 11.5 inches in length. A piece of twine or thin rope to hang the project, which should be about two feet long, and you'll need some sewing thread and a sewing machine. To trace the design onto your fabric, first take the traceable template and place it on your light source. Place your fabric on top of the design, making sure that the warp and weave lines of your fabric are straight vertically and horizontally, matching the direction that the template is going, and then go ahead and turn on your light pad and trace. Make sure that you use your opposite hand to your tracing hand, to stabilize the paper and fabric as you work. Before moving your fabric and paper off of your light source, always turn the light source off and make sure that you've traced over every part of the design before you shift things away.

Day 2 - Straight stitch, back stitch, and split stitch

- Before we dive into our project, we'll be going over a few of the basic techniques that we'll be using throughout the month. Feel free to follow along with me by doing it yourself or just watching and learning. If you're using DMC thread like I am, you'll always want to pull the thread out from the part of the skein that has the longer plastic piece with the number that indicates the thread color. Pull out a length that is no more than two feet long, cut. I'm going to separate the six strands into two groups of three. Piece them apart toward one end and then just carefully and slowly pull. This month, we'll be using groups of three strands, two strands, a single strand, and one or two times we'll use a four-stranded section. So you'll get a lot of practice at separating strands of thread. To thread your needle, grab one end, put that thread right through the eye, making sure each and every strand gets through at the same time. To place the needle on the strand, make sure you have two thirds of your length of thread on one side of the needle, and about one third of your length of thread on the other side of the needle. Tie a knot in the long end. There are lots of different ways to tie knots, and you can choose any way that you like. Your thread will have a little bit of a tail beyond the knot, and you'll want to make sure to trim that really nice and short. The first stitch we're learning is a simple straight stitch. To do a straight stitch, you'll always begin from the backside of your fabric, bringing your needle up, pulling it through all the way until you feel that knot bump against the backside of your fabric, and then depending on the length of line you're stitching, you will replace your needle back down into the fabric and pull it through. That is a single straight stitch. You can do a straight stitch in a variety of lengths, but for this project, we'll be keeping most of them nice and short to reduce their propensity for snagging. The next stitch is backstitch. Begin backstitch in the same way that you began a straight stitch, by bringing your needle up through the backside of the fabric and replacing it back down through the front. In backstitch, it's important to keep your stitch lengths as similar to one another as possible. So, estimate how far away from the end of your first stitch you need to move to make sure that your next stitch will be the same length, and bring that needle right back up through the back of the fabric. This time, you'll reinsert your needle through the very same hole that you ended your first stitch in, essentially moving backward. That's why it gets the name backstitch. You'll repeat this motion until you finish the end of your line. Now we'll be learning split stitch. Begin split stitch in the same way that you did straight stitch and backstitch. This time when you reinsert your needle, you're going to bring it up halfway through the stitch that you just made, splitting the strands in half. So, I've just made this stitch with four strands of thread, so I'm gonna get two strands of thread on either side of my needle and bring my thread up, making sure it's pulled securely, and then reinserted it back down so that my stitch is the same

length as the first stitch that I made, which means there will be a half stitch length of fabric exposed between the end of my first stitch and where I'm reinserting my needle. This time, I'll reinsert my needle, again, halfway through my previous stitch, which is right at the end of the first stitch that I made. This type of stitch gives a really nice even look without any obvious breaks between stitches like the backstitch had.

Day 3 - Stem stitch, satin stitch, and French knots

- We'll be using three additional stitches in this project. This one is stem stitch. Stem stitch begins just like backstitch. And traditionally, when you do stem stitch, instead of pulling your needle all the way through back to the backside of the fabric, you actually keep it on the front side and bring your needle back up through the center of where the thread is coming out and where it would be going back in, and pulling that stitch through this way. And for your second stitch, again, you wanna go half a stitch length away and then bring that needle back up through the end of the previous stitch, keeping your needle on the front side of your fabric the whole time and pulling it through. Since we'll be using a thick fabric and doing very small design, it can be tricky to manipulate your needle in a way that keeps it on the front side of the fabric, so I'm gonna show you a little bit of a trick for how to do a cheat stem stitch. Insert your needle and actually pull it through to the backside of the fabric, using your other hand to hold a loop down below your line of stitches. Bring that needle back up through the end of your previous stitch and pull it through. This creates the exact same effect as a traditional stem stitch, and is much easier than doing it the traditional way for this project. When you go around a curved area with stem stitch, make sure to reduce the size of your stitches, keeping them small and close together. This prevents the creation of a jagged edge and keeps your line looking smooth. The four stitches we've learned so far are line stitches. You'll use these stitches to trace over the lines in the design. Now we're gonna switch and learn the two fill stitches used in this pattern. The first of these is satin stitch. I've drawn a rectangle onto this piece of fabric to show you how to fill in the area. Satin stitches can go in any direction: vertically on a shape, horizontally, or even at an angle. For now, I'll demonstrate doing some vertical satin stitches. Satin stitch begins by bringing your needle up through one edge of the space you're filling in and reinserting your needle on the other side. As you stitch, make sure that all strands of the thread you're using get pulled nice and smooth and flush against the top of the fabric. As you do satin stitch, always bring your needle up through the same side of your shape and down through the same side of your shape. So I began my first stitch on this side, so I'm gonna bring my second stitch up on this side as well. And I'm bringing that stitch up very, very close to where I began my first stitch, leaving almost no space in between the two. This technique wraps the fabric in stitches. And I don't recommend that you alternate by bringing your stitch up this way, down this way, and then up on the same side and back down because it puts way too much tension on some really thin areas of fabric. The key to a nice satin stitch is to make sure that all of your stitches are parallel and sitting smooth against the top of the fabric. If you find your thread getting twisted, make sure you stop and smooth out before you keep going. Carry on in the same way to fill in the entirety of the shape you're working on. The final stitch we'll be using are French knots. French knots will be used in this design, both singularly and in groups to fill in an area. To begin French knots, bring your needle up through the backside of your fabric and then use your other hand to wrap your needle with the thread two times. One, two. The whole time you complete this stitch, you'll need to maintain tension in your thread using your opposite hand. Carefully, reinsert your needle either in the same hole that you brought your thread up through, or just very, very close to it. Still hanging on with your opposite hand, reach around the

backside and pull the needle through. Only take your finger out of this loop when there's very little left and pull it tight. That's your first French knot. To do a group of French knots together, you do the same technique near where you did your first French knot. Like so. You can do as many French knots as you need to fill in the space as indicated. We've covered all the techniques and stitches you need to know to do this project.

Day 4 - Stitching letters

- As we move on to working on our actual project, we'll need to set our fabric into a frame. This is an 11 by 17 inch Q-Snap frame that goes together like this. (assembling Q-Snap frame) Place your fabric on top of the frame so that the design is centered as much as you can. You'll need to make sure that you have room on either side of the frame, so that you can pull the fabric tight once it's set. Then you'll take these and place them on top of the existing frame. This Can be a little bit tricky and sometimes you'll put this on and need to take it off and adjust it. Like I just put this on and it moved my fabric so much that it's covering part of my design, so I'm gonna take it off and try again. There we go. And then you'll place the opposite side before moving on to these ends. Grab the side of the frame and then rotate that top piece that's holding it in place to tighten the fabric across the frame. (assembling frame) Now you can do the opposite ends. You can also flip the frame over and gently pull the fabric to help it be nice and snug in the frame. Before you begin stitching, make sure that the design looks nice and straight and none of the images or letters are too warped or shifted, because you'll wanna make sure that you're stitching your lines exactly as indicated. I'm happy with how this is set in the frame, and my fabric is nice and drum tight, so now we'll move on to stitching the letters. For all of the letters, you'll use a horizontal satin stitch and three strands of thread. Since this is pre-printed fabric, you'll wanna make sure that you bring your needle up just outside the lines indicated in the design, so that you don't have any of those print marks show up on your finished project. Always make sure to keep your stitches nice and close together, even if that means it takes you a couple of tries to get your needle through in the right spot. Focus on making nice clean lines at the edges of your letter, and this is a place where focusing on the warp and weave of your fabric and where those lines are, can help you to make sure things are lined up the way you want them. After completing your letter, turn the frame over and tie a knot. My favorite way to tie a knot, is by looping your needle under existing stitches to create a loop and then tacking your needle through that loop and pulling it snug. Do this at least two times. Trim the remaining thread to a short tail. Like that. Many of the letters have curved edges and or holes in the middle, I'm gonna show you, O, so we can learn how to do those techniques. To begin stitching letter O, start at the top of the letter and stitch it in just the same way that you did letter E, by staying just on the outside edge of the printed area. For each new stitch, bring your needle out slightly further than the previous stitch until you get to the center of the letter where the curve is the biggest. When you get to a point where you can no longer do one continuous stitch to fill in all the way across because of the hole in the center, you'll need to pick one side to fill in first. It's easier and saves on thread to stitch all the way down one side and then return to the top and stitch down the other side. As soon as you are able, continue stitching all the way across the letter. If you find that you've gone too far down and there's some visible design above, you can go ahead and go back and add in another stitch. Like that. Once you reach the bottom of the letter, go back and fill in the remaining area. Once you finish stitching the letter, go back and make sure all of your stitches are smooth. You can do this by using the side of your needle to smooth the stitches out, or by turning the project over and gently tugging with your needle to make sure any excess thread is pulled to the backside of the fabric instead of on the

front. You can use these techniques to stitch all of the letters in this design. You can decide whether you wanna stitch all the letters before you start the individual designs, or stitch each letter with the design day by day.

Day 5 - I is for Iceberg

- As we begin stitching each of the little designs in this project, we'll be going out of order. Instead of alphabetical order, we're gonna begin with letters that have simpler and fewer stitches, and then progress to more complicated designs later on. I'll be teaching each one in a small hoop with just one image on the hoop to make it a little bit easier to see. In the class PDF, you'll find a page for each letter that indicates what type of stitches and how many strands to use for each part of the design. We're going to begin with the iceberg. This is composed of mostly straight stitches and one line of stem stitch. I'm using three strands of thread on my needle, and I'm gonna begin by stitching straight stitches on all the lines on the top portion of the iceberg. You'll do one single straight stitch on each length. And then when you get to a point where the angle of the line changes, that indicates where you will do a new stitch. Make sure with each stitch that is touching another one, the needle goes right back into the same hole in the fabric where another stitch is coming out of. So those two stitches will share a hole in the fabric, sort of like they do in backstitch. You can do these in any order, whatever makes sense to you. Since these are some of the longer stitches we'll be using, make sure that each stitch is pulled nice and snugly down to the top of the fabric with no extra threads sticking up because once we take this out of the frame or hoop and the fabric is sitting loose, we don't want the thread to pucker and have parts that are sticking out. Those are prone to snagging. If you're using the pre-printed fabric, some of the lines are a bit light, and I've done this so that when you are all finished, you don't see any of the ink that's printed on there. But if you have trouble seeing anything, make sure to refer to your PDF so you can check whether or not you are stitching everything exactly where it goes. Once you've filled in all of the edges of each section of the iceberg, you'll stitch this water line with three strands of thread using stem stitch. To finish a line of stem stitch, simply re-insert your needle into the very end of your last stitch, and pull it all the way through. Continue adding straight stitches on the edges of the iceberg all the way down on the bottom half. As you can see, I finished all of my iceberg with the rest of those straight stitches, and I filled in the letter I with horizontal satin stitches. Yours should look something like this when it's all complete.

Day 6 - W is for Web

- Today I'll continue using stem stitch and straight stitches to make the web. I have two strands of thread and I'm going to begin by stitching the outline of the web, just the outer edges. Can start on any of the corners that you like. Treat each of these curves as a separate line and end it by reinserting your needle at the end of your previous stitch and then starting anew at the end of the next curve. For these parts that stick out beyond the main curve, we'll go back and add a straight stitch to finish them. But for now, we're gonna continue doing stem stitch. Once you finish adding the stem stitch edge you'll add all the other lines with small straight stitches. I prefer to stitch around the spiral of the web first and then go back and add these cross pieces but you can do it the opposite way if you prefer. Each little segment should have its own stitch. On this big project, I finished all the stitches for the web. I continued adding straight stitches on every segment of the inside of the web, and I added straight stitches on these outside little pieces there. I use horizontal satin stitch to fill in the W with an alternate color.

Day 7 - C is for Clouds

- This time we'll be using straight stitches and stem stitch for the clouds. Each of these little shadow markings at the bottom of the clouds should be stitched with one straight stitch. I have three strands of thread on my needle. When you get to the end of a section, or if you run out of thread, make sure you stop, tie a knot at the back of your hoop, and switch to a new piece of thread, picking up where you left off. I'm going to stitch with stem stitch around the edge of this cloud. You can start at any point, but I find it helpful to start at the edge where this first cloud overlaps. If you get to a corner in a line where there's a point, and you need to start a new line, you can bring your needle up just slightly beyond where you brought it down for your last stitch, rather than bringing it up through where you just put it down, because bringing it up where you just put it down will undo your previous stitch. So I'm gonna begin a new line at this little corner very close to where I finished my last stitch but not directly inside of it. Remember to keep stitches small and close together as you go around a tight curve. You can continue doing stem stitch in this way to finish this cloud and the other one. On this big project I finished both clouds with the straight stitches and stem stitch around.

Day 8 - R is for Rabbit

- This little rabbit is my toddler's favorite picture from this project. And it's always the one he points out first. We'll do the entire outline of this rabbit using split stitch in two strands of thread. You can start anywhere you want. (thread swishing) Make sure you keep your stitches nice and small as you work around the outline. You'll continue this line of split stitches all the way around the rabbit, and then start a new line to stitch each of these two back legs. On this big project, I'm going to add straight stitches for this fur and satin stitch for the eye and nose of the rabbit. I'll continue using two strands of thread. Each fur marking just gets one single straight stitch. As you can see on our PDF, the rabbit's eye has a round circle and one straight stitch going over top. You'll use satin stitch to fill in the eye. This will only take you about two stitches, and the same thing with the nose. The stitches on the nose should go vertically. And just fill in until the end of the nose, where it bumps up against the split stitch that you did before. And that's our finished rabbit.

Day 9 - Q is for Quartz

- Next up in our project is quartz. We'll use a few straight stitches and split stitch to complete this section. I'm using two strands of thread to add in some completely random, small straight stitches in this bottom section. This makes it look like a different kind of material than the quartz crystals, and more like a rock. You can add in as few or as many as you wish, just make sure that they're all going in different angles. Once you're happy with the amount of straight stitches you added in this lower section, you'll switch to using split stitch to stitch around the outline of the bottom here, the line that goes right under the quartz, and then each line of the quartz crystals. For really, really small lines, like you see here on these crystals, you can just do small straight stitches and not worry about splitting them, to make it a little bit more defined in where the different lines are. You can begin stitching on any of the crystals or with the rock base. It's completely up to you. Finished the end of one line of split stitch, and you need to start another line in a new direction, you can bring your needle up at where the end of your stitch will be, and actually do a backstitch to begin the new line. That way you're not bringing your needle up through where you finished your previous stitch. Split the stitch you make, and then continue normally. Since this little triangular portion is so small, I just did two straight stitches instead of split stitch there. Here's what the quartz look like on a finished

project.

Day 10 - H is for House

- All of the images in this project are in a nature theme. This house is a little bit different, but since I think that it's important to always live close to nature, I wanted to include a home in the nature project. For each of the windows on the house, you'll begin by placing one straight stitch with three strands of thread on the outside edge of each window. You'll switch to two strands of thread to stitch the window cross pieces. You can decide whether to stitch the horizontal cross piece or the vertical one first, just make sure that you're consistent, and do it the same way for all of your windows. Continue using two strands of thread to stitch the doorframe using stem stitch. And remember when you're going around a curve, like the top of this doorframe, you want to reduce the size of your stitches. While you're doing the door, you can use the same piece of thread to stitch two small stitches right next to each other and fill in the door knob. When you get a small knot in your thread, like this one, you can fix it by sticking your needle through the small loop that's created by the knot and then gently pulling on either side of the thread until it comes loose. Like that. All of the edges of the house are also stitched with stem stitch using two strands of thread. Always make sure each individual stitch that you do is pulled all the way through, so there isn't any excess thread sitting on top of your fabric. It's always better to make sure you don't have too much thread in your stitch before you continue on, rather than going back and fixing it later. You'll continue using stem stitch to stitch the entirety of the outline of the house, including the roofline. You'll also use stem stitch to stitch around the smoke from the chimney, and straight stitches to stitch the edges of the chimney, just like you did on the windows.

Day 11 - U is for Urchin

These urchin shells are some of my favorite things to find when I'm tide pooling on the coast. We'll be using split stitch and straight stitches to do this part of the project. I have two strands of thread and I'm going to use split stitch to stitch a ring around the outside of each urchin. When completing a ring of split stitch, you can make the seam where the two ends of the ring meet a little bit more seamless by bringing your needle up through your last stitch to split it. And then back down into the middle of the stitch that started the ring. Like that. You can continue using the same two strands of thread to stitch the center ring of the urchin with just a few straight stitches. The long lines of the urchin will also be stitched with just one straight stitch each. The small dots in between the straight lines you've just made will be stitched with one straight stitch each but just really, really small ones. Like that. You'll repeat this whole process. Two more times to finish the remaining urchins.

Day 12 - O is for Owl

- Today we'll be using a variety of stitches to embroider an owl. I'll begin with two strands of thread, and I'm going to stitch these little V shapes for the owl's front feathers. Each V is made up of just two straight stitches that meet at a point. After finishing up these little Vs, I'm gonna continue with the same thread to stitch these long lines on the owl's tail. Each line will just be one straight stitch. I'm going to make sure that I pull each stitch nice and snugly to the surface of the fabric, so that they don't have looseness and snag when I pull this out of the frame. I'll continue using straight stitches to fill in the bottom edge of the tail. The rest of the outline of the owl and the scallops on the wing and face will be stitched using split stitch. On this owl, I finished the split stitch all the way around, and now I'm going to fill in the feet and face. I'll do a satin stitch on the eyes and this lower

portion of the beak, with just one straight stitch connecting, and then I'll fill in these little tiny toe bumps with satin stitch. Each owl eye will take just about four stitches to fill in, and I'm angling those stitches slightly down toward the center of the face. Now I'll fill this lower portion of the beak with horizontal satin stitches. And just place one straight stitch connecting each eye to the top corners of the beak. For the feet, they're so small, they'll just need a few stitches each, with three main bumps on each foot. I make these bumps by just placing one longer stitch in the center, and then two slightly shorter stitches on either side. And that's our finished owl.

Day 13 - F is for Fox

- The image for F is a fox and I'll be stitching it mostly with split stitch. Each of the lines on the fox's body, tail, and ear are stitched with split stitch, using two strands. You can begin anywhere you want and when you get to the end of a line like this one or this one, simply stop and begin again in a new place. Remember that to end a line of split stitch, you just re-insert your needle into the end of your previous stitch. When you're going around a curved area, make sure that you keep your stitches nice and small. Once you've completed the outlines of the fox with split stitch, fill in the nose and pupil of the eye with a couple of small satin stitches. Continue using two strands of thread for this. You'll come back to the eye with a single strand of thread to do the outline. But while you have two strands of thread on your needle, you can go ahead and add in the little straight stitches for the fox's whiskers. Instead of trying to tie a knot in a single strand of thread, you can cut a long length of thread and leave it loose with some extra length sticking out the back side and then when you finished stitching what you're stitching with that single strand of thread, you can tie the two ends together on the backside. Use your single strand to outline the shape of the eye. And there we have a sly finished fox.

Day 14 - N is for Nest

- Next up is a nest. We'll be using some of the techniques we've learned already, and some freestyle stitching to do this part of the project. Use two strands of thread to stitch the outline of each egg using split stitch. If you refer to your PDF guide, you can see that the nest has a couple of clusters of leaves. There are some small leaves and some larger ones. Each leaf will be stitched with a cluster of satin stitches but instead of satin stitches all going in the same direction, it's best if you fan the satin stitches out so that they are closer together at the point of each leaf where the leaf is coming off of the stem. You can use a single straight stitch to connect clusters of leaves. These really small leaves can be stitched with just two stitches each. I've stitched these little clusters of leaves and now I'll connect them with a straight stitch. These larger leaves will take a few more stitches to fill, but you'll do them in the same way. Again, use one straight stitch to make a stem. To stitch the remaining twigs that make up the nest, use first three strands of thread and then two strands of thread to add straight stitches at a variety of angles that overlap each other until all, or at least the majority, of these lines are covered and you can't see them anymore. The angle and shape and size of these individual stitches is gonna be up to you and just make sure that the stitches that you place are not all pointed in the same direction and that you change for each one so that it looks random and natural. I have three strands of thread on my needle now and I'll be adding a layer of stitches in this slightly larger amount of thread first, and then go back and add in more stitches with just two strands of thread. Your foundational layer of three stranded stitches should look something like this all the way around the nest. I'm using this two stranded layer of thread to fill in all the remaining area of the nest that I want filled. The finished nest should look something like this. Each person's

nest will look completely unique though because you'll be placing the stitches however you choose.

Day 15 - E is for Evergreen

- I live in Washington, which is the evergreen state, so it seemed only fitting to use an evergreen for the letter E. I'll begin by stitching the trunk of the tree using straight stitches for these inner markings and stem stitch around the edge of the trunk. I have two strands of thread on my needle and will be using that throughout the design. Continue using these two strands of thread to stitch the entire outline of the evergreen using split stitch. You'll need to start stop your lines at every inside and outside corner. As you see here, I finished the split stitch outline on this evergreen. I'm going to continue using two strands of thread to fill in these inner branch markings. You can think about this as either one straight stitch per section. So one here, one here, here, and here or a jagged line of backstitch. And that's all you need to do to finish the evergreen.

Day 16 - Y is for Yucca

- Today I'll be stitching a yucca plant. We'll continue using split stitch and satin stitch while also adding in French knots. Each leaf of the yucca plant should be stitched with split stitch using two strands of thread. On this yucca plant, I've finished doing split stitch on every leaf. And now I'm going to add in the stem and flower portion of the plant. Fill in the stem with just a couple of stitches going vertically out from the leaves with satin stitch. These little flowers are all each French knots. We demonstrated French knots earlier in the month. And if this is your first time doing French knots, I definitely recommend practicing on a separate piece of fabric until you get the hang of it. French knots can be a little bit tricky, right at the start. Remember to wrap your needle two times and reinsert it into the fabric very, very close to where the thread is already coming out and maintain that tension in your thread with your opposite hand, as you pull the French knot to a close. After finishing your French knots, the yucca plant is complete.

Day 17 - A is for Apple

- Let's have some more practice with French knots on our apple. We'll use French knots and stem stitch to do this project. Each of these little dots on the apple will get their own French knot. Continue using two strands of thread to stitch the outline of the apple and each leaf using stem stitch. Remember that when you finish a line of stem stitch and you want to start a new line going in another direction that looks like it connects to the first line, bring your needle up just a tiny bit away from where you ended your last stitch, so that it looks connected, but you don't pull your previous stitch out of the fabric. On this apple, I've finished all of the French knots and the stem stitch around the apple and leaves. You can see here, I've stitched the veins on this leaf. I've done that using just a few straight stitches on each segment of the leaf vein. Each time the main vein of the leaf changes direction, you'll need to add a new stitch, so that it can cover the vein. And each of the ones sticking off the side, the branching veins, will also get their very own stitch. The last step to completing this apple is to fill in the stem. You'll use horizontal satin stitches starting from the top down. If you find a place in your rows of satin stitch where you feel like there's a little bit of a gap, you can always feel free to go back and add in another stitch. Just be sure to smooth it down using your fingernail or the side of your needle to make sure that it looks like it fits in with its neighbors. And with that, the first letter of the alphabet is finally done.

Day 18 - X marks the spot

- There aren't very many words in the English language that start with X, so for this letter, I've illustrated a map with an X marks the spot. This particular illustration has several layers, and I encourage you to refer to your class PDF and look at the enlarged bold image as a reference while you stitch. I'm going to begin by stitching these contour lines on the map using backstitch and a single strand of thread. Be sure to keep stitches small so they look curvy and not jagged. On this version of the map, I've already stitched all of those contour lines. Now I'm going to stitch these fold lines across the map with a row of stem stitch each, and then the outline of the map with a row of split stitch. I'll be using two strands of thread for each of these. It's okay to go right over the top of your contour lines. If you find that your thread is getting tangled for any reason, it's always a good idea to stop and smooth things out before you keep stitching. Stitch the other fold line of the map in this same way, and then do the outline with split stitch like this. On this version of the map, I finished all of the contour lines, the fold lines, and the outline of the map. What's left is to stitch this dashed line that leads the way to the X. I'll do this with a full six strands of thread and place a single straight stitch on each dash mark. Again, it's okay if these marks go over existing contour lines or the fold lines of the map. At this point, I'll switch back to two strands of thread to stitch the X. Fill in across the X on one full diagonal with satin stitch, and then go back with more satin stitches to fill in the opposite way over top of the row you did first. And now we've made it to X marks the spot.

Day 19 - L is for Lilly pad

- Today, I'll be showing you how to stitch a lily pad for letter L. Each of these lily pads has an outline, lines that go toward the center, and this one has a lily. You'll use the same techniques for the outer line and lines going toward the center on all three lily pads. You'll also use two strands of thread for each element of this design. The lines that go toward the center of the lily pad should all be stitched with a single straight stitch each. You'll also use straight stitches to do this V-shaped edge of the outside of the lily pad. Do two stitches, right on top of each other, for this V-shape to make a thicker outline on the edge. The straight stitches on these other two lily pads should all meet at one center point and share a hole in the center of the lily pad. Outline each lily pad with stem stitch, continuing to use just two strands of thread. Since some of the lily petals cross over the line of the backside of the lily pad, you'll need to start and stop your line of stem stitch. Now we'll work on the lily itself. For these three marks indicated here on the PDF, you'll do one straight stitch each. Now outline each petal with stem stitch. Your finished lily pads should look something like this.

Day 20 - V is for Volcano

- Today's stitch project is the friendliest little volcano you've ever seen. All of the trees and shrubbery in this design are stitched with a horizontal satin stitch. Use two strands to stitch them all. For trees that have a visible trunk like this one and this one, you can do one or two vertical stitches to fill in the trunk as indicated. Remember that any time you do satin stitch, just move your stitches down and make sure they're all sitting cleanly against the top of the fabric. You can do this by using your needle or fingernail to smooth your stitches, as well as turning the project over and using your needle to gently tug on your stitches from the back, and pull any excess thread through to the other side. Continue this satin stitch technique for all of the shrubs and trees in the design. Then you'll continue to stitch the lines of the volcano and the hills in the front with split stitch using two strands of thread. On this volcano, I've already finished all of the trees and shrubs, as well as the outlines of the volcano and hills. I'm going to continue using two strands of thread to stitch these little crease marks at the sides of the volcano. I'll place one straight stitch each for all the lines. I'm going to

stitch the opening of the volcano with a horizontal satin stitch, continuing to use two strands of thread. I find it really helpful to do my first stitch from each side of the volcano and those lines that I have already done in split stitch. And then fill in below and above. I'll stitch each of the volcano's lava sprays and smoke with stem stitch in a single strand of thread. Remember that when you're doing stem stitch around a curve, you'll need to keep those stitches really nice and small. When you finish your volcano's smoke and lava, the volcano portion of this project is done.

Day 21 - G is for Geese

- Seeing birds migrating in the sky is always a welcome sign of the change of seasons. For the letter G, I've done a set of geese flying in V formation. All of the geese in this design should be stitched using vertical satin stitch in three strands of thread. Before making a stitch, you can always use your thread and make a line with it, instead of inserting your needle, to decide where the angle of that stitch should go. Fill every goose with satin stitch until your flock is finished.

Day 22 - T is for Toadstools

- I love searching for toadstools while hiking with my sons and that's what we'll be stitching for the letter T. Fill the spots on this toadstool with horizontal satin stitch using two strands of thread. Once you fill in all four spots with satin stitch you can connect them on the top and on this lip here with one straight stitch. Continue using two strands of thread to stitch a line of stem stitch here, here and around the stem of the main toadstool. Continue using stem stitch this time with just a single strand of thread to outline both of these smaller toadstools and their stem. To finish up this image add a single straight stitch on every line underneath the main toadstool, use a single strand of thread for each stitch. And now our toadstools are done.

Day 23 - Z is for Zinnia

- For the last letter of the alphabet, we'll be stitching a zinnia. Begin stitching this flower at the center, which should be filled with French knots, using two strands of thread. Unlike the French knots we've done so far, all of these should be touching each other with no visible space in between. When the center of the flower is filled, move on to stitching the petals using backstitch in three strands of thread. Most of the flower petals will only need three to four stitches to go around their edge. I've stitched all the petals on this zinnia, and now I'm gonna show you how to do the leaf veins. Since these leaf veins are curved in many spots and not straight, I'll be using a stem stitch in a single strand of thread to stitch each vein. Stitch the outside edge of each leaf with split stitch, using two strands of thread. When you finish your zinnia, it should look something like this.

Day 24 - K is for Kelp

- Kelp makes up the forests of the sea. They're a really vital part of our Earth's ecosystem, and so I wanted to honor them by using them for the letter K. Begins stitching this piece of kelp with the bottom stem. Fill it in with satin stitch using three strands of thread. Make sure you place each stitch horizontally, maintaining the same angle as you work your way up the kelp. As you work your way up the stem, it separates into four separate pieces. Stitch each of these with satin stitch individually all the way up to the top of each kelp bulb. On this version of the kelp, I've already finished the satin stitch section. Now use one strand of thread to do a stem stitch line up the center of each kelp leaf. Switch to two strands of thread to do an outline of each kelp leaf using split stitch. And here you can see our full finished kelp.

Day 25 - J is for Jellyfish

- Today we'll be stitching a friendly little jellyfish to hang out next to our kelp. Begin by stitching the outline of the jellyfish body using two strands of thread and stem stitch. To stitch the thin tentacles of the jellyfish, continue using two strands of thread and split stitch. Switch to using three strands of thread to fill in the larger tentacles with satin stitch. Finish off your jellyfish by adding these little polka dots using two strands of thread and French knots. And that's our finished jelly.

Day 26 - B is for Bumblebee

- A bumblebee was the first thing I ever embroidered. It's been really great to revisit that design for this new project. Start stitching your bee by placing a single straight stitch along either side of the white stripes on the bee body. Continue to stitch all the way around the second part of the bee body and the head, using backstitch. Now switch to using one strand of thread to stitch around the outline of each wing. To finish the body of the bee, switch to two strands of thread to fill in each black stripe with satin stitch. As you can see on the larger PDF version, the stripes of the bee have straight edges. As you stitch, you can choose to follow these lines exactly or do what I did, which is create a slightly jagged edge which makes the bee look a little bit more fuzzy. On this bee, I've continued filling each stripe with satin stitch and used satin stitch to fill in the bees eye. From here, we'll use a single strand of thread to fill in the lines on each wing. Similarly, to a lot of the leaf veins we've done in other parts of the project, each little segment of the lines on the wings should get their own straight stitch. Remember, if you have trouble seeing these small details on your fabric, you can always look at what they look like on your printed PDF. Continue using the single strand of thread to stitch each antenna with stem stitch. Lastly, switch back to two strands of thread to stitch the bee's legs. If you look on the PDF, you'll see that each of the small back legs can be stitched with one single straight stitch, but you'll use two, one here, and one here for each of the front two legs. And with that, your bee is complete.

Day 27 - S is for Strawberry

- My family's favorite thing to grow in our summer garden is strawberries. Let's stitch them. Begin with the main stem by using four strands of thread in split stitch. Since you're using four strands of thread this time, try to make sure you get two strands on either side when you bring your needle back up through the stitch. After completing the main stem, swap to using two strands of thread to stitch all of the smaller stems and the outlines of the big leaves. Continue using split stitch for these sections. As you can see here, I've finished outlining all the leaves and stems with split stitch and added the veins on the leaves using a single strand of thread for each section, just like we did earlier on the apple. Continue outlining each strawberry with split stitch using two strands of thread. Fill each of the small leaves at the strawberry tops with satin stitch in the same way that we did the small leaves on the nest. You can finish off your strawberries by adding the seeds with two strands of thread and tiny little straight stitches throughout.

Day 28 - D is for Dandelion

- Today we'll be stitching a dandelion for the letter D. The heads of each dandelion are composed of two parts: long, straight stitches that extend from the base, or center, outward and a row of satin stitches along the outside edge. Use a single strand of thread to stitch these long straight stitches. Add a second stitch overtop of the stitches on both outside edges of the bottom dandelion. That gives this stitch a little bit thicker line and defines the edges of the shape. Create a jagged line of

satin stitch along the outside edge, bringing your needle up through the outside edge of the dandelion and back down through the inside edge. That way you won't pull up any of your stitches you've done at the center. Here I finished both of the dandelion heads and I'll add the small leafs at their base with two strands of thread. Do this in the same way that you did the small leaves on the strawberry tops. After finishing the small leaves, continue using two strands of thread to stitch the outside line of the leaf using split stitch. Stitch the stems of the dandelions using a horizontal satin stitch and two strands of thread. You can see here that I used a single straight stitch for each section of the leaf veins, just like I did on the strawberry. All that remains to finish our dandelions is to stitch the floating seeds. Do this with a single strand of thread. Stitch a single long, straight stitch in the center. Followed by a V-shaped set of stitches at the top. At the base of each floating seed, place two stitches right next to each other. Repeat this process for all three seeds. Now go ahead and make a wish.

Day 29 - P is for Poppy

- California poppies are one of my favorite wild flowers because they pop up everywhere as volunteers. Let's add some to our project. Outline each petal on both flowers, as well as the seed pod with a row of split stitch using two strands of thread. Here I've outlined the basic shapes, and I'll continue using two strands of thread to add these accent markings around the flower centers. Use straight stitches to also stitch the top of the poppy pod. The stripes that run up the center of the poppy pod can also be stitched using split stitch. Just like when we stitched the dandy lion, for letter D, fill the stem of the poppy with horizontal sand stitches. Be sure you don't leave out this little bit here between the two flowers. Finish up your poppies by adding a cluster of French knots in the center of each flower, just like we did with the zinnia. And with that, our poppies are complete.

Day 30 - M is for Moth

- The moth is the last letter of the alphabet that we have left to do. It's one of the most intricate designs of this project, but by now, you'll have the skills to tackle it with confidence. The outline of the moth's wings and body should be stitched with stem stitch using just a single strand of thread. On this moth, I finished outlining each section. The details on the inside of the moth should be stitched with straight stitches for these dash marks and small dots, and satin stitch for the bigger markings. Make sure to refer to your PDF guide to see them a little bit more clearly before you start stitching. I'm using three strands of thread to place a single straight stitch on top of each mark in the lower portion. Switch to two strands of thread to stitch the remaining marks here, here, and here. Fill in the remaining marks with satin stitch. You can do this in any direction as long as you make sure that the direction you use is mirrored from one side of the moth to the other. After filling in this circular section with satin stitch, use a single strand of thread to stitch the remainder of this oval using stem stitch. Here, I finished all of the wing decorations on this moth, and I'll show you how to stitch the antennae. These are very, very delicate, and you'll use a single strand of thread for all of it. Begin by stitching a line of stem stitch up the middle of each antennae. After you complete your line of stem stitch, add a single straight stitch on the end and matching stitches on either side, all the way down the antenna. Once you've finished the second antenna, your moth should look something like this. Congratulations, all 26 letters of the alphabet are now complete.

Day 31 - Finishing

- Before you do anything else to your project, make sure that you use a heat gun or at-home blow dryer to erase any visible lines left over from a friction pen if you traced the design onto your fabric. In order to finish up your project, you'll need to remove it from its temporary frame or hoop. There are lots of different ways that you can finish up this project, and you should feel free to be as creative with that process as you wish. You could turn this into a pillow, you could wrap the fabric around a wooden frame or a pre-stretched canvas, stapling it to the back, or you can do what I'm about to do, which is to sew a back panel of fabric and hang it by a dowel at the top and with one at the bottom as well. The next step is to collect the fabric you're using for the back, some straight pins, fabric sheers or a rotary cutter, and thread for your sewing machine. Be sure that the fabric you have for the back panel is something sturdy that will hold the structure of the piece, and is at least as large as your front panel. Use a measuring tool to mark how big your fabric needs to be. Measure three inches on the top and bottom. So on the bottom, that is three inches from the bottom of the Yucca plant, and on the top, three inches from the top of the B. Leave that fabric so that you have it for sewing the slots for the dowel. You'll also need an inch and a half of fabric to the right of the edge of the poppy, and an inch and a half of fabric to the left of the edge of the Q. Place your fabrics on top of one another, and make sure they're cut to match. While you will sew your fabrics with the right sides together, that means this front of the panel facing in, I think it's best to measure and cut your fabric while you can see the front of your panel, to make sure that you're lining things up correctly. The finished measurements of your fabric should be 17 3/4 inches tall by 11 1/4 inches wide. When you're happy with how everything looks, turn your embroidered panel over so that the front of it is facing your backing fabric. When you've realigned both fabrics so that all the edges are sitting cleanly together, use some straight pins to pin the two together. Once your two pieces of fabric are pinned together, you're ready to sew the edges. You can do this with a sewing machine like I will, or, if you don't have access to a sewing machine, you're welcome to hand sew the seams, or most fabric stores have a sticky sort of tape you can use to seal seams together. Sew seams around the entire edge of your fabric, leaving a gap of about three inches at the top so that you can turn the piece inside out. You'll want to leave a half-inch seam allowance on the long sides, and a quarter-inch seam allowance on the top and bottom. (gentle music) Before you turn your fabric right side out, be sure to trim the corners. (scissors snipping) Once you get the whole piece turned right side out, you can gently fold this open seam in, place a couple of pins there, and sew a line just to close it up. This won't be visible because it will be folded back to make a pocket for the dowel. (sewing machine whirring) Before sewing the pockets for the dowels, iron the edges of your embroidery to flatten the seams we just sewed. Turn your embroidery over and fold the top and bottom edges over one inch. Pin the fabric there, and then sew a quarter-inch seam along the long edge. (gentle music) The very last step to finish up this project is to insert the dowels at the bottom and top through the pockets you just sewed, and to tie the twine onto the top dowel. I'm using a length of twine about 20 inches long to tie a double knot on either end of the top dowel. If you have an extra-long length of thread on one end, go ahead and trim it down to about an inch, and then you can tuck the end of this twine, and on this side, into the pocket. It can be helpful to use the head of a pin to push the twine into the pocket. If you're just finishing up this project, hooray! It was an absolute marathon of stitching. I designed this project as a way to show love for the children in my home. I hope that your finished piece finds its way into the nursery of a child you love, and is cherished as the beautiful heirloom it is.