
How to Read a Crochet Pattern with Edie Eckman

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- Hi, I'm Edie Eckman. I'm a knit and crochet designer and the author of *The Crochet Answer Book*. Let me show you how to read a crochet pattern. (light music) There are many types of crochet patterns. We're just going to show you a couple to get you started. (light music)

Chapter 2 - How to Read a Crochet Pattern

Pattern reading basics

- This is a pattern from my book, *Connect the Shapes Crochet Motifs*, and it's a nice little motif pattern to help you get started. A lot of times patterns will start with an introduction, or a little what they call romance, to tell you about the pattern. But let's just jump right into the instructions. You'll see here I have a special abbreviation, Picot-3, and we'll refer back to that when we come to that in the instructions. Any standard abbreviations in this particular pattern are given separately in a glossary. So any time you're reading a pattern, you'll see that there's a glossary either at the beginning of the book, the end of the book, within the pattern, it will be somewhere, so you don't have to guess at what any of the abbreviations mean. The instructions begin with chain five. That Ch means chain, and you know that if you go back and look at the glossary. Then join with slip stitch to form a ring. That means you'll be slip stitching in the very first chain to form a ring. Now before we get too much further, I'd like to also show you what this looks like in a symbol chart. So we'll be reading the text and the symbol chart together. You'll see here there's a symbol chart that is also another way of instructing you how to make this motif. Now what do all those symbols mean? That can be confusing. Luckily, there is a symbol key in the back of the book that tells us what every symbol means. So you can always go back and see what the symbol means. Each of those little ovals means a chain, so you count one, two, three, four, five chains and joined with a slip stitch. That tiny little dot means slip stitch. Remember you can always go back and look at the stitch key and eventually you'll start memorizing what the symbols mean because after all doesn't a little oval look like a chain link? That will help you remember what the chain symbol is. Round one tells me to chain three, and it also tells me that that chain three counts as a double crochet. So I know to count that chain three as a double crochet. Then there's a comma, which tells me I can breathe and just do the chain three. Then I put 17 dc in ring. What is dc? That's double crochet. 17 dc in ring, then join with slip stitch to top of chain three. That tells me I have a total of 18 double crochets, because that first chain three counted as a double crochet. On the chart, it looks like this. I have my one, two, three chains that began my round and then I have 17 double crochet symbols. That tall stitch with a little hash mark and a stroke across the top is a double crochet. And if you count, you'll see there's 17 of those double crochets plus the chain three means 18 double crochets, and there's my slip stitch that joins the round. You can see from the chart, we're working from the center out, and I'm showing you the chart worked in the direction that a right-hander would work. If you're left handed, you're going to be working in the opposite direction. That's what's great about a chart because both right-handers and left-handers can use the chart in the way that works for them. Round two gets a little more complicated. We start with an asterisk and a parentheses, and a chain three, comma, two tr, that stands for treble crochet, end parentheses, in same stitch. What that means is you do what's within the parentheses all in the same stitch. So you chain three and do two trebles in the same

stitch. And then work a Picot-3. What's a Picot-3? At the top of the page, we have a special abbreviation for Picot-3. It's chain three, then slip stitch in third chain from hook. So you do that Picot-3, then you jump right back down to where we left off on round two. Now it says to do two treble, chain three, slip stitch. All within the next stitch you do everything that's within those parentheses in the next stitch. Chain one, skip one stitch. Hmm, we've come upon two asterisks. We're just going to ignore those for now. The next thing to do is to slip stitch in next stitch, and then repeat from asterisk around. That means we go all the way back up here to the asterisk and do this, all of these things over and over. When you hit that asterisk you go back up here, do it all the way around. But on the last repeat as you're working around, you end the last repeat at that double asterisk. That's where we left off. We said we were going to ignore that, but now we're going to leave off at the double asterisk and join with a slip stitch in the first slip stitch. The pattern says we should have six petals, so let's check. One, two, three, four, five, six, so we're good on that. Whenever the pattern calls for a certain stitch count, or in this case a petal count, it's always a good idea to stop and double check that you have the right number of stitches before moving on. Now let's see what that looks like in the chart. But before I do that, let me talk about color for a minute. You can see in the picture that this motif uses three colors but we haven't really talked about colors. In this book, the colors are designated at the top of the page. You can see that round one uses color A, which is green. Round two uses color B, which is pink. And rounds three through six are worked in color C which is yellow. Of course, you can use any color in any round the way you want to. In this particular book, I didn't specify round by round because I wanted you to be free to use whatever color choices you wanted to use. You can see here's the beginning of round two. There's a little two and it's done in blue, so you can distinguish it from round one which was in black. So there's my chain three, my two trebles. Notice this symbol for treble crochet looks like a double crochet, but it has two hash marks down on the stem. So there's my two trebles worked in the same stitch. There's a Picot-3, and you'll see that little symbol that's three chains and a slip stitch is the symbol for Picot-3. Then in the next stitch, I have two trebles, chain three, and slip stitch all in the same stitch. And I work that all the way around. There I am with chain three, two trebles, Picot-3, two trebles, chain three. Look at where each stitch is placed. You can see that the symbol, the foot of the symbol, the base of the stitch is in the top of the stitch that it goes into. That helps you know where to put the stitch. That's another great thing about charts. You can see the relationship of the stitches to each other and exactly where to put your hook when you're creating a stitch. Round three says to begin with a standing single crochet in picot of any round two petal. Well what is a standing single crochet? That is an abbreviation that is explained in your glossary so you just skip over to your glossary and see what that means. And you put it into the picot of any round two, that's the last round, petal. Then asterisk, chain four, double crochet in next chain one space between two petals. That may sound confusing, but here's the thing. If you were working along with the pattern and you have the work in your hand, you can see what those words mean. Looking at a crochet pattern without having the work in your hand and working along step by step can be pretty overwhelming and I don't recommend that you just try to read a crochet pattern and understand what's going on without working it along round by round or row by row. You should really do each step, work up to a comma, do that thing, then work up to the next comma, and do that thing. So you're not trying to understand the entire thing all at once, but you're just understanding in little bite size pieces. It's good, however, to get an overall view by looking at the chart. So let's continue with the text on this round and then we'll move on to the chart. The next instruction says to chain four, then single crochet in the picot at the tip of the next petal and repeat from asterisk around,

omitting the last single crochet. So you're going to do everything that it says after the asterisk over and over and over. But on the last repeat, you're not going to work that final single crochet, and you'll end the round by joining with a slip stitch to the first single crochet. Here's the beginning of round three, and you can see that there is a single crochet symbol, that plus sign, right in the tip of the petal, right in that Picot-3. Then there's a chain four and a double crochet in that chain one space, then a chain four and a single crochet at the tip of the next petal. And you're doing that all the way around. You can see visually what's going on. You're working into the petals. At the very last step, you end with a chain four and slip stitch to the first single crochet. Round four begins with a chain one, and then here are some parentheses. We're going to single crochet, chain three, single crochet, all into one stitch, into the same stitch we started with. Then chain three, single crochet in next space. We're going to do that two times. So look, that's a little bit different. We're doing here what's in the parentheses two times, but here we're doing what's in the parentheses all in the same stitch. So you do have to watch with parentheses. What happens after the parentheses will tell you where to put what's within the parentheses. Then we move on to a chain three, single crochet, chain three, single crochet, all in the next single crochet. Then chain three, single crochet in the next space two times. Then repeat from the asterisk around. Be careful not to go all the way back to the beginning of the round because you just repeat from the asterisk and work that part all the way around ending with a chain one, join with a half double crochet, hdc, in first single crochet. Hmm, that sounds strange, join with a half double crochet. Don't worry if it says join with half double crochet and you've been joining with a slip stitch. That may sound weird or wrong, but just trust the pattern and do what it says. Here's the beginning of round four, chain one, and there's a single crochet, chain three, and single crochet in that same stitch. And then you see the chain threes and the single crochets worked all the way around until the end of the round. When you get to a single crochet chain one, and look at that tiny little thing right there. That sort of sideways symbol is a half double crochet, so you join with a half double crochet. At this point, maybe you're starting to become familiar with the symbols and the abbreviations and how the punctuation marks work and how you work back and forth between the asterisks and what's in the parentheses. So go on and finish reading the pattern and maybe working along with it to get really comfortable with reading a pattern. But a garment pattern can be a little bit different, so I want to show you some differences you might have in a project pattern or a garment pattern. Some patterns are going to have more information than the motif pattern I just showed you, and this information is really important to pay attention to. Let's take a look at this garment pattern so we can see some of this important information. The title page of the instructions have information at the top, what we call top matter. It has sizes and the finished bust and length measurements, the yarn that was used in this particular pattern, the hook size that was used, the gauge, and then other supplies. Let's look at these one by one. This pattern is presented in women's small, medium, large, extra large, and extra extra large, with the sample shown in size medium. Well, what size would you need to make? Don't always assume you're a medium or a small or whatever. Take a look at the finished bust measurements and here you can see that the instructions, the first instruction is for a small. So women's size small, the finished bust is a 34. If you're looking at medium, you see medium is the first size within the parentheses. That corresponds to the first size within the parentheses here. So whatever size you want to make with the finished bust, and then again the finished length, again medium would be the first one within the parentheses. So they stay in order. You can find more information about the sizes by looking at the schematic. A schematic diagram is a drawing that shows the shape of the piece or pieces as well as the finished measurements. And if it's more than one size, again you'll

have the sizes in order, so small, medium, large, extra large, and so on. So you'll be able to choose your size based on the finished measurements. There should always be a schematic for a garment, but you may not have a schematic for something like a hat or socks or an afghan. This schematic indicates that this vest is actually made in one piece because you can see it's all one piece, although there are sections labeled back, left front and right front. It also shows the entire width of the piece shown here. And again, those sizes would be small, medium, large, extra large, and extra extra large. So you can see the length of the armholes and the width of the back neck and so on. All of that will help you decide which size you're going to make. There's more information in the top matter that we need to pay attention to. The yarn used in this pattern was Wisdom Yarns Poems Sock. It gives me the fiber content and the yardage in each ball of yarn. It also tells me how much yarn is needed for each size. You can see that the pattern calls for three, three, four, four, and five balls of color number 955 Tropical Sunset. Of course, you can use any color you want, but pay attention here to the number of balls you need depending on your size. If you're making the largest size, you'll need five balls of yarn. The hook size called for is a *D/3* or a 3.25 millimeter hook, or a size you need to obtain correct gauge. Notice that that's in italics. That's kind of yelling at you saying don't just use a D/3 hook. You need to get the correct gauge in order for your vest to fit. So make sure you do a good gauge swatch and change your hook size if necessary to get the gauge called for in the pattern. The gauge called for in the pattern tells me that rounds one through three equals 2 1/8 inches or 5.5 centimeters blocked. That means you need to actually work rounds one through three of the motif to get 2 1/8 inches. If that's not the size you get with your hook, you need to change your hook size until rounds one through three match the gauge given in the pattern. And finally, you'll need a button. Choose one pretty button because you only need one. Now the rest of the pattern is pretty straight forward in that we see that the motif is set out, and then a half motif is set out. That's like an abbreviation or a unit that will be referred to later in the pattern. So you don't start there but you know that that motif and a half motif are defined for you at the beginning of the pattern. The pattern instructions actually begin here where it says Making the Vest and then Back. So that tells me we're gonna start making the vest with the back. Go ahead and read the instructions and just follow what it says, again working step by step. Don't try to get overwhelmed with all the instructions you have to follow. Just take it one small piece at a time, and you can understand what's going on.