

# Cross Stitch Terms

**Aida** - The most commonly used fabric for cross stitch, weaved evenly with holes in to make your "X" and usually 100% cotton.

**Evenweave** - Another common fabric used in cross stitch, but much softer and more flexible.

**Zweigart Brittany Lugana evenweave** - The most common 28 count evenweave, this fabric is 52% cotton and 48% modal (which is what makes it softer than aida).

**Zweigart Murano evenweave** - Another common evenweave this is also 52% cotton and 48% modal but comes in 32 count.

**Linen** - Similar to evenweave but because it is a natural fabric made from flax there may be some flaws in the fabric making your stitches a little uneven.

**Waste canvas** - Another type of fabric you can use to stitch on clothes etc but this one you pull the threads out instead of them dissolving.

**Soluble canvas** - A type of fabric you can use to stitch onto clothes etc. which dissolves in water.

**Aida band** - A strip of aida which has a pretty border on; used for bookmarks/towel edging etc.

**DMC Magic Guide Fabric** - aida is evenweave that has the grid already on that matches your pattern grid. This makes it easier to count when stitching and keep track of where you're up to. The lines disappear when washed.

**Binca** - Again, mainly used for children binca is firmer than aida, but not plastic. It usually comes in a 6 count making for easy stitches.

**Plastic canvas** - Generally used for children's kits the holes in plastic canvas are quite big and you tend to use a wool thread to stitch on it.

**Fabric count** - This refers to the number of holes per inch (HPI) there is on the fabric. For example, on 14 count aida there are 14 holes per inch.

**Warp** - these are the threads that run horizontally through your cross stitch fabric.

**Weft** - these are the threads that run vertically through your cross stitch fabric.

**Tapestry/cross stitch needle** - A blunt needle made specifically for cross stitch that comes in different sizes. For example, a size 24 can be used for 14 count aida or 28 count linen.

**Needle eye** - The small hole at the top of the needle where you put your thread through.

**Needle threader** - A small tool used to help put your thread through the needle eye if you are struggling to do it.

**Counted cross stitch pattern/Chart** - The most traditional type of pattern that is broken into a grid of squares that you follow on your fabric.

**Stamped cross stitch pattern** - This type of pattern is stamped directly onto the fabric and you stitch over it.

**Sampler** - A type of cross stitch pattern made up of a variety of stitches.

**Motif** - A small cross stitch pattern, usually of a single item such as a Christmas Tree or a bird, used to make Christmas cards or add onto clothes etc.

**PDF pattern** - This is a cross stitch pattern that you can download directly to your phone/tablet/computer etc. This saves on postage costs and saves paper because many people can stitch directly from the pattern on their phone. And it means you can start stitching as soon as you buy the pattern.

**Grid** - Where your counted cross stitch pattern will be printed. It is usually broken into blocks of 10 squares.

**Design area** - The size of your finished piece. It will be smaller on the higher count aida/evenweave you stitch it on.

**Cross stitch Symbol** - Symbols are used on your cross stitch pattern to differentiate between the different colours. They come in handy when 2 colours are very similar or your pattern is printed black and white.

**Colour key** - This will be at the side of or near your grid/pattern and tell you what symbol matches which thread colour. It will also tell you the brand of thread used, and sometimes give you 2 different brands (usually DMC or anchor).

**Whole cross stitch** - A full "X" stitch.

**Half stitch** - Just one diagonal stitch going in either direction "\"/".

**1/4 Fractional stitch** - A stitch that covers just one-quarter of the square. You end the stitch in the centre of your square so these are easier to do on evenweave or linen.

**3/4 Fractional stitch** - Basically a half stitch plus a 1/4 fractional stitch, these take up 3/4 of the square.

**Backstitch** - Lines of stitches that go in any direction. They are used to add detail to a pattern and/or to outline it.

**Stitching over 2** - This is the most popular method for stitching on evenweave or linen. Instead of stitching from one hole directly to the next like you do on aida you skip a hole so there will be 2 threads of evenweave under your "X".

**Loop/knotless method** - A way of starting your cross stitch where you fold 1 strand of thread in half and use the loop to secure your thread.

**Waste knot method** - A different way of starting (one I don't use) where you use 2 strands of thread (or however many your pattern calls for), tie a knot and thread it away from where your stitches will be. Then as you make your stitches catch the thread at the back and then you can snip your knot off. You can also start this way without making a knot and just hold your thread at the back while you "catch" it.

**Petit point** - You can only do a petit point stitch on linen or evenweave. Another name for stitching over 1, instead of stitching over 2 you stitch like you would on aida and this gives you a tiny stitch on your fabric and makes your pattern 4x smaller (there are 4 petit point stitches for every stitch over 2).

**French knot** - A small knot that you make by wrapping the floss around your needle. It adds a bit of extra texture to your design, but are a bit tricky to get the hang of at first.

**Colonial knot** - An alternative to a french knot you make this a little bit different and some people prefer them over french knots. But they are basically the same thing.

**English cross stitch** - This is when you stitch one whole cross stitch at a time (good for when there's a few colour changes or a smaller pattern).

**Danish cross stitch** - This is when you half stitch your stitches (good for when there's a big block of colour).

**Railroad stitching** - Where you put your needle in between your strands of thread as you are pulling it through your fabric. This makes your stitches sit flatter.

**Confetti stitches** - These are stitches that are scattered around your pattern (it's best to use the English method of stitching for these).

**Tweeding/blending** - This is when you thread 2 different colours on your needle (usually 1 strand of each colour) and stitch with the 2.

**Cross country stitching** - This is a way to move around your pattern stitching one colour at a time. This way of stitching is easier if you have blocks of colour, but if your colours are spread out a little bit then you might have to carry your threads at the back (hence the name) which some people don't like doing.

**Basting stitches** - these are stitches that will eventually come out of your work. In cross stitch, they are mainly used to keep your waste or soluble canvas in place while your stitching on it.

**Parking** - This is a method used on large pieces with lots of colour changes. Instead of stitching all one colour then moving onto the next, you stitch in rows from one stitch directly to the next. When you have a colour change you pull your old colour thread through the front to "park" it while you change to the new colour then pick up the old colour when you need it again.

**Gridding** - something many stitchers do to make counting easier. You draw a grid with soluble pen directly onto your cross stitch fabric, usually broken into blocks of 10x10 squares the same as a cross stitch pattern. Or buy the fabric with it already on (see above).

**Frogging** - A term used when undoing stitches where you have made a mistake (because you have to "rip it, rip it")

**Seam ripper** - a tool used to rip out stitches. It can be used in cross stitch and other sewing techniques too.

**Embroidery hoop** - These are used to help keep your fabric taught and you can use them to frame your finished work too. They come in sizes from 2-12 inches and can be round or oval. They also come in a few materials; wooden, rubber (which are called flexi) and plastic (which are usually coloured). DMC has also recently released some cute animal shaped ones.

**Frame** - Used when stitching larger cross stitch projects, they work like an embroidery hoop in keeping your fabric taut while you are stitching. The flaw is that they're too big to really be portable, but the benefit is that you won't have to move it around as much, and could probably stitch the whole pattern within the frame.

**Scroll frame** - These are frames are good for larger projects because you can roll the fabric you're not stitching in around the rods and then just move around as needed. This also helps prevent your fabric from fraying.

**Plastic snap frame/Q-snap** - These seem very popular in the states, but I don't see them being used much in the UK. They are plastic tubes that link together to hold your work while you are stitching. I've still yet to try them but I hear good things - "once you snap you never go back". Q-snap is a brand but is generally used when talking about plastic snap frames.

**Floor stand** - Used to hold your frame when stitching so you have both hands free and this helps with aches in your hands.

**Lap stand/Seat frame** - Smaller and more portable than a floor stand these are great for holding your hoop when stitching. You sit on the bottom part and this holds your stand while your stand holds your hoop.

**Table stand** - Like an in-between of the floor and lap stand, this goes on a tabletop to hold your hoop.

**Table clamp** - Instead of going onto a tabletop this clamps onto your table edge to hold your hoop.

**Aperture card** - A card that has a hole pre-cut at the front for you, you can use these to make a cross stitch card. Some are tri-fold so you can hide the back of your stitching.

**Floss/stranded embroidery thread** - 6 strands of embroidery thread loosely wound together.

**Skein** - Usually around 8 metres of floss wound up into bundles/skeins.

**Ply** - Some people refer to the individual strands of thread that make up a skein of floss as plies. For example, you usually use 2 plies for cross stitch (2 strands from the 6).

**Light effects** - A type of thread from the brand DMC. There are metallic threads, neon and glow in the dark.

**Étoile** - A type of embroidery thread with glitter in that DMC released in 2018.

**Variations** - A type of embroidery thread that has many colours in just 1 strand so you have subtle colour changes as you are stitching.

**Perle** - A type of embroidery thread that is usually used for embroidery rather than cross stitch (although it can be used for both) this thread can't be separated and has more of a silky feel than mouline thread (stranded embroidery thread).

**Seed beads** - these are small beads stitched on top of your cross stitch work, used to add some texture. They can also be used in place of French knots. Small beads which you can add straight onto your stitch or add to your design after you have stitched it.

**Beading needle** - A needle used to stitch seed beads onto your design.

**Paper bobbin** - Used as a holder for your threads you wind your thread around it and write the number at the top.

**Plastic bobbin** - Similar to paper but these last a bit longer as they don't rip. A lot of people use stickers for their numbers and then they can peel it off if they're reusing for a new colour.

**Bobbin box/embroidery thread storage box** - these are the perfect size to hold your paper or plastic bobbins. A lot of them also have the option to take the dividers out and then you can fit full skeins of floss in too.

**Bobbin winder** - A handy tool that wraps your thread onto your bobbin for you!

**Floss bobbin ring** - There is a hole at the top of your paper or plastic bobbins so that you can store them on a bobbin ring. These are usually used per project so all the threads you need for 1 project are in 1 place.

**Embroidery scissors** - These are small and sharp scissors; perfect for cutting those small embroidery threads.

**Stork scissors** - Embroidery scissors that have a design shaped like a stork bird. This design actually helps your grip on the scissors as well as being really cute!

**Fray check** - Use for sealing the edges of your fabric to stop it from fraying.

**Thread conditioner/beeswax** - Used to condition your thread so it glides through the aida more easily and make your thread last longer. I recommend always using this on Light Effects thread. I use the brand Thread Heaven but I believe they have recently stopped manufacturing so this might not be available to buy soon. I have stocked up in preparation.

**Needle minder** - 2 magnets that attach to your fabric for you to place your needle on between your stitching sessions. Usually, the front has a pretty design on.

**WIP/Work in progress** - a term used to describe a project you are currently working on.

**SAL/Stitch-a-long** - an event where stitchers all stitch the same pattern at the same time and it is released in parts; usually weekly or monthly but it can even be as much as every other day.

**UFO** - "Unfinished Object" used to describe an unfinished project.

**Stash** - All stitchers will get a stash eventually! Used to describe all of your cross stitch supplies (or your supplies for knitting, crochet, embroidery, painting, drawing, scrapbooking, card making .....)

**DMC** - A popular brand of embroidery floss but they also do other supplies such as aida, wool and hoops.

**Anchor** - Another popular brand of embroidery floss, and most patterns in magazines etc come with both keys for DMC and Anchor.

**Milward** - A brand that sells some needlecraft supplies such as embroidery hoops, scissors and needles.

**Zweigart** - The inventor of aida! They have roughly 2'500 fabrics - the largest collection in the needlecraft world. They offer so many colours and types of fabric which can get a little overwhelming but also amazing once you dive in.

**Jobelan** - Another popular brand who make aida and evenweave, but I mainly see people using their evenweave.

**Elbese** - A popular brand for embroidery hoops and stands.

**Siesta** - Another good brand for embroidery hoops and the best part is that they have 3-inch hoops.

**#WIPwednesday** - a popular hashtag used on Instagram and Twitter to share your current project every Wednesday.



View the full blog post here: <https://hannahhandmakes.com/blogs/cross-stitch-terms>  
with links to extra tutorials and where to shop for the tools and materials mentioned.