

Fill in the Blanks – Oh, the Possibilities!

Fill in the Blanks



This series is written by guest blogger, Pamela Cox. Pamela is an expert embroiderer, designer, digitizer and all around wonderful girl! We are so happy to have her contributing to the Sulky Blog!

Need a last-minute gift for a birthday or holiday, but there is no time for shopping? Not to mention that your mind just goes blank? That may not be a bad idea after all!

There are many pre-made “clean slates” perfect for embellishing with machine embroidery. T-shirts, sweatshirts, and linens all come to mind – and all are easily found in many local stores.

Pillow

A plain white pillow case can easily be turned into a special holiday or wedding gift by releasing the hem,



embroidering a design, and re-stitching!



Design: #135 "Squiggle Flower #4" from Sulky Embroidery Club

Garments

A beautiful cashmere scarf would be well appreciated and, when monogrammed, becomes a lifetime treasure.



Original monogram design

Don't limit garments to just t-shirts and sweatshirts – look at other items to add a fashion statement to.



Blouse design: Janes White Work from Graceful Embroidery;
Sweatshirt: Eagle Head-Toile A8372 from Embroidery Library

Obviously, all pre-made items can be used as originally intended, but with a little creative thought, some items can be stitched together to quickly make larger gifts.

Hankerchief

A handkerchief can be embroidered and simply be an even more lovely and special handkerchief...



Design: Janes White Work from Graceful Embroidery

Or, a larger handkerchief could serve as a nightstand topper.



Stitching two or more together creates a table runner!



Design: "Pumpkin Scrolls" from Graceful Embroidery

Napkins

Napkins also make great gifts as is...



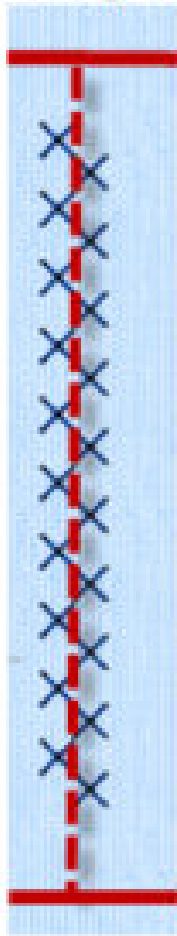
Design: #9 and #15 from [Cotton + Steel Scout embroidery collection](#).

but, they too, can be seamed together – or in this case, butted up against each other to create larger table linens.



Most machines offer a variety of joining stitches, a stitch that will “bite” into one side of a straight line and then jump over and “bite” into the other side.

Joining Stitch



Heirloom D13
on a
Viking Diamond

Large tablecloths can even be made from joining linen napkins – and the best part is that it can be made by embroidering a square at a time!



Designs Janet Sansom's Georgia Collection

Helpful Hints

Now that you can see the potential in using blanks, both as they are meant to be, and, possibly, expanding original intentions, let's explore a few helpful hints to ensure successful embroidering!

Since pre-made items come in a variety of fabrics, materials,

shapes and thicknesses, there is no “one size fits all” advice. However, it is safe to say that almost all pre-made items cannot, or should not, be secured directly in an embroidery hoop. It might be due to its material – like this straw place mat.



Or due to its size or thickness, such as a pot holder.



Sulky to the rescue!

Fortunately, [Sulky®](#) has many choices in stabilizers to solve any dilemma that might occur during the hooping process.

There are two types of “sticky” stabilizers, which allow pre-made items to be secure in a hoop by firmly pressing it directly on to the hooped stabilizer:

Sticky+™



Sticky+™ is an easy-to-tear stabilizer, perfect behind larger designs and especially appliques.



It holds the pre-made item in place, yet easily peels away from the stitched area. It is the first choice for most commercial embroiderers.

[Sticky Fabri-Solvy™](#)

[Sticky Fabri-Solvy](#) – a water soluble stabilizer that is perfect for projects where the back should look as nice as the right side of the project. Once again, the item is securely held for stitching, but after the excess stabilizer is gently pulled up from the fabric and cut-away, any remaining stabilizer disappears after rinsing.

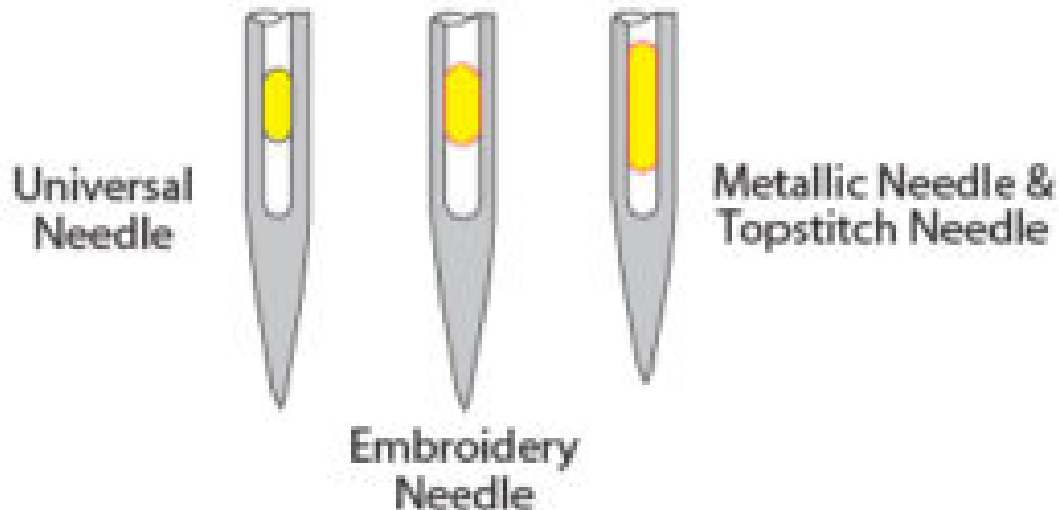


On projects such as the potholder, matching bobbin ([Sulky PolyLite™](#)) and top ([Sulky 40 wt. Rayon](#)) thread color was used. Compare the two potholder photos. Hard to tell front from back, right? **Hint:** check out the hanging loop. (**TIP:** If you are giving a potholder that is going to be used and not just a decorative item, be sure to use only Sulky Cotton Threads for embroidery. Cotton has a higher melting point than either rayon or polyester.)

Needle selection is dependent upon the material being embroidered, however, Topstitch needles are perfect for

machine embroidering, especially since they can be found in larger gauges which are helpful of pre-made quilted items.

NEEDLE EYE COMPARISON



Heavy, thick items, such as the pot holder, was stitched with a 100/16 needle, while the bib was stitched with a 90/14 one. For knits, use a Ballpoint embroidery needle in proper gauge for fabric weight. (And a real plus for some of us – they're easier to thread!)

Design positioning is also important on pre-made items. Take the time to mark center design position on the item and then line up machine needle position to it.



Even though the sticky surface of the stabilizer will secure the item for stitching, if your machine offers the function of basting a box around the design, it is helpful to use it. Not only will it secure a top stabilizer ([Sulky Heat-Away Clear Film™](#) or [Sulky Solvy™](#)) if needed,



but a “fix box” also provides a visual of design placement prior to embroidering. If your machine doesn’t have a fix feature, and you find you need more “sticky” to secure the “unhoopable” item, you can use [Sulky KK 2000™](#) to add extra sticky to the stabilizer and/or the wrong side of the item.



Two suggestions that are universal when machine embroidering on pre-made items:

1. Turn the speed of the embroidery machine down by at least half.
2. Monitor the stitching process. Many pre-made items, when hooped, present with a lot of extra fabric or parts, which could easily fall onto the stitching surface and get caught in the stitching process – possibly damaging the machine.



Build a stash of blanks by shopping sales to find quality “blank canvases” to keep on hand all year long! I’m just saying...

“Blanks” may just become your new best friend!



Design: Sulky Embroidery Club's 684 "Owl"

Featured designs are available on the following websites:

- www.sulkyembclub.com – Sulky Embroidery Club
- www.embroideryonline.com – Scout by Cotton+Steel
- www.embroiderystash.com – Janet Sansom
- www.gracefulembroidery.com – Graceful Embroidery
- www.emblibrary.com – Embroidery Library
- Source of fine linens: www.EMBROIDERTHIS.com
- Other fabulous blanks: www.allaboutblanks.com
- Blanks on the Sulky site: www.sulky.com

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