

composition book cover sewing tutorial



MATERIALS:

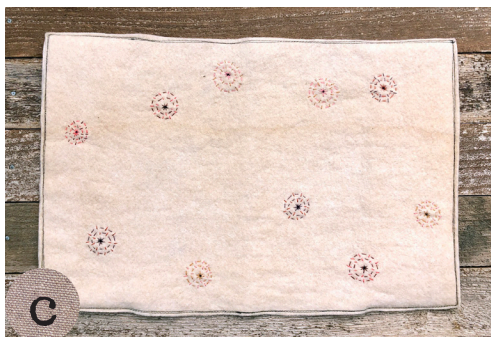
I like to use wool felt for this project because it has a bit of stretch and does not fray.

- [1] 15.5 x 10.25" piece of wool felt*
- [2] 3.5 x 10.25" pieces of wool felt*
- ruler or tape measure
- sharp scissors
- cotton embroidery floss
- sewing needle
- straight pins
- sewing machine (optional)

*These measurements are for a standard 100 sheet composition book that measures 9.75" x 7.5". You can use these instructions to cover any book. To modify the size of the large rectangle: add .5" to the height of the book and .5" to the width of the OPEN book (so you accommodate the width of the spine). The inner flaps will be the same height as your rectangle and as wide as feels appropriate for the size of your book.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Refer to the Notes and Guide to Basic Stitches on the second page.
2. Cut your felt pieces to size. (a)
3. Decorate the larger piece of felt that will be the front and back of your composition book. I use 2-ply embroidery floss in 3 or 4 colors and place my decorations randomly. I like for this hand-stitched decoration to also extend into the inner flap. Another option is to stitch the subject name on the cover of your book: write the word on a piece of thin tracing paper paper, pin it on your felt, and then stitch the general shape of the letters through the paper with the running stitch. Tear the paper away and complete the letters with the double running stitch. If you don't want to decorate by hand, you could also decorate with your sewing machine by stitching randomly placed lines in a contrasting color.
4. With the sewing machine, sew two lines of stitching on one long edge of each inner flap piece. If you don't want to use a sewing machine, you could also use the blanket stitch to sew this edge with 2-ply embroidery floss. Stitching this edge will give your assembled book cover a more finished look and also help the flap keep its shape.
5. Pin the inner flap pieces in place along the top and outer edges (b) and sew the entire perimeter of the composition book cover with a sewing machine (c & d) or by hand with the blanket stitch. It is important to sew close to the edge (refer to pictures) so that the book cover will fit (luckily the felt can stretch if it is a little too tight). You will be stitching through two layers when you sew over the inner flap pieces. I like to go around twice with my stitching, as that is my aesthetic. Trim the felt as needed if there are places that no longer line up perfectly after sewing.

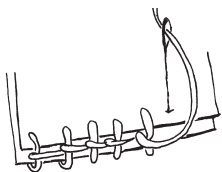


GUIDE TO BASIC STITCHES:

BLANKET STITCH

Note: these instructions are much easier to follow with your actual needle and thread in hand. The stitch is simple; the instructions sound complicated.

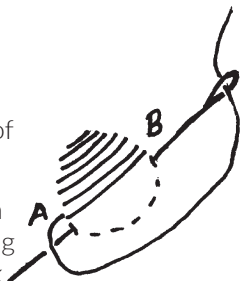
- Thread your needle and tie a knot at the tail.
- Starting between the sandwiched pieces, poke the needle through your top layer of felt about 1/8" from the edge. The knot will be between the two layers of felt where it will not be seen.
- Bring the thread around the edge of the two stacked pieces of the felt and poke it through the same spot as the first stitch.
- Pull your needle through the stitch you just made at the top edge. This anchors your thread but is not a true stitch.
- TO CONNECT TWO PIECES ALONG THE OUTER EDGES: Start a new stitch through the back side, 1/8" from your first stitch, and 1/8" in from the edge of the felt. Before you pull the stitch all the way, catch the loop through the top with your needle and pull tight. The thread should create a straight line that lies along the edges of your two pieces of felt. Continue your evenly spaced stitching (1/8" over, 1/8" in), pulling each stitch through from the back side and catching the loop as you go.
- TO CONNECT TWO LAYERS ALONG A SINGLE EDGE: push your needle from the top down through both layers. Dip through the back side making a small stitch and bring your needle up through the single layer, just outside where your first stitch went in. Before you pull the stitch all the way, catch the loop through the top with your needle and pull tight. The thread should create a straight line that lies along the edge of your top piece of felt. Continue your evenly spaced stitching (1/8" over, 1/8" in), pulling each stitch through from the back side and catching the loop as you go.
- To finish, connect your last stitch to your first stitch by sliding your needle underneath your first stitch and knotting it at the back. Push your needle between the layers and out through the front about 1 inch from the edge. The thread will be pulled inside, hiding the knot from view. Then cut off the excess thread very close to the top layer of the felt.



SATIN STITCH

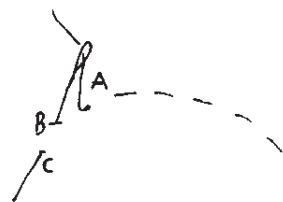
This stitch is used to fill in a space.

- Begin by stitching the perimeter of the space you plan to fill.
- Start with the threaded needle on the back side of your felt and bring it up through the felt (A) and back down into the front side (B).
- Place the stitches close together so that they create a solid shape.



RUNNING & DOUBLE RUNNING STITCH

- Start with the threaded needle on the back side of your felt and bring it up through the felt (A) and back down into the front side (B).
- Pull it the whole way through, then bring the threaded needle back up through the felt from the back side (C).
- Try to keep the size of the stitches and the space between them consistent.
- A double running stitch is used to make a solid, connected line.
- Start with a running stitch. When you reach the end, reverse your direction and fill in the space between the stitches with another running stitch so you have a solid line.



NOTES:

- Embroidery floss has 6 plies (threads) and the plies are easily separated. Most embroidery patterns use 1 to 3 plies. Long strands can get easily tangled, cutting them to 18-inch strands helps prevent this. It also helps to very gently separate the pieces from the center of the strand instead of starting at one end.
- If your thread becomes too short while you are sewing, attach a new piece of thread to the end with a knot. Tie it as close to the felt as possible and try to hide the knot.
- Keep stitches even and hide knots.
- Felt is very flexible to work with; it can be pulled and stretched as needed, and because it doesn't fray you can trim as you work if your pieces are not lining up.

ABOUT KATA GOLDA:

Alison Kaplan is the creative force behind Kata Golda, a craft studio in the mossy seaside town of Port Townsend, WA. Kata Golda is a flourishing business that explores crafts such as needlework, letterpress printing, bookbinding, block printing, hand-thrown pottery, hand-dyed textiles, and jewelry making. Alison finds inspiration in the woods, farmlands, and beaches of her Pacific Northwest wonderland. See her work at www.katagolda.com.

