



THE 4-H
CROCHETING
HANDBOOK

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TEACHING YOUR LOVE OF CROCHETING TO KIDS

Helping 4-H members learn a skill like crocheting can be a real challenge as well as a gratifying experience. You will find that some members will master the skill easily, while others will struggle. Children who are taught to crochet learn so much more than just “stitches.” They learn problem solving and math skills. Their reading, motor skills and eye-hand coordination are enhanced. It is an opportunity to develop decision making abilities and learn skills that can give pleasure throughout a lifetime. They find an outlet for their creativity which builds self-confidence and self-esteem.

TEN TIPS FROM THE PROS

1. **KEEP IT FUN!** Your young students must enjoy what they are doing. Let them see that you are having fun.
2. Have a model to display of a project so your students can see what they will be making.
3. Select simple projects that will interest your young students.
 - Choose projects that can be completed quickly
 - Use brightly colored yarns
 - Have extra supplies on hand
4. Keep the lessons short to accommodate the short attention span of children.
5. Don't expect perfection. They are trying. That is what is important. Praise them! Find something to compliment:
 - “I like that yarn color!”
 - “You have been a good listener today!”
 - “I like the way you are holding your crochet hook!”
 - **REMEMBER KEEP IT FUN !!!**
6. Showing is better than telling. Demonstrate the skill that you want them to learn.
7. Put something in their hands as soon as possible. Many teachers have found it easier to begin by giving students a hook with a few rows of crochet completed. Students learn the basics more easily and then go back and learn foundation chain, which can be tricky for beginners because of their tension.
8. Children need a sense of accomplishment. Provide them with frequent progress reports.
9. When a child is having difficulty with a skill, show an alternative, if possible.
10. When teaching teenagers:
 - Do not “dumb down” your instructions, but recognize their interests are different.
 - Treat them as adults not like “large children.”
 - Choose projects that match their interests.
 - Consider current fashion trends.

CROCHETING PROJECT

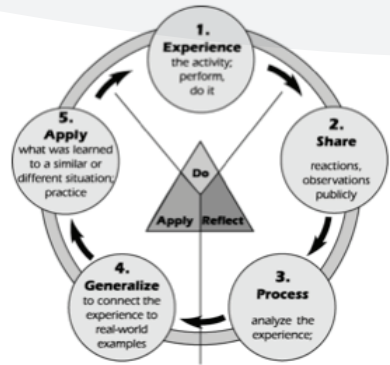
The purpose of the 4-H program is to help youth learn technical skills and life skills that will improve their lives. Technical skills relate to the subject matter, while life skills are those abilities used in every facet of our lives. Life skills developed through these 4-H activity guide projects include: planning and organizing, decision making, learning to learn, wise use of resources.

4-H EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL

Do - What did you do?

You will learn to:

- Tie a slip knot
- Chain
- Single crochet
- Double crochet
- Half double crochet
- Treble crochet
- Increase and decrease stitches
- Recognize stitches and know the difference between stitch and space
- Slip a stitch
- Attach yarn and change colors
- Fasten off
- Count stitches and rows
- Join seams
- Learn abbreviations used in pattern directions
- Read and follow pattern directions



Reflect - How do you feel about your project?

What part of the experiences was the most challenging or easiest?

Apply - Using the skills listed above you will practice and complete a project.

Potential Projects or Exhibits:

- Pot holder
- Slippers
- Dishcloth
- Purse, baby bassinette purse
- Hat, scarf, or mittens
- Small afghan for a baby or a lap blanket
- Crocheted edge patterns
- Any other crochet items from patterns found in books, Internet, etc.

CROCHETING TOOLS

Proper tools are necessary in crocheting. Learn about the tools before you buy so you will select good equipment.

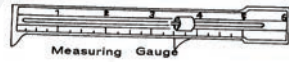
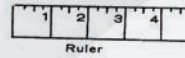
CROCHET HOOK

A crochet hook is the first tool required. Crochet patterns tell the size of hooks to use. Your leader will help you decide what hooks to use for your first project.



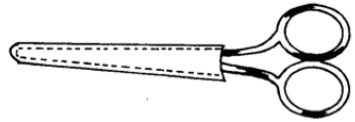
MEASURING TOOLS

For measuring you will need a ruler (either 6 or 12 inch), a measuring tape, or a metal-measuring gauge.



SCISSORS

Keep a small pair of scissors or shears handy for cutting yarn, trimming pompoms, etc. Be sure to keep scissors in a case for safety.



TAPESTRY NEEDLE

A blunt-pointed tapestry needle is used for sewing seams. A straight, steel needle is best. Some tapestry needles have a “hump” around the eye. They are not good for joining seams in crocheting as the hump catches on stitches and makes it hard to pull the yarn through.



YARN & GAUGE

YARN

Yarns are available in a variety of weights (thickness of the strands) and fiber contents. For best results, use the yarn specified in the instructions. Be sure to purchase all the yarn you need for a project at the same time because dye lots may vary a little in shading and this will show on the finished project. If you are combining different types of yarn in the same project, make sure they have similar washing instructions. Care instructions are found on the product label—follow them carefully. Always make sure to make a swatch to measure the gauge.

GAUGE

Gauge is the number of stitches (and spaces) per inch and the number of rows (or rounds) per inch. In many patterns, gauge is specified over 4 inches. Your gauge and the gauge specified in the pattern must be the same so that your project will be the correct size. This is especially crucial for projects that must fit.

Before starting your project, take the time to make a gauge swatch. To check gauge, use the same yarn, hook and pattern stitch specified in the instructions. Make a swatch that is approximately 6 inches square. Work in pattern for about 6 inches, then bind off. Let the swatch relax for a bit, then flatten it without stretching to measure.

Using pins, mark off a section of stitches in the center of the swatch that measures 4 inches square. Count the number of stitches and rows in this 4 inch section. If they match the gauge, you can start right in on your pattern.

If you have too few stitches, you are working too loosely—change to smaller hook and make another swatch. If you have too many stitches, you are working too tightly—change to larger hook. Keep making swatches and experimenting with hook sizes until you obtain the specified gauge. Everyone crochets differently, this will help you be able to make a project that fits. Each skein of yarn has the yarn size and suggested hook on the label. You will want to keep the label for your reference.

Threads are also use to crochet. Crochet thread is generally used for dollies, table cloths, table toppers or as an edge on a project. The most commonly used thread is a number 10 size thread. The larger the thread number, the finer the thread, so 20 is finer than 10, and 30 is finer than 20. You will want to use a thread hook for this type of crocheting. A “0” hook works well with a size 10 thread.



WORKING FROM A PATTERN

Patterns are written in a language of their own, and this will help you become familiar with special stitches and abbreviations. Although not all publications use the same abbreviations, the terminology will become familiar with a read-through.

ABBREVIATIONS

These are standard abbreviations that may appear in this booklet. Any abbreviations specific to a pattern will be given at the beginning of the pattern.

beg - begin(ning)

ch - chain

sc - single crochet

dc - double crochet

hdc - half double crochet

tr - treble crochet

st - stitch(es)

sl - slip

sk - skip

yo - yarn over

in - increase

rep - repeat

rnd(s) - round(s)

lp - loop

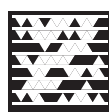
RS - right side

WS - wrong side

tog - together

*****, ******, **+** or **++** - repeat whatever follows the *****, ******, **+** or **++** as indicated

[] - work instructions in brackets the number of times indicated.



ROLLING YARN INTO A BALL THAT PULLS FROM CENTER

Some yarns come in hanks, some are pre-wound and pull from the center. Rolling a ball that pulls from the center is a good skill to have.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Hank of yarn or loose yarn

INSTRUCTIONS

Step #1:

If you are rolling a ball from a hank of yarn, carefully untie the hank, keeping it in the large loop. Have someone hold it for you, or drape the loop over the back of a chair or over your knees.



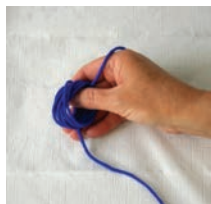
Step #2:

Holding the loose end of yarn firm with your thumb, roll the yarn around three fingers very loosely 10-12 times.



Step #3:

Slip the yarn off your fingers and hold it firmly in the center with the free end of the yarn hanging loose.



Step #4:

Now very loosely wrap the yarn around the part you rolled on your fingers about 10-12 times. If you pull the yarn too tightly, it will not pull free from the center of the ball when you are ready to knit or crochet, and it may also take some of the stretch out of the yarn. Be sure not to catch the free end while wrapping the yarn.



Step #5:

Now that you have formed the base for your ball, hold your thumb on the spot where the free end of yarn is coming out and your fingers are on the opposite side. (We will call the side with your thumb the top and the other side the bottom.) Hold the free end of yarn in the palm of your hand with your little finger.



Step #6:

Now, gently wind yarn from the bottom, toward you, across top of ball, keeping the yarn close to your thumb. Keep turning the ball slowly counter-clockwise. Be very careful to keep your thumb in the hole you form as you wind, and keep the free end of yarn free. Be sure you wind the ball loosely. Always wind from bottom across top—never around sides. If the ball becomes too pointed on the bottom, squeeze it more tightly between thumb and fingers.



Step #7:

When the yarn is all wound, tuck the end under several loops of yarn. When you are ready to crochet, the free end you hold in the palm of your hand will pull out easily and the ball will not roll away.

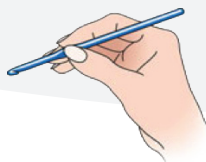


LEARN HOW TO CROCHET - HOLDING THE YARN AND HOOK

INSTRUCTIONS

Step #1:

There are no hard and fast rules about the best way to hold the hook and yarn. Choose whichever way you find the most comfortable. Some people prefer the “pencil grip.” The hook is held in the right hand as if holding a pencil.



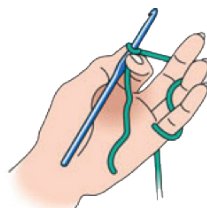
Step #2:

Some people prefer using the “knife grip.” The hook is held in the right hand as if holding a dinner knife ready to cut.



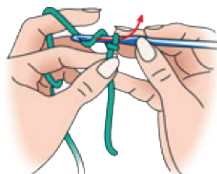
Step #3:

To maintain the slight tension in the yarn necessary for easy, even stitches, you may find it helpful to wrap the yarn around the fingers of the hand opposite the one holding the hook. Try one of these ways, or find another way that feels comfortable to you.



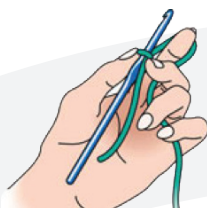
Step #4:

In the illustration to the right, the left hand holds your crochet work and at the same time controls the tension of the yarn. The left-hand middle finger is used to manipulate the yarn, while the index finger and thumb hold on to the work.



Step #5:

Some people find it more comfortable to manipulate the yarn with the index finger and hold the project with their thumb and middle finger. While you're learning, if one way feels awkward, try another way until you find the one that suits you.





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