

Reading Knitting Charts



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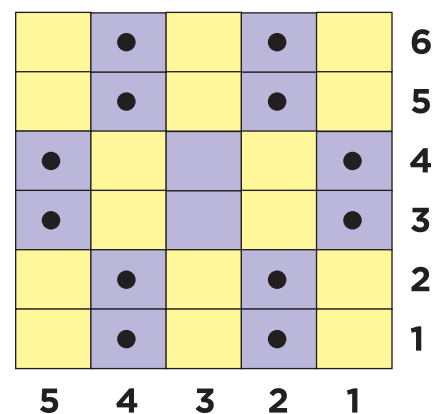


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Reading Knitting Charts

A knitting chart is a map of stitches that is designed to guide you through the making of a project. While written instructions for a row of knitting can be lengthy, charts use colors, symbols, and lines to provide the same information, but in a more visual and compact way.

This guide covers the basics of knitting chart design and language. But note that no two knitting charts are the same and some patterns may use different symbols to indicate different instructions.



The Basics

- Knitting charts are made up of a series of squares. Each square on the chart represents a stitch.
- Knitting charts include symbols that represent stitches as viewed from the front (RS) of the work.
- Numbers located at the top and/or bottom of the chart indicate the stitch number.
- Numbers located to the left or right of the chart indicate the row or round number.
- If the row or stitch numbers are shown in boxes, take care not to count these as stitches.

Key

The Key (or legend) is used to decode the stitch symbols, colors, and lines used in a knitting chart. Next to each symbol will be an abbreviation or description. Most patterns will include a list of abbreviations or will let you know where to look for the information. Makers' Mercantile knitting pattern abbreviations are found at makersmercantile.com/abbreviations

We also included the most current version of our abbreviation list at the end of this document.

Remember the symbols used for knitting charts are not universal. Take care to review the pattern and the key to learn what each symbol means for every project.

-  K on RS, P on WS
-  K on WS, P on RS
-  yo
-  M1 Make 1 st
-  ssk
-  k2tog
-  cdd
-  pattern repeat section

Reading Charts for Knitting Flat

When knitting a flat object, we begin knitting at the bottom right, reading this first row (RS) from right to left. Once that row is completed, we turn our knitting over, move up the chart to the next row, and then read that next row from left to right. This next row is called a wrong side (WS) row. Remember how we just turned our work over? Well, we can't "turn over" the printed chart image, so to accommodate that on a chart, wrong side (WS) rows are read in the opposite direction of RS rows.

The following instructions all provide identical directions for rows 1-10 of this pattern.

Let's look at the full pattern written out as sets of stitches:

- Row 1 [RS]:** Purl2, Knit2, Purl2, Knit2, Purl2
- Row 2 [WS]:** Knit2, Purl2, Knit2, Purl2, Knit2
- Row 3 [RS]:** Purl2, Knit2, Purl2, Knit2, Purl2
- Row 4 [WS]:** Knit2, Purl2, Knit2, Purl2, Knit2
- Row 5 [RS]:** Purl2, Knit2, Purl2, Knit2, Purl2
- Row 6 [WS]:** Knit2, Purl2, Knit2, Purl2, Knit2
- Row 7 [RS]:** Knit10
- Row 8 [WS]:** Purl10
- Row 9 [RS]:** Knit10
- Row 10 [WS]:** Purl10

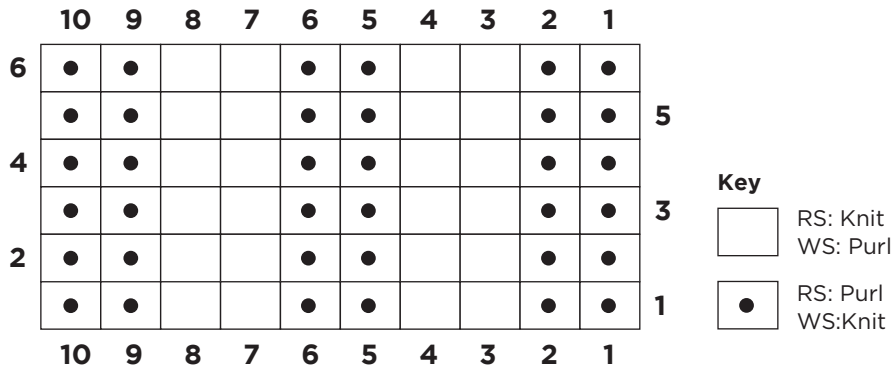
This can be shortened by making a note that specifies repeated rows:

- Row 1 [RS]:** Purl2, Knit2, Purl2, Knit2, Purl2
- Row 2 [WS]:** Knit2, Purl2, Knit2, Purl2, Knit2
- Repeat Rows 1-2 three times*
- Row 7 [RS]:** Knit10
- Row 8 [WS]:** Purl10
- Repeat rows 7-8 once more*

We can use abbreviations to further shorten the instructions:

- Row 1 [RS]:** *P2, k2; rep from * to last 2 sts, k2
- Row 2 [WS]:** *K2, p2; rep from * to last 2 sts, p2
- Rep Rows 1-2 three times*
- Row 7 [RS]:** K to EOR
- Row 8 [WS]:** P to EOR
- Rep rows 7-8 once more*

A chart provides the same information as the written instructions, but also adds an opportunity to visualize how the pattern might look. The chart below illustrates every row of knitting from the previous written instructions:



Setup rows and Zeroes

Some charts may begin with a row “zero” – usually this is a setup row or round that is only repeated once. After that, the chart instructions may be given to repeat the following series of rows or rounds a number of times.

Lace Charts | Every Other Row Charted

In some patterns, such as the lace chart on the right, the wrong side (WS) rows are all the same. The pattern instructions will explain what to do on the WS rows since they are not represented in the chart.

In this portion of the **Windsbraut Padua** pattern, only the RS rows are shown. The instructions begin as follows:

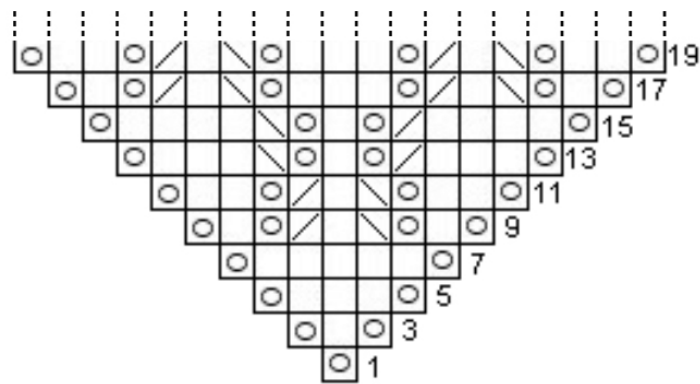
Cast on 4 stitches and knit three rows in garter stitch

Note: *The 2 sts at the beginning and end of each row and the center st are not shown on the charts*

Work Chart 1, as follows: K2, work row 1 of chart, K2

Note: *The charts show Right Side rows only*

Work wrong side rows as follows: K2, purl to last 2 sts, K2



- = K - Knit
- ▧ = k2tog - knit 2 stitches together
- ▨ = SSK - slip 2 stitches knitwise, then knit together through back loop
- ⊙ = YO - Yarn Over

This chart only shows the right side (RS) rows of the project. When the work is turned, we must refer to the written note to know how to work the wrong side (WS).

If we somehow missed the note about what to do on the WS of the work, the row numbers will remind us that not all rows are represented on the chart because they are not consecutive.

Colorwork

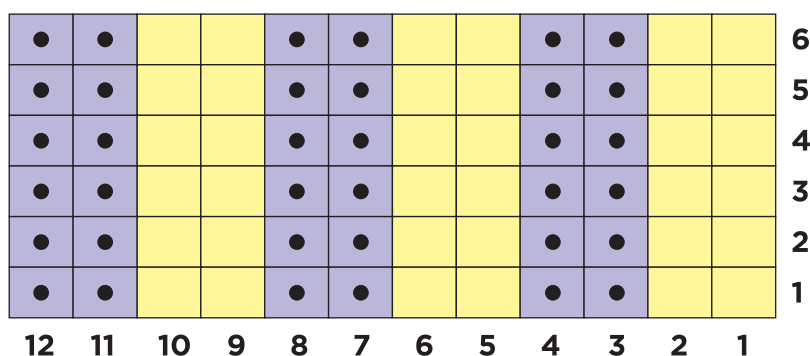
The majority of colorwork patterns are worked in stockinette stitch. For these charts, the color of the square indicates which yarn is to be used. The name of the yarn color can be referenced as the main color (MC) – often the one that is used the most for the project, and the contrasting color (CC).

Alternatively, patterns may use color 1 (C1) and color 2 (C2). Both are correct for two-color knitting.

Projects that use more than 2 colors will generally use C1, C2, C3, and so on, and the color numbers are assigned in the order in which they appear in the pattern.

Write the color name/number you are using on the chart next to its symbol to help keep yourself organized.

In the case of two-color ribbing, both the stitch pattern and the color are represented by the chart. Looking at round 1 in the chart below, the first two stitches are knit with C1 (shown as yellow squares), and the second two stitches are purled in C2 (shown as light purple squares).

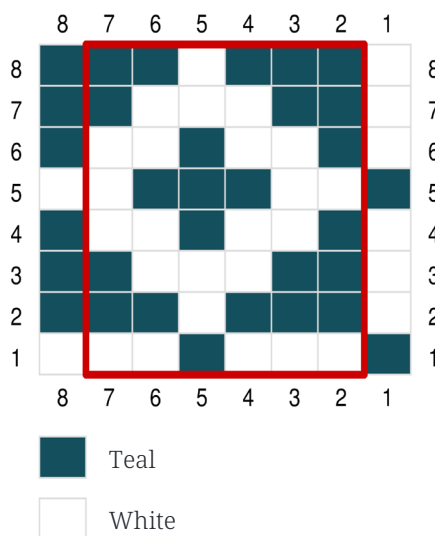


Key



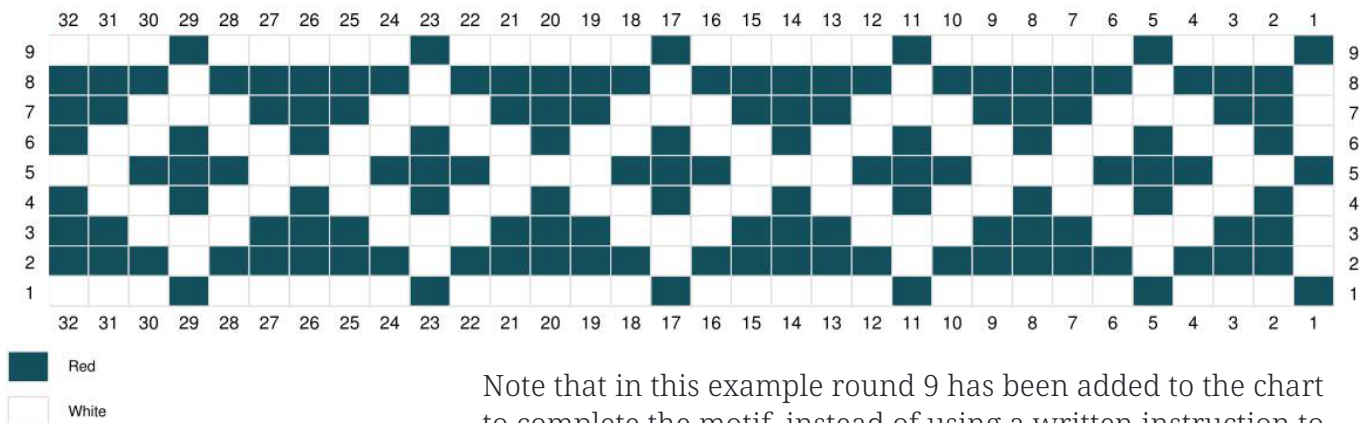
A colorwork chart can be abbreviated using lines to show the repeated stitches in the project.

For example, the chart on the right shows a 6-stitch repeat. If you had 32 stitches in the round on this imaginary project, you would work the first stitch, then repeat stitches 2-7 a total of five times, and then work the last stitch on the chart for a total of 32 stitches.



We would repeat rounds 1-8 until the desired height, and then repeat the first round once more to complete the pattern.

If we omit the red lines that specify the repeated section, the previous chart would look like this:

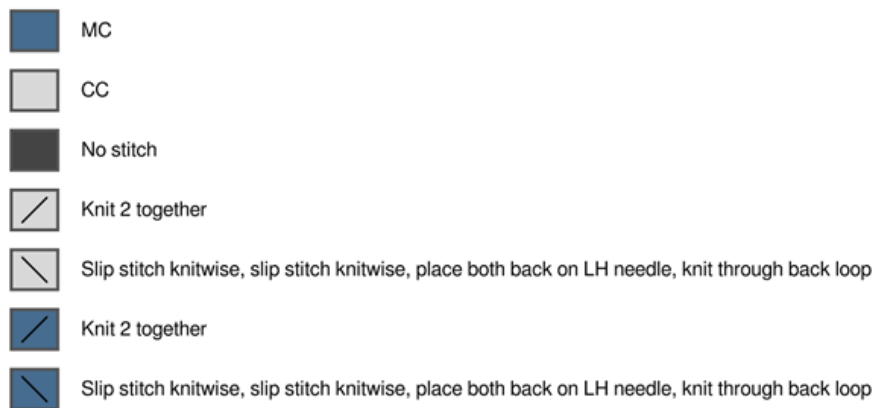
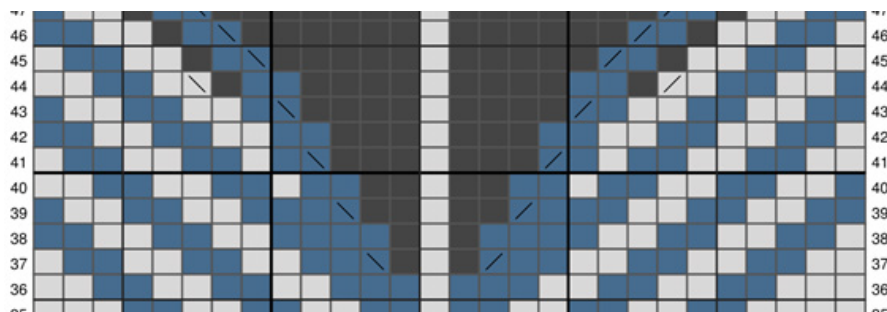


Note that in this example round 9 has been added to the chart to complete the motif, instead of using a written instruction to repeat round 1.

Shaping in Charts

Now that we have reviewed how to read charts in the round, how to understand which color is which, and what the symbols mean for shaping, let's look at a portion of the Nicholas hat pattern to put it all together.

In the key we notice a symbol that means “no stitch” – This symbol is used to fill the space between stitches when the stitch count is changed. The “no stitch” symbol helps to keep the chart symbols aligned. When this symbol is encountered on a chart, continue in the same direction on the row or round to the next symbol.



Cables

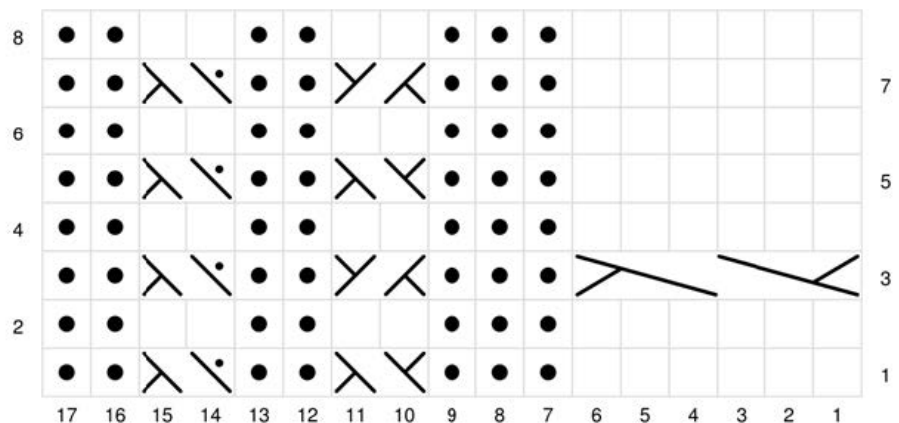
Symbols for cables generally will take up the same number of squares as the stitches required for the stitch. For example, the key below shows 4 different 2-stitch cable patterns. Notice in the chart how these symbols take up two squares on the chart. The larger cable shown is a 6-stitch cable, and it occupies 6 squares.

Cable stitches are usually performed on RS rows, with WS rows generally worked in knit and purl stitches. If a pattern being worked flat happens to have a cable on a WS row, take care to execute that cable in the proper direction.

If we look at row #3, the written instructions of this pattern might read:

Row 3: (3/3 LC), p3,
(1/1 RC), p2, (1/1 LPC),
p2

Identical information is provided in the chart, but in addition to the instruction, the chart gives a visual indicator of how the stitches move in each row.



RS: Knit
WS: Purl



RS: Purl
WS: Knit



sl 1 st onto cn, hold in front, k1, k1 from cn



sl 1 st onto cn, hold in front, p1, k1 from cn



sl 1 st onto cn, hold in back, k1, k1 from cn



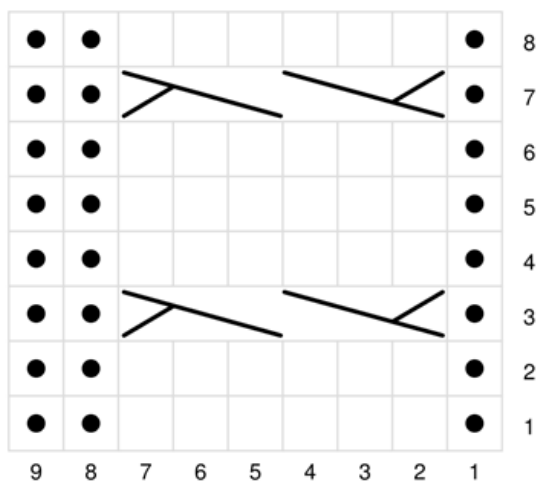
sl 1 st onto cn, hold in back, k1, p1 from cn



sl 3 sts onto cn, hold in front, k3, k3 from cn

An example of a cabled chart worked in the round is shown on the right.

Since the project is always worked with the right side facing, notice that cables can be worked on any round.



Knit



Purl



sl 3 sts onto cn, hold in front, k3, k3 from cn

If you find yourself confused with a knitting chart, first review the pattern. Make sure that you have read all of the pattern notes to see if they are helpful.

If that doesn't resolve the question, reach out to your crafty friends or your LYS for assistance. Still confused? Check on Ravelry for notes about the design or try contacting the company or designer that published the pattern.



Tools of the Trade

Highlighter Tape

Highlighter tape is the perfect way to keep track of your patterns as you knit or crochet! Especially if you are working with a chart. This removable tape can be moved each row so you won't lose track of where you are.



LoRan Magnetic Board

Magnet boards offer portability, versatility, and extreme usability. The boards provide a home for your chart while you're working on your project. The base of any organized stitching area. Includes 3 magnets and a magnetic ruler.



Stitch Markers

Stitch markers come in lots of different materials and sizes. Locking stitch markers can be moved easily, while solid ring markers are certain not to fall off of the work. Choose a stitch marker that is just a little larger in diameter than the needle you are working with.



Abbreviations

For a complete list of chart and pattern abbreviations visit:

makersmercantile.com/abbreviations