

Crochet for Beginners: How to Read a Pattern



Before you start your project, look at the entire pattern: firstly, check the type of yarn you need as well as the quantity of the yarn needed, secondly, the hook size, and thirdly, the gauge. You should also look for any special stitches or instructions needed for the pattern. Next read through the actual pattern to make sure you understand the stitches and how they all work together. This will keep you from having any surprises or getting stuck during the process.


The image is a collage. On the left, there's a wooden surface with various crocheting tools and materials: a ball of white yarn, a ball of multi-colored yarn, several grey crochet hooks, and a white needle. A light green rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the collage, containing the text "1 CHECK THE GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS" with a horizontal line below it. On the right side of the collage, there's a white rectangular area containing pattern information. At the top, it says "LW4166" and "BEGINNER" with a small icon of a hook and a square. Below that, it says "crochet" and "Designed by Lorene Eppolite". Underneath, it says "What you will need:" followed by a list of materials: "RED HEART® Reflective™: 1 ball 8704 Neon Pink", "Susan Bates® Crochet Hook: 6mm [US J-10]", and "Yarn needle, four ½" buttons, sewing needle and thread to match". At the bottom, it says "GAUGE: 14 sts = 5" (12.5 cm); 3 rows = 1¼" (3 cm), in pattern. CHECK YOUR GAUGE. Use any size hook to obtain the gauge."

First check for the skill level on the pattern; this pattern on the example picture is rated for beginners. Then check the yarn and the quantity you'll need. In this example, you will

need one ball of Red Heart Reflective in Pink. You can use this yarn or you can substitute it for any medium weight worsted yarn. It is written, that you will also need a size US J/10 (6mm) crochet hook, a yarn needle, and four ½ inch buttons along with a needle and thread to sew on the buttons.

The next important thing to check is the gauge. Why? Because the pattern designer used it to get the pattern's size. If you take the yarn called for and the hook the pattern specifies and crochet single crochet stitches to make three rows with 15 stitches your swatch should measure 1 ¼ inches high and five inches wide. If it doesn't you may need to go up or down a hook size or adjust your tension to get the correct gauge.

Crochet patterns are usually set out by numbering each row to be crocheted and giving the instructions per row. This allows you to keep track of where you are in a pattern simply by counting how many rows you have crocheted. The special instructions for the example pattern on the picture state that the directions are written for small with medium and large in parentheses. That means that if you need to make a larger size you would follow the directions inside the parentheses and ignore the other directions. The pattern also gives you the finished dimensions for each size. And in the end you will also find some useful abbreviations. I suggest you to download my abbreviation guide from the previous post and refer to it along the way.



2 GO THROUGH THE ACTUAL PATTERN

Directions are for size **Small**. Changes for **Medium** and **Large** are in parentheses.

Cuff measures 2½" wide x 8¼ (9¼, 10¼)" long (6.5 x [21 (23.5, 26.5) cm].

CUFF (make 2)
Ch 24 (27, 30).
Row 1: Hdc in 3rd ch from hook (beginning ch counts as first hdc), hdc in each ch across, turn—23 (26, 29) hdc.
Row 2: Ch 2 (does not count as first st here and throughout), hdc in first st, ch 1, skip next st, hdc in remaining sts, turn—22 (25, 28) hdc and 1 ch-1 space.
Row 3: Ch 2, hdc in each st and ch-1 space, turn—23 (26, 29) hdc.
Rows 4 and 5: Repeat Rows 2 and 3. Fasten off.

Now we get to the most important thing - how to work the pattern. Check the example in the illustration, you see that you will be making two cuffs and you start by chaining 24. Row 1 starts with a half double crochet in the third chain from the hook. The first three chain stitches count as the first half double crochet. This is a common direction in most

patterns. The first two or three chain stitches count as the first stitch unless otherwise specified. Now work a half double crochet into each chain stitch until the end. If you count your stitches you will have 23 half double crochet stitches counting the first three chain stitches as the first half double crochet. Turn your work and you are ready to start Row 2.

Row 2 begins with a chain two. Notice that this does not count as the first stitch from now on. Half double crochet into the first stitch. (This is the first half double crochet of the previous row.) Chain one, skip the next stitch and work a half double crochet in the remaining stitches. You should now have 22 half double crochet and one chain stitch. Turn your work. Row 3 starts with chain two. Work a half double crochet into each stitch and into the chain one space across. You will have 23 stitches in this row. Turn your work.

Rows 4 and 5 are repeats of rows 2 and 3. Once you work rows 2 and three again leave about a six inch tail and cut your yarn. Not that complicated, right? But please let me know if have faced any difficulties during the process.

Tips for Reading Patterns

I want you to be comfortable reading patterns so let's sum up the main tips for mastering this skill.

- Look over the entire pattern before you start to work it.
- Check any special instructions or stitches you need to know before you start. Look them up online (or feel free to ask me in direct messages or comments, if you face any troubles with that).
- Be sure you have enough yarn before you begin. You don't want to get almost done only to find that you haven't purchased enough yarn. It's better to purchase too much yarn than not enough.
- Gather up all the supplies you'll need to be sure you have the correct hook and all of the accessories you will need.
- And the most important rule - take your time and relax!

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