



Senior Textile Artist

When you see all the colors and textures of fabrics and yarns, do you dream up a million things to do with them? Get ready to turn those visions into reality as you meet with artists, learn about the world of textile arts, and make two projects in the craft that most inspires you to pick up your needles (or loom or spinning wheel).

Step

1. Choose your textile art
2. Find your tools and materials
3. Learn the basics
4. Make something for everyday use
5. Create a gift or item for a special occasion

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll have learned the basics of a textile art—and I'll have two fantastic projects to show for it.

Step 1: Choose your textile art.

Find out about the many varieties of textiles, from intricate embroidery to colorful quilts to cozy knitted scarves. Through this step, you'll choose one textile art to learn, so decide if certain materials appeal to you more than others, or if one art's history inspires you to create today.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Look into two different textile arts from other cultures. In Mexico's Oaxacan lowlands, women weave sarongs using indigo-dyed thread. Among America's Amish, women make the same graphic quilts their grandmothers did. Use these or other examples you discover, and find out: How and when did these arts begin? How have they changed? How do artists today add a modern twist to what they make?

For More FUN: Try this activity from the 1980 Popular Arts badge: Look for examples of woven materials from other parts of the world. What do the colors and designs tell you about the way of life of the people?

OR

Interview an artist who works with textiles. You can find an artist by checking with a store that sells art materials or course catalogs at colleges or community centers. Find out how they started, what they love about their craft, and how their art has changed over the years.

OR



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Visit an art gallery or museum with a textile exhibit. Study the different patterns, materials, and colors you see. Do any inspire you to create a work of your own?

For More FUN: Create a “look book” as you tour the exhibit. Sketch patterns you like and add notes about each piece.

Step 2: Find your tools and materials.

To embroider you need to know about embroidery thread, hoops, needles, types of fabric, and the stitches you might use. Quilters use quilting hoops or frames, and knitting requires different needles and types of yarn. Get inspiration and information for one of the crafts below.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Thread-based craft. Visit a fabric store and find out about needles and thread. Ask for thread samples, tape them to heavy paperboard or in a journal, and label them with information about texture, weight, and color. Add information on needles and you’ll have a handy reference guide to use as you learn more.

OR

Yarn-based craft. Visit a yarn or fabric store and explore types of needles and different textures, weights, and colors of yarn. Make a yarn-reference guide as explained in the choice above.

OR

Quilting project. Visit a fabric store and explore needles, threads, fabrics, tools, and racks for quilting. Ask for fabric swatches for the reference guide explained in the first choice.

Step 3: Learn the basics.

Now that you have your material and tools, it’s time to try them out. Get started in one of these ways.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Find a mentor. Use your networking skills and find a textile artist willing to teach you the basics — maybe another girl who has already learned the craft, a neighbor, or someone who works at a crafts store.

OR



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Find a class. Check your local community center, fabric store, art center, or school to see if they offer a beginner's class in the textile art you want to learn.

OR

Learn the basics on your own. Find out all you can by delving into books, magazines, or online communities that specialize in your craft.

Step 4: Make something for everyday use.

In this step, make a functional, useful item that serves an everyday purpose. Perhaps knitted mittens to keep your hands warm, a phone holder to attach to your backpack, or patchwork curtains to shade a window?

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Make something to wear. Check magazines, online sites, or clothing stores for inspiration. Try making a hat or scarf, or “knit either a muffler, sweater, or baby’s jacket and cap” like a girl earning her Needlewoman badge in 1925 might have done.

OR

Create something useful for your home or meeting place. You might make a patchwork tablecloth, embroider napkins, cross-stitch a pillow cover, macramé a plant hanger, or a make a quilt.

For More FUN: Make a T-shirt quilt. Use old T-shirts that meant a lot to you but that you can’t wear anymore—the memories will keep you warm in more ways than one!

OR

Make an accessory. Create a phone holder, purse, or reusable tote bag. If you want to decorate like a Girl Scout from 1947, you might add an embroidery design “suitable for a needlepoint bag.”

Step 5: Create a gift or item for a special occasion.

Put your new crafting skills to good use and create something lovely for someone else. You’ll learn more if you make something different than what you made in step 4.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Make a gift for an anniversary, baby shower, birthday—or as a thank-you. If the gift recipient loves a particular place, you might try this from the 1947 Needlecraft badge: “In cross-stitch, make a picture map of some familiar locale, such as your camp, community, home, or school grounds.” Or you might make a special thank-you for adults who help you in Girl Scouts.



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OR

Create something to mark a special occasion. For example, you might embroider napkins for a holiday or family event.

OR

Make something to give to a charity. You might donate a raffle prize or something for a specific need—caps for cancer patients or blankets for homeless animals. You could create a quilt or panel for an organization that raises awareness about breast cancer or AIDS—and make it at a quilting bee with family and friends!

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Donating a project to a charity crafting organization
- Blogging to pass on what I've learned
- Starting a monthly crafting bee to reach out to new friends I'd like to make

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