

Stitching Book Club

-----Presents-----

Sense and Sensibility Finishing

Sixth Edition • Designed by Kristin Ashley

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Sense and Sensibility Finishing Instructions

Materials needed:

- Finished cross stitch
- 8 X 10 frame (I used a white frame from Joann Fabrics)
- 16 X 20 piece of finishing fabric (the kit contains Sky Blue broadcloth from Joann Fabrics)
- 8 X 10 piece of cardboard (cut to fit inside your frame with a little wiggle room for the fabric)
- Gimp braid, 23-25 inches (the kit contains white 3/8 inch gimp braid from PaperMart.com)
- Oval templates from this tutorial
- Sewing thread (white to match the gimp braid)
- Sewing needle
- Fabric pen (or regular pen or pencil)
- Fabric scissors and paper scissors
- One piece of tape

*The pictures in this tutorial feature both colorways for this project.



Note: This is a very technical finishing. If it seems too advanced for you, you can simplify it by removing the gathering element. To do this, cut the finishing fabric down to approximately 11 X 13 inches. Use the small oval to cut out the center instead of the large oval. Sew the fabric flat onto the cross stitch and cover with the gimp braid. Finish by lacing the back to the cardboard.

1. Begin by ironing your cross stitch and finishing fabric. Some wrinkling will happen during the finishing process, but you want to remove any deep-set wrinkles now as you will not be able to iron later.
2. Print out your oval templates. Cut out both shapes and tape together the large oval along the edge of the paper.
 - a. Before proceeding, check to make sure that the smaller oval is the correct size as every computer and printer is slightly different. When centered over your stitching, the oval should completely cover all floss with a small border around it.
 - b. If the small oval is not the right size, make any adjustments necessary. The large oval should be fine regardless.
 - c. If you have made alterations to the size of the small oval, check and make sure that your gimp braid is still long enough to go around the entire shape.
3. Using the small oval, we will now mark our cross stitch fabric.
 - a. Place the small oval over your cross stitch. Make sure it is centered and properly covering all the cross stitch.
 - b. Once you feel confident that it is in the proper position, trace along the outer edge. This will mark where we will be sewing the finishing fabric to the cross stitch fabric.
 - c. **Please be aware that any sort of marking on your cross stitch fabric may become permanent. Therefore, you want to be confident that everything is correct before making these markings.**
 - d. Once you have the oval traced on your fabric you can set it aside.
4. Take up your finishing fabric and place it in portrait orientation (taller than it is wider). Center the large paper oval on your finishing fabric. Trace around it and cut out the oval shape **leaving the outer fabric intact**. You can discard the oval piece of fabric that you have cut out, as well as the large paper oval.
5. Next, we will be gathering every side of the finishing fabric including the open oval at the center. We will use an unanchored running stitch for this.
 - a. Begin by cutting an extra-long piece of sewing thread. Thread one end through your sewing needle.
 - b. Taking up your finishing fabric, pick a side to begin on. You will sew along the edge starting at the corner. Sew straight across the fabric to the other corner. **Each side of the fabric will be done individually.**
 - c. At your starting position, put your needle down through the fabric and then up through the fabric with approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of separation.



- d. Pull the thread through the fabric until a tail of about six inches is left. Leave this tail as it is. This tail will be known as “**Tail A**”. Note: We are **not** locking this stitch into the fabric in any way.
- e. Continue putting the needle up and down, evenly spaced, across the entire length of fabric. You can do several stitches at a time to speed up the process. When you have reached the end, cut off any excess thread leaving another six inch tail. This tail will be known as “**Tail B**”.
- f. You will now repeat this exact same process approximately 1/8 of an inch below the first line of sewing. Make sure to put your needle up and down at the same places along the fabric so that the two rows of stitching match.
- g. Repeat this process for all four sides of your finishing fabric.
- h. For the center oval you will do the exact same process. Sew all the way around the oval stopping approximately one stitch away from where you started. *Try to sew as close to the edge as possible here as these stitches will need to be covered up by your gimp braid.*



- i. While it is best to make all of these stitches as even as possible throughout the fabric, none of these stitches will actually be seen on the finished project. So please don't worry about trying to make them perfect. It is okay if some of them get a bit wonky.
6. Now that all the running stitches are in place, we can begin to gather the fabric.
 - a. Start with the center oval.
 - b. Tie the two Tail A's together with a knot.
 - c. Grasping the two Tail B's together, start pulling on the thread. As you pull, the fabric will begin to gather.
 - d. Use your fingers to push the gather around the oval as needed.
 - e. Continue to pull and spread the gathering evenly throughout the oval until it has shrunk to the size of the small oval.
 - f. Once it is the size needed to fit around your small oval, tie the two Tail B's together and cut off the excess thread. This will lock your oval into the new smaller size.
 - g. Now that your oval is locked into the smaller size, work on getting the gathering evenly spaced throughout. This is, perhaps, the most finicky part of this finishing process. Take your time and work with it as much as needed until you are satisfied.

7. Pin the finishing fabric to your cross stitch fabric so that the two can be sewn together. The edge of your finishing fabric should sit along the edge of your oval.

a. Once pinned in place, sew the two fabrics together. I used a backstitch for this and made sure to stay close to the edge so that the sewing would be covered by the gimp braid.

8. Now that the gathered oval is attached to the cross stitch, we will cover the raw edge with our gimp braid.

a. Fold your gimp braid in half to find the middle.

b. Place the center of your gimp braid at the top center of the oval over the raw edge of your finishing fabric. It is important to cover everything that you do not wish to be seen on the final product.

c. Begin sewing the gimp braid in place along the outer edge using the little loops as anchors.

d. Sew along one side, all the way down to the center bottom.

e. Once you have nearly reached the center bottom, stop.

f. Cut the gimp braid so that it just extends past the bottom center.

g. Fold the small amount of excess gimp braid under so that it now stops at bottom center and sew in place, make sure to catch both layers of braid.

h. Repeat this process on the other side of the oval.

i. Now sew the interior edge of the gimp braid down to the cross stitch fabric, stretching it over the raw edge of the finishing fabric and covering any markings that you don't want seen.



9. You can now start to gather the other edges of your finishing fabric.
 - a. On each side of your fabric, tie the Tail A's together and gather the fabric by pulling on the Tail B's.
 - b. Once the size of your fabric has begun to shrink, place your piece of cardboard inside and continue to tighten your gatherings until the cardboard is enclosed by the fabric.
 - c. Tie off your Tail B's so that the gather won't come undone.
 - d. Adjust the gathering so that it is relatively even on every side. Make sure to check the front to see how it is looking on that side.



10. Make sure that the cross stitch is centered and lace the fabric tightly onto the cardboard.
 - a. It's important to pull the fabric as tightly and as evenly across the cardboard as possible. If it is not tight enough, the cross stitch may appear loose or bubbly. For the best results, place your lacing stitches close together.
 - b. Make sure that you also lace the corners.
 - c. If there are any parts of the cross stitch that do not lie flat once you have completely finished lacing, it is because there is an area that has not been laced tight enough.
 - d. Starting where the cross stitch is bubbling, follow the fabric around to the back side of the cardboard and put more lacing in that area.
 - e. Do not get frustrated as it took me several lacing adjustments to get mine to lie perfectly flat. Continue to tighten as needed. Rest assured that the back will not be seen so it can be as messy as need be.



11. Place your finished piece in your frame and you are done!
 - a. Please note that the glass needs to be removed from the frame for this project to fit.