

## Practice Your Embroidery

In 1792, Sarah Pierce started the Litchfield Female Academy, a pioneering school where women could receive an academic education. Sarah Pierce advanced the school's academic curriculum while maintaining quality instruction in needlework, drawing, painting, and music.

Ornamental instruction ensured that the Academy could attract new students, as most parents expected their daughters to master some form of art or music while at school. Displayed in the family home, elaborate embroideries and watercolor paintings became visible "proofs" of a daughter's achievement and a family's ability to pay for her education. In the classroom, the same works reinforced academic, moral, and religious lessons.

Pierce made sure that her students understood the importance of their academic training even as they completed ornamental work. Just as Frances Brace wrote that Pierce integrated sewing into academic lessons, Nancy Hale recalled that she did not "allow anyone to embroider without they attend to some study," as she "intended to ornament their minds" as well as develop their artistic abilities.



This needlework embroidery of a pastoral scene was done by student Maryann Bacon in 1802.

She kept a journal while attending the Academy, frequently noting between July and September that she was working on this embroidery while at school and when visiting her Roxbury home.

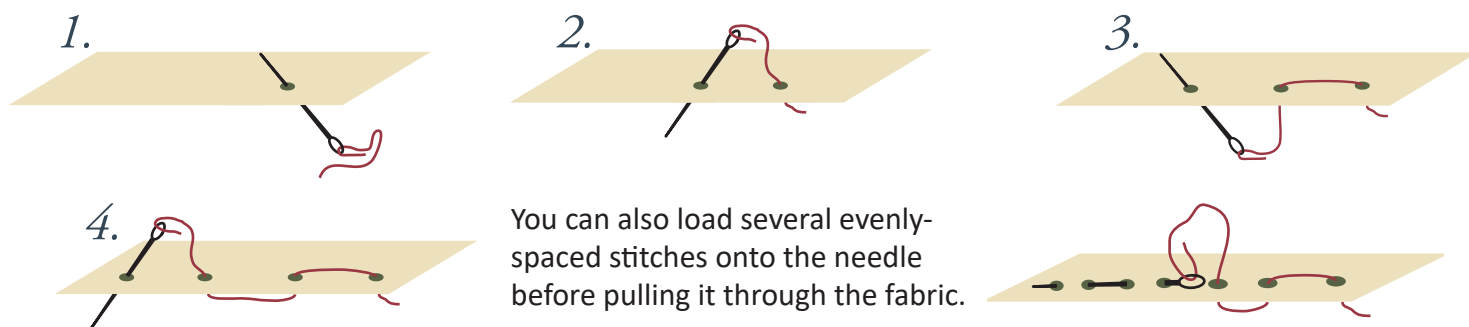
Needlework Embroidery – Pastoral Scene

Silk embroidery and watercolor on silk  
Maryann Bacon Whittlesey (1787-1869)  
1802

There are hundreds of different stitches, each with their own purpose and character. Learn the basics by trying these simple stitches.

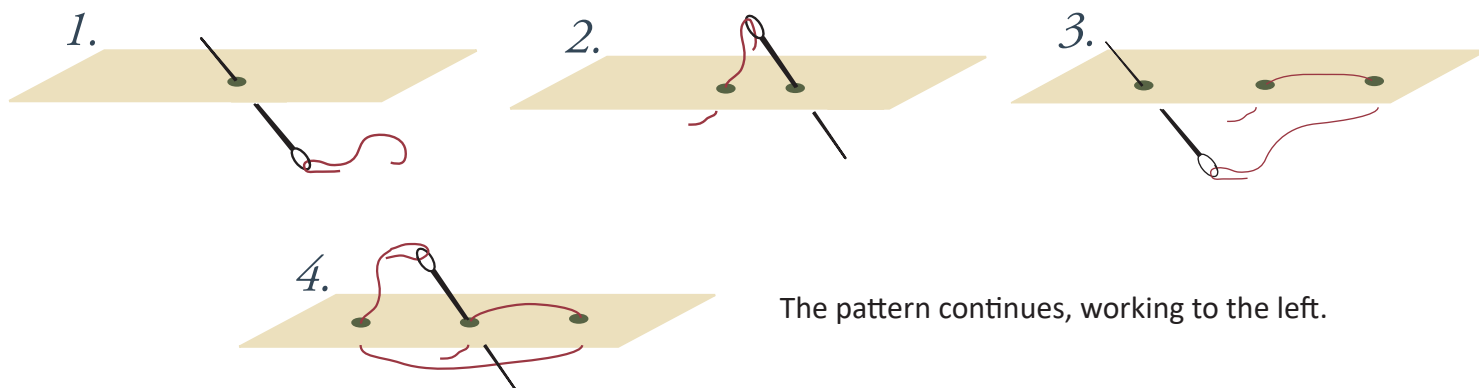
## Running Stitch

The running stitch is a line of small, even stitches that run in and out through the cloth without overlapping.



## Back Stitch

The back stitch is a very common stitch, often used for outlining shapes or adding fine details.



## Cross Stitch

The cross stitch gets its name from its x-shape. It is created by stitches two half stitches over each other.

