This design will cover one 2 ½” ball or may be smocked with extra repeats for an insert. This design is based on the spacing of a 24 Row pleater.

Pleat a fabric 4” wide of heavy quilting cotton such as Moda's Bella or Kaufman's Kona in white or ecru.

Pleat 9 Full Space Rows PLUS a Half Space Holding Row (HR) at the top and the bottom, ½ space away from each edge. Do NOT use half spaces except the top and bottom holding rows. Rows 1 and 9 use a colored thread AND a white thread for pleating. Use white thread for the HRs. DO NOT TIE OFF ANYTHING! WE WILL DO THAT AS PART OF THE NEXT STEP!

Threads: Perle cotton will be used as is, no need to strip floss for this project! Choose 3 complimentary colors of perle cotton thread in 3 different sizes. You will need about 8 yards of each color for the ball. The darkest color should be 5 weight. The medium color should be 8 weight. The lightest color should be 12 weight.

Needles: Smocking needles: Crewel 7 and 5 or Darter 7 and 5 or Chenille 22 & 24. The needle should be roughly the same diameter as the thread.

Finishing: One-yard double-faced satin ribbon. ¼” wide to 3/8” wide. Two straight pins to hold the ribbons in place. Poly ball form, 2 ½”.

![Image of smocked ball with ribbons and bow.]
Prepare the fabric for smocking.

Pull a thread or tear a 4" width of fabric. Center fabric over 11 needles: 9 full spaces with a half-space above and below. If your pleater only has half spaces at one end, start threading the needles ½ space away from the left edge. Use a full space at the other end.
Pleat the half-space holding rows with thread to match the fabric. Pleat R1 & R9 with 2 threads, one the color of the fabric and one in a contrasting color.
Pleat the rest of the rows with a contrasting color.

![Image of pleated fabric](image)

Leave the gathering threads at least 13" long.

**Basic stitching reminders:**

Be very careful to avoid stitching through the gathering threads so you can move the threads back and forth as you smock.

Each stitch should be sewn through the top 1/3 of the pleat, level from right to left taking the same amount on each side of the pleat.
The needle is ALWAYS parallel to the gathering thread.

When smocking from the left hand side toward the center, keep the gathering threads snug against the left hand pleat. When you reach the middle of the pass, gently pull the gathering threads to the left, snuggling the knots to the right hand edge. Lay the pleated panel on a flat surface. Put one open hand over the entire panel to support it. Pull the gathering threads to the opposite side. This keeps the pleats standing tall for smocking. Keeping the pleats uniform, the stitches will be uniform in size.
The smocking stitches do not stretch. It is the unused portion of the pleat under the stitches that gives smocking its elastic characteristic.
Tie off the pleated panel to 96 pleats.

Remove 2 pleats along the left selvedge edge for each Row.
Tie the top two gathering threads as a pair, the next 2 gathering threads, the center 3, next 2 and final 2 threads.

Count 96 pleats from the first pleat on the left hand side.
  • Count 25 pleats. Vertically, stick a pin in the 25th pleat.
  • Count 25 more pleats and pin.
  • Count a final 25 pleats and pin.
  • Count 21 pleats and stick a pin in the 21st pleat horizontally.
Pull out the remaining gathering threads up to the edge of the 96th pleat.

Wrap the pleated panel around the 2 ½" ball to get an idea of how long to leave the gathering threads.
Tie the threads off in pairs to the newly measured length plus 1" matching the left hand side.

Trim away the extra fabric, leaving 1" past the final pleat. Cut an angle at the top and bottom edges to prevent raveling.
The purpose of this lesson is to practice Plaid Smocking while using perle cotton threads on a heavy weight cotton fabric. There will be particular attention paid to placement of stitches in an odd number of steps of the trellis.

A few general notes about Plaid Smocking:
~Plaid smocking is usually a combination of 3 or more colors and varying weights of threads.
~Begin smocking with the darkest color, finishing with the lightest for the most effect use of color.
~Begin smocking with the heaviest weight, finishing with the lightest weight for balance.
~Smock one entire color before layering the next color.

This majority of this design is a 7-step Trellis (Wave) over 2 full spaces. The remainder of the design is a 3-step Trellis over 1 full space.

SMOCK IN THIS ORDER!

1. Begin smocking on R5, 1 strand of #5 Black.
   Under Cable 1 on R5.
   Trellis 7 steps up to R3.
   Over Cable 1 on R3.
   Trellis 7 steps down to R5.
   Under Cable 1 on R5.
   Repeat 6 black inverted Vs.

   NOTE: Do NOT take the final stitch in each pass. Park the thread tail to use later in construction. The last stitch will be placed when smocking in the round.

2. Begin smocking on R5, 1 strand of #5 Black.
   Over Cable 1 on R5.
   Trellis 7 steps down to R7.
   Under Cable 1 on R7.
   Trellis 7 steps up to R5.
   Over Cable 1 on R5.
   Repeat 6 black Vs completing the center diamond motif.

3. Using 1 strand #5 Black begin smocking on R1, Cable/Trellis 7 steps down to R3 with 6 repeats.

4. Using 1 strand #5 Black begin smocking on R9, Cable/Trellis 7 steps up to R7 with 6 repeats.

Note: These four passes complete the foundation for the design.
Removing stitches in perle cotton is more difficult than removing floss stitches. Use this drawing lesson to get the rhythm of odd spacing over two full spaces.

1. Print this page.
2. Fold paper vertically on each number.
4. Draw 7 trellis stitches between R5 and R3. NOTE: stitch 4 ends up straddling R4. Stitch 7 should be on R3.
5. Always keep in mind the middle stitch is going to straddle the middle Row and the final trellis stitch is on the Row as is the cable stitch.
Argyle in Perle
Maggie Bunch, ©2016

BASE LAYER

cable stitches straddle

stitch 4 straddles the halfway point

7  stitch 7 is level on the gathering thread

maggieb!

7  trellis steps over 2 full spaces
Argyle Mystery
Second Layer
Maggie Bunch
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The second layer is exactly the same stitch as the first layer except the Rows are different. For this layer use the #8 perle cotton. PLEASE NOTE: The 4th stitch in each trellis pass will be stitched over the previously layer stitch of the base layer.

The following two pictures demonstrate how this is done. The GREEN, size 8 perle cotton is the second layer.
Argyle Mystery  
Second Layer  
Maggie Bunch  
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1. Begin smocking on R3, 1 length of #8 perle. Under Cable 1 on R3. Trellis 7-steps up to R1. Over Cable 1 on R1. Trellis 7-steps down to R3. Under Cable 1 on R3. Six repeats.

NOTE: Do NOT take the final stitch in each pass. Park the thread tail to use later in construction. The last stitch will be placed when smocking in the round.

2. Begin smocking on R3, #8 perle. Over Cable 1 on R3. Trellis 7-steps down to R5. Under Cable 1 on R5. Trellis 7-steps up to R3. Over Cable 1 on R3. Six repeats.

3. Using 1 length of #8, begin smocking on R7, Cable/ Trellis 7-steps up to R5, cable one. Six repeats.

4. Using 1 length of #8, begin smocking on R7, Cable/ Trellis 7-steps down to R9 with 6 repeats.

Note: These four passes complete the middle layer.
This entire layer is smocked in #12 perle cotton.

1. Stitch a 3-step trellis between R2 and R1 and between R8 & R9.
   • Begin smocking on R2, 1 strand #12.
   • Under Cable 1 on R2.
   • Trellis 3 steps up to R1. The second stitch will cross over the Base Layer.
   • Over Cable 1 on R1.
   • Trellis 3 steps down to R2.
   • Under Cable 1 on R2.
   • Repeat this across R2/R1.

Repeat 3-step trellis on R8 – R9.
   • Over Cable 1 on R8.
   • Trellis 3 steps down to R9. The second stitch will cross over the Base Layer.
   • Under Cable 1 on R9.
   • Trellis 3 up to R8.
   • Repeat across the entire width.
2. Stitch a 7-step trellis between R4 & R2 and R6 & R8. Note the peaks will match up with the 3-step trellis you just stitched.
   - Begin smocking on R4 with Under Cable 1 on R4.
   - Trellis 7 steps up to R2.
   - Over Cable 1 on R2.
   - Trellis 7 steps down to R4.
   - Under Cable 1 on R4.
   - Repeat 6 motifs between R4 & R2.

Repeat the 7-step trellis between R6 and R8.
   - Begin smocking on R6 with over Cable on R6.
   - Trellis 7 steps down to R8.
   - Under Cable 1 on R8.
   - Trellis 7 steps up to R6.
   - Repeat across R6 & R8.
   - Note the peaks will match up with the 3-step trellis to butt the cables against each other.
3. Stitch two 3-step trellis passes between RR4 & R5 and R6 & R5.
These two passes will ‘fill-in the blanks’ in the center section, connecting with the 7-step trellis smocking.

- Begin on R4 with an Over Cable. Cable 1.
- Trellis 3 steps down to R5.
- Under Cable 1 on R5.
- Trellis 3 steps up to R4.
- Repeat across.

Repeat the 3-step trellis between R6 & R5.

- Begin on R6 with 1 Under Cable.
- Trellis 3 steps up to R5.
- Over Cable 1 on R5.
- Trellis 3 steps down to R6.
- Repeat across.
This layer is smocked with #12 perle cotton.