How to Read a Smocking Graph

The horizontal lines (they look like black dashed lines here) indicate **guide rows**. They are the pleating threads which hold the pleats in place until you add decorative stitching on the right side or backsmocking on the wrong side. Pleating threads usually aren’t removed until all the smocking is complete. You should try not to catch the pleating threads with the needle while doing the decorative stitching; but even if you do, it’s not a disaster! This example has 5 guide rows.

The wide green lines in the illustration represent the **pleats**. Most smocking graphs don’t show them in color; sometimes they are just white, but they will always be shown wider than the valleys.

The skinny grey lines represent the **valleys**. They are the space between the pleats where the fabric dips down below the pleating thread.

This is what it looks like from the side

**Valley**

**Guide row**

**Pleating thread**

**Pleats** on the right side of the fabric. Sometimes they stick up higher than the pleats on the wrong side.

**Pleats** on the wrong side of the fabric. Sometimes they don’t stick up as high as the pleats on the right side.