

# Signing Your Work

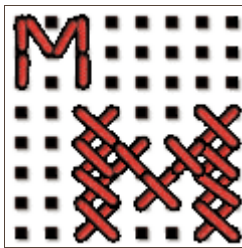
## A Scarlet Quince™ Tutorial

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We strongly encourage you to sign your work. If you are stitching an heirloom piece, a day will come when your descendants will wonder when, if not by whom, your work was stitched. Don't leave them a mystery. Here are the basics of signing cross stitch.



**1.** First, decide what you will put in your signature. At a minimum, sign your work with your initials and the year. If you like, you can put your full name and the full date. Some people also inscribe it to the person the piece was stitched for, or even include a short thought. Try your ideas on scratch paper until you're satisfied. Try different layouts — one line or multiple, centered or right- or left-justified.



**2.** You can sign with backstitch or cross stitch. Find an alphabet of an appealing size and style in old patterns you may have, on the internet, or you can design your own letters. Either type of stitching can go inside the stitched area of the pattern, or next to the stitching if the background is not stitched.

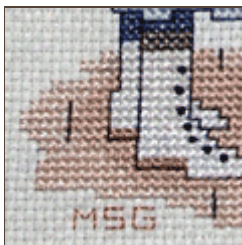


**3.** Regardless of the type of stitching and placement you will use, first draw the stitches for your text on graph paper. This will give you a guide to stitch from, and will also let you know how much space you will need.



**4.** Choose a complementary color for your text. If stitching on bare fabric, use a color from the nearby cross stitch. If you are backstitching over the crosses, choose a fairly contrasting color so that your text is readable. Hold one strand of floss across the area to be stitched to make sure it will show up. It's up to you whether you want barely or highly visible. If you are signing inside the stitched area with cross stitch, your letters will be much larger and bolder and less contrast is needed (though you can still go for strong contrast if you like).

In the photo, the upper 2 floss colors would show up well, the 3rd and 5th would not (they contrast in places but in other places they blend in), and the 4th is borderline.



**5.** If you are signing a piece in which the background is not stitched, you'll probably stitch on bare fabric next to the cross stitch. You may wish to transfer your letters from the graph paper to the chart so you can see exactly how it will fit. If it's cramped, or extends past the stitching, erase and try a different area, or spread it over more lines. Keep the signature in close to the stitching to be sure it won't be hidden after framing.



6. If you are signing with backstitch over cross stitch, careful planning is important so you don't end up ripping the backstitching out. If you are signing on the left, you're unlikely to run out of room on the right, but make sure you start far enough from the bottom so that you have room for all your lines of text. If you are signing on the right, have a margin of several cross stitches and then count backwards to arrive at a starting point. To make life easier, sign on the left if you have a lot to say.



7. You can also sign with letters formed from cross stitch. If the background is not stitched, just follow the pointers in step 5. If you are signing within the stitching, you must plan the signature before you stitch the area you're signing. Chart your letters, then mark them on the pattern with a colored marker. It can be an opaque marker — you won't need to know what the symbols were. Choose a suitable floss color, as in step 4, then stitch your marked stitches with that color **instead** of the colors the chart indicates. Your signature stitches, when done in cross stitch, can't go over existing stitches — they **replace** the stitches you would have made following the chart.

See [Needlework Alphabets](#) for a few alphabet charts suitable for signing your work.

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