

How to Jumble

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Introduction: About Fancy Jumbles

Thank you for your interest in Fancy Jumbles embroidery alphabets.

A Fancy Jumble is an arrangement of letters that all have the same shape but vary in fill patterns and/or in colors. Ten alphabets with different fill styles are available. As shown above in the “How to Jumble” title, the alphabets are: Waves (H), Stripes Vertical (o), Polka Dots (w), Harlequin (t), Scallops (o), Key (J), Interlock (u), Stripes Horizontal (m), Fish Scales (b), Zigzag (l), and Waves (e) repeated.

Each alphabet includes all 26 lower case and 26 upper case letters, all ten digits, and six punctuation marks: exclamation point, hyphen, period, question mark, single quote open and single quote close. The single quote close can also be used as a comma and an apostrophe, and double quotes can be formed from two consecutive single quote marks.

The alphabets are available for purchase either singly, in predetermined pairs, or as a complete set. The pairs are: Fish Scales/Zigzag, Harlequin/Waves, Interlock/Key, Polka Dots/Stripes Horizontal, and Scallops/Stripes Vertical. You can start with one or two alphabets and add more as you wish. (See combinations at the end of this guide.)

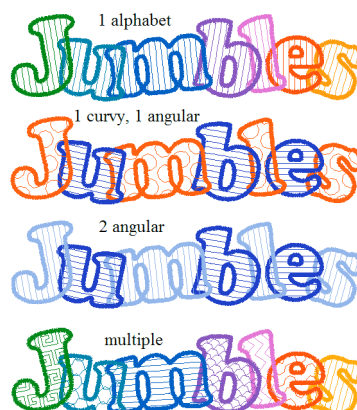
These alphabets can be used in two ways. Some computer-based customizing software and some advanced embroidery machines allow you to open multiple designs at once, rotate individual designs to any angle, and then combine them all into a single design. Alternatively, you can hoop fabric for each letter separately. You will find this document useful in planning your design whether or not you have the software for it.

In the remainder of this document you will find suggestions for using Fancy Jumbles alphabets. They are not rules, but tips to help you “Jumble,” that is, to arrange these letters in a pleasing way. In addition, you will also find some technical suggestions regarding your embroidery software’s options. This guide assumes you have at least basic knowledge of your software and your embroidery machine.

Planning your Fancy Jumble

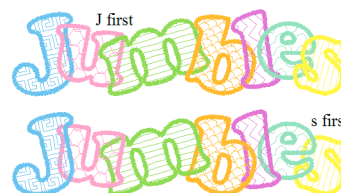
First you will need to choose the fills for your design. Your options here depend on how many Fancy Jumbles alphabets you have purchased. If you have a single alphabet, you will use it for all letters. If you buy a pair, you can alternate the two. If you buy more than two, you can alternate among the alphabets until you have spelled out your Fancy Jumble. I prefer to use as many alphabets as possible, beginning the sequence again if I have more letters than alphabets. The title for this document has eleven letters so the first and last letter use the same alphabet.

Note that five of the alphabets have curved fill patterns (Fish Scales, Interlock, Polka Dots, Scallops and Waves) while the other five have angular or straight fill patterns (Harlequin, Key, Stripes



Horizontal, Stripes Vertical and Zigzag). I prefer to alternate between curved and angular alphabets to give a balanced look, but many other options can also be pleasing. You may find it helpful to spell out the desired Fancy Jumble on paper and then draw the fill style you want next to each letter.

The next consideration is the order of stitching. If you start from the beginning of a Fancy Jumble, as in this first example, then the letter that appears on top will be the last letter. Eyes will naturally be drawn to that end of the Fancy Jumble. If you start at the end and work toward the beginning instead, then the first letter will attract the eyes. The second example shows the last to first arrangement. You can see that the yellow “s” stands out in the first example, and the blue “J” does in the second.

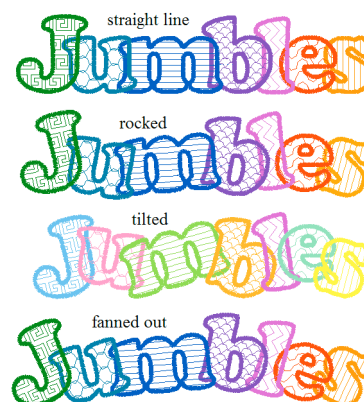


Creating your Fancy Jumble

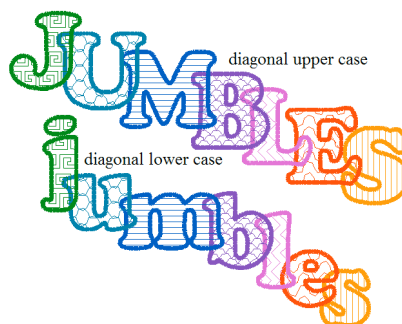
Consult the manual for your customizing software to determine the order in which you should select the letters for your Fancy Jumble. The software I use stitches first whatever is selected first, but yours may differ. Once you have decided on the fill pattern for each letter and the order for stitching the letters, add each letter to the design in the appropriate order.

Each alphabet is found in its own folder, and within that folder there are sub-folders for Letters, Numbers and Punctuation. The letters are named with letter, then case, then fill style, and finally a 55. (The upper case letters are about 41 millimeters high. All letters, numbers and punctuation marks were created within a 55 millimeter field to keep them proportional.) Thus, a lower case “a” in the Fish Scales alphabet is named **a_lower_fs_55**. The alphabets are abbreviated **fs** (Fish Scales), **ha** (Harlequin), **il** (Interlock), **ke** (Key), **pd** (Polka Dots), **sc** (Scallops), **sh** (Stripes Horizontal), **sv** (Stripes Vertical), **wa** (Waves), and **zz** (Zigzag).

Now that you have your letters on the screen, it is time to jumble! Here are a few examples of Fancy Jumbles. The simplest way to jumble letters is merely to move them close enough to overlap. The letters themselves sit straight on a baseline like normal text, as in the first example. If you want to mix things up a little, you can slightly rock each letter a bit to the left or to the right. The first letter rocks to the left, the last to the right, and those between approximately alternate. If you have an odd number of letters in your Fancy Jumble, try leaving one letter straight. Lower case “e” and “o” have much the same shape whether tilted or not, so are good candidates for not rocking. Play with the letters until you find an arrangement that you like. Notice that the letters still appear to remain in a straight line. You can also create a Fancy Jumble with a stronger tilt to the letters. It is often possible to fit more letters into a hoop with the larger tilt because the letters can fit closer together. Some letters are “elevated” from the baseline. Another idea is to “fan” the letters from left to right, as shown here.



You may want to arrange letters diagonally. I suggest limiting such arrangements to upper case letters, however, because lower case letters will vary more in height and width. Most upper case letters have the same height and similar width. “T” is much narrower, and “Q” is taller. The lower case letters, however, include many that are short, some that are unusually wide (“m” and “w”), and a few that also descend. Lower case “j” is the tallest letter of all. As you see in these two diagonal arrangements, the one with only upper case letters has a more consistent angle of descent. The “M” is wider, but not as much so as the “m” in the sample below. The “j” in the second sample looks out of place because it is a descending letter that in this case ascends instead. If I had positioned it lower, it might have ended level with the bottom of the “m.” That would be just as odd for the diagonal as having the “j” stand too high.



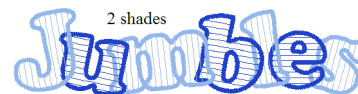
For the same reasons, I recommend only upper case letters for vertical arrangements. The example arrangement “FJ” is made by centering the “F” directly above the “J” (to create proper order of stitching) and then overlapping the letters a bit. You can vary alphabet fill style and tilt of letters as for any other arrangement of letters.



The following two recommendations may be helpful to you no matter what sort of arrangement you decide to try. First, avoid arranging letters so that one satin stitch outline directly overlaps another, as shown. It may be difficult to stitch such a design without breaking threads. Second, keep in mind that the shapes of letters that happen to be next to each other will have an effect on how you can arrange them. You may find, for example, that if you tilt an “r” to the left, it may not make contact at all with whatever letter follows it, especially if that letter is tilted to the right. The wide lower case letters “m” and “w” may look very odd if tilted to the same degree as other letters in your Fancy Jumble. If one arrangement doesn’t work, you may have better luck with another.



Now comes the fun task of choosing colors for your Fancy Jumble design. Initially, all letters in all alphabets are set to the same color. You can change the colors via your software, or if you do not use software you can write down the colors you mean to use in the order you prefer. If you use only one alphabet, you can arrange the colors according to whatever scheme you like, just as you might for any other embroidery alphabet. The first example here shows the Stripes Vertical alphabet in a rainbow progression of colors.



If you use two or more alphabets, you may prefer to designate a color for each alphabet. The second Jumble uses two alphabets and two colors. The third uses two alphabets with two shades of a single color. Either of these alternation schemes can also work for three or more different alphabets. The fourth example displays another rainbow progression of color; this time, the colors vary with the alphabets. Finally, you see a random mix of colors. This is a nice option to use if you want to coordinate your embroidery with a particular fabric print.

Software and Embroidery

When you are satisfied with the look of your Fancy Jumble, consider some of the options your software may provide. (Check your manual for details.) You may have an available option to remove overlap automatically when combining designs. Please **disable** this option, since the overlapped portion of a letter is intended to be visible through the open spaces of the letter stitched after it. Click the tool that lets you combine all elements into one design. You will probably see a single rectangle surrounding the entire design rather than smaller rectangles surrounding individual letters. Move the design to the center of the appropriate hoop area and then click the tool to center the design. Save the design in the format required by your embroidery machine. If you reuse colors or don’t bother to change the colors, do not use a Color Sort feature. It may change the overlap of the letters or eliminate stops for thread changes. (NOTE: If your embroidery hoop requires you to save a design into multiple portions, do this *before* you combine the letters into a design. The Save to Multiple Hoop process will combine the design elements for you.)

There are two ways that software can resize a design. One preserves the original number of stitches, no matter how much you increase or decrease the size of a design. Embroidery experts recommend that you change a design no more than 15 to 20 percent if you use this option. If your software allows you to preserve stitch density, instead, then you will be able to change your design size to a greater extent. Be aware, however, that the satin stitch outline will change width with the size of the design. Test stitch a sample to be sure it will be suitable. If you do change the size of your Fancy Jumble, save the new version with a different name so that you don’t lose the original. Follow the instructions provided with your software and/or embroidery machine to transfer your design to your embroidery machine.

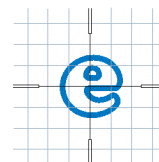
Although each letter consists of a single color, thread jumps are necessary in some cases. Lower case “i” and “j” (as well as exclamation point and question mark) have dots, quite a few letters and numbers include

inside satin stitching, and a few polka dot letters have polka dots that don't touch an edge. I suggest that you trim any jump threads before stitching the next letter in the Fancy Jumble.

Rehooping to Jumble

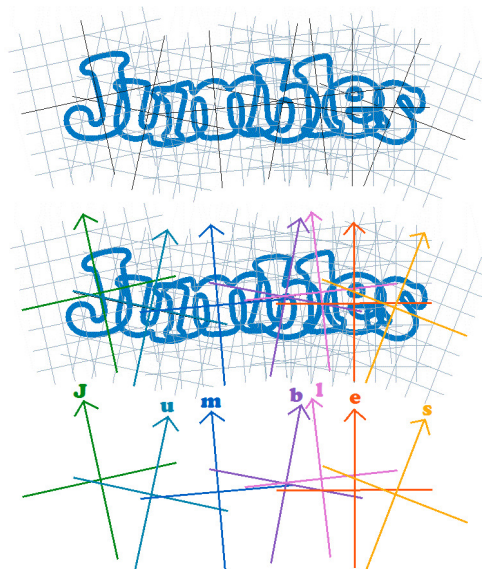
If you do not have the capability to combine designs in software or on your sewing machine, you will need to hoop and embroider each letter of your Fancy Jumble as a separate design. Templates for all letters, numbers and punctuation marks in the alphabet(s) you purchase are available as .pdf files. Print the templates for the letters you need onto special transparency plastic or vellum (available at office supply stores) made for inkjet printers.

Cut away most of the plastic, leaving just enough surrounding the letters to show the centering lines clearly. To make it easy to mark fabric for letter positions, cut very thin slits on the centering lines as shown here. (NOTE: The fill patterns of the letters will be visible on the templates, but it's really the outline you need to consider when positioning your letters. Templates for one alphabet will be sufficient since the outlines of all alphabets are the same.)



Select and arrange the letters you need for your Fancy Jumble, following the suggestions provided above. Tape the templates together as they overlap and then position the collection of templates on your fabric as desired. Use additional tape to hold the template collection in place.

Using a non-permanent marking tool, mark the centering lines for each letter. You can use waxy Tailor's chalk, washable fabric pens, or even washable Crayola® markers, but be sure to test your fabric to make sure marks are removable. Disappearing ink may disappear too quickly for this use. Start by marking in the template slits, and mark the top side of each letter with an arrow pointing up. You may need to lift neighboring letters out of the way for this marking. If you use a few distinct colors for marking, you can keep track of which centering lines go together. Mark each pair of centering lines with the same color and use different colors for the neighboring letters. You need not use a color for each letter as shown here; two or three colors will suffice. It may also help to write the letter above the centering marks to remind you what to embroider in each location.



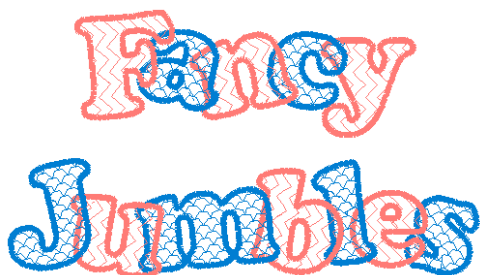
Remove the templates and connect the centering marks for each letter. You will see a series of +'s at various angles, as shown here. Hoop the fabric for each letter in its turn, making sure that the centering lines match the orientation of the hoop. Avoid removing your marks until you have stitched all letters.



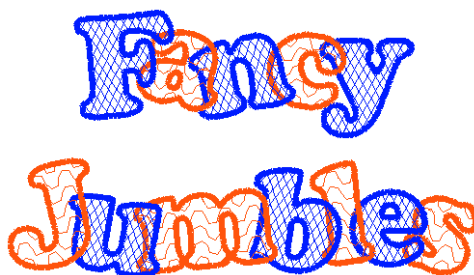
Complete Set



Fish Scales and Zigzag



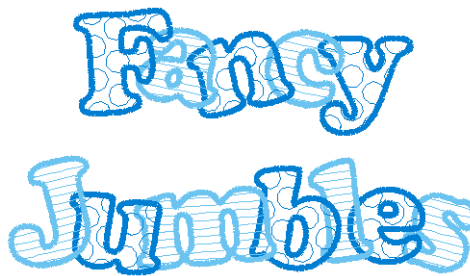
Harlequin and Waves



Interlock and Key



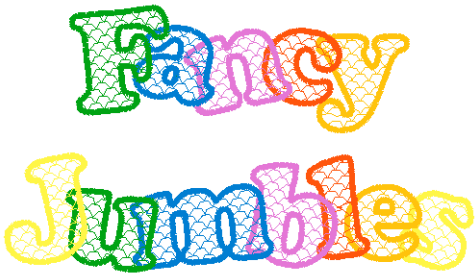
Polka Dot and Stripes Horizontal



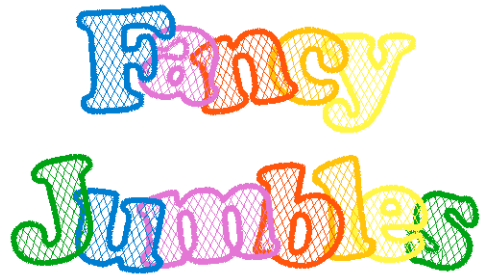
Scallops and Stripes Vertical



Fish Scales



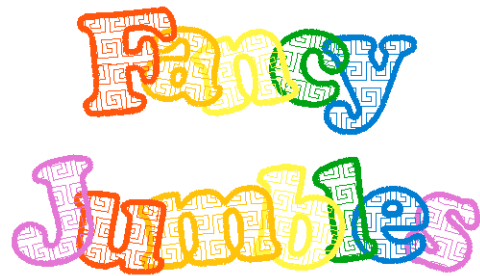
Harlequin



Interlock



Key



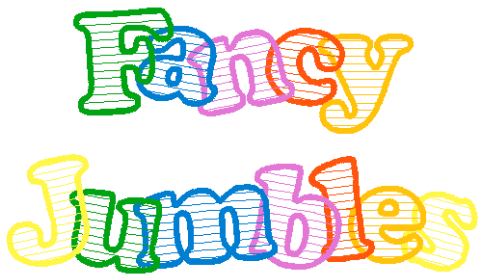
Polka Dots



Scallops



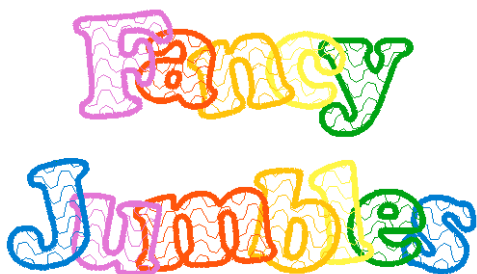
Stripes Horizontal



Stripes Vertical



Waves



Zigzag

