Read a Basic Crochet Pattern Abbreviation

Decode US crochet shorthand into a ten-stitch, five-row reading exercise

Learn the language before following the line

A crochet pattern is a compressed set of actions, not a secret code. This edition teaches how to read several common US abbreviations and then expand one original five-row single-crochet practice pattern into full English. It uses familiar chain and single-crochet methods from F067 and F068. A reader may practise decoding on paper before picking up yarn; a completed swatch is not required to benefit from the lesson.

Identify the vocabulary system

The letters sc mean single crochet in US terminology. In many UK patterns, the name double crochet refers to the same basic short stitch. UK and US usage are not interchangeable simply because the written letters look similar; always read the pattern's stated terms. This booklet explicitly uses US terminology throughout and gives no permission to reinterpret an unrelated pattern without checking its key.

The basic legend

ch means chain; sc means US single crochet; st means stitch and sts means stitches; sl st means slip stitch; rep means repeat; sk means skip; yo means yarn over; sp means space; RS means right side, WS means wrong side. BLO and FLO indicate back-loop-only and front-loop-only work. The final four are included as recognition vocabulary here; this first exercise uses ch, sc, st(s), turn and row ranges.

Numbers carry real arithmetic

A parenthetical count like (10 sc) or [10 sts] at the end of a row tells you how many completed stitches should be there. The bracket is a count report, not an additional instruction to work ten more stitches. In this original sample, a foundation of ch 11 followed by sc in the second chain from the hook yields exactly ten sc, since the first chain is skipped.

Know what is not promised

The original sheet is a decoder and a small swatch pattern, not a full course on all crochet symbols, advanced shaping or chart conventions. Stitch tension affects fabric dimensions; no tested width, gauge, wash performance or fitness for a household use is claimed. The reader uses gentle hand movements, stores sharp tools safely and keeps yarn away from children and pets.

Plan the practice

Read these dimensions and conventions before touching yarn.

Read a whole row before beginning

First locate the foundation instruction, the active row number and the stated stitch total. Decide whether a term is an action, such as 'sc', a location, such as 'in next st', or a repeat control, such as 'rep'. Translate the sentence into one plain-English instruction before touching the hook. If any symbol is not defined by the author, do not guess a meaning from a different source's abbreviation list.

The original five-row practice pattern

Foundation: ch 11. Row 1: sc in 2nd ch from hook and in each rem ch across (10 sc). Rows 2-5: ch 1, turn; sc in each sc across (10 sc). Finish off, leaving a yarn tail for weaving. This exercise applies one sc per real stitch and does NOT count the ch-1 turning chain as an sc. The foundation chain is not called Row 1; Row 1 begins with the first single crochet.

Work out the first-row total

There are eleven foundation chains. The first chain closest to the hook is skipped; ten remain available for working sc. That yields ten completed US sc in Row 1. In later rows, ten completed real sc receive one new sc each, so each row remains ten. If you count eleven stitches, inspect whether the turning chain was incorrectly worked or counted as an extra stitch.

Understand a row range

The text 'Rows 2-5' means perform the listed row instruction four times: once for Row 2, once for Row 3, once for Row 4 and once for Row 5. It does not mean five repeats and it does not include the separate Row 1. At the end you should have five completed rows, not six. The printable decoder has a dedicated row-by-row table to make the logic visible.

Brackets, commas and asterisks

A comma separates closely related actions; a semicolon often divides stages of a row. Asterisks can mark the beginning of a repeat in other patterns, often followed by 'rep from *'; the author must state where to stop. Square brackets may group repeated instructions or give counts, depending on the writer's legend. Parentheses also can contain a repeat unit or a stitch total. Do not treat punctuation as universal without reading the pattern's own notes.

Use the drawings as readers' keys

PATTERN 1 is an original abbreviation decoder and eleven-chain-to-ten-single-crochet count diagram. PATTERN 2 is an original five-row grid with ten stitch columns and a turning-chain note beside each row. These teaching diagrams are symbolic rather than an exact-size swatch. Each pattern page carries two original 50 mm scale references for checking print settings, but the grid itself is not a physical crochet gauge or a cutting pattern.

Write down your first translation

RECORD 1 asks you to expand each abbreviated line into ordinary English; RECORD 2 holds a row count and an unfamiliar-terms checklist. Use them first without yarn. If you decide to crochet the sample, select smooth, light yarn with a hook suitable to its label, perhaps around 5-6 mm, and mark the row number on the record every time you finish one traversal.

Practice - steps 1 to 8

Each numbered action stands alone. Count real stitches, not temporary hook loops.

1. Read the title and convention Before a line of shorthand, find the language convention. Write 'US crochet terms' at the top of RECORD 1. Do not borrow a 'dc' interpretation from a UK pattern. This booklet uses the US sc: insert, yarn over, pull up one loop, yarn over, draw through the two hook loops. The live loop on the hook is never a completed stitch.

2. Underline each abbreviation On the original decoder, locate ch, sc, st/sts, sl st, rep, sk and yo. Write their ordinary English meanings. Do not begin a new stitch merely because the abbreviation appears in a legend; a legend is a dictionary, not a row instruction. Mark any unfamiliar acronym for checking against a pattern-specific key.

3. Translate the foundation instruction Read 'Foundation: ch 11' as 'make eleven chain stitches from a slip knot'. Count the eleven visible Vs rather than the starting knot or the live hook loop. On the paper worksheet, write the number 11 beside foundation and circle it. The foundation is a preparatory chain, not the first completed row of sc.

4. Find the location phrase Translate '2nd ch from hook' as 'the second actual chain immediately below the live loop on the hook'. The nearest chain is skipped and therefore supplies turning height. In the original count drawing, the skipped chain is marked by an open ring; the ten target positions are marked by filled circles. The drawing identifies locations and is not a required yarn length.

5. Expand Row 1 aloud Translate 'sc in 2nd ch from hook and in each rem ch across' as 'work one US single crochet into the second chain from the hook, then one into each of the remaining nine chains'. Count one completed sc per worked chain. The ten sc tops, not the skipped chain or a temporary hook loop, form Row 1.

6. Check the parenthetical stitch total At the end of Row 1 the printed '(10 sc)' confirms the target. Calculate eleven original chains minus one skipped = ten. The parentheses do not instruct you to add ten further stitches. Put '10' in the R1 row of RECORD 2; if a physical sample has nine or eleven, locate the mismatch before continuing.

7. Read the next row marker The label 'Rows 2-5' applies the subsequent instruction to four successive rows. Write R2, R3, R4 and R5 on the worksheet, one line each. Check that there are four numbers, not five. Do not count the foundation as a row and do not do Row 1 again when starting R2.

8. Decode ch 1, turn Translate 'ch 1, turn' as 'make one turning chain, then rotate the piece to face the return direction'. In this US sc pattern, that turning chain does not count as one of the ten sc. Do not make a sc into the turning chain as an additional stitch. If practising only on paper, draw a small turning arrow beside each repeated row.

Practice - steps 9 to 14

Complete the exercise, check the work, and use the quick repairs below.

9. Decode one sc in each sc The wording 'sc in each sc across' means one new single crochet into the two top V loops of each of the ten true sc from the previous row. It does not mean working two sc into each of the two visible loops. The top V is one stitch; inserting under its two strands preserves the basic method taught in F068.

10. Read the row count after every pass After each of Rows 2, 3, 4 and 5, enter ten in the count box only when ten real sc were identified. The original table provides one row for each traversal; it is not a separate stitch pattern to add more rows. If one row holds nine, you probably missed an edge stitch. If eleven, check the turning chain or a duplicated edge sc.

11. Recognize a repeat marker Look at the optional example '*sc in next st, ch 1; rep from * three times'. The star identifies where the repeated sequence begins, but the meaning of 'three times' may vary between writers as to whether the first execution is included. For this teaching example, use the explanatory note 'work the bracketed unit three times total'. Do not apply the sample repeat to the ten-sc swatch above.

12. Read a non-working recognition term On the reference sheet, identify sl st as slip stitch, sk as skip, yo as yarn over, RS as right side, WS as wrong side, BLO as back-loop-only and FLO as front-loop-only. These are vocabulary items, not instructions to change the original five-row exercise. When a pattern uses an unfamiliar variation, seek its full directions before attempting it.

13. Expand the finish instruction The words 'finish off' mean secure the current live loop after the final row by cutting a comfortable tail and drawing it fully through that loop; the resulting yarn tail should be woven in if the sample will be kept. It does not mean cutting each row separately. Store the hook and needle safely, with loose strands beyond the reach of children and pets.

14. Re-read the pattern without abbreviations Read your own translation in order: make eleven chains; work ten sc into the ten eligible foundation chains; turn with a ch-1 that is not counted; work ten sc in each of four additional rows; finish and record five rows of ten. If any word or count still seems ambiguous, compare the diagram and the source's declared US glossary before making a new swatch.

Fix, care and preserve

The row count appears to grow. A row-ending total in parentheses is a check, not an extra set of instructions. A turning ch-1 is not a counted sc in this sample. The abbreviation 'st' is one stitch location, even though two strands form its top V.

A repeat statement seems uncertain. Read the full pattern's legend and whether 'repeat 3 times' includes or follows an initial unit. Do not assume repeat punctuation is standardized across every publisher. The original F069 five-row pattern uses only a row range and contains no asterisk repeat within its active stitch instructions.

A pattern changes terminology halfway through. Stop before applying an unfamiliar stitch. Verify the author has not switched from US to UK vocabulary, and look for a missing glossary or correction. Guessing from a near-identical abbreviation can change stitch height and distort later counts.

Read a Basic Crochet Pattern Abbreviation

Original schematic drawing - teaching reference, NOT a yarn-length gauge

DECODER / US TERMINOLOGY

ch	chain
sc	US single crochet
st / sts	stitch / stitches
sl st	slip stitch
rep	repeat
sk	skip
yo	yarn over
RS / WS	right / wrong side
BLO / FLO	back-loop-only / front-loop-only

CH 11 / 1 SKIPPED / 10 ELIGIBLE CHAIN POSITIONS



HOOK END: rightmost open dot is the skipped first chain.

The 10 filled dots are eligible for one sc each (Row 1).

50 mm BAR A

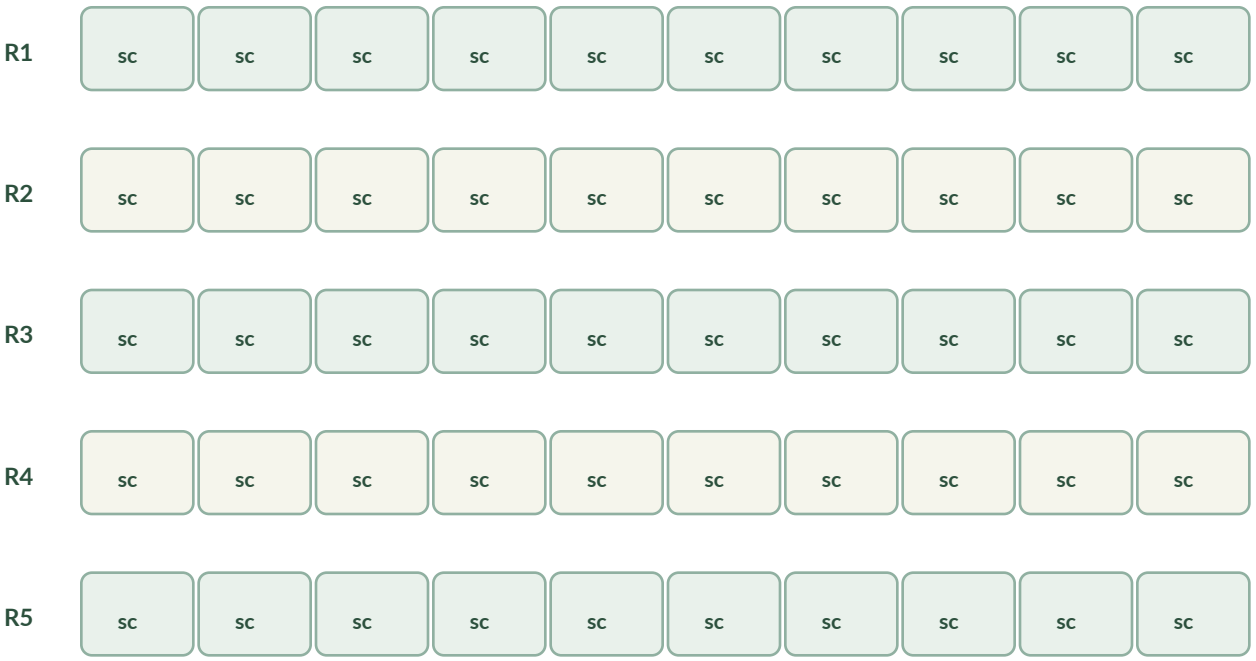
50 mm BAR B

PRINT AT 100% / ACTUAL SIZE; DO NOT FIT. Measure BOTH 50 mm bars.

Read a Basic Crochet Pattern Abbreviation

Original schematic drawing - teaching reference, NOT a yarn-length gauge

ORIGINAL 5-ROW COUNT CHART / 10 SC PER ROW



Foundation: ch 11 -> skip nearest ch -> 10 sc in Row 1.

Rows 2-5: four more rows, 10 sc each; ch 1 is NOT counted.

(10 sc) reports a count. It does not add 10 new stitches.



50 mm BAR A



50 mm BAR B

PRINT AT 100% / ACTUAL SIZE; DO NOT FIT. Measure BOTH 50 mm bars.

Read a Basic Crochet Pattern Abbreviation

Materials and setup

Date / name:

Terms: US crochet

Foundation line in full words:

Row 1 translation:

Rows 2-5 translation:

Unfamiliar terms / where verified:

Count checkpoints

- [ ] Foundation: 11 ch
- [ ] Row 1: 10 sc
- [ ] Rows 2-5: 4 additional rows
- [ ] Final rows: 5

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Row-count and abbreviation log

Write each actual stitch count, then decode unfamiliar terms below.

Row 1: expected 10 sc	Actual count:
Row 2: expected 10 sc	Actual count:
Row 3: expected 10 sc	Actual count:
Row 4: expected 10 sc	Actual count:
Row 5: expected 10 sc	Actual count:

Unfamiliar term / pattern source / correct meaning

Evidence boundary

Original digital instruction, not physically tested or calibrated by the publisher.