Chenille Varsity Letters

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Chenille letters may be sewn onto a variety of objects to make fabulous gifts. Consider adorning sweatshirts, fleece blankets, vests, seat cushions, etc. with these letters. There are many ways these gifts may be prepared. Feel free to use the instructions below as general guidelines, and modify them as you wish. For each separate letter, do the following:

Preparing the Fabric/Hoop (the provided designs fit the __medium__ hoop):

- Tightly hoop (in the medium hoop) ONE LAYER of the desired fabric (cotton only)—right side UP.
- Cut FIVE pieces (approximately 4.5"x 5.5") of the SAME fabric and STACK these five pieces atop the hooped base fabric __WITHOUT__ using any spray adhesives.
- Position the hoop into the embroidery machine and stitch the GRID.ART file. (Use a matching thread.)
- Remove the stitched design both from the machine AND from the hoop. Slide the blade of your Olfa Chenille Cutter (set on Medium) through all the middles OF __ONLY THE TOP FIVE__ FABRIC LAYERS between the stitched diagonal lines. This leaves the sixth (bottom) layer __UNCUT__.

Note: Any number of the above grids can be prepared in advance; i.e., if your project requires ten letters, go ahead and prepare (stitch/slit) ten of these layered grids.

- REHOOP the stitched/slit grid—attempting to "center" the fabric in the hoop. (Exactness is not required.) Make sure the ENTIRE BOTTOM LAYER of fabric is securely hooped. COVER the stitched/cut grid area with a THIN layer of water-soluble stabilizer. (Again, DON'T use spray adhesive. You can HOLD this stabilizer in place as the letter is stitched.)
- RETURN the hoop to the machine, then download and stitch __a desired letter__ atop the prepared/hooped grid. *Note: I reduce the speed one notch when I stitch the letter shapes.*

Applying the Chenille Letters to Your Project:

- Remove everything from the hoop. Trim at the letter's outside edge, leaving a scant quarter inch. *Note: If you would like to have NO CLEAN-UP (trimming outer stray ends, etc.) after machine washing, trim VERY CLOSE and add a satin-stitch border around the edges (instead of straight stitching) when you proceed through the next step. Some folks prefer the "clean" edge, and others (like me) don't mind the extra brushing that results in an interesting frayed outer border.*
- Leaving the water-soluble stabilizer atop the letter, SEW (with regular sewing machine) the letter in the desired position of your project item—exactly atop the letter shape/outline (NOT on the diagonals). Remove the larger areas of the water-soluble stabilizer, and (optional) clip any odd seam angles.
- WASH on a long cycle in your washing machine. Dry in the typical manner.
- Fluff (and/or snip stray threads) as desired. Use the __chenille brush__ as needed, and trim stray threads, especially around the outer edges.

NOTE: These complimentary digitized designs are TIGHT and several go "edge to edge" of the allowed embroidery design width (medium hoop). When they are downloaded in SOME machines, the hoop might "jump" from medium to large oval. Do not fret—simply switch it back to the medium hoop. It WILL fit!

How to Digitize Other Letter Fonts or Creative Shapes:

In case you would like to create additional letters (with other fonts) or other chenille shapes (such as an apple, etc.), here is the basic procedure I recommend: FOR LETTERS: In the Artista software, begin with the font of your choice (many are provided by Bernina, and a large number of fonts may be imported) and pull up one letter at a time on the screen. Enlarge each letter height to 4.86 (and accept the logical width unless it exceeds your hoop size—if so, gently ease it back to the allowed hoop width). Click on the CLOSED STAR, and draw around the EDGE of the letter. (I generally hold down the CONTROL key for straight lines, but that won't work for many diagonal segments.) When finished, delete the original letter in the picture mode. This same procedure may be used for objects (just bring in the shape via the picture mode) or other creative uses. FOR THE CHENILLE GRID, I drew the original grid in CorelDraw, saved it as a bitmap, brought it to the Artista screen through the picture mode, and then used it as a guide to digitize the diagonal lines.

Modify the above in any way you wish. HAVE FUN.