

Royal School of Needlework
Preliminary Box and Box - Diploma
Academic year 2025/26

This module comprises a preliminary fabric covered small box with lid to practise and understand the construction process. This is followed by the design and construction of a larger box which has at least one moving part and a lid. The focus is on accurate construction of the box rather than the embellishment.

1. Preliminary box

Aim

To construct a small, lidded, fabric covered box, including felt padding. This will take at least one class but no more than two. The preliminary box is included in the assessment process.

Materials and equipment

There is no starter kit for this module. Mountboard and felt, in a limited range of colours, can be purchased from the RSN.

Fabric: Either quilting cotton or Liberty lawn work best in two patterns and/or plains or one of each. Small patterns work best. If other cotton is used it should not be too thick or heavy. A fat quarter (approximately 50 x 50 cm (20 x 20 inches) of each.

Felt in matching colour, 20 x 20 cm (8 x 8 inches).

Threads: Matching Gutermann polyester sewing thread.

Needles: Fine curved needle.

Other: Mountboard – preferably acid free 1.5mm thickness. Double sided Sellotape 10mm width. Metal ruler. Set square. Cutting board. Cutting knife (e.g. Stanley). Pins. 2H pencil.

Reasonable adjustments

If there is a reason you may have difficulty completing the module e.g. visual impairment, allergy to some materials, please discuss this with the tutor and the C and D team before starting. Adjustments are possible.

Essential requirements

Size

- 7cm cube/basic box. Metric measurements are more precise. *With thanks to Heather Lewis – Embroidered Boxes – RSN Techniques, Projects and Pure Inspiration series.*

Exterior	Cms	Inches	Interior	Cms	Inches
Lid	7 x 7	2 ³ / ₄ x 2 ³ / ₄	Lid	6.0 x 6.2	2 7/16 x 2 7/16
Front	7 x 6.8	2 ³ / ₄ x 2 ³ / ₄	Front	6.6 x 6.6	2 5/8 x 2 5/8
Back	7 x 6.8	2 ³ / ₄ x 2 ³ / ₄	Back	6.6 x 6.6	2 5/8 x 2 5/8
Sides (left and right)	6.6 x 6.8	2 5/8 x 2 ³ / ₄	Sides (left and right)	6.2 x 6.6	2 7/16 x 2 5/8
Base	6.6 x 6.6	2 5/8 x 2 5/8	Base	6.2 x 6.2	2 7/16 x 2 7/16

2. **Box**

Aim

To design and construct a fabric covered box with a lid and one moving part. Padding should be used to enhance the box, while embellishment should be limited. The focus is on accurate and sound construction.

Discuss ideas for this module with the tutor at an early stage. RSN tutors have considerable experience in working this technique and in teaching it. Please listen to their advice.

Materials and equipment

There is no starter kit for this module. Mountboard and felt, in a limited range of colours, can be purchased from the RSN.

Fabric: Medium weight fabrics such as quilting cotton, Liberty lawn or silk dupion. "Powerloom" silk dupion has fewer slubs. Fabrics can be mixed.

Padding: Felt in matching colour(s). Wadding may also be used.

Threads: Matching Gutermann polyester sewing thread.

Needles: Fine curved needle.

Other: Mountboard – preferably acid free 1.5mm thickness. Other thicknesses can be used depending on the design.

Thinner corrugated card, recycled boxes, can be used for the mock-up.

Double sided Sellotape 10mm width. Metal ruler. Set square. Cutting board. Cutting knife (e.g. Stanley). Pins. 2H pencil.

Beads, threads, ribbons etc. for embellishment.

Fittings such as feet, handles, fine chains or clasps.

Essential requirements

Construction

- It is important to make a mock-up of the box. Constructing the proposed box in thin corrugated card can help explore the practicality of ideas and work out how panels fit together at corners.
- No specific size or shape is required but avoid creating something too large.
- For this module, all pieces should have **straight edges** and **90-degree corners**.
- Part of the box is to be padded.

Components

- The box must have a lid of any construction style i.e. hinged, or overlapping lift off, or inset lift off.
- There should also be at least **one** moving or removable part e.g. a door, a drawer or a tray.

Fabrics and stitching

- All panels will be fabric covered, with the fabric grain running parallel to one edge, unless specifically required by design.
- Choose fabrics carefully; select those that will completely cover the card. Avoid anything too thick, that will add bulk at the joints, or anything too thin or open weave that may risk the corners of the card sticking out.
- Slip stitches should be small, neat and concealed.
- A small amount of surface embellishment should be worked, in keeping with the overall design of the box.

Purchased fittings such as feet, handles, fine chains or clasps can be used where they are appropriate for the box concept.

Getting started – before class

It is not necessary to arrive at the first class with a finalised design, but you should come with some ideas. For examples of work by other C and D students look at the C and D gallery on the website. <https://royal-needlework.org.uk/courses/certificate-diploma/canddgallery/>.

Getting started – in class

Preparatory work

Preparation prior to construction and stitching is an important part of the learning process. Your tutor will give guidance on how to prepare the following:

- Preliminary sketches of the box design (open & closed), showing locations of embellishments and padding.
- A list identifying all the pieces and their sizes.
- An order of work.
- A mock-up version of the main box is essential preparation.

Initial plans can be amended as the embroidery progresses. If you choose to have your work formally assessed, you should submit the preparatory work listed above together with any source inspiration, which will form part of the assessment.

Things to think about when planning the work

- Remember the focus is on accurate construction. Complete the small box first. Then the mock-up of the larger box. This will inform your design decisions.
- Think about functionality. How will the box be used?
- Consider whether padding will be on the inside, outside or both.
- Choose fabrics that will enhance the design.
- Consider pattern size and potential for pattern matching when choosing fabric.
- Avoid excessive embellishment.

Intellectual property

The final design must be original to you. Use of your own visual media (photographs, drawings) is encouraged. Referencing and interpreting other visual media is acceptable. Copying is not. The intellectual property of others must be respected.

Additional information

Additional information can be downloaded from the website.

- Resources - Websites, Books, Suppliers for C&D