Printing and Using Placement Templates

Products Used

Extra Scoops (Applique) (Sku: EAP16890-1)

When you're stitching an embroidery design, it can be useful to have a paper template of the design to help plan exactly where the embroidery will go. You'll see me use them quite a bit in our tutorials, but first you need to know how to get them, and how exactly to use them to get the placement you want.

There are a couple of ways of getting your templates. If you have embroidery software on your computer, you can open the design in the embroidery software and print it at full size. Or, if you don't have embroidery software, you can cut a piece of paper to the approximate size and shape of the design, to help with placement. We'll show you both approaches.

Steps To Complete

PRINTING A TEMPLATE WITH EMBROIDERY SOFTWARE

So, how to you get a template to print? Well, if you have an embroidery software program on your computer, you may be able to print the design to use as a template for placement.

For instance, in Embird in Editor mode, I'm opening this ice cream cone design, then choosing File --> Print Template. It then offers me a few options, which I click through as desired, and print the thing. Make sure you're printing it at full size!

Shopping around for embroidery software? Embird has a free trial, for what it's worth, and your embroidery machine's manufacturer may offer software too. In most software you should simply be able to open a design and then find the "print template" command, or something similar.
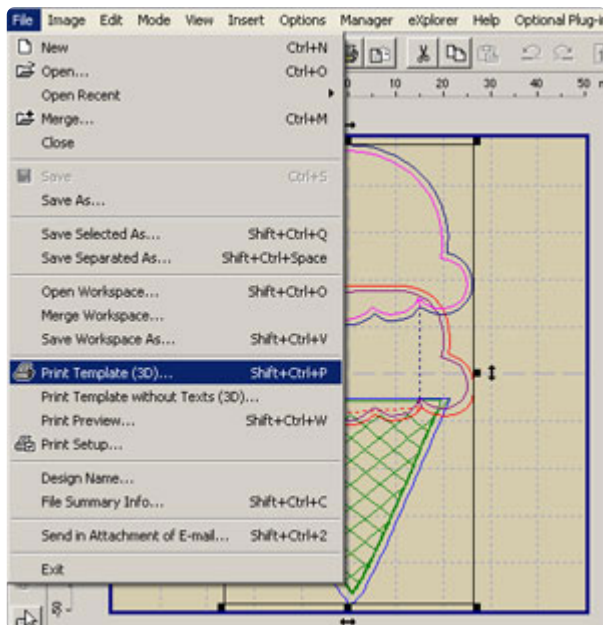
Templates are different than dielines. Dielines are guidelines for cutting out applique shapes as part of a design, and usually appear as part of your applique zip file, with a "dl" at the end of the filename. These are meant to help you cut out fabric shapes, not so much to help you lay out a design.

Ta da! A printed template of the design.

Cut out the grid part. This is your template; you can use it to help plan exactly where your embroidery design will go. More on that in a bit.

DRAWING YOUR OWN TEMPLATE

No embroidery software? You can still make a template of the design, sort of. Grab a ruler and pencil and paper.

Take a look at the dimensions of your design, as listed on the page for that product. This ice cream cone is 2.08" wide by 3.81" high, so sketch out an ice cream cone-ish shape that's just over 2" wide and just under 4" high.

While you're at it, use that ruler to mark the center point of the design, and perpendicular horizontal and vertical lines through it. This will mark the center of your design, and is the most useful part of your template.

When you're done, cut out your template.

USING PLACEMENT TEMPLATES

Now, there are a couple of ways you can use the markings on your template with the markings on your hoop. For general placement, simply hoop up your fabric so the four markings on your hoop line up with the crosshairs on your design, like so. Eyeballing it will work in most cases.
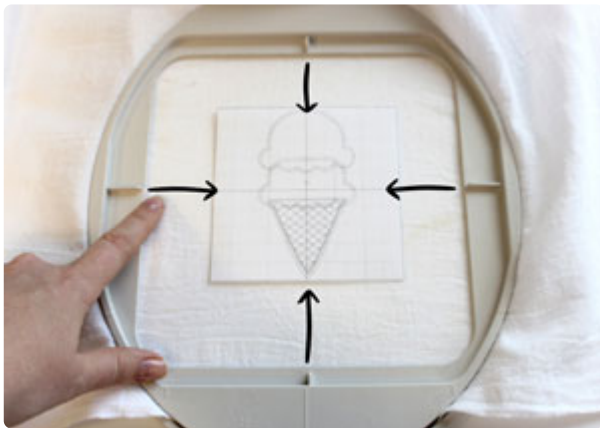

For times when you need exact placement, you can mark the crosshairs of your design right onto your fabric with a disappearing ink pen, and then hoop it exactly.

There are also times when you can use your template to help space a design that's not perfectly centered in your hoop. For instance, I hooped the bottom of this tea towel, but if I centered my design, it would start too far up. So using the top and bottom dielines, I kept my design centered on the vertical axis, and made sure the horizontal line stayed parallel with the horizontal axis.

When hooping, there are two ways of centering a design on a machine. If, for instance, you are stitching something that is not centered in your hoop, you're still going to want to be able to tell the machine to stitch it right where you've placed your template. This will require moving your design in the hoop. On some machines, this will move the whole hoop, and you'll be able to tell your design is ready when the needle is over the center of your template crosshair. Other times, the needle won't move until you hit start, so you'll have to "trace" your design with your machine to see if it matches the template.

Tip from da Bunny
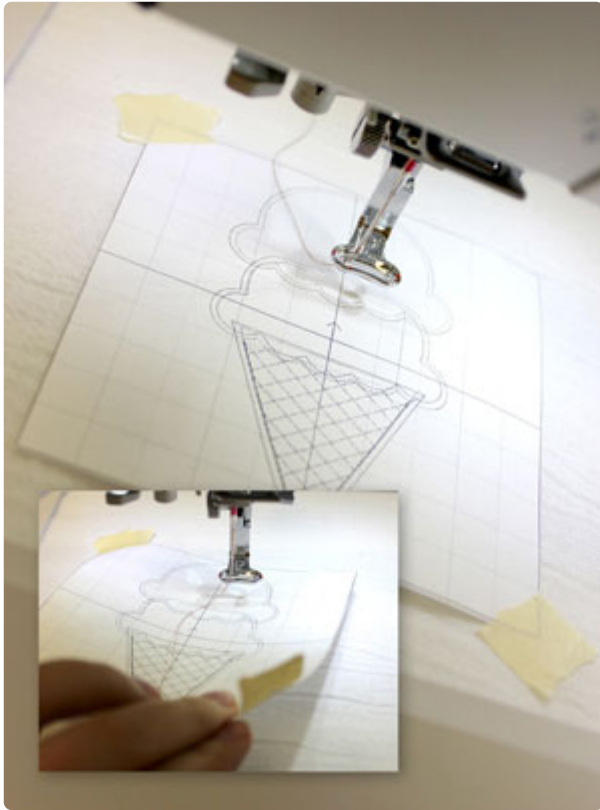
You can see here my needle isn't centered over my template, but the design itself is, which I checked by telling my machine to trace the edges of the design.

Once you're sure your machine knows exactly where to stitch your design, remove your template and start stitching!

Yes, that's a stated step. You have no idea how many times I've almost started my machine with my template still in place.
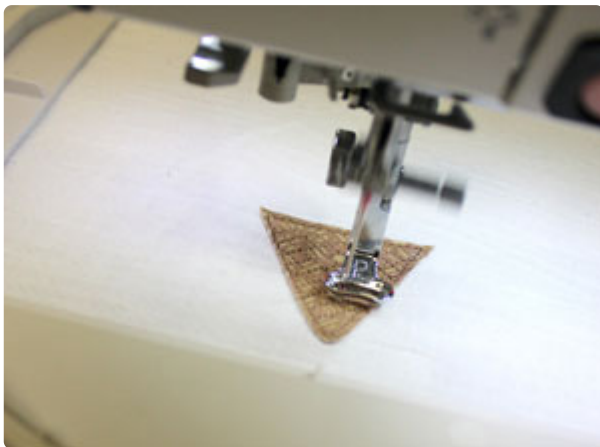

Your design should stitch exactly where you want it, and your template crosshairs and your hoop markings will make sure it's perfectly oriented on your fabric.

Templates are useful for more than just simple design placement. Take this ice cream cone design, for instance. It actually comes with an extra "scoop" file included, which you can use to add extra scoops to your regular two-scoop ice cream cone design!

Printing a template of this extra scoop will help you place it exactly where you want it to go.
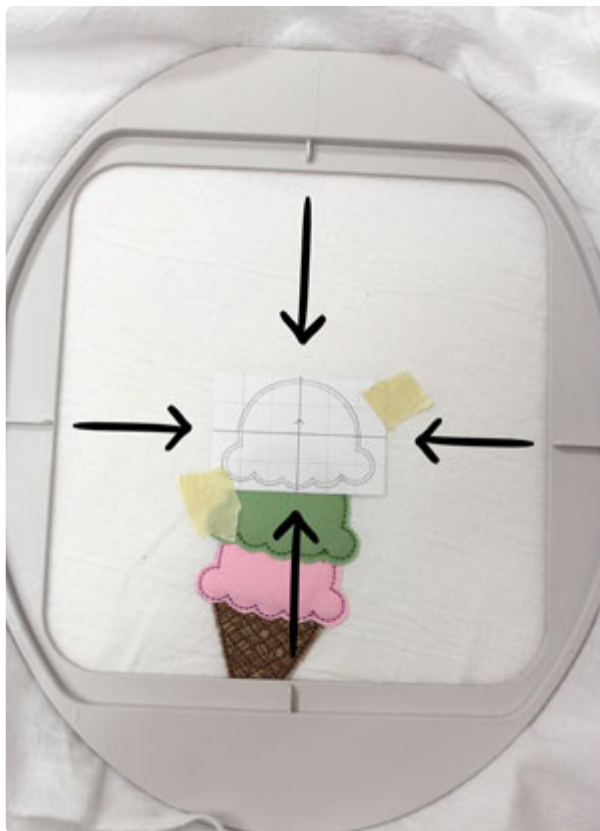
Once I had this template taped exactly where I wanted it, I hooped it so the template crosshairs lined up with your hoop markings. In this instance, I can hoop my design exactly in the center, which is the easiest way to get your placement perfect.

Remember, you can always draw your crosshairs on your fabric with an air-erase pen if you want to make extra sure you have it hooped right.

Place your hooped design under your machine, and make sure your needle is under the crosshairs, or your trace shows that your design is placed correctly.

Start stitching! Now I can add extra ice cream scoops with precision.

And add a little...

Or a lot!

Using templates to help me guide my design placement, I know it will turn out just where I want it to each time. So now you know how easy it is to print or make templates, and just how useful they can be!

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