

Ombre Tote

Warm weather is arriving, and it's the perfect time to grab a tote, fill it with all the things you need on the go for a sunny day, and set off on an adventure. A plain old tote won't cut it though, we need something worthy of the beach! Instead of making everything from scratch, this project is whipped up easily using a ready-made bag. After using a couple quick tricks and collaging on some embroidery designs, you won't recognize it from the plain old tote you started with.



Supplies

So, to make your fun new nautical tote, you'll need:

A blank tote bag (I got mine for a few bucks at Michaels)

Spray fabric paint

Awesome

[Nauticus embroidery designs](#)

Scissors and pins

Seam ripper

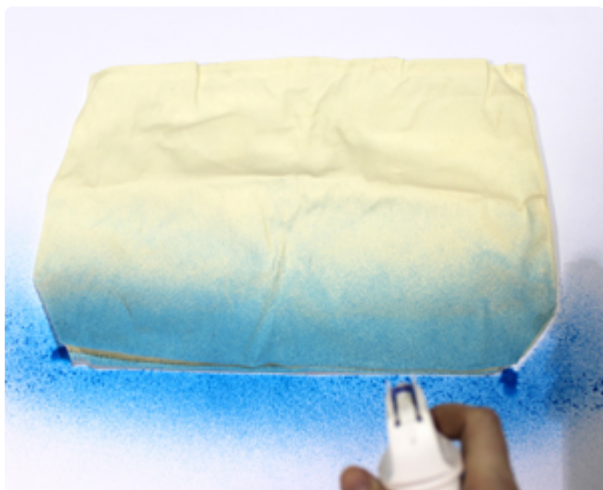
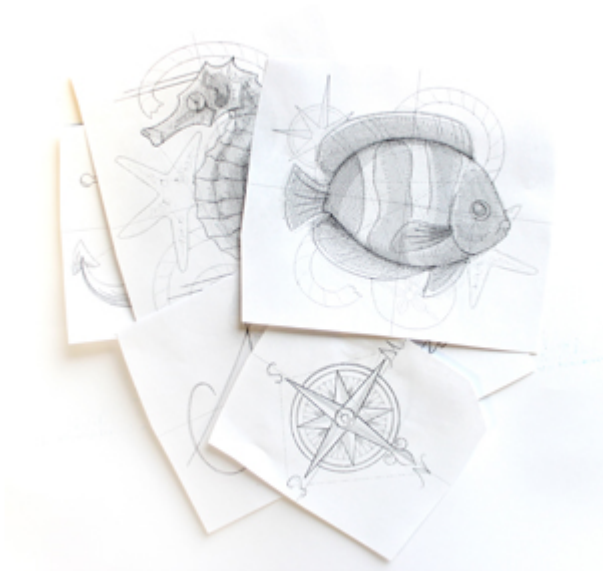
Cutaway stabilizer

Steps To Complete

It also helps a lot to have printed templates of all the designs you're going to use. [Here's how to print templates for placement.](#)

Designs like these are meant to be layered, but it helps to know how they will all lay out beforehand. Templates will be your best tool!

For this bag, I'm using the 5"x7" [seahorse](#), [fish](#) and [Set Sail](#) designs, and the 4"x4" versions of the [compass rose](#) and [anchor](#) accents (all of which are included in the [5"x7" pack](#)).



Let's start by making our bag a little more ocean-inspired. Lightly spray the bottom of your bag with a couple of light coatings of blue fabric spray, fading upwards.



Let your tote dry before you move on to the next step. It should be noted that once my paint dried, I also went over this bag with a nice hot iron. It's pretty darn wrinkly.



So, in order to make embroidering on our tote as easy as possible, we're going to open up the side seams to make hooping it a cinch.

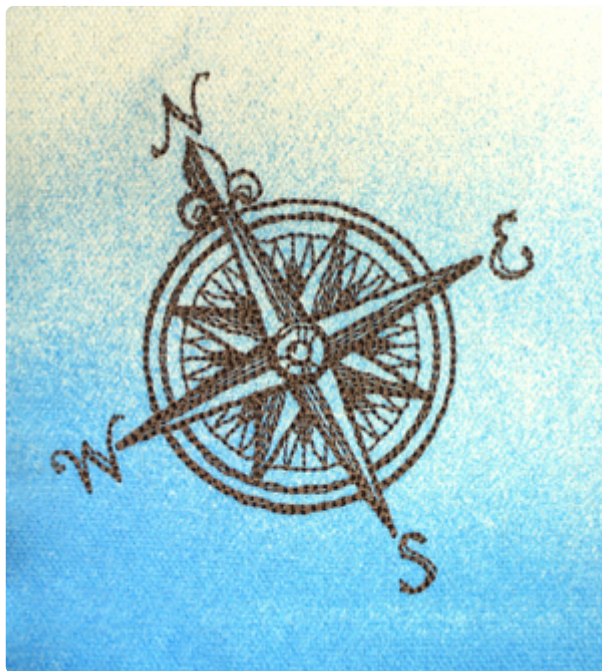
You'll find especially on these craft tote bags, opening up the seams is super easy. In fact, this baby will probably be much sturdier when you sew it back together.

You only need to rip down to where the box corners of your seam start at the bottom of your bag. That will give you enough flexibility with hooping.



Once your seams are open, you can start laying out where you want your designs to go. You can see here how the templates help. This will also help you work out the order you want to stitch things in.

I put my accents to the back, so they'll stitch first. Then the big colorful animals will stitch, with the "Set Sail" design finishing it off on top.



I started by stitching my first design, the little 4"x4" compass rose.



Next, I layered one of the more colorful feature designs on top. I let the designs overlap slightly, to give it an intentional layered look. Once you get the hang of this, you'll realize things don't have to be perfect to look good!



I worked some similar magic on the right side, stitching the anchor and then the seahorse on top, using the templates to get good placement each time. Don't be afraid to reevaluate your placement as you go along.

Finally, I got my last design ready to stitch by placing my template.



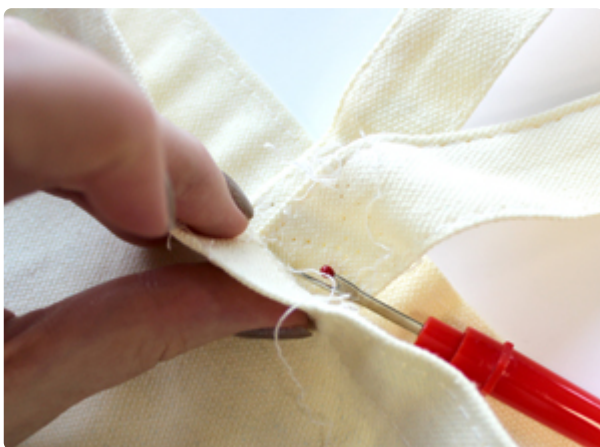
All the designs are done! How lovely and colorful they look on our once plain tote bag!



Now let's put those seams back together. Turn your bag inside out, pin the sides together, and sew the sides shut again. I found after I put my bag together it was a lot stronger than it had been in the first place!



So, technically we could be done here, but there's one more easy trick that will really transform this tote into a nautical wonder...



Use your trusty seam ripper to remove those boring old handles from both sides.



Then, below where the handles once were, poke a hole and put a new gold grommet through. Use your grommeter to clam the two sides together for a nice secure new grip. Do this in all the places the handles once were, four times total.



Then take your nautical “rope” and thread it through the new holes. Tie a nice sturdy knot on the inside of the bag, so the rope can’t go back through the grommet. Do this on both sides, creating a nice seafaring looking rope handle.



Done!

Your plain old tote has been transformed into a bright and bold nautical themed bag ready for the beach or any sunshine adventures.



It's now stronger, brighter, more chic than before. And it took almost no sewing at all! Just a few simple tricks and some stunning designs. Now you're ready for whatever those sunny days have in store.