This plait or braid is worked using the technique known as Fill-the-Gap which is used in the country craft of straw plaiting.

The eleven sided card holds the threads in the correct position and enables an even tension to be maintained.

Instructions are given for a second plait and grids are provided to help you design your own plaits.

FILL-GAP BRAID

## *with 10 strands*

To make your plait

The card should be held in the left hand, with the fingers underneath and the first two either side of the knot. The thumb should be on top and held lightly over the centre hole.

With the gap at the 4-5 o'clock position as in fig. 1, ease the fourth thread (12 o'clock position) out of its notch and, jumping over three threads, place it in the notch in the gap, lifting your thumb momentarily as the thread is repositioned.
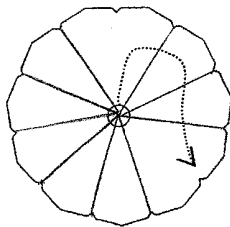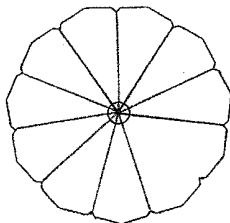

1

Rotate the card clockwise four positions until the new gap is at the 4-5 o'clock position, as in 3.
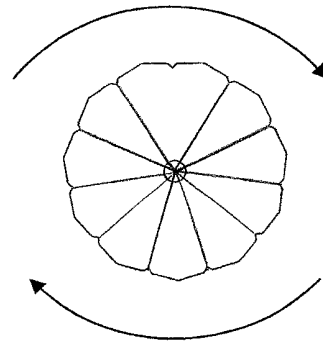
2

Repeat moving a thread and rotating the card until the plait is the required length. Remove plait from the card and whip the end or simply tie a knot to finish it off.

Tension
It is important to keep an even tension. A good indication is if the crossing point of the threads is always central to the hole. If you are using ribbon yarn it is better to keep it flat rather than twisted.

If you require a softer, looser plait, this may be achieved by hanging a weight from the knot. The weight could take the form of nuts or washers or a film canister containing coins.

3

Another plait

The first plait was created by taking the fourth thread from the gap and jumping over three threads into the gap. It is also possible to produce a plait by taking the third thread and jumping over two threads.
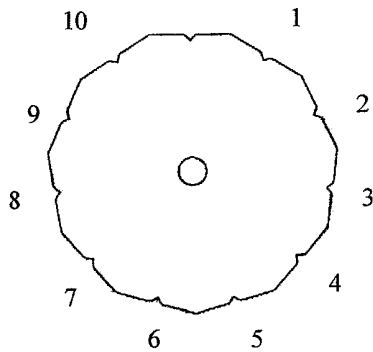
It is a bit more tricky to maintain a good even tension because threads are not moved across the card but merely skirt round it. If you are not careful, the crossing points creep further and further from the centre. I have found it useful to move the thread straight across the card and trap it with my left thumb before positioning it in the gap. Once a rhythm is attained good tension comes also.

A new pattern is produced by jumping over two threads and more designs in colour can be devised.

Designing Plaits

The numbers 1-10 represent the starting positions of the threads. If it were possible to open out the plait, the patterns produced would be as shown on the grids provided.

Making new plaits

Cut ten threads in your chosen colours. Knot the threads together. Put the knot through the centre of the card and spread out the threads, putting one each in the notches 1-10 to achieve the required pattern.

As a rough guide, 60cm threads should produce about 25cm of plait. The length of threads needed varies with their thickness. It is important to start with sufficient length as it is not possible to add on extra tidily.

JUMP OVER 3

The grid columns (read top to bottom):

Col 1	Col 2	Col 3	Col 4	Col 5	Col 6	Col 7	Col 8	Col 9	Col 10
2	5	4	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
6	9	8	3	2	1	4	10	9	10
10	2	1	7	6	5	10	3	8	3
3	6	5	4	10	9	3	2	1	7
7	10	9	8	3	2	7	6	5	4
4	3	2	1	7	6	4	10	9	8
8	7	6	5	4	10	8	3	2	1
1	4	10	9	8	3	1	7	6	5
5	8	3	2	1	7	5	4	10	9
9	1	7	6	5	4	9	8	3	2
2	5	4	10	9	8	2	1	7	6
6	9	8	3	2	1	6	10	9	10
10		1	7	6	5			2	3
3				9	9				7
									4
									8

JUMP OVER 2

The grid columns (read top to bottom):

Col 1	Col 2	Col 3	Col 4	Col 5	Col 6	Col 7	Col 8	Col 9	Col 10
1	3	10	9	8	7	9	5	4	6
4	6	2	1	10	10	8	7	9	2
7	9	5	4	3	2	1	10	1	5
10	1	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	8
2	4	3	10	9	8	7	6	4	3
5	7	6	2	1	10	9	8	7	6
8	10	9	5	4	3	2	1	10	9
3	2	1	8	7	6	5	4	2	1
6	5	4	3	10	9	8	7	5	4
9	8	7	6	2	1	10	9	8	7
1	3	10	9	5	4	3	2	1	10
4	6	2	1	8	7	6	5	4	2
7	9	5	4	3	6	9	8	7	5
				6	2		3		8