Etsy PDF Patterns - Problem Solving & Protocol

In today's sewing world, PDF patterns are becoming more and more common. Many designers, such as myself, only offer PDF patterns. The expense of offering paper patterns is cost prohibitive for small businesses.

Some of the bonuses of PDF patterns is the instant availability to download and begin sewing. It also is such a benefit to overseas buyers as mailing paper patterns is extremely expensive.

As a seasoned seamstress, I had to become familiar with PDF patterns in order to sell them. With selling comes the challenges of other seasoned seamstresses buying the PDF patterns and may struggle with downloads and some of the technical considerations for these patterns. I hope that this will demystify PDF patterns to those that are new to them.

As someone that sells PDF patterns, I can attest to the fact that 95+% of the messages I get from buyers that experience problems are not problems with the download files but rather the download process and requirements. I will walk you through the process of buying, downloading & printing the patterns.

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Buying Your PDF Pattern

When you go to Etsy to shop, the **first** thing that you want to do is to sign in to your account. If you don't have an account, create one!!! You want to make **ALL** purchases while signed in to your account, especially any downloadable purchases (embroidery files, PDF patterns, etc.).

When you make a purchase as a guest, it does go through, however, the **ONLY** option for downloading the files are with the link that **ETSY** sends. If you lose this link, you cannot download your pattern. Sellers don't send these links and therefore, they cannot "resend" the link if it is lost. While this is stated in every one of my listings, I constantly get messages from buyers asking me to resend the link to their purchase. It's frustrating for both buyer & sellers to have this request and it is impossible for the seller to fulfill.

The benefit of having an account and purchasing *while signed in to your account* is that the download is immediately available and there is NO limit to how many times you can download the pattern files. So, should your computer crash and you lose all of your data, you can always go back and download these files again. Or, if you are out of town, they are still available to download wherever you are. The pattern files should be downloaded to a computer or laptop in order to print correctly, but the instructions can be downloaded to a tablet or phone - this saves printing expense and allows you to zoom in on the pictures to get a larger view of the details when needed.

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When making your purchase, observe the thumbnail and the title of the item. Notice in the picture to the right that both the pattern picture description indicates that it is a PDF pattern and below the price, Etsy also adds an icon that indicates that it is a digital download.

If you don't want a PDF file/digital download, then don't purchase a PDF pattern. Sellers try and make this as obvious as possible, but buyers still make the mistake of buying a PDF pattern thinking it is a physical pattern that will be mailed. Reading the pattern cover as well as the description would resolve this problem.

BETSY Vintage Reproduction PDF Smocked Dres...
★★★★★ (846)
$14.00
☁ Digital Download

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Carefully **READ** the description!!! Sellers write up the description of the item with as much information as possible to ensure that a buyer will know exactly what they are receiving. Information such as sewing level of the seamstress, unusual supplies needed (such as pleaters or a pleating service), skills needed (knowledge of how to smock and/or embroider, etc.) are usually included in the description. Whether a smocking design is included or not is typically included in the description. Reading the description will allow you to avoid the pitfall of making a purchase that may be beyond your skill set or making a purchase that requires skills or supplies that you may not have available to you.

The description will also indicate what files are included and what type of pattern you are purchasing. Some patterns are **LAYERED** while other patterns are either **nested**. Some patterns have all the pieces in a single PDF file to be printed. Some patterns include an A0 file. My newer patterns are layered while older ones are not.

A layered pattern allows you to print individual sizes - no tracing needed! A nested pattern prints all sizes stacked on top of each other and requires that you trace out the size you wish to make. An A0 file is a large format pattern that can be printed at a print shop - no taping pages together. Pay attention to what type of pattern you are purchasing so that you won't be disappointed.
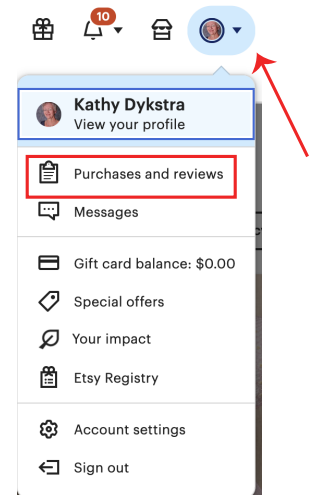
Once you've read the description and confirmed that the pattern is suitable for your skill set and you have any unusual supplies that might be needed, then make your purchase!

After you have made your purchase, Etsy sends an email with a download link. **I** don't send this link! However, you can access the files immediately via your account. This is always the method that I recommend for downloading the files.
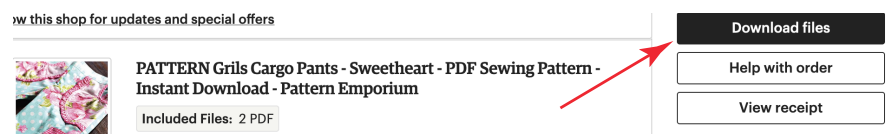
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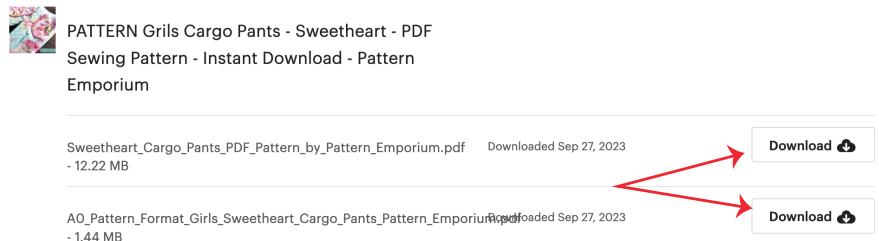You've made your purchase and now you want to download your pattern files.

FIRST - you want to be on a desktop or laptop computer in order to download the files, **NOT** on a phone or tablet. If you made your purchase on your phone, then go to your computer and sign in to your Etsy account. I don't recommend using the app for this. Once signed in to your account, go to your account, which is the icon in the top right corner (see red arrow). When you click on your profile icon, a drop down menu will appear. In that menu will be your purchases (see red box). Click on that box and everything that you've ever purchased on Etsy will be there.

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PATTERN Grils Cargo Pants - Sweetheart - PDF Sewing Pattern - Instant Download - Pattern Emporium

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A0_Pattern_Format_Girls_Sweetheart_Cargo_Pants_Pattern_Emporium.pdf - 1.44 MB | Downloaded Sep 27, 2023 | **Download**

Your downloads will download to the file that you have set up on your computer. My computer has a "download" area where all downloads go. I can then move it to another folder. I like to have my patterns in a file that is exclusively for sewing patterns. In that folder I have the patterns organized in sub-folders - each designer that I buy from has their own sub-folder. However, you can set yours up however you wish.

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Once the pattern files have been downloaded, they are ready for you to print. In order to print the files correctly, the PDF file should be opened in Adobe Reader, **NOT** Adobe Preview. Sometimes when you download a PDF file, it will automatically open in Adobe Preview. Close that file, find the file where you have saved it and then open it up in Adobe Reader. If you don't have Adobe Reader, this is a free download available from Adobe. They regularly update Adobe Reader, so you want to make sure that you have the latest version (again, free!).
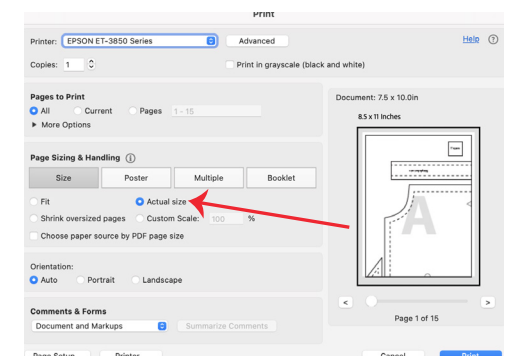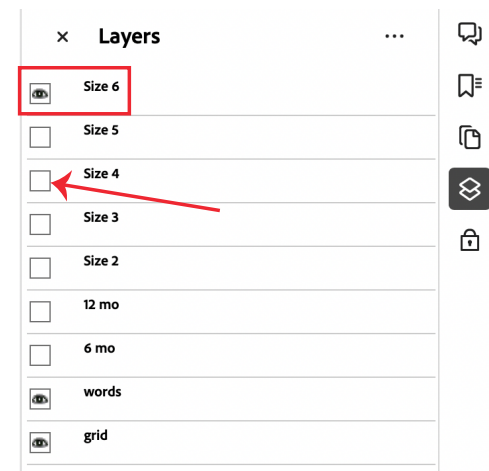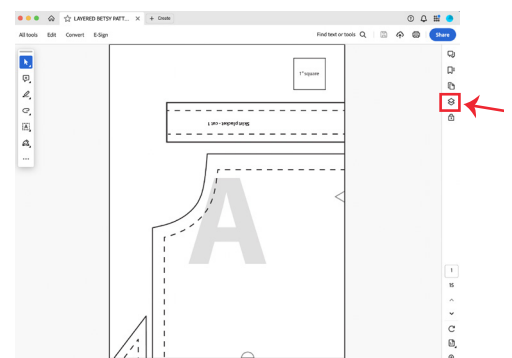
If you have a LAYERED pattern, when you open the file in Adobe Reader, the page will have lots of information on it. The layers are on the upper right hand side of the page (see red arrow and box). The "layers" is the icon that looks like a stack of papers.

When you click on that icon, the layers panel will open. From this panel you can select and deselect layers.

In the example to the right, the size 6 layer is selected. If you wanted to print a size 4, you would click on the empty box next to the Size 4 and the eyeball will appear there, indicating that the size 4 pattern is visible. You would then click on the eyeball on the size 6 to deselect it, which makes the pattern pieces for the size 6 become invisible.
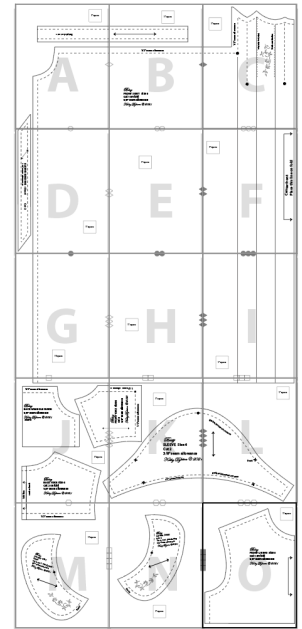
If all of the boxes have eyeballs showing, that indicates that all sizes are visible and printing it with all sizes visible will be a visual mess and nearly impossible to sort out the size that you want. Be sure and deselect the extra sizes so that only the size desired shows!

Once the correct layer is selected, then you are ready to print the pattern. When you hit the "print" button, a dialog box will appear. Make sure that you have "actual size" selected. This will ensure that the pattern prints correctly. You will not get this dialog box with a phone or tablet, so the patterns will not always print accurately, which is why you want to print from a computer or laptop.

After printing the pattern, verify that it printed correctly by checking the 1" box on each page. If all is well, it is ready to assemble the pages. I generally will stack 5 pages on top of each other and then trim the right hand side and the bottom of the pattern on the outer box/lines indicated on the page. That way it is easy to lay one page on top of the other, match up the symbols and tape the pages together. The pattern will have a photo of how the pages should be assembled.

Buyer Etiquette

As a seller, I'm always prepared to help out a buyer and answer questions as well as problem solve for them as I'm able. That said, I'm not a technology person, I'm a pattern designer so my technology advice is very limited. Most of the time I have to use google to help me find an answer to most problems/questions asked. However, as I mentioned earlier, most of the problems/questions that I get come from first time PDF buyers since this may be a new experience for them.

There are plenty of YouTube tutorials on how to down load PDF patterns. As Adobe makes updates, some of these tutorials will have "old" information. For example, up until recently, the "layers" panel could be found on the left hand side of the Adobe Reader page. With the latest update (this is Feb. 2024 information), the layers panel has moved over to the right hand side of the page.

Please be considerate of the sellers time and technology expertise (or lack of it) and do some research before messaging the seller about your technology issues (downloads included). It is extremely rare that the PDF file has a problem, though sometimes they will become corrupted in the download process. In that case you can delete the corrupted file and download the file again. Many seamstresses are not familiar with technology skills needed to effectively use PDF patterns and can become very frustrated. Unfortunately, these problems cannot be solved by the seller. If you do need to message with a problem and you want technology help, please include all necessary information - are you on a computer, phone or tablet, are you attempting to download from the Etsy email or your account, are you using Adobe Reader, are you on the Etsy App, etc. To send a seller a message saying "I cannot download my pattern" delays getting an answer to your question, because the seller will need to ask you for additional information to help you out.

FEEDBACK

Sellers always appreciate it when a buyer takes time to post feedback, though it isn't required. Including pictures is even better! Sharing your "make" on social media is always welcome!

If there is a reason that you don't feel that you can leave a 5 star feedback, sellers ALWAYS appreciate it if you would contact them first to find out what they could do to make your experience better so that you could confidently and honestly be able to leave them a 5-star review.

Why a 5-star rather than a 4-star? On the Etsy platform, though there are 1 - 5 stars available for you to select, from the Etsy Platform perspective, anything less than a 5-star review is a fail. So, 1 - 4 stars is a fail and 5 star is a pass. Why does this matter? Sellers work HARD to create quality patterns and secure a "Star Seller" status. Receiving 1 - 4 star reviews are all considered fails as it pertains to a star seller status. I have had many reviews with less than 5 stars and they are due to user error. Either the buyer had problems with the download, which sellers can not control or because the buyer felt that there were too many pages to print, or because they didn't know how to use a layered pattern. I don't mind fewer stars if the buyer genuinely felt that my pattern or instructions fell short or that they had difficulty understanding the instructions. However, to get fewer stars due to user error is unfortunate and negatively impacts my presence on Etsy.

I go out of my way to be helpful to buyers and I'm sure that most other sellers do as well. If you feel as though you may have had a unique and unsatisfactory experience, check the total volume of feedback for a seller and the ratings of other buyers on the issue you experienced. Etsy manages the platform we sell on and the download process. Sellers should not be penalized for services they don't control and have spent many hours finding the best service to meet their selling needs. Your sellers will appreciate honest reviews of the patterns and instructions!

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I hope that these instructions will prove to be helpful to those that are new to using PDF patterns! My goal is to make your experience a good one!