

Al-Sadu weaving: Bookmark Loom Craft

Create your own woven bookmark while learning how patterns, color, and storytelling come together through a weaving technique inspired by traditional Al-Sadu practices.

Color Themes: Red, Yellow, White, Beige, Black, Brown or Green (Min 2 or 3)

Materials:

- Printout/Template
- Medium Thick Yarn in multiple colors
- Colored pencils
- Cardboard to the size of template
- Scissors
- Glue stick/White Glue
- Masking Tape
- Paddle Stick/ruler
- Optional: Prestick, Clipboard (Stiff book with foldback clips or table surface)

What is a Loom?

A loom is a tool used to weave cloth and patterns.

- The vertical threads are called warp threads
- The yarn carried across the loom is called the weft
- The weft is passed using a shuttle, and it locks each row in place

Each completed row is called a “pick”

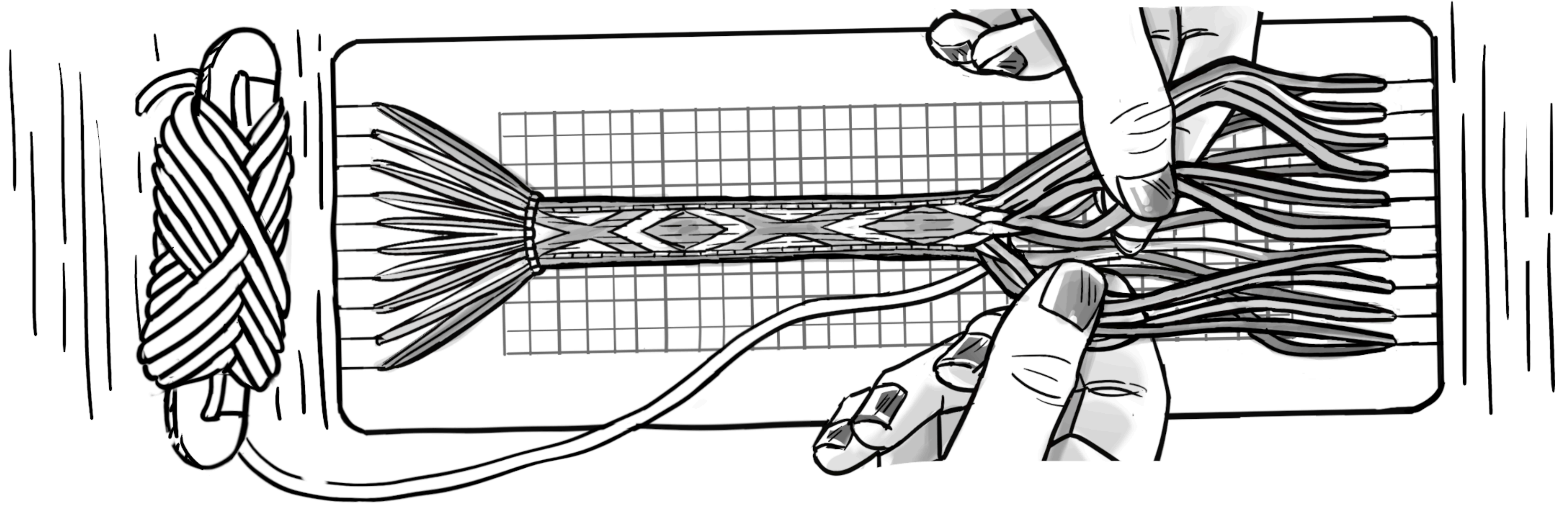
Preparing Your Workspace for Cardboard:

Gather all materials and work on a clean, flat surface with enough space to move your tools and yarn comfortably.

Building Your Cardboard Tools:

- Loom
 - Cut out the loom template
 - Glue it onto cardboard
 - Cut it out carefully
 - Ensure the cardboard grain runs vertically
 - Cut evenly spaced notches at the top and bottom
- Shuttle and Divider
 - Cut and glue templates onto cardboard
 - Cut them out cleanly

The shuttle carries the weft yarn and the divider helps separate and organise thread pairs.



History of Al-Sadu

Al-Sadu means “horizontal weaving” in Arabic.

It comes from the Bedouin people of the Arabian Peninsula.

Bedouin women used wool and hair from camels, goats, and sheep to weave strong textiles for tents, saddles, and daily life in the desert.

They often used natural dyes from plants to add colour.

Al-Sadu is woven in horizontal rows, building patterns step by step.

These patterns could have meaning and were passed down through generations, along with the skills to make them.

It is both a practical craft and a way of keeping Bedouin culture and stories alive.

Planning Your Pattern: Al-Sadu Design guide

Use the Pattern Grid and Pattern Chart to design your bookmark patterns before threading (thread set up) the Loom.

- Each square represents one row (pick)
- Work from the bottom upwards
- Colour in your design using colored pencils

Think of your design as a story made from symbols and colors.

- Traditional Al-Sadu designs often use symmetry, but you can:
 - Follow a pattern
 - Combine symbols
 - Or create your own unique design

Choosing Your Colours to Thread the Loom

Each vertical position on your loom holds two threads (a pair). These pairs act like a color switch, allowing you to choose which color shows in each row.

Before threading:

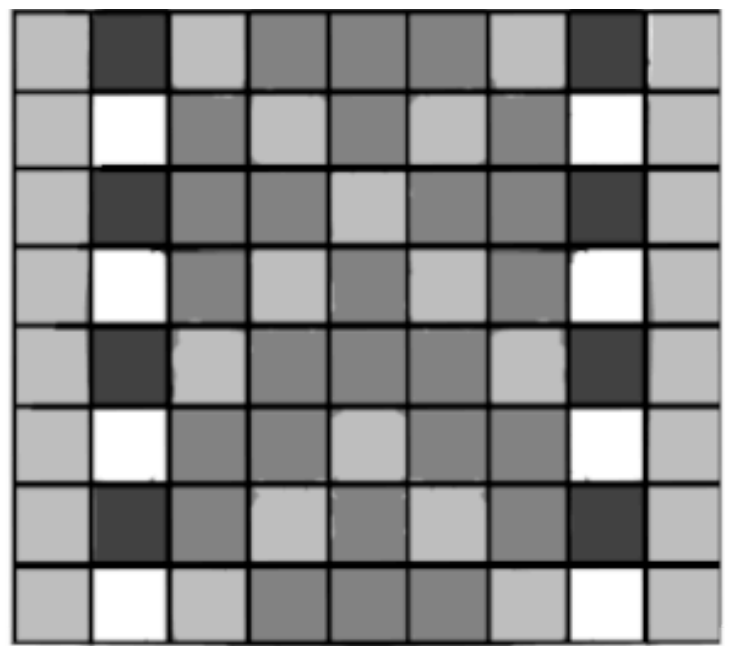
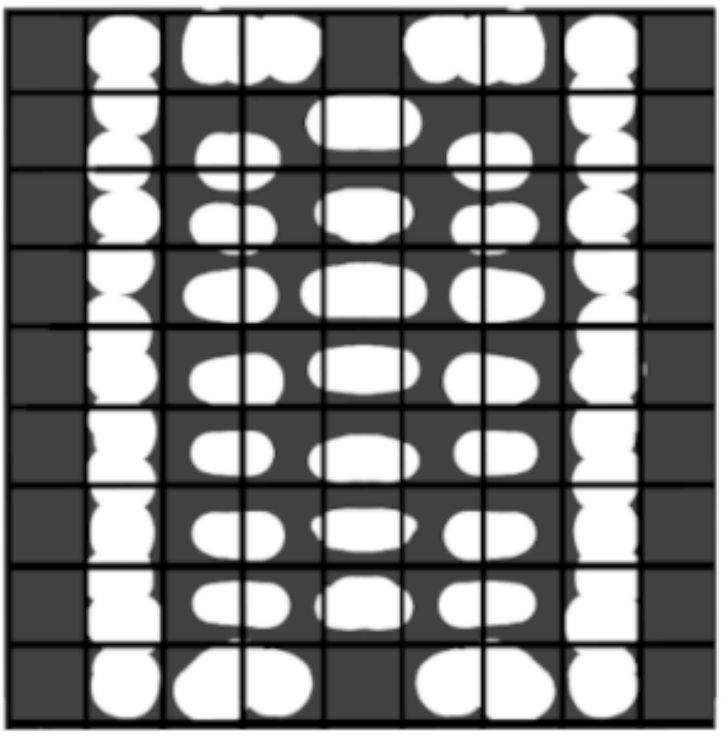
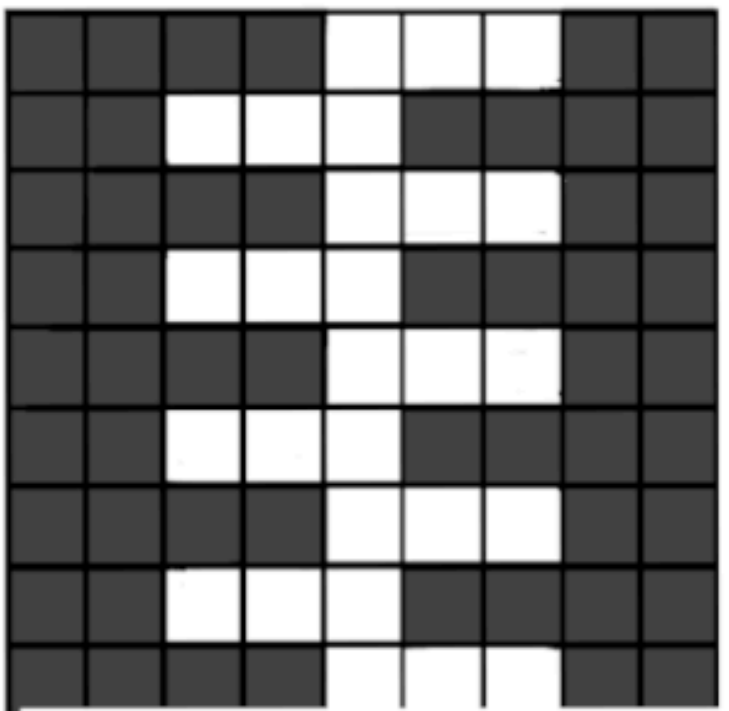
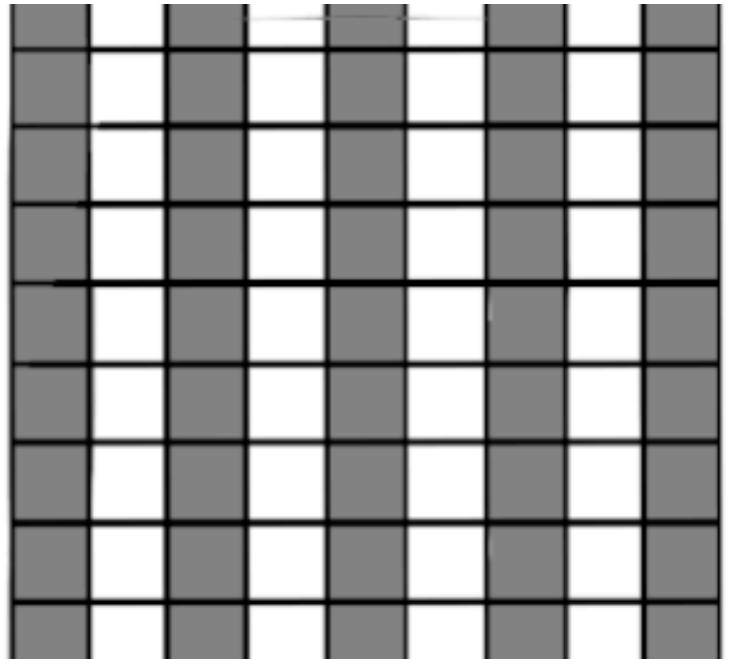
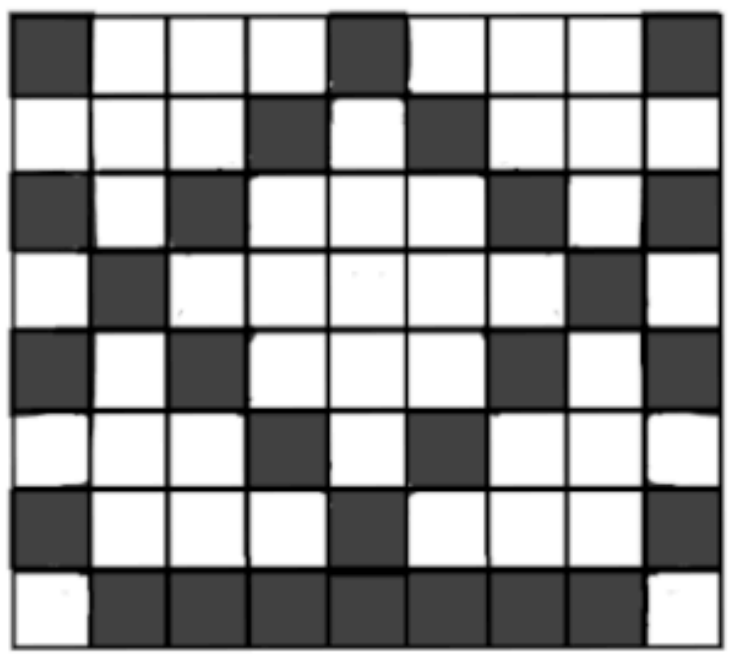
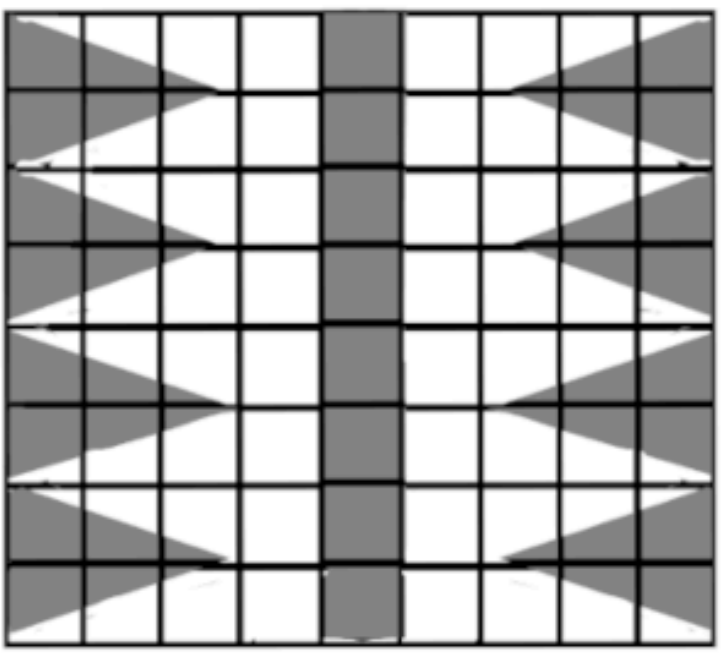
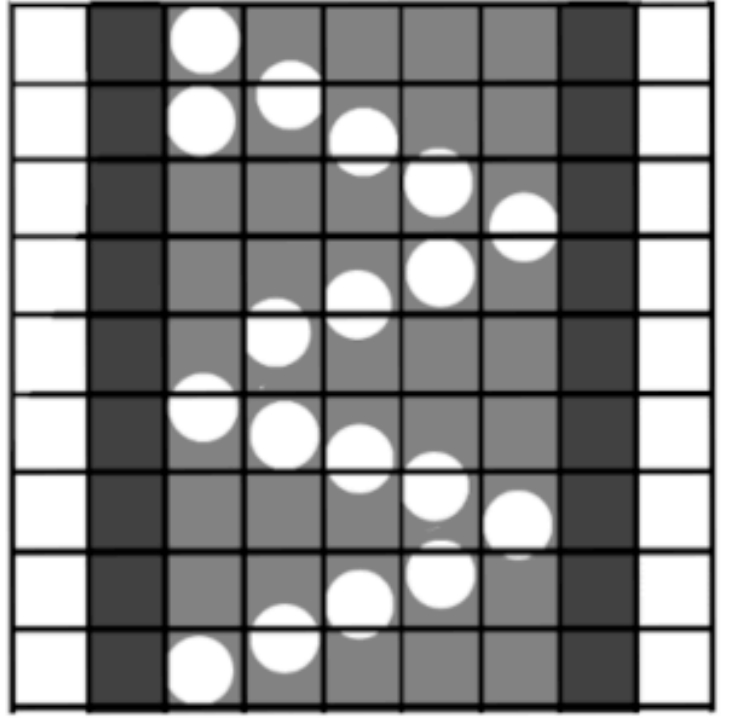
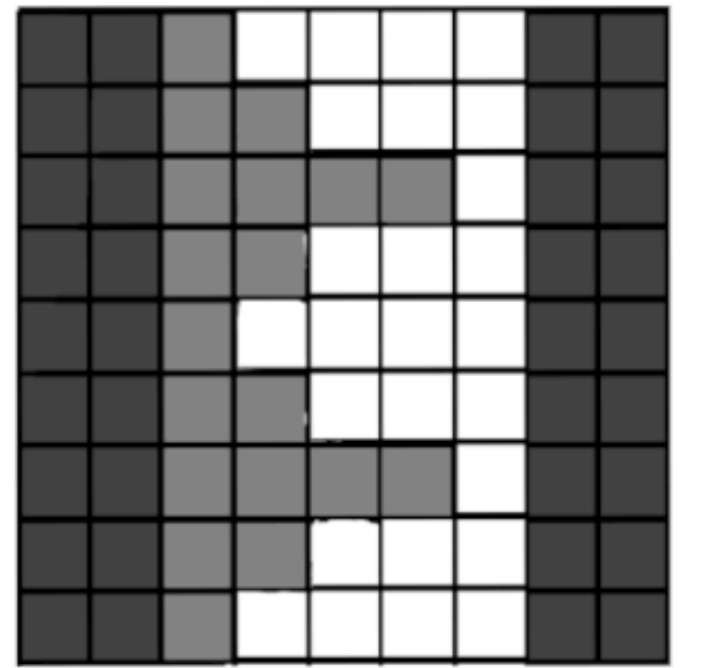
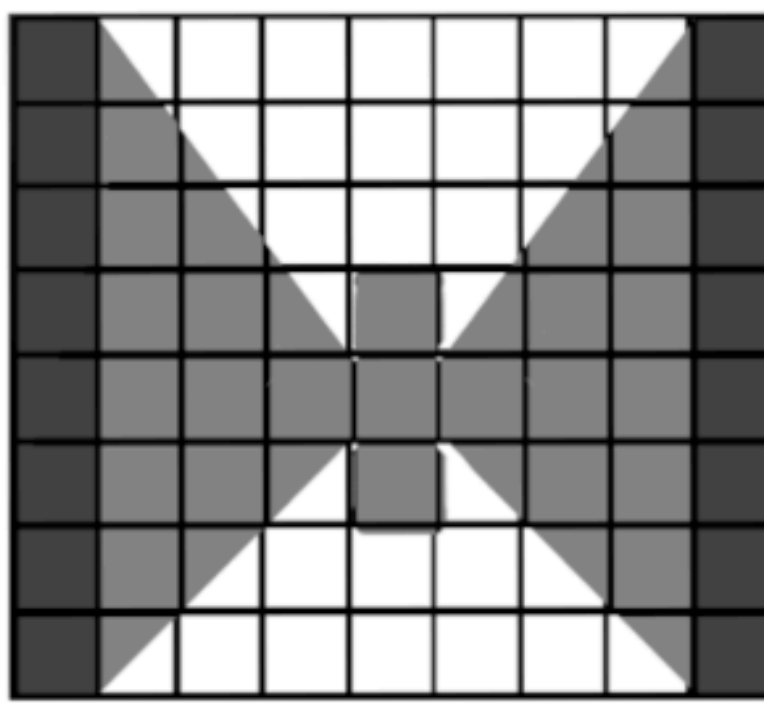
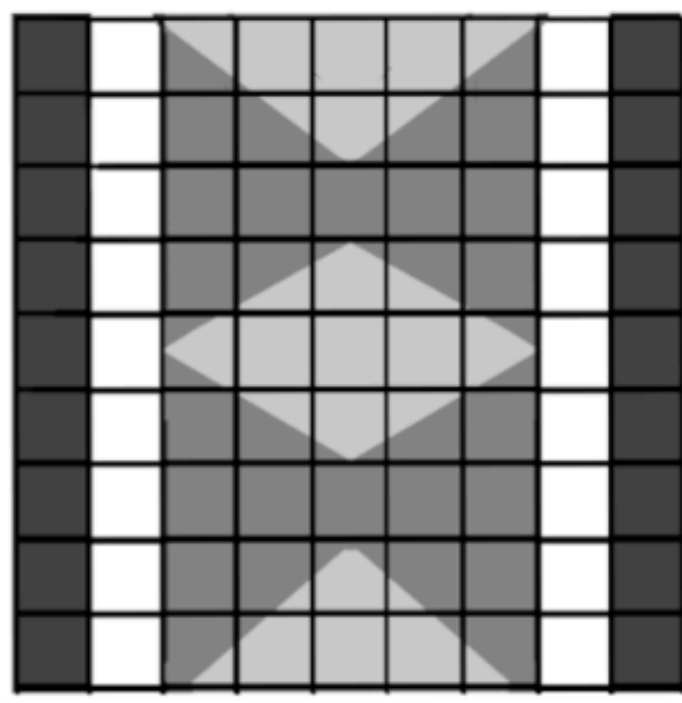
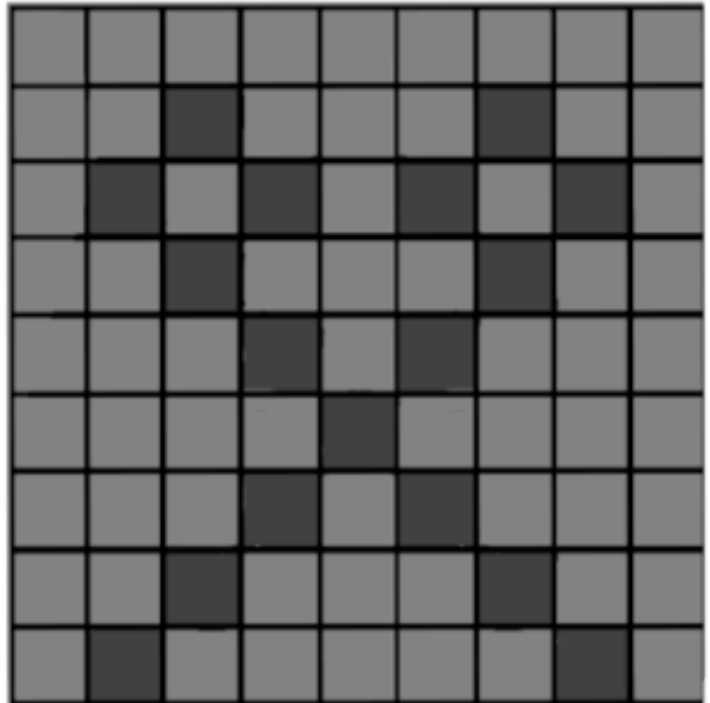
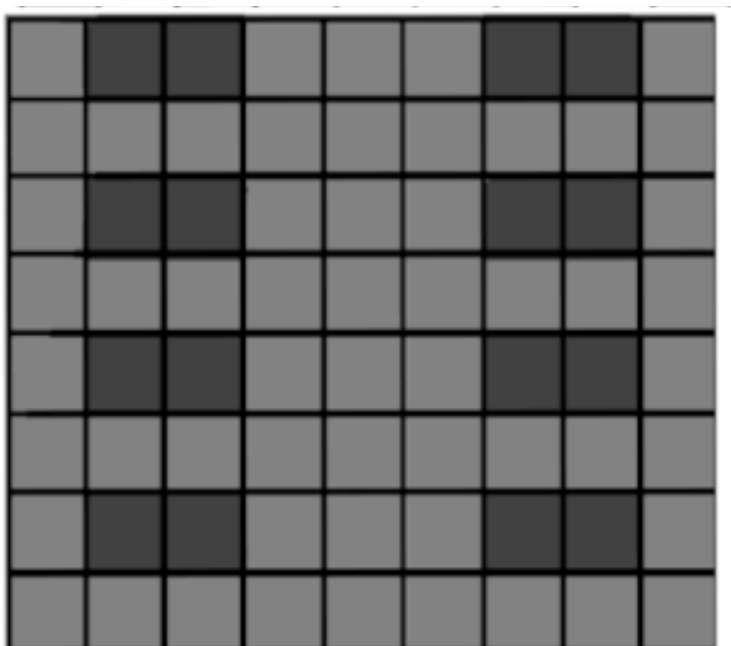
- Decide which two colors will go together in each pair.
- Choose contrasting colors.
- Match your choices to your pattern grid.

Preparing Your Workspace for Weaving:

- Secure your loom with masking tape/prestik to the clipboard/table.
- Gather your yarn colors and work on a clean, flat surface with enough space to move your tools and yarn comfortably.

Repeatable Pattern Chart: Al-Sadu and Al Saud cultural meanings

Use these to build your own story or signature like a logo through weaving.

<p>The Al-Saud Wasm: This "X" shape is a version of a tribal brand. It's like a family's signature or "logo" used to mark their animals and belongings.</p>		<p>The Seeds: These small alternating blocks represent desert seeds or grains, symbolizing growth and food.</p>	
<p>The Comb (Mishat): A very common traditional symbol representing the combs used to clean wool before weaving.</p>		<p>The Tent Poles: Simple vertical lines that represent the wooden poles that hold up the Bayt al-Sha'ar (House of Hair/Bedouin tent).</p>	
<p>The Eye (Uwaina): This diamond shape is meant to protect the weaver and the tent. It represents alertness and warding off bad luck.</p>		<p>The Mountains: These triangles represent the rugged peaks of the Hijaz or Asir regions.</p>	
<p>The Snake (Hayya): The zigzag path represents the movement of a snake or the winding tracks left in the sand dunes.</p>		<p>The Steps: These represent the "ladder" of community and the different stages of a journey across the desert.</p>	
<p>The Tree (Shajarah): This is the most famous Al-Sadu pattern. It represents the "Tree of Life" and is the centerpiece of the most beautiful weavings.</p>		<p>The Star (Najma): A nested diamond representing the North Star, which guided Bedouins through the desert at night.</p>	
<p>The Scissors (Maqas): This hourglass shape represents the tools used to trim the wool, showing the importance of the craft itself.</p>		<p>The Camel Tracks: These small dashes represent the footprints of a camel caravan moving across the sand.</p>	

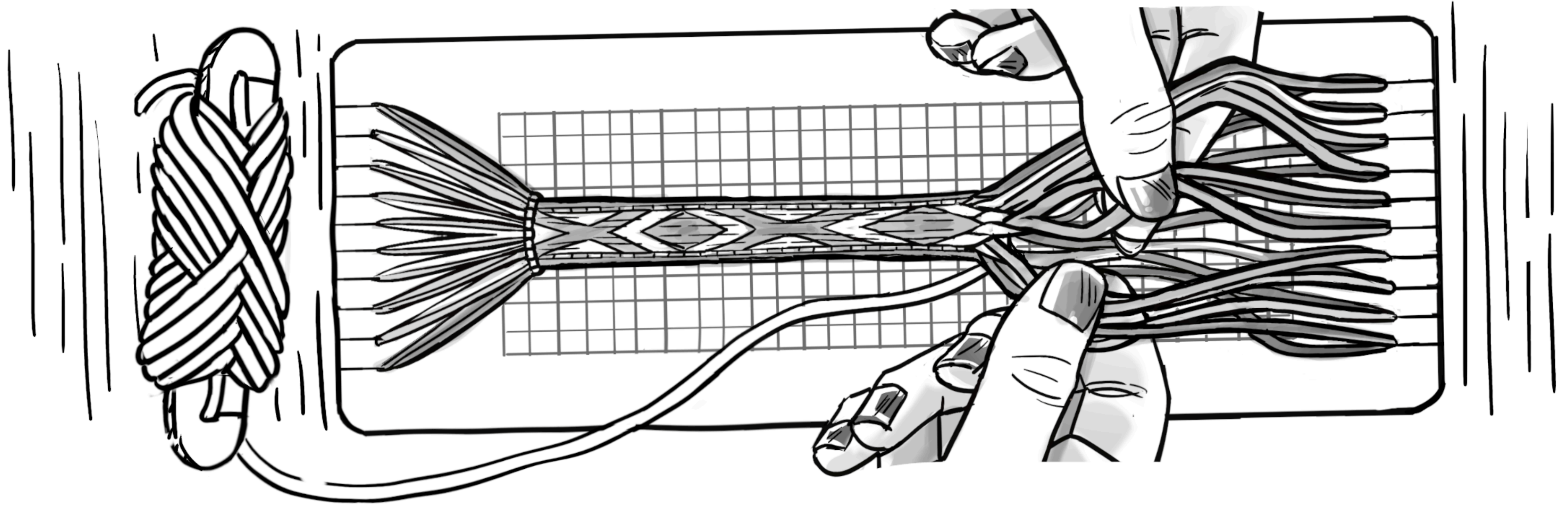
Using Traditional Patterns in Your Design

Patterns can represent meaning:

Triangles → mountains

Zigzags → movement or water

Diamonds → protection



Threading the Loom (Double Threading)

Each notch must contain two strands of yarn.

1. Tie your first color to the back of the loom
2. Wrap it up and down through the notches
3. Tie off at the back
4. Repeat with your second color

Now each notch contains a pair of threads, ready for pattern selection.

Note: Doubling the centermost thread can give your weave structure like a book spine and more thickness for the center of your bookmark. This is called a raised "Shadjarah" meaning "Tree" in Arabic featuring the centered symbols in the patterns.

Loading Your Shuttle (Weft Yarn)

- Choose a neutral colour for your weft so your pattern stands out.
- To load your shuttle:
 - Wrap the yarn around the shuttle in a figure-8 pattern.
 - Keep the yarn flat and evenly spread.
 - Do not bunch the yarn in one place.
- This helps the shuttle:
 - Pass smoothly through the threads.
 - Avoid tangles
 - Keep your weaving neat.

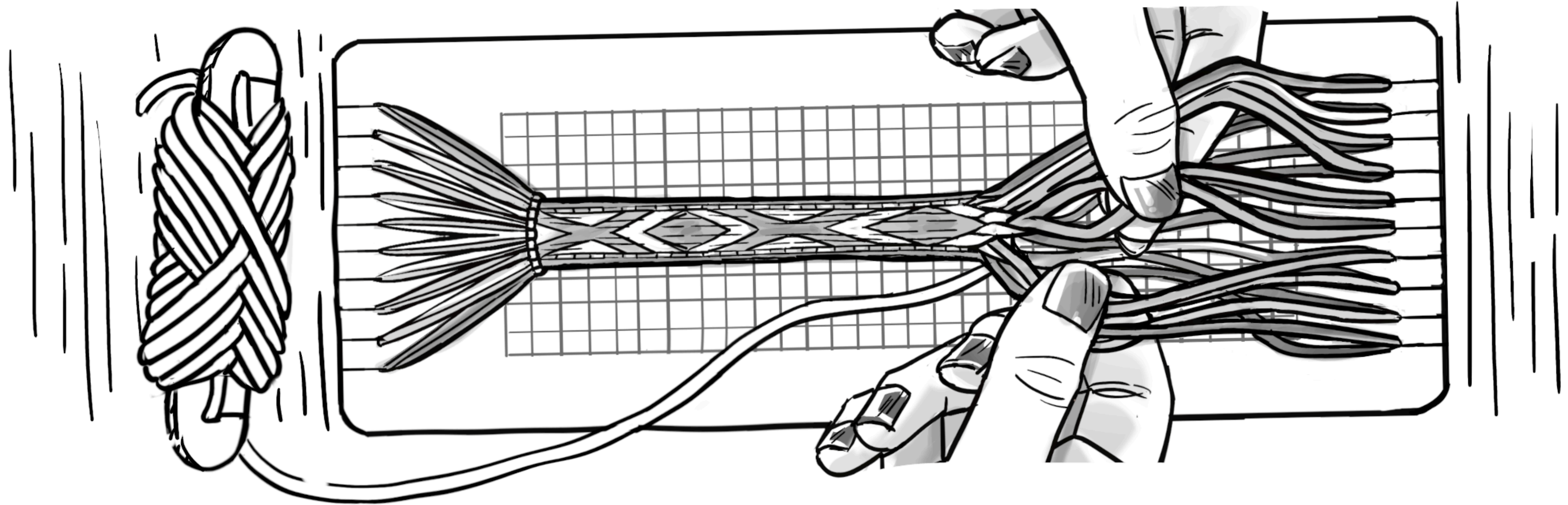
Setting Your Starting Edge

Before you begin weaving, you can secure your warp threads to create a neat starting edge.

1. Take a short piece of yarn (your weft on the shuttle or a separate piece)
2. Tie small knots across the warp threads near the bottom of the loom.
3. Gently tighten the knots so the threads sit closer together. This removes gaps and sets a clear starting line for your weaving

How the Tools Work Together?

- The loom holds your warp threads.
- The divider separates thread pairs so you can see and organise them.
- The shuttle carries the weft to secure each row.
- For every row (pick):
 - a. Select your colours
 - b. Pass the shuttle across
 - c. Pull and press the row into place
 - d. Reset threads for the next row



How This Weaving Technique Works?

Each vertical pair contains two colors.

For every row:

- You choose which thread in each pair comes to the front.
- The shuttle passes across to lock that choice in place.
- This is how your pattern is created.

Using the Divider

The divider helps you:

- Separate all thread pairs at once.
- Clearly see your pattern.
- Hold your place if you need to stop

You can:

- Use the divider.
- Or use your fingers for faster control.

Weaving Your Bookmark

Start: at the bottom of your loom, just above your knotted starting edge.

(Look at the first row of your pattern grid.)

Weaving Method;

Step 1: Select Colors

For each thread pair, bring the chosen color to the front.

Step 2: Pass the Shuttle

Weave the shuttle (weft) side to side across the loom.

Pull the yarn through gently.

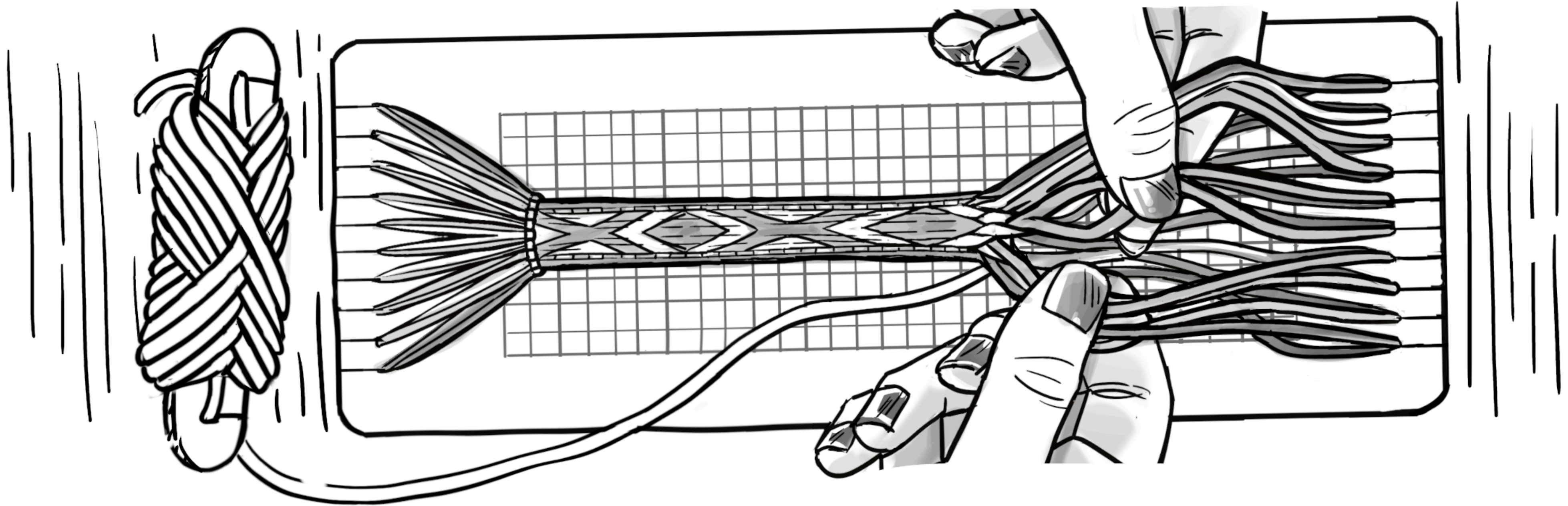
Step 3: Press the Row

Push the row down using your fingers or shuttle.

Step 4: Reset

Lift and separate threads again for the next row.

Repeat for each row (pick), building your design.



Tips for Troubleshooting:	Tips While Weaving:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven weaving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Loosen your tension • Mistake in pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Gently undo the Weft ◦ Adjust threads and redo • Tangled threads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Use the divider to separate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your tension even: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ When you thread your Looms Warps ◦ As you weave with your Shuttle • Don't pull too tightly • Press each row firmly and neatly • Follow your pattern grid • Place an object on your grid design to keep track of where you are

Finishing Your Bookmark:

- After your final row, tie the weft yarn securely to the last threaded pair
- Carefully remove the weaving from the loom.
- Cut any loops you dont want to use.
- Tie off the top and bottom threads
- Ensure all threads are knotted.
- Trim neatly if it is being left as is.

Decorative Finishing Techniques for frayed edges before a final trimming:

Make sure to knot these elements that will be attached to the bookmark

- Tassels:
 - Gather threads
 - Tie a knot near the end
 - Trim evenly
- Wrapped Tassels (Al-Sadu Inspired):
 - Tie threads together
 - Wrap yarn around the bundle
 - Knot tightly
- Braiding:
 - Divide threads into three groups
 - Braid and tie off at the end