

# How To Use the Cricut Machine & Heat Press



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## What is a Cricut?

The Cricut is an electronic cutting machine that allows you to cut materials into anything you dream! It is a smart “robot” that follows digital designs, created by YOU! We are also lucky to have Cricut Design Access, where we have access to thousands of exclusive images, fonts, and ready-made projects, providing endless creative possibilities!

## Get to Know the Cricut Machine

1. Power button: The power button is used to turn on and off the machine
2. Load/Unload button: This button is indicated by an arrow and used to load or unload the mat from the machine.
3. Go button: This looks like the Cricut “C” symbol. Press this to start your cut.
4. USB Port and power cord connection: You can find these slots on the back of your Cricut machine, however this machine is connected via Bluetooth.



The center part of the machine is called the feeder. It has the cutting tool, feet, and metal rollers. Leave all of the settings for the machine the same. The cutting tool is prepared for most projects.



## Cricut Tools

Weeding Tools: These will be needed if you are using sticker or heat transfer vinyl. With these materials, you can remove all of the excess material. Each tool helps weed the materials, and each maker has their preference. Examples of weeding tools are shown and some explained.

Tweezers: These are handy when lifting small items off the mat.

Scraper: these help you clear your mat from extra materials.

Spatula: this can be used to get under paper to lift them off the mat.

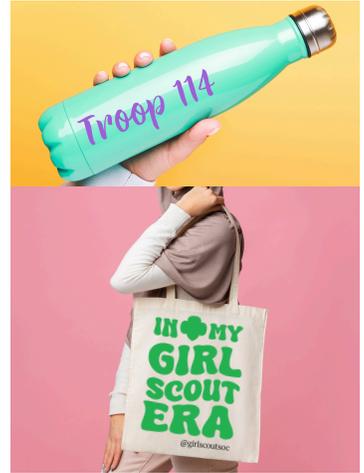
Along with this machine you will find the power cord, the USB cable (only needed if Bluetooth is not connecting), Cricut Mat and the accessories for the Heat Press.

## How to Get Started

We will provide instructions for two projects in this guidebook.

1. Vinyl Sticker
2. Iron-On Image

The vinyl sticker is created to add to a hard surface such as a notebook or a water bottle. The iron-on image is for iron-on projects to fabrics such as a t-shirt or a tote bag.



The GSLC Makerspace has vinyl available, you will need to bring the item put the vinyl on to. You also may bring in your own vinyl to ensure you get a specific color. No colors are guaranteed to be available.

### Sticker Vinyl Project Examples:

- water bottle
- cups/mugs
- notebook
- keychains
- door hangers or signs



### Iron-On Vinyl Project Examples:

- bags
- t-shirts
- pillowcases
- bows

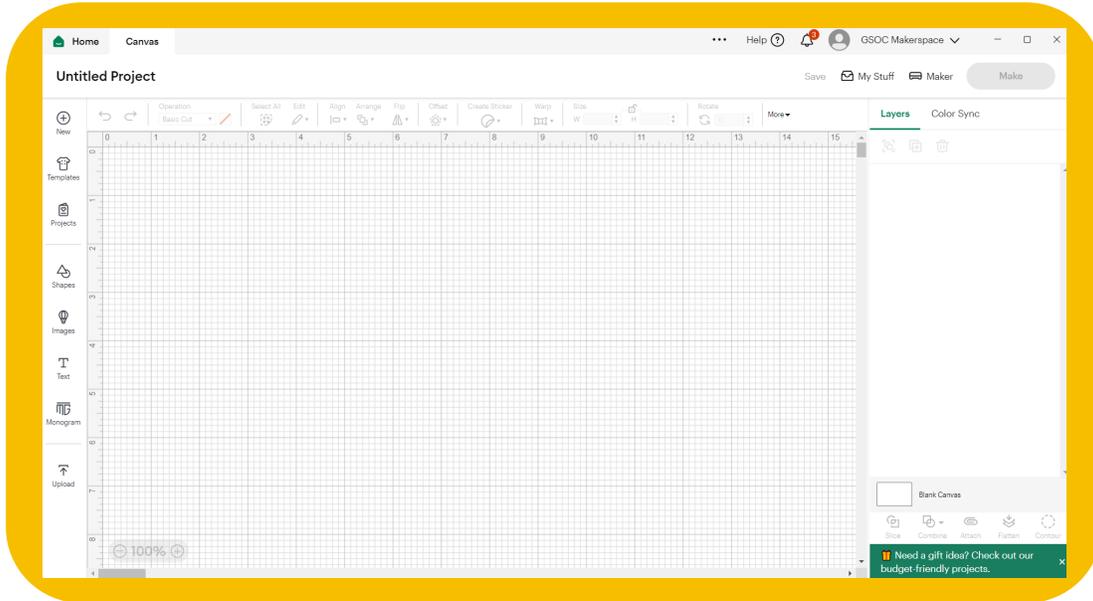


**\*\*Remember:** We will provide the vinyl, you bring the item.

# Getting Started on Cricut Design Space

## GETTING STARTED

Click the “new project” button to get started. You will see what is referred to as the “canvas”, this is where you create a design. Below you can review the basic elements of the workspace.



## TOOL BAR

On the left tool bar, you will find your project tools. “New” opens a new canvas, while “Templates and Projects” buttons provide ideas for a new design. Check out Shapes, Images, & Text to get access to the millions of images, fonts, and icons included with our Cricut Design Space Access. To upload your own design from a USB drive or the computer desktop, click Upload.

Check out pages 12 & 13 for more information on uploading your own images!

The top toolbar has a lot of important features. On the left, you will find the “undo” and “redo” buttons. Most of these tools are similar to a classic presentation or document. Operation should always say “Basic Cut” for projects in this guidebook.

The right toolbar has your layers and color sync panel, many of these tools you will not need for beginner projects.

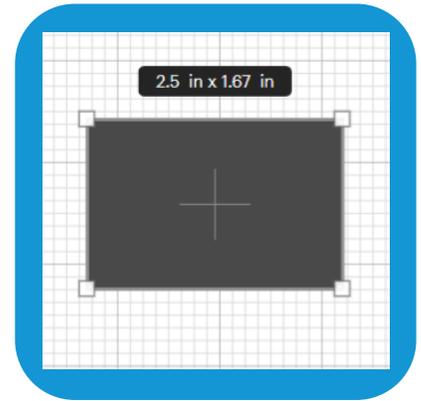
At the bottom of your screen, you will see an option to “zoom”. The bottom and right side also have bars that can be used to scroll around the canvas for larger projects.

Dont forget to SAVE! 😊

## HANDLES

When you click on any item on your canvas, you will see four “handles”. These help you resize your object. You can use this along with the top tool bar which will allow you to type in shape measurements, lock the sizing, and rotate the shape.

This will work for shapes, text, and images!



## Recommended Projects for the Cricut

As a reminder, We will provide instructions for two projects in this guidebook.

1. Vinyl Sticker
2. Iron-On Image



## CREATING YOUR DESIGN

It is recommended that when creating your design that Girl Scouts choose a single-colored image. They can choose a color vinyl from the supplies. (Note: it does not matter what color the design is on Cricut Design Space, whatever color vinyl you put on the machine is the one it will be!)

GSOC provides images that match the requirements under the “Upload” button. There are fun images and words.

Choose single-colored text for a simple personalized project.

Check out “Images” for the catalog to browse the millions of images provided. Remember to look for single-colored images that are not too detailed.

*Example:*



## Basic Cutting Instructions

When you are ready to cut, click the button:  
This button is in the top right-hand corner.

**Make**

*SAVING: If you have not yet saved your project it will prompt you to do so now.*

The next screen will ask about your mat, choose “on mat”.

It will then show your design. You can move it around where you want it cut. It defaults to the upper left-hand corner. Press continue if you are ready to cut your project or cancel if you need to make adjustments in Cricut Design Space.

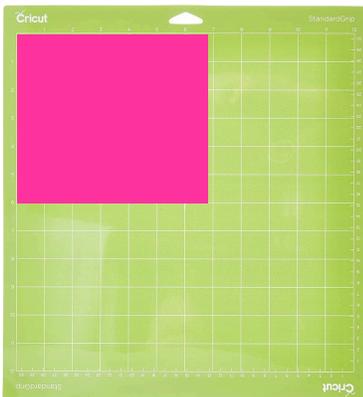
Then, you will pick a material. If you do not see the option you want, click “browse all materials”.

For Iron-On Vinyl - choose “Everyday Iron-On” \*

For Sticker Vinyl - choose “Premium Vinyl - Permanent Glossy”

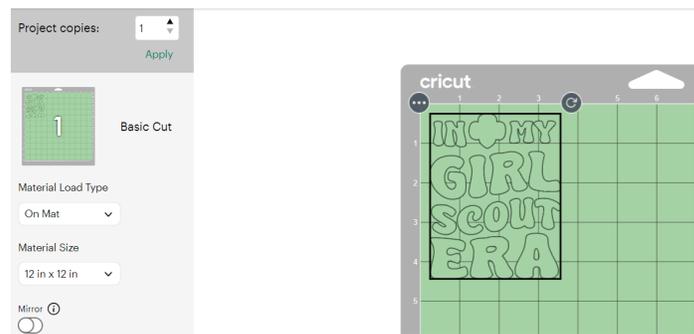
*\*Note that when you choose Iron-On, it will “mirror” your image. This is because of the way you place the vinyl on to the mat. You want it to be mirrored!*

Next, you will **prepare your material**. Choose the material for your project (the Makerspace has two bins, one for sticker vinyl, one for iron-on vinyl). For Iron-on vinyl, you will place it “shiny side” down. For sticker vinyl, you will place the non-colored side on the mat.



Place your material in the left-hand corner of the mat.

When looking at your design, you will want to make sure you have enough material on the mat that is shown in Design Space.



## Ready to Cut!

Once you are ready to cut, you should see the “load/unload” button flashing on the Cricut machine. Hold your mat that has your material attached under the mat guides on both sides and against the grey rollers. Press the “unload/load” while pushing (softly) on the mat at the same time. The machine will load the mat. Design Space will indicate it is ready to cut and tell you to press the “go” button. Press the flashing “go” button on your machine to start your cut. Once pressed, the machine will start the cut. It may do some checks before starting the cut.



Don't forget to put the mat under the mat guides!

Once your cut is complete, Design Space will prompt you to unload the mat and the “unload/load” button will flash once more. Press this button to remove the mat. Once you press the button, the mat will eject from under the rollers and you can remove it. The best way to do this for most materials is to flip the mat over and peel the mat back from the material. This ensures that you do not damage or curl your material when peeling it off the mat.

If your design had more than one color, your Design Space will then be ready for your next mat. The mat that is ready to be cut will be highlighted. You can click “edit” on a mat on this screen if you forgot to do something previously.

Once your done, you can turn off the machine to store it!

## Weeding - Preparing Your Material

Yay! You have cut your project! If you haven't already, carefully remove the material from the mat and replace the mat's plastic protector.

Weeding is the removal of all excess vinyl from your project. In other words: everything you don't want transferred on to your surface. This includes everything around the outside as well as things like the centers of letters or designs. It is similar to weeding your garden of anything you do not want.

The items you weed away from your design should be thrown away.



Use those weeding tools to help you remove the extra vinyl! I recommend using the sharp pointed tool first. Start at the corner of your design and weed away!



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How your project is finished, depends on what project you are doing. Choose the application instructions for sticker vinyl or iron on vinyl for the next step!

Page 10, Sticker Vinyl

Page 11, Iron On Vinyl

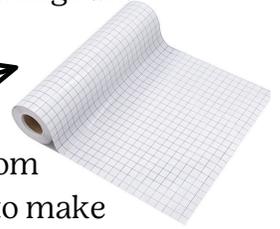
## Sticker Vinyl: Finishing Your Project

Once you are done weeding, you are ready to put your vinyl sticker on something fun!

For sticker vinyl, you will need something called transfer tape.

Transfer tape helps \*transfer\* your design from the paper to your object.

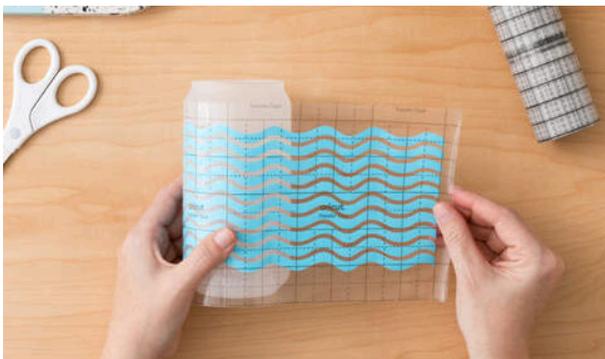
Cut out a piece of transfer tape a bit bigger than your design. Then, peel it from the backing and stick it on top of your design. Use the weeding tool scraper to make sure it sticks!



Then, pull the white paper away from the transfer tape. (Note: If your sticker is not sticking to the transfer tape, stick it back down and use the scraper tool to really help it stick!)

Once you have your transfer tape with the vinyl, you can then place it on your item! Use the scraper tool again to make sure it really sticks to your item.

Once you are sure it is stuck, peel away the transfer tape. Be careful! If it is not fully stuck to the object, the vinyl could rip!



Ta Da! Now you have a completed sticker vinyl project!

# Iron-On Vinyl: Finishing Your Project

Once you are done weeding, you are ready to get your iron out! To adhere you Iron-on vinyl to a fabric, you will need the Cricut Heat Press.



Once you are done weeding, you are ready to get your iron out! To adhere you Iron-on vinyl to a fabric, you will need the **Cricut Heat Press**. A Cricut heat press is a specialized press used for applying heat-transfer designs onto fabric, wood, and other surfaces. Unlike household irons, a Cricut heat press ensures more consistent results through evenly distributed heat.

Place the Heat Press on a flat surface and plug in the Heat Press. To determine the temperature of the heat press, you can go to <https://cricut.com/en/heatguide>. When using the provided vinyl, below are some typical materials and their temperatures.

Material	Temperature	Time	Notes
100% Cotton & Poly Blend	315°F	30 seconds	Pre-heat material with iron for 5 seconds. Apply firm pressure.
Cotton Canvas	340°F	30 seconds	Pre-heat material with iron for 5 seconds. Apply firm pressure.

Time to prepare your items. First, place the grey Heat Press Mat on a flat surface and place your item on top of the mat. After, place your design where you want it on the item. Ensure the plastic side is facing down. Then, place the tan heat paper on top of your design. Finally, place the heat press on top and press the “C” cricut button.  Hold the iron on the item until the timer is up. Then remove the iron. Wait until it is cool to the touch. When it is cool, you can remove the plastic from the design.



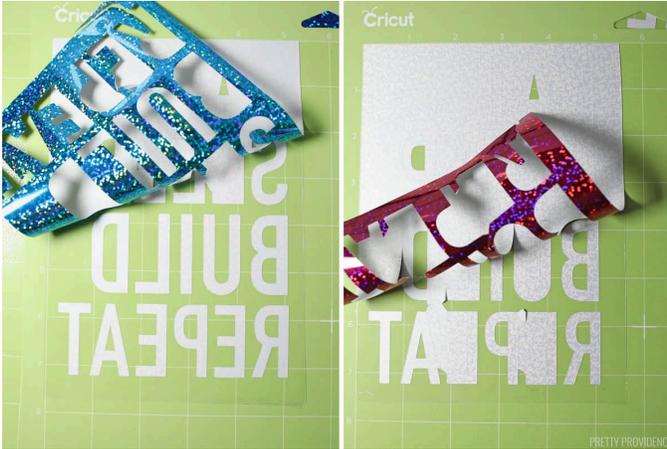
Order of items: Top to bottom!

- Heat Press
- Tan heat paper!  dont forget me!!!
- Vinyl design
- Item you are iron on to
- Heat Mat

## HOT Tips!

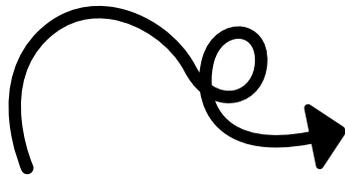
(Get it? We are using a Heat Press!)

1. Weeding Iron-on vinyl can look a little odd. You are weeding the design backwards so it can be right-side-up on your item.



Iron-on Vinyl can be easier to weed than other vinyl. Use the tool to get started, then you can pull away excess vinyl using your hands. Then go back to get the small pieces.

Don't forget the small things like the insides of letters!



When you are ready to iron, you will place the design plastic side up! The plastic will kind of stick to the material, helping you pick the perfect spot for your design.



2. If your project did not fully stick to your item (your shirt/tote/etc) after you used the Heat O Press, put the plastic back down and do the Heat Press process again. This also could happen if you try to remove the plastic before it is cool.



TA DA! You now have a wonderful new design on a shirt, tote, or another fabric!

# Uploading Your Own Image to Design Space

## Bringing Your Own Files:

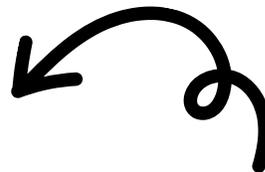
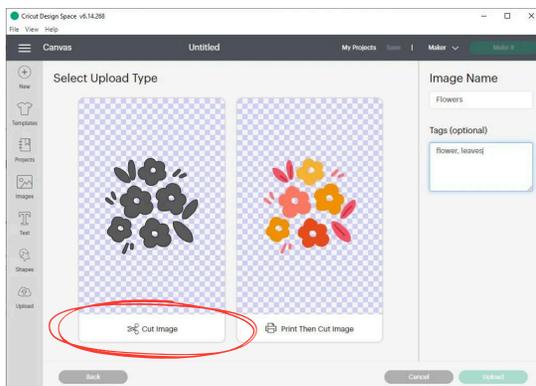
- **SVG:** this is the most common file for uploading to your Cricut. It is a graphics file that is best for cutting. On your computer, this file may appear as an HTML file, however, they will upload correctly. You can purchase on sites like Etsy.
- **JPG, PNG:** These are all photo files that will not have any background removed. You will have to follow the process to manually remove the background. (PLEASE NOTE: Your design will be printed as all one color this way).
- **ZIP:** This is an easy way to deliver multiple file types at once. You will need to unzip the file in order to get something you can upload to your Cricut. Open the zip file and you should see options to extract the individual files. Note that you do not need any paid service for zip files.

**\*\*Remember - Choose basic files with only one or two colors.**

## How to...

### Upload a PNG or JPG to Design Space:

1. Click on Upload in the left-hand toolbar.
2. Click Upload Image, then select your cut file from your computer.
3. Choose whether your design is simple, moderately complex, or complex. For most designs, simple works fine. Click Continue.
4. (If your image is transparent or does not have a background, you can move to save your image)
5. In this next process, we will remove the background. Click on all the areas of the image you want to remove. Since the background isn't transparent, you will need to tell the Cricut where to cut.
6. Typically, you will click on the white area around the text or image. Don't forget to do the inside of letters and designs!
7. Click the Preview button to see what your cut file will look like and to make sure you haven't missed any areas. Click Hide Preview to go back to the regular view.
8. Click Continue and then save your image as a cut file.
9. After you save your image, you'll be taken to a screen where you can see all the images that you have uploaded. Click the image you would like to use then click Insert Image.



Upload simple designs! They will all become black and white and the color can change based on the material you have.

## Uploading an SVG to Design Space:

1. Click on Upload in the left-hand toolbar.
2. Click Upload Image, then select your cut file from your computer.
3. With an SVG file, the designer has already done all of the work of creating different layers and telling the design file where to cut. All you need to do is name your design and save it!
4. After you save your image, you'll be taken to a screen where you see all of the images that you have uploaded. Click the image you would like to use and then click Insert Image.

## Helpful Hints

### Cricut Design Space Issues

If you are having issues with Design Space, try these steps first:

- Restart the program as well as your computer/device and Cricut machine. This will generally solve most issues.
- If you are using the iPad application, make sure what you're trying to do is compatible. Many options are only for computers.
- Design Space will give you various errors in the layers panel on the right-hand side if you are trying to do something that will not work. These will be indicated by an orange triangle. Click the triangle to see the error. If you try to click "Make it" anyway, you will once again see an error message.

### Bringing Your Own Vinyl

There are many brands and types of vinyl on the market. Let's start with the different types:

- Glossy: A general rule, permanent vinyl will be glossy. (The vinyl available is glossy).
- Matte: In most brands, removable vinyl will have a matte finish.
- Glitter: Adding sparkle to your projects. It can be harder to weed.
- Also, Holographic, metallic, printed or pattered, and shimmer.

If you are bringing your own vinyl, it is recommended to stick with the name-brand products of Cricut, Oracle, and Siser. They all can be found at craft stores or Amazon.

You can bring any of the above vinyl to be used on the machines.