

CRICUT DESIGN SPACE

A Beginner's Guide

Everything You Need to Know
to Navigate Design Space —
No Matter What Version
You're Looking At

A free resource from
Life Pinspired

Stop Overthinking. Start Creating.



Hello, I'm Debbie with Life Pinspired

I didn't always know what I was doing with a Cricut. Honestly, I was just like you — full of ideas, a little overwhelmed, and not sure where to start.

The turning point for me was a woman at my university's library makerspace who just sat down and showed me things. No judgment, no rushing — just someone who knew more than me taking the time to make it simple. That experience changed everything.

Life Pinspired exists because of her. I want to be that person for you — the crafty friend who breaks things down, skips the overwhelm, and reminds you that you don't have to figure it all out before you start.

“Encourage one another and build each other up”

-1 Thessalonians 5:11

FIND ME HERE

YouTube: Life Pinspired

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This guide pairs with
my Design Space Deep
Dive series on YouTube.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is your permanent reference for Cricut Design Space. Use it while watching the videos, keep it next to your Cricut, or pull it up whenever you need a quick reminder. You never have to memorize anything — just know where to find it.

What's Inside

1

ADD ELEMENTS TO CANVAS

Pairs with: Cricut Design Space Deep Dive - Video 1
Text, shapes, Cricut library images, and your own uploaded files.
How to bring your ideas into Design Space.

2

EDIT YOUR ELEMENTS

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Size, position, color, layers, fonts, spacing, and curves.
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3

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A Cricut Glossary is included at the back — every crafting term translated into plain English.

SECTION

1

Add Things to Your Canvas

PAIRS WITH:

Video 1 of Cricut Design Space Deep Dive Series

Your canvas is your design workspace — the white area inside Design Space where everything comes together. Before you can edit or cut anything, you need to bring it in first.

The left panel of your Design Space canvas is your starting point for every project. Everything you add to your canvas lives here. In this section is a quick overview of each option — in the exact order you'll see them on your screen.

REMINDER BOX:

The exact location of panels and buttons changes with Design Space updates. This guide focuses on WHAT each tool does — so you always know what you're looking for, no matter what the screen looks like.

Projects

WHAT IT IS:

A library of complete ready-to-make designs created by Cricut and other users. Great when you want to make something without designing from scratch — browse, pick something you love, and cut.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Browse thousands of ready-to-make designs
- Search by theme, occasion, or material
- Open a project and customize it before cutting
- Use as-is straight from the library

CRICUT ACCESS:

Some projects are free — many require Cricut Access. Always free to browse.

NOTE:

Key element — this is its own feature and cannot be recreated with other tools.

Images

WHAT IT IS:

Cricut's built-in library of thousands of ready-made images and illustrations you can add directly to your canvas. Everything from simple icons to detailed multi-layer designs — someone else already did the design work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Search by keyword, theme, or style
- Insert a single image or a full layered design
- Use as-is or ungroup and edit individual layers
- Combine with your own text and shapes

CRICUT ACCESS:

⚠ Most images require Cricut Access. Free images are available but limited

NOTE:

Key element — great for beginners who want a polished design without starting from scratch. You can also get images from other places though.

Monogram

WHAT IT IS:

A built-in shortcut for creating monogram designs — pick a decorative frame, add your initials, and Design Space sizes and arranges everything automatically.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

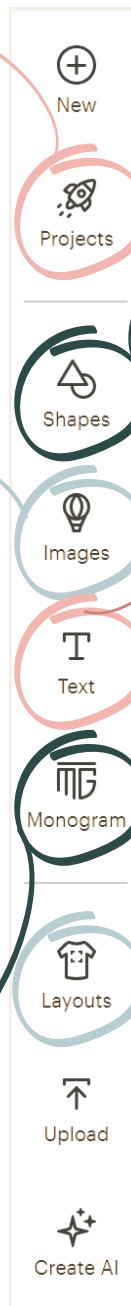
- Choose from a variety of monogram frame styles
- Add one, two, or three initials
- Customize font and size
- Insert directly onto your canvas ready to cut

CRICUT ACCESS:

⚠ The monogram tool requires Cricut Access.

NOTE:

Convenience feature — this shortcut saves time but you could recreate a monogram yourself using the Text and Shapes tools. Great to know when you're ready to explore!



Shapes

WHAT IT IS:

A built-in library of basic geometric shapes — circles, squares, triangles, stars, and more. One of the most used tools in Design Space. Simple but incredibly versatile.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Insert any basic shape onto your canvas
- Resize, recolor, and rotate freely
- Use as backgrounds, frames, or design elements
- Combine with other shapes using the manipulate tools (Section 3)

CRICUT ACCESS:

Most shapes are free — special ones require Cricut Access.

NOTE:

Key element — the foundation of most designs. You will use this constantly.

Text

WHAT IT IS:

Exactly what it sounds like — a tool to add words, phrases, letters, or numbers directly to your canvas. One of the most used elements in Cricut projects.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Type any word, phrase, or letter
- Choose from hundreds of fonts including your own computer fonts
- Adjust size, color, letter spacing, and line spacing
- Curve your text to follow an arc
- Combine with shapes for labels, signs, shirts, and more

CRICUT ACCESS:

⚠ The text tool itself is free. Some fonts in the Cricut library require Cricut Access. Fonts already installed on your computer are always free.

NOTE:

Key element — you will use this in most of your projects.

Layout

WHAT IT IS:

A visual guide that places the outline of a real object — a shirt, mug, tote bag, pillow, phone case, and more — onto your canvas. Helps you size and position your design accurately before you cut so you know exactly how it will look on the finished item.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Choose from dozens of object templates
- Place your design on top to check sizing and placement
- Adjust your design until it looks right
- Remove the template before cutting — it never cuts, it's just a guide

CRICUT ACCESS:

Some templates are free.

NOTE:

Convenience feature — very helpful for beginners! You could also create your own templates but this is easier for common projects.

Upload

WHAT IT IS:

The place where you bring in your own design files — anything you downloaded, purchased, or created yourself. This is what makes Design Space truly flexible. Your own designs, your own creativity, your Cricut cuts it.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

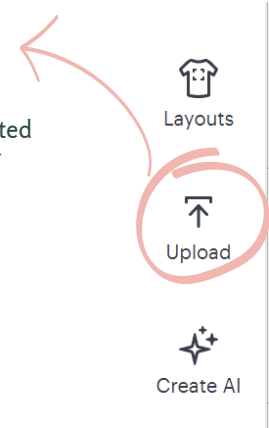
- Upload SVG, PNG, or JPG files
- Use designs you purchased or downloaded for free
- Bring in files you created yourself in a design program
- Save uploaded files to reuse in future projects

CRICUT ACCESS:

Not required — uploading your own files is always free.

NOTE:

Key element — and one of the most powerful tools in Design Space. A future video will cover how to create your own SVG files for free using Inkscape. Subscribe so you don't miss it!



File Types Explained

	SVG	PNG	JPG/JPEG
What it looks like			
Stands for	Scalable Vector Graphic	Portable Network Graphics	Joint Photographic Experts Group
How it works	Made of mathematical paths and nodes — little dots that work like coordinates to the machine. The machine follows the paths to cut	Made of pixels — tiny colored squares that form an image. The more pixels, the higher the resolution.	Made of pixels like PNG but uses compression to reduce file size — which sacrifices some quality.
Layers	Can contain multiple layers and groups. Each layer can be a separate color or cut. Design Space reads and preserves all layers.	Flat single layer image — Design Space may convert to layers but may not be accurate and a lot of work.	Flat single layer image — no editable layers.
Background	No background — SVGs are always transparent by nature. Only the actual design paths exist.	May have transparent or filled background. Design Space can remove background but may have rough edges.	Always has a solid background — usually white. No transparency support at all.

File Types Explained (Continued)

	SVG	PNG	JPG/JPEG
Resizing behavior	Scales to any size perfectly — 1 inch or 10 feet, same crisp result. This is the biggest advantage.	Loses quality when scaled up — gets pixelated and blurry. Only scale down, never up.	Same as PNG — loses quality when enlarged. Compression artifacts become more visible the bigger you go.
Best for	Cutting anything. Always choose SVG when available.	Print Then Cut projects. Also works for cutting simple designs if the background is truly transparent.	Photos and Print Then Cut only. Never ideal for cutting.
When you'd use it	Your own designs, purchased files, downloaded freebies — anything meant to be cut.	Colorful stickers, illustrated designs for Print Then Cut, clipart with transparent backgrounds.	Printing a photo onto a project or an image to be printed on Print Then Cut. Very limited use in Design Space.
Important to know	Not all SVGs are created equal — a poorly built SVG can have messy overlapping nodes or missing layers. If an SVG behaves strangely in Design Space, the file itself may be the issue, not you.	The checkerboard pattern in design programs means transparent — that's what you want. A white background in a PNG will cause problems in Design Space like incorrectly identifying the boundaries of the design.	JPEG and JPG are the same thing — just two ways of writing the same file extension.

SECTION

2

Edit Your Elements

PAIRS WITH:

Video 2 of the Design Space Deep Dive Series

Once something is on your canvas, Design Space gives you a lot of control over how it looks and where it sits. This section covers all the editing tools you'll use in almost every single project.

You'll learn how to:

- Resize and reposition anything on your canvas
- Change colors — and understand why color matters more than you think
- Manage your layers
- Edit text: fonts, spacing, and curves

REMINDER BOX:

The exact location of panels and buttons changes with Design Space updates, as well as the appearance of buttons. This guide focuses on WHAT each tool does — so you always know what you're looking for, no matter what the screen looks like.

Size, Position & Basic Edits

For the following tools to work, you need to first select the shape/text you wish to edit.

TOOL	WHAT IT DOES	CRICUT ACCESS REQUIRED?
Resize	Change the width and height of any element. Drag the corner handles OR click on size button and type exact numbers into the size boxes for precision.	No
Lock Aspect Ratio	Click on size button and then the lock icon next to the size boxes. When locked, resizing keeps the proportions — it won't stretch or squish your design. Keep this locked unless you intentionally want to distort (such as turning a square into a rectangle).	No
Position	Move elements by dragging on canvas. X and Y coordinates will show based on element's placement on canvas (example - 2 inches to the right and 3 down will show x: 2, y:3).	No
Rotate	Spin an element to any angle. Hover over any corner until the rotate handle shows and drag element, or use the rotate button to type a specific degree.	No
Flip	Mirror an element horizontally or vertically. Useful for symmetrical designs.	No
Color	Change the fill color of any element. Important: in Design Space, each color = a separate layer = a separate cut mat. You are not just picking a pretty color — you are telling the machine to cut that piece separately. Also important to note that the color you choose on design space is for visual purpose only - you will still need to pick a vinyl in the color you choose for your design and it does not need to match the color on the canvas.	No
Align	Lines up two or more elements so they are perfectly aligned with each other.	No
Distribute	Evenly spaces multiple objects, making the gaps between them equal. Often found together with Align tool.	No
Warp	Curves or bends element into different pre-set shapes for a more creative look. Often found under effects or edit.	Yes

Text Editing

For the following tools to work, you need to first select the text you wish to edit.

TOOL	WHAT IT DOES	CRICUT ACCESS REQUIRED?
Font	Change the style of your text. Design Space has a built-in font library plus access to fonts installed on your computer. System fonts are always free.	Some fonts require Access
Letter Spacing (Kerning)	Controls the space between individual letters. Tighten it to bring letters closer together — especially important for script fonts where you want letters to touch or connect. Often found under edit or format button.	No
Line Spacing	Controls the space between lines of text when you have multiple lines. Often found under edit or format button.	No
Font Style	Switch between regular, bold, italic, and other style variations within the same font family. Some fonts do not allow you to change the style - that is a font problem, not a you problem.	No
Text Alignment	Controls how text is positioned in text box (left, center, right, or justified). Often found with format or edit button.	No
Curved Text	Makes your text follow a curved path. The location of this option moves with updates — but the function is always there. Look for a curve or arc option in your text editing toolbar.	No

Layers Panel

TOOL	WHAT IT DOES	CRICUT ACCESS REQUIRED?
Layers Panel	Shows every element on your canvas as a separate layer. If you can't click on something on the canvas — find it here and select it from the list. A lifesaver for complex designs.	No
Hide / Show Layer	The eye icon next to each layer. Click to hide or reveal individual elements without deleting them. Great for checking how pieces look separately.	No
Reorder Layers	Drag layers up or down in the panel to change which element sits on top of another. Can also go to Arrange button to “send to” front or back if needed.	No
Lock Layer	Locks an element so it can't be accidentally moved or edited. Useful when you have a background element you don't want to disturb.	No

SECTION

3

Combine & Manipulate

PAIRS WITH:

Video 3 of the Design Space Deep Dive Series

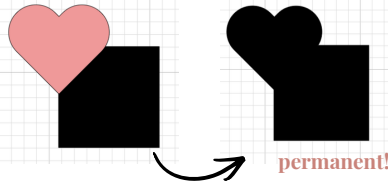
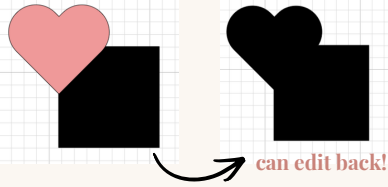
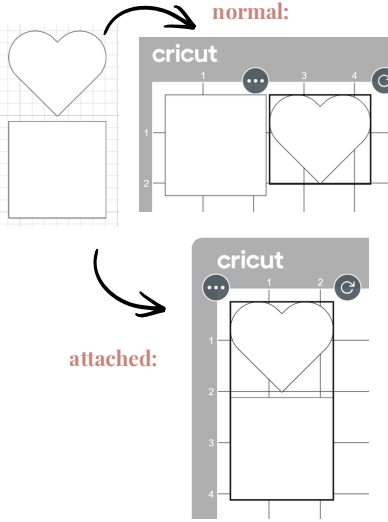
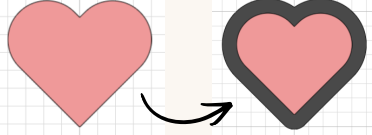
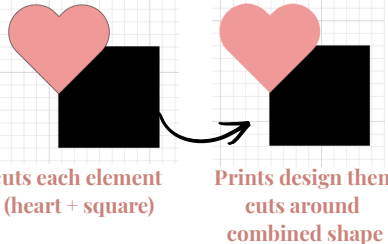
These are the tools that take your design from a collection of pieces to a finished, intentional thing. They can look similar but they each do something very specific.

The demos in this section use two simple shapes — a square and a heart — so you can see exactly what each tool does and compare them side by side.

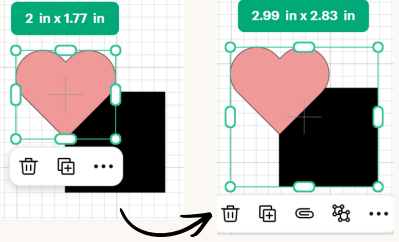
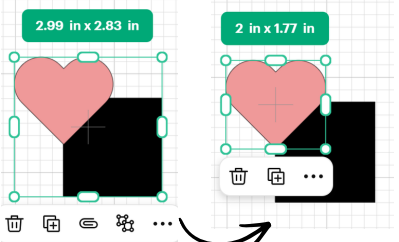
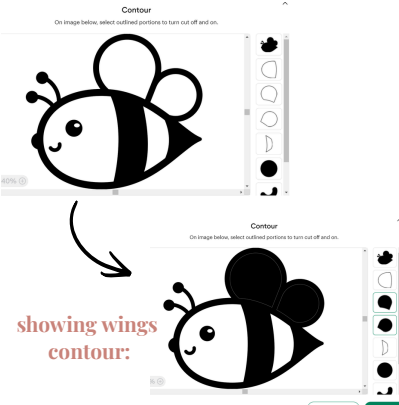
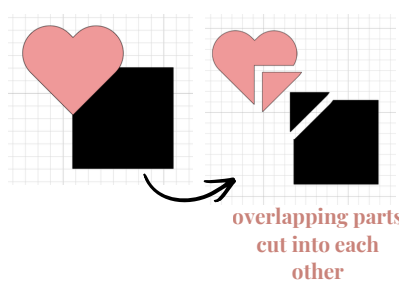
IMPORTANT NOTE:

These tools look like they might do the same thing. They don't. Read each one carefully — knowing the difference will save you a lot of frustration.
en looks like.

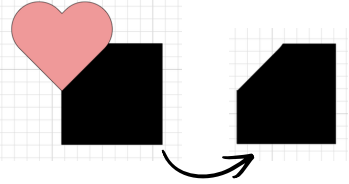
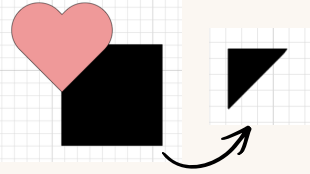
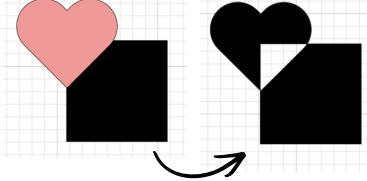
Weld, Unite, Attach, Offset & Flatten

TOOL	WHAT IT DOES	BEFORE → AFTER	CRICUT ACCESS REQUIRED?
Weld	Permanently joins overlapping shapes into one single shape. Removes all overlap lines so the machine cuts the whole thing as one piece. Cannot be undone after saving and closing. Best for: connecting script letters, merging two shapes permanently.		No
Unite	Very similar to Weld — joins overlapping shapes into one. The difference: Unite stays editable until you save and close the project. After that it behaves exactly like Weld. Note: some older tutorials say "Weld" when they mean Unite — they are now part of the same Combine menu.		No
Attach	Locks two or more elements in their exact position AND tells the machine to cut them on the same mat in the same spot. Does NOT change the shape of anything. Best for: keeping text positioned exactly on top of a shape when sending to cut.		No
Offset	Creates an outline or shadow layer around any shape or text at a distance you control. Great for stickers (border around design), layered vinyl (shadow effect), or adding visual depth.		No
Flatten	Turns multiple layers into one single flat image for Print Then Cut. Use when you want to print a colorful design on your home printer and have Cricut cut the outside shape. Must flatten before printing. This will ensure Cricut cuts around your combined design rather than each individual element.		No

Group, Ungroup, Contour & Slice

TOOL	WHAT IT DOES	BEFORE > AFTER	CRICUT ACCESS REQUIRED?
Group	Bundles multiple elements together so they move and resize as one unit. Does not affect how the machine cuts — just makes it easier to manage on the canvas. To access individual items on a group without ungrouping, go to layers panel.		No
Ungroup	Separates a grouped set back into individual pieces for independent editing. Always ungroup Cricut library images before trying to change individual colors or layers.		No
Contour	Hides specific cut lines inside an image without deleting them. Useful when a Cricut library image has internal details you don't want the machine to cut. Hidden lines can be revealed again — nothing is permanently removed.		No
Slice	Uses one shape to cut into another — creating new shapes from the overlap area. Requires EXACTLY two layers selected (no more or less). You end up with multiple pieces including the cut-out and the negative space. Best for: cutting text out of a shape, creating custom cutouts. NOTE: If more than one shape you will need to unite or weld down to two elements to be able to slice.		No

The Combine Menu — Advanced Options

TOOL	WHAT IT DOES	BEFORE → AFTER	CRICUT ACCESS REQUIRED?
Subtract	Removes one shape from another using the overlap area. You get the bottom shape with a clean hole where the top shape sat. Think of it as you are subtracting the top element from the bottom one. Cleaner single result than Slice since you don't get the overlapping pieces.		No
Intersect	Keeps only the area where two shapes overlap — everything outside the overlap disappears.		No
Exclude	Removes the overlapping area and keeps everything else — the opposite of Intersect.		No

SECTION



Send to Machine

PAIRS WITH:

Video 4 of the Design Space Deep Dive Series

You've designed it. Now it's time to cut it. This section walks you through every step between finishing your design and pressing Go on your Cricut.

You'll learn:

- How to set the right operation for each element (cut, draw, score, print)
- How to read the mat preview screen
- How to select the right material
- How to send your design to your machine

Step 1 — Set Your Line Types

OPERATION	TOOL TO USE	WHAT THE MACHINE DOES	WHEN TO USE IT
Cut	Fine point blade, Deep-point blade, Knife blade, Bonded-fabric blade, Rotary blade (for fabric)	The blade cuts through the material along the design lines.	Default for almost all projects — shapes, letters, vinyl, cardstock.
Draw	Cricut pen (other pens might work depending on thickness or if using adapter)	The machine uses a pen or marker attachment to draw the line instead of cutting it. Note: Cricut will write along the what would be cut lines, so unless you are using a writing font it will seem like an outline.	Cards, journaling, adding handwritten-style details to a design.
Score	Scoring stylus, Scoring wheel	A scoring tool presses a fold line into the material without cutting through.	Cards, boxes, anything that needs a clean fold.
Print	Printer	The element is sent to your home printer — the machine won't cut or draw it. Cricut will have registration marks to help Cricut cut at the correct place.	Print Then Cut projects where you print color and cut the outside shape.
Foil	Foil Tool	The machine presses metallic foil onto the material using a foil transfer kit.	Adding gold, silver, or holographic accents to cards and paper projects.
Engrave	Engraving Tool	A tip scratches or etches the design into a hard material surface.	Metal, leather, acrylic — decorative etching effects.
Deboss	Debossing tool	A tip presses the design into the material surface creating an indented impression.	Leather, thick paper, foil — dimensional texture effects.

Step 2 — Choose Your Mat Setting

After you click Make It or Continue, Design Space will ask how you want to cut — before it shows you the mat preview. You'll typically see three options:

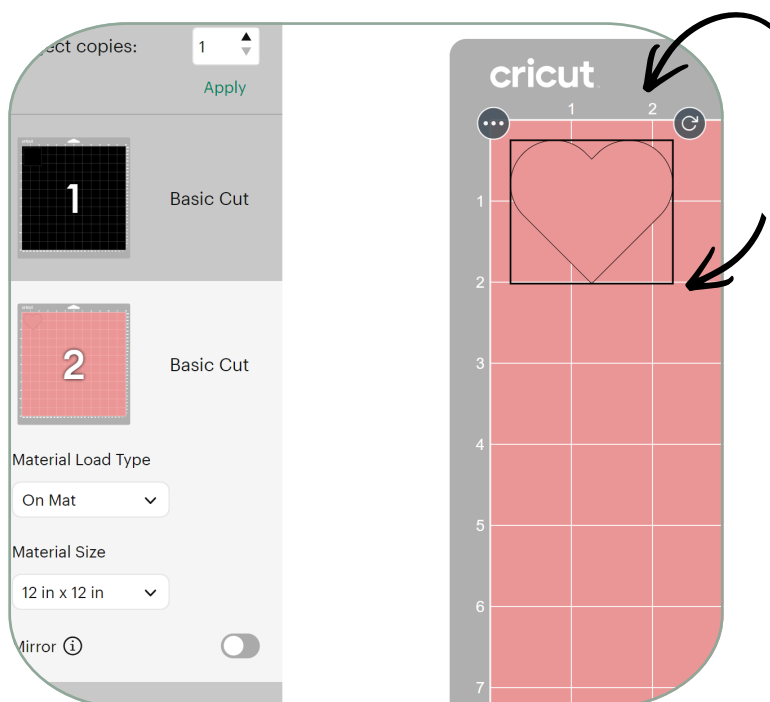
OPTION	WHAT IT MEANS	WHEN TO USE IT
On Mat	Your material is placed on a standard cutting mat and loaded into the machine	Whenever putting material on regular mat (light/standard/strong grip and fabric)
Without Mat	No mat needed — material feeds directly into the machine	Only works with Cricut Smart Materials (special Cricut-brand rolls)
Card Mat	Uses Cricut's Card Mat accessory designed specifically for card making	Only when making cards with the Card Mat accessory

Step 3 — Read the Mat Preview

After selecting your mat setting, you'll see the mat preview screen. This shows you exactly how your design will be laid out on your cutting mat before you cut.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Each color in your design gets its own mat — this is why color = a separate cut.
- You can reposition pieces on the mat to use your material more efficiently.
- You cannot edit the design here — go back to the canvas for any changes or if something does not look right.



The view shown on the right corresponds exactly to your cutting mat. Use the numbers to ensure the position of the design on the screen matches the position of material on the mat. In this example the design is just to the right of vertical 2 line, and below horizontal 2 line. You would want to make sure the material is at least 3x3 inches in this case.

REMINDER NOTE:

The exact look of this screen changes with Design Space updates. Look for a preview showing your design on a mat-shaped area with color tabs. That's always where this lives.

Step 3 — Select Your Material

After the mat preview, Design Space asks what material you're cutting. This tells the machine how much blade pressure to use and how fast to move. Getting this right means clean cuts and easy weeding — getting it wrong means the blade cuts too deep or not deep enough.

HOW TO USE IT:

- Search for your material by name (vinyl, cardstock, iron-on, etc.)
- Pick the closest match to what you're actually using
- When trying a new material — always do a test cut first (meaning cut a little square or circle in a corner)

COMMON MATERIALS QUICK REFERENCE:

Adhesive Vinyl (permanent or removable) → search "vinyl"
Heat Transfer Vinyl / Iron-On → search "iron-on" or "everyday iron-on"
Cardstock → search "cardstock" — pick weight if known (light, medium, heavy)
Poster Board → search "poster board"
Fabric → search by fabric type (cotton, felt, canvas)

Step 4 — Load & Cut

After selecting your material, Design Space will walk you through loading your mat and pressing Go. Follow the on-screen prompts — they are very clear.

THE BASIC FLOW:

- ① Place your material on the mat
- ② Load the mat into the machine
- ③ Press the flashing button on your machine when Design Space tells you to
- ④ Wait — let the machine finish before touching anything
- ⑤ Unload the mat and carefully remove your cut design



YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE.

This guide is just the beginning. If you want to keep learning, keep making, and have a community of crafters cheering you on every step of the way — come find us.

"You Don't Have to Craft Alone" — free Facebook group

Stop Overthinking. Start Creating.
You Don't Have to Do It Alone. ❤️



CRICUT GLOSSARY

*Cricut-Speak Translated
Into Plain English*

Every term you'll hear in a Cricut tutorial — finally explained in a way that actually makes sense. Keep this next to your Cricut and never get lost in a tutorial again.

A companion to the Cricut Design
Space Guide for Beginners

Part of the Design Space Deep Dive Series
at Life Pinned

How to Use This Glossary

Heard a word in a tutorial and had no idea what it meant? This is your translation guide. Terms are organized by category so you can flip straight to the right section.

Terms marked RARELY USED are included so you're never caught off guard — but don't stress about memorizing them. Focus on the ones you encounter first.

Categories In This Glossary:

1

CRICUT MACHINE TERMS

parts, tools, blades, accessories

2

DESIGN SPACE TERMS

software tools and functions

3

CUTTING TERMS

what the machine actually does

4

MATERIAL TERMS

parts, tools, blades, accessories

5

WEEDING TERMS

software tools and functions

6

COMMON CRAFTING TERMS

what the machine actually does

7

FILE TYPES

software tools and functions

8

MAT TERMS

what the machine actually does

1

Cricut Machine Terms

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
Cricut	The brand name — like how we say "Google" for a search engine. Cricut makes cutting machines, accessories, and materials. Pronounced "cricket."
Machine / Cricut Machine	The actual cutting device that sits on your craft table. Cricut makes several models — Maker, Explore, Joy, Venture — each with different capabilities. When someone says "send it to the machine" they mean press Go and let it cut.
Smart Cutting Machine	Cricut's official marketing term for their machines. You'll see this on packaging. It just means the machine reads your design from Design Space and cuts it automatically.
Carriage	The part inside the machine that moves back and forth while cutting. It holds the blade or pen. You'll rarely hear this term but if you do — that's what it is.
Clamp A	The left slot on most Cricut machines. Holds pens, scoring styluses, and other non-blade tools. If your pen isn't drawing, check it's in Clamp A not B.
Clamp B	The right slot — this is where your blade goes. The main cutting tool always lives here.
Mat	A sticky rectangular surface that holds your material in place while the machine cuts. Comes in different grip levels for different materials. You load it into the machine and it feeds through automatically.
Matless Cutting	Cutting material without a mat. Only works with Cricut Smart Materials — special rolls designed to feed directly into the machine.
Smart Materials	Cricut-brand rolls of vinyl, cardstock, and iron-on designed to cut without a mat. They feed straight in from the roll. Convenient but only compatible with certain machines.
Tool Housing	The small cylindrical piece that holds interchangeable blades. You swap the blade inside without replacing the whole housing. Clicks into Clamp B.

1

Cricut Machine Terms (Continued)

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
Fine Point Blade	The blade that comes with your Cricut. The one you'll use most often — great for vinyl, cardstock, iron-on, and most beginner projects. When in doubt, start here.
Deep Point Blade	A blade with a steeper angle for cutting thicker materials like foam, thick cardstock, or fabric (with backing). Looks similar to the Fine Point but has a sharper tip. Usually sold separately.
Rotary Blade	A rolling blade designed specifically for fabric. Cuts fabric cleanly without a backing sheet. Only available on the Cricut Maker. Looks like a tiny pizza cutter.
EasyPress	Cricut's version of a heat press — a flat heated plate you press onto HTV to bond it to fabric. More consistent heat than a household iron but easier to use than a full-size heat press. Many crafters consider it a must-have for iron-on projects.
Ready to Cut Indicator	The flashing button on your Cricut machine that tells you it's loaded and ready. When Design Space says "press the flashing button" — this is it. Don't press it until Design Space tells you to.
Brayer	A small hand roller used to press material flat onto your cutting mat. Helps prevent bubbles and lifting during a cut. That little roller in many Cricut tool kits — now you know its name.
Scraper / Scraper Tool	A flat rigid tool used to firmly press vinyl onto a surface (burnishing) and to clean dried material bits off your mat to extend its life.
Spatula	A thin flat tool used to carefully lift delicate cuts off the mat without tearing them. Essential for intricate paper cuts or thin vinyl letters.
Cricut Joy	The smallest Cricut machine — compact and portable. Great for labels, cards, and simple decals. Not compatible with all materials or tools that work on the Maker or Explore. If a tutorial shows the Joy, some steps may look different on your machine.
Scoring Stylus	The original scoring tool — a pen with a rounded tip that presses a fold line into paper or cardstock. Goes in Clamp A. Good for lighter materials.
Scoring Wheel	A newer, stronger scoring tool with a small wheel that rolls along the material for a deeper, crisper fold line. Goes in Clamp B with an adapter. Better for thicker materials. Only works on the Cricut Maker.

2

Design Space Terms

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
Cricut Design Space	The free software — where you create, arrange, and prepare designs before sending them to your machine. The control center between your idea and your Cricut.
Canvas	Your design workspace inside Design Space. The white area where you place everything. What you put here is what the machine will cut, draw, or score.
Artboard	Another word for canvas. Not commonly used in Cricut tutorials — you may hear it if someone comes from a graphic design background. Same thing. (Rarely used)
Bounding Box	The dotted rectangle that appears around an object when you click on it. Shows the edges of your design and lets you resize, rotate, or move it. (Occasionally referenced in tutorials)
Layers Panel	Shows every object in your project as a separate layer. If you can't click something on the canvas — find it here and select it from the list. A total lifesaver.
Upload	Bringing your own design file into Design Space. Supports SVG, PNG, and JPG. This is how you use designs you bought, downloaded, or created yourself.
Image Library	Cricut's built-in collection of thousands of ready-made designs. Some are free, many require Cricut Access. Look for a lock icon or price tag on paid images.
Projects	Complete ready-to-make designs shared by Cricut or other users inside Design Space. Great for beginners who want to make something without designing from scratch.
Template	A background guide inside Design Space showing the shape of a real object — shirt, mug, tote — so you can size and position your design accurately. The template itself does not cut.
Cricut Access	Cricut's subscription service — like a Netflix for Cricut content. Gives you access to thousands of images, fonts, and projects. Not required to use your machine but expands what you can do significantly.
Attach	Locks two or more objects in their exact position AND tells the machine to cut them on the same mat in the same spot. Does not change any shapes — just holds position. Use when you need text to stay exactly on top of a shape.
Weld	Permanently combines overlapping shapes into one single shape. Removes the overlap lines so everything cuts as one piece. Cannot be undone after saving and closing the project.
Unite	Very similar to Weld — combines overlapping shapes into one. Key difference: Unite stays editable until you save and close the project. After that it behaves exactly like Weld. Note: older tutorials may say "Weld" when they mean Unite — they now live in the same Combine menu.

2

Design Space Terms (Continued)

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
Slice	Uses one shape to cut into another, creating new shapes from the overlap. Requires EXACTLY two layers selected. You get multiple pieces including the negative space.
Combine	A newer Design Space menu containing Unite, Subtract, Intersect, and Exclude — more advanced versions of the old Weld and Slice tools.
Subtract	Removes one shape from another using the overlap area. You get the bottom shape with a hole where the top shape sat. Cleaner single result than Slice.
Intersect	Keeps only the area where two shapes overlap — everything outside the overlap disappears. (Rarely used by beginners)
Exclude	Removes the overlapping area and keeps everything else — the opposite of Intersect. (Rarely used by beginners)
Flatten	Collapses multiple layers into one flat image for Print Then Cut. Use when you want to print in color and cut the outside shape. Must flatten before printing.
Contour	Hides specific cut lines inside an image without deleting them. Useful when an image has parts you don't want cut. Hidden lines can be revealed again later.
Group	Bundles elements together so they move as one unit. Does not affect cutting — just makes canvas management easier.
Ungroup	Separates grouped items back into individual pieces. Always ungroup images before editing individual colors or layers.
Align	Automatically lines up elements — left edges, right edges, centers, tops, bottoms. Saves you from eyeballing it manually.
Distribute	Automatically spaces multiple elements evenly. Use for consistent spacing without measuring.
Offset	Creates an outline or shadow layer around any shape or text. Great for stickers, layered vinyl, or adding a border.
Operation / Line Type	Tells the machine what to DO with each element — Cut (default), Draw, Score, Print, Foil, Engrave, Deboss.

3

Cutting Terms

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
Basic Cut	Standard cutting — the blade cuts through your material along the design lines. The default for most projects.
Cut Lines	The paths the blade follows when cutting. Every shape and letter in your design has cut lines.
Score	A shallow line pressed into material to create a clean fold. Used for cards and boxes. Requires a scoring stylus or scoring wheel — not the regular blade.
Perforate	Creates a dotted tear-away line — like the edge of a stamp or coupon. Requires a special perforation blade.
Deboss	Presses a design into a material surface without cutting through — creating an indented impression. Great for leather, paper, or foil.
Engrave	Scratches or etches a design into a hard material like metal, leather, or acrylic. Requires an engraving tip.
Foil	Adds shiny metallic foil accents using foil sheets and a foil transfer kit. Great for gold or silver details on cards and invitations.
Print Then Cut	Two-step process: print a colorful design on your home printer first, then Cricut cuts around it using registration marks for alignment. Great for stickers, labels, and some Print-then-cut HTV.
Bleed	A tiny amount of extra color Design Space adds around the edges of a Print Then Cut design. It's there because cutting is never perfectly precise — the bleed ensures you won't see a white edge if the cut is even slightly off. Important: make sure your design is welded or flattened first or the bleed can appear in unexpected places and affect how your design looks.
Registration Marks	Small black marks Design Space adds automatically to Print Then Cut sheets. When you load the printed sheet into your Cricut, the machine scans these marks to find exactly where your design is and where to cut. Do not crop them off when printing.

3

Cutting Terms (Continued)

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
Kiss Cut	Cuts only through the top layer of vinyl — not through the backing paper. How sticker sheets work — you cut the design shape but the backing stays intact so stickers can be peeled individually.
Die Cut	Cuts completely through all layers of material.
Calibration	A setup process that helps your Cricut align cuts and prints accurately. If your Print Then Cut designs are off or score lines aren't where you expected — run a calibration in Design Space settings.
Test Cut	Cutting a small version of your design before committing to the full project. Lets you check blade pressure, material settings, and mat grip. Always do a test cut when trying a new material.
Nesting	Arranging designs close together on your mat to use as little material as possible. Design Space has an automatic nesting feature but you can also do it manually.



Material Terms

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
Vinyl	A thin flexible adhesive material — like a really precise sticker film. Cut a design, apply to smooth surfaces like mugs, tumblers, windows, or walls.
Permanent Vinyl	Adhesive vinyl designed to last years — weather resistant and waterproof when sealed. Use for outdoor projects, mugs, car decals, and anything you'd like to last longer.
Removable Vinyl	Adhesive vinyl that comes off cleanly without residue. Use for temporary decorations, wall decals you might want to change, or when you don't want a permanent commitment.
HTV (Heat Transfer Vinyl)	Vinyl that bonds to fabric using heat and pressure instead of adhesive. Cut it, weed it, then press it onto fabric with a heat source. Must be mirrored before cutting.
Iron-On	Another name for HTV. Same product — heat transfer vinyl.
Infusible Ink	Cricut's version of sublimation — special ink sheets or pens that bond permanently into compatible blank materials using high heat. The ink becomes part of the material instead of sitting on top. Produces vibrant, wash-resistant results. Requires specific Infusible Ink-compatible blanks and very high heat — not compatible with regular fabric or standard blanks.
Transfer Tape	A clear or gridded tape used to pick up cut adhesive vinyl from its backing and transfer it to your final surface as one piece. Without it you'd have to place every letter individually.
Carrier Sheet	The clear plastic sheet attached to the back of HTV. Holds all pieces in position while you press them onto fabric. Peel it off after pressing — not before.
Cold Peel	Letting your project cool completely before peeling off the carrier sheet after pressing HTV. Some HTV types require this — peeling while warm can cause the design to lift or distort. Always check your specific HTV instructions.
Warm Peel	Peeling the carrier sheet off while the material is still warm — right after pressing. Some HTV types work best this way. Getting it wrong (peeling cold when it should be warm or vice versa) can ruin your project. When in doubt — check the instructions on your HTV roll.
Weeding Box	An extra rectangle you add around your design in Design Space before cutting. Gives you a clean edge to grab and peel from during weeding. Especially helpful for intricate or small designs.
Blank	The item you're decorating — the shirt, mug, tote bag, tumbler, or sign. When someone says "blank" they mean the undecorated item that will receive your design.
Substrate	A fancier word for blank — the surface receiving your design. Same idea, more technical term.

5 Weeding Terms

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
Weeding	Removing the excess vinyl after cutting — peeling away everything that is NOT part of your design. One of the most satisfying parts of Cricut crafting once you get the hang of it.
Weeding Tool	A hook-shaped metal tool used to lift and peel away small or intricate vinyl pieces during weeding. Comes with most Cricut tool sets.
Reverse Weeding	Applying transfer tape to your vinyl first, then weeding from the back. Especially useful for intricate designs where small pieces might fall out of place during regular weeding.
Negative Space	The cut-away areas that are NOT part of the final design — the parts you remove during weeding. In a letter like O or B, the inside circles are negative space.

6 Common Crafting Terms

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
Burnish	To rub firmly and evenly over vinyl or transfer tape to improve adhesion. Use your scraper tool or a credit card. Skipping this is a common reason vinyl lifts at the edges.
Mirror / Mirroring	Flipping your design horizontally before cutting. Required for almost all HTV and iron-on — you cut HTV face-down so the design needs to be backwards before cutting. Forgetting to mirror is one of the most common beginner mistakes. Design Space usually reminds you but always double check.
Layering	Stacking multiple colors or pieces of vinyl on top of each other for a multi-colored design. Each color is cut separately and applied in order, usually bottom to top.
Knockout Text	Text that is cut out of a shape rather than placed on top — so the background shows through the letters. Created using Slice or Subtract.
Shadow Layer	An offset or slightly larger copy of a design placed behind it to create a drop shadow or outline effect. Created using the Offset tool.
Monogram	A decorative design using initials — typically one, two, or three letters. Very popular in vinyl and HTV projects — often the first thing people make with a Cricut.
Mandala	A layered decorative circular design — intricate and symmetrical. Popular for Cricut because the machine handles the fine detail that would be nearly impossible by hand.
Aspect Ratio	The proportional relationship between width and height. When resizing in Design Space, keeping the aspect ratio locked means it scales proportionally — no stretching or squishing. Keep the lock icon on unless you intentionally want to distort.
Kerning	The spacing between individual letters. Tightening kerning brings letters closer together — especially important for script fonts where letters should touch or connect.

7 File Types

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
SVG	Scalable Vector Graphic — the gold standard for Cricut cutting. Made of mathematical paths rather than pixels so it scales to any size without losing quality. When buying or downloading a design, always choose SVG. Design Space reads SVGs natively and keeps them fully editable.
PNG	A standard image file often with a transparent background. Great for Print Then Cut projects. Not as flexible as SVG for cutting because it's made of pixels and can lose quality when scaled up.
JPEG / JPG	A standard photo format. Has a solid background (no transparency). You can upload JPGs to Design Space but it will ask you to remove the background. Good for photos but not ideal for cutting designs.
DXF	A vector file format sometimes used in cutting. Less common than SVG in the Cricut world but Design Space can import it. If you see DXF files in a design shop they will usually work — but SVG is always the safer choice. (Rarely used)

8 Mat Terms

CRICUT TERM	PLAIN ENGLISH
LightGrip Mat (Blue)	The least sticky mat — designed for lightweight materials like printer paper, thin cardstock, and vellum. Using a stickier mat on delicate paper can tear it when removing.
StandardGrip Mat (Green)	The most common mat — good for general use. Works with most cardstock, patterned paper, vinyl, and iron-on. When in doubt, start here.
StrongGrip Mat (Purple)	The stickiest mat — for heavy materials like thick cardstock, chipboard, leather, and stabilized fabric. If your material is lifting or shifting during a cut, this mat can help.
FabricGrip Mat (Pink)	Designed specifically for fabric when using the Rotary Blade on the Cricut Maker. The texture grips fabric without it slipping.
Sticky Mat / Mat Grip	How well your mat holds material. A new mat is very sticky. Over time it loses grip and material may shift during cutting. Clean your mat regularly to maintain grip.
Restick	Attempting to make an old mat sticky again after it has lost its grip. Washing with soap and water can remove debris and restore some stickiness. Results vary — sometimes it works, sometimes it's time for a new mat.

When I was a beginner at Cricut, I wished I had something like this.

A simple, clear reference I could keep next to my machine and actually understand. So I made one — because if it helps even one person feel less overwhelmed and more confident, it was worth it.

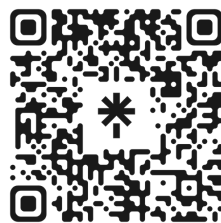
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Thank you for being here. It genuinely means a lot. ❤️

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