



Cricut Guide

Cricut® Air 2



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Before You Start

What does a Cricut do?

A Cricut is an electronic cutting machine that uses a precision blade or pen to cut or draw designs on a variety of materials.

Designs are prepared in Cricut Design Space and then sent to the machine for cutting or drawing. The machine follows the digital design precisely, producing accurate and repeatable results.

The Cricut Explore Air 2 is best suited for lightweight materials such as adhesive vinyl, cardstock, paper, and iron-on (heat transfer) vinyl.

What can you make with a Cricut?

With a Cricut, you can create a wide variety of custom projects, including:

- **Vinyl Projects:** Decals, wall decals, stickers, and labels.
- **Paper Crafts:** Greeting cards, invitations, gift tags, paper flowers, and cake toppers.
- **Iron-On Transfers:** Cut designs to apply to shirts, bags, and other fabric items.
- **Stencils:** Custom stencils for craft projects.

This makes it a popular tool for crafting, personalization, home organization, education, and small business projects.

What to Expect

- **Average project time:** 30-60 minutes, depending on design complexity and material.
- **Skill level:** Beginner-friendly. The MakerStation is a self-guided workspace designed for independent use.
- **Project size:** Maximum cutting area of 12" x 12".
- **Software:** Projects are prepared using Cricut Design Space. A Cricut account is required to use the software.
- **Materials:** Bring your own Cricut-compatible materials or purchase available materials from BPL. See *Supplies & Material* for details.
- **Preparation:** Have your design file prepared and ready to upload before your booking. Accepted formats include PNG, JPG, SVG, DXF, GIF, and BMP.

Software & Files

Software Requirements

All Cricut projects are sent to the machine through Cricut Design Space.

A free Cricut account is required to use Cricut Design Space. You can create an account through the Cricut Design Space sign-in screen or on the Cricut website.

Cricut Design Space is used to create designs, upload artwork, arrange project layouts, and send projects to the Cricut machine. Designs can also be created in CorelDRAW or other vector editing software and imported into Cricut Design Space.

Accepted File Formats

Cricut Design Space accepts the following file formats:

- PNG
- JPG
- SVG
- DXF
- GIF
- BMP

PDF files cannot be uploaded to Cricut Design Space.

Design Requirements

For best results:

- **SVG files work best.** They are ready to cut and keep their layers and colours.
- **Use clear, high-quality images for PNG and JPG files.** Blurry or low-resolution images may not cut cleanly.
- **PNG files with transparent backgrounds need less cleanup** because empty areas are automatically excluded from the cut.

Free vs Paid Content

Cricut Design Space includes both free and paid content.

How to Identify Paid Content

Paid content may display:

- A price next to the item
- A green Cricut Access “a” icon

Free content does not display these indicators.

Important: If your project includes paid images, fonts, or other paid content, you will be prompted to purchase or remove it before you can make your project.

Supplies & Material

Customers may bring their own Cricut-compatible vinyl or cardstock, or purchase materials from BPL.

Materials Available at MakerStation

The following materials are commonly available for Cricut projects:

- Adhesive vinyl
- Transfer tape
- Cardstock

Various colours may be available. Please ask staff about current colours and availability.

Bringing Your Own Materials

Users may bring Cricut-compatible materials from home.

Materials should be:

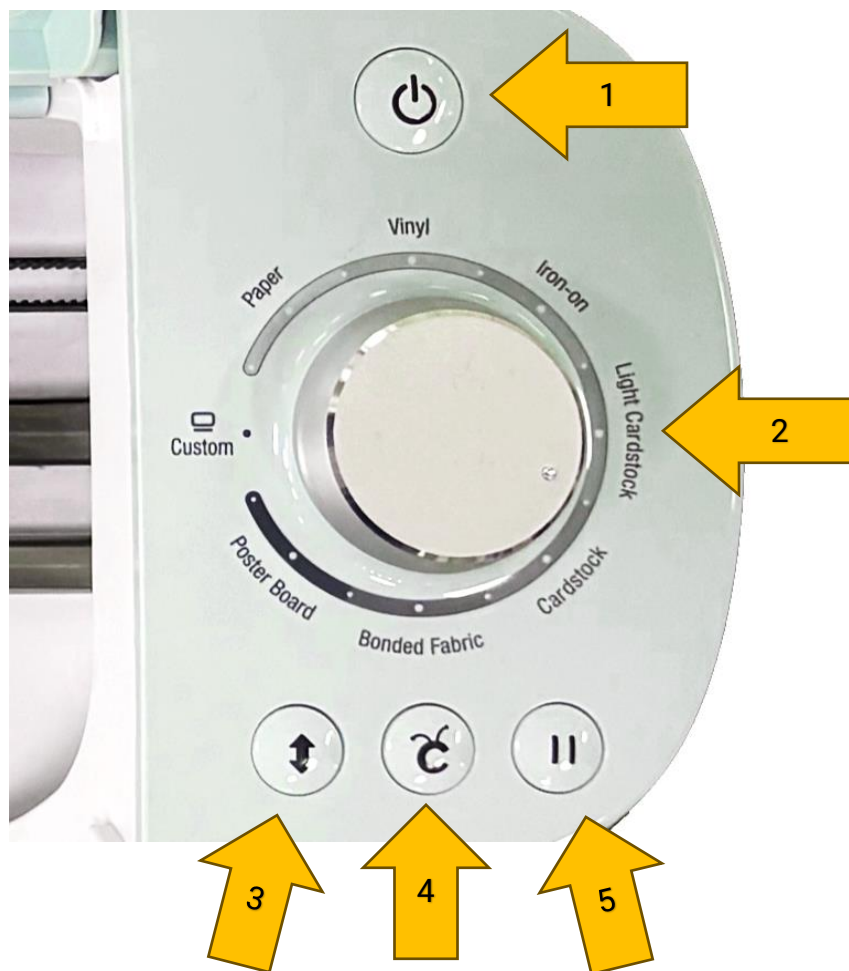
- Clean
- Flat
- Free of wrinkles or creases
- Suitable for a 12” x 12” cutting mat

If you are unsure whether a material will work with the Cricut, please ask staff before beginning your project.

Hardware Overview

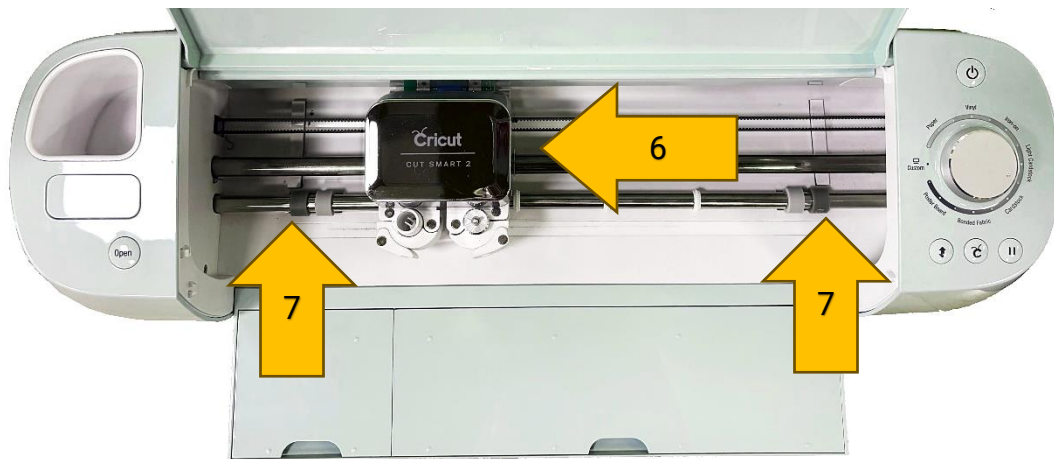
The Cricut Explore Air 2 includes:

1. Power Button – Turns the machine on and off.
2. Material Selection Dial – Selects the material being cut.
3. Load/Unload Mat Button – Loads and unloads the cutting mat.
4. Go Button – Starts the cutting or drawing process.
5. Pause Button – Pauses an active job



6. Clamp A and Clamp B – Hold the Cricut pens and blades during operation.

7. Alignment Tabs – Help position the cutting mat before loading.



Safety

Blade Safety

- The blade is sharp.
- Keep fingers away from the blade carriage.
- Do not place your hands inside the machine while it is operating.
- Never attempt to touch or adjust the blade while a project is running.
- Ask staff for assistance with blade changes.

Safe Operation

Before starting a project:

- Ensure there is adequate space in front of and behind the machine.
- Confirm the correct tool is installed.
- Make sure the material is firmly attached to the cutting mat.
- Keep loose clothing, jewelry, and long hair away from moving parts.

During Operation

- Allow the machine to complete the job before unloading the mat.
- Do not force the cutting mat into or out of the machine.
- If something appears wrong, pause the job and ask staff for assistance.

Getting Started

1. Create or Upload a Design

Open Cricut Design Space and create a new project.

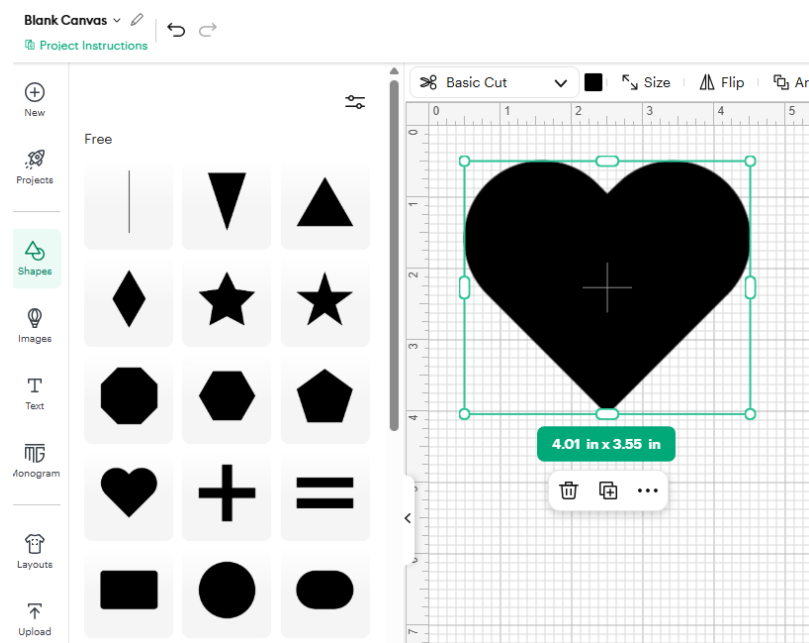
You can:

- Add text
- Insert shapes
- Upload images
- Import SVG files

Use the tools on the left side of the screen to add content to your design.

Select a design element to access editing tools along the top of the screen, including:

- Size
- Rotation
- Position



2. Choose an Operation Type

Select the correct option from the **Operation** dropdown menu for your project.

Cut

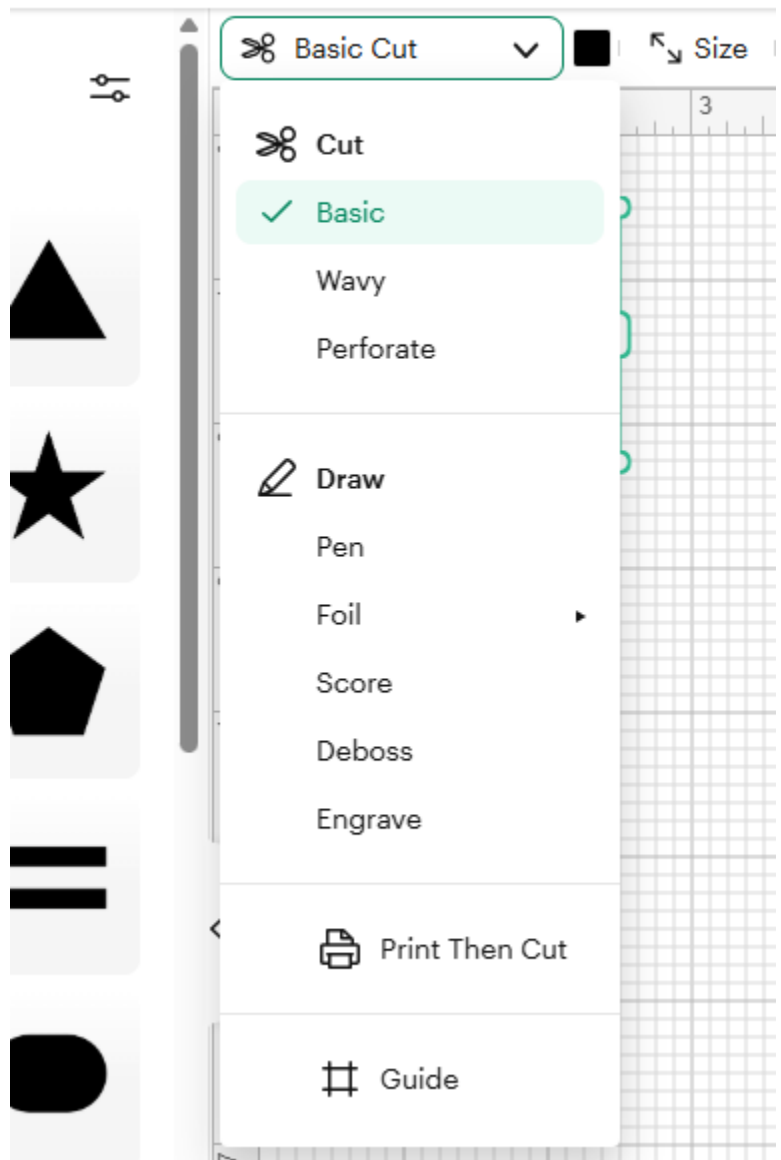
Uses a blade to cut materials such as:

- Adhesive vinyl
- Iron-on vinyl
- Cardstock
- Paper

Draw

Uses a Cricut pen to draw designs for:

- Greeting cards
- Labels
- Decorative artwork



3. Attach (Keeping Your Layout Together)

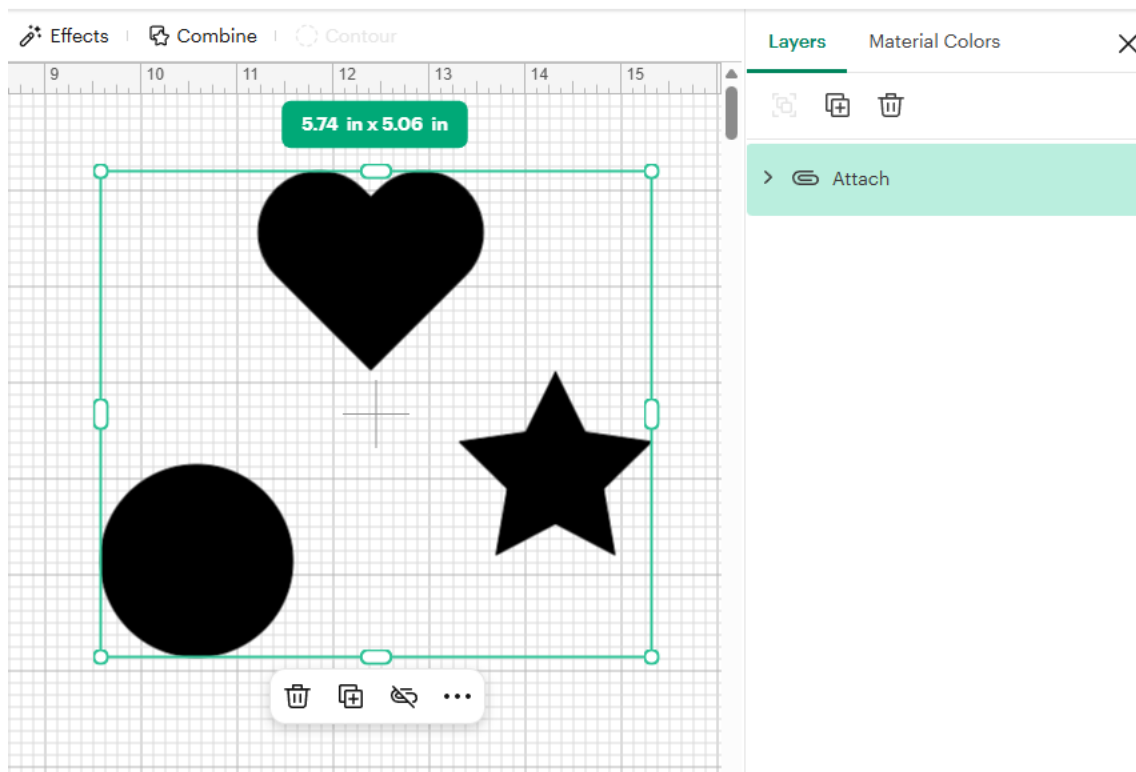
The Attach tool keeps the parts of your design in the same position on the cutting mat as they are arranged in Cricut Design Space.

It can also keep a drawn (pen) or scored layer lined up with the cut layer.

By default, Design Space moves objects close together to save material, which can rearrange your layout. Attach prevents automatic rearrangement and keeps everything exactly as you arranged it.

To Use Attach

1. Arrange your images and text as desired.
2. Select all the layers you want to keep together.
3. Locate the Layers panel on the right side of the screen and click Attach. The selected layers will be labelled "Attach."



Note: If an image contains multiple layers, ungroup it first to avoid attaching all layers together unintentionally.

Attach is especially useful for:

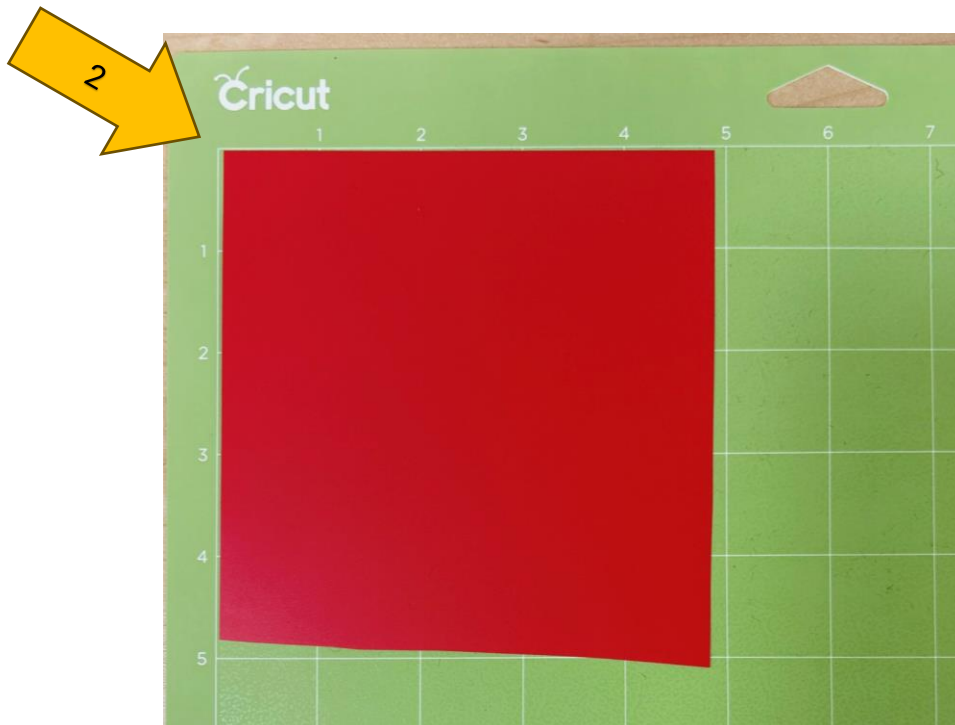
- Labels
- Greeting cards
- Multi-part designs
- Projects that need precise positioning

4. Prepare Your Material

The Cricut uses a sticky cutting mat to hold material in place during cutting or drawing.

Place Material on the Mat

1. Remove the protective cover from the cutting mat.
2. Place the material in the upper-left corner of the mat.
3. Smooth out any bubbles or wrinkles.
4. Press the material firmly onto the mat.



5. Load the Mat

1. Align the cutting mat beneath the Alignment Tabs.
2. Slide the mat forward until it touches the rollers.
3. Press the **Load/Unload Mat Button** (right hand side of the machine).



The machine will pull the mat into position.

6. Select Material Type

Turn the **Material Selection Dial** to the setting that best matches your material.

Common options include:

- Vinyl
- Cardstock
- Custom

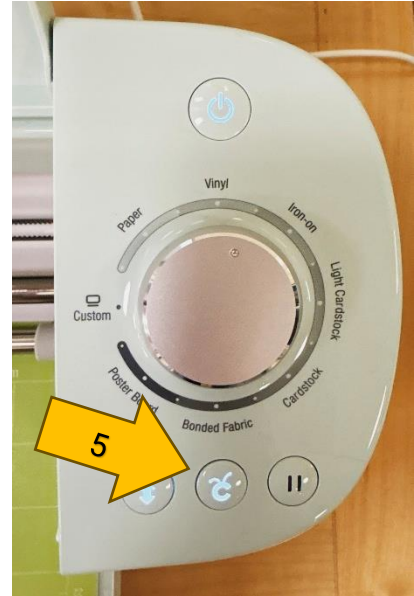
Using the correct material setting helps achieve cleaner cuts.

7. Cut or Draw Your Design

1. Click **Make** in Cricut Design Space.

2. Confirm the mat size is set correctly.
3. Follow the on-screen instructions.
4. Load the cutting mat.
5. Press the flashing **Go Button**.

The machine will begin cutting or drawing your project.



Weeding

Weeding is the process of removing unwanted vinyl from around your finished design after cutting.

This step is only required when working with adhesive vinyl or iron-on (heat transfer) vinyl.

What You Need

- Weeding tool or pick tool
- Good lighting
- A clean, flat work surface

Steps

1. Remove the material from the cutting mat.
2. If desired, trim away excess material around the design.
3. Use a weeding tool to lift a corner of the unwanted vinyl.
4. Peel the unwanted vinyl away slowly.
5. Remove small interior pieces from letters and shapes.
6. Inspect the design to ensure all unwanted material has been removed.

Tips for Easier Weeding

- Work slowly around small text and detailed designs.
- Hold small letters in place while removing surrounding vinyl.

- Use good lighting to help see cut lines more clearly.
- If the vinyl does not separate easily, the cut may not have gone all the way through.



Transfer Tape

Transfer tape is used to move adhesive vinyl from its backing paper to its final surface while keeping the design aligned.

Transfer tape is similar to masking tape. It allows the entire design to be lifted and applied at once while keeping all pieces in the correct position.

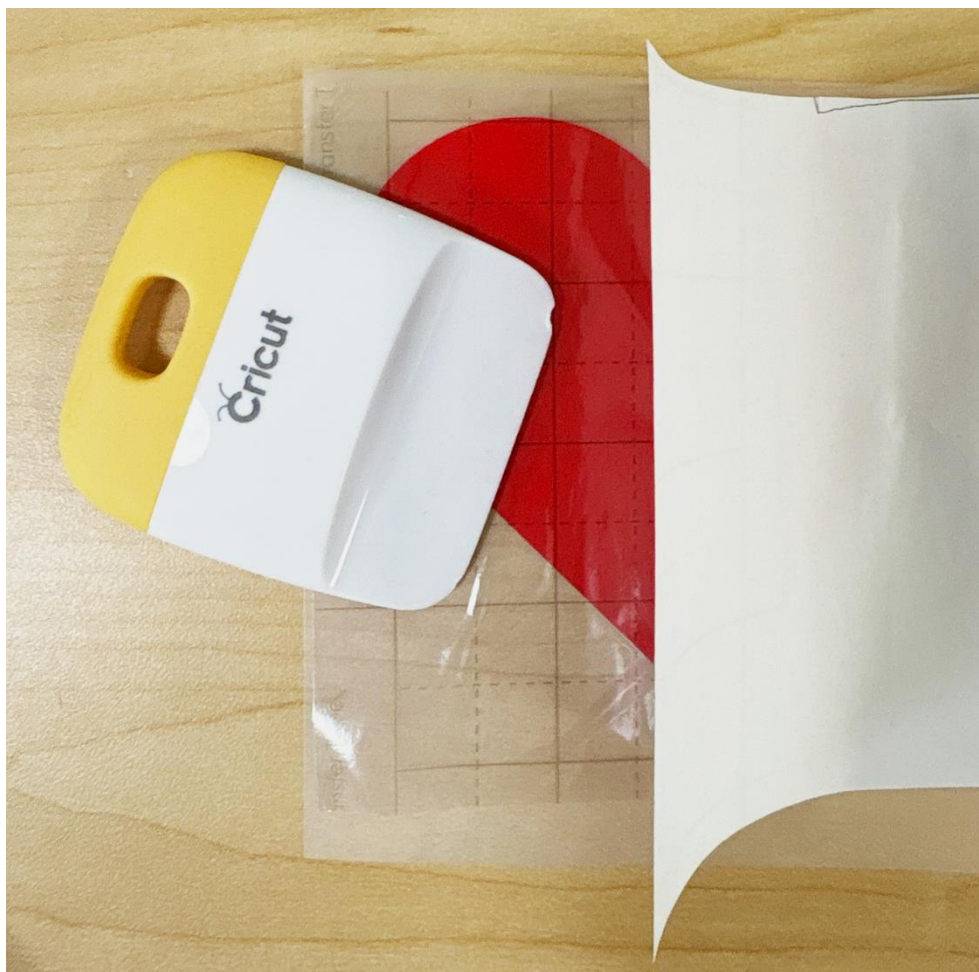
How to Use Transfer Tape

1. Cut a piece of transfer tape slightly larger than your design.
2. Remove the backing from the transfer tape.
3. Place the transfer tape down on to the weeded vinyl design.
4. Use a scraper tool to press the transfer tape firmly onto the design.
5. Slowly peel the backing paper away from the weeded vinyl design.
6. Position the design on the final surface.
7. Use a scraper tool to press the vinyl onto the surface.
8. Slowly remove the transfer tape, leaving behind your vinyl design on the surface.

Tips

- Peel the transfer tape away slowly.
- If part of the design remains on the backing paper, press the transfer tape down again and scrape more firmly.
- Use transfer tape only with adhesive vinyl.

Important: Iron-on (heat transfer) vinyl already includes a carrier sheet (the clear plastic layer attached to the design) and does not require transfer tape.



Tips for Success

- **Use SVG files whenever possible.** SVG files are ready to cut and generally require less cleanup than image-based formats.
- **Check for paid content before starting a project.** Paid images, fonts, and templates must be purchased before they can be used.
- **Use Attach when layout matters.** Without Attach, Design Space may rearrange objects and change the layout of your project.
- **Press material firmly onto the cutting mat.** Material that lifts or shifts during cutting can produce inaccurate results.
- **Keep cutting mats clean.** Dust, paper fibres, and vinyl scraps reduce the mat's ability to hold materials securely.

- **Weed slowly.** Small letters and fine details can lift with the surrounding vinyl if removed too quickly.
- **Start with simple designs.** Intricate designs can be more difficult to cut and weed successfully.
- **Test unfamiliar materials first.** A small test cut can help prevent wasted materials and improve results.

Common Issues & Quick Fixes

Problem	What to Do
Project contains paid content	Remove or purchase any paid content before making your project.
Uploaded image has too many cut lines	Use a higher-quality image or an SVG file. Low-quality images often create unwanted cut paths.
Cricut rearranged my design	Use Attach before clicking Make. Without Attach, Design Space may rearrange objects to save material.
Design draws instead of cuts	Verify that the Operation type is set to Cut rather than Draw.
Material lifts from the cutting mat	Press the material firmly onto the mat. If the mat is no longer sticky, it may need cleaning or replacement.
Vinyl does not cut completely	Confirm that the correct material setting is selected and that the blade is installed properly.
Design is cut in the wrong location	Ensure the material is placed correctly on the cutting mat and matches the placement shown in Design Space.
Small letters lift during weeding	Weed slowly and hold small letters in place while removing surrounding vinyl.
Transfer tape will not lift the design	Rub the transfer tape more firmly before peeling it away.

If anything goes wrong while using the Cricut, notify staff immediately.

Need More Help?

- Ask MakerStation staff for assistance during open hours.
- Visit the MakerStation webpage for booking information, materials, and availability.
- Refer to Cricut Help and Cricut Learn for tutorials and project ideas.