Begin Designing

When you click ‘New Project’ you will arrive at the Cricut designing mat. There are several options when you arrive at the Cricut designing mat; insert images, upload images, insert shapes, and insert text.

Inserting Images

To insert an image, click on the ‘insert images’ tab on the left hand side of the design mat. This will open the library of images available for use. Images that show as ‘free’ or ‘subscribed’ can be used without any charges. Please do not select any images that require purchase. You can search for images using the search bar at the top of the image library. You can also use the tabs in the top left to narrow to all images or cartridges.

To select an image simply click on the image; click again to deselect. You can select multiple images at the same time. The selected images will appear in a bar along the bottom of the library. If there are any images you decide not to use, you can hover the mouse over this image in the library and click the red ‘x’ to remove it. Once you are ready to add the selected images, click the green “Insert Images” button.

Uploading Images

To upload images, click on the ‘upload images’ tab on the left hand side of the design mat. There are two options – basic upload and vector upload. We will discuss these in more detail later in the guide. You can upload your own images from your computer into design space. Please respect copyrights and intellectual property rights when using images.

Inserting Text

Click on the ‘insert text’ tab on the left hand side of the design mat. Type your text in the box that appears. You can use the tabs around the text to drag the text box to the desired position.

Inserting Shapes

Click the ‘insert shapes’ tab on the left hand side of the design mat. This will bring up a box with several basic shapes and a ‘score line’ (more detail on the score line later in the guide.) Clicking on a shape will place it on the design mat. You can then resize and alter the shape.
**Set Canvas**

On the left hand side of the design mat, under the image/text options, is a tab for ‘set canvas.’ This will allow you to choose a canvas background that will appear in design space, so you can see how your finished project would look on the chosen canvas. If your project is stand-alone this may not be needed, however if you are making clothing or bag embellishments, banners or signs, etc., the canvas can be very helpful to visualize the final look of the project, and get sizing and shape the way you want it. Browsing through the canvas options can also give you ideas for projects you may never have thought of, such as decorating jack-o-lanterns and personalizing your smartphone case, soap dispenser, or even dishwasher! Note that the canvas will not cut or write with the rest of the project, it is only there as a guide.

**Mats and Blades**

There are several different mats available for use with the Cricut; light grip, standard grip, and strong grip. There are also two different blades currently available for use, as standard blade and a deep cut blade. Consult the ‘What Can Cricut Cut?’ section at the end of this guide for mat and blade recommendations for different materials. Remove the protective lining from the mat and set this aside while you cut; be sure to replace the lining when you are finished. Press the material firmly onto the cutting mat; make sure the material is smooth (use the scraper to smooth if needed) and that the edges are firmly against the mat. To remove material from the mat, bend the mat gently away from the material, and pull the material away slowly, being careful not to tear or bend the material. For small objects or objects that are not coming off of the mat easily, use the spatula tool.

**Mat Preview Window**

The mat preview window will load when you first click ‘Go’ from the design mat. This will show you all of the different cutting mats that will be used for the project, and you can review the mats at this time to ensure the project is going to cut the way you want it. You can go back and make corrections at this point if needed. You can also move the objects around on the cutting mat and rotate the objects in the mat preview window. Cricut defaults to cutting the images in space saving mode, and the way that they appear in the mat preview is the way they will be cut. If you need to move the images to best fit your materials, etc., this is the place to do so. You can also make multiple copies of your project on this screen by using the ‘multiple copies’ box. This allows you to only design one of the project but cut multiple copies. You can also select the ‘mirror image for iron-on’ box to cut the project as a mirror image. This allows you to design the project the way you want it to look but cut it as the mirror image. Once you are finished reviewing the mats, click the green ‘go’ button at the bottom of the screen.