

# MASTER YOUR CRICUT

3 DAY CHALLENGE



# WELCOME TO OUR 3 DAY CHALLENGE



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Hey Friends!

Welcome to the Makers Gonna Learn Three Day Challenge! We're so excited to have you here. During this challenge, we're going to teach you the basics - the fundamental things you need to know in order to get started with Cricut crafting. If you've been struggling to understand how to use your Cricut, you are in the right place.



# Design Space Fundamentals: Uploading Fonts & Files



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On our first day of the Three Day Challenge, we are going to go over some Cricut core elements. Let's start with a tour of Cricut Design Space. Many people put an emphasis on the machine and the mechanics, but we think that mastering your Cricut machine starts with really understanding how to use the software.

You can even get a Cricut Design Space account, completely for free, before you purchase your machine. This will give you a jump-start on learning what you need to know to get your machine performing the tasks you want from it. You can find Cricut Design Space at [design.cricut.com](https://design.cricut.com).

From there, simply click Download and accept their terms of use and privacy policy. Design Space works on PCs and Macs but not on Chromebook. You can also use it on your phone or iPad/tablet, but things may look a little different than what we are showing you on a desktop.





Let's start with the Design Space home page. When it opens, you'll see a selection of images and projects. In the corner of each image, you'll see an icon of a letter A. This stands for Access (as in Cricut Access).

Cricut Access is their subscription that allows you use to their cut files and fonts for one monthly price. However, while they do offer cut files, fonts, and project ideas, they don't provide the education and support to go with them and this is where Makers Gonna Learn can truly help you master your machine.

### PRO TIP

You do not have to pay for Cricut Access in order to use Cricut Design Space. Design Space is free to use.

In the left hand sidebar on the home page, you'll see My Stuff. This is where you'll find the files and projects you have saved in Design Space.

Right next to the Home tab in the upper left corner, you'll see Canvas. This will open your canvas - your workspace in Cricut Design Space.

Let's go through the left hand sidebar of the Canvas.

First up is New. Click this to get a fresh, new blank canvas.



Next is Templates. Cricut provides templates for a variety of surfaces that you can work with when designing a project. We don't find these helpful and actually prefer to use Shapes and create our own templates.

Moving down the sidebar, we see Projects next. This is where you can find Cricut Design Space projects.



Projects



Shapes

Shapes come next. There are some free basic shapes there that you can use when creating your projects as well as some that are available with an Access subscription. You can also find all of these shapes in our Makers Gonna Learn membership so that you don't have to pay for Access in order to get them.



Images

After Shapes, you'll find Images.

Once again, this is where you'll find Cricut images from Cricut Access. Along with the subscription, you can also purchase individual files from Cricut.

Below that, you'll find Text. When you choose that, a text box will open on your Canvas. It will default to the Cricut Sans font, but you can change that to whatever font you want.



Text

### PRO TIP

You can move the font selection box around as needed on your canvas. When selecting a font, you'll see that there is a tab for Cricut fonts and one for System fonts. System fonts are where you'll find the ones you have downloaded to your computer.



The next section on the sidebar is Phrases. Once again, these are files you can purchase from Cricut.

Below Phrases are Editable Images which are more files that can be purchased from Cricut and then customized in certain ways. We don't generally use any of these as we use the files from Makers Gonna Learn.



Upload

Following Editable Images is Upload. This is where you will upload cut files into Cricut Design Space.

Finally, you'll find monograms from Cricut. Many of them don't really have that true monogram appearance and we use the monogram files from our own membership instead.



# PNG vs. SVG

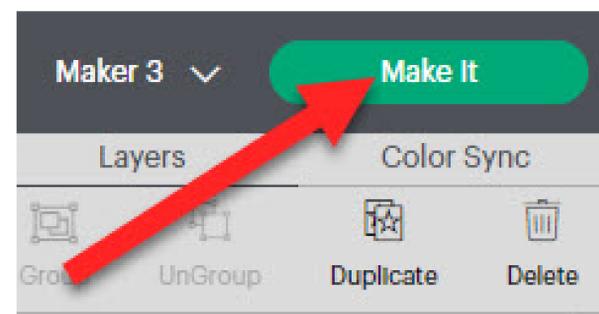
PNGs and SVGs are different types of graphic files. We use both of these when working in Cricut Design Space. One of the biggest differences between PNGs and SVGs are the layers.

So, with an SVG, every color of your design is a separate layer. You can see this when you have your image selected and look at the Layers Panel on the right hand side of your Canvas.



PNGs are generally used for printable images only.

When you click Make It in Design Space, each color of an SVG will be placed on its own mat and cut out separately. With a PNG, it will be placed all on one mat. You will first be printing it with your printer and then your Cricut will cut around the entire design.



## PRO TIP

Any SVG can be turned into a PNG. To do this, be sure to select your whole image (all layers) and then choose Flatten which is located below the Layers Panel. If you change your mind, you can always unflatten as well

You can learn more about this in our full 30 Day Challenge, available as part of our membership. Remember, you can try out a Makers Gonna Learn membership with a free 7 day trial membership!

## How to Use Third Party Files in Cricut Design Space

Begin by downloading and unzipping your file (for example, from Makers Gonna Learn). In Design Space, click Upload (left hand sidebar). Then, Upload Image. Next, you can browse and find your file to upload or you can drag and drop it into Design Space.

Click Upload and you will find it in Recent Uploads. Select your file and click Add to Canvas. Once your image is on your Canvas, you can resize it as needed and cut it out with your Cricut.

### PRO TIP

Once you have uploaded a file into Design Space, you won't need to upload it again. It will remain in your library there.

When it comes to fonts, head back over to Makers Gonna Learn and download the font you want to use. Once again, you will be given a zip file. Unzip the file by double clicking it. Double click the unzipped .otf file and choose Install Font. To be able to use the font in Design Space, you need to choose View and then Reload or Force Reload. Make sure to save your project first, though. Your font will now be available under System Fonts in Design Space.

### PRO TIP

If you are currently working on a project, be sure to save it before reloading Design Space.



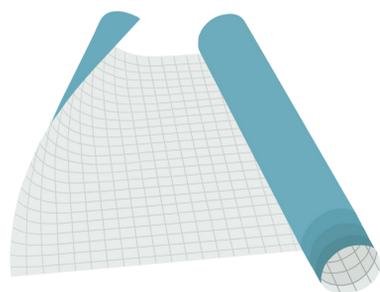
## Adhesive Vinyl vs. HTV | Make Your First Cut



[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)

What is the difference between adhesive vinyl and heat transfer vinyl?

Well, it all comes down to how the adhesive is activated. With adhesive vinyl, it is activated with pressure. This means that it works best on hard surfaces such as plastic, wood, and glass.



For heat transfer vinyl, as you might have guessed, the adhesive is activated with heat and pressure. When it comes to most HTV, the shiny side is the carrier sheet (like built-in transfer tape). You will need to use something like a heat press, mini EasyPress, or even a household iron to activate the adhesive and adhere the HTV to your surface.

HTV needs to be cut with the carrier sheet facing down and because of that, you will need to mirror your image. Heat transfer vinyl can be used on a wide variety of surfaces including: fabric, wood, and glass. HTV is mainly used for fabric, but as you can see, it can be used for other surfaces as well.

# Cutting Vinyl with Your Cricut



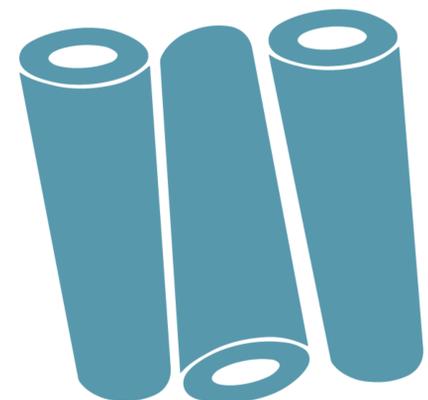
Because we're going to cut out the vinyl instead of making a Print then Cut project, you want to upload the SVG version of your chosen cut file. Add a shape from the Shapes menu to your Canvas to represent your surface. Size it to match the available space you have on your surface material for your design. Then you can size your design to fit that template and get a visual idea of just how it will look on the finished project.

When you try to bring your design over the shape, you might see it going behind the template. To correct that issue, with the design selected, go to Arrange, bring to front, or you can move it on your Layers Panel by selecting the layer it is on and dragging above the layer you want it to be in front of. Once sized, delete the shape you have used as your template.

To cut out your design, click Make. Your design will be placed on the virtual cutting mat. Click continue and connect to your cutting machine. You can connect via USB or Bluetooth but our favorite is USB as it is the most reliable.

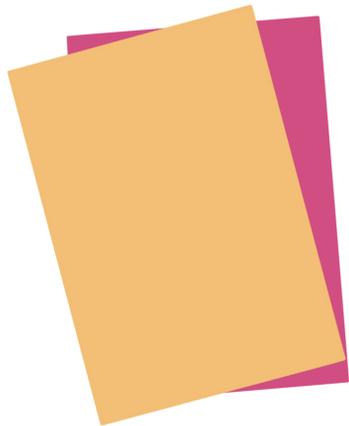
Next, set your material. The regular vinyl setting works well for good quality adhesive vinyl.

Our recommendations for the best permanent vinyl options: Starcraft, Oracal, or Teckwrap. We find that if you use a good quality vinyl, sealing your project isn't necessary.



## PRO TIP

Vinyl does have a shelf life and after 3-5 years, the adhesive may start to break down and it may no longer stick as well.



Apply the vinyl to your cutting mat.

You can use either a StandardGrip or LightGrip mat (especially if it's fairly new) for vinyl. You can check the size of your design in Cricut Design Space and trim your vinyl using a TrueControl or X-acto knife to size. This will help you save vinyl and money. Use care not to cut into the mat.

Design Space will prompt you to load your tools and material. For vinyl and HTV, you need to use your fine point blade. Load your mat into the machine making sure that it is under the two guides on either side. You should see a flashing arrow button on your Cricut. Press that button and your Cricut will load the mat.

Sometimes it will then measure your mat and when it's ready, you will see a flashing button again. Press that flashing Cricut button and your Cricut will start cutting your design. Once cutting is complete, you will see the arrow button flashing one more time. This is what you will press to unload the mat.

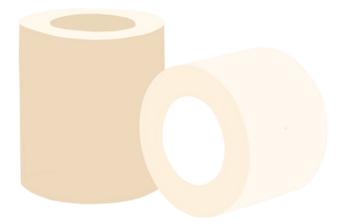
## PRO TIP

Before you unload the mat, you can use your weeding tool to make sure that your cut went all the way through the vinyl. If it hasn't, don't press the flashing arrow button to unload the mat. Instead, press the Cricut button and it will cut it again on the same cut lines as the first time.

Once cut, it's time to weed your design.

We advise you to start from the outside and work your way in. We prefer weeding on the mat because it's like having a third hand to help you hold the vinyl down. Work slowly and carefully to pull away the excess vinyl that isn't part of your design.

With adhesive vinyl, you need to use transfer tape. Cut a piece to fit over your weeded design. Remove the backer from the transfer tape. Apply the transfer tape over your design. We like to use the taco method where you gently fold the tape in half, lay it down in the middle and then work out to the edges from the middle. This will help prevent air bubbles.



Use a scraper tool to burnish the transfer tape down to your design. Flip your design over and remove the backer from the vinyl. Now you can apply the design to your blank surface. Once again, we like to use the taco method. Use a burnishing tool to help it adhere well to the surface.

### PRO TIP

We like to line up the two sides of the design and fold it in half, creasing at the top and bottom of the transfer tape to help center it on the blank.

## Cutting Heat Transfer Vinyl with Your Cricut

Lay down your HTV onto your cutting mat just as you did with the adhesive vinyl. Remember that with heat transfer vinyl, you want to place it transfer sheet facing down (with many brands this is the shiny side, but that's not always true).

Make sure you have turned on Mirror and set your material settings to Everyday Iron On in Design Space. Following the same steps as with regular adhesive vinyl, cut out your design. While it's cutting, this is a good time to preheat your heat press. Our favorite is the Cricut Mini EasyPress. You can use a different heat press or even a household iron instead.

### PRO TIP

On Makers Gonna Learn in the membership dashboard we have a heat guide that will help you determine the correct heat settings for your project. This is found under Resources, Cricut Reference Guide. Remember that you can try out our membership with a 7-day Free Trial Membership.

Once your design has finished cutting, it's time to weed it. Remember that after weeding, you don't need to add transfer tape because it has a built-in transfer sheet. Place the weeded design on your blank surface. You want something underneath the surface to protect your work surface and help with the heating process.

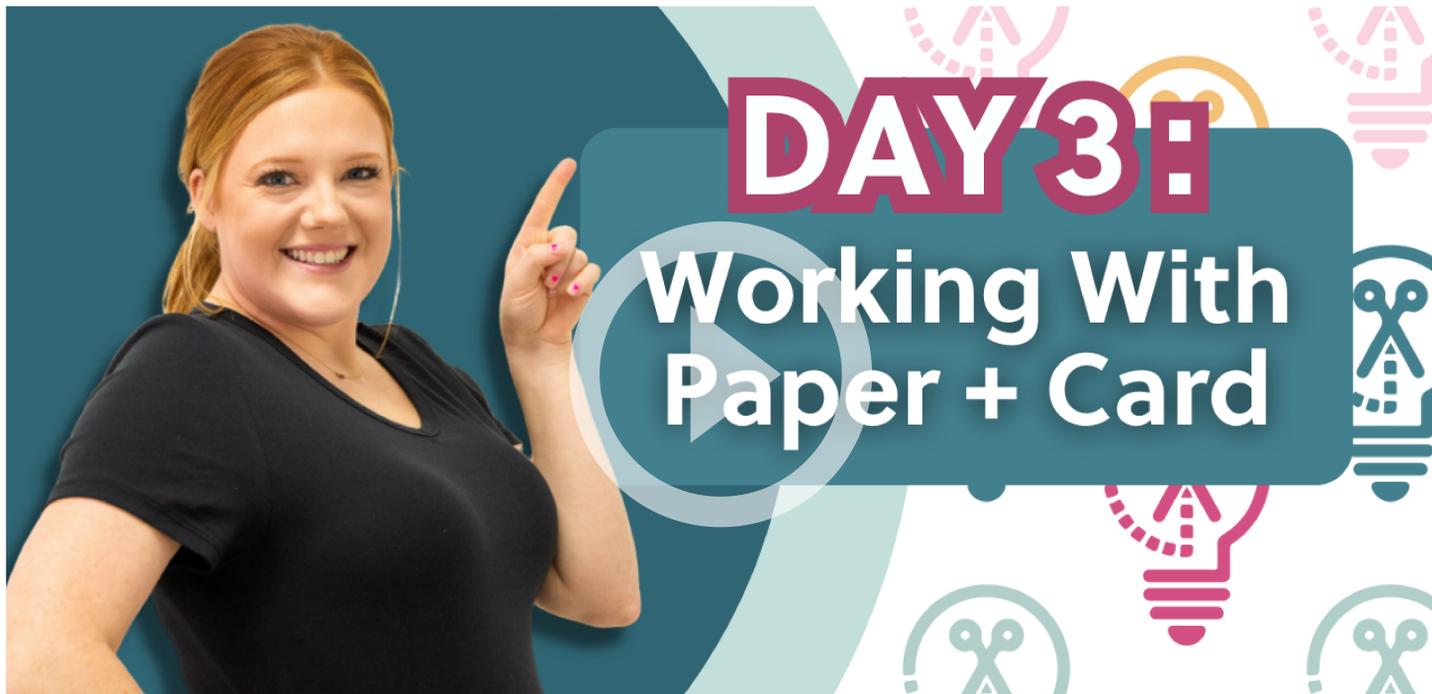
We like to use the Cricut EasyPress Mat but you can also use a folded up towel.

We like to move the EasyPress around so it doesn't overheat in one area. You should start seeing bubbles form as the design comes away from the transfer sheet.





## Working With Paper + Simple Card

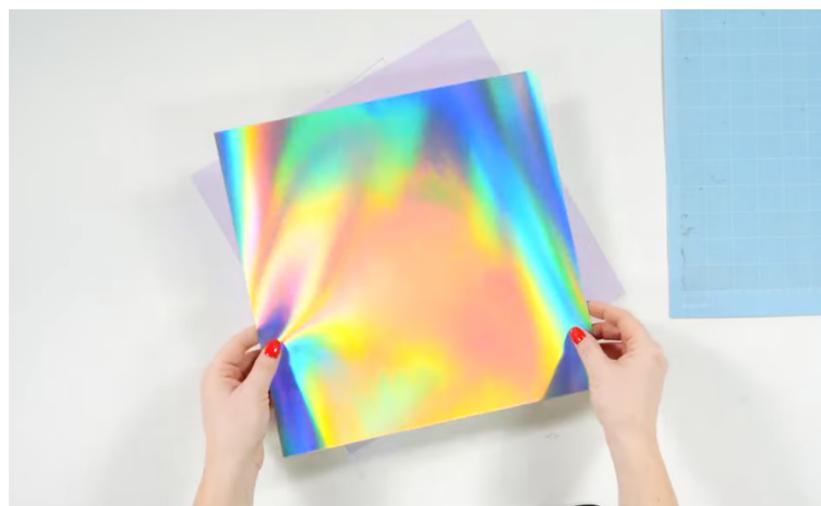


[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)

Today, we're going to show you how to work with card stock using your Cricut machine. We will show you how easy it is to make a really cute three-dimensional greeting card.

### **Materials We Like to Use When Making Paper Crafts:**

You can use whatever you have on hand or whatever kind of card stock you find available locally, but our favorite is the Ashlee Falco brand from Celebration Warehouse. We prefer to use color-core card stock. This means that the color runs all the way through (as opposed to types that have a white center inside).



When cutting paper, you should use a LightGrip cutting mat. You can also use a well-loved StandardGrip mat, but the key is that you need something with a light tack adhesive on it so it doesn't rip your paper when you try to remove it from the mat.

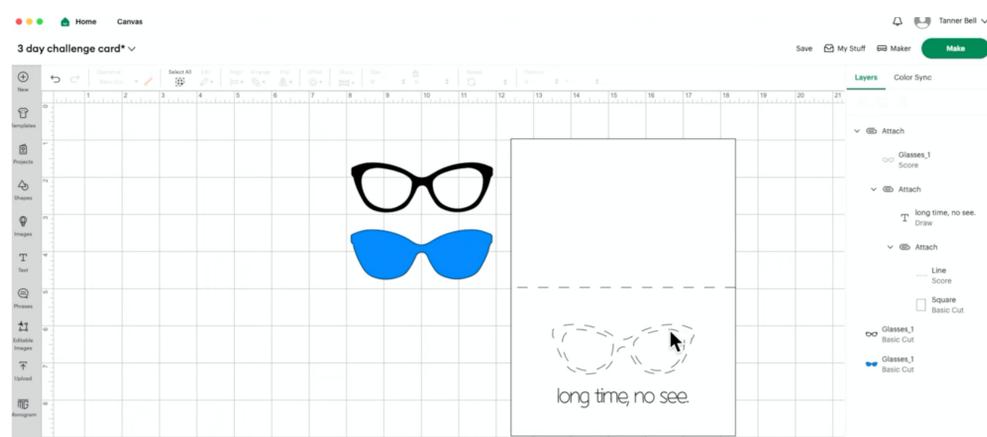


A tool you might want to have on hand for paper projects is the Scoring Stylus. It will work in either the Maker or the Explore. With this tool, the Cricut will make score lines for you so you don't have to do it manually. Another tool we love is reverse tweezers. They're really handy when working with small, intricate pieces.

The Zig Two Way Glue Pen is one of our favorite adhesives when working with paper. It's similar to a paint pen and allows us to apply glue evenly to our project. The glue comes out blue and dries clear. We also like to use foam adhesive squares. These are perfect for 3D projects. Finally, for a project such as the one we're making today, you will need a fine point Cricut pen.



## Working in Design Space



Download the glasses cut file from Makers Gonna Learn and upload it to your Canvas in Design Space.

Type in the text that you want to use, select it, and change it to your desired font. We used a sketch font called Thomas Sketch from MGL.

**Thomas Sketch**

Thomas Sketch

SAMPLE TEXT

Crafting quick beautiful projects with  
zeal makes my heart very excited.



Next up, you need to make the card base. Think of how large you want the finished product to be. For example, we made a 4 x 6 inch card. So, since we want to be able to fold it in half, we doubled the height of the card and made our base 8 x 6 inches.

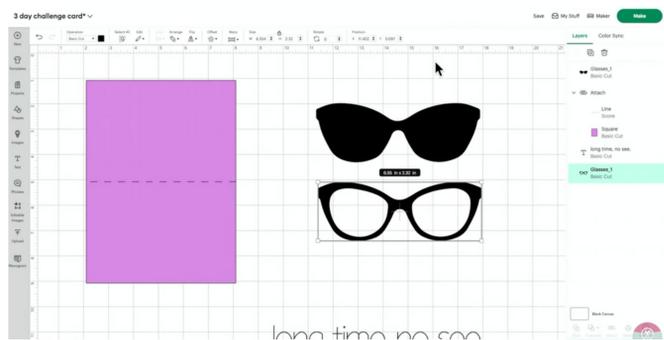
In order to be able to fold the card in half, we need to add a score line. Go to Shape, Line. Add a line to your rectangle. Since the card is 6 inches wide, make the line 6 inches long. Then, go to Rotate, 90 degrees. Place it on your card base. To get it perfectly centered, select both the line and the card base and go to Align, Center.

## PRO TIP

With the line selected, go to Operation. Make sure that it says Score (not Basic Cut). Change if needed. If it's a score line, it should look dashed instead of solid and you will see in the Layers Panel that it says "Score".

Select both the score line and the card base and choose Attach (below the Layers Panel).

Next, duplicate the glasses image. With one of the glasses images selected, choose Contour (below the Layers Panel). Click Hide All Contours. Change the colors of each of the glasses images so they will cut out on different mats.



With the text selected, go to Operations and change it from a Basic Cut to Pen. Place the text on the card base and size to fit. With the card and text both selected, choose Align, Center Horizontally. Then, with both still selected, choose Attach.

Select both glasses. Resize them to fit on the card. Resizing them at the same time ensures that they will still line up with one another. Next, with both of them selected, choose Align, Center.

## PRO TIP

Duplicate the outer glasses frame. Place the duplicate on the card and place it where you would like it to be. Change from Basic Cut to Score in the Operations menu. Your Cricut will score the outline of the glasses and make it much easier for you to place your cut pieces exactly where you want them. Don't forget to attach your score lines to the card base.

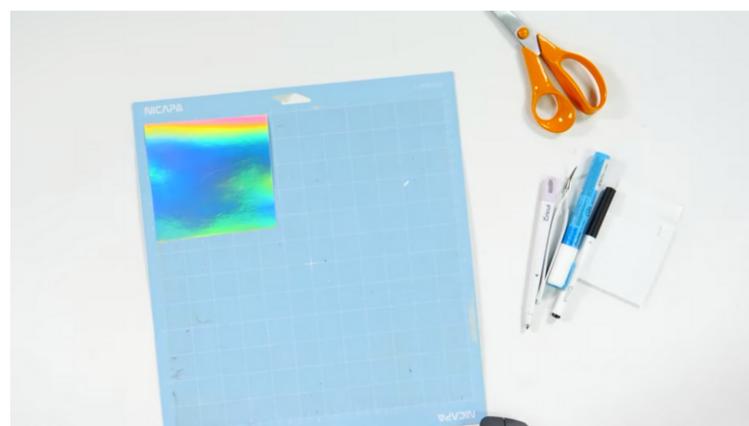
## Cutting Out the Project

Click Make in Cricut Design Space and your project will be sorted onto the cutting mats. Start with the first mat and place the card stock down on the mat. You can use a scraper tool to burnish it down but with some materials like holographic card stock, it might scratch it. So, we like to use a brayer instead.

Choose Continue and connect to your machine. Select your materials. Search for the type of material you are using (for example, holographic card stock). Use your fine point blade for cutting the card stock. When finished cutting, we like to check it by lifting up the card stock to make sure it has cut all the way through before unloading the mat from the machine.

Repeat for the other image, remembering to change the material setting accordingly. Once you unload the mat from the machine, we like to flip the mat upside down and carefully peel the mat away from the card stock, using gravity to assist. This helps to keep it flat and prevent curling and is a good idea for lighter weight card stocks.

For the card base, you'll see in Design Space that it will prompt you as to which tools it wants you to load and which clamp to place them in. If you're using a Cricut Maker and a Scoring Stylus, you may have to edit your tools as it will default to using the Scoring Wheel. Once the correct tools are loaded into the machine, you can load the mat.



Your machine will do the scoring and then stop and prompt you to swap out the Scoring Stylus for the pen. Once you have done this, press the flashing button on your machine to continue. When your machine has finished writing, it will then cut out your card.

Unload the mat from the machine. We like to immediately remove the pen and put the cap back on it so it doesn't dry out. Flip the mat over and use the gravity method again to remove your mat from the card.



When it comes to folding the card, we like to use a Bone Folder to ensure that we get nice crisp folds. To assemble the glasses, we used the Reverse Tweezers to hold the top layer and applied some of the Zig Two Way Glue to the back of it. Glue the glasses frames and lenses together.

Attach the glasses to the card with foam adhesive squares. Remember to use your score lines to help you line it up. That's it. Your card is finished!

# CONGRATULATIONS!

## YOU HAVE COMPLETED OUR 3 DAY CHALLENGE



[WATCH NOW!](#)

Remember, this is only the beginning of your Cricut journey. There is so much more to learn and so many more projects to make. Our full 30 Day Challenge offered within the Makers Gonna Learn membership will take what you've learned here and extend it.

