SVGS MADE SIMPLE

Learn how to find, download, upload, and modify SVG cut files

BY AWARD-WINNING GRAPHIC DESIGNER
AND BESTSELLING AUTHOR

JENNIFERMAKER

Lesson 3: Modifying SVGs in Design Space

In this lesson, I'm going to show you how to modify the SVGs you upload in Cricut Design Space. You're going to learn how to fix up the files so they are ready to cut, how to modify and personalize the designs, and how to group and ungroup, attach, and change cut lines to score lines or write lines. Once you can do this, you will have the key to using SVGs to create amazing projects.

So if you're struggling with this, as I know many of you are, this will erase that feeling of frustration. And you'll be making beautiful things from SVGs before you know it.

So just to recap, in session/video one I taught you how to find super cool SVG files, how to download them, and where to find the files once they were downloaded.

In session/video two, I showed you how to actually use those files to make things — by uploading the file to your design software using a Mac, a PC, or even an iPad or iPhone.
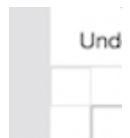
And now, I'm going to show you how to prepare those files for cutting, how to modify them, and how to personalize them to your needs.

Are you ready? Let's do this!

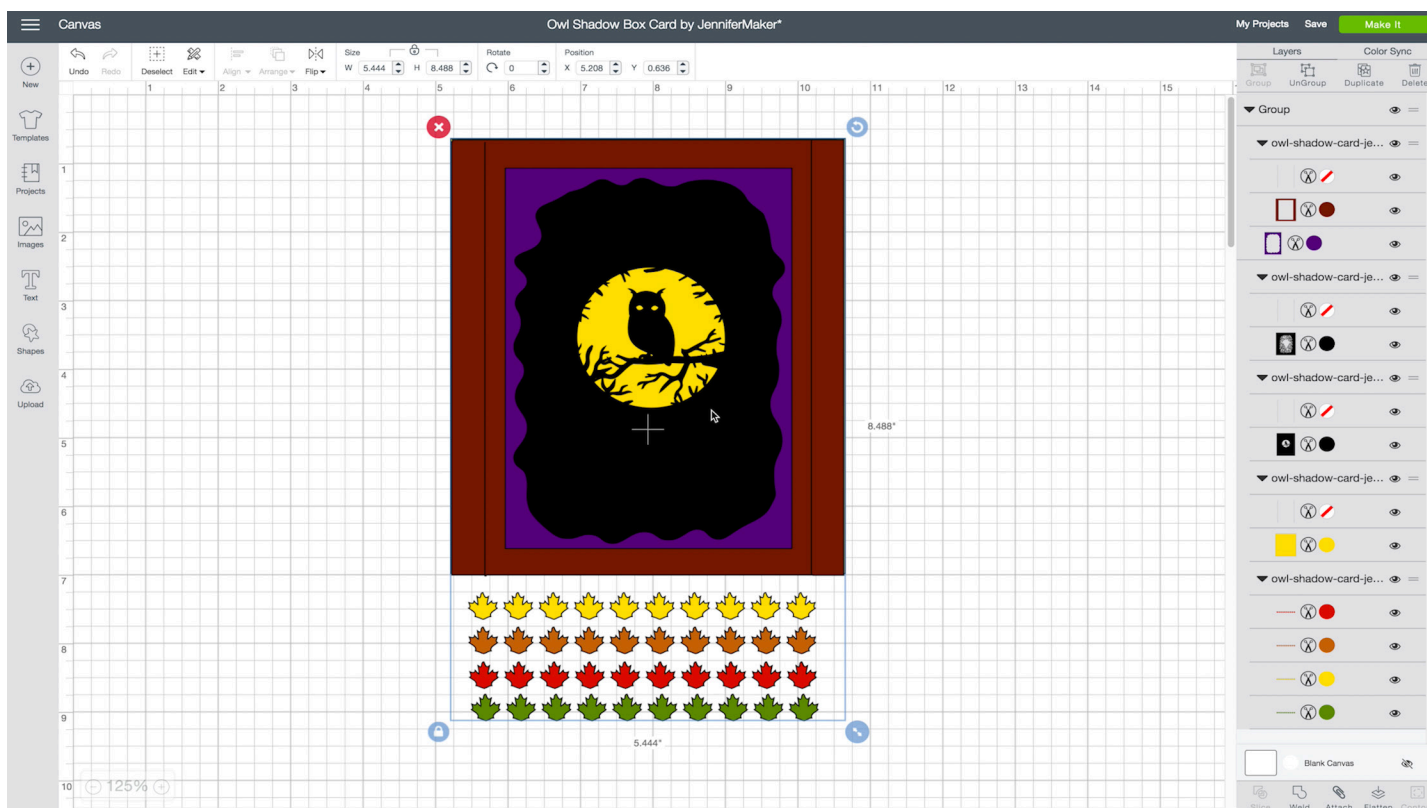## How to Prepare SVG Files in Design Space (Including Score Lines)

Let me show you how to make your SVGs in Cricut Design Space really work for you! On the next page is my Cricut Design Space window with my Owl Shadow Box Card loaded, exactly as it appears right after uploading it and placing it on the canvas. The Canvas is this big open area in the middle. (Remember, if you're not sure how to upload files to Cricut Design Space, review the previous session and video in this training series.)

Tip: You can modify the gridlines on the Canvas grid by clicking in the empty white box at the top left corner where the rulers meet. I like to keep my grid turned on.

It's important to understand that most SVG cut files are not ready to go as soon as you upload them, unless they are very simple. Most need some preparation in order to get the results you want. Instructions and tutorials for the files will needs to be done, but if you're not familiar with these concepts, it can be confusing.
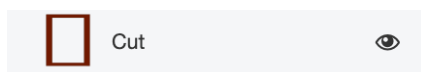
To help you understand, I'm going to walk you through the two big prep tasks you need to do with uploaded SVGs — Modifying Layers and Ungrouping/Attaching. Let me show you how to do this on my Owl Shadow Box Card using Chrome (on a Mac). And I should note that Cricut Design Space looks the same on all desktop and laptop computers, regardless of the browser or operating system. But it does look different in the app on the iPad and iPhone, so I'll be showing you that as well.

NOTES

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

How to Modify Layers in Design Space

First, let's talk about Modifying Layers. All SVG cut files, except the very simplest, have layers. You can view the layers in the layer panel on the right side of the screen. You can click each layer in the panel and it will highlight and select it on your Canvas.

Each line item in your Layers panel shows several important things — a thumbnail of the layer itself (so you can see a general shape), the layer color (indicated by the thumbnail color), the layer attributes (cut, draw, score, or print), and whether it is visible or hidden.
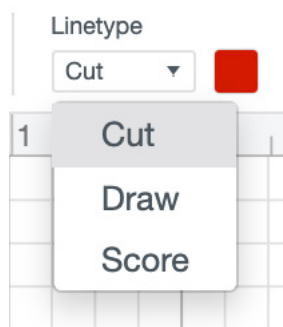
By default, all layers come in with the CUT attribute selected. But not all design layers are intended to be cut. This particular project, like many other SVG projects I make, has SCORE LINES built in to help you fold the project after it is cut. But all score lines are really just lines — YOU have to tell Cricut Design Space that you want them to be scored instead of cut. Thankfully, this is easy. Here's how you do it:
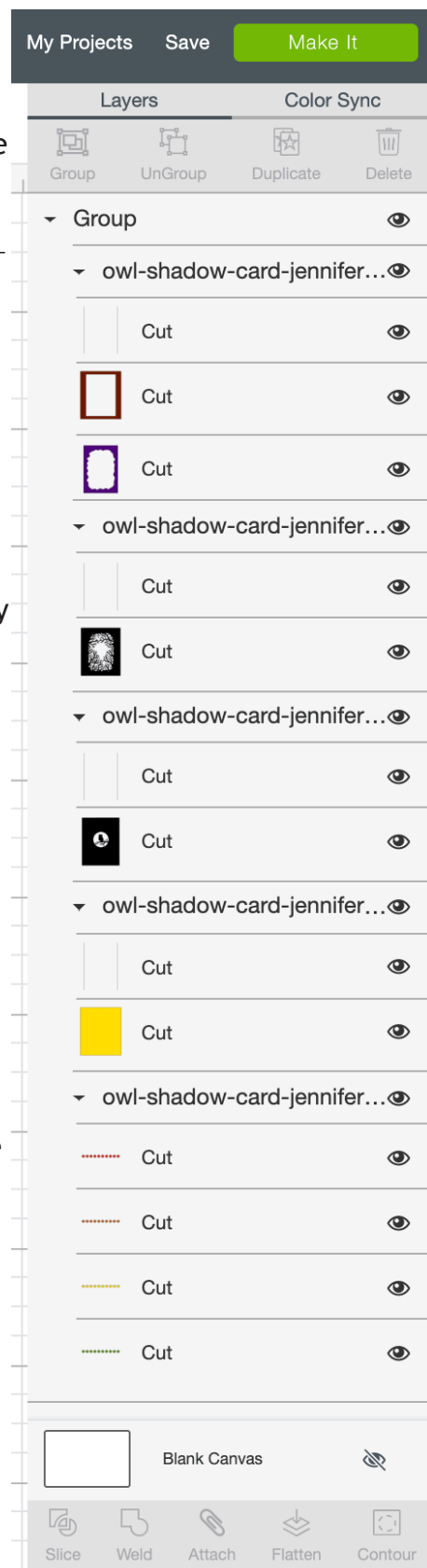
First, you identify the score lines. Your instructions or tutorial for the file will mention which lines are score lines, but you can also tell by the fact that the color icon in the layers panel looks like it has no color (it's just an empty box or line(s)). It is no color because it's just a line.

So you click that layer, then click the Linetype menu at the top of the window, and change it from Cut to Score in the menu. That's it.

We do this for each score line layer. In this file, there are four of them, all indicated by the thumbnails of empty boxes and lines.

Great! So now our score lines are properly set, and if you have a scoring stylus in your Cricut, it will score these lines instead of cut them.
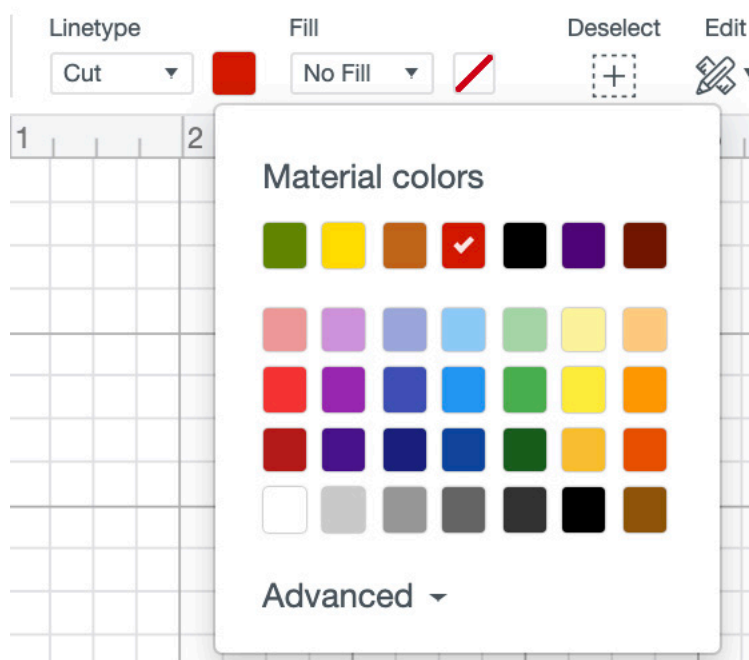
You can modify layers in other ways, too, of course.

If you click the thumbnail then click the color box near the top of the screen, you can change the color. Note that the Material Colors at the top of the screen show you what colors you already have for this project if you want to choose one of those, or you can pick an entirely different one below.

You can also make a layer invisible (hidden) by clicking the eye icon. A hidden layer will not show on your Canvas and it will not cut out.

Tip: You can undo any action you take in Cricut Design Space with the Undo icon, or just press Command + Z (on a Mac) or Control + Z (on Windows).

And there's more you can do with layers, too!

NOTES

....

....

....

....

How to Ungroup and Attach Layers in Design Space

One important thing you can (and should) do is Grouping, Ungrouping, and Attaching Layers

Let's look closely at the layer of the Owl Shadow Box Card. At the top of the Layers panel, note that there is a small black arrow next to the word "Group." This black arrow indicates which layers in this file are grouped together. If you click the arrow icon to the immediate left of the word "Group," it will display (or collapse) all items in that group so you can see what is in the group. In this case, everything in this file is grouped.

Before we can change anything about how these layers are attached together, we need to UNGROUP the layers. So click on the Group, then click Ungroup at the top of the Layers panel.

You'll see now the word "Group" is gone, but we still have a bunch of black arrows! Those black arrows indicate the sub-groups that were in this group. So this is important to note — some files, especially more complex ones, have more than one grouping. You can always ungroup any group, if you need to.

In this case, however, we don't need to ungroup these subgroups. They were setup on purpose so that the score lines were grouped with the layer they belong to. This is important because it's now necessary to ATTACH the score lines to the appropriate layer.
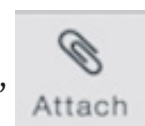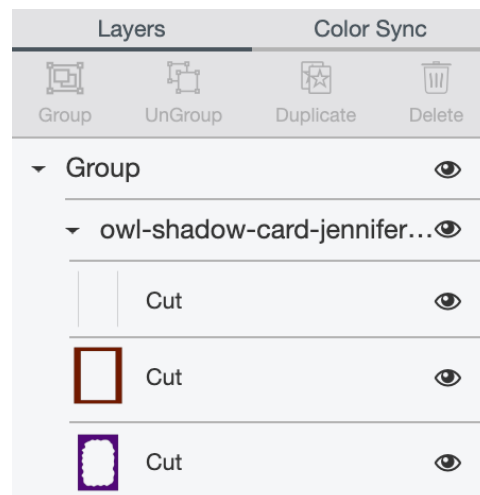
Now, I gotta get real with you all. This idea of grouping and attaching was hard to wrap my head around at first, and judging from all the emails I get and comments I see on Facebook, it's hard for you too. At this point, I have a good grasp on it, so let me try to explain the difference. Grouping is just a way to indicate layers that belong with one another. Those layers may be anywhere on the Canvas — they are together, but not fixed in place together. Attaching, on the other hand, keeps those layers physically together when you go to cut the file. So they aren't just together, they are linked by position.

Think of it this way. Grouping is like taking a walk in a park with someone you love. You might walk a little faster or slower at times, someone might stop to talk to a friend, but otherwise you're together — you'll arrive and leave at the same time.

Attaching is like holding hands while you're taking that walk. You have to walk at the same pace and stay together when you're holding hands, right? One doesn't go anywhere without the other.

This is important because we need to get our score lines and our layer cut lines to hold hands! We need to attach them!

Thankfully, this is also pretty easy. Just select the two layers you want to attach to one another and click the Attach button at the bottom of the Layers panel. When it is successful, the word Attach appears above the layers to indicate they are now attached together.

You'll want to attach all of the layers that have score lines to their cut lines, just like this.

Now, something that trips people up is when they cannot attach two layers. This is pretty much always because of a group. If you ungroup layers and keep ungrouping until the groups are all gone, you can always attach two layers together. Next time you have an issue with attaching, make sure you've ungrouped EVERYTHING, then try to attach the layers.

Ok, now that we've modified the layers from Cut to Score, and attached the layers with the Score Lines to their appropriate Cut Layers, let's save this project! Just click the Save link up in the top right corner, give it a good name, and click Save. Now this project is in our Cricut Cloud and can be accessed anytime we open Cricut Design Space regardless of where we are.
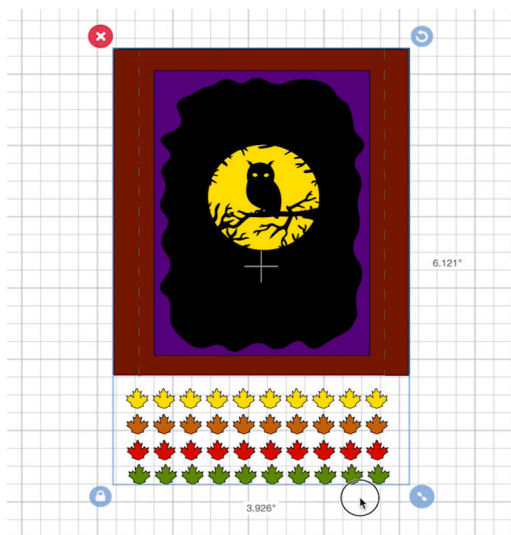
Make It

And this file is now ready for cutting. Just click that Make It button and you're good to go.
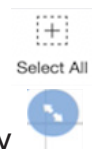
NOTES

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

How to Customize Layers in Design Space

Now you will notice there are a lot more buttons and controls in Design Space than we've mentioned. Many of these you do not need to worry about if you're just uploading and preparing SVG files. But you can use them if you want to customize the SVG. So let me show you a few things you can do:

If you want to RESIZE your SVG, first make sure everything is selected with the Select All button at the top. Now click the double-arrow icon in the lower right and drag it in or out to make it smaller or bigger. A handy measurement appears to let you the size. Note that the measurement shows the combined size of all objects selected, so if you have extra items beyond the finished project as I do here with the leaves, use the rulers and grid lines to tell you how big something is instead. For example, right now I've sized the owl shadow box card to be 7" inch high because I can see that there are seven inches from the top edge of the card to the bottom edge of the card.
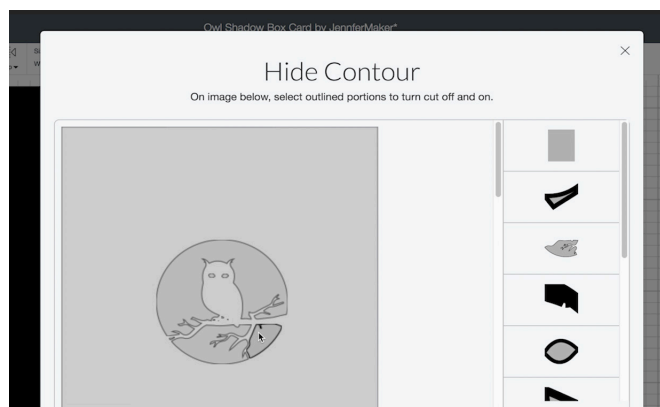
A note about resizing: most designers intend for something to be cut at a certain size. If you go too small, you may find it hard to cut out fine details. And if you go to big, it may not fit on your mat. Just keep this in mind.
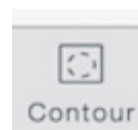
You can also flip a design horizontally, if you want it to be a mirror image. You can even rotate images.

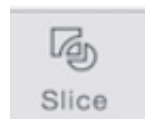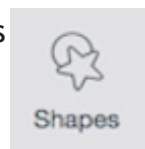Something else you can do is change the design itself with special tools like slice, weld, and flatten.

For example, lets take just the owl layer out and look at it. Let's say I didn't like the glowing eyes. I mean, that's not very realistic! To get rid of the eyes, click just the owl layer, then click Contour. You can see each individual element now. So click the eyes and they'll disappear. Easy peasy.

But what if I wanted to put some hearts on this owl, because I love owls? Click the Shapes icon on the left, choose a heart, resize it to what you want, and position it where you want it. Now select both the heart and the owl layer in your Layers panel and click Slice. The owl now has a heart! Be sure to get rid of the sliced-out heart (or hide the layer), unless you actually want to cut it out too.

Finally, what if I wanted the moon to be in a different phase? I can click Shapes, select the circle, position it so it looks like the moon isn't quite full. Now select both this circle layer and the owl layer, and click Weld to permanently fuse them together.

So as you can see, there's really a lot you can do to modify SVGs in Design Space.

Of course, I think it's better to just design the SVG yourself and make it just the way you want it. That's just my opinion though!

So there you go — lots of ways to prepare and modify your SVG files before you ever cut it out!

NOTES

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

Wrap-Up

Okay, so now that you know how to use SVGs in Cricut Design Space, you can cut them and make them!

And at this point, you may be wondering how those SVGs get made in the first place. I mean, they are really cool…. but wouldn't be even better if YOU could make those designs yourself, making them exactly the way you want without compromise?

It's possible… and YOU can do it.

I've taught myself how to do it. And once I knew how to design amazing things, I began sharing them on my JenniferMaker.com blog. And, oh my gosh, it's been SUCH an amazing experience to turn the ideas in my head into real projects, and then to go and share what I made with others who can also make it. I have met so many amazing people through my designs. And I've made my house into a real home with all the things I've made.

And I can teach you exactly how to create designs, too. I am starting up something special — it's called the CUT ABOVE design course. And in it I can show you how to do what I do, how to make personalized projects that you can upload, share, and even sell. And I can teach you how to do this whether you're on a Mac or a PC, and whether you use Illustrator or Inkscape. All you need is a personal computer, some extra space on your hard drive, and your imagination.

Registration for the course is not open yet, but it will open soon. Enrollment will be limited so I can offer personal assistance to all of my students. The course is divided into eight sections, with one section offered per week, but it's completely self-paced. And if you want to enroll, be sure to mark your calendars so you don't miss out.

Jennifer

NOTES