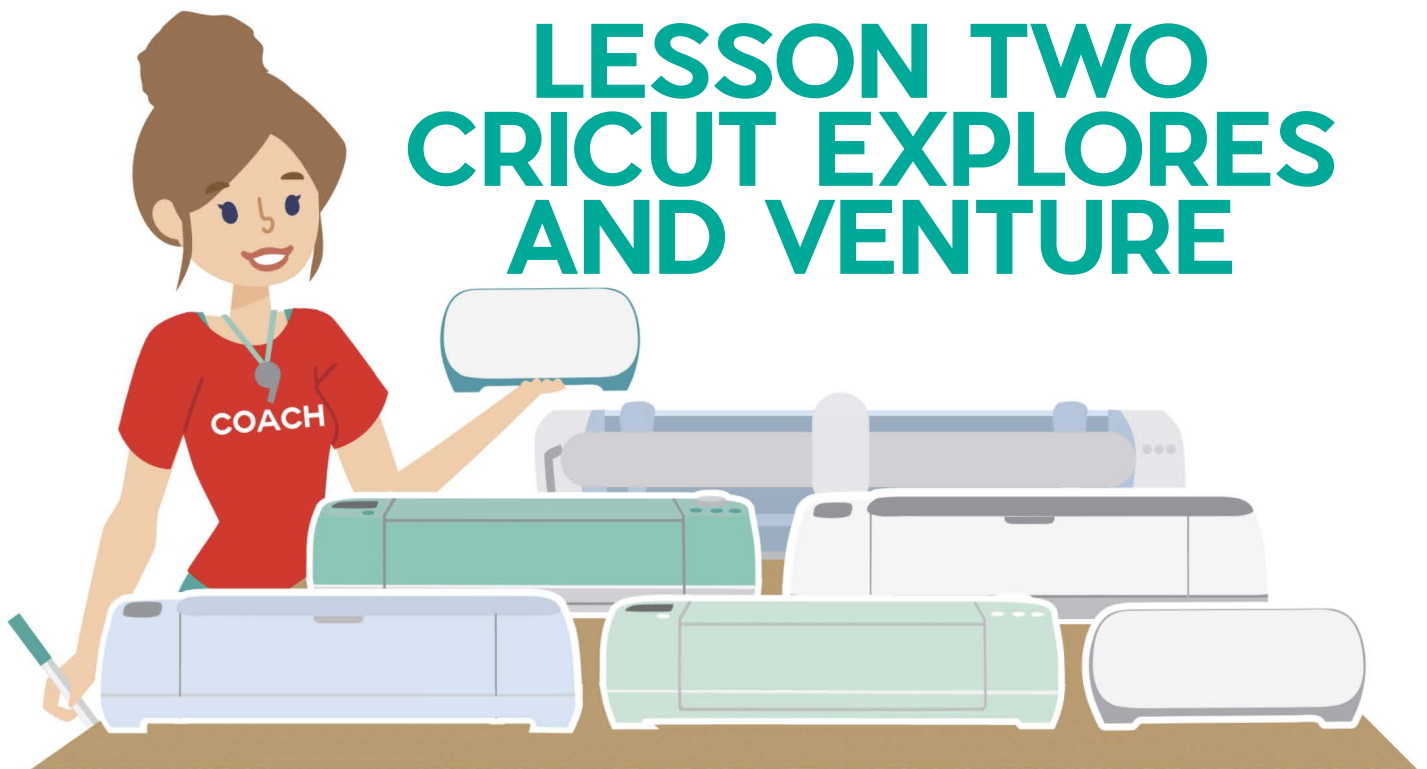


CRICUT® KICKOFF TRANSCRIPT

LESSON TWO CRICUT EXPLORES AND VENTURE



SET UP YOUR CRICUT FOR SUCCESS WITH
JENNIFERMAKER

ABOUT THIS TRANSCRIPT

This is a transcript of the edited version of Cricut Kickoff: Know the Tools to Use With Your Cricut Joy and Joy Xtra video. Transcripts are provided for those who prefer to read and/or follow along with a text version as you watch the video at jennifermaker.com/cklesson2b.

Please note that this transcript was made using an automated service, which means there may be some mistakes in interpretation of what I said, but we have reviewed it and attempted to correct all errors.

If you have any questions about using this transcript, please join me in my Cricut group at jennifermaker.com/cricutcrafter or email me at hello@jennifermaker.com.

For more Cricut Kickoff lessons, visit makeracademy.com/cricut-kickoff-lessons.

Happy making,

Jennifer



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Hello everyone. My name is Jennifer Maker and today I'm teaching you all about the tools, supplies, and accessories you can use with your Cricut, Explore Air 2, Explore 3 and Venture cutting machines.

This is the "Cricut Kickoff" Lesson Two, and we're going to go through all of these fun things together one by one. So please pull up a chair here in my craft studio and we will get started.

All right, so in Lesson One, you saw that your cutting machine comes with a few things beyond the machine and power cord and USB cable and all that. So in the box of the Cricut Explore Air 2 was a blue, a LightGrip Machine Mat, a black pen, and some cardstock and in the Cricut Explore 3, we had a piece of test smart vinyl and three full size sheets of smart cardstock, smart iron-on and smart vinyl, but no pen and no mat. The Cricut Venture had a roll of black smart vinyl and white smart vinyl as well as the cleaning kit, but again, no mat or pen. All three of these cutting machines also had a premium fine point blade already installed in the clamp, but there's a lot more tools, supplies and accessories available and understanding them and understanding what you need as a beginner and what you don't need as a beginner can really go a long way toward making what you love with your Cricut and that is our goal today.

Now before we get too far, I want to remind you about my free "Cricut Kickoff" principal handbook that goes along with these lessons. You can download it right now at cricutkickoff.com, just register for the class and you'll get the handbook. I'll refer to it as we go along during today's lesson.

But real quick, let me just show you something in here. So in Lesson Two there is a section for each lesson. Getting there. Here we go. Lesson two, Know The Tools To

Use. Note that there is a chart for all the blades and it'll indicate whether it works for your machine so you can check things off, make notes on all of the blades that you have or might want to get, and also pens and markers, as well as mats and your favorite brands. As we talk about things you may want to make notes. I highly recommend it. So lots of good stuff in the "Cricut Kickoff" handbook.

Alright, let's put this away and really get started. I have so much stuff here. Trying to put this in here. There we go, all right.

Let's begin with your blade. The Cricut Explore and the Ventures all come with a blade, which is made of German carbide steel and is very sharp, so handle it carefully. The blade is already in your Cricut as we saw yesterday. It's installed in clamp B in your Cricuts when you receive them and the Ventures is back there. It is very sharp, so always handle it carefully, always, I might say that more than once. This is the blade that you'll use most of the time. Its housing is either silver, I'm going to take this out so you can see it. It's either silver like this, this is usually what you'll see in your machine or it may be gold like this one. These are both exactly the same blade, even though they're different colors.

You'll use the fine point blade for cutting cardstock, vinyl and really most materials. Please note that the Ventures fine point blade is actually a performance blade, which is even stronger than a premium blade and it's like that because of how fast the Venture is. So you can use the regular premium blade instead, but it just may not last as long, just so you know, okay. So you will use the fine point blade that came with your Cricut the most, most of the time really. If you need to replace this blade, I highly recommend getting another Cricut premium or

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performance fine point blade, not a knockoff. Your blade is your first must have tool and it is so important to get good cuts.

That said, you probably won't need a new blade for a long time if you keep the one that you got cleaned. I almost never need to replace the blade in my Cricuts, because I keep the one that came with my Cricut cleaned. So if it's not cutting as well as it did in the beginning, it's probably just got some stuff on it and that you need to clean off.

There are two good ways to clean your blade. The simplest and fastest cleaning method is with a ball of aluminum foil. The slower and more careful cleaning method is with some isopropyl alcohol and a lint-free cloth. So that means there are two more must-haves for you. Some regular aluminum foil. This is the kind that you would probably already have in your kitchen and or some isopropyl alcohol and something like a coffee filter or you can just get these alcohol prep pads which are ready to go. I want to demonstrate both methods for you so you can decide which one you want to use.

This, switch to my closeup camera. Let's see. That's not my closeup camera. It might be offline. One moment please. I'm going to figure that out. Let's see here, because I would love to show you close up. Let's see. I might have to plug it in. All right, let's try plugging it in. Sometimes that's all it needs. It does work wirelessly, but you know technology right? There we go. It is like bouncing all over the place.

Okay, so you can see over here, here is the Cricut Explore 3 in the background here. All right, so let's start with our aluminum foil method. Alright, so let's put all these over here. Alright, so to clean your method with the aluminum foil method, you just want to use regular household aluminum foil. You just take off a sheet like this, doesn't have to be

exact and you ball it up into a nice tight little ball like this, just like this and then here is your blade and it's in its housing, right? So if I push on the plunger right here, the blade will come out and you can see it, actually bring up a little closer, you see? That's the blade right here. Always be really careful around your blade so you don't poke yourself, it's very sharp. So to clean off adhesive, glitter, paper, just whatever things that might get stuck on your blade and cause its in that cut as well with an aluminum foil ball, you just depress the plunger like this and then you stick the tip of your blade into the aluminum foil a few dozen times. This removes oxidation adhesive, little bits of dirt, all that stuff, just be careful.

Now the pros to doing it this way is that it's very easy. You can keep these balls of aluminum foil and whenever you need them and just pull it out and clean. This is the method that I use most of the time to clean. In fact, I would say all the time. It works very well for me. You may have heard that some people will say it sharpens the blade, it does not sharpen it, it cleans it. Some people will tell you that it can dull the blade and it probably can, but it would do it very slowly over a long period of time. I've been using this method for years now. I'm using my Cricut since 2017 and I started doing it that year. This is not my idea, I learned it from someone, I'm not sure who, possibly Melody Lane and it's been working like a champ for me ever since, but what can happen is that doing this can push any adhesive or gunk up into your housing, right? That's not caused a problem for me, but it could cause a problem for you.

Other things that might happen is that your blade can get stuck in the aluminum foil ball. It's not a big deal, you just take it out and put it back in, but that is something else to watch for. I've heard people say that it might also nick or break your blade, but that

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has never happened to me or anyone on my team. So, but of course your mileage may vary.

All right and the other method to clean is using alcohol. So here we have just an alcohol prep pad. Of course you can just use regular isopropyl or rubbing alcohol and a lint-free cloth like a coffee filter for example, but this prep pad works great, so to do this method, you're going to take out the little pad and you want to remove the blade from the housing, 'cause we're going to do it the careful method, we're going to do it all the way. So to remove the blade from the housing, this is the same way you would change your blade if you do decide to ever replace it is very carefully 'cause this is very sharp here, grab a hold of that end there and there we go. So there it is. Now we want to clean the housing itself. You can use compressed air, you can just blow in it to get any dust or anything that might be stuck in there out and then we take our little blade, it's very tiny, be very careful with it and we use the alcohol to clean it. The alcohol will dissolve adhesive and then it'll, you know, take off any glitter, dirt, little bits of paper, whatever you might have stuck on there, just like that and then we put it back into our housing. I like to use this just to protect my fingers and you can just, it'll just go back in there with a, there's a magnet and then it will stay in place. And there it is back in there and it's, that's it. That's how you clean it.

So there are, it is, just always be really careful you run your blade, but if you keep your blade clean, it can last for years and years. Seriously. I'm not exaggerating. I've had so many of my blades for a long time and some of you may know how much I cut a lot, a lot of stuff. Okay, so that is our premium or performance blade and let me just show you the Ventures blade so you can see how

similar they look. Let's switch back to this one 'cause it's nice and close. So this one here, that is the fine point, premium fine point blade that comes in the Explores and this is the Venture's performance blade. Like you really, it's the same housing, it's just the blade itself in the Venture is stronger 'cause it's a lot faster, but you could still, they're interchangeable. You could use each one in each machine if you wanted to. I have not tried putting the performance blade into my Explores. I don't think that it needs it, but you could use it if you needed to.

Now let's make sure I put them back in the right order, 'cause the Venture does benefit from having the performance blade. Nope, yes, here we go.

All right, so there are actually more blades that you can use in the Explore and Venture cutting machines. The blade in the black housing, which is this one right here, is the deep cut blade and allows you to cut thicker materials. The deep cut blade has a steeper blade angle of 60 degrees and it's made of a harder and more durable steel. I use the deep cut blade to cut cardboard, chipboard magnets, bass wood, balsa wood, stiffened felts and foam sheets among other things. So this is what it looks like and you do want to use the black housing with this blade. You don't want to put the blade into the silver or gold housing and you can use this in both the Explore and the Venture.

The blade in the pink housing. This is the bonded fabric blade and here's the thing, even though it says it specifically for bonded fabric, I don't believe there's any difference between it and the regular fine point blade, this one right here, other than the color, but if you want to keep your blade to cut fabric separate from the blade that you use to cut paper or vinyl or you just like the color pink, then you can get this one. Otherwise, just know that you can use the fine point

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blade with the silver or gold housing to cut bonded fabric too, okay, so that you're not, don't think you actually have to have that and finally we have this one here in the blue housing and this is not so much of a blade as a tool.

This is the foil transfer tool and it comes with three interchangeable tips in fine, medium and bold and the foil transfer tool is used to transfer Cricut's foil transfer sheets onto your projects. You can learn more about the foil transfer tool on my blog and YouTube channel. There's a lot of cool things that you can make with it.

Now it's important to note that while there are other Cricut blades like the knife blade and the rotary blade, you cannot use these in the Cricut Explore or Venture, nor can you use a Cricut Joy blade in a Cricut Explore or Venture.

Okay, the Joy blades are different from the Explore and the Maker and the Venture and as I said earlier, you can get replacement blades as needed, but one blade can really last a long time with cleaning. If you do get replacements, the premium fine point blades can be identified out of their packaging by the color of the caps. Either usually white but sometimes red.

Let me give you a graphic so you can see what this looks like because I'm going to caution you here. Do not use the gray cap blades. They are made for older Cricut machines and they're too long for the Cricut Explore or Venture. Look for the premium fine point blades. They're also maybe called German carbide blades that are made by Cricut. If you do not use the right blade in your Cricut, it may be cutting too deep. It is not uncommon for someone to come onto our Facebook page and comment that you know, something's not working right for them,

something's not cutting right for them and they mentioned that they just changed their blade and when I asked them what blade they changed it to, it's the gray tipped one. All right, so use that premium fine point blade. That's the only blade that I use. It really, it really matters. It may, you may be using the gray one without have any issues, but it is ever so slightly different, okay? So check your packaging and be careful when buying replacement blades.

One more thing before we move off blades is storage. Remember you can use the accessory tray in your Cricut Explore to store blades. Let's get a nice closeup on that. Here is our tray and everyone remembers that there is, right here, there is a lift up, a blade section. I've even got a little blade sitting in there, right? So this is, this magnetic see so you can put your blade right there. There's even little like cutouts there. These little ones right here, they will hold the blades with the housings, see? So this is awesome and it keeps the blades from rolling around. Eventually you may get too many blades for the accessory compartment or you know it's already filled with something else like oh some M&Ms or something and you'll need a different storage method.

So let me show you two others. I'm going to switch to a different camera, or actually I need to grab them, they're kind of over here.

All right, get this one and I'll show you in a second. I forgot I was going to show you this, but we're going to show it to you and this one. Okay. So let's see if we can get a good shot of it. It's very close. Let's back it up a little bit. This here is a tool, a 3D printed tool organizer that Greg designed for me. I asked him to do this. It's a few years old now. He made it on his press, a 3D printer. I have the free files for anyone who might want to make this tool holder.

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If you don't have a 3D printer, Cricut makes a blade holder. Let's put this one over here. It looks like this. It's pretty nifty. You can keep your blades in here. Note that these ones that you see here with gears, these are for the Maker only, but I use this and I store all my blades in here, but you can just keep, like here's the foil transfer tool, oops, the foil transfer tool and you can store a lot of blades in here. I like it because you can see at a glance all the things that you have. So I, you know, if at some point you may have a lot of blades and need to store them and these two methods work great. Alright, didn't he do a nice job on this? I love it. It's always on my desk, right here.

Okay, so next we're going to talk about blades. We have so many things, so I need to clear a little space, 'cause the blade, sorry, not blades, mats, the mats will take a little, take some space for, take some, you know, they'll require some extra room. I'm going to move this over here in case we need it again for anything.

All right, mats. Got lots of mats. I like to keep this aluminum foil ball right in here. So if you are ever at my studio and looking at my Cricuts or you just happen to notice, you'll often see a little ball of aluminum foil in there.

All right, now how about mats? Mats are adhesive covered. I don't even know what this is. Some kind of really thick material. Hey Greg, what is this stuff you think? What would you say this matte stuff is made out of? I feel like I should know. Some kind of plastic, some kind of thick plastic but obviously flexible, okay?

So they're adhesive covered plastic mats that hold our materials in place while we cut them on the Cricut. We call these machine mats to distinguish them from other mats like the self-healing mat, self-healing mat, which

I will tell you about later. So if you got the Cricut Explore Air 2, there was one machine mat included, this blue LightGrip Mat. We used it in Lesson One for our test cut for the Cricut Explore Air 2, but the Cricut Explore 3 and the Venture, this one and this one didn't come with a mat, although they certainly can use them. So don't be confused.

Just because there's not a mat in the box, doesn't mean they can't use them. They absolutely can and you'll want a mat.

So let's go through what the different mats are used for. So the blue LightGrip Mat is the least sticky of all the mats and it's good for light and medium light paper, medium cardstock and vinyl. This LightGrip Mat fits the Explores and it actually comes as two different size, this is the standard 12 by 12 size and this is the LightGrip Mat that fits the Venture, which of course is a much bigger machine. There's two sizes for both mats. This is the larger of the two Venture mats and this is the smaller, it's about half the size, okay? So that you know the two different sizes. The mats as you can imagine are not interchangeable between the two Explores and the Venture because they're different sizes, but of course you can use the same mats on all Explores and all Makers too for that matter.

Alright, so there are other machine mats to choose from. There is the green StandardGrip Mat, which looks like this. This mat is stickier than the blue mat and it's ideal for use with materials like vinyl, medium to heavy cardstock, poster board and more. The green mat is the mat that I use most of the time. This is my go-to mat.

Then we have the purple StrongGrip mat. This is the stickiest mat there is, this mat is best for use with heavy weight materials like matboard, bonded fabric, chipboard and thin wood, like bass wood. You can also, I also like

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to use it for full leather 'cause it's just so very sticky.

Now the Explore mats, the Explore machines can have two more mats that they can use. There's the pink FabricGrip mat. This is a slightly thicker plastic mat with a special adhesive on it that is made for gripping fabrics. It will also release your fabric from the mat more cleanly than it would if you were using one of the others, but in a pinch I have used the purple and green mats for fabric before.

And then finally we have the insert card mat, which is used with the pre-folded insert cards made by Cricut. It allows you to cut just on the front of the card without damaging the back of your card.

So four of these machine mats come in two sizes. The standard 12 by 12 inch size mat that came in your Explore Air box if you got an Explore and then the longer 12 by 24 inch mat that you can buy and the card mat comes in just one size and then again on Venture, we've got the two different sizes of that one. I'm not going to get those out and show you again, you saw them, but just remember you can't interchange them. You look, you can't get, you can't put the Explore mats into the Venture or the Venture mats into the Explores. You also can't cut them down, because there's adhesive in places there shouldn't be. So don't do that either and note that you cannot use the fabric, there is no fabric grip or card mat on the Venture at all. So those are not, at least at the time I'm making this video, there isn't one.

Now I consider mats to be a consumable and they will need to be replaced over time as they get less and less sticky and if your mats not sticky, you need to take care of that, because other thing, otherwise things just will not cut, but you can keep them going for quite a long time by cleaning them with

baby wipes when you notice they aren't sticky enough. So you just want to make sure that you're using alcohol free baby wipes because alcohol dissolves adhesive and there's adhesive on your mat. So don't use anything with alcohol. If you don't have alcohol free baby wipes, you can also use a mild dish washing detergent like you know, the hand stuff that you put in your sink and some warmer, warmish water, you know, like lukewarm water and clean them gently, don't scrub at them or you can scrub the adhesive right off and then let them air dry. I have tutorials and videos on that if you want to learn more.

So those are our mats and I'm now going to set these over here, so they're out of our way and we are going to turn our attention to pens.

So the Cricut Explore and Venture pens are great for writing on cards, making labels and embellishing paper crafts. The Cricut pens are water-based, acid free, non-toxic and permanent after they dry. Now it's very important to note that Cricut Explore and Venture sized are only sized for the Explores, the Ventures and the Makers clamp. So you cannot use them in the Joy and vice versa, you cannot use the Joy pens in the Explore, Venture or Maker, but if you just have like a Maker or and Venture, or Explore and Venture or just the Explore and Venture, you can definitely use like all the pens that fit in these, fit over here and vice versa. Now, so when you get pens and markers, make sure that they are, they indicate that they're for the right machine on the box. So and I want to point this out to you so that you understand. So I'm going to hold this up and it says down there at the bottom, "For Cricut Explore machines," do you see that? If, this can confuse beginners because they're like, "Well I have a Venture, it's not going to work for me. What do I do?" It's okay, I'm telling you it's okay. If you have an Explore, a Maker

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or a Venture and it says it's for Explore, it will work, it'll be okay. Okay. Now if you got the Cricut Explore Air 2, you got a fine point pen with a 0.4 size tip in black with your Cricut, but there was no pen with the Cricut Explore 3 or the Venture, but not to worry 'cause there are so many other pens and markers available if you want one.

There are lots of colors, but there's also extra fine point pens, metallic pens, watercolor pens, opaque pens, Cricut Infusible Ink pens. I don't even know what, they have so many pens. I'm looking for my Cricut Infusible Ink pens.

Ooh, permanent markers, trying to find them. One thing I do want to, I don't see them right now. There's just so many things.

Wait, are these it? Here we are. Cricut infusible ink pens, there's a lot of different pens. If you're looking for something, they probably have it. They come in different sizes and I mean the tip when I say that, so there can be pens, there can be markers and then this one here, this is, this was inter, no not these, this is the watercolor. These are really cool. The permanent markers. The permanent markers were introduced when the Cricut Venture came out this summer and you can use these on the Explore.

You might not have noticed this or realized it, but you can and I would like to demonstrate a pen with you, because it says, I don't know, actually know if it says, it doesn't actually say on here, it's just for Venture, but this is really thick, permanent marker, it's so cool. So let's bring our camera back over here, so you can get a nice good look at this.

All right, so point this right at, okay, here's the Cricut Explore 3. This will also work for any Explore. So it includes the Explore, any other Explore 1, Explore Air 2, all that, okay.

So here is clamp A. When it comes, when you get it and this is true of the Explore and the Venture. There is a pen adapter in here. This thing right here, this is an adapter. Most of you will never even remove it or worry about it, but it does come out. So to take it out, you open the clamp and you push up from the bottom and pull it out. So this is what it looks like. If you've ever had an issue with, or you ever in the future have an issue with something that you put into this clamp and it's acting odd, it's possible that you might just need a new adapter and you can buy them separately if you need to.

Anyways, so now we've taken out that pen adapter. We can take the Cricut, the big old chunky Cricut permanent marker and we can use that in any Explore. So you just take off the tip, always, whenever you are using a pen, always test it first to make sure it's writing. So I'm going to take the back of my handbook and just scribble a little bit. Yes, it's working. Always do this whenever you use a pen and then you know the ink is flowing.

All right and then we take off the tip and we're just going to insert it right down into here and you might hear a little click, but maybe not, because we've taken out the adapter and then we close it just like this. You can see the tip is down there, but it's not touching your Cricut and then put your cap on your pen so you don't lose it.

So that's how you insert the big markers, but you, it's the same basic thing for when you are doing the regular size ones as well. So let's get one out and I'll show you. We put our adapter back in. So here's our adapter. Put that right back in. Hear a little snap, we close it. Here is a pen. Take off the cap, test it and then we'll put it in here. I like to hold the bottom when I insert it and you will usually hear a click. Sometimes you won't, so long as it's in the right spot, that's all that matters. Close the clamp and put your

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cap back on your pen so you don't forget and then of course when you're all done, immediately remove it, I say that, but of course I've left my pen in there and, but try to immediately remove it so that you don't have your pen dry out, okay?

So in addition to all of these awesome pens I just showed you, there's also things like a washable fabric pen if you're doing any fabric projects, the watercolor pens that I mentioned, the Infusible Ink pens, which I'll explain in a little bit how that works and yeah, the washable fabric pen, it looks like this.

Right, so it's not the same as that blue one I just showed you. It's actually, this is just a regular, this is a gel pen and with a one point tip, see on the side, it's written on there, so you can always, if it's out of its packaging, you'll still know what it is and its size and its color at the end. Sometimes there's also like a indicator. Can you see that? There is one. It's a little G, see? So we know it's a gel pen. Can you see that?

Does this one have one on the end? Yes. So you can hold that one up, so you can see that one. 2.5 millimeter, so to indicate that it's the, the chunky permanent marker.

Alright anyways, so the washable fabric pen, you can use on your fabric to mark seam allowances or darts. I use this pen a lot because I love to sew and cut fabric on my Cricut for my projects.

Alright, so, but there's really just so very many, so very many pens and you need to find the right pen for your projects. It really makes a difference. All right, let's see what we're up to next. I think that's all the pens.

If you have questions by the way, feel free to leave them in the comment section and I will be sure to help you out.

Hey Greg, can you help me with my notes? Thank you. Lots of pens. Oh, there was one more I wanted to show you. Thank you very much. That's exactly what I needed. Thank you. Alright, so perfect, thank you.

Now these pens, you might see these in the store. I want you to note that these are called free hand markers. Even though they're made by Cricut, these will not fit into your Cricut. So these are intended for people who want to use infusible ink and again, I'll explain what that is by drawing pictures. So don't get these and expect them to fit in your Cricut, okay?

Alright, now I suggest that you store your Cricut pens and markers tip down, so they will come like this, right, at the store, but I think that you should put them tip down when you're storing them or like this, that will help keep the ink where it needs to be so that they won't take so long for the ink to start flowing again. So keep that in mind if you just bought a pack from the store, because usually at the store they're just stored like this, right? And so if you just use them right away without setting them down for a while, or better yet having them stored like this, it might seem like there's something wrong with them. So keep that in mind.

So there are a lot of tools that you can buy for your Cricut Explore and Venture. Some are useful, some are less so. The ones I recommend you get, the ones I use all the time are the scraper tool, the weeding tool and the scoring stylus. I have them all over here. We'll go in order.

All right, so first, this is the scraper tool. It is great for getting all the bits off your mats, all those little bits that want to stay on there, they'll come off with this. I have both a small one that looks like this and a big one. This is my big one. So a small one and big one. I find them both useful to have. If you don't want

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to buy one, you can use an old store loyalty card or an expired debit or credit card. It won't work quite as well but it will work in a pinch. These however, are the best they have a nice sharp edge on the bottom and they're awesome. They come in all sorts of different colors of course, and not that color matters or anything like that. We don't buy tools based on how cute they are.

The next one is the weeding tool. So the weeding tool is used to remove excess vinyl from a cut, which we call weeding. This is how you get all those little bits out that you don't want from your design after you've cut it. I also use the weeding tool on intricate paper projects as well. It's really helpful for poking out the little bits that don't just come off automatically on your sticky mat, right? So this is the weeding tool. You'll want to have this for sure.

The next one that I really highly recommend is the scoring styus, which works like this or looks like this. The scoring stylus is one of the best accessories I think a new Cricut owner can get and it's often overlooked. With a scoring stylus, you can make a wider variety of paper crafts. Most of the paper crafts on my blog have some sort of scoring involved. It is a simple tool that makes a big difference for paper crafting and note that if you don't plan to do paper crafting, you don't need this accessory. The scoring stylus goes in the same clamp as your pens clamp A. So it goes right back here, like this. Just like that.

Okay, another tool, so those are the three, those are my three mainstays, but another tool that you can use is the spatula. The spatula tool is used for removing materials from your mats. It's super useful if you have a lot of small pieces of cardstock that you need to remove from your mat without damaging them. I love to have intricate cuts in my projects, 'cause it's one of the best

things that the Cricut can do as far as I'm concerned. It's like these amazing intricate cuts that we would never be able to do, like with just a, you know, a knife in our hands and, but you know, they can be tricky sometimes to get off the mat, but the spatula will do a great job.

The next one that I love is the brayer, which it looks like this. The brayer is an optional tool. Some people love it. There are others who rarely use it. The brayer is really just a big rubber roller that helps you stick stuff down to your machine mats for cleaner cuts. If you go look it up on Cricut site or on Amazon, it'll tell you that it's for fabric, but I and lots of other Cricut crafters use it for vinyl and cardstock too. So if you find that you're having issues getting your material onto your mat smoothly or your cuts don't seem to be doing as well, you may find the brayer useful. You'll, if you watch my tutorials, you'll notice I use it in most, anything I put under the mat these days, I brayer it down. It really helps.

Another tool that I think is really handy is, get this out. This one here, the True Control Craft Knife. It has a special razor sharp non-stick blade. You saw me using it for opening the Cricut box and the seals up yesterday when we were unboxing all of our Cricuts.

Craft knives like this are used for doing manual cuts and sometimes that means a project almost cut all the way through, but is hanging in by a tiny little bit due to a design issue or something like that and then you can just use something like this to easily cut it so that you don't have to redo it or scrap it and so you can get them like this, where they're just a blade, but you can also get them with these interchangeable tools that are actually weeding tools. So here are the interchangeable tools and then it's not just a knife, but rather it's like a four on one tool

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and you can add the different weeding tools, you know, and with different angles of the tips. I actually love to use it as a weeding tool as well.

Now if you get the True Control Knife, you're also going to want a self-healing mat, which you can see right here on my desk, I'm going to move our camera so we can see that a little bit better. There we go.

This is a self-healing mat. This is not an adhesive mat, like the kind that you put into your Cricuts, but rather an extra thick mat that you can use to cut things with your craft knife and it's self-healing, which means it's made from separate tiny pieces of material which are pressed together and, essentially it feels solid, right? It feels very smooth, but when you cut on it, the blade goes between those tiny pieces and this separates them rather than cuts into the surface of the mat, thus we call self-healing. I always craft on one of these mats because, well I just really like, I mean I like the way they look, but that's not why I do it. I craft on one of these, usually this larger one here, this is an 18 by 24 inch one, because I find not only can I cut on it with my knife, but I find it easier to keep clean than my normal work surface like this back here, because I can just use alcohol on it to clean it off and also when it eventually just gets to whatever I can replace it, so I can protect this surface and have this surface here and I just will replace my mat. So that works really well for me.

All right, now there are few other tools that I want to show you that are not sold by Cricut. They're just things that I found useful over the years.

So the first one is used when you're weeding and it is, I'll show it to you, there's a couple versions of this one, it is a weeding scrap collector and I'll give you a closer look at

these. So this is the weeding ring. You can put it on your fingers like this as you're weeding and then it moves around with you while you're working. It's made of silicone so the vinyl doesn't stick to it and you just put your, let's get a weeding tool. So as you're weeding a piece of vinyl, right, you can just pick it up and then you can just use these little, little cuts in the silicone there to, and it just takes your vinyl right off for you. So it's super easy and it is really important to keep your vinyl away from your work surface while you're working so it doesn't wander back into your project and get stuck to something.

Another one you can use, and this is by the same brand, the brand is Tweezy, it's this bigger one here and it's on a, let's take that one, put that one right, put this one back here so you can keep an eye on it, all right. This one has a suction on the bottom and so, and it just does it on its own and it's got this hinged, a hinge on it so you can aim it wherever you want it and a bigger area in here and it's the same thing though. You would just go like this to get your vinyl off and when you want to remove the things from, you know, all the scraps from your scrap collector, you just reach in and you take them out and you throw 'em away and this is silicone, right? So it doesn't stick, it wants to stick to itself rather than to the sides of it, so it's very easy to empty. So that is the weeding tools.

Oh, there's another one I have to show you. Another weeding tool comes in this little case. I really like, like these, I am a reluctant weeder. I find weeding challenging. It's hard to see. I think that's the big issue. These are weeding tools and they're not just pretty, they're actually light up tools. They have little batteries in them and then you can light them up and you can see what you're doing better.

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Remember everything that I'm talking about today, I guess I should have mentioned this earlier, I forgot, it's all in a shopping list for you, 'cause I know you're going to ask me where to find these. I just put it up on the screen. It's at jennifermaker.com/cricut-explore-must-haves, so Cricut Explore must haves. All these things I'm mentioning, things that are harder to find, especially I put them all into that shopping list for you. So these are all in here. Little lighted weeding tools are in there as well.

Then since we're on the topic of weeding, let me show you another thing I really like since again I struggle with weeding. It is these magnifying glasses. So they come with interchangeable lenses, in this little case right here. So lots of different magnification levels and they just go right on over your head. If you're wearing glasses, they do go on over your glasses and they are amazing for seeing tiny details that you might otherwise miss and they just go on your head, on like this. They're awesome. I've been using them for several years. Greg introduced me to them, because he likes to paint miniatures and they help him see little tiny details as well, but if you're ever struggling to see little details, this could really be a life changer for you.

All right, and one more thing I want to show you. This is not related to weeding. It is instead for your Cricut. So here's the Cricut and so when we have a mat, let me grab a mat and as I mentioned yesterday, the mat moves in and out of your, it moves in and out of your machine right? Now if you would like to keep your Cricut up on a shelf or anything like that, many of us do, this mat will be a little floppy. It'll kind of flop off the end, right? And that can be, especially if you're using the long mat, that can be a problem, because it can change how your material is adhered to it. It can loosen it up on the mat.

So there's something else that, something that you can do. I have to find my things. Where'd they go? One moment I had them and now they're missing. Where's my box? Aw, oh here they are. I really wanted to show you this.

All right, this is called a Mat Extender and it's really, it's just pieces of plastic. I got it on Amazon and it just goes, let's see. So there's one that goes, one goes right here and this one goes right here and there's a bridge that you can put in between like this to keep them more secure. Take that out and put it together properly. There we go. But see, it goes into these little, little, the little thumb holes there and then when you're using your mat, it doesn't flop over and cause any issues with the adhesion of the materials onto it.

So I think these are really cool and I have these linked in that shopping list that's right down here too. Those are all, not, none of these things are made by Cricut, but none of them will, you know, like this is not going to hurt your warranty. It's just a little thing that's attached to this, so we do have to be cautious of third party materials or tools that could void our warranties and mostly that means anything that physically alters your machine. So that might mean pen adapters or I would be really cautious with third party blades that aren't Cricut's blades.

I'd be really careful with mats, because if there's any adhesive in places that shouldn't be like are too close to your rollers, it can cause issues and you can get adhesive in your rollers, for that reason, never try to restick your own mats with adhesive. It can cause all sorts of issues and definitely void your warranty, so be cautious with that, but those are all really cool things I think.

Now I want to talk about materials, 'cause this has all been tools, right? We have lots

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of materials too. So let's make a little space again, 'cause this is going to take lots of room. So many tools. I'll clean this up afterwards. It's sort of piling it in the front.

All right and we are going to start with cardstock. In fact, I'm going to make a big pile of it so we can go over it. I have lots of cardstock here and cardstock matters, if you are a paper crafter, the quality and not all cardstock is the same, but there's lots of different kinds that you can use. So here are a stack of my favorite papers and I'll explain why I like them.

Okay, so first is Cricut cardstock and they make excellent cardstock. It's really high quality, cuts beautifully and I wish I could use it in every project I have, but I find that it's in limited quantities and it goes out of stock and I think it's hard for them to keep it in stock. I don't know, maybe because it's so amazing, but if you can get it, I highly recommend it. So these are two bulk packs. This one's got some different colors in it, it's really, really great stuff.

Okay, now they also make pattern paper. This is really fun. So this is pattern where there's different, it's like printed on like that, so this is, can be great for certain projects. Here's a few of the ones I have. They have licensed Disney products there, so that's not easy to come by.

They also make things like metallic poster board and foil poster board. This is really, really beautiful.

There's a lot of other things as well that Cricut makes. I like all of Cricut's paper. So if you can get it, I highly recommend it, but as I said, sometimes it's really difficult to get.

So I use other brands as well and here are some of my favorite brands. I like Recollections cardstock, this is cuts really,

really well. I have been hearing people recently say they've been having some issues with white recollections cardstock. I can't say I've had those same issues but if you, if that is, if that's you and you've tried it and you're having issues, you can switch to one of these other brands I'll tell you about, okay?

AC Cardstock. This is a really high quality cardstock. It comes in all sorts of fun colors and it's slightly textured so it's really beautiful, but this is their summer pack, it says "Summer."

I do want to note that cardstock does come in different weights. Usually it will tell you on the packaging what the weight is. Typical weights are for like medium cardstock is about 65 to 80 pound, right? So this Recollections here, this is 65 pound and the AC cardstock is 80 pound. I mostly use those interchangeably, unless I'm making a shadow box and in that case I prefer 65 pound so that we can see the light through it.

All right, another great brand, and I get this off Amazon is Cardstock Warehouse. They have all sorts of colors and weights and sizes and things like silver glitter paper. I also really like Clear Path paper, another high quality paper that I get from Amazon. They have all the colors and all the weights and all the sizes too.

And then you can get these paper packs like this if you're doing special projects. In this this case, these are on one side only and whenever you have a printed cardstock like this, this is always going to have what's called a white core and that means that if you look at it on its side, you'll see that it looks white. Whereas if we look at this pack of Recollections paper here, it actually shows all the colors on the side and that tells us it's solid core and this matters because you can see those white edges when you cut something with it. Sometimes you want that

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but usually you don't. So if it matters to you, you'll want to use solid core paper like this and reserve things like the white core paper. Oops, reserve things like the white core paper for projects where you really need a pattern, right? Because it can be very fun to do with the patterns.

Echo Park makes great pattern paper as well as does, what brand is this? I've had this one for, oh Roses Recollections, right? I like almost all of Recollections stuff and one more that I have used, I've got this on Amazon is Precision Cardstock and they have pretty good, this is textured solid core. This is not dissimilar from this brand. They're both a nice textured weight. You'll notice their packaging is really similar too. So that is a selection of cardstocks I recommend.

You will need some cardstock for Lesson Three in "Cricut Kickoff," but you just need like a two pieces of four by six cardstock. So you don't even need a big pack. You could get a small pack of paper or you could recycle something. The only caveat with recycling something is you don't know the characteristics of the paper, right? And so it could be tricky to cut and you wouldn't even necessarily understand why. So for that reason it can be good to go out and get a small pack of paper. In fact, I recommend paper as your first material when you're learning your Cricut, because I find it pretty easy to cut and it's not expensive. So you can practice with it and learn and make cool things without breaking the bank. One pack of paper could last you for years. Alright, so that's paper.

The next thing that people usually are curious about is vinyl and I have vinyl here. I'm going to close our Cricuts so we can see them all a little bit better. There we go and stick out our scoring stylus in this one. There we go. All right. So I have a lot of vinyl and this

isn't even all there is, but I'm going to show you some of it. So I separate vinyl into three categories, adhesive vinyl, iron-on vinyl and specialty vinyl.

So let's start with adhesive vinyl. So that's things like permanent vinyl, removable vinyl. These are two basic vinyls and then you can get into fancier stuff like holographic sparkle vinyl and glitter vinyl and these are all adhesive vinyls. So they don't, you don't iron them on, you just, they're sticky on the back. So you can just cut them, weeded them and then transfer them to whatever you want to use.

If you use any adhesive vinyl, you'll also need some transfer tape. So let me show you that. Transfer tape comes in a couple different varieties. This is a, this is the standard grip transfer tape. It has gray, a gray grid line and it just says "transfer tape" on it. So if you go to the store or you're on Amazon, this is what you're looking for. You'll want to use this for most adhesive vinyls. Not this one, but like these.

Anything that's smooth, you would want to use the StandardGrip, but with the glitter vinyl, you'll want to use StrongGrip transfer tape. StrongGrip has a purple grid and it says "StrongGrip transfer tape" on the label. Okay, so this is stickier. You only want to use Strong Grip with textured vinyl. Do not use it with the smooth vinyl, you'll find it really difficult to get off, okay? So don't use it with the smooth stuff. Use regular StandardGrip transfer tape for that and only use the StrongGrip with the glitter or shimmer vinyl, that kind of thing. I think I have a shimmer right here. So here is some or true brushed but it's got a texture. I'll show you in the camera. You can see, see it's kind of like, looks like brushed metal. It's really pretty but that makes it harder for it to transfer, so you need the StrongGrip. One thing many people

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don't know however, is that this, anything that needs StrongGrip, if it's Cricut, it will actually have a sheet of StrongGrip transfer tape inside the roll. You have to open it up and get to the bottom to find it, but it's inside, it's the last layer on the roll. So you might not need to buy a roll of it. So you might just have it already if you've bought this, okay? So those are our adhesives.

They do come and there's also patterned ones, there's all sorts of different ones. I couldn't get them all out 'cause there wasn't room for them, but there's like really, if you can think of it, they probably have it. There are non-Cricut vinyls of course, and I have certainly used them and tried them.

I tend to use Cricut because I have quite a bit of it at this point and also there's actually a couple of reasons, people have asked me this, like if I ever try anything else and totally I do, I've tried lots of other things. I do like Oracal for adhesive vinyls. For iron-on vinyls, I also have tried Siser and HTVRont and they all work fine, so I mostly use Cricut, because I can just go to the Michael's or JoAnn's down the road and pick it up like that day and not have to wait for it to be shipped. So that's, and and it comes in so many colors. It's so easy, it's so accessible to me. Just, it's just right there at the store. So that's the biggest reason I'd say that I use Cricut vinyls and they also work great for me.

Alright, so now there's some, oh, I forgot, there's one more transfer tape I want to show you. So that you see this is actually is new this year. So this is called linerless transfer tape and it's basically like the StandardGrip stuff like this, but it doesn't have a liner so it's better for the environment for that reason and it does remove an extra step. So if you'd like, you can get the linerless transfer tape. I think it's a little harder to use, especially if you're a beginner, because

it's sticky. It's sticky the whole time, but you know, it's still pretty awesome and it works great.

All right, so some specialty vinyls. Let's move these all off to the side here, 'cause I don't think they're going to be going back up on those pie plates. All right, specialty vinyls include, or we'll say materials include things like adhesive foil, which looks like this. Adhesive foil is not really a vinyl, it's just foil that's adhesive, but it kind of works like, it kind of, it's just really shiny, right? So this is another cool thing that you can use to decorate things.

This is chalkboard vinyl. So you can use this for making labels that you can write on with some chalk. Really nice, fun, great for labeling.

They also make window clinging in a variety of different colors if you want to decorate a window. Lots of tutorials on all these things and dry erase vinyl if you want to make labels or you know, signs or decorate a locker or whatever, or refrigerator with dry erase so that you can just wipe it off.

Something else that came out this year is color changing vinyl. This one is heat activated. There's also color activated ones and they change color with a temperature change. I did a whole, when I went to Hawaii last year, I took some of this with me. I took pink heat activated vinyl with me and I put it onto a sun tea pitcher and then I put it out in the sun so we could see it change and it was fun. So this is another cool thing that you could do.

Also there's another one, stencil vinyl. If you're cutting stencils, the Cricut does an amazing job at that. So you can cut stencils. Honestly, I usually just use permanent vinyl,

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but this has a grid on it, it's translucent and there's a grid. So that could be useful to some people who stencil.

So those are all our adhesive vinyls. I'm going to have to stack some of these up, 'cause I just won't have room for them. One moment. They're just not going to go back in a nice neat order like they were. I had them all arranged by type originally, so I could pull them off to show you and then now I'm like, how did I even fit them all up here? Like I think it must've been like some kind of crazy juggling act.

All right, so next I'm going to tell you about iron-on vinyl. Okay, that's good enough. All right, over on this side I have iron-on vinyl and it comes in a variety, I'm not going to, I'm going to leave those up there. It comes in a variety of different finishes, colors, patterns.

I do want you to note that there are some that are in just rolls like this and then there are some in boxes like this. The ones in boxes are smart vinyl. Smart vinyl is the one, the type of vinyl that you can put in your Cricut Explore three or your Venture. The ones for the Cricut Explore 3 are this size and the ones for the Cricut Venture are obviously bigger, because it's a much wider machine. So, and with smart vinyl and they make it in both adhesive and iron-on, but you don't have to use a mat. So it's really cool. You just feed it in and it cuts without the mat. It's nice, you can do big long projects, big, you know, you can do lots of cool things.

They also have iron-on color changing vinyl for like T-shirts or whatever so that you can have that as well. I think that's mostly it.

And then there's one more thing that's missing from my table 'cause I guess I forgot to bring it out and that's infusible ink transfer sheets. So infusible ink is a sublimation

product that's been pre-printed onto a transfer sheet that you can then cut with your Cricut that you can cut with your Cricut and you, and then apply to a surface such as a special infusible ink coaster and the ink will transfer right into here. You just have to use high heat with something like a mini easy press or a regular size easy press. So I just ran out of space. I have many tutorials on infusible ink though, just know that, that's part of the Cricut ecosystem and it's really cool because it allows you to do sublimation crafting without having a sublimation printer.

So they make both transfer sheets and pens and markers. So you can use your Cricut to draw things or you can draw by hand and then transfer to coasters, tote bags, T-shirts, anything that has an infusible ink friendly coating on it, which basically means it has enough of a polymer surface. So that could be polyester, as in like a white polyester shirt or it could have a special coating applied to it, which these coasters do. I have many tutorials on this if you're curious about it and there's really a lot of tools that we could talk about.

This is the Cricut Mug press and we can use infusible ink with this to make really cool mugs. So this one isn't decorated, but I do have one over here that I have made in the mug press, let me show you. This is my water, tumbler that I always use when I do videos, I made this in the Cricut Mug Press. So this is metal, not ceramic, but as you can see I made this all with infusible ink and just different colors of it, so it says "Jennifer Maker" on one side with some flowers and a bee and then on another side there's some more flowers and another bee on it. So infusible ink is really cool. If you've heard me or other people talking about sublimation, but you're not ready to get all the tools and supplies you need for it, infusible ink is the way to go. It's a great way to try it out and see if it's something that interests you. The

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big thing that you'll need to do it is a heat source that gets to at least 400 degrees Fahrenheit, which you can do with the Mini Easy Press, the regular size Easy Presses, there's two of those, and the Cricut Auto Press, which is a bigger clamshell press, which auto measures, does auto pressure and auto opens. So I really like it.

Now the Cricut Venture, it's materials, so I showed you the mats for that. You can use any size, really you can use any size material with the Cricut Venture so long as you put it onto a mat. So don't let that ever confuse you. This is true for your Explores as well. If you just have a little bit, like a little scrap or something, you can always use it on a mat, right?

Now the Cricut Explore Air 2 does not do, it won't do smart materials, it doesn't accept them, but the Explore 3 and the Venture do, so, but with a mat you can really cut anything that is cuttable, right?

So Cricut does sell large size cardstock and vinyl and iron-on and adhesive for, it does not sell large size infusible ink transfer sheets, so you'd still use regular sizes for that. The only other tools that we haven't talked about for the Venture is there is, a manual will cutoff that goes and it came with your Cricut and it's right here in the back. There's also an auto cutoff tool that you can get that goes into clamp A and if you're doing rolls of vinyl, you can and it'll, it knows it's in the clamp, 'cause like you can tell it to, it'll auto cut off your vinyl, which is really cool. So if you're curious about what that looks like, I have it in a video about the Cricut Venture and I think that's it.

Oh, well I guess this docking stand is also an accessory. The docking stand is a separate purchase with the Venture and it really, we talked about it a little bit yesterday, but

it's a really cool stand. It's on wheels. The wheels can lock. It has these, can you see? It has these catch bins in the front and back, so when you're doing rolls of vinyl, the vinyl can go into these rather than onto the floor and get all dirty, which I really love and right back, in here, I don't know if you can see it, there is a little hook right here to hang all your mats, 'cause they're really quite large and that can be unwieldy. There's no doubt about the large mats are unwieldy. So the docking stand is awesome and if you're going to get a Venture and you have room for the docking stand, I would also get that.

I feel like we have done a pretty good overview of the materials and tools and supplies that you can use with your Explores and Ventures.

So I would love, well actually, let's talk about what you really don't need to be worrying about as a Cricut beginner, because this is a whole lot of stuff here, right?

Okay, so first you really don't need the replacement fine point blades. I use my aluminum foil ball, trick or the alcohol prep pad trick to keep your blades nice and clean.

Second, you do not need every color and type of cardstock or vinyl or infusible ink, even though you may be tempted. I recommend you buy your supplies on a project by project basis to avoid stockpiling too much and getting overwhelmed, because this is totally a thing, okay?

Third, you do not need to try all the different types of materials. Again, pick one. I recommend a paper craft when you're first starting out. Do it, finish it, and move on from there. It's really important to stay focused for success. I have many, many beginner tutorials. Most of my projects are for beginners and you can follow along. I

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show you how to do everything from the start to all the way up to the end And so that you can gain confidence and not overwhelm yourself by being like, okay, what do I do?

There's so many options. So it allows you to pick something that you really want, like focus on the end goal, the thing you really want to sign, or you really want a T-shirt, whatever it is and like imagine the thing and being done and then come to jennifermaker.com, search for a tutorial on that and follow that and make the thing you want.

All right, so until, oh, I can't forget, don't forget about our workbook. Lots of great information in here on all of your tools and supplies, charts, ways for you to keep track of what you've got, ways for you to see all of the other things that are possible, even if I maybe forgot to mention it, 'cause there's a lot of stuff.

You can get the handbook at cricutkickoff.com.

So until our next class, this is Jennifer Maker reminding you to craft a life you love.