

How to Create your own Button Design

Although you can make fun buttons using fabric, wrapping paper, photos, pictures you find in a magazine, or your own drawings, you can use the computer to create your own button designs. Below is information on how to access the Build-a-Button 6.0 Design Center. Learning through the online video course is also easy. More about that on the next page.

You can also download “Free Button Making Templates” by going to www.americanbuttonmachines.com then clicking on “Design Center” then “Free Button Making Templates.” You can download templates for Photoshop, CorelDraw, Open Office, and Print Shop. The Library Innovation Studio computers have CorelDraw for your use. So if you prefer using design software you already know, feel free to use those templates for a 2.25” Round button. However, I think it might be easier to design with Build-A-Button. The following pages review that software and how you can learn more its features by using the online video course and the summary of those units on the pages that follow.

How to Access the Studio’s Build-A-Button 6.0 Membership

Build-a-Button 6.0 Design Center can be accessed from the four Library Innovation Studio desktop computers and the two laptops through the start menu shortcuts. If you want to access this site from another computer go to Americanbuttonmachines.com Click on “Design Center” then “Build-a-Button” then “Build-A-Button 6.0.”

If you are not on a Library Innovation Studio computer perhaps you are at a makerspace that has a Build-A-Button membership. Ask staff and if they do, you can use their password on their computers for use with their button maker.

NOTE: Only one person can use a membership at a time so you may need to try at another time during the day.

There is a great online video course for 6.0 on Americanbuttonmachines.com that is very helpful. The next few pages outline the units in that course so you can more easily find what you are looking for.

How to Learn to Use Build-A-Button 6.0 (Note you do not need to be logged into a Build-A-Button membership to view this online video course.

Go to

<https://www.americanbuttonmachines.com/>

Click on “Design Center” in Blue Bar

Click on “Build-A-Button” Tutorials

There you will find a video course with “short” 2-3 minute units. Click on those units to learn more about each one. The information below summarizes what you would learn in each of those units. This document should help you find what you are looking for, and in some cases, the information below might answer some of your questions without spending the time viewing a tutorial unit.

BUILD-A-BUTTON 6.0 - COMPLETE VIDEO COURSE

Basics

+ Button Templates – Choosing the Right Size (1.43 minutes)

Tells you how to choose the size and shape of your button design. The Library Innovation Studio’s button maker are Round 2.25” buttons, so simply choose round and 2.25” to match the size of the Library Innovation Studio’s button maker.

+ Image Area – Defining the Different Areas in a Button Design (2.48 minutes)

Tells you to keep what you want visible from the front within the red dotted line. Shows you how to click on instructions so you know how to add taglines that show on the back of your button. Click instructions again to get back to your button design. Taglines are covered in the Tagline unit.

+ Centering Guide and Grid Area (2.14 minutes)

Tells you how to line up the various items in your design. Tells you how to find and use the **grid button** (looks like a box made up of 9 boxes in the tool bar on the right). Shows you how to use the **centering button** (looks like a scope target below the grid button). These are both good if precise alignment is important in your button design.

+ Color Picker Tool – Applying Custom Colors (4.3 minutes)

Tells you how to select background and text colors using the **color picker**. You are able to select **text color**, **text outline** color, and **shadow color**.

There are set pre-color swatches you can pick from;

You can use the hexadecimal value (if your company’s logo uses a particular color and you know the hexadecimal value number of that);

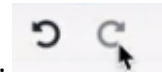
You can drag the slider on the **rainbow color slider**; or

You can use a color found in the inserted photo/image by using the **eye dropper**.

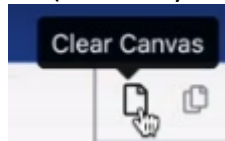
This **eye dropper** feature will come in handy to select a color found in your photo/image if: 1) you want to make your text the same color as some color in your photo, 2) your picture is shaped such that you need to add more color surrounding your picture that blends with your photo, or 3) you want to select a color from your photo to create a frame/ring around your button to give your button a nice border that matches a color found in your photo.

+ Undo – Redo – Clear Canvas Functions (2.46 minutes)

Tells you how to use the **undo** and **redo** buttons found in the top tool bar. Undo allows you to take a step backwards, and if you decide against your Undo, you can Redo which will take you forward (so undo your undo 😊). If you don't like anything

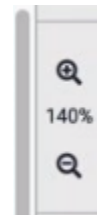


you did, you can **clear canvas**, but remember that you can not get anything back after you cleared your canvas.

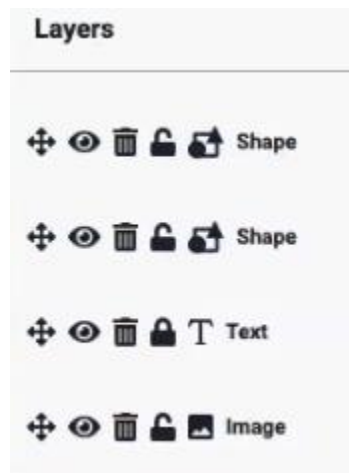


+ Zooming In and Out (1.22 minutes)

This **Zoom In and Out** Button (pictured to the right) is found in the right tool bar. You can also use the gray scroll bars to the right and below your button image to move up and down on your screen.



+ Layers – How to Manage Layers (6.35 minutes) (Important Unit)

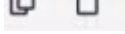


This unit tells you how to manage all the layers you may add to your button that shows up in a **layers panel** to the right of the button you are designing on your screen (pictured). You are able to “collapse” or “expand” this layers panel with the arrow next to Layers so it doesn't block your view or so you can see the full panel.

Check out the symbols in each layer line. The first is that plus with arrows symbol which is the **move symbol**. If you want to reorder your layers (put a different one on top, simply click on that line, when click on that **move symbol** of that line and drag it up to put at the top of the list which puts that as the front layer, or drag it down to the bottom of the list that moves that layer to the back layer of your graphic. If you want to turn on or off the visibility of one of those layers as you are working, you can click on the **Eye symbol** on that layers line. This allows you to work without having to see a layer that might be in your line of sight.

If you want to trash an entire layer, you can click on its **trash can symbol** on that layer line.

You can also copy and paste a layer if you want two of those layers. This comes in handy if you need to duplicate your picture to cover some unwanted white space shown

beyond your photo. The **copy button (and paste buttons)** shown here  can be found in the upper tool bar. It shows you how to choose filters and then blur so that the background photo you are adding to cover the white spaces blends in to the button graphic. This blurred background photo will need to be dragged to the bottom of the layers panel, as this needs to be the most back layer.

The **lock symbol** for each layer is important and very handy. When you have several layers and you want to move a layer, how do you move just the one layer? Well you simply click on the **lock** of every layer you do not want to move. If the layer you want to move is the only unlocked layer, that will be the one you can work in without moving all the other layers. You will notice that the **lock symbol** changes when you click to **unlock it** or **lock it**, the symbol changes indicating if it is currently open or locked.

+ Layers – How to Group Layers (2.36 minutes)

Tells you how to group your layers so you can resize them all as a group. This would come in handy if you designed a button for a 2.25" button and now you want to change your design for a 3.0" button. This allows you to change the size of every layer by first grouping the layers. You may seldom use this feature, but let's say you have two text boxes and you wanted to resize them as a group. If so, you could first group them and then make your changes. To group layers you need to click on a layer in the layers panel then use your shift key to click on another layer in your layers panel to group them. Then you can click, stretch, drag, etc. as a group.

+ Edit – Save to Edit/Print (2.46 minutes)

Tells you how to save your design to re-edit it someday, or if you are not done designing your button, you can save it so you can upload it another day so you can finish it later. Find the **Save & Print** button in the top tool bar – then choose **Save to Edit** option. You will name your file. Then hit save. Then Download file. Later, when you come back to work more on that saved button, you will click on the **Upload** Button in the upper bar then use the **choose button option** and then find the saved file on your computer. (If you used a library computer, you will want to save your file to a thumb drive so you have that saved file when you want to go back in to work on that button you saved.)

+ Printing – How to Save A Button Design for Printing (2.29 minutes)

This Unit shows you how to use the **Save & Print** button in the top right corner of your screen. When you are ready to save your newly designed button for storage and printing, select the Save and Print button in the top right corner. You get four options, choose **Save to Print** option. Since you will likely be cutting your printed buttons with a graphic punch, circle cutter or scissors, choose the Punch Cutter button. You can either choose the default number (for the 2.25" button the default is 6 (the most that you can print on a page) or you can select a number to print. If you only want to make one button with this image, and you want to save ink, you may choose 1 copy. You can then

save as a PDF, JPEG or PNG file. Generally, you will choose PDF unless you are a graphic designer and know that your computer can handle those other options. You will name your file. Then hit download. Then Download file.

+ Upload to Print – Printing Single or Multiple Button Designs on a Page (2.44 minutes)

This unit shows you how you can load and print multiple button designs you have previously saved on a single page. First click the **Save and Print** button at the top right. Then click the **Load and Print** button (one of the options that comes up) so that you can load the designs you have saved. Then select one of the save options. Choose PDF unless you know you want one of the others. You are prompted to enter a name of what you want to name your file. Then hit **choose files** button and navigate to the location to choose a saved design you created earlier. You can repeat this step to continue to choose files to add other saved buttons to your new document so that you can print multiple designs on the same sheet. If you want to print three buttons of one design and two buttons of another design and you want them to print on the same page, you would need to Upload the one design three times and Upload the other design twice. Once you have chosen all the designs you want to print, click the **Upload** button. Once that has processed you can click on the **download file** button to download your new file. You can open that new document by clicking on its name at the bottom left hand corner of your screen.

Photos

+ Photos – How to Add a Photo to Your Button Design (4.15 minutes)

This unit shows you how to add photos—yours, those you find on the internet, or those available in the Build-A-Button software. Click on **Photos** in the left toolbar. You will see a library of images in the software in categories such as Nature, Science, etc. There is also a search bar so if you want to search for a specific subject by typing in what you are looking for such as puppy or heart.

Once you select a photo, you can change the attributes of the photo. You can use the size plus and minus to increase or reduce the size of the photo. You can also grab and stretch the corners diagonally to change the size of the photo, or you can use the zoom slider to change the size of the image. You can move the image around by clicking and dragging. You can also **flip the image vertically or horizontally** by clicking on those commands to the left, or rotate the image one way or the other by using the **rotation slider** or by grabbing and moving the handle that you see at the top of the image. You can also use the **opacity slider** if you want to fade your background image.

You can also upload a photo by clicking on the **Upload your photo** button, then browse and select that image and click the **open** button, then the upload button to add that image to your button design.

+ Photos – How to Crop a Photo Image (2.17 minutes)

Although there is not an issue with your image/photo hanging off the edges of your button design, there may be instances where you do want to crop your image to a rectangular shape or a circular shape. You can do this by using tools in your top tool bar. There is the **Crop Round** Shaped button and the **Crop Square** button. You will find these just to the left of the Undo and Redo button. Once you select one of those options, a circle or square will appear onto your photo and you can move and pull that circle/square where and how big you want it. When you are happy, you can Click **Crop**. You can still resize it after you crop it. You can also click on **Uncrop** if you need to undo your crop.

+ Photo – Adding a Photo Filter (2.38 minutes)

You can also apply filters to change the appearance of an image. You can simply click on the image (or on the image layer to the right on the layers panel). To your left, you will see a **Filters** blue button. Click on that. This provides you various options—or filters you can choose from, you can also choose more than one. For instance, you can choose both **black and white** and **Kodacrome** filters to apply. Once you choose your filter(s), you may move the sliders adjusting for brightness, contrast, saturation, hue, and blur to alter the look to our liking.

+ Avoiding White Space When Designing Buttons (2.43 minutes) (Important Chapter)

Avoiding White Space will come in handy for you. I would recommend you viewing this unit. This will be handy when your photo is such that when you increase the size of your photo to fill your entire button, the main subject of your photo becomes too big. Say you have a picture of your puppy, but your puppy's head is close to the top of the photo. You will need to figure out how to replace the white space beyond your photo. To do this, you can insert a background layer behind your photo so it is not obvious that your photo does not fill the button. This shows you how to select background colors, or how to use the **eye dropper** feature to select colors directly from your photo. It also shows you how to duplicate your photo (remember those copy and paste buttons in the top tool bar) and blurring the background photo for blending purposes if you think that is a better option than selecting a static color. Perhaps the background of your puppy's photo is sky on top and grass at the bottom. You can also put in two additional backgrounds behind your photo using the grass and sky colors picked out of the photo and line those up with the grass/sky lines in the front photo with two background images, one at the top of your button and the other one below that lining up where the colors changes.

Other ways to deal with unwanted white space is to use either the Accent Ring or Border Feature that are described in later units.

Text Options

+ Borders

This one is empty but Borders are actually covered in a Unit farther down the list.

+ Text – Adding Basic Text to a Button Design (2.18 minutes)

Shows how you click on the **Text** button in the left toolbar. This brings up a dialog box that has an **Add New Text Layer** blue box. When you click on that, you will see a text line in the Layers panel and the text box shows up on your button. Now type into the Edit Text Below box you see near your left toolbar. If you want three lines of text on your button, as you are typing simply use your keyboard's **enter/carriage return** key when you want to move to your next line. As you are typing in that white text box on the left, you will see that text is also showing up in your button design to the right. See the next section for text adjustments.

+ Text – Adjusting Text Attributes (4.36 minutes)

Now that you laid in the text, this unit shows you how to adjust/change the attributes of your text. The box to the left includes buttons and sliders to use to change the look of your text in many ways.

You can change the text size by using the **plus or minus**.

You can select another **font**. Adding fonts is also easy see that unite below.

You can select **center, flush right** or **flush left**.

You can use the font size slider.

You can **curve the text up** or **curve the text down**.

You can use the **line spacing slider** the makes your lines closer or father apart
(this only works if you put in hard returns between your lines)

You can use the **letter spacing slider** to adjust the spacing between letters.

You can rotate your text using the **rotation slider**.

You can adjust the text curve with the **radius slider**.

The **opacity slider** adjusts the clarity/fade of your photo;

If you look below opacity, you will find ways to **change the text color**, your **text outline** if you want an outline, **text shadows** (a variety) and more.

+ Curved Text – How to Add Curved Text to Your Button Design (2.22 minutes)

Tells you how to add curved Text. Select **Text** from the left toolbar, then click **curved text**, then select curve up or curve down. The radius slider box will help you adjust the curve to match the curve of the button, or the curve of the item in your photo.

+ Fonts – How to Add Custom Fonts (2.44 minutes)

Tells you how to choose a current installed font (which is easy without watching this). However, it also shows you to add fonts by uploading fonts many of which can be added

in just two quick steps. Only TTF and OTF font files can be uploaded into Build-A-Button. If you want to add more fonts that are easily available, first click **Text**, then click **Add Fonts** button just above the fonts box. Then click on one of the categories of fonts, **Sans Serif, Display, Serif or Hand Writing**. Then a whole menu of fonts will come up. Simply click on the **Add boxes** for the fonts that appeal to you, then click **Done** at the top. Then click **OK**. Now when you click on the **Font Family** popup the newly added fonts will be on there.

+ Monogram – Adding a Monogram to Your Button Design (1.25 minutes)

If you want to do a monogram on your button that contains one to three letters, use this Monogram feature. You can see there are three text styles: **Normal Text, Curved Text** and **Monogram Text**. The **Monogram Text** have shape options to include Heart, Circle and Scallop. You can change the **Opacity**, or the **Text Color**.

Borders – Accent Rings – Taglines – Stencils

+ Stencils – Styles and Colors (3.08 minutes)

After choosing your round button, you can choose a stencil if you like. Options include Clear Stencil, 2-Color Stencil (top one color and button another), 3-Color Stencil (great for red, white and blue buttons), or a Circle and Slash Stencil (great for your “no whining” button). Then you can choose solid colors, or linear gradient colors or radial gradient colors. There are color swatches to choose your colors (the top one for solid colors and the one below for gradient colors). You can even shift the position of the gradation itself by using the **+ -** buttons. On the **circle and slash stencil** you can also adjust the thickness of your line and circle by using the sliders. You can also select colors as you can in the other stencils.

+ Tagline & Accent Rings (3.16 Minutes)

Although you are normally concentrating on what will show on the front of your button, because the outer edges of your paper wraps around your button, there is a small amount of printed graphic that can be viewed from the back. This small amount of space on the back is a good place to add words such as your company name, an inspirational message, or the name of the button’s artist. To be able to add tag lines on the back, click on **LINES** in the selection options in the left toolbar. Then you will see options for **Image Area, Tag Lines** and **Accent Ring**. When you choose **Tag Lines**, you will see two blue circles near the edge of your button that shows where your tag line will show. (The blue lines—like the dotted red line--will not print.) Simply type the words you want to add to the **Edit Tag Line Text Below** box and those words will automatically show up between those two blue circles. You can choose to have that tag line at the top or bottom of your button by choosing **curve down** or **curve up**. You will notice that the words appear backwards and upside down. This is important because when that outer edge wraps around your button you will be able to view it as normal text.

The **Image Area** selection does not alter your button at all. It simply removes the red dotted line (that does not print) from your screen. This allows you to view your graphic without having to see the dotted line. However, most prefer to design with the dotted line so that when designing your button, you can make sure that you know what will show on the front of your button. The portion beyond the dotted line will wrap beyond the front of your button.

The **Accent Ring** option is a nice feature if you want to add an accent ring of printed color to the outer edge of your button. Using the **size slider**, you can make this accent ring as thick or thin as you choose. You can also select colors and even use the **eye dropper** feature to select a color that you find in your picture.

+ Borders – Adding a Border to Your Design (2.19 minutes)

You will find a **Borders** button on the left toolbar. Clicking on that brings up many border options. Although you might like to use a border to give your button a nice accent, you can also use a border to hide the fact that the picture you inserted still left some white space showing even after you adjusted your photo. When you select a border, you can still adjust the border's rotation, opacity, size (using the zoom slider). Adjusting the opacity might reveal that white space that you were trying to cover so be careful.

Digital Downloads

+ Editable Digital Downloads (8 Minutes)

This would only be used if you purchase an editable digital design from American Button.