

Module 3: Designing your app

Level of difficulty: ● ○ ○ ○
Estimated time: 15 mn

How to style components (labels, buttons, pics...)

1. We have created a screen with labels (text) and button in the previous module. Now, we want to change their color, size, shape... and general appearance to personalize our app. To do that, we need to open the GUI Builder:

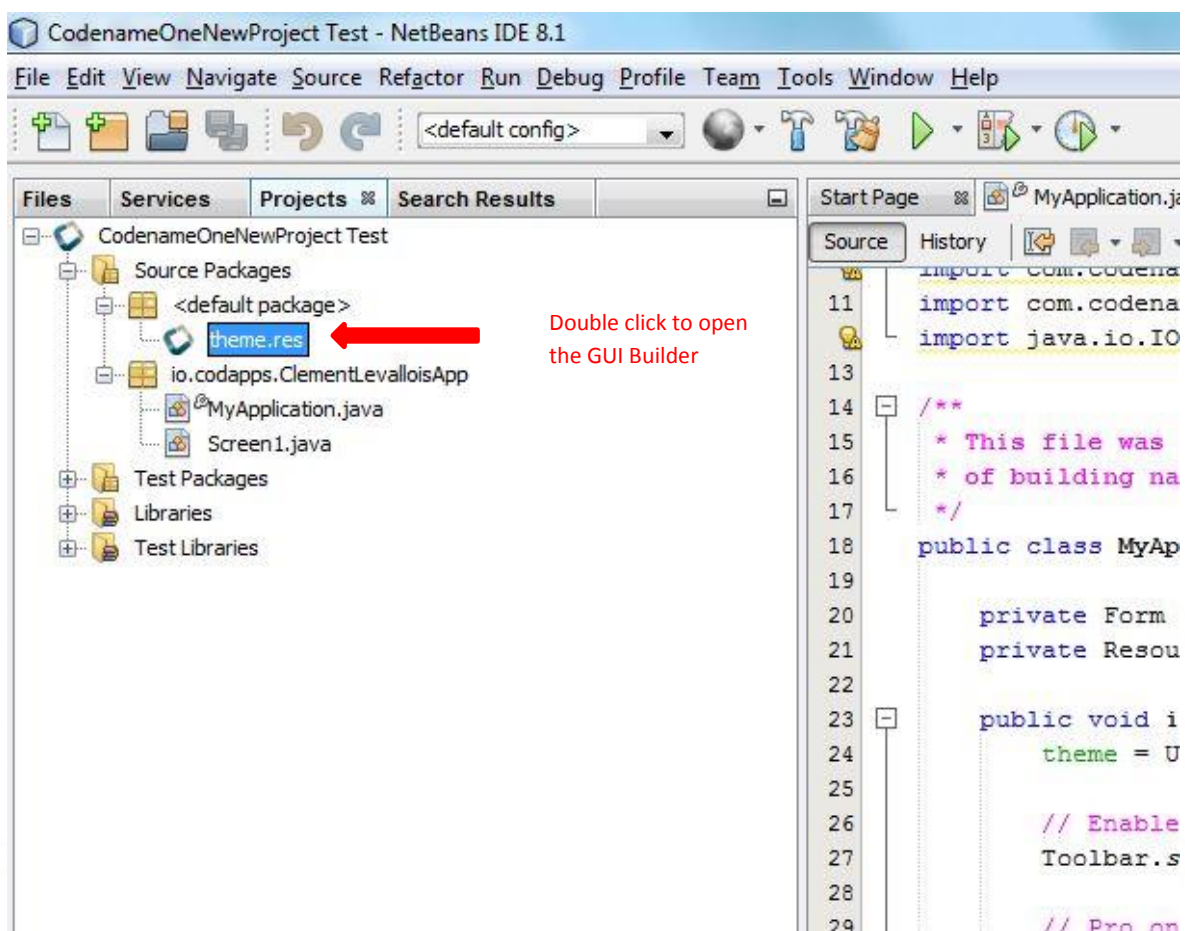
The general principle to do that is:

- We add a new style to the Theme of the app. We define this style as we want (color, etc.)
- We apply this style to the Label, Button... that we want.

Let's do it. We start by opening the GUI Builder:

- **Double click on "theme.res":**

(wait a bit as opening the GUI Builder can take a couple of seconds)



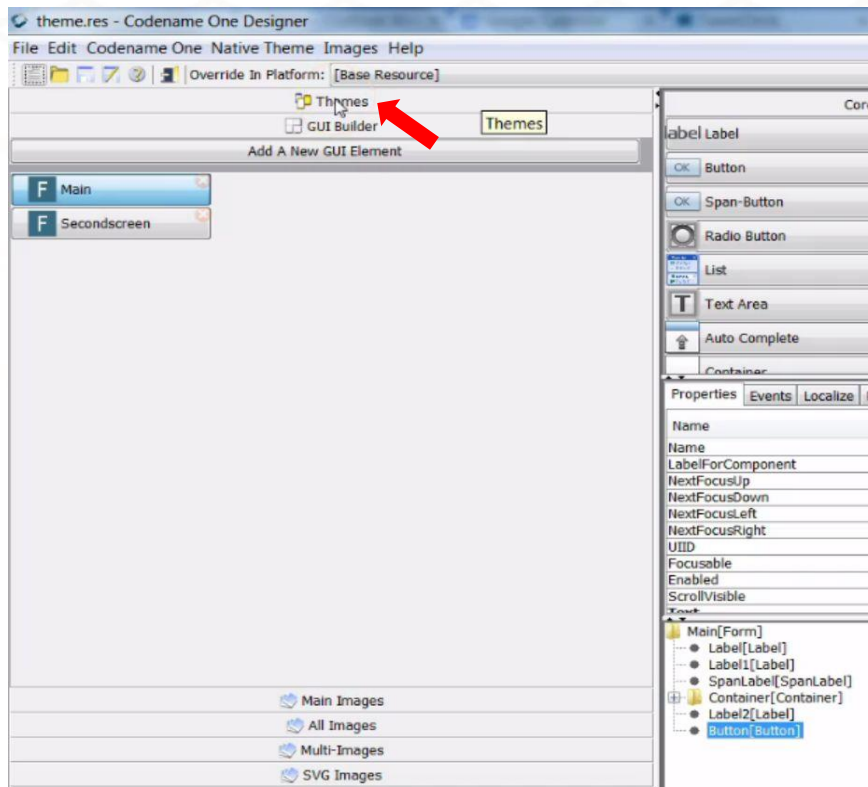
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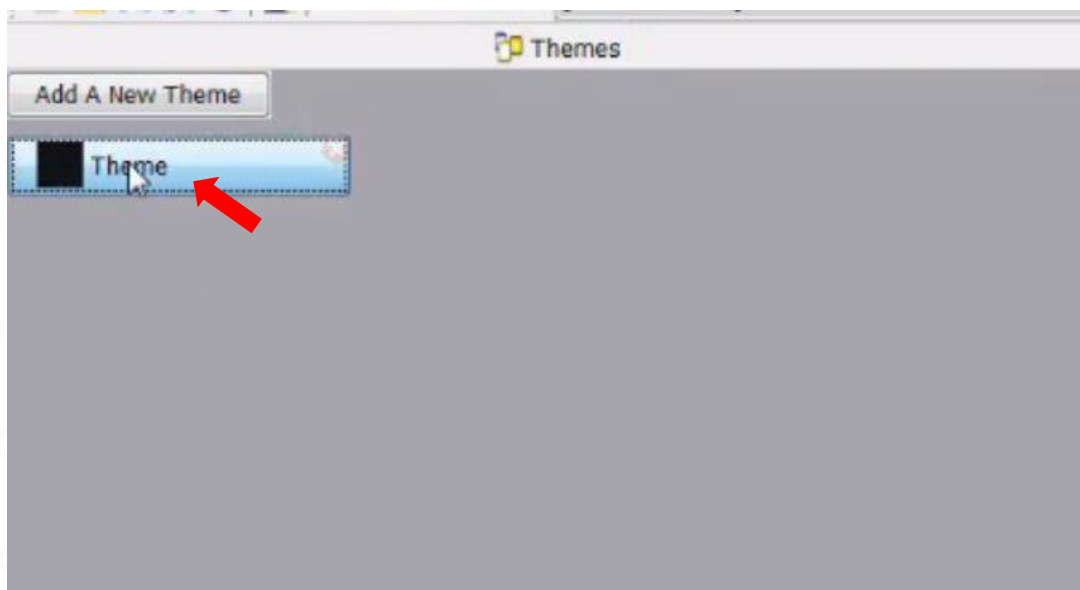
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How to style components (labels, buttons, pics...)

In the menu on the left, click on “Themes”:

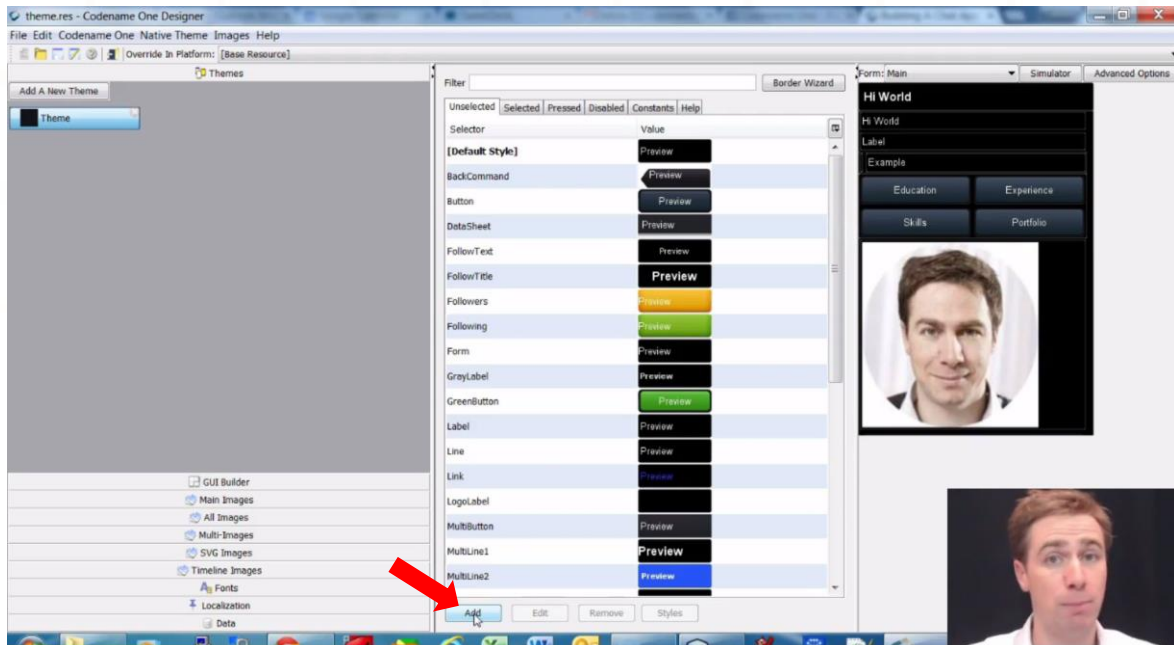


2. This show this screen, where you should click on “Theme”:



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3. This opens a window where you see all the details of the theme of your app. Click on “add” at the bottom to add a new style:



4. A window opens. On top in the field “Component”, you should give a name for your style. In this example I show how to create a new style for a button which would open my LinkedIn profile, so I call it “LinkedInButton”.

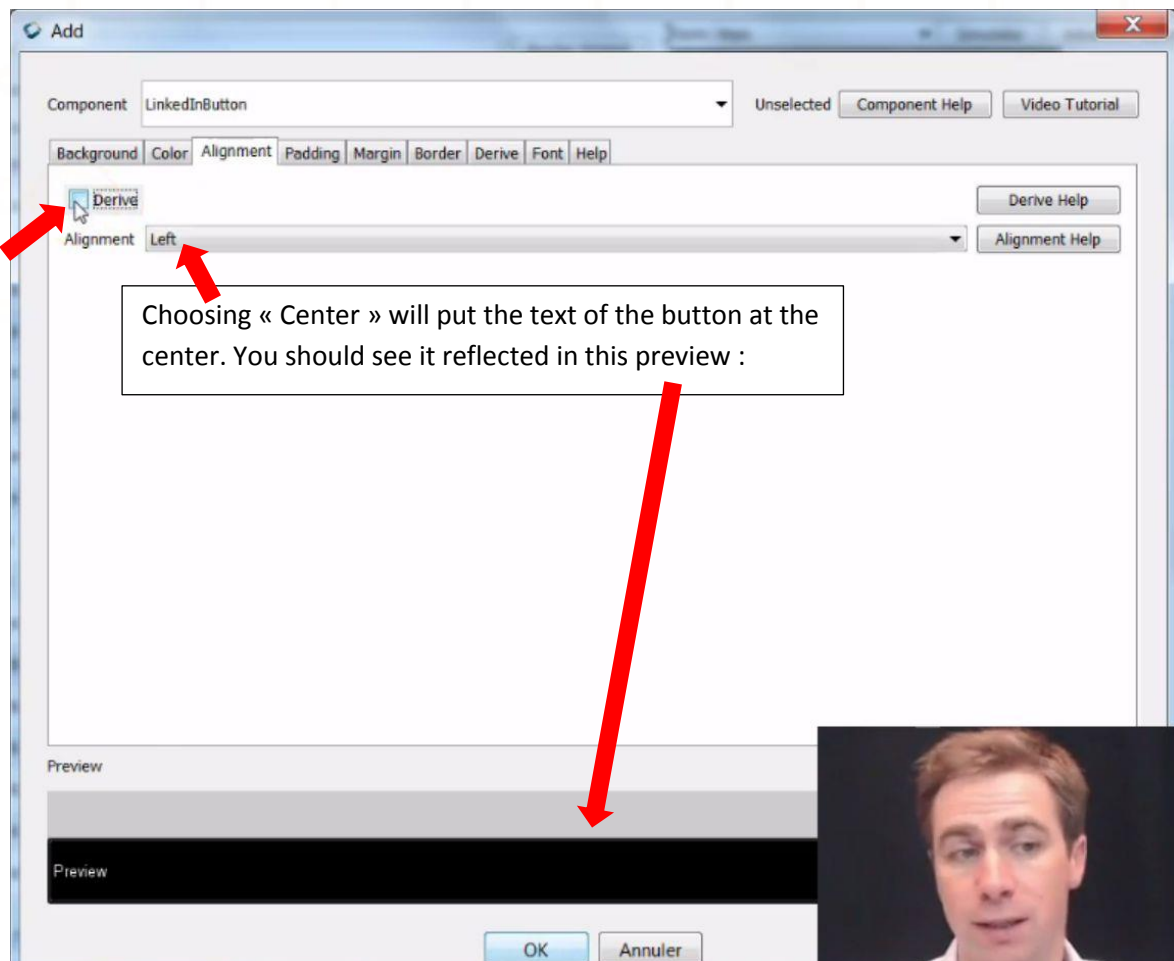
Important: if you just give a name to your style and click “OK”, your style will not be saved. You need to change at least one thing in the style (color, background... whatever).

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The principle is simple: untick the box “Derive” (remove the mark, as shown on the pic) to apply the changes you want in each category: background, color, font, margins, etc.

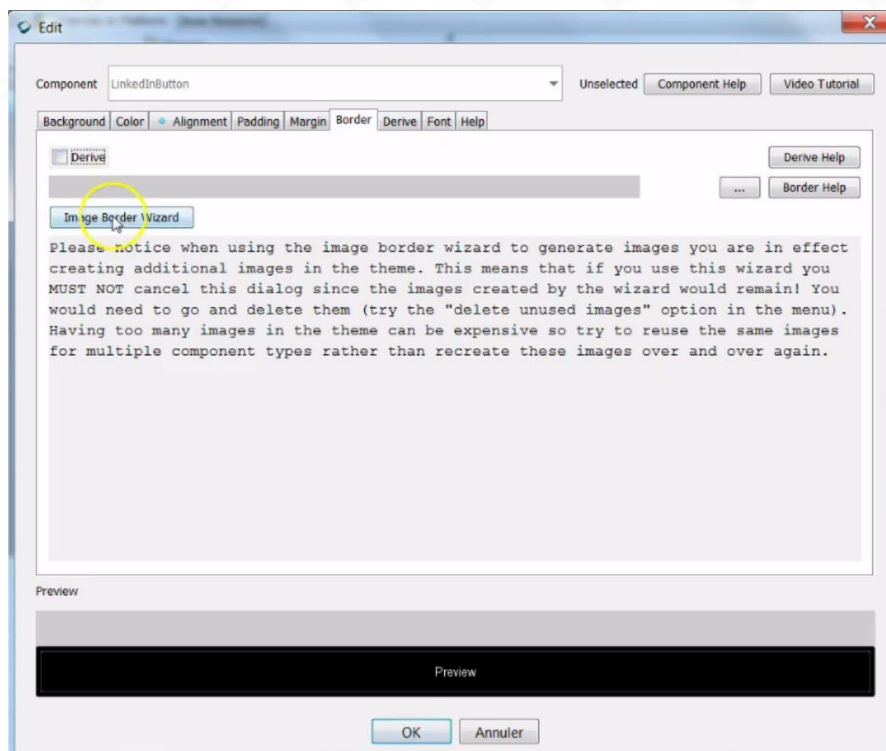


5. A special tab is “Border”. There, untick “derive” and click on “Image Border Wizard”. This opens a new window, where you can change the shape of the component you are designing.

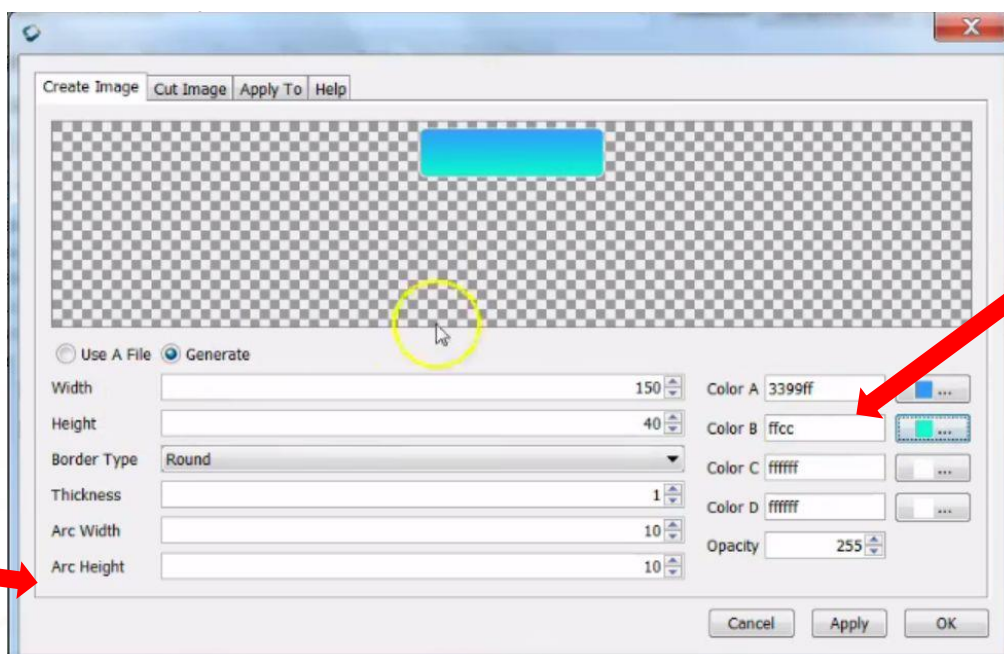
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6.



Arc width and height:

Try values of 20 for both, to get a button with round corners.

Color A:
color of the top of the button

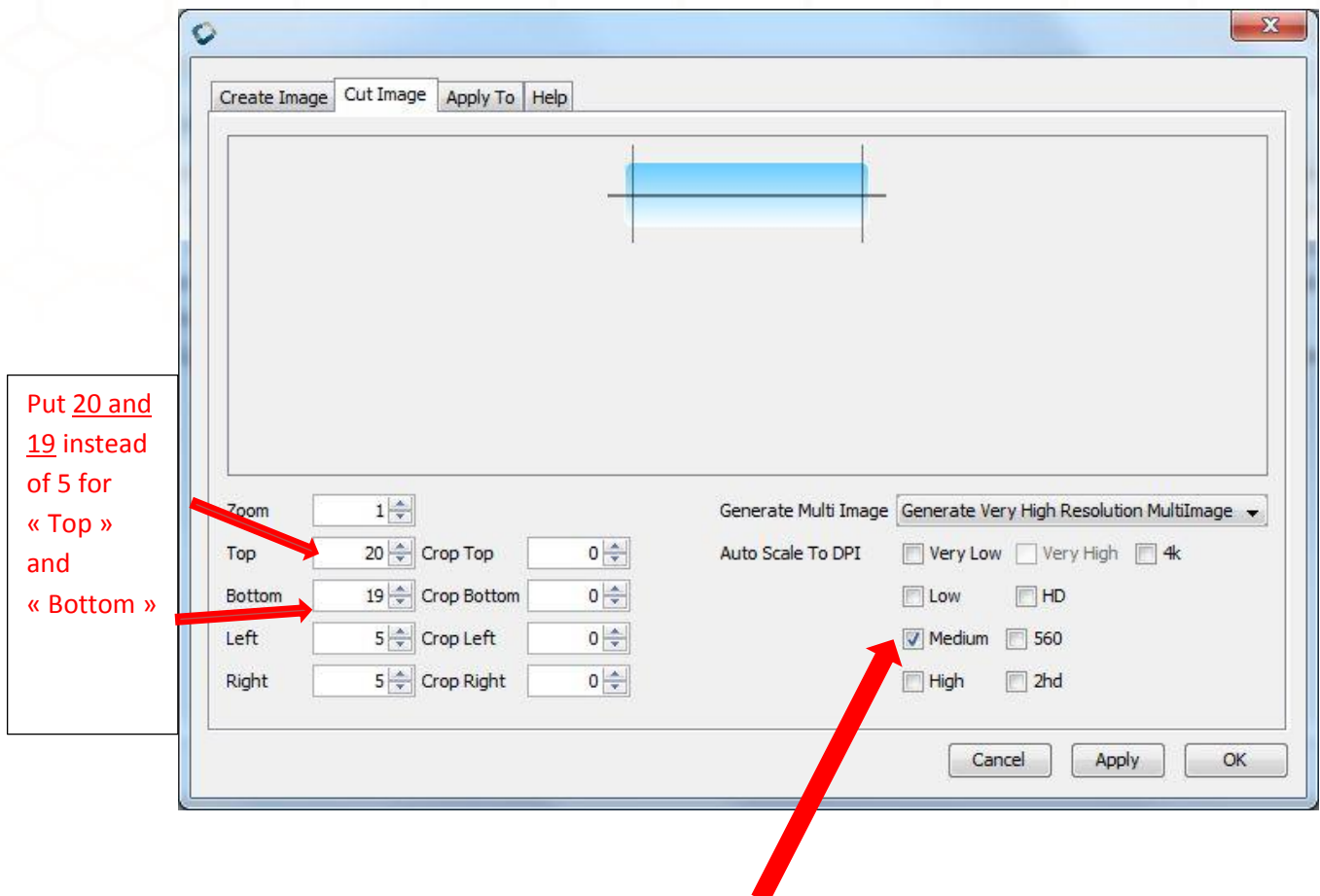
Color B:
color of the bottom of the button

Color C:
color of the top of the border

Color D:
color of the bottom of the border

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8. Only if we applied a color gradient (for example, a blue color for the top of the button, and a white color for the bottom of the button), we need to go to the “Cut Image” tab and do:



And untick (leave unselected) all the boxes, except “Medium”.

By the way...

- **why “20” and “19”?** Our button is 40 pixels of height (as you can see in the “Create Image” tab). Here, we cut the image at 19 from the bottom, and 20 from the top. It leaves a very narrow band (1 pixel of height) in the middle, which is going to be repeated (“tiled”) as much as necessary when the button will be displayed on larger screens.

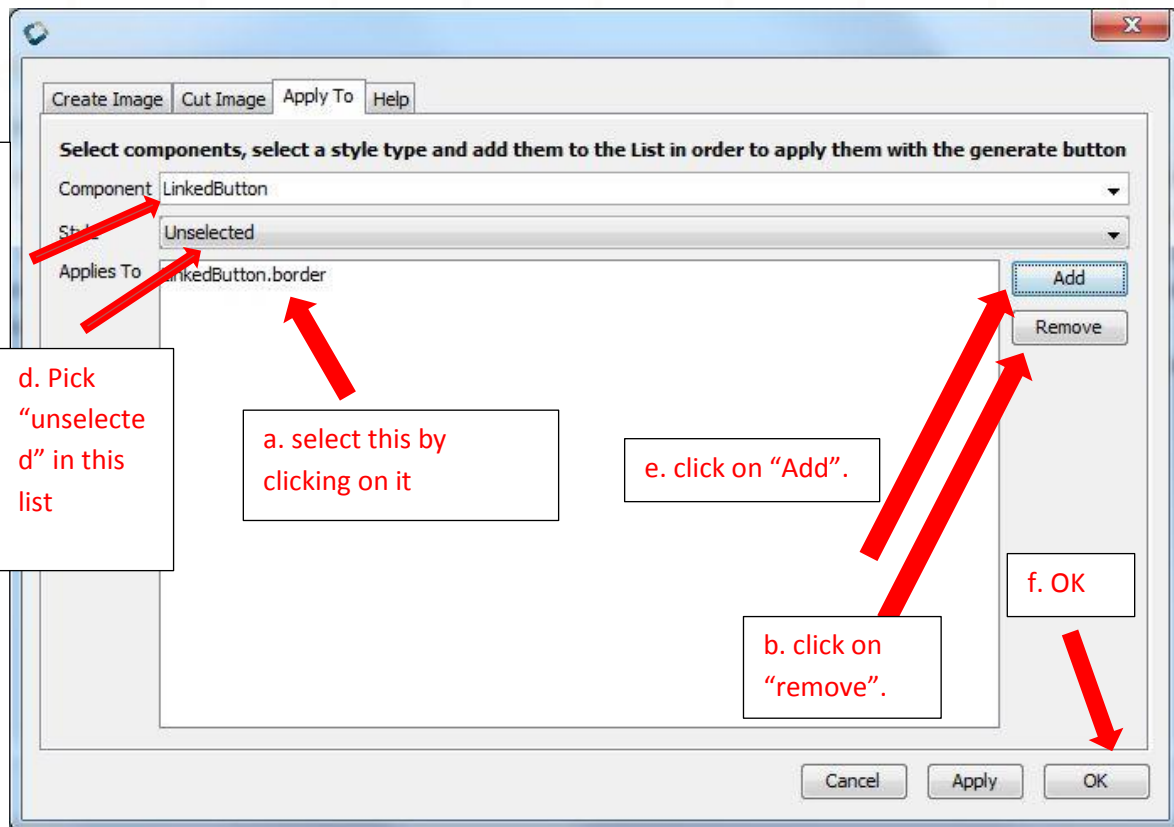
- **why just “Medium”?** We need to create an app which is very small in size, so in this exercise we generate just one size (medium) of image for the button. In a bigger app, we could select all options.

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9. Finally! We need to follow the sequence of steps below very carefully from a) to f), to make sure our gradient of color is applied. Boring but hey, it works... (famous last words).



10. You should now have left the "Border Wizard" Window. You can close the window for the style of your component, then SAVE (File -> Save) before closing theme.res

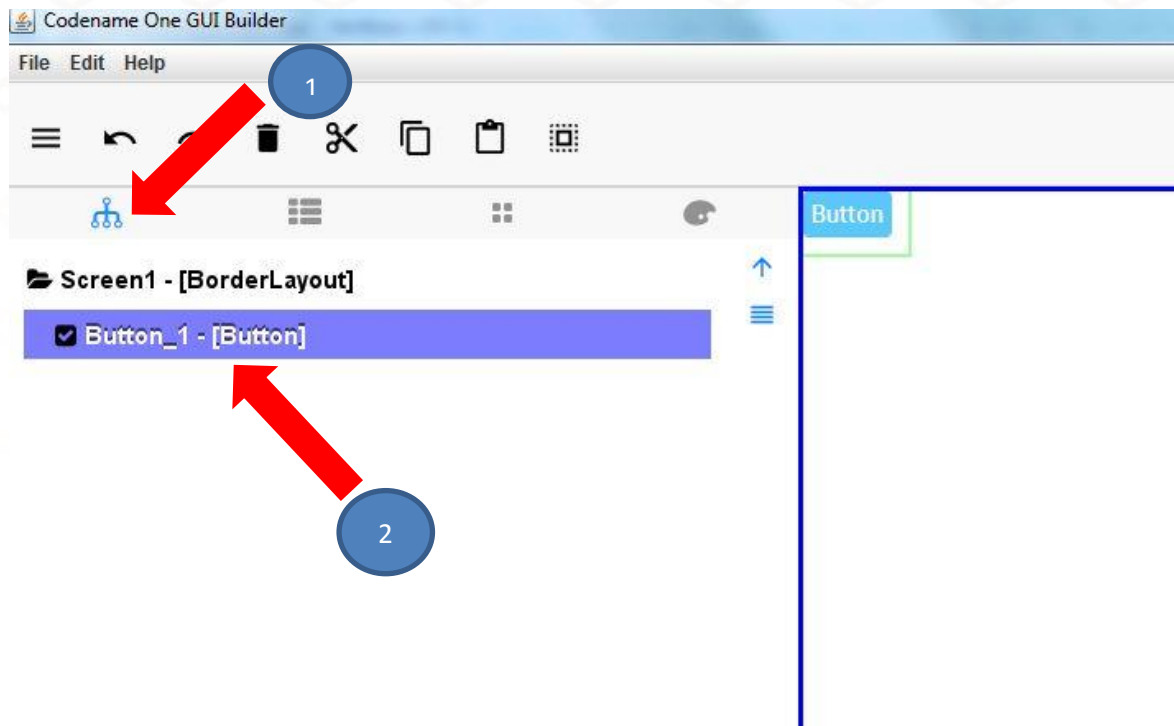
11. To apply this style to your button in your app,

- Go back to NetBeans.
- Right click on Screen1.java (or any name you gave to your screen) and select "GUI Builder" in the menu. The screen was already opened? Close it and reopen it.
- Select your button:

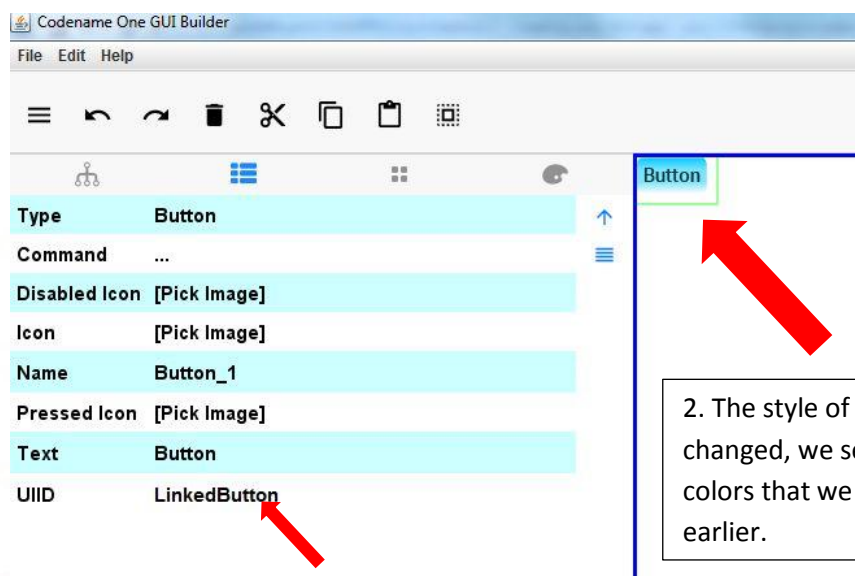
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12. Now, click on "Property Sheet" to modify the "UUID" of the Button. The "UUID" of the Button is the name of its style, in our case we used "LinkedButton". We see on the right the style of the button, which is the one we defined.



1. We typed « LinkedButton » instead of « Button »

2. The style of the button has changed, we see the gradient of colors that we have defined earlier.

13. Save (File -> Save), your button is now styled. The same logic applies to style Labels, etc.