ChatGPT

Native Gutenberg Controls for Padding, Borders, Radius, and Shadows (Dec 2025)

As of December 2025, WordPress Gutenberg provides **built-in sidebar controls** (no custom code required) for common CSS properties like padding, margin, borders (color, width, style, radius), and even drop shadows. A block developer can simply opt into these **native block supports** to expose the corresponding controls in the block's sidebar. Below is a rundown of the available native controls and how they are used.

Padding and Margin (Spacing Controls)

Gutenberg offers **"Dimensions"** or **spacing** controls for padding and margin. By enabling spacing support in your block (e.g. via `supports.spacing` in `block.json`), you get UI sliders/fields for padding and margin on the block's sidebar [1] [2]. Users can adjust these values in various units (px, %, em, etc.), and toggle the link/unlink icon to apply the value uniformly or per side. In other words, padding and margin can be set **individually on each side** or all at once when linked [3]. This is all provided natively – for example, a `block.json` with:

```
"supports": {
  "spacing": {
    "padding": true,
    "margin": true
  }
}
```

will add **Padding** and **Margin** panels in the editor sidebar for that block [1]. (Note: Themes must allow spacing controls, but most do via "appearance tools" or theme.json settings.)
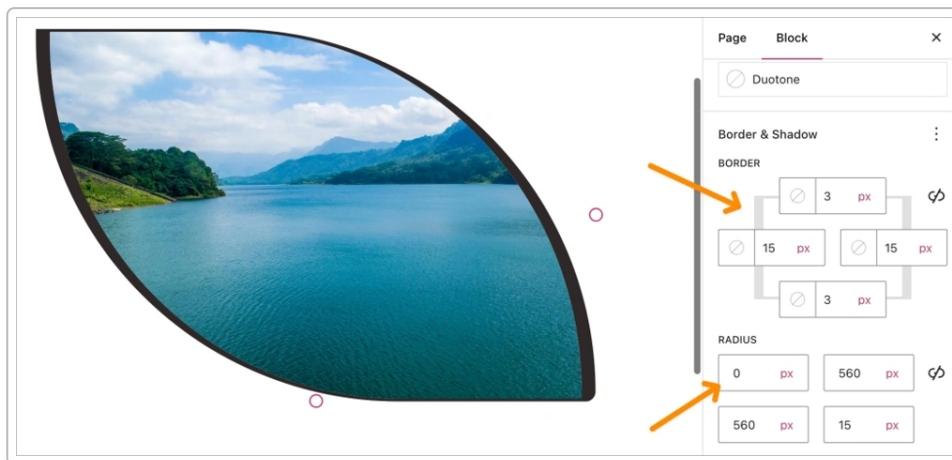
Border Controls (Color, Width, Style)

When border support is enabled, Gutenberg provides a **"Border"** panel in the block's sidebar with controls for border width, color, and style. Developers can opt in by adding `supports: { "border": true }` (or specify sub-properties) in the block's settings [4]. By default, the border control UI includes:

- **Border width** – an input/slider (with unit selection) to set the thickness of the border.
- **Border color** – a color picker (supports theme palette or custom colors, including transparency if enabled).
- **Border style** – a dropdown for style with options like solid, dashed, or dotted [5].

These controls appear together under **"Border"** (often grouped with Shadow in a "Border & Shadow" section of the Styles tab) and allow the user to add a line around the block. Users can click a **link/unlink sides** button here as well, to apply the border uniformly or set different widths on each side [6].

Notably, if any one of color, width, or style is enabled, Gutenberg will show all three options for completeness [7] . This means you get a comprehensive border tool without extra coding.

Example: The Border & Shadow panel with independent per-side border settings (top, right, bottom, left) and radius controls. Here the sides have been unlinked, allowing different border widths on each side, and custom corner radii creating a unique shape. [6]

Border Radius (Corner Rounding)

Border radius controls (often labeled just "Radius") are provided natively as well. With border-radius support enabled, the block's sidebar shows a **Radius** slider/input that allows adjusting corner roundness [8] . By default this slider is "linked" (all corners change together), but users can unlink it to set each corner radius individually (e.g. make only certain corners rounded) [9] [6] . The UI also typically displays preset radius values if defined. In WordPress 6.9, a new feature introduced **border radius presets** – theme designers can define named radius sizes (e.g. XS, Small, Medium, etc.), which users can select from a dropdown or slider steps [10] [11] . These presets appear in the Radius control, making it easy to apply consistent corner rounding across blocks. For example, a theme can register presets like 0px (sharp), 0.5rem, 1rem, up to 9999em for fully rounded, and the editor will offer those options in the radius slider or a dropdown [11] . This native radius control ensures developers don't need to build custom range inputs – simply enable `border.radius` support and Gutenberg handles it.

Linked vs Unlinked Corners: Just like padding and borders, the radius control has a chain icon to toggle linked/unlinked mode [6] . When unlinked, the UI expands to four fields (top-left, top-right, bottom-right, bottom-left) so the user can set each corner's roundness separately. This is all provided by Gutenberg's core components, and even complex values (like elliptical radii) are supported via the preset system [12] (though such advanced cases require using the unlink mode for individual corners).

Box Shadow (Drop Shadow)

Gutenberg also includes a **box shadow** design tool natively, introduced in core around WordPress 6.5. If a block declares `supports: { "shadow": true }`, users will see a **Shadow** picker in the sidebar [13] . This "Shadow" panel lets users apply a drop shadow style to the block without any custom CSS. Typically, a set of **preset shadow styles** is available (defined by the theme or default), such as *Natural*, *Deep*, *Sharp*, *Outlined*, *Crisp* shadows. The user can choose one, and the block will render with that shadow effect. For example, core Button, Image, and Column blocks support shadows – selecting "Deep" might add a darker, more pronounced shadow, whereas "Natural" might be a subtle soft shadow.

Under the hood, these are implemented via CSS variables and theme.json, but from the developer's perspective you only need to enable the support flag. The shadow UI is a dropdown or list of presets (and in some cases can be customized via the Styles editor globally). As of 2025, users cannot free-form adjust all shadow parameters per block (they choose from presets), but theme authors can provide custom shadow presets (color, blur, offset, etc.) for consistency [14] [15] . This native shadow feature means you don't have to create a custom box-shadow control – simply opt in and Gutenberg supplies the interface and applies the appropriate CSS class or inline style.

Summary of Native Style Controls

In summary, **Gutenberg's block editor now natively covers most common style settings** via the sidebar: spacing (padding/margin), border (color, width, style), border radius, and box shadow. A developer can enable these by using the Block Supports API in the block's `block.json` or registration, and Gutenberg will generate the necessary sidebar UI and output the styles. These controls come with built-in UX enhancements like unit selectors and link/unlink toggles for symmetric or individual side control [6] . The key built-in components making this possible include the **BoxControl** (for linked/ unlinked paddings/margins) and **BorderBoxControl** (for linked/unlinked borders) under the hood, which Gutenberg exposes in a user-friendly way [3] [16] .

By leveraging the native supports instead of custom fields, you ensure your block stays consistent with WordPress standards and benefits from any future improvements. As of Dec 2025, you can confidently use these **native style panels** in your custom blocks – for example, adding the snippet above will surface Padding, Margin, Border, Radius, and Shadow options without any custom React code [1] [13] . This allows you to implement rich design controls on the sidebar using Gutenberg's out-of-the-box capabilities.

Sources: The information above is drawn from official WordPress development documentation and tutorials, including the Gutenberg block inspector guide by Misha Rudrastyh [1] , the WordPress Developer Blog (on border radius presets [10] [8] and on the box-shadow feature [13]), as well as WordPress.com support documentation illustrating the *Border & Shadow* sidebar section [6] . These confirm the existence of native Gutenberg controls for all the mentioned style properties in WordPress 6.9 and beyond.

[1] [3] Inspector Controls – Add Settings to a Custom Gutenberg Block
https://rudrastyh.com/gutenberg/inspector-controls.html

[2] [13] Supports – Block Editor Handbook | Developer.WordPress.org
https://developer.wordpress.org/block-editor/reference-guides/block-api/block-supports/

[4] Stabilize Border Block Support Keys · Issue #64312 · WordPress/gutenberg · GitHub
https://github.com/WordPress/gutenberg/issues/64312

[5] [7] Border – Theme Handbook | Developer.WordPress.org
https://developer.wordpress.org/themes/global-settings-and-styles/settings/border/

[6] [15] Border & Shadow Settings – WordPress.com Support
https://wordpress.com/support/wordpress-editor/border-settings/

[8] [9] [10] [11] [12] Border radius size presets in WordPress 6.9 – WordPress Developer Blog
https://developer.wordpress.org/news/2025/09/border-radius-size-presets-in-wordpress-6-9/

[14] Using the box shadow feature for themes – WordPress Developer Blog
https://developer.wordpress.org/news/2023/01/using-the-box-shadow-feature-for-themes/

[16] BorderBoxControl – Block Editor Handbook | Developer.WordPress.org
https://developer.wordpress.org/block-editor/reference-guides/components/border-box-control/