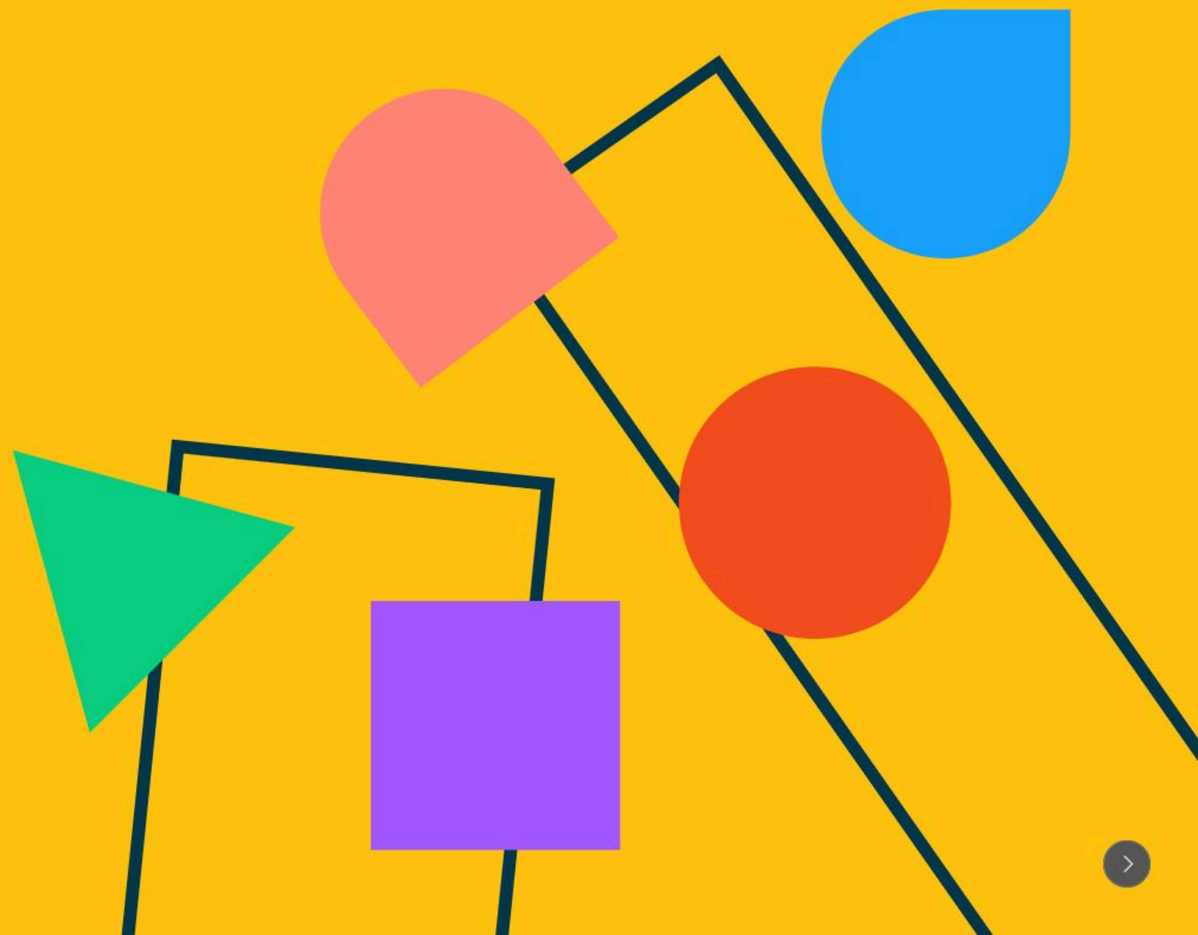
Basics of Figma

You will be guided through the fundamentals of starting your design in Figma using this tutorial file.

Visit **help.figma.com** for a complete list of features and additional lesson content.



1

Toolbar

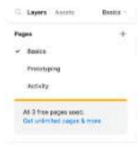
The toolbar lets you add basic elements (much like Illustrator). You can also easily copy/paste images/text from anywhere. Like Photoshop/Illustrator, Layers are used to organised top/bottom layering. Frames are also visible here. Pages in figma refer to new 'sections' of content in the same document – it is NOT a new frame!

Toolbar

Create custom sized frames, add shapes, arrows, texts, comments and other elements

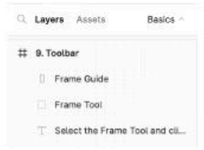
Pages

New pages for different types of documentations.



Layers and Assets

Layer you are currents working on and components (assets) throughout the document to pick and drop.



Design Inspector

This is where you will find all of the options to tweak the appearance of your element. This changes according to the type of element selected.

You can align, distribute, and set numeric values for all elements. Remember that screen-based design is pixel-specific, so having an awareness of pixel dimensions is critical.

There are PLENTY of customisation options here – and more importantly, all customisations are meant to reproduced on the web as these properties respect web standards, and therefore can be 'reproduced' easily by developers.

2

Frames

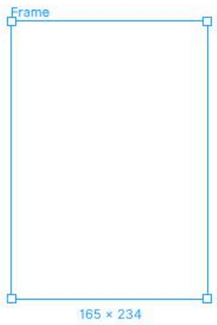
Frames in Figma are what you may think of as artboards in other design tools. Frames are a foundational element for your designs that act as a top-level container for most things you create in Figma. There are a few different ways to create frames in Figma:

Custom sizes

Create custom sized frames by selecting the frame tool and click and drag your cursor to the desired size.

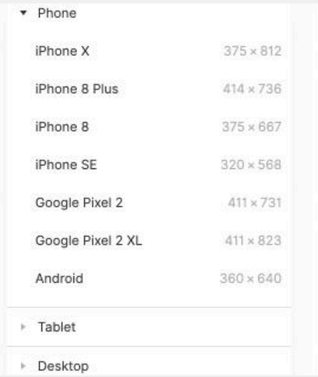
macOS and Win shortcut

F



Preset sizes

Create frames with preset sizes, e.g. iPhone X, by selecting the preset in the Properties panel on the right-hand side.



Existing elements

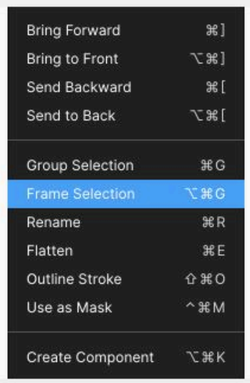
Create frames from existing elements on the canvas by right-clicking and selecting Frame Selection.

macOS shortcut

⌥ ⌘ G

Win shortcut

Ctrl Alt G



Try it out

Select the Frame Tool and click and drag along the dotted line to create a new frame.

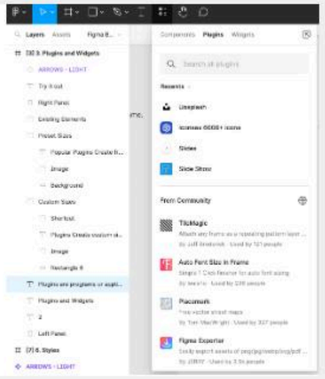
3

Plugins and Widgets

Plugins are programs or applications created by the community that extend the functionality of Figma and FigJam.

Plugins

Create custom sized frames by selecting the frame tool and click and drag your cursor to the desired size.



Widgets

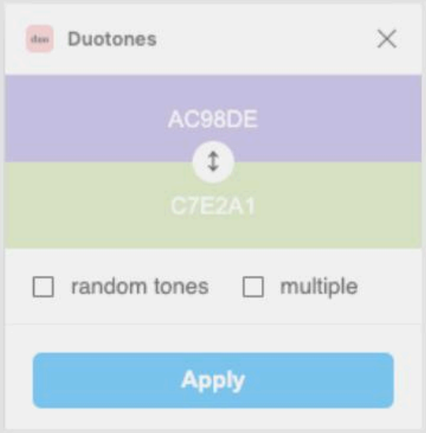
Widgets are interactive objects that extend the functionality of design files and FigJam boards. Unlike plugins that run for a specific person, everyone can see and interact with the same widget. You can add as many widgets to the board as you need and even run them at the same time.

Try it out

Try out plugins to manipulate images.

1. Go to Plugins and run Duotones

Click on Resources (toolbar) and click on Plugins. Search for Duotones.



2. Edit the picture

Select the picture and apply random tones to it.

4

Constraints

Constraints allow you to fix elements of your design to different sides of their parent Frame. This lets you build fluid layouts to support multiple device sizes and breakpoints within the same group.

Constraints overview

Horizontal and vertical constraints can be set independently

Left and **Top** maintains the object's position, relative to the left-side and top of the frame.

Right and **Bottom** maintains the object's position, relative to the right-side and bottom of the frame.

Left & Right and **Top & Bottom** maintains the object's size and position, relative to the left and right and top and bottom of the frame.

Center maintains the object's position, relative to the horizontal and vertical center of the frame.

Scale maintains the object's size and position as a percentage of the Frame's dimensions.

Ignoring constraints

You may want to resize an object, without applying any constraints. To ignore an object's constraints, hold down the modifier key and resize the object.

macOS: ⌘ **Windows:** Ctrl

Try it out

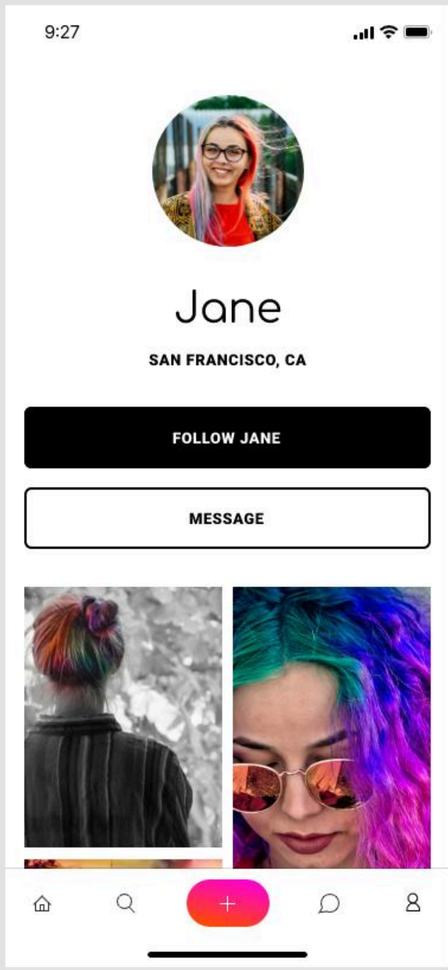
Resize the Frames below to see Constraints in action.

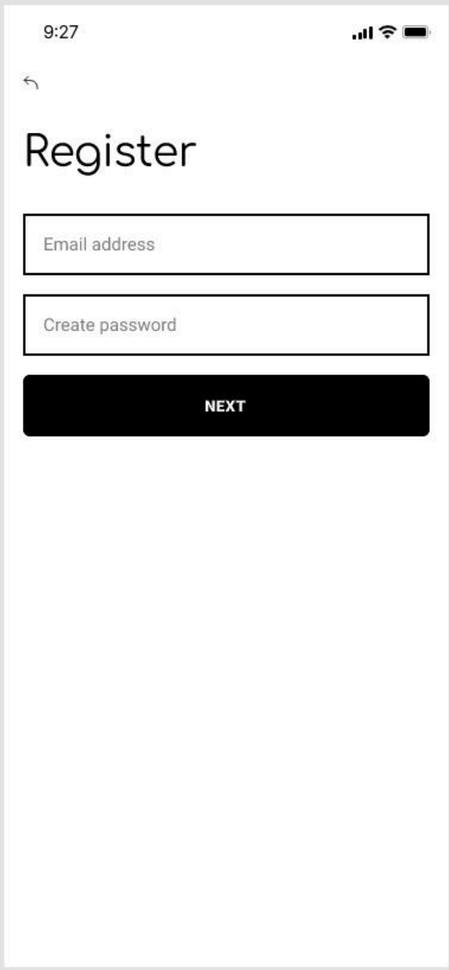
1. Resize this Frame's height

The bottom menu bar has the bottom constraint applied to it making it stick to the bottom when the frame's height is resized.

2. Resize this Frame's width

The input fields as well as button have left & right constraints applied to them making them expand to fill the viewport as the frame's width is resized.





5

Components

Components enable you to reuse existing parts of your design, saving time on otherwise repetitive and tedious work. Components create new instances rather than copies, allowing you to override properties directly on the canvas.

There are two aspects to a Component:

1. The *Main Component*, which defines the properties of the Component.

2. The *Instance*, which is a copy of the Component that you can reuse in your designs.

Instances are linked to the *Main Component*, so any changes you make to the *Main Component* will be applied to the *Instance*.

Creating components

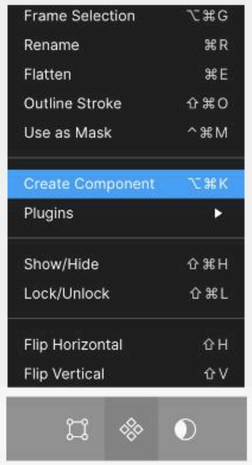
Select the layers you want to include in your *Main Component* and either use the Create Component button at the top or use the right-click menu to create a new component.

macOS shortcut

⌥ ⌘ K

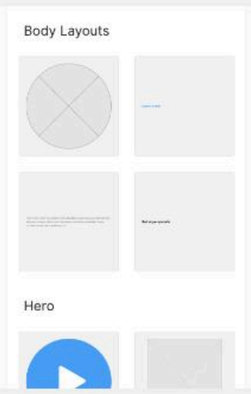
Win shortcut

Ctrl Alt K



Asset panel

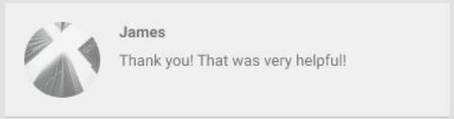
The Asset panel will house all of your components. Just drag and drop them onto the canvas to create a new instance.



Try it out

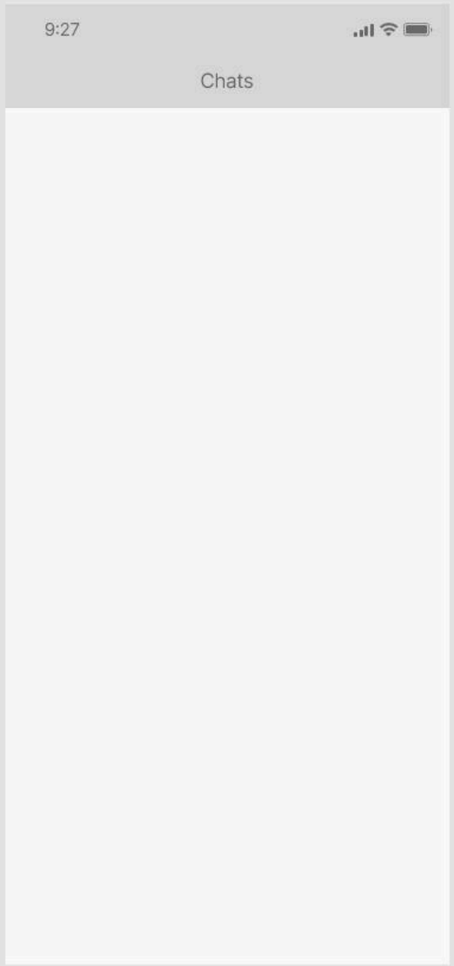
1. Create a Component

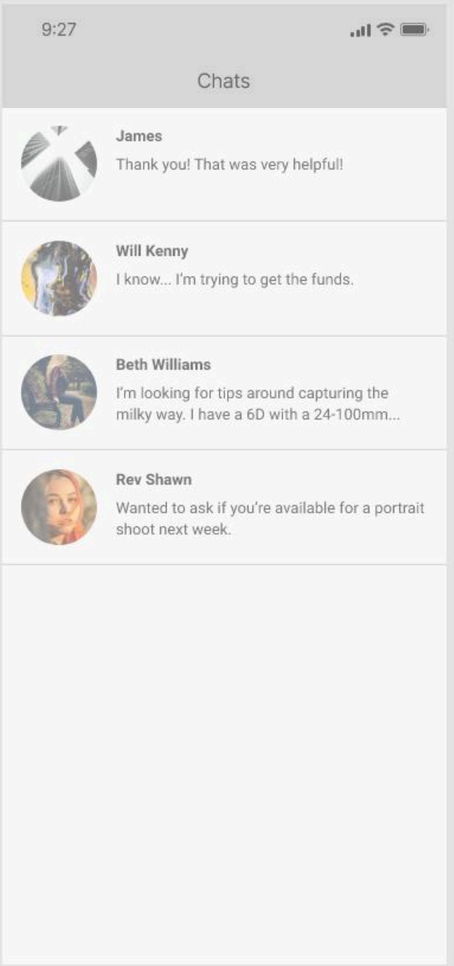
Select the grouped object below and make it a Component by using the Create Component icon above or via the right-click menu and selecting Create Component. This is now the *Main Component* that you can duplicate to create new instances of it.



2. Duplicate the Main Component

Open the Assets panel at the top-left and drag an instance of your new Component into the “Chats” frame below. Try adding a few more instances and then override the image fill and text to create the mockup you see on the right.





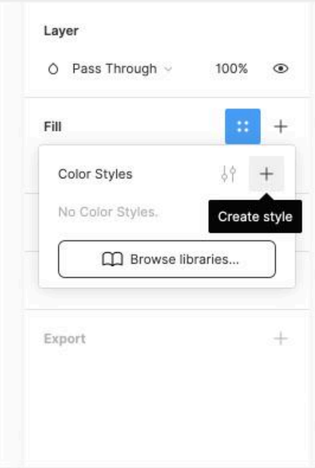
6

Styles

The Styles feature allows you to define a set of properties like color, font, and effects of an object, that can be reused across your team's designs. Whenever you make a change to a Style's properties, any objects using that Style will be instantly updated.

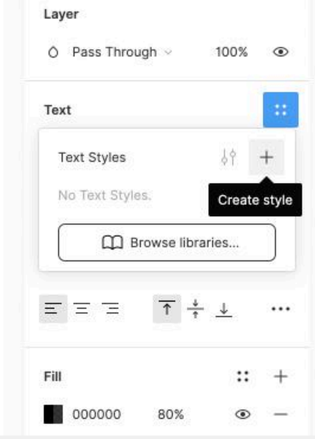
How to create Color Styles

Select the object you'd like to create a Style for and in the Properties panel, click the Styles icon next to the property you would like to save. Click the "+" icon and you'll be prompted to give your Style a name.



How to create Text Styles

Select the text you'd like to create a Style for and click the Style icon within the text properties in the Properties panel. Click the "+" icon and you'll be prompted to give your Style a name.



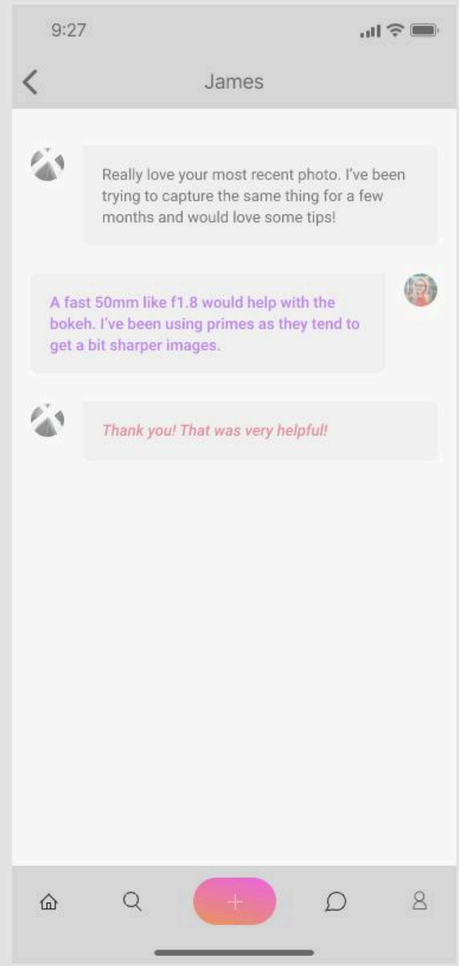
Try it out

1. Create a new Style

Select the text from the 1st chat bubble below and create a new Text Style from it. While you're at it, also try creating a Color Style from the same text selection.

2. Applying Styles

Notice how the 2nd and 3rd chat bubbles have different text and color? Try applying your newly created Text and Color Styles to them so they're all consistent.



7

Custom fonts

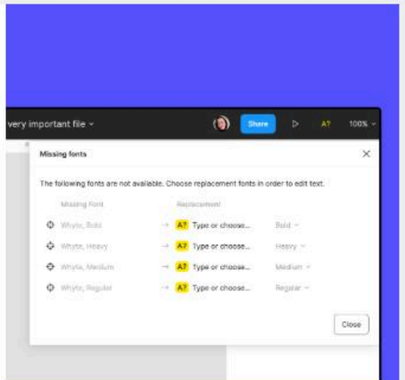
If you've installed the Figma app on your Mac or Windows PC, the fonts installed on your computer are available in the Figma font picker. But if you're using the web-based version of Figma, Chromebook or web-version you'll need to install a special font service app to use the fonts you've installed.

Mac or Windows PC

Select the object you'd like to create a Style for and in the Properties panel, click the Styles icon next to the property you would like to save. Click the "+" icon and you'll be prompted to give your Style a name.

Reload all tabs in Figma after installing so your fonts will be available.

If you're not an organisation admin or would just prefer to make the font available to a specific team, you can upload fonts to a team instead.



Administrators and Orgs

If you're using Figma with an Organization or Enterprise subscription, you can upload a custom font to the server that'll be shown to all members of the organization or a team and best of all, nobody needs to install anything to use them — they're included in Figma. You will need to be (or forward these instructions to) an Organization Admin to upload fonts to the organization, or a Team Admin to upload fonts to a team.

Try it out

1. Download a Google Font

Go to Google Fonts and download a font you would like to install.

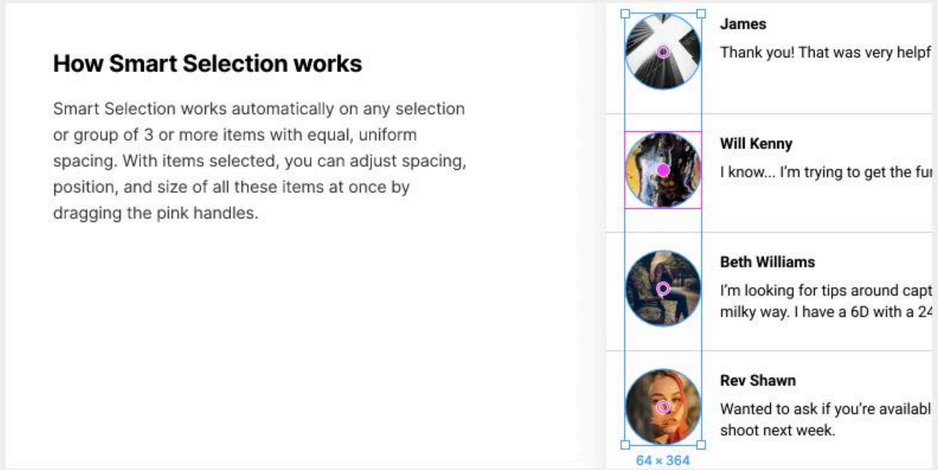
2. Applying Font

Refresh or restart Figma to start using the font in the Desktop App.

8

Smart Selection

Smart Selection allows you to quickly adjust spacing between objects, create an uniform grid by a selection of objects, and rearrange objects within a grid layout. Think of grid layouts for inbox interfaces, news feeds, and photo galleries.

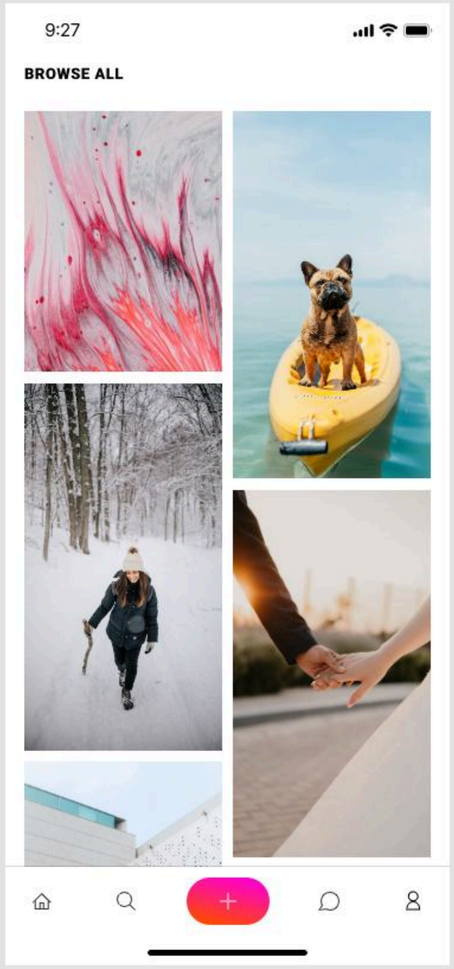


Try it out

See how Smart Selection works with the two examples below.

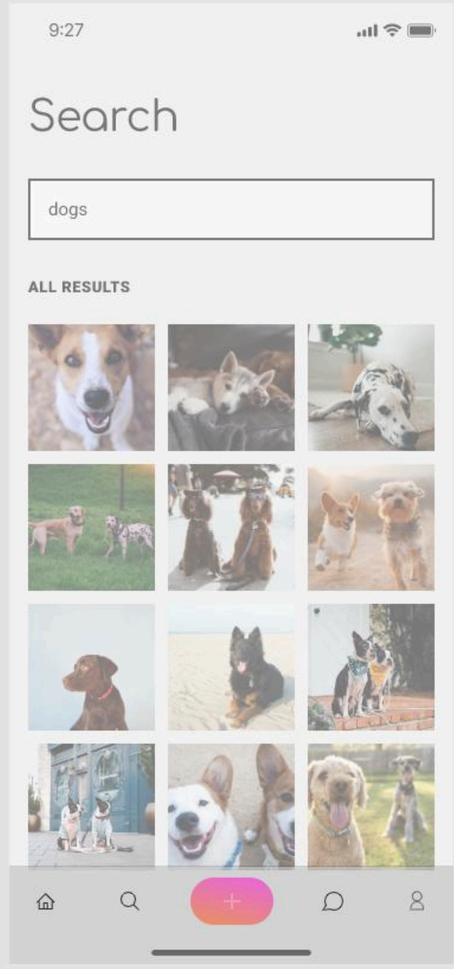
1. Adjust position

On the app below, select the two photos on the right-side *(dog on boat and holding hands)* and use the circular handle to quickly swap their positions. Hold the *shift* key to multi-select.



2. Adjust spacing

On the app below, select all the dog photos *(12)* in the grid below and use the horizontal handles to quickly adjust their vertical spacing. Hold the *shift* key to multi-select



9

Exporting

Figma supports exporting in PNG, JPG, SVG, and PDF formats. When using Figma in the browser, exports will be automatically saved to your default download folder. Try exporting using the Figma desktop app to choose where to save.

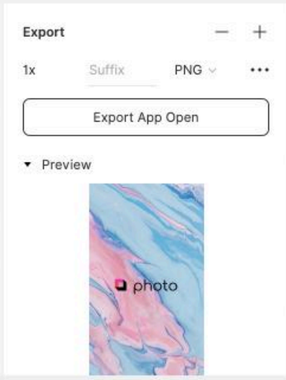
Make your selections

First choose which elements of your design you'd like to export. You can export single layers or objects, multiple layers or objects, individual group or frame, multiple groups and frames, and even your entire canvas.

Apply export settings

You can define exactly how you would like your objects, layers, or frames to be exported, using the Export settings in the Properties panel.

Figma supports exporting in PNG, JPG, SVG, and PDF formats as well as in a variety of screen density multipliers and appending suffixes to filenames.



Exporting your selection

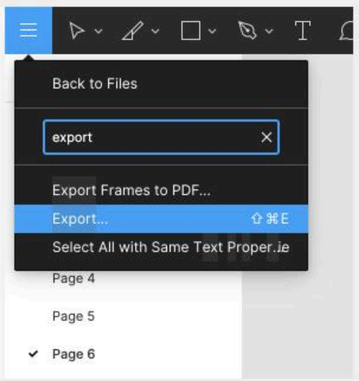
Once export settings have been applied to a selection, that selection will be recorded in the Export list. You can then export your selections with a single action in the future. Search for “export” in the menu.

macOS shortcut

⇧ ⌘ E

Win shortcut

⇧ Alt E



Try it out

Select the entire Frame below and try exporting it to a PNG.

10

Commenting

Comments add another layer of collaboration in Figma. You can add comments anywhere on the canvas. Comments can be added to both the design file as well as prototypes.

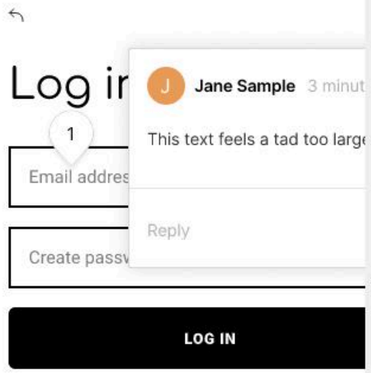
Adding comments

To add, view, and respond to comments, you'll need to enter Comment mode by clicking on the Comment icon in the toolbar. Then, click on anywhere on the canvas to add your comment.

You're also able to *@mention* someone on your team so s/he receives an email notification.

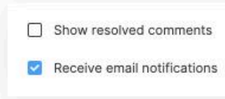
macOS and Win shortcut

C



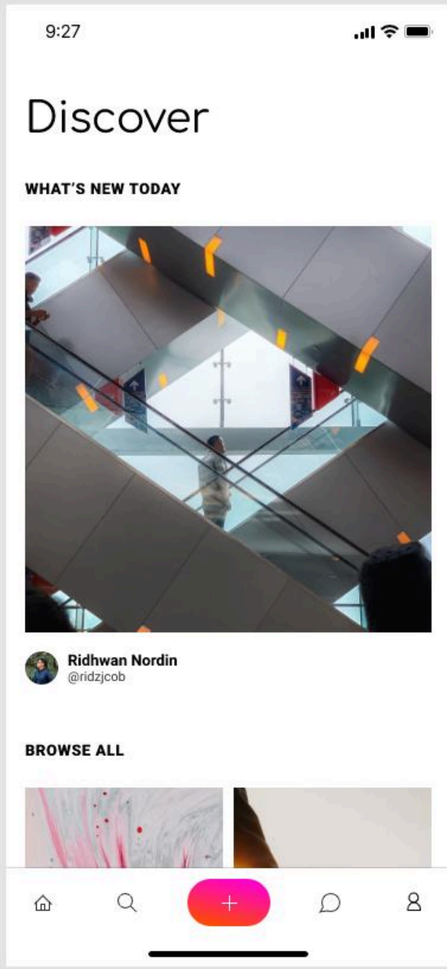
Notifications

The properties panel has additional options to show resolved comments and whether or not to receive email notifications for new comments and replies.



Try it out

Select the Comment tool and add a comment to the Frame below.



11

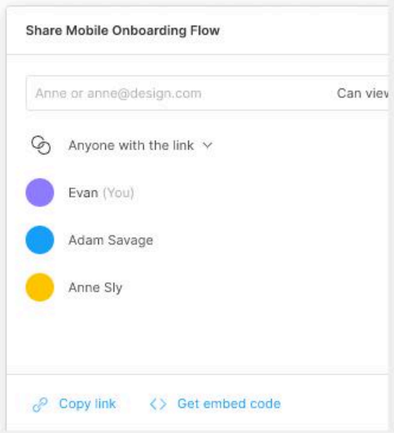
Sharing

Sharing your files in Figma is simple. Open the share dialog to set specific permissions or enable link access. With link access enabled, sharing a file is as easy as sharing its URL.

Permissions

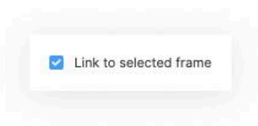
Figma has four different levels of access: Viewers, Editors, Admins, and Owners. When you share a file, you can specify which level of access you'd like for each person you're sharing the file with.

Share



Share an individual Frame

In addition to sharing a file, you can link to a selected frame on the canvas so it'll be zoomed and in focus when your collaborators open the file.



Try it out

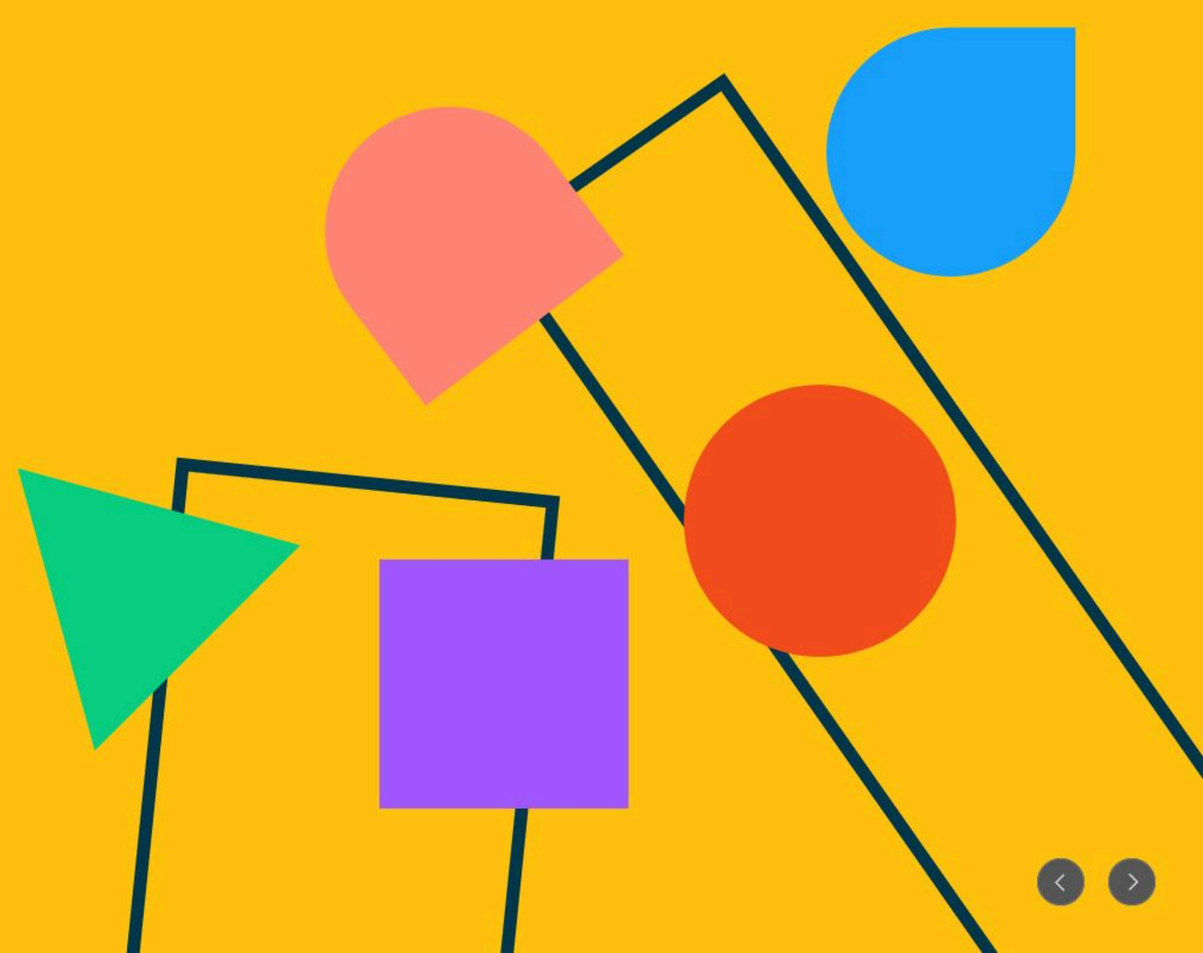
1. Share this file

Try sharing this Figma Basics tutorial file with a colleague by clicking the Share button in the upper-right of the editor.

2. Share a specific Frame

Try sharing just a single Frame. Select a frame and click the Share button and make sure to check the *Link to selected frame* option.

Prototyping and interactions



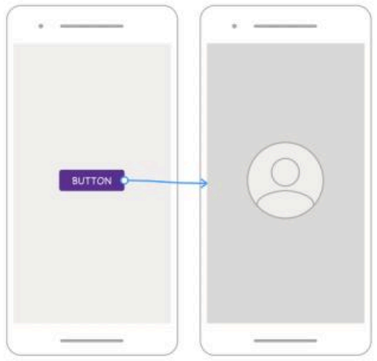
1

Prototype Mode

The panel on the right is where click first before you add ‘connections’ from one element to another. It works closely with Frames. Frames are what defines content area in Figma.

Connections

Connections are displayed as faint blue arrow lines. In a large project, they can look very messy but don’t worry – it’s just Figma’s way of saying that there are existing interactions applied.



Interactions

Once an interaction connection has been made, you can then setup the interaction trigger, and various other effects – try them out and see how it works! Click on an interaction arrow to change its settings.

You can also add to get a more realistic simulation of screen transitions.

Try it out

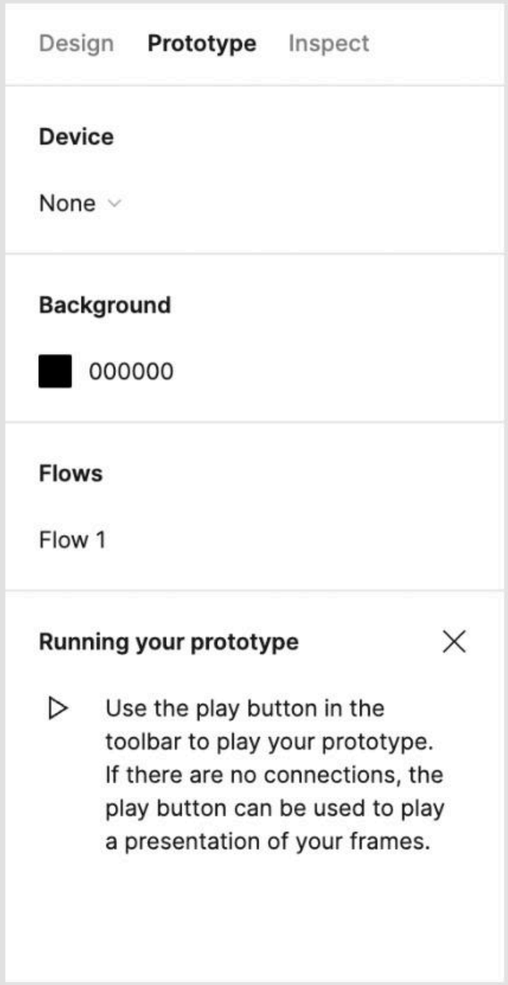
Resize the Frames below to see Constraints in action.

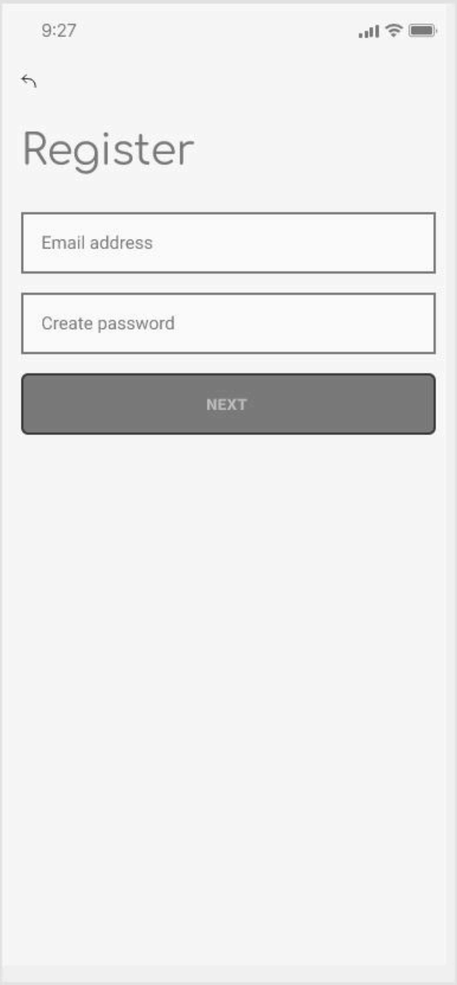
1. Go to Prototype Mode

Click on any frame, each element will present a blue circle to its right edge.

2. Drag and join

Drag the resulting blue arrow out to any other element / frame to define an interaction.





2

Sharing Prototype

In presentation mode, you can comment on elements just like you would in regular Figma editing mode. Pro Tip: if you drag the window to its own standalone window, you can continue to edit elements in the Editor, and see the changes 'live' – which makes it really easy to prototype wireframe interactions.

Presentation Mode

Click on the play icon in the upper right corner of the application to begin any presentation. If no flows are found, will just present all of your frames like a slideshow.

If flows have been made, this will only allow you to present the flows themselves.

Figma App

Download the Figma app to your smartphone. Login using the same account as your computer. You can now select any frame in your Figma document, and that frame will show up on your smartphone, including prototyped interactions. This provides an easy way to test layouts, legibility, contrast on an actual device.

You might find that viewing your work on a mobile device – even wireframes – can 'change' the way we experience screen elements – why is this?

Downloading the App

Click on the play icon in the upper right corner of the application to begin any presentation. If no flows are found, will just present all of your frames like a slideshow.

If flows have been made, this will only allow you to present the flows themselves.

Try it out

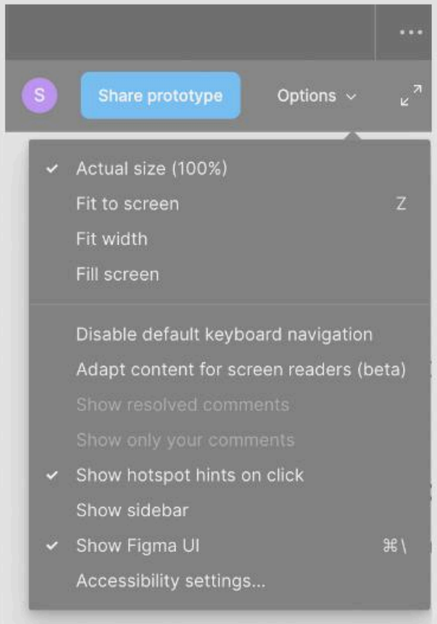
Resize the Frames below to see Constraints in action.

1. Go to Presentation Mode

Click on the play icon in the upper right corner.

2. Edit Settings or Share

Explore toolbar and 'Options' on the upper-right corner.



3

Inspect Mode

The Inspect panel allows you and your collaborators to view and copy properties, values, and code from your designs.

Design to Develop

Using the drop down menu you can choose between CSS, iOS(Swift), and Android (XML) formats and with those icons you can switch between Code view and Table view. Keep in mind that you can't export to HTML in Figma.

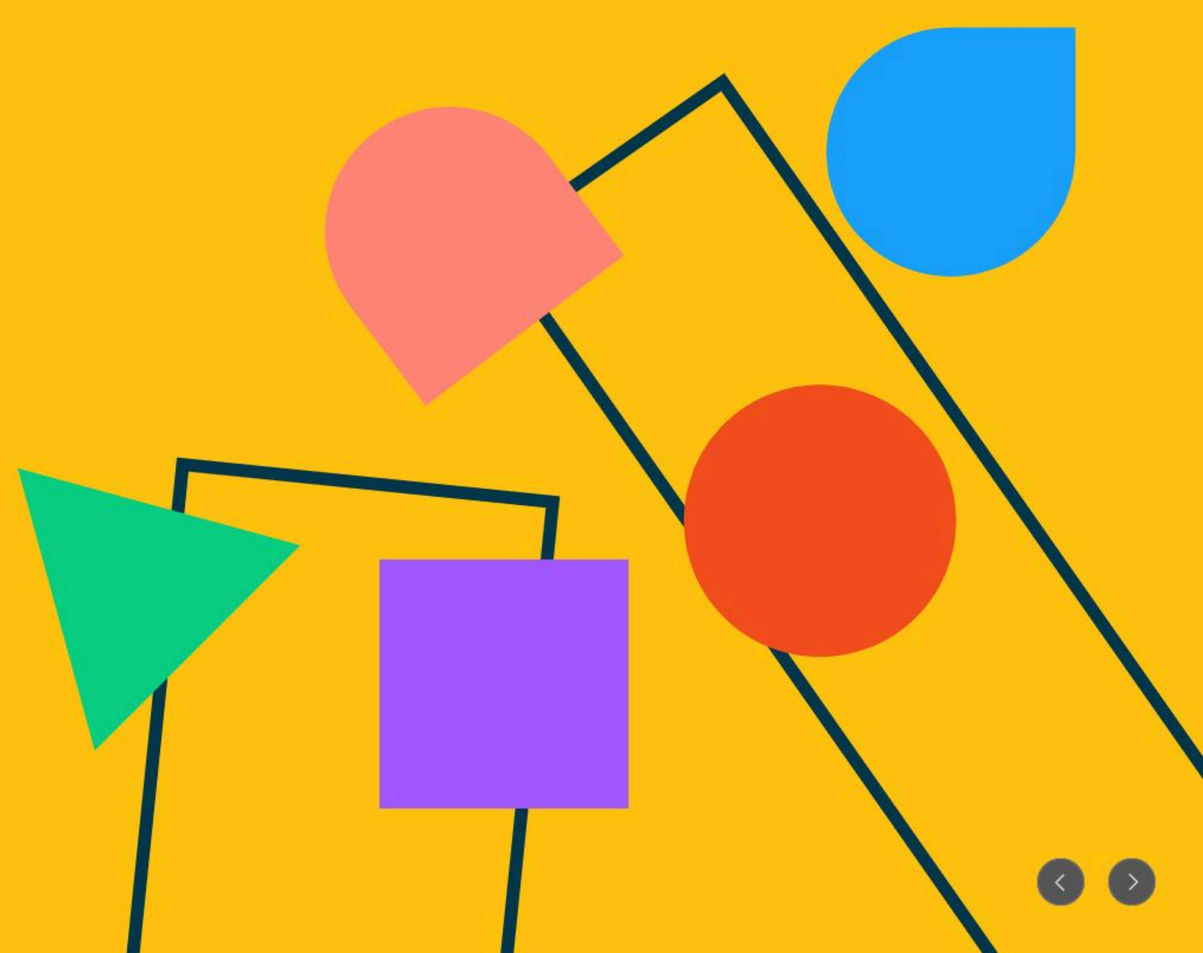
Try it out

Select the Frames below to see Inspect in action.

1. Go to Inspect Mode

Click on any frame, each element will present a blue circle to its right edge.

Additional features



1

Auto Layout

It lets you create designs that grow to fill or shrink to fit, and reflow as their contents change. This is great when you need to add new layers, accommodate longer text strings, or maintain alignment as your designs evolve.

Alignment tool

With this tool we can adjust the position or alignment of an element, both vertically and horizontally.

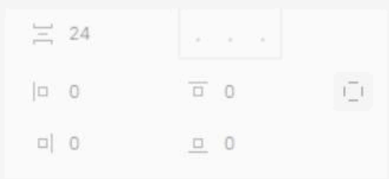
Layout Direction

It sets the direction of the layout, or the alignment of the elements in the auto layout

Spacing

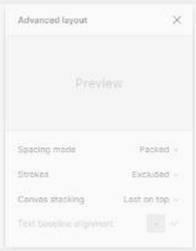
Spacing on auto layout is divided into 2 categories:

- spacing between items
- padding horizontal & vertical



Advance Layout

These tools help with further layout settings, such as spacing, strokes, canvas stacking, text baseline alignment



Watch Tutorial on YouTube

Try it out

1. Click on the features list

Select the container, to see its auto layout settings.

2. Edit the list

Select an item from the list, copy/paste or reposition it, to see how auto layout works.

FEATURE 1

Slate helps you see how many more days you need to work to reach your financial goal.

FEATURE 2

Slate helps you see how many more days you need to work to reach your financial goal.

FEATURE 3

Slate helps you see how many more days you need to work to reach your financial goal.

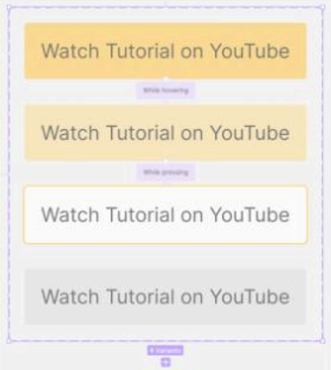
2

Variants

You might have multiple components for buttons, with separate components for various states and sizes, as well as light and dark modes. Variants allow you to group and organise similar components into a single container, simplifying your library.

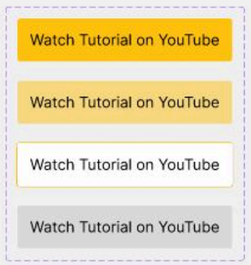
Variant Prototyping

Interactive components allow you to create prototype interactions between variants in a component set. Any time you add an instance to your designs, those interactions are set up and ready to go.



Variant Component Library

When building a component library or an application, it is useful to define several semantic "flavors" of some components to help simplify your library and create default states.



Try it out

1. Interact with the prototype

Change the states of this checkbox by clicking on it.

Watch Tutorial on YouTube

2. Make a new variant

Add a disabled variant to the checkbox component.

3

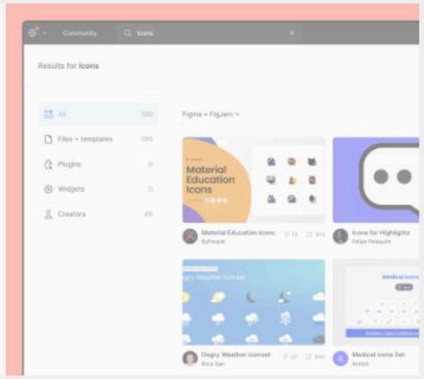
FigJam and Figma Community

FigJam Collaboration

FigJam is a free online whiteboarding and collaboration tool you and your team can use to brainstorm and organise ideas. You can access them alongside your regular design files in your teams, projects, and drafts.

Figma Community Resources

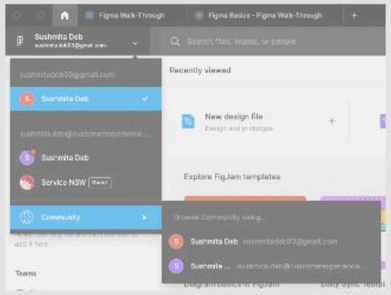
The Figma Community is a public space where you can publish live design files that anyone in the world can inspect, remix, and learn from.



Try it out

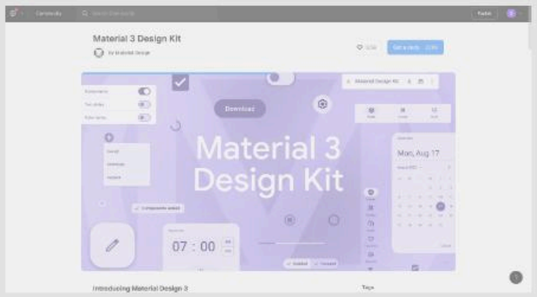
1. Go to Community Page

Click on your account on left hand side in the home page to enter Figma Community.



2. Search and duplicate MUI

Developed by Google, the Material 3 Design Kit provides a comprehensive introduction to the Android design system, with styles and components to help you get started.



Resources

Additional L&D:
Coursera - Google:
Create High-Fidelity Designs and Prototypes in Figma