

# The Newbie's guide to sign making

I wanted to make a sign and Rockler had their State Park font kits on sale so here are my thoughts on Sign Making and the decision making process in an effort to help some other poor soul that might wander down this path. To be clear I know almost nothing about wood working so take everything I say with a grain of salt.

I bought this:

Rockler Interlock Signmaker's Templates - State Park Font Kit, 3-3/8" Item #43820 \$60. This kit has the bushing in it to ride inside the letter template.

I went with the bigger size font because bigger is always better, isn't it?

I also purchased a bit that the Rockler site recommended.

Rockler Signmaking Carbide Bit 5/8" D x 1/2" H x 1/4" Shank Item #32443 for \$30

My current router did not have a plunge base and I thought a small router with a plunge base would be a good thing to have around.

I decided on the

Makita RT0701CX7 1-1/4 HP\* Compact Router Kit which I purchased through Amazon for \$150.

The first problem is the bushing in the template kit fits the router but not the plunge base. So if you want to free hand things you can make it work. My idea was to use the plunge base (which was the whole motivation for getting a new router) to make sure I don't mess things up.

Apparently there is a solution (and that is to spend more money). Rockler sells a router base template that it looks like the bushing will fit into.

Makita Template Guide Adapter Item # 54390 for \$30 (\$43 with shipping and tax)

If I was smarter I think I would have gotten the

Bosch GKF125CEPK Colt 1.25 HP (Max) Variable-Speed Palm Router Combination Kit for \$220 on Amazon.

I don't think I would have needed the above solution and the Bosch has a variable speed setting which the Makita does not.

So with the below part, I was able to get things going.



First off there is a right way and wrong way to the template guide

Left column is the WRONG way. Right column is the RIGHT way



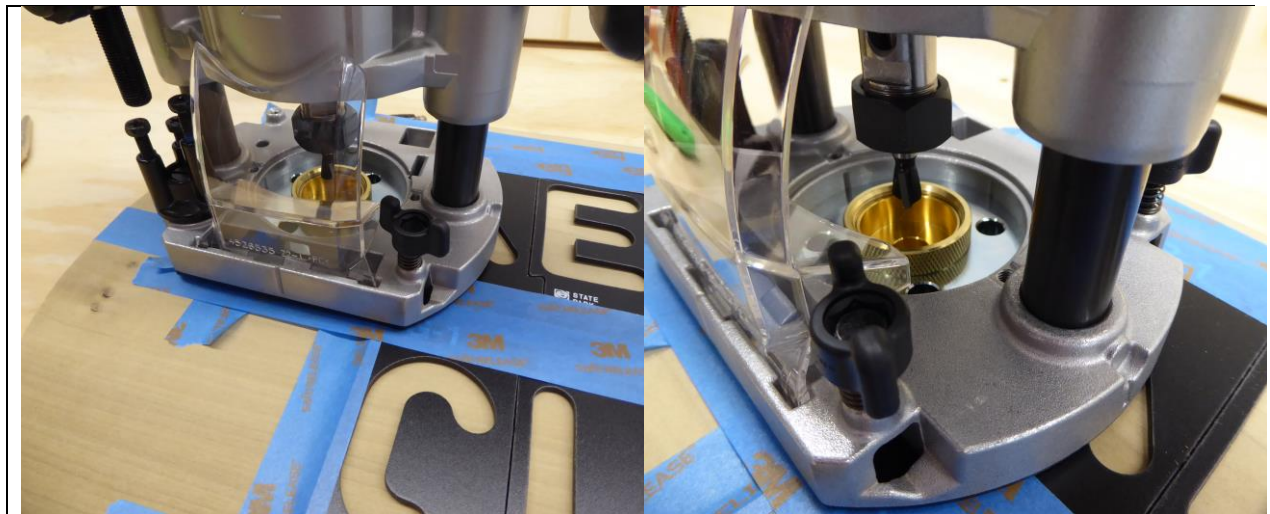
The next little snafu is I decided that the bigger letters were too big. So I ordered the middle size ones.

Rockler Interlock Signmaker's Templates - State Park Font Kit, 2-1/4" Item #48356

Luckily they were still on sale.

I did not buy the recommended router bit, as I figured I had to have something lying about and used an inverted cone.

I finally taped the 2 1/4" templates down to the wood with painters tape and it worked but the router liked to catch on the tape. It seems to me that you are really doing the project by feel as I could not see what the router was doing. Regardless it all worked out.

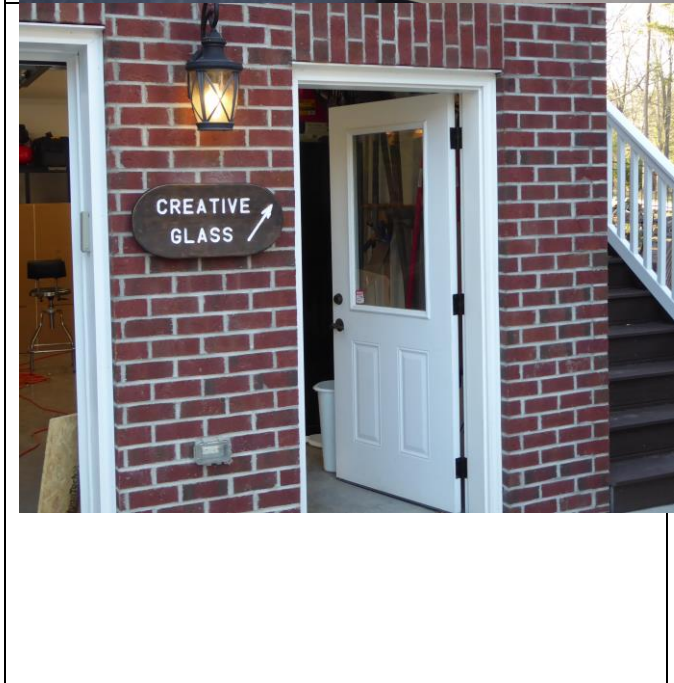


I really like the templates. I think a creative person could find lots of uses for them.

I decided to finish the piece by taking a propane torch to the wood to char the outside and paint the inside letters with acrylic paint.

It's not perfect, I think my next one would be much better but it made my wife happy and a happy wife is a good thing.





I can't decide whether to cover the piece with some polyurethane or just let it be.

Anyway, that's my story and I'm stickin' to it.