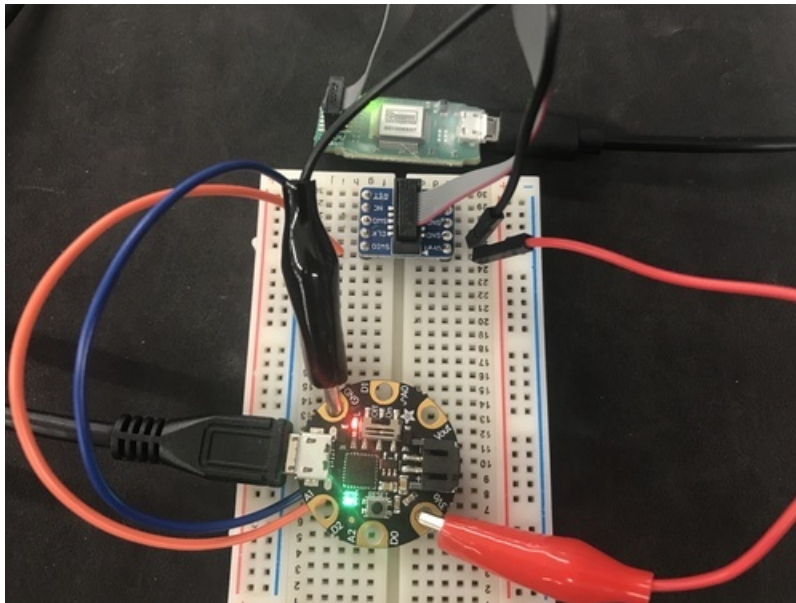


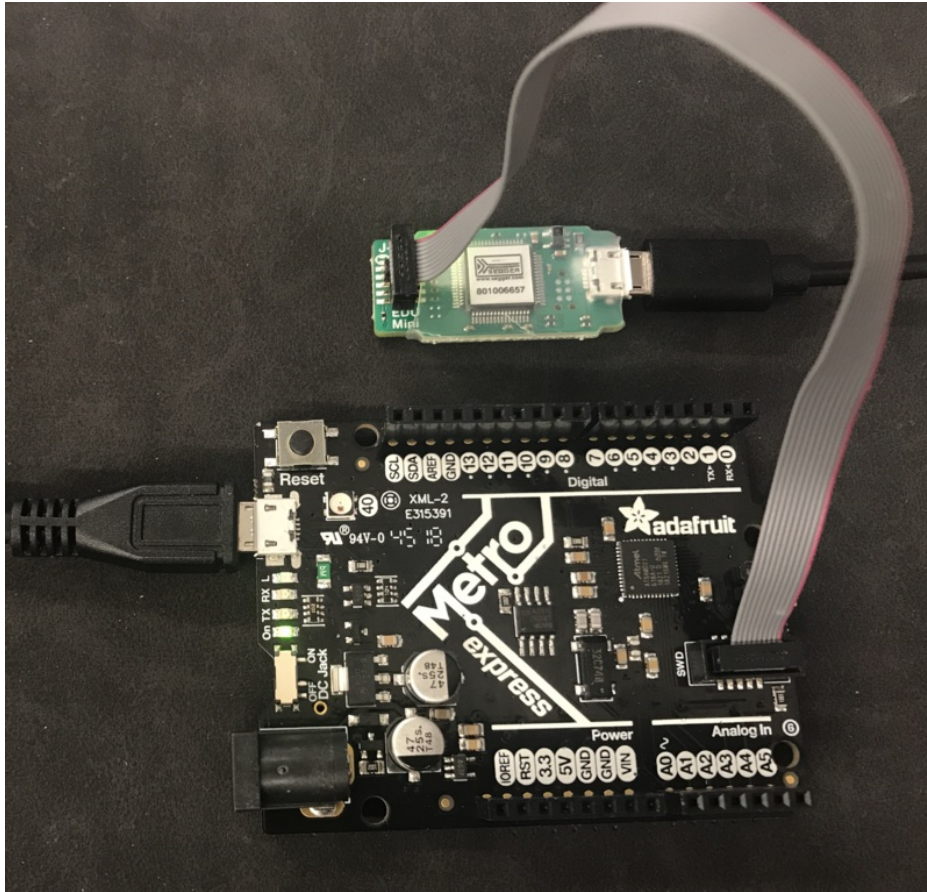
How to Program SAMD Bootloaders

Created by Brent Rubell



Last updated on 2019-08-08 07:24:37 PM UTC

Overview



Do you have a bricked Adafruit SAMD board that won't boot into CircuitPython, or show up as a boot volume? Are you building your own SAMD board and want to flash our UF2-SAMD bootloader onto it?

This guide will cover wiring a J-Link to a SAMD board, flashing the bootloader, and (optionally) installing the latest CircuitPython build.

This process does require extra hardware and some software installation time. It is unfortunate when a microcontroller's firmware is corrupted - it does not happen often. But, rather than buy a new board and have one sitting, this process will get your original board back to 100%.

About the SAMD UF2 Bootloader

You will need to program [the Adafruit UF2-SAMD Bootloader \(https://adafru.it/Dj0\)](https://adafru.it/Dj0) onto the affected board. Adafruit SAMD21 (M0) and SAMD51 (M4) boards feature an improved bootloader that makes it easier than ever to flash different code onto the microcontroller. This bootloader makes it easy to switch between Microsoft MakeCode, CircuitPython and Arduino.

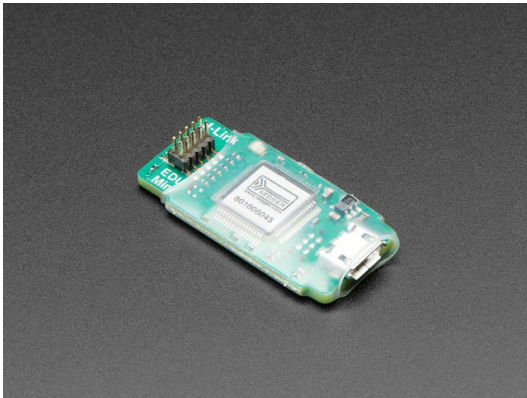
Instead of needing drivers or a separate program for flashing (say, `bossac`, `jlink` or `avrdude`), one can simply **drag a UF2 file onto a removable drive**.

Parts

To flash the bootloader, you'll need a JTAG/SWD debugger. We suggest the J-Link EDU Mini. This version is smaller (the size of a USB drive) and less expensive than the full-sized J-Link EDU, BUT it is for non-commercial use only.

What does that mean?

Basically, if you're making money (or plan to make money) off your project, you'll need to order the full commercial version, or find a different debugger that suits your needs and budget better. But if you're working on personal, non-commercial projects, such as publishing some open source designs you're not selling yourself, you're good. You don't need to be a student, and you can even be a paid engineer during the week, using this on the weekend for personal non-commercial projects. As long as your intentions are non-commercial, the J-Link EDU is an excellent choice!



SEGGER J-Link EDU Mini - JTAG/SWD Debugger

\$19.95
IN STOCK

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We also carry the [full-sized J-Link EDU](https://adafru.it/e9G) (<https://adafru.it/e9G>) and the [J-Link base](https://adafru.it/e5q) (<https://adafru.it/e5q>) (this model is for commercial use).

If you're a commercial user (not educational/home hobby) - you must use the commercial J-Link Base



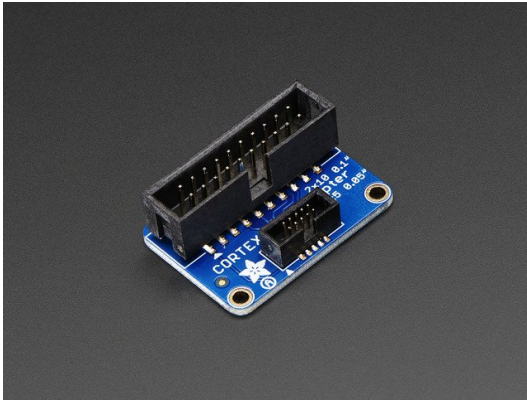
SEGGER J-Link BASE - JTAG/SWD Debugger

OUT OF STOCK

OUT OF STOCK

The process for using the J-LINK models is identical, only differing in the software you will install for the specific unit on the next page.

You'll also want to get a JTAG to SWD converter board and SWD cable (not needed for the JLink mini), and a SWD breadboard breakout



JTAG (2x10 2.54mm) to SWD (2x5 1.27mm) Cable Adapter Board

\$4.95
IN STOCK

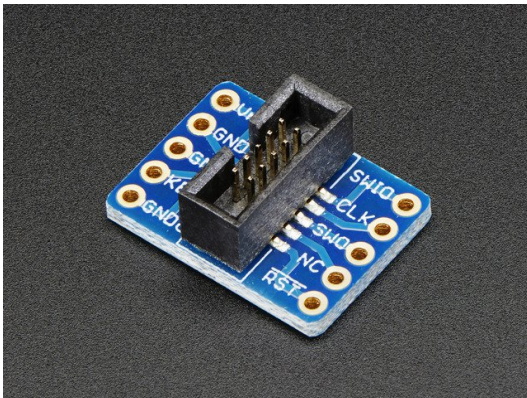
ADD TO CART



10-pin 2x5 Socket-Socket 1.27mm IDC (SWD) Cable - 150mm long

\$2.95
IN STOCK

ADD TO CART



SWD (2x5 1.27mm) Cable Breakout Board

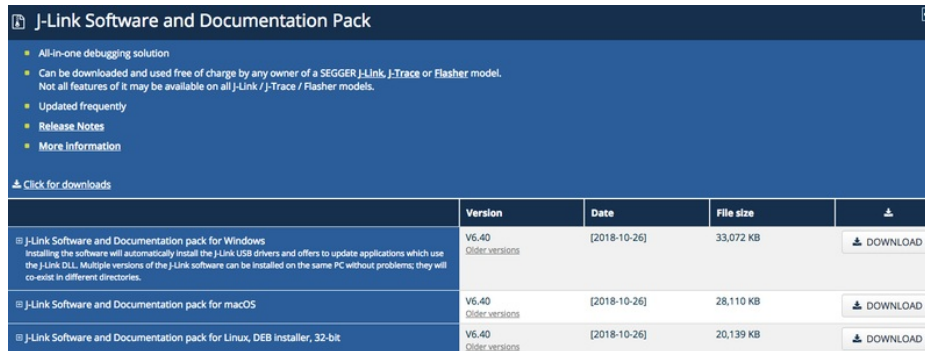
\$1.95
IN STOCK

ADD TO CART

Setup

Installing J-Link

Navigate to the [Seger downloads page \(https://adafru.it/val\)](https://adafru.it/val) and install the version of the *J-Link Software and Documentation Pack* for your operating system:



	Version	Date	File size	
J-Link Software and Documentation pack for Windows <small>Installing the software will automatically install the J-Link USB drivers and offers to update applications which use the J-Link DLL. Multiple versions of the J-Link software can be installed on the same PC without problems; they will co-exist in different directories.</small>	V6.40 Order versions	[2018-10-26]	33,072 KB	DOWNLOAD
J-Link Software and Documentation pack for macOS	V6.40 Order versions	[2018-10-26]	28,110 KB	DOWNLOAD
J-Link Software and Documentation pack for Linux, DEB installer, 32-bit	V6.40 Order versions	[2018-10-26]	20,139 KB	DOWNLOAD

Grab a Bootloader

You'll also want to **download a compiled bootloader binary** (.bin file) for the board you're recovering. These can be found on the [Adafruit/uf2-samdx1 repository \(https://adafru.it/D3C\)](https://adafru.it/D3C):

<https://adafru.it/D3C>

<https://adafru.it/D3C>

(Optional) Grab the Latest CircuitPython UF2

If you want to install CircuitPython onto the UF2 bootloader, you'll need a board-specific **.uf2** file. Click here to find the latest build:

<https://adafru.it/tBa>

<https://adafru.it/tBa>

Click the file corresponding to the CircuitPython board you're recovering. Check the two letter code for your language: **english**, **espanol**, **french**, **filipino** (tagalog) - we'll be using the **english** build but instructions are the same for other languages.

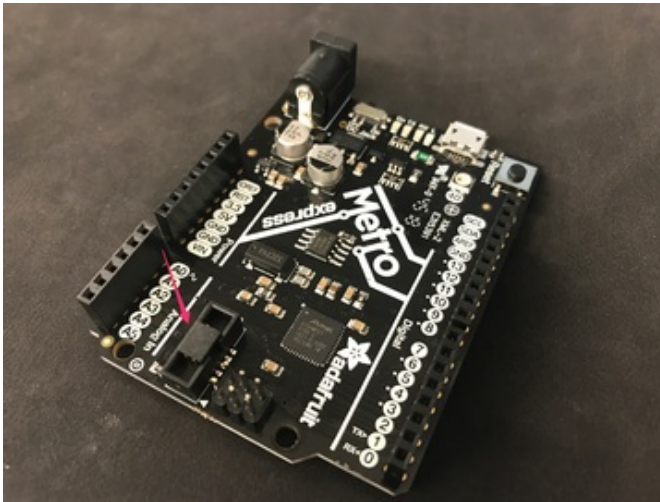
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_m4_express-en_US-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_m4_express-es-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_m4_express-fil-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_m4_express-fr-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_m4_express-ID-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_m4_express-it_IT-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_m4_express-pt_BR-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_nrf52840_express-de_DE-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_nrf52840_express-en_US-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_nrf52840_express-es-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)
-  [adafruit-circuitpython-feather_nrf52840_express-fil-4.0.0-beta.0.uf2](#)

When the UF2 finishes downloading, move the file to your Desktop.

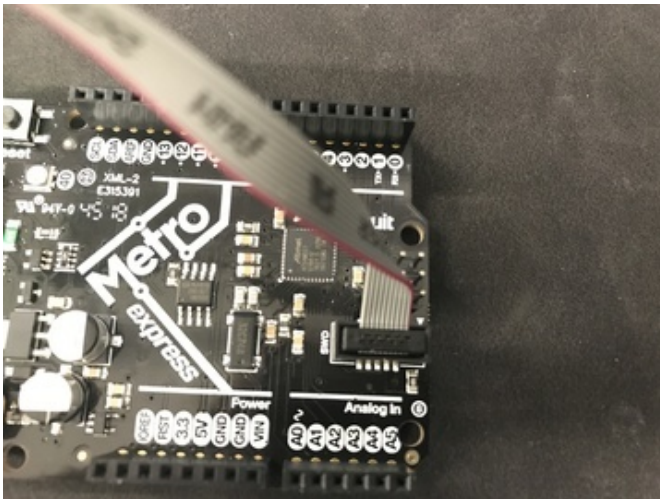
We'll leave this file alone and come back to it when we're ready to load CircuitPython onto our board's boot drive.

Metro M0/M4 Wiring

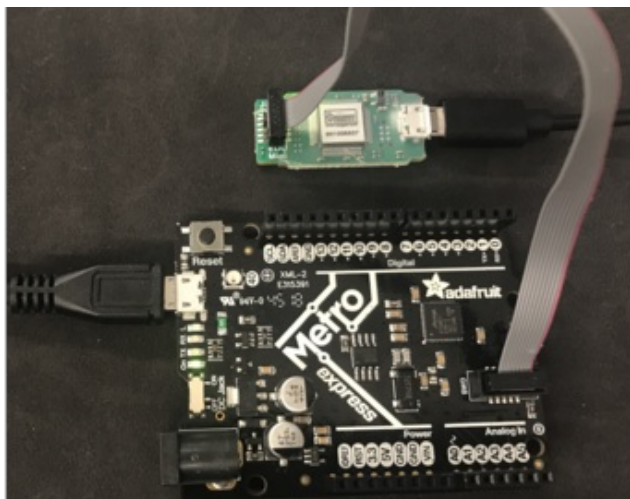
The Adafruit Metro M0 and M4 have a socket for connecting to a SWD cable built-in - you can connect (and disconnect) a SWD cable quickly.



Remove the small plastic cap from the SWD socket on the Metro.



Then, connect the SWD cable from the J-Link to the Metro.

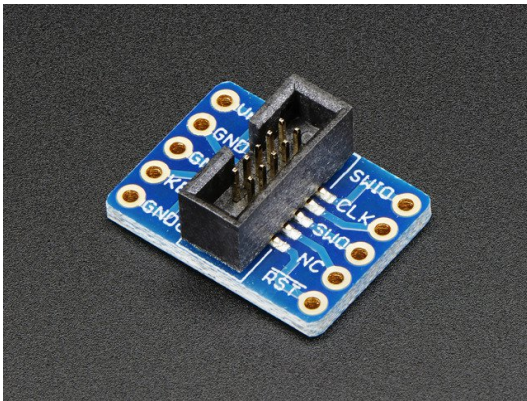


Once the Metro is wired up, **plug the J-Link into a USB port** on your computer and wait for the status indicator LED to turn green.

Then, **plug a USB cable into the Metro**, this is required!

ItsyBitsy M0/M4 Wiring

The ItsyBitsy has pins SWDIO and SWCLK broken out on the back edge of the board. You'll need a SWD cable breakout to connect the J-Link to an ItsyBitsy:

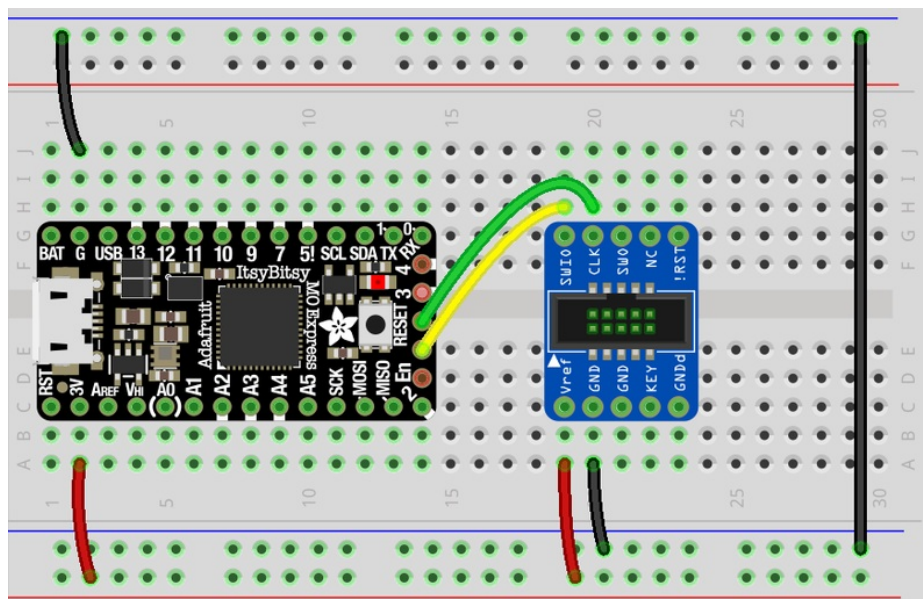


SWD (2x5 1.27mm) Cable Breakout Board

\$1.95
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ItsyBitsy Wiring



Make the following connections between the ItsyBitsy M0/M4 and the SWD Cable Breakout:

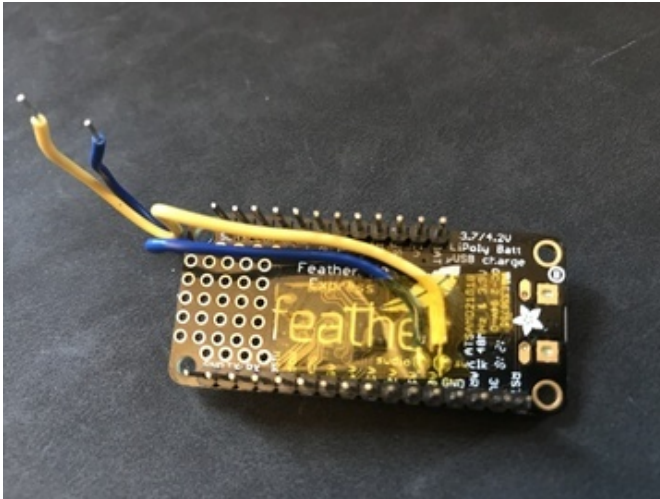
- ItsyBitsy GND to Breakout GND
- ItsyBitsy 3V to Breakout Vref
- ItsyBitsy SWCLK to Breakout CLK
- ItsyBitsy SWDIO to Breakout SWIO



You must also plug in a USB cable to the ItsyBitsy to power it during programming

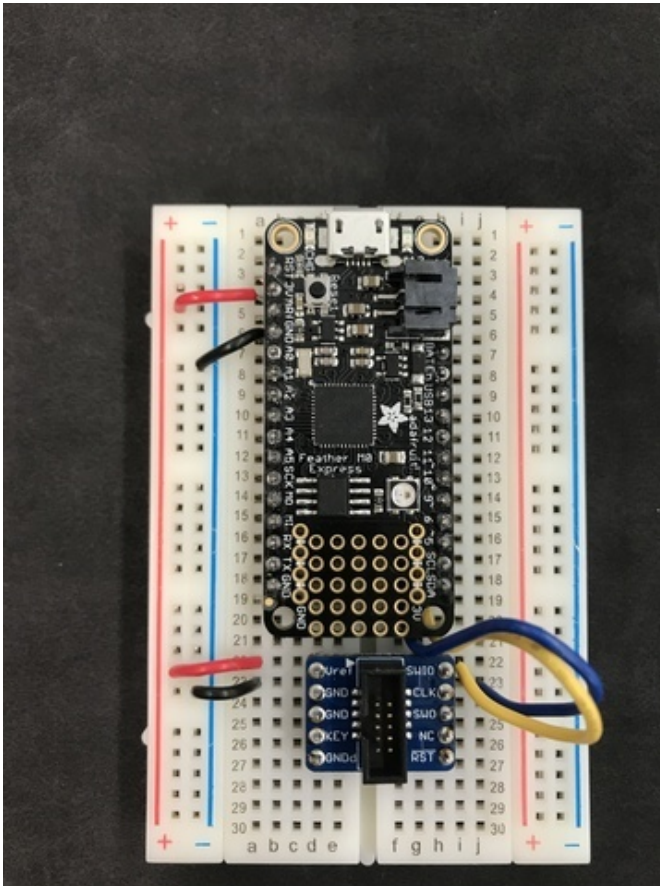
Feather M0/M4 Wiring

The debugging interface on the Feathers are a little bit harder to get to than the ItsyBitsy and the Metro. They're on the bottom of the board - labeled **SWDIO** and **SWCLK**. We'll need to solder a wire to each of them.



Cut and strip two wires. Solder one of them to the **SWDIO** pad and the other to the **SWCLK** pad, making sure that the two wires do not touch.

After soldering, add a small piece of tape to secure the connection between the wire and the pad.



Make the following connections between the Feather and a SWD Breakout:

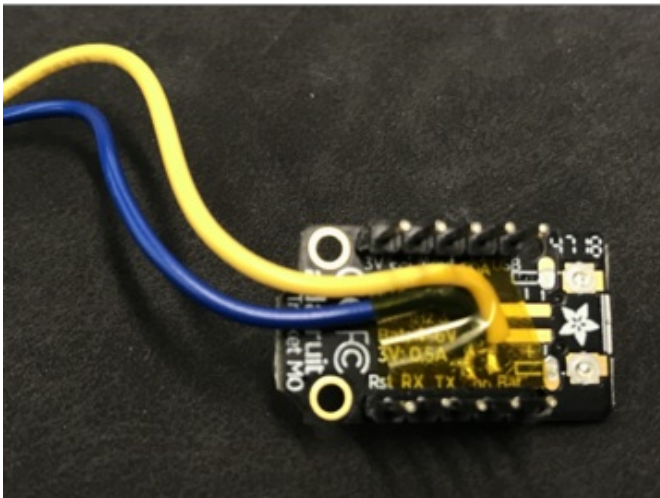
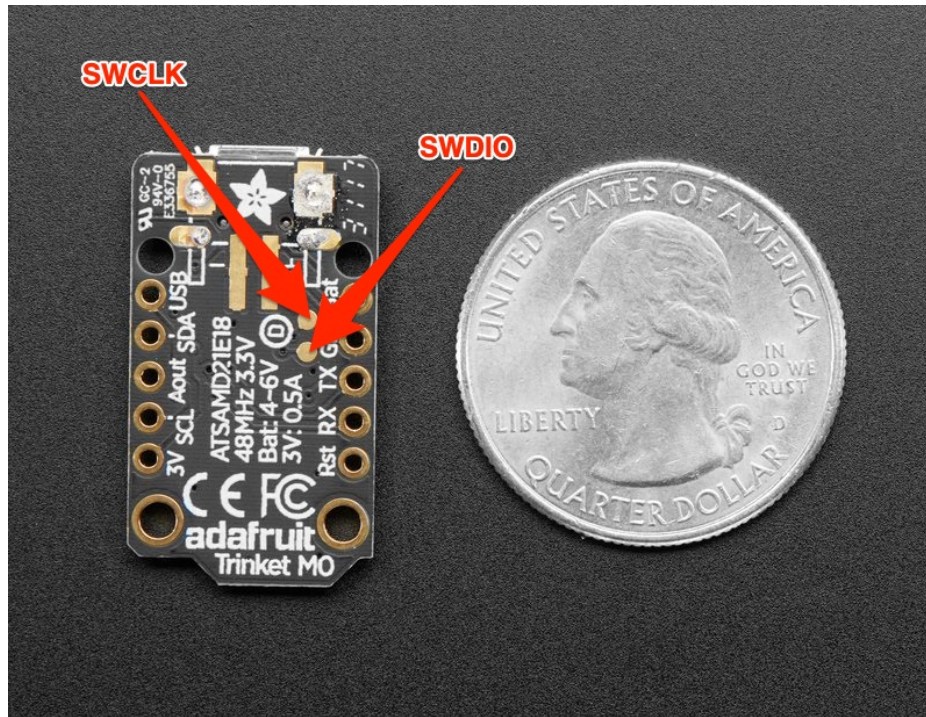
- Feather SWDIO to Breakout SWIO
- Feather SWCLK to Breakout CLK
- Feather 3V to Breakout VRef
- Feather GND to Breakout GND



You must also plug in a USB cable to the Feather to power it during programming

Trinket M0 Wiring

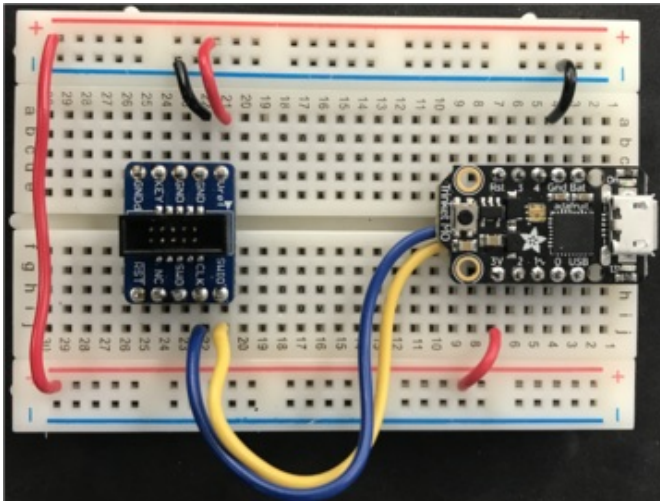
There are two programming pads located at the bottom of the Trinket M0:



Cut and strip two wires.

Solder one of them to the SWDIO pad and the other to the SWCLK pad, making sure that the two wires do not touch.

After soldering, add a small piece of tape to secure the connection between the wire and the pad.



Then, make the following connections between the Trinket and the SWD breakout:

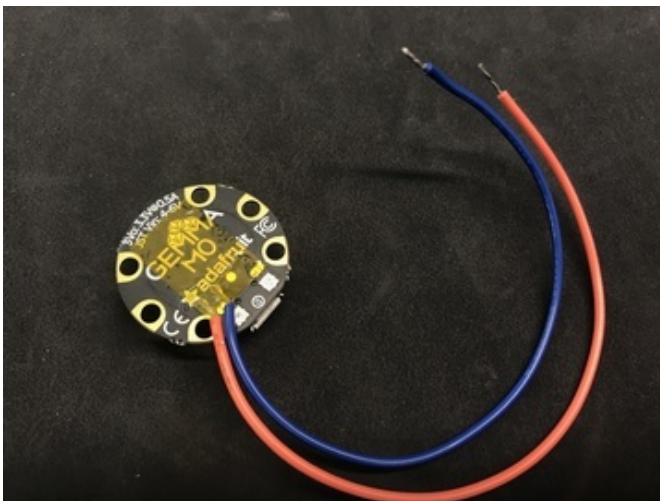
- Trinket SWDIO to Breakout SWIO
- Trinket SWCLK to Breakout CLK
- Trinket 3Vo to Breakout VRef
- Trinket GND to Breakout GND



You must also plug in a USB cable to the Trinket to power it during programming

Gemma M0 Wiring

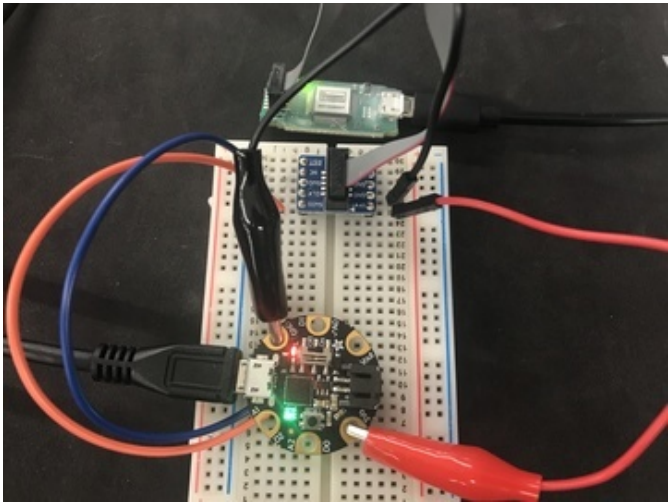
On the bottom of the Gemma, there are three small pads used for programming:



Cut and strip two wires.

Solder one of them to the **SWDIO** pad and the other to the **SWCLK** pad, making sure that the two wires do not touch.

After soldering, add a small piece of tape to secure the connection between the wire and the pad.



Then, make the following connections between the Gemma and the SWD breakout:

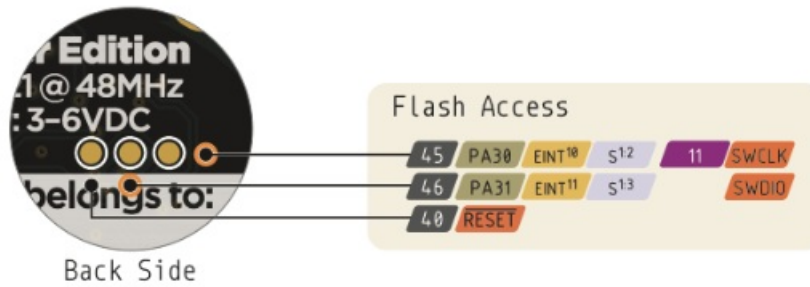
- Gemma SWDIO to Breakout SWIO
- Gemma SWCLK to Breakout CLK
- Gemma 3Vo to Breakout VRef
- Gemma GND to Breakout GND

You can use [breadboard-friendly Alligator clips \(https://adafru.it/xAV\)](https://adafru.it/xAV) to attach the Gemma M0's 3Vo and GND pins to the breakout.



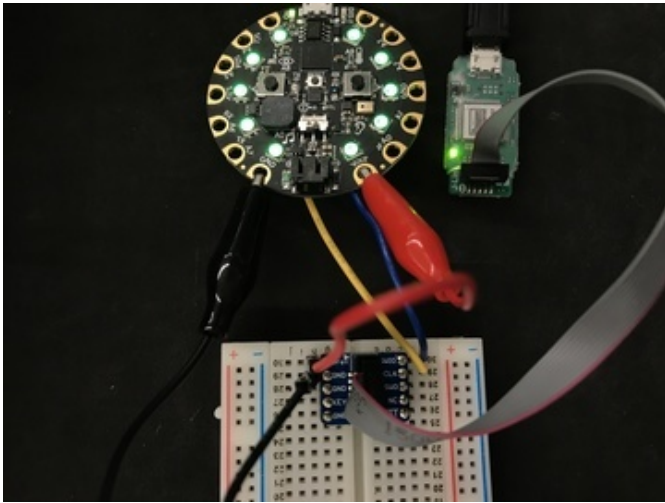
You must also plug in a USB cable to the Gemma to power it during programming

Circuit Playground Express M0 Wiring



To program the Circuit Playground Express, you'll need to solder directly to the SWCLK and SWDIO pads on the back of the board.

After soldering, use a piece of tape or a dab of hot glue to hold the wires in place so they don't rip off of the pads.



Then, make the following connections between the Circuit Playground Express M0 and the SWD breakout:

- Circuit Playground Express **SWDIO** to Breakout **SWIO**
- Circuit Playground Express **SWCLK** to Breakout **CLK**
- Circuit Playground Express **VOut** to Breakout **VRef**
- Circuit Playground Express **GND** to Breakout **GND**

You can use [breadboard-friendly Alligator clips \(https://adafru.it/xAV\)](https://adafru.it/xAV) to attach the Circuit Playground Express **VOut** and **GND** pins to the breakout.



You must also plug in a USB cable to the Circuit Playground Express to power it during programming

Programming the Bootloader with Atmel Studio



You'll need to **install Atmel Studio 7**. This software is **free** and **only works on a Windows host computer**.

- If you're running macOS or Linux, you can run Windows in a virtual machine (Parallels, VirtualBox) and install Atmel Studio on the Windows virtual machine.

The download (**we recommend the online installer**) is available from Microchip's website.

<https://adafru.it/DJO>

<https://adafru.it/DJO>

Setting up JLink for Atmel Studio

JLinks ship with the firmware they are programmed with from the factory. We'll want to update ours to the latest version.

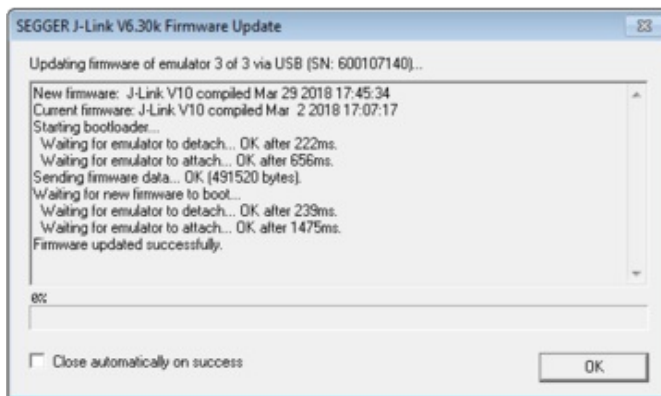
From the Windows search bar, search for the **Jlink Configurator** application and launch it.



The JLink Configurator tool will show all connected devices. Tick the box next to the JLink you want to update.

Then, click **Update Firmware of Selected Emulators**.

If a new firmware is available, the JLink will launch a pop-up window, updating the firmware.

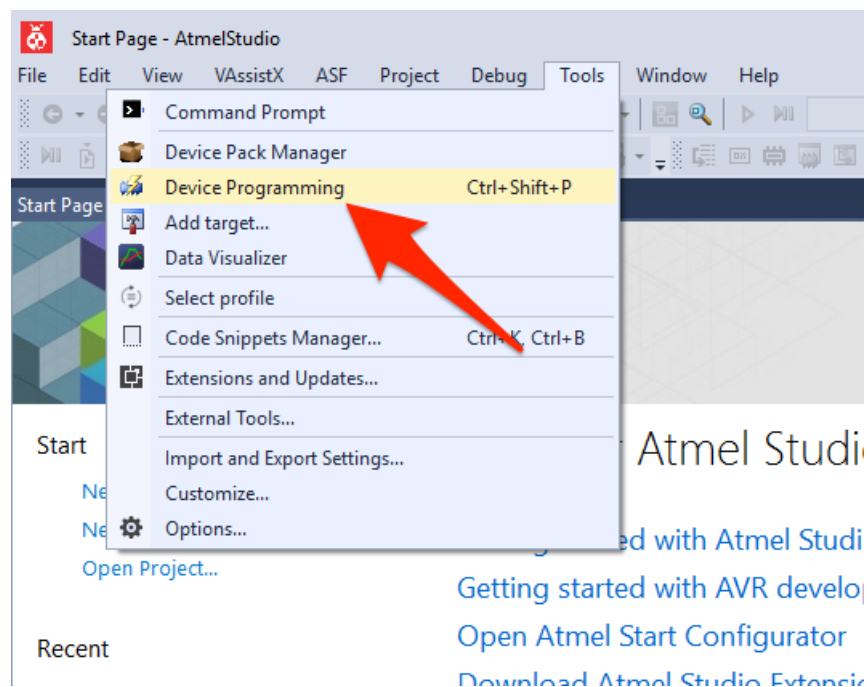


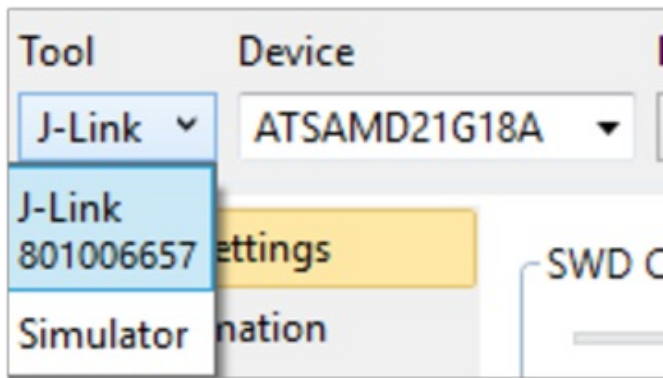
Next, launch the SEGGER JLink DLL Updater from the start menu.

If there is an update available for Atmel Studio 7, **tick the checkbox** and click **OK** to update Atmel Studio 7's the latest JLink software.



Next, open Atmel Studio. From the toolbar, select **Tools -> Device Programming**.

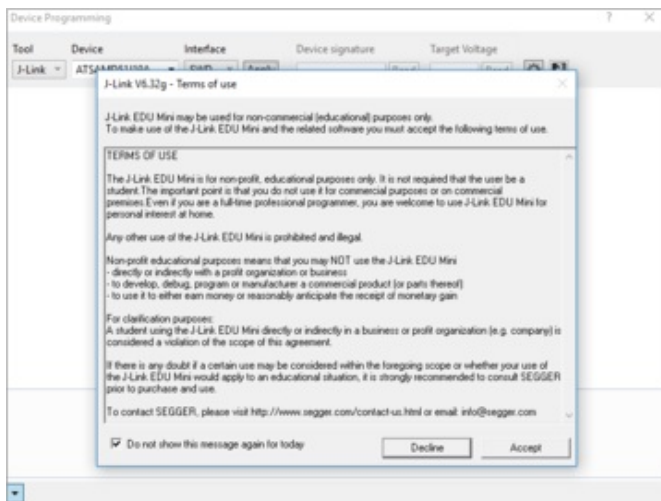




The device programming window will open. Before we proceed, make sure your J-Link and board are both plugged into your computer.

Then, select Tool->J-Link.

- If you're using a J-Link EDU, the terms of use will pop up after selecting the J-Link interface. Click **ACCEPT**.

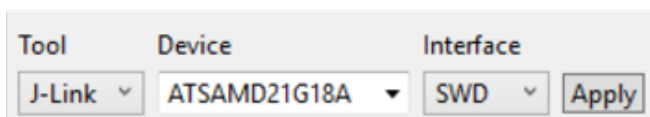


Flashing a SAMD21 M0 Board with Atmel Studio

Next, we're going to **select the Device** (the type of chip you're programming):

- For the Feather M0, Metro M0, Trinket M0, and Circuit Playground Express, **select ATSAMD21G18A**
- For the Gemma M0 and Trinket M0, **select ATSAMD21E18A**

Click **Apply**.



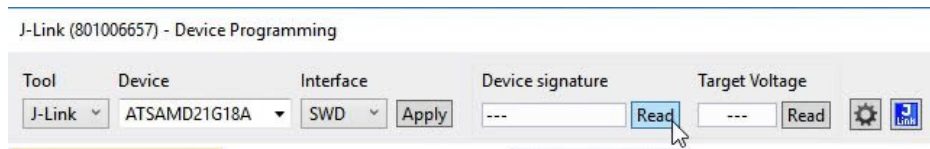
Make sure your board is plugged into USB, then click **Read**. The empty fields for *Device Signature* and *Target Voltage* will populate.

Make sure these values appear before proceeding!

- If the board is not detected, or your wiring is not detected, Atmel Studio will throw an error that it could not connect to the board. Check your wiring (especially the **SWDIO/SWCLK** wires), that your USB cables are connected to the computer, and try to connect again.



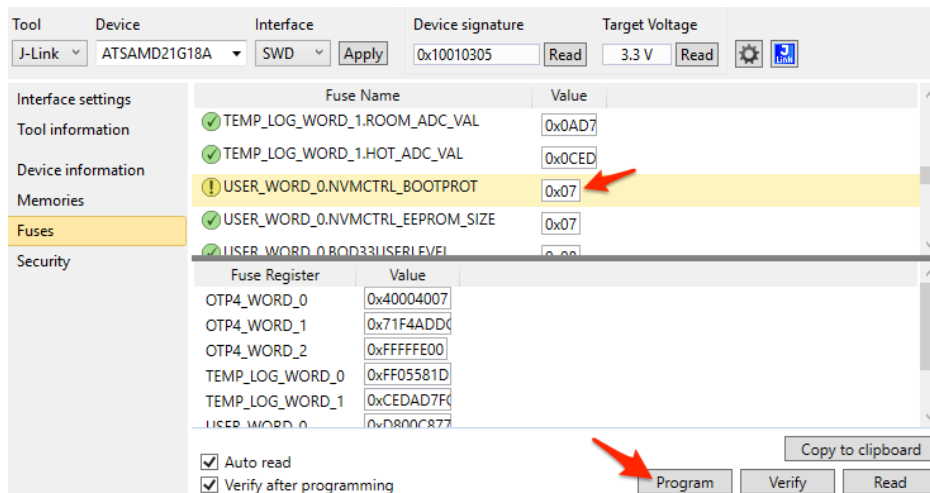
Be sure your USB cable is a USB data cable and not a "cell phone charging" power only cable. The data lines are needed to communicate between your computer and the J-LINK.



The SAMD21 has a **BOOTPROT** fuse protecting the flash area of the bootloader. You'll want to clear the **BOOTPROT** fuse before flashing the bootloader.

For SAMD21, you will need to set it to **0x07**

Click **Program**, wait for a confirmation that the fuses have been set. Then, click **Verify**.

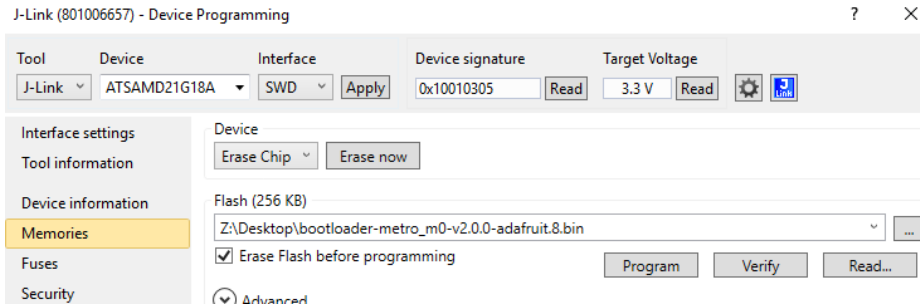


On the sidebar, click **Memories**.

Select the **bootloader** for the CircuitPython board you're recovering (the **.bin** file you downloaded earlier).

Select **Erase Flash before programming** and **Verify flash after programming**.

Then, click **Program**.



After clicking **Program**, the serial will output:

Erasing Device...OK

Programming Flash...OK

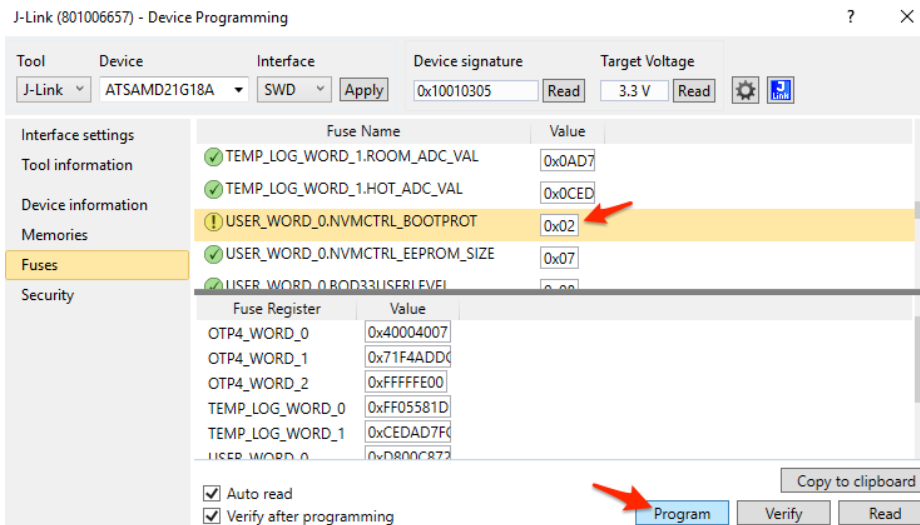
Verifying Flash...OK

Erasing device... OK
Programming Flash...OK
Verifying Flash...OK

Verifying Flash...OK

After flashing, you'll need to set the **BOOTPROT** fuse to a 8kB bootloader size.

From Fuses, set **BOOTPROT** to 0x2 and click Program



Open Windows Explorer - there should be a new volume mounted on your machine indicating that the board has been programmed with the UF2 bootloader:

▼ Devices and drives (4)



If you want to use the SAMD21 board with Arduino or Microsoft MakeCode, you can stop here.

If you want to use it with CircuitPython, let's continue to installing a CircuitPython build.

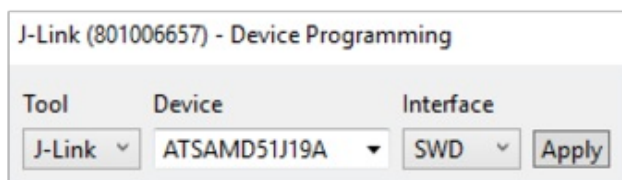
Flashing a SAMD51 M4 Board with Atmel Studio

Boards like the Metro M4 and the Grand Central use a different, more powerful chip than the SAMD21, the SAMD51 - the flashing process is a little bit different for these boards.

In the Device Programming window, select the device based off which M4 CircuitPython Board you have.

- Feather M4 and Metro M4, and the Itsy-Bitsy M4 select **ATSAMD51J19A**
- For the Grand Central M4, select **ATSAMD51P20**

Click Apply.



Make sure your board is plugged into USB, then click **Read**. The empty fields for *Device Signature* and *Target Voltage* will populate.

Make sure these values appear before proceeding!

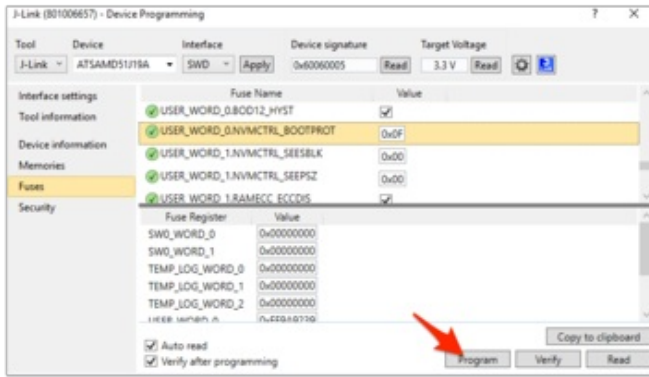
- If the board is not detected, or your wiring is not detected, Atmel Studio will throw an error that it could not connect to the board. Check your wiring (especially the **SWDIO/SWCLK** wires), that your USB cables are connected to the computer, and try to connect again.



Be sure your USB cable is a USB data cable and not a "cell phone charging" power only cable. The data lines are needed to communicate between your computer and the J-LINK.

J-Link (801006657) - Device Programming





The SAMD51 has a **BOOTPROT** fuse protecting the flash area of the bootloader. You'll want to clear the **BOOTPROT** fuse before flashing the bootloader.

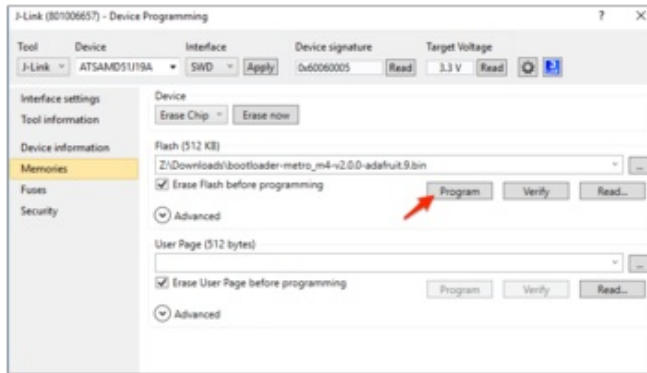
- From the Device Programming window, select **Fuses**.
- Then, change the value of **USER_WORD_0.NVMCTRL_BOOTPROT** to **0x0F**
- Click **Program**
- Then, click **VERIFY** to verify that the fuse has been set correctly.

On the sidebar, click **Memories**.

Select the **bootloader** for the CircuitPython board you're recovering (the .bin file you downloaded earlier).

Select *Erase Flash before programming* and *Verify flash after programming*.

Then, click **Program**.



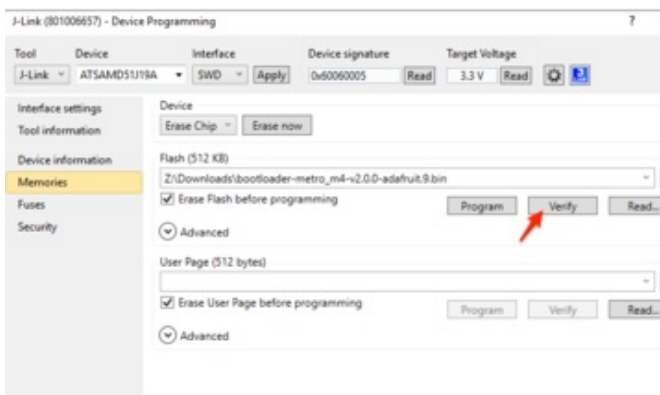
On the sidebar, **click Memories.**

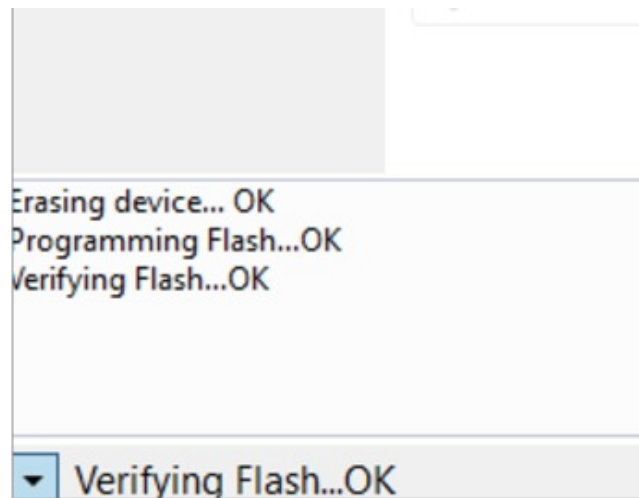
Select the bootloader for the CircuitPython board you're recovering (the **.bin** file you downloaded earlier).

Select *Erase Flash before programming*

Click Program.

Then, click Verify





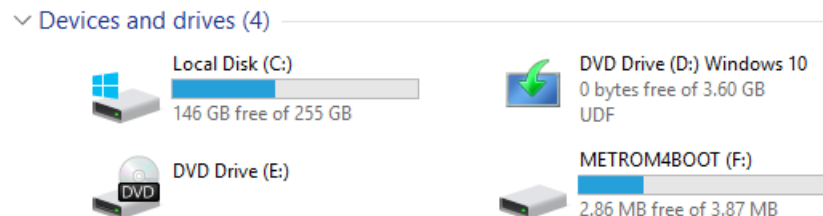
After clicking **Program**, the serial will output:

Erasing Device...OK

Programming Flash...OK

Verifying Flash...OK

Open Windows Explorer - there should be a new volume mounted on your machine indicating that the board has been programmed with the UF2 bootloader:



If you want to use the SAMD51 board with Arduino or Microsoft MakeCode, you can stop here.

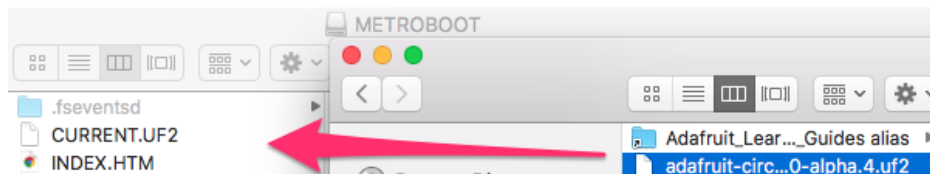
If you want to use it with CircuitPython, let's continue to installing a CircuitPython build.

Installing CircuitPython

A perk of the SAMD UF2 bootloader is the ability to load other firmware (like CircuitPython) onto the board without re-programming the bootloader.

Double tap the Reset button, a new volume should appear on your computer - **boardNameBOOT** (the name of this volume differs between boards).

Drag and drop the CircuitPython board and language-specific UF2 file we downloaded earlier from the desktop to the **boardNameBOOT** volume.



The volume should briefly disappear, and reappear as **CIRCUITPY**.

Congrats, your board is un-bricked and running CircuitPython again!

