


## Blends & Gradients

A blend is a series of objects that is placed between two primary objects. The closer one of the in between objects is to a primary object the more it will reflect the attributes of the primary object (shape, color, stroke, etc.).

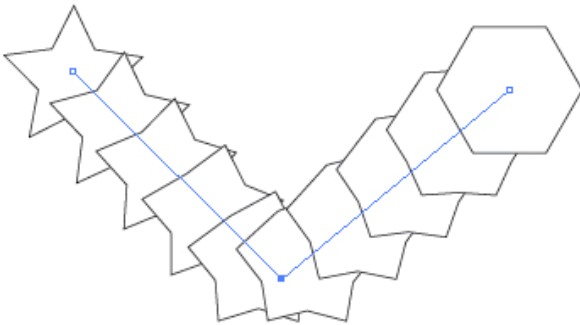


For this example I started by laying out a star and a hexagon and then I used the blend tool  to do the rest.

By double clicking on the blend tool you will see a series of options in a pop up box that will allow you to specify the number of steps in a blend, the distance for a blend and the coloring of a blend.

To make a blend first lay down your primary objects and then select the blend tool, specifying the number of steps that you would like to have in your blend. Bring the cursor over your chosen anchor point for your first primary object and click once. Then move your cursor over the anchor point that you want the blend to go to in your second object. Illustrator does the rest of the work for you.

If you select the blend with the selection tool you will notice a path connecting the two primary objects. This path can be manipulated as normal to create interesting effects.



You may also edit the primary objects of the blend and the blend will follow your edits.

Blends may also be used to create gradients within an object and other interesting effects

### Gradients:

Gradients work the same way as they did in Photoshop. In the hands of a talented graphic designer (like all of you) gradients can add an almost life-like depth to an image. Use the gradient window to call up the palette or use the icon docked at the side of the screen.


You can fill an area with a gradient simply by clicking on the gradient icon in between the color and stroke toggles below the color picker at the bottom of the toolbar.

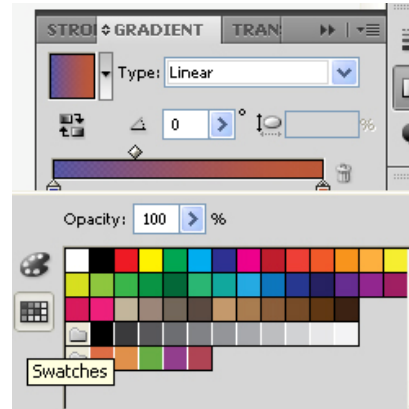



There are two main types of gradients: Linear and Radial. Linear gradients move evenly across the surface of the selected area while radial gradients move outward in a circular fashion from a central point. Both types of gradients can be controlled by the sliders in the gradient palette. You may add as many sliders as you want to for a particular effect.


To change the color of a gradient fill double click on the slider and then, in the menu that pops up, select a color from the swatches palette.

Using just the gradient palette can be limiting so Illustrator has way to load your own gradients into swatches and then to use them over and over again at a later date.

To do this fill an area with your gradient and then select the swatches palette. Click the new swatch icon  and name your gradient. This will make a new swatch for you to use in any area that you choose.



Illustrator has also given us the option of using the gradient tool  which allows you to adjust the gradient directly on the object in Illustrator CS4. You can control the size, shape, length, and direction of the gradient as well as the sliders to control the transition of color on the object.

Another handy trick is using the transparency palette.  This tool allows you to make overlapping images seem less solid than the things around them and is useful for making visual illusions of transparency such as wings or windows with scenery outside.

Take the time to play with gradients and transparencies a bit. This will help you a lot in later projects. Save your experiments and turn in your favorite three.