

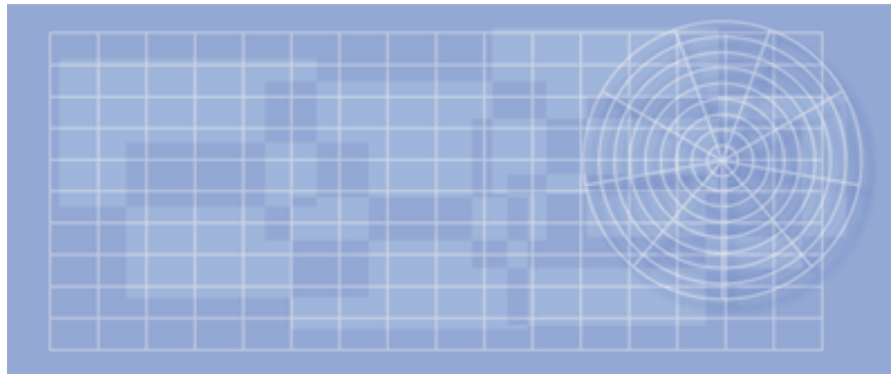
INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS

Combining Objects into Editable Compounds

Information Sheet No.



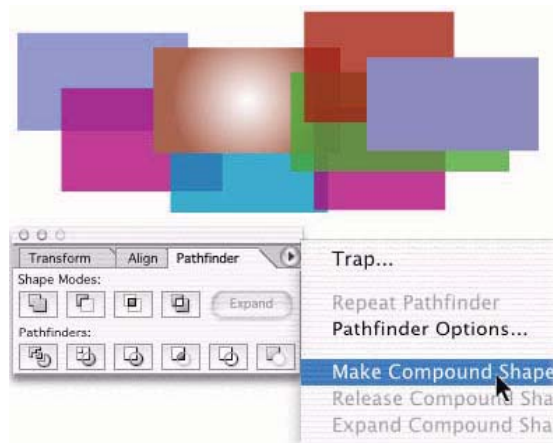
Illustrator has good support for compounds, making it easier to build intricate designs by combining simple shapes. Now, when you use the Pathfinder palette to create compound shapes, the original objects remain fully editable. Making modifications—whether you're editing the individual paths or including new elements in the compound—is easier than ever before.



1. Create a compound shape.

To create a compound shape, draw a number of overlapping objects and then select them. Choose **Window > Pathfinder** to open the Pathfinder palette. In the Pathfinder pop-up menu, choose **Make Compound Shape**. The new shape—a composite of the objects you selected—takes on the paint and transparency attributes of the top object.

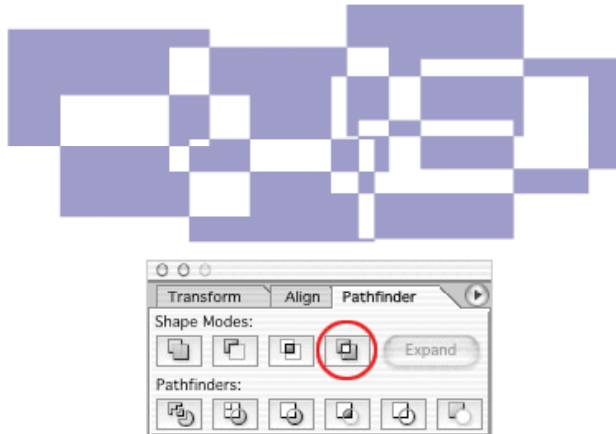
When creating a compound shape, you can include paths, compound paths, groups, and other compound shapes. You can also use blends, text, envelopes, and warps. All of these elements remain editable.



2. Make overlapping object areas transparent.

With the direct selection tool, select one or more objects in your compound shape. In the Shape Modes section of the Pathfinder palette, click the **Exclude Overlapping Shape Areas** button. The overlapping areas of the selected objects become transparent.

You can use the other Shape Mode buttons to delete an object from the compound shape, add a new object, or use an object to clip the compound as a mask would. If you need to replace an object—when the client asks you to use a circle instead of a square, for example—delete the undesired object and then add the new object.



3. Edit an individual object within the compound.

With the direct selection tool, select an object within the compound shape. Drag the object to reposition it. To resize it, drag an anchor point. To reshape the object, edit the path as you would with any free-standing element.

4. Change the transparency.

With the selection tool, select the compound shape. Choose Window > Transparency to open the Transparency palette, and adjust the opacity or select a blending mode. Changes made to the transparency or paint attributes affect the entire compound shape. You can also use commands in the Filter and Effects menus to modify a compound. After setting the compound shape over a blue background, we changed the fill to white and then set the blending mode to Soft Light and the opacity to 50%.



5. Revert to the original objects.

With the selection tool, select the compound shape and choose Release Compound Shape from the Pathfinder palette pop-up menu. All the objects regain their original, individual attributes—with no need to redraw.