



Class by Jen White

## Cluster Queen

### Lesson 07 Part 1: Classic Core Cluster



#### Why These Five Elements?

Each of the elements provided comes from my personal stash. The element set is not specific to any particular designer or kit.

- **Style.** A classic core cluster can be made with literally anything you have on hand. But, if you vary the style of the elements you use, your cluster will look more alive.  
One way to vary style is to look for items that require different sized shadows. The five elements I chose for lesson 7 have a variety of shadow needs.
- **Texture.** Variety in texture is a little easier to determine. Imagine holding each of the five downloaded elements in your hand. They all should feel very different. Your eye measures that difference as well and it likes things mixed up.
- **Color.** Because the anchor (paint) I chose had two bold colors in it, I kept all the other elements very neutral. The string was originally green, but I recolored it to gold to better match the other colors.

#### Step One: Create a Cluster

- Create a classic core cluster using the five elements provided.

#### What is a cluster?

- A cluster is a group of elements positioned close together.

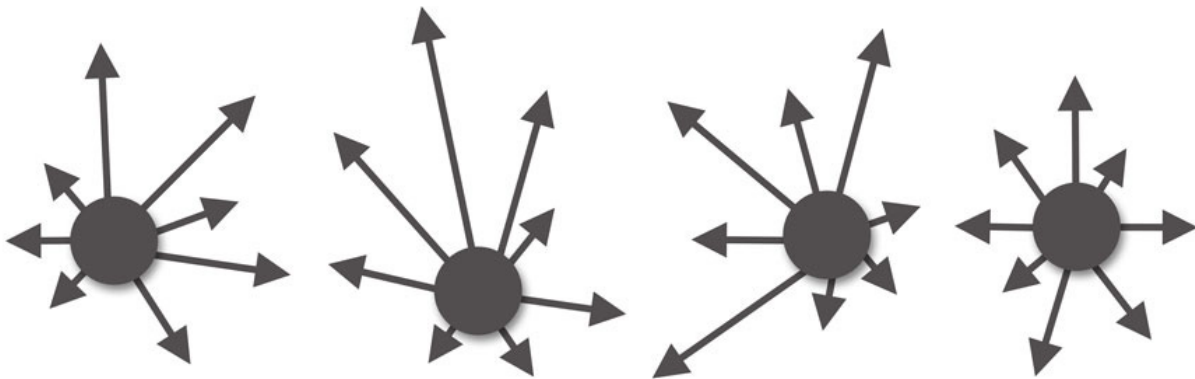
## What is a classic core cluster?

- A classic core cluster is built solely on the concept of focus.
- It does not have any shape restrictions, like linear or circular.
- It will work well in any situation and is extremely versatile.

## Keep the Focus

All good clusters contain focus. Without focus, all you have is cluttering, not clustering.

- Focus is what classic core clusters are built upon.
- Choose one element to be the focal element. Which of the five elements provided would you choose to be the focal element?
- All other supporting elements in the cluster should randomly spring from the focal element.



- If using the Top Down method, start with the focal element, then add the supporting elements from the top down.
- If using the Bottoms Up method, start with the focal element, then add the supporting elements from the bottom up.
- If using the Shape Starter method, begin by placing a small circle on your document. Place the focal element on that circle and then add the supporting elements.

## Tips, Tricks, and Inspiration

Having trouble getting started? Cannot seem to think outside the box? Here's a little help from a friend.

- Always start with the focal element of your cluster.
- Use the next image you place to determine the focal point of the cluster.
- All other other elements should stem from the focal point.
- Vary the vertical and horizontal centers of each element in the cluster.
- Flip, snip, rotate, and resize until you are happy.
- Work to keep elements in good proportion with each other.



Is your confidence growing?

Is it getting a little easier to read my instructions and then see a cluster start to form in your imagination?

If you are not feeling even the tiniest bit more confident, that means you need to spend more time in Step One and Step Two.

**Do This—Chart Your Confidence.** Make a physical note about your confidence level at the start of this lesson. Where are you on the scale? Any different than last lesson?

## Additional Challenges

You will find some lessons easier than others. If you feel like you breezed through Step One, here are some prompts and ideas to get you thinking like a Cluster Queen and challenge you to take it to the next level.

- See if you can build a cluster with a different element as the focal element.
- Try moving the focal point and see what a difference that makes.
- Do you see any opportunities for a custom shadow?
- For a more minimal look, see how many clusters you can create using just two or three elements from the download.



**ATTENTION:** Please do not post your results of Step One on the class Facebook Group. Doing so may sideline the creative process for your fellow classmates.

If you're mega excited to share your result of Step One, I'd love to see it. You can email it to me or send it via the Help Desk.

**CAUTION:** Don't rush to Step Two; take time to experiment and find your own solution.