



Class by Jen White

Cluster Queen

Lesson 07 Part 2: Classic Core Cluster



Drop Shadows

No - paint

Low - paper edge

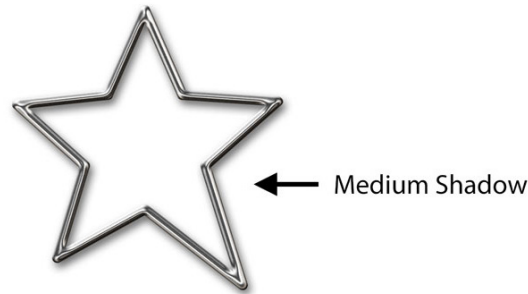
Med - tag, star

Custom - string

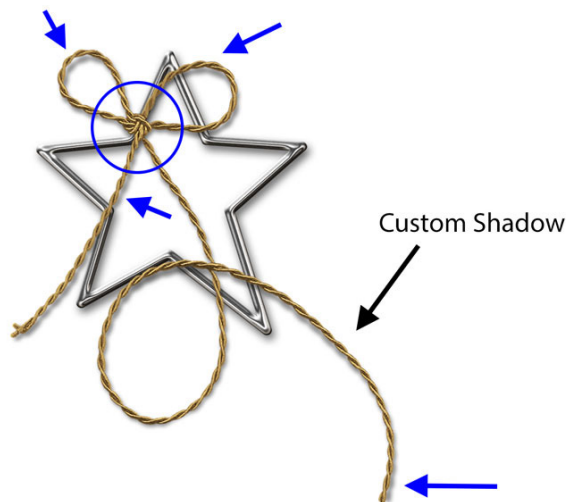
Here is one possible example of a classic core cluster using the five elements provided. The paper is only included to help the cluster stand out.

Evaluate My Cluster—Here's What I Did

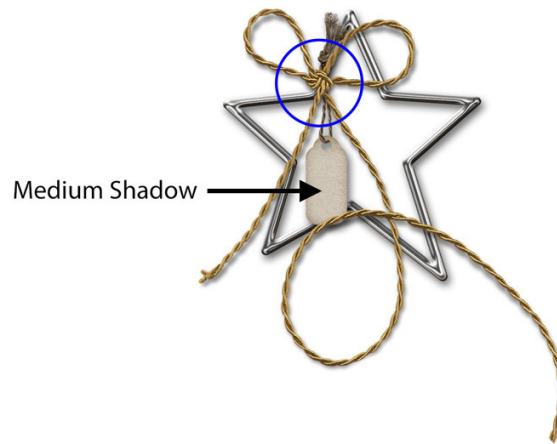
Remember, it's okay if your process of cluster creation is different than mine.



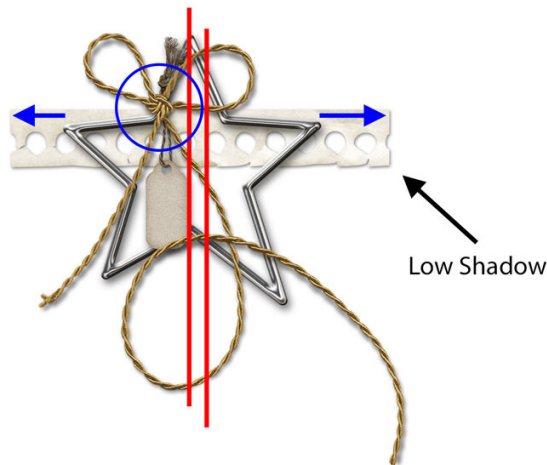
- As instructed in the lesson, I started my cluster by choosing which of the five elements provided would be my focal element.
- This metal star was the most showy of all the elements, so I choose it to be the star of the cluster.
- I then applied a medium shadow to the star because it's somewhat bulky.



- Working from the top down, next I decided to add the string.
- Even though the star is the focal element, the string does not really cover it up.
- Instead, the string sets the focal point for the cluster (as indicated above by the blue circle) by being tied to a specific place on the star. All other items in the cluster will now need to stem from this point.
- Also, I originally added a medium shadow to the string just to get a better feel of what it looked like on the star. But, after I was done deciding where the string was going to sit on the star, I applied a custom shadow instead.

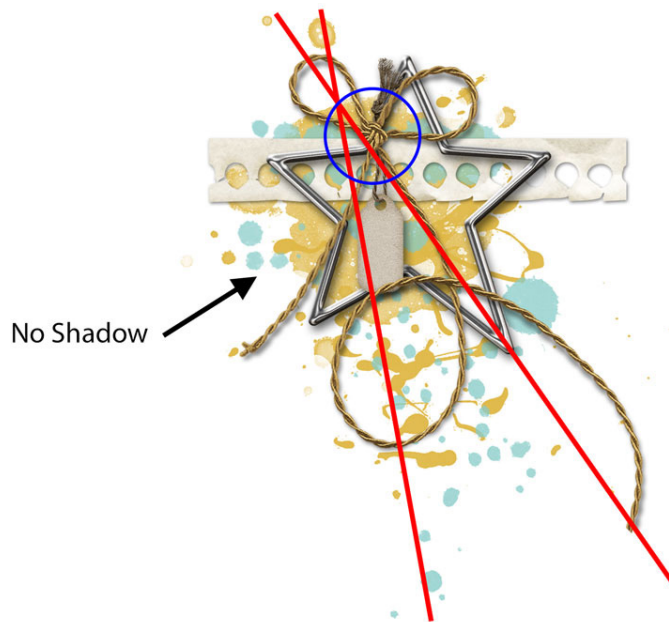


- Next, I added the tag behind the string.
- Keeping the focal point in mind, I made sure the string of the tag passed through the focal point (as indicated above by the blue circle).
- The tag was given a medium shadow. Sometimes tags can benefit from a custom shadow, but in this situation, a custom shadow would just be overkill.



- Next, I added the paper strip behind the star.
- Since the paper strip is relatively flat, I applied a low drop shadow.
- The position of the paper strip not only intersects with the focal point of the cluster (as indicated above by the blue circle), but it also balances the cluster by showing a little to the left of the star and a little to the right of the star (as indicated above by the blue arrows).
- The balance I'm talking about here is just a visual balance, not a literal one. Because if you look at the actual vertical centers of the star and the paper strip (as indicated above by the red lines), they are offset.

Tip: You want to try and avoid symmetry when working with clusters.



- Finally, I added the paint behind it all to anchor it.
- The paint gets no shadow since it's meant to work only as an overlay.
- The position of the paint intersects the focal point of the cluster (as indicated above by the blue circle). It's not centered on the focal point, it just comes in contact with it and brings balance to the cluster by peeking out on all sides.
- Since the string is flowing somewhat vertically, I made sure the paint was flowing vertically as well (as indicated above by the red lines).

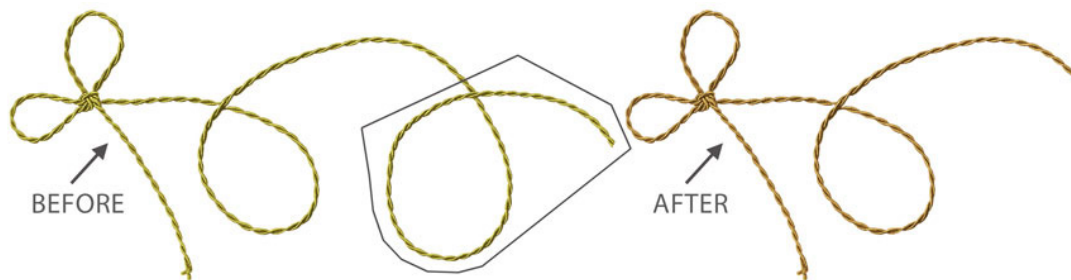


Step Two: Copy My Cluster Exactly

- Take the time to create an exact copy of the classic core cluster above. Use the elements I provided.
- Pay special attention to the order and position of each layer and element.
- Follow the advice of drop shadow depth for each of the five elements.

Alterations—Do Not Fear!

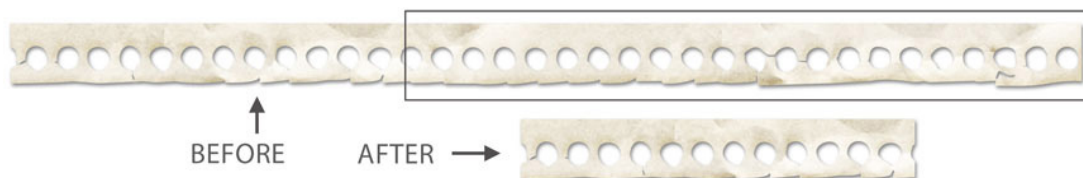
When creating clusters, you need to be flexible. Be willing to mask away parts of an element that does not work or change the color of an element that does not match. Three of the elements in this lessons download were altered to make them easier to use and fit in.



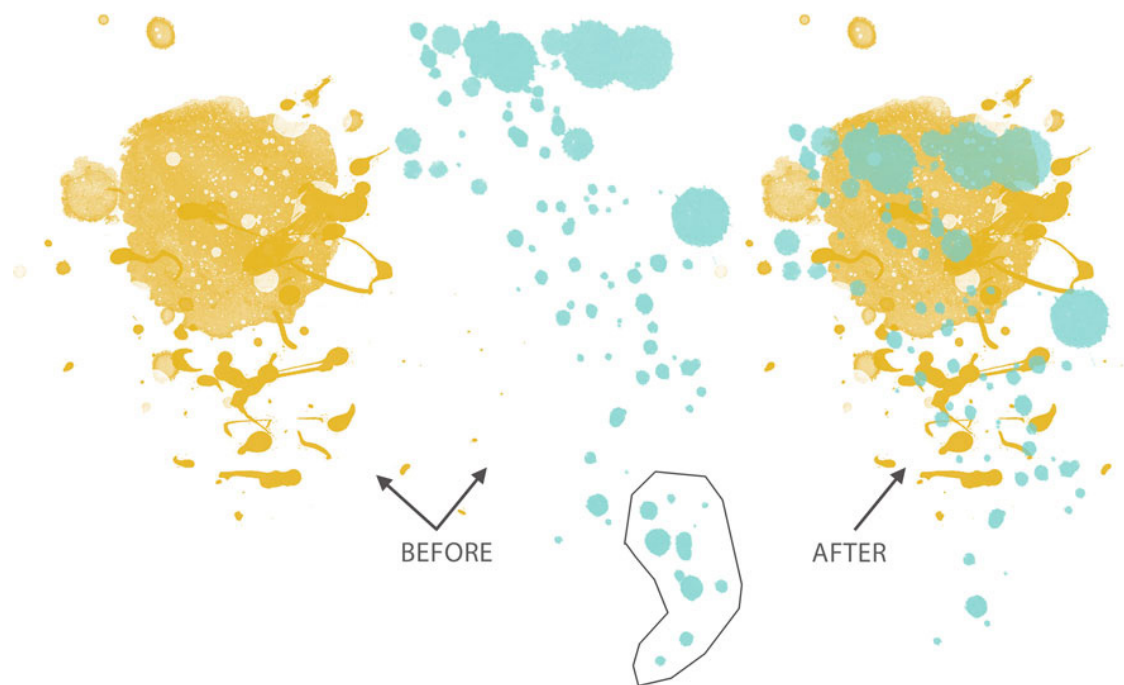
- The original string from my stash was much longer than the one I placed in the download. To shorten it, I masked away the excess.
- I changed the color of the string from green to gold to better match the paint.



- The original tag was very long. To shorten it, I removed the long part of the string and then replaced it with the end. Doing this can sometimes be tricky and often involves the Liquify Filter.



- The paper strip was nice and long. But since I was only using it on a cluster, I masked away most of it.



The paint in the download is actually a combination of two paint elements. I removed part of the teal paint to make them look better balanced when combined.

More Inspiration

Did you happen to try the Additional Challenges above? I had a little bit of time to play. For some extra practice, try copying these designs as well.



Here are two examples similar to the first classic core cluster I created. Do see where the focal point moved to? Notice how all the elements still spring from the focal point.

Answer: The focal point for both clusters above is the knot in the string.



And, here are three examples of a more minimal design, using only three of the elements provided. Can you spot the focal point on these three clusters?

Answer: The focal point of the first two clusters above is the knot in the string. The focal point of the third cluster is the the point where the tag's string attaches to the star.

What's Your Preference?

Which of my additional clusters do you like best? Your answer might help you narrow down what your style preference is when it comes to clusters.



ATTENTION: Please do not post your results of Step Two 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 Two, 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 Three until you've successfully completed Step Two.