



Class by Jen White

Cluster Queen

Lesson 05 Part 1: Word Strip Cluster



Start Here

Download the Lesson 5 elements, video, and manuals (21 Mb).

The Cluster Queen Action Set (for PS & PSE) download can be found in the Lesson 1 download folder.



PDF Lesson Downloads

CAUTION: Each step in this lesson has its own PDF manual—Step One, Step Two, and Step Three. For success in this class, do not move on to the next step until you've successfully completed the one before it.

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.

Nearly every scrapbooking kit available on the web comes with a variety of word strip elements. A cleverly constructed word strip cluster is perfect for adding into the little nooks and crannies of a scrapbook page.

- **Style.** I included three different word strips in this lesson's download. Notice how they are each very different. One has dark words on a lighter background (picture perfect). One has light words on a darker background (say cheese). And, one is a little of both (xoxo). Doing this adds variety and interest to the cluster.

TIP: Whenever using word strips, you should try to pin them down in some way. That could be accomplished with something like a staple, some stitching, or a clip.

- **Texture.** Word strips are typically made to look like strips of paper. So because three of the elements are paper, I searched for two other things that were not paper. A staple is always a great addition to a word strip cluster because it pins down the strips and adds a metal texture. I then chose the plastic-coated heart clip to add a shiny texture.
- **Color.** Word strips are a great way to add a little pop of color to a scrapbook page, but “little” is the key word. Because there’s already a lot going on with all the words, I intentionally kept the color to a minimum. I had to recolor these strips to achieve that look.

Step One: Create a Cluster

- Create a word strip cluster using the five elements provided.

What is a cluster?

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

What is a word strip?

- A word strip is a thin strip of paper with a word or word phrase on it.
- A word strip is not the same as word art.
- They typically are not very tall. The height of the example below is just a portion of the square document.

What is a word strip cluster?

- A word strip cluster is several coordinating word strips creatively arranged to bring additional meaning and feeling to a scrapbook page or greeting card.
- A word strip cluster is intended to directly support the subject of a scrapbook page or greeting card through the use of single words or small phrases.
- Word strip clusters are usually very small and compact.

Keep the Focus

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

- The focus of a word strip cluster is the word strips, as in all of them. So, keep them all very close together. Think of them as a set.
- All the rest of the elements in the cluster should simply support the word strips.
- The supporting elements should not distract attention away from the word strips or overpower them.
- In all methods, try arranging the word strips first, then add the supporting elements below, on top of, or in between the word strips.

Tips, Tricks, and Inspiration

- Having trouble getting started? Cannot seem to think outside the box? Here’s a little help from a friend.
- Vary the size of each word strip so that they differ in length. Do not stretch them.
- Word strips are usually horizontal to make them easier to read.
- Vary the space between each strip.
- Try overlapping two of the strips.
- Vary the vertical centers of each of the word strips.
- Work to keep elements in good proportion with each other. In real life, for example, what size would a staple be in relation to a word strip?
- Always add a low drop shadow to a word strip, but never add a bevel.



GOOD



BAD

- If angling a word strip, keep all the other strips straight.
- Keep the angle of a word strip very small—5° or less.



- Don't be afraid to cover up a small portion of a word strip in order to tack it down.
- You still need to be able to understand what the word stays if it's partly covered up.
- Do not hide important letters in a word.
- Vowels in the middle of a word are usually safe to hide.



- When you get to Step Three, check out my tips for creating your own word strip.
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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.

- In the Layers panel, try placing the heart clip layer between two of the word strip layers. How does this change things? Will you need to alter your shadows?
 - Do you see any opportunities for a custom shadow?
 - For a more minimal look, see how many clusters you can create using just one or two word strips and one or two of the supporting elements.
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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.