



Class by Jen White

## Cluster Queen

### Lesson 01 Part 1: Cluster Strategies & Tips

#### What is a 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.** My overall goal was to create a horizontal line cluster. So, I intentionally searched for a few elements that were long and skinny—the lace and the berries.
- **Variety.** Beautiful clusters often have a wide variety of textures. I looked for something flat (stamp) and something big and bushy (teal flower), then I continued with variety for the other three elements. The inclusion of the metal brad in the center of the brown flower is an additional texture—a big two thumbs up.
- **Color.** Too much color often equates into too much clutter. I chose one main color element (teal flower) and then tried to remain relatively neutral with the rest of the colors (brown, cream, and nature greens). The yellow provides a coordinating secondary color that does not try to compete for the spotlight.



#### FREE PDF Tutorial

I often change the colors of the elements in a cluster so that they better coordinate with each other or better coordinate with the scrapbook page they are on.

Read how to do it: [Constructive Color Change PDF Manual](#)

## Step One: Create a Cluster

Create a horizontal line cluster using the five elements provided.

### What is a cluster?

A cluster is a group of elements positioned close together.

### What is a horizontal line cluster?

Picture a 6-inch ruler. That's the shape your cluster should take.

If using the Shape Starter Method, you would start with a long, thin rectangle.



#### Key Concept

The key is to make sure the outside edges of the cluster are very uneven. One way this can be done is by slightly tilting the horizontal direction an element is pointed.

## Determine the Focus

Every good cluster has a focal element that is the star of the show. This is the element you notice first. The focal element is typically the largest and most colorful element in the cluster.

- Of the five elements provided, which do you think would make the best focal element?
- If using the Top Down Method, you would start with the focal element.
- If using the Bottoms Up Method, place the focal element last.
- If using the Shape Starter Method, experiment with the focal element by placing it at different positions along the long, thin rectangle.

## Tips, Tricks, and Inspiration

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

- Try flipping or rotating an element for interesting looks and combinations.
- To make the cluster appear longer, duplicate the linear elements (lace and berries) and line them up end to end.
- Always resize elements as you add them to your cluster. The more variety of size, the better your cluster will look.
- Supporting elements usually look best when they are peeking out from under the main (focal) element.
- Vary the horizontal centers of each of the elements so they don't look piled on top of each other.
- If you don't especially care for the provided elements, think of how you might arrange them for a friend.

### Still feel like you are fumbling around?



**Relax.** This is only the first step of our 10 week journey. You are not expected to be a genius at clustering. Just do your best—that's all I ask.

**Do This—Chart Your Confidence.** Make a physical note about your confidence level. Where are you on a scale of 1-10, where one is a big hot mess and ten is a cluster queen? Throughout the pages of this class, you will begin to see your confidence level rise. I guarantee it.

## 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.

- Create several different horizontal line cluster designs using the same five elements. Here are some ideas:
    - Try using a different focal element
    - Try a different flow—left to right, right to left
    - Try creating a fuller cluster by duplicating elements
    - See how many tiny clusters you can make by using only two or three of the provided elements.
  - Which of your horizontal line clusters do you like the best?
  - Which do you like least? Do you know why you don't like it?
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**ATTENTION:** Please do not post your results of Step One or 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 One, I'd love to see it. You can email it to me or send it via the Help Desk.

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