



Class by Jen White

Cluster Queen

Lesson 08 Part 1: Dependent Linear Cluster

Beginning with Lesson 8 we will be diving into the world of clusters that are dependent upon photos.

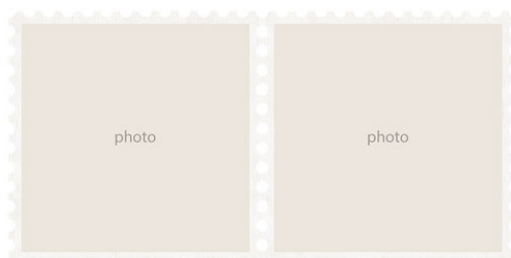


Why These Six Elements?

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

- **Style.** As with the previous lessons, I purposely searched my stash for a variety of element styles. The shape of each of the elements provided is different. There are rectangles and a circle. There are 3D elements and a 2D element. There are sharp edges and soft edges. There is something messy (paint) and things that are very structured (frame, ribbon). But most importantly with this lesson, I made sure to find a couple linear elements that would stretch from side to side.
- **Texture.** Variety of texture in your cluster's elements will go a long way to making it more interesting. I found something soft (leaf) and something hard (button). There is something made of paper (tab) and something made of cloth (ribbon).
- **Color.** This group of elements has more color than in previous lessons, but the colors are all in the same family—they go well with each other. Also, none of the colors are competing with each other.

NOTE: The download for this lesson contains a frame with photo masks. There's a flat version and a layered version. Use the flat version for Step One and Step Two of this lesson.



Use the flat version
of the frame.

Step One: Create a Cluster

- Create a dependent linear cluster using the frame (flat version) and the five elements provided.

TIP: In order to focus on cluster creation, do not add photos to the photo masks in Step One, Two, or Three.

What is a cluster?

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

What is a linear cluster?

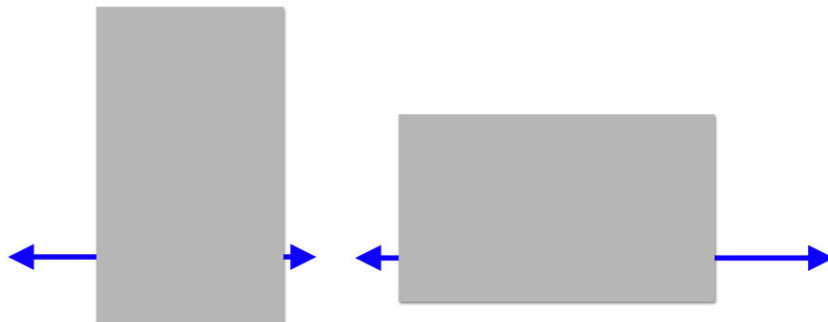
- In a linear cluster, the elements follow a path or line.
- In this lesson, I'm asking that the line be horizontal.



What is a dependent linear cluster?

Up till this point, all the clusters we have created could stand alone—they did not need a photo in order for them to feel complete. They were independent.

- A dependent linear cluster is one that is completely dependent upon the photo/frame it supports. If you were to take away the photo/frame, the cluster would feel incomplete.
- The cluster will be partly represented to the left of the photo/frame and partly represented to the right of the photo/frame.
- The orientation of the photo/frame can be portrait or landscape.



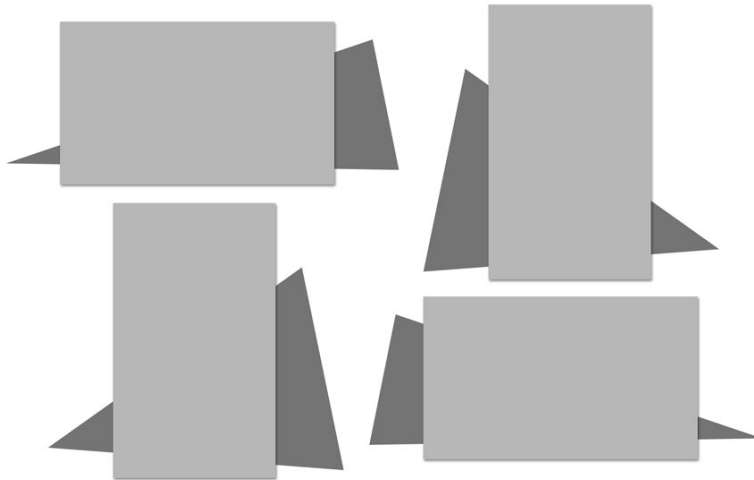
Determine the Focus

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

- In a dependent linear cluster, you will need to choose one side of the photo/frame to be the focal side.
- The focal side of the cluster should represent all of the elements.
- The focal side should contain a focal point, as with any cluster. Try to keep all elements visually connected to the focal point.
- The supporting side of the cluster should only slightly extend the focal side. This is done with the linear elements.



- In all methods, start with the photo/frame.
- If using the Top Down Method, use one of the elements to establish the focal point on the focal side of the cluster. Remember, the focal side can be on the left or on the right.
- If using the Bottoms Up Method, begin with a linear anchor element. Most of the linear element should show on the focal side and determine the focal point. A small portion of the linear elements should show on the supporting side.
- If using the Shape Starter Method, use a triangle (pointed left or right) behind the photo/frame. The wide side of the triangle is the focal side. The small point of the triangle is the supporting side.



Tips, Tricks, and Inspiration

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

- Place some elements behind the frame and some overlapping the frame.
- You don't need to see much of an element in order for it to be effective.
- Flip, clip, rotate, and resize until you are happy.
- You may need to duplicate the linear elements in order for them to span the distance of the photo/frame. Do not stretch elements.
- Work to keep elements in good proportion with each other. For example, what size would the button be in relation to the tab in real life.
- Vary the horizontal centers of each of the elements so they don't look piled on top of 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.

- Look at the shape starter images.
 - Try switching the focal side of your cluster.
 - Try changing the orientation of the photo/frame in your cluster.
 - For a more minimal look, see how many clusters you can create using just the photo/frame and two or three other elements.
 - For a fuller look, try duplicating the elements (like the ribbon).
 - Which of your dependent linear 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 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.