Illustrator:
Using Clipping Mask

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What is a Clipping Mask?
A clipping mask is a shape (called a clipping path) that masks any object below it, so only what’s inside of the clipping path is visible. A clipping path can only be a vector object, not a photo. However, the object below it can be anything – a raster photo, vector drawing, etc.

A few things to note about clipping masks:
- The clipping path must always be on top of the object you’d like to clip.
- You can only have one clipping path.
- However, one or more objects can be clipped.
- Clipped objects must be in the same layer or group.

How to Make a Clipping Mask
A clipping mask can be made using various techniques:
In this example the clipping path will be the text BEACH, . The objects we are going to clip will be an image of a beach scene and the word “BEACH”.

1. Insert your image: File> Place> Image
2. Type your text: Type tool \text{T}_{2}> type the word BEACH
3. Select both pictures
4. Go to Object > Clipping Mask > Make

Using Two or More Clipping Paths

Another technique used to create a clipping masks can be done by having either the clipping path or object underneath altered to fit together. By following the steps below you will see how this works.

1. Type “BEACH FUN”

2. Now you will want to edit the letters individually. First you will convert the text to outlines so each letter can be edited individually Select BEACH FUN >
3. Go to Type > Create Outlines (shift > command > O) or by right clicking on the text and selecting Create Outlines.

Each letter has now become an object that can be edited but not like regular text. You can no longer change the font type but you can edit the letter individually. You will notice that anchor points appear on each letter — they can be moved and edited individually.

Text NOT outlined:
No Anchor Points

Text OUTLINED:
Anchor points
(blue squares are anchor points)
The outlined text is no longer one path (it’s now eight paths B E A C H F U N). BEACH FUN is still only one clipping path. In order to use the clipping technique you now must take the clipping path and make it a compound path.

To convert it to one path use the following steps

1. Select text **BEACH FUN**

2. Selecting Object > Compound Path > Make (Command>8).
3. Highlight the compound path (BEACH FUN) and photo,

4. Select Object > Clipping Mask > Make:
Clipping Two or More Objects

Although, there can not be two or more clipping paths (without making them a compound path), you CAN clip two or more objects underneath.

I’ve made sure the photos of the two patterns are on the same layer. I’ve also made sure they are placed underneath the clipping path: *Forever MSU.*

1. Select Object
2. Clipping Mask
3. Make.

I’ve made the images more visible by adding a black background
Release or Edit a Clipping Mask and Compound Path
To release or edit a clipping mask, you can either:

- Select Object > Clipping Mask > Edit/Release
- Or edit by isolating the clipping mask: double click it or find it on the Layers Panel

Release or edit a compound path:

- Select Object > Compound Path > Release
- Or edit by isolating the compound path: double click it or find it on the Layers Panel
Illustrator Tools

Every tool that has a black triangle in the corner of the button, has hidden tools associated with that tool. Click and hold the button and a pop up of all tools will appear.

1The above graphic is an extract from the Tools Panel overview from the Adobe Illustrator online help. Adobe Illustrator/Tools. 20/3/2013
NOTES
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