How to Create a Chalkboard Vector

Tutorials | May 19th, 2011 | 72 Comments

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In this tutorial I'll show you how to create a chalkboard vector with some gradients, a bristle brush, and some freebies from Vector Mill! The tutorial is relatively simple and can be applied to many other Illustrator projects. Moreover, you can use the Vector Mill freebies in other projects!
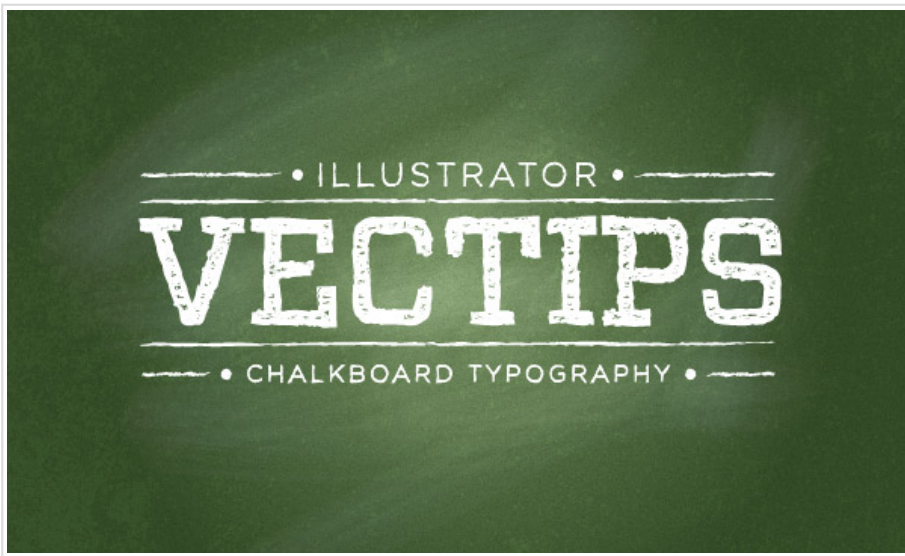
Final Image

Below is the final chalkboard vector we will be shooting for.

Popular Posts

Tutorial Details

- **Program:** Adobe Illustrator CS5
- **Difficulty:** Beginner / Intermediate
- **Topics Covered:** Grain Effect, Bristle Brush, Brushes
- **Estimated Completion Time:** 15-20 minutes
- **Required Files:** Vector-Mill-Sample.ai (compatibility CS4-CS5)

Step 1

Create a new document and create a rectangle with the Rectangle tool (M). This will be our chalkboard vector background.
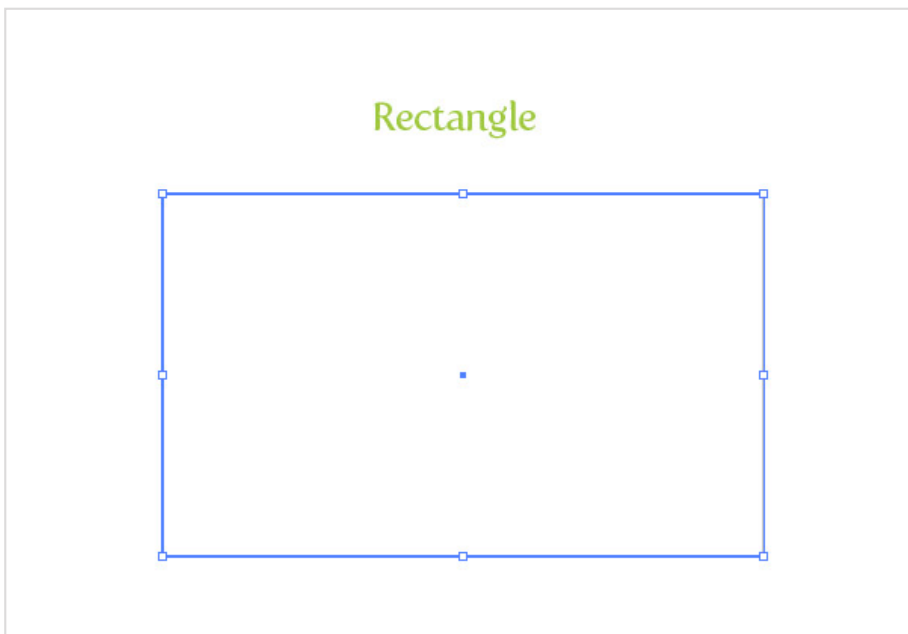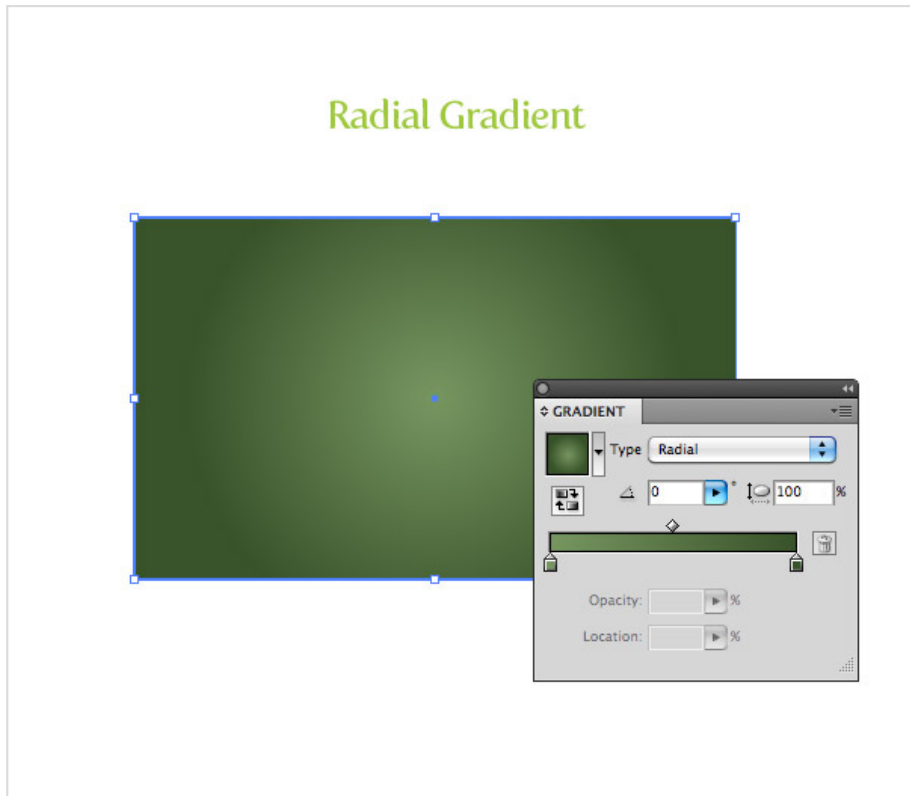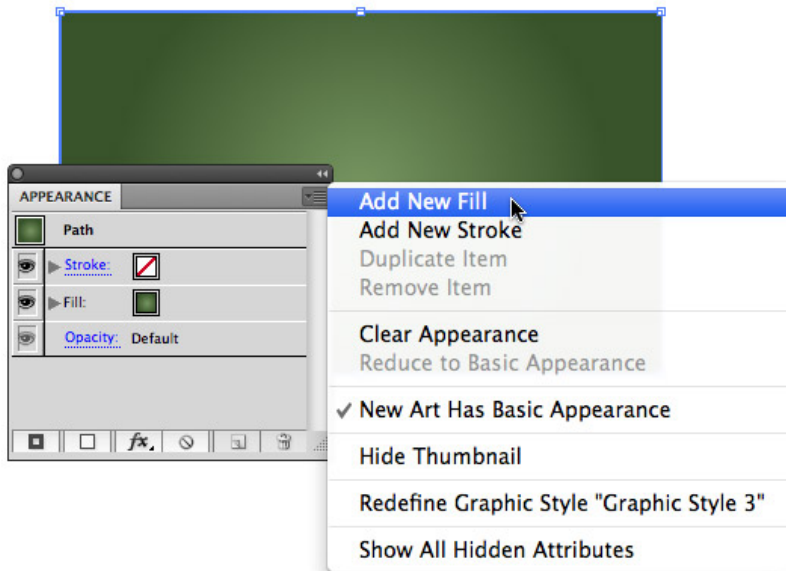

Step 2

Fill the new rectangle with a radial gradient, change the first color stop in the gradient to a green color, and the second color stop to a darker green color.

Step 3

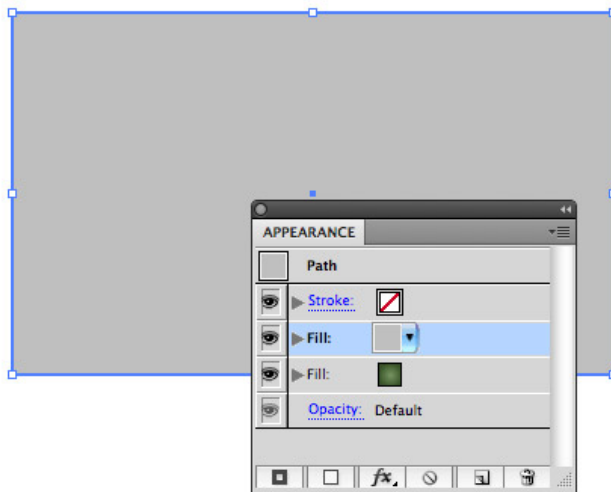With the rectangle still selected, open the pop-up menu of the Appearance panel, and choose Add New Fill. Fill the new item with a light gray.

New Fill

Fill Color

Step 4

With the new gray fill item selected in the Appearance panel, go Effect > Texture > Grain. In the Grain dialog, change the Intensity to 60, the Contrast to 50, and the Grain type to Sprinkles. Next, expand the gray

fill item in the Appearance panel, click the Opacity item, and change the Blending mode to Multiply.

If you are a vector purest, I created a set of Seamless Grain Textures in the Vector Mill February Crate that are 100% vector you should check out!

Grain

Multiply

Overlay
Soft Light
Hard Light

Difference
Exclusion

Hue
Saturation
Color
Luminosity

g   Knockout Group
k Define Knockout Shape
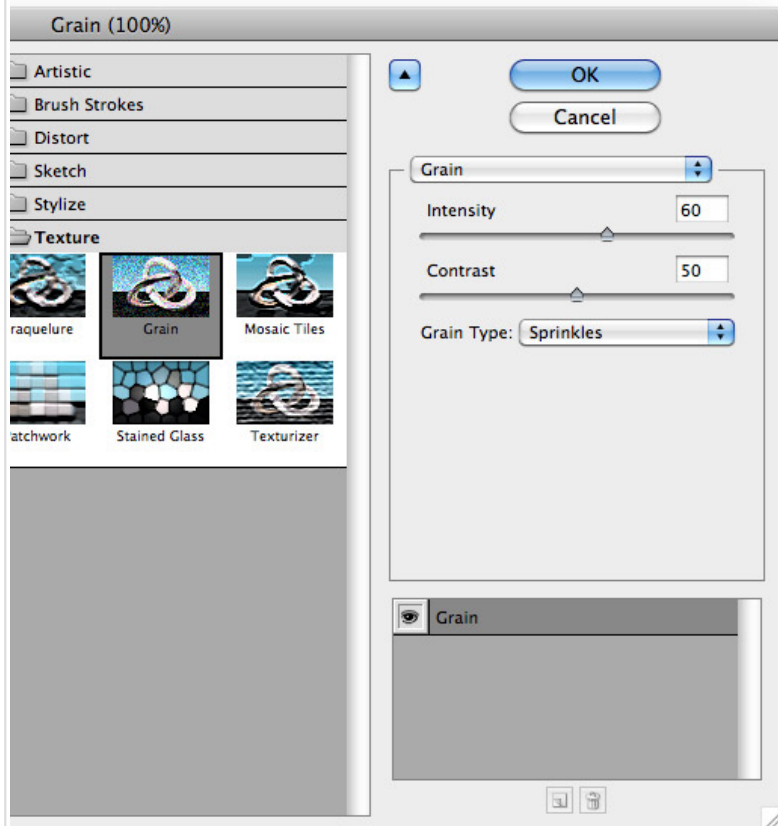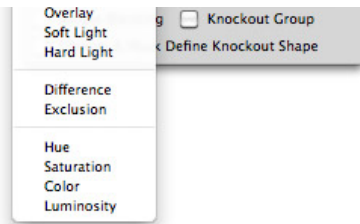
Step 5

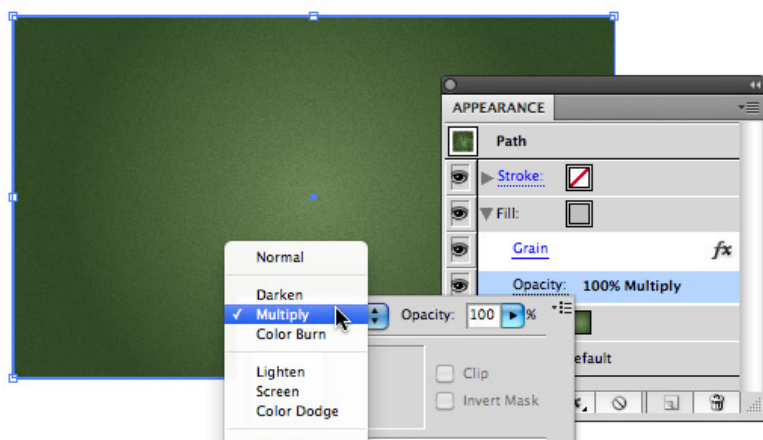For this step, you need to download the Vector-Mill-Sample.ai file.
This Concrete Texture we will be using comes from the February
Crate. Open the file, Copy (Command + C) the big concrete texture, and
Paste (Command + V) it over your green gradient. Fill the texture with
white, set the Blending mode to Overlay and set the Opacity to 10
from the Transparency panel.

Paste Texture

Fill Texture
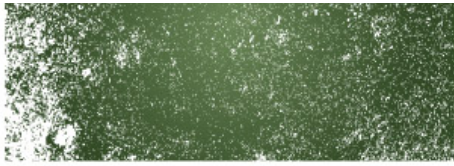
Blending Mode and Opacity
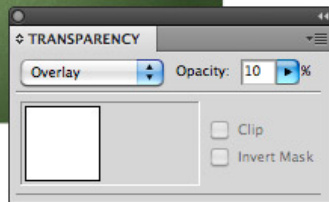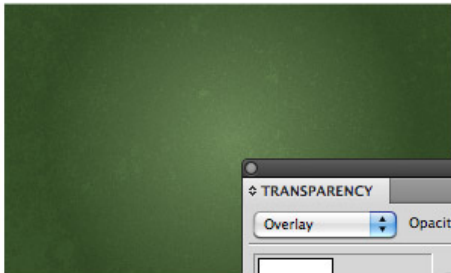
Step 6

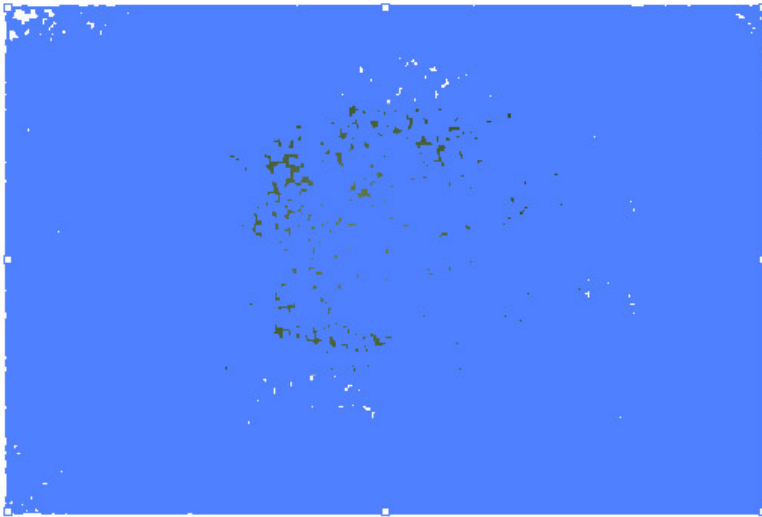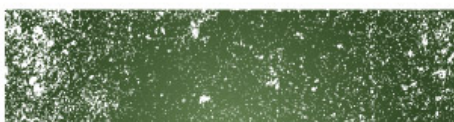We are almost done with the chalkboard vector background texture, but let's add a little more depth with a Bristle Brush. If you are still not on CS5 you won't be able to create this step like in the tutorial. As an alternative, you can use some of the watercolor art brushes I created a while back.

If you have CS5, start by pressing the New Brush button at the bottom of the Brush panel and choose New Bristle Brush from the dialog. In the Bristle Brush Options dialog, make these changes:

- **Type** = Round Fan
- **Size** = 10 mm
- **Bristle Length** = 150

- **Bristle Density** = 75
- **Bristle Thickness** = 50
- **Paint Opacity** = 15
- **Stiffness** = 100

Once you have these settings, select your Paintbrush tool (B) and draw some erratic overlapping paths on the chalkboard vector. That should do it for the background. Now onto the text!
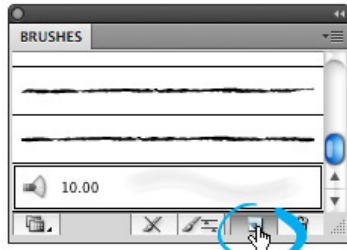
New Brush

Bristle Brush
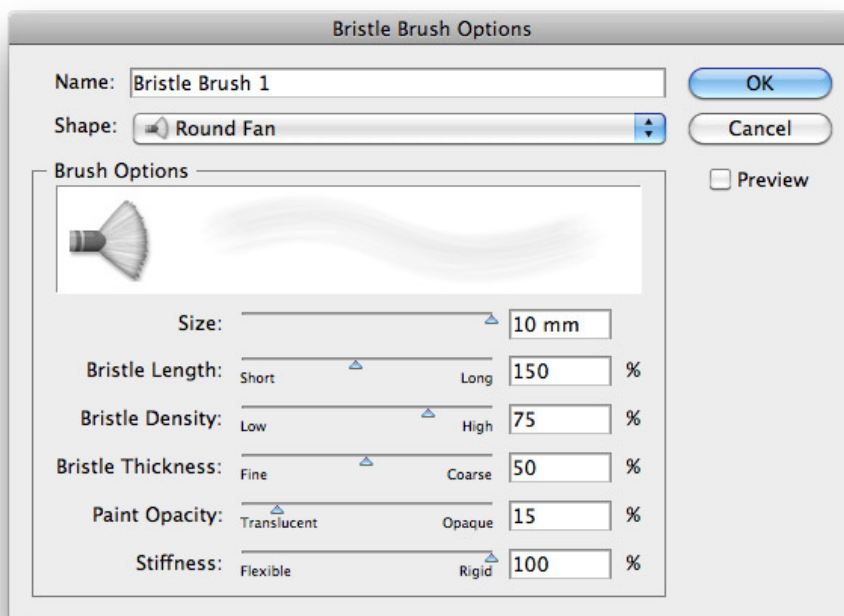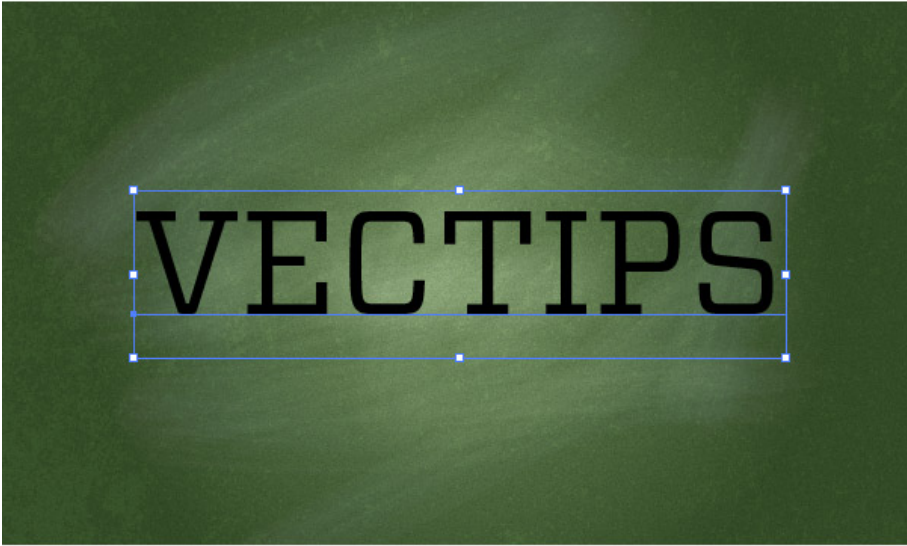
Paintbrush tool (B)
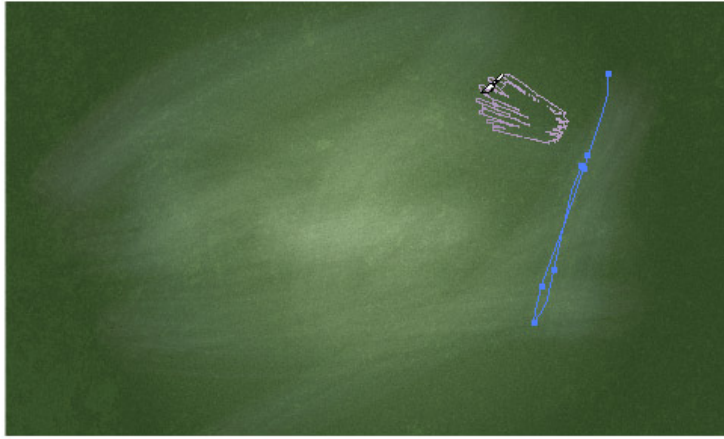
Step 7

With the Type tool (T), type out some text and choose a font. I'm using Vitesse Book for my text, but you can use whatever. After you have your text, remove the fill and stroke color. This makes it easier to use Appearance panel for the following steps.

Type Tool (T)

No Fill or Stroke
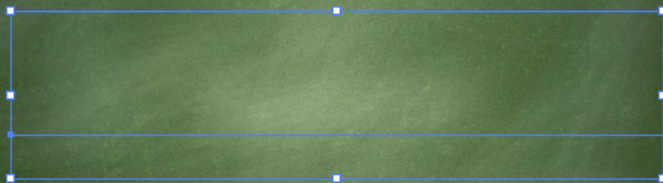
Step 8

From the pop-up menu of the Appearance panel, choose Add New Stroke and change the stroke color to white.

New Stroke
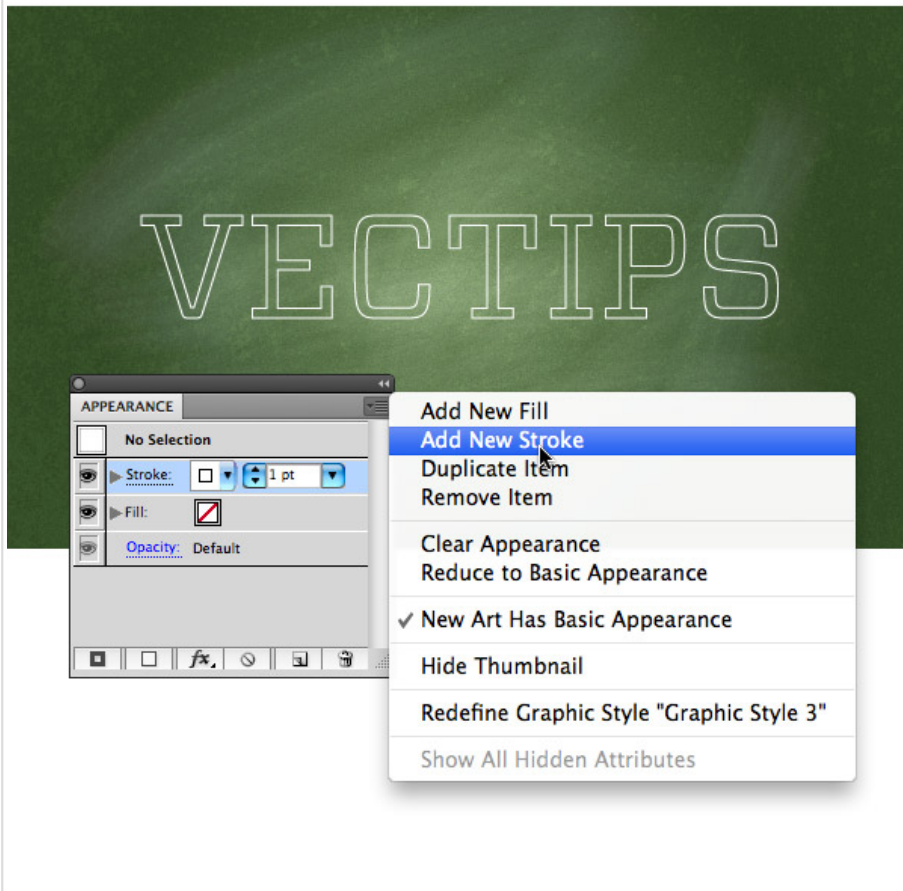
Step 9

Now hop over to the Vector-Mill-Sample.ai file again and select the brushes. These brushes are part of the March Crate's Conté Crayon Brush set. Copy both brushes and paste them into your document. They now should be available in the Brushes panel. With your new white stroke item selected, choose the VM-Conté-01-Closed brush. To make it look a little thicker, change the stroke weight to 2 pt.

Apply Brush
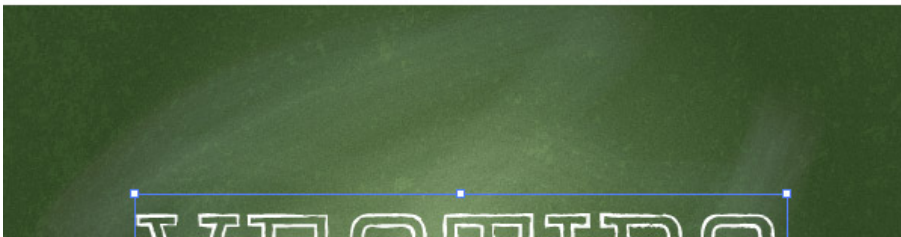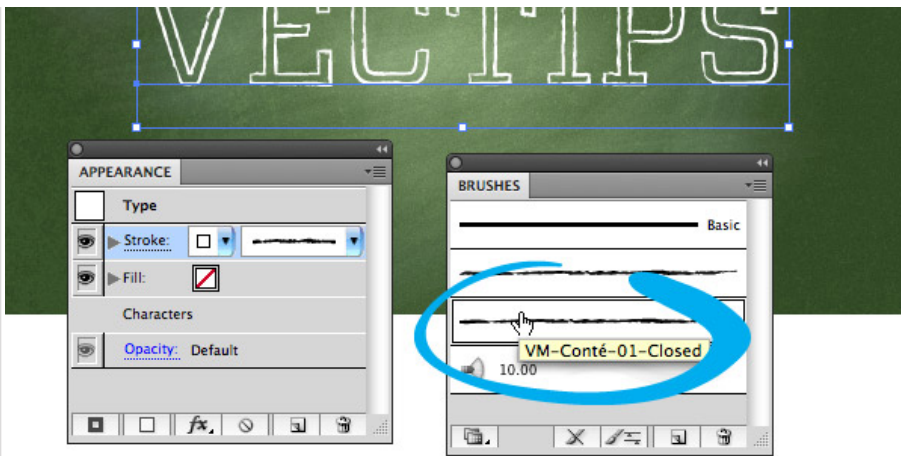
Stroke Weight
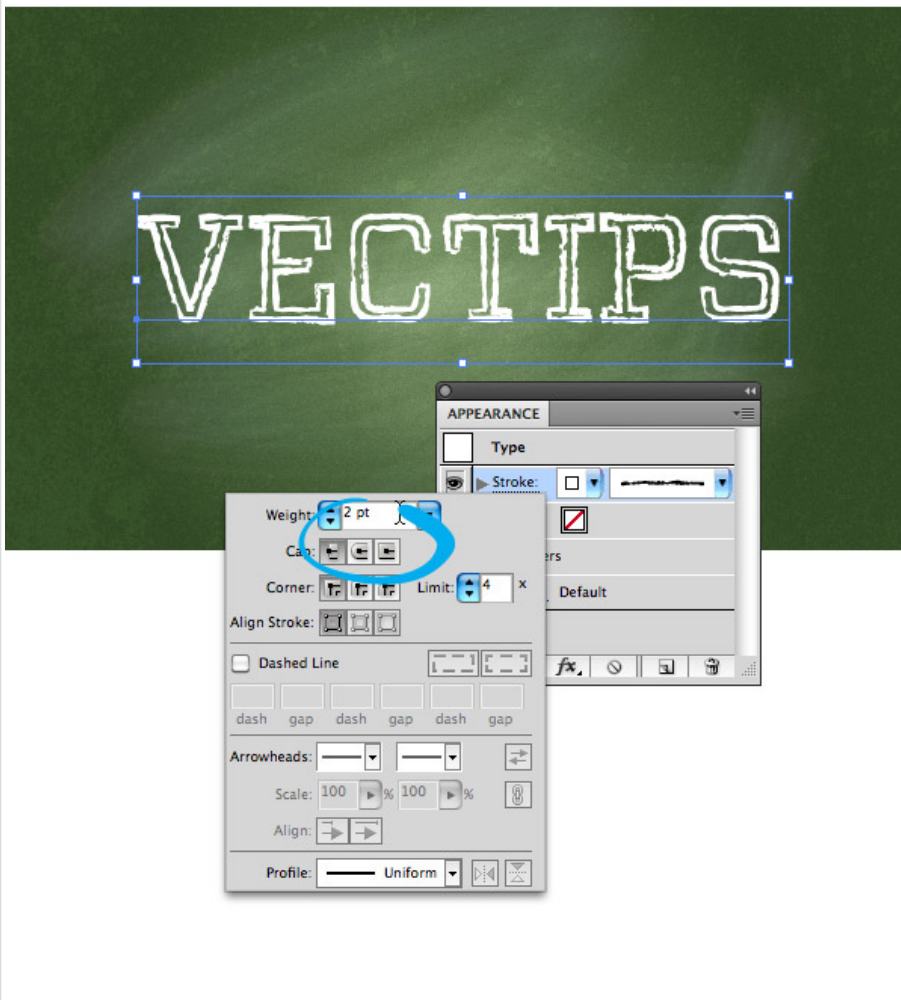
Step 10

For the fill of the text on this chalkboard vector, we need the last freebie in the Vector-Mill-Sample.ai file. This one is from the March

Crate and is part of a Seamless Watercolor Paper Texture set. Copy the rectangle filled with the pattern from the freebie document to your document. Note: the rectangle has a couple of fills associated with it just so you can see the seamless pattern. The pattern swatch will automatically copy into your Swatches panel once you paste the rectangle shape into your document. So right after you copy it into your doc, you can delete it.

With your text selected, choose the VM-WC-Paper-Seamless-Rev-White pattern swatch for the empty fill item in the Appearance panel.

Final Image

That is pretty much it for this chalkboard vector! Pretty easy, right? You can add more text, strokes, and other elements to your chalkboard vector like I did in the final image. I created the lines with the Line Tool (\), applied the VM-Conté-01-Open brush to them, and adjusted

the stroke weight for the other text.
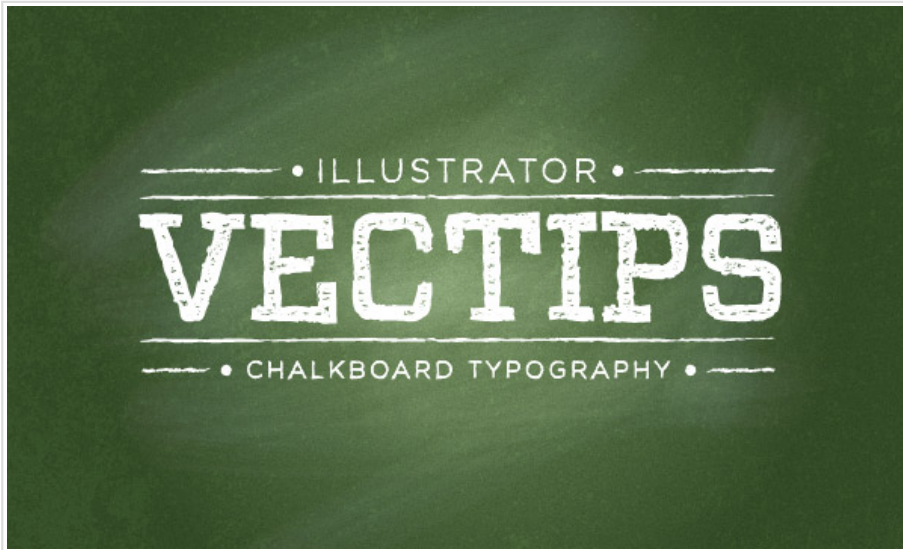
These icons link to social bookmarking sites where readers can share and discover new web pages.

-
-
-
-
-
-
- TwitThis

← Did You Know: Symbol Layers

Weekly Vector Inspiration #122 →
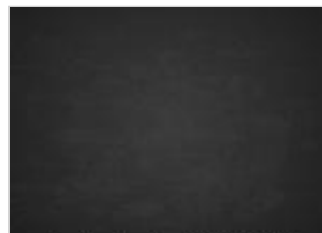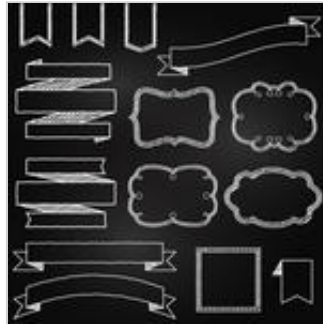
72 thoughts on "How to Create a Chalkboard Vector"

Josh Holloran says:

May 19, 2011 at 12:41 pm

Great Tut Ryan. I've never messed too much with custom brushes in Illustrator. This inspires me to do so. Awesome chalkboard background that doesn't look "vectory" at all…smooth and photoshop-like with scalability. Nice work.

Reply

Federico says:

May 19, 2011 at 5:23 pm

Excelente! Felicitaciones

Reply

Joachim says:

May 20, 2011 at 3:07 am

Very nice tutorial. It sure will come in handy.

Reply

alison says:

May 21, 2011 at 2:07 am

i couldn't finish it..

Reply

Christa says:

August 24, 2011 at 8:39 am

Me either. I had trouble applying the conte brush to the stroke.

Reply

Small Business Logo Design says:
May 27, 2011 at 6:39 pm

Nice tutorial. It will surely help in logo designing. 😃

Reply

Pingback: Illustrator Tutorials Roundup – May 2011 | Vectorious.net Blog

OgdenRoyal says:
June 6, 2011 at 6:45 am

Great tutorials as usual, The vectormill sample crashes Illustrator though.

Reply

Rype says:
June 8, 2011 at 11:58 am

Yikes! Which sample was it and what version of Illustrator are you on?

Reply

Molly says:
May 16, 2013 at 1:53 am

Happens to me to! For me it was the Vector Mill sample that you linked in step 5. I have Illustrator CS6 version 16.0.0

Reply

Becky says:
June 17, 2011 at 1:01 pm

Thanks for the great tutorials! Your website has some of my favorite tutorials. Would you consider making a tutorial on how to create a logo in the style of the "vector mill" logo that you have? You know- the old world style effect that your logo has? It's so neat! And I'm sure others like it too!

Reply

Zander says:
June 20, 2011 at 6:09 pm

This is awesome! It looks as though the link to the sample files is dead, and it'd be really awesome to give your tools a try. Thanks!

Reply

zinc says:
June 22, 2011 at 2:23 am

It seems that the link to the free ai is broken. Can you supply a new one please?

Reply

Stephen says:
June 22, 2011 at 10:03 am

The Vector-Mill-Sample.ai file link is no longer working. Is it not available anymore?

Reply

Lucas del Río says:
June 27, 2011 at 10:00 am

This is great! so creative, the use of every tool aiming a great result. I think the use of the brush was very cleaver!

Reply

DeGroup says:
July 1, 2011 at 8:12 am

This is awesome!!!

Reply

Rui says:
July 14, 2011 at 7:11 pm

I have problem with step 6. Since I'm using CS3, so need to download water colour artbrush. But when I fill white colour, the brush will turn invisible. So it's impossible for me to get the same

result as in Step 6: Paintbrush tool (B). Any idea?

Reply

Andrea says:
March 10, 2013 at 6:59 am

I have the same problem!

Reply

Patrick says:
July 21, 2011 at 12:51 am

I like this tutorial. The chalkboard text styling, make me have a feel like back to school study.

Reply

Designerist says:
July 24, 2011 at 3:17 am

Thanks a lot for this great tutorial!

Reply

Tarcila says:
July 28, 2011 at 11:04 am

Very good!

Reply

Patrick says:
August 1, 2011 at 6:42 am

WOW... i love this tut! very nice outcome dude!

Reply

RooDik says:
August 2, 2011 at 10:09 pm

Nice tutorial, it's just what I needed. Thanks man !

Reply

Meghan says:
August 23, 2011 at 11:16 am
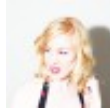
Beautiful! Thanks so much!

Reply

David says:
September 30, 2011 at 10:27 am

Ended up coming out perfectly, thanks!

Reply

Ally says:
October 8, 2011 at 7:17 pm

Thanks Ryan, another great tute. That bristle brush effect is just amazing!

Reply

Jay says:
October 16, 2011 at 12:21 am
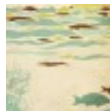
Awesome lesson.
A bit difficult, but manageable....

Reply

Anya says:
November 14, 2011 at 9:31 am

Thank you for a great tutorial. It is very inspiring and well explained! Good job!

Reply

Jc says:
November 26, 2011 at 6:05 pm

greatly done. nice. love it. thanks kuya Ryan=)

Reply

Jon says:
November 27, 2011 at 1:05 pm

This is a great tutorial; thanks! The file size is quite large when it's all completed. Does anyone know of a good strategy to reduce the file size?

Reply

Simone says:
December 8, 2011 at 9:49 am
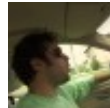
Very useful! But link http://v.ecti.ps/6tSc is broken, can you give a new one?

Thanks a lot

Reply

Pingback: 50 Excellent Text Effects Tutorials In Adobe Illustrator

eazy-e says:
February 25, 2012 at 11:13 am

that appearance panel bit blew my mind! i didnt know you can simply reference a file as a fill. hot stuff.

Reply

Jekgerr says:
March 9, 2012 at 12:48 am

Joss...

Simple n Perfect

Reply

Anthony says:
April 22, 2012 at 9:24 pm

Thank you for sharing~~This is great!

Reply

Jasmine says:

April 27, 2012 at 2:30 am

How do you change the colour of the gradient?

Reply

Ben says:

May 4, 2012 at 6:06 am

Fried my graphics card and deleted what I was working on. DO
NOT ATTEMPT.

Reply

Kemp says:

June 12, 2012 at 6:08 pm

Thanks！ I learn a lot from here！

Reply

April says:

June 14, 2012 at 12:32 pm

What if I need the white chalk to be red?

Reply

Max says:

June 19, 2012 at 1:59 am
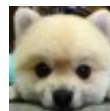
Excelente!Thank you for sharing! I learn a lot from here！

Reply

Corrina says:

June 28, 2012 at 5:50 am

This was awesome! It was great all the way up until the end, I
couldn't import the pattern to apply to the text fill. Great stuff,
though- thanks for sharing!

Reply

agungredsman says:

July 21, 2012 at 12:51 am

nice tutorial! thank you mate!

Reply

Gregoirski says:

October 16, 2012 at 7:59 am

what a ride, from crash through crappy outline messing, to troubles with the pattern fill, till it all matches together ... that great feeling that you've learned something i've wanted to learn for a long time ! thx ;)

Reply

sara says:

October 16, 2012 at 8:14 pm

I am new to Illustrator...
On step 5, how exactly do you fill the texture to white? I have managed to execute all of the steps up until this point.

Reply

wEn says:

January 2, 2013 at 9:01 am

This was a great tutorial! Thanks!!!

Reply

Taha Algherbawy says:

January 15, 2013 at 12:30 am

Great.

Reply

Shari says:

January 16, 2013 at 11:13 am

Thanks SOOOOO much!

Reply

Jen Bee says:
February 28, 2013 at 1:00 pm

Thanks so much for this great tutorial. Steps 8-10 didn't go exactly the same but I was able to get it to work out fine. Now I have a great chalkboard!

Reply

Ibrar says:
April 2, 2013 at 12:04 pm

This is the second time I have been unable to finish tutorials from this website and I not going to bother next time. Either there is not enough information between steps or in this case completely different end products.

The brush effect is not even the same and the grain like effect is pixelated as hell. I just shut down it and didn't bother proceeding any further. That's half an hour I won't get back again.

Camtasia studio man!!!!!!!!!!!!! Get it!

Reply

Wap Kid says:
May 21, 2013 at 4:25 am

Cool Tutorial

Plz also tell me about the chapter wise tutorial on Illustrator

thx

Reply

Pingback: Web Design – Week 3 | jennifermitchellblog

Lani says:
August 28, 2013 at 2:06 am

I like. It worked great for me and I like how easy you made it to grab the brushes and fill by copying from the .ai sample. Thx.

Reply

Javier says:
August 28, 2013 at 9:19 am

I'm stuck in Step 5. I don;t know how to perform the blending mode action. I m using AI CS5 and I'm trying to create a chalkboard background at 11″ x 17″ for my magazine (cover spread).

Reply

Sam says:
September 5, 2013 at 12:46 pm

Need to explain how to apply the brushes to the stroke of the text. This tutorial is pointless without instructions for each step. You got lazy and decided to skip over it.

Reply

Lukas says:
October 17, 2013 at 3:37 am

Great tutorial, thanks!

Reply

The Gambling Paradise says:
January 15, 2014 at 11:14 pm

I think everything posted made a bunch of sense. But, what about this?

suppose you were to create a awesome post title?
I mean, I don't want to tell you how to run your website, but what if you added a post title
to possibly get people's attention? I mean Create a
Chalkboard Type Treatment | Vectips is kinda boring. You ought to glance at Yahoo's front page and note how they
create news titles to get people to click. You might add a video or a pic or two to grab readers interested about
everything've got to say. In my opinion, it would make your posts a little livelier.

Reply

Sands says:

January 27, 2014 at 8:31 am

Thanks for that recommendation! We'll certainly take that into consideration for titles of our future tutorials.

Reply

Alexis nilo la hoz says:

January 17, 2014 at 11:09 am

This is a great tutorial, one can create many awsome things out of it. Thank you very much.

Reply

Jonny says:

January 17, 2014 at 11:46 am

Awesome! thanks, great tutorial, and the freebie file was an amazing help.

Reply

Tia says:

February 2, 2014 at 2:44 pm

Is there a link that works for the file? I'd really love to finish with this tut!

Reply

Gordon says:

February 10, 2014 at 8:28 am

Once you've tried this, I'm sure you'll realise that although it looks pretty cool, you could go to your local hardware store, buy some chalkboard paint, paint a wall in your house/apartment (or even just a big piece of wood you can put aside), and experiment with the REAL THING. Nothing beats the old-school approach. It'll look better, 10 times out of 10.

Reply

naruto mobile games says:

April 11, 2014 at 6:43 am

Wow, this article is good, my younger sister is analyzing these things, so I am going to convey to her.

Reply

Pingback: DIY Party Invitations in Illustrator | beets & okra
Pingback: Free Chalkboard Fonts and Resources
Pingback: Beautiful Text Effect Tutorials (25 Tutorials) | Inspire Arena

Anita says:

August 17, 2014 at 4:50 pm

Turned out great! Text remains editable. Saved the valuable brushes and fill pattern.

Reply

Pingback: Clock Design | BAMA241
Pingback: Illustratorを使ったすごいテキストエフェクトのチュートリアル100個まとめ | Web制作ツールナビ

John Knutson says:

November 24, 2014 at 6:21 pm

lettering effect worked out great, thanks!

Reply

Pingback: Nápis kriedou – ako na to? | Net Secrets

panchenen says:

April 28, 2015 at 1:26 pm

Is there anyway to create a new, or change the colour of the stroke and fill that you created, if for example I wanted a blackboard with several colours of chalk on it?

Thanks for any advise

Reply

Alex says:

June 22, 2015 at 4:38 pm

Easy to follow. Definitely one of the best ai tutorials I've done!

The freebie package was really nice and not a scary download. Thank you for sharing!

Reply

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Name *

Email *

Website

Comment

You may use these HTML tags and attributes: `<a href="" title=""> <abbr title=""> <acronym title=""> <b> <blockquote cite=""> <cite> <code> <del datetime=""> <em> <i> <q cite=""> <strike> <strong>`

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