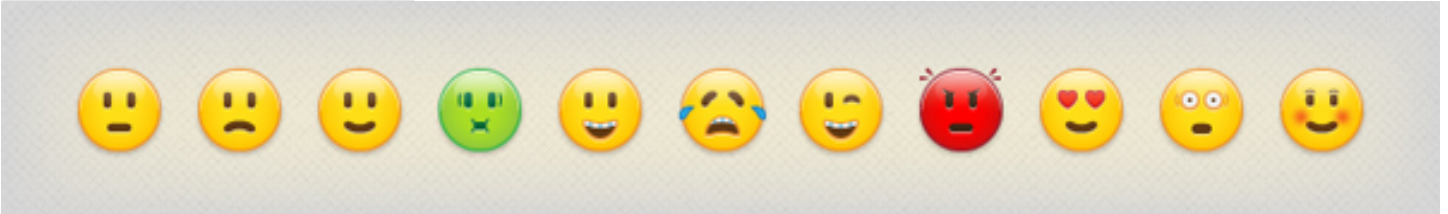


How to Create a Nice Emoticons Icon Set aka “Emojis”

by [Andrei Marius](#) 2011 *Revised* by Jenn Bible 2016

Difficulty:Intermediate Length:Medium

Icon DesignVectorAdobe Illustrator

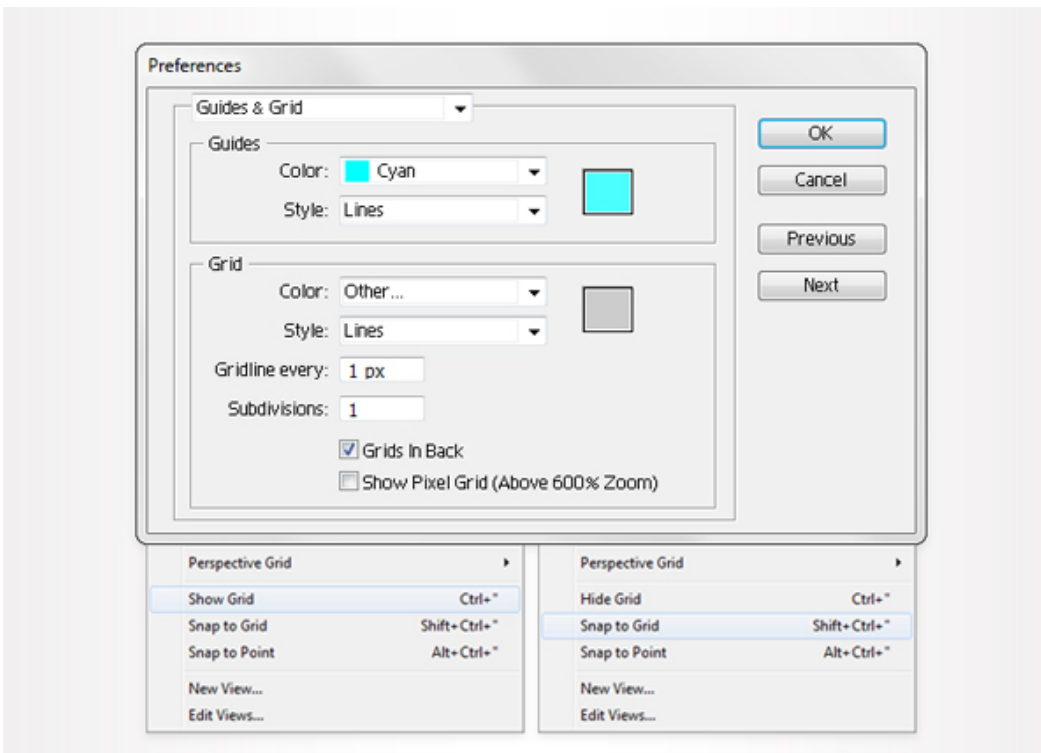


In the following tutorial you will learn to **create an attractive emoticons icon set**. Learn an **easy to follow workflow** for creating each of these little emotional character faces in Adobe Illustrator.

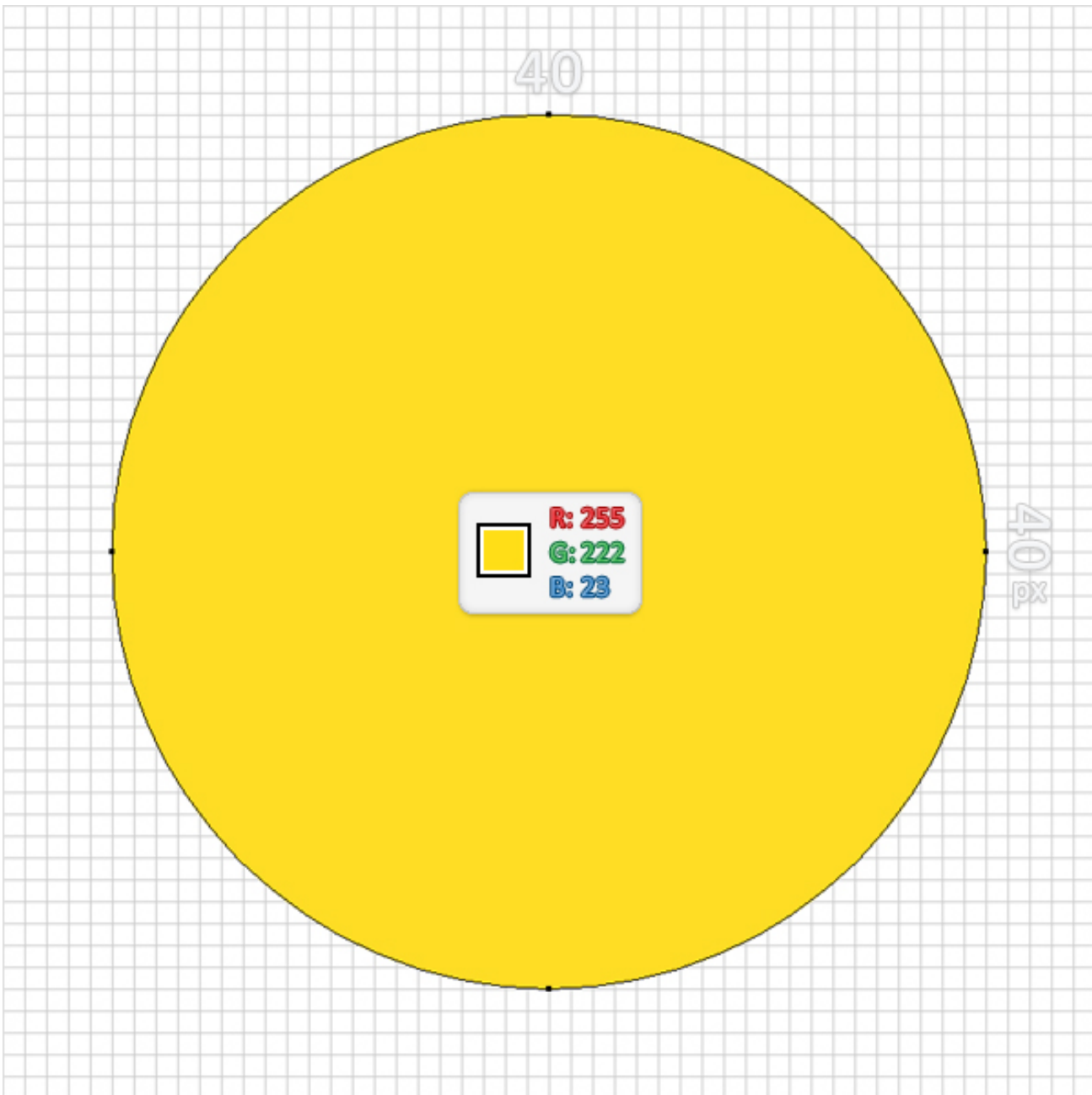
Step 1

Create a 60px by 60px, RGB document. First, turn on the Grid (View > Grid) and the Snap to Grid (View > Snap to Grid). Next, you'll need a grid every 1px. Go to Edit > Preferences > Guides & Grid, enter 1 in the Gridline every box and 1 in the Subdivisions box.

You can also open the Info panel (Window > Info) for a live preview with the size and position of your shapes. Do not forget to **replace the unit of measurement to pixels** from Edit > Preferences > Unit > General. All these options will significantly increase your work speed.



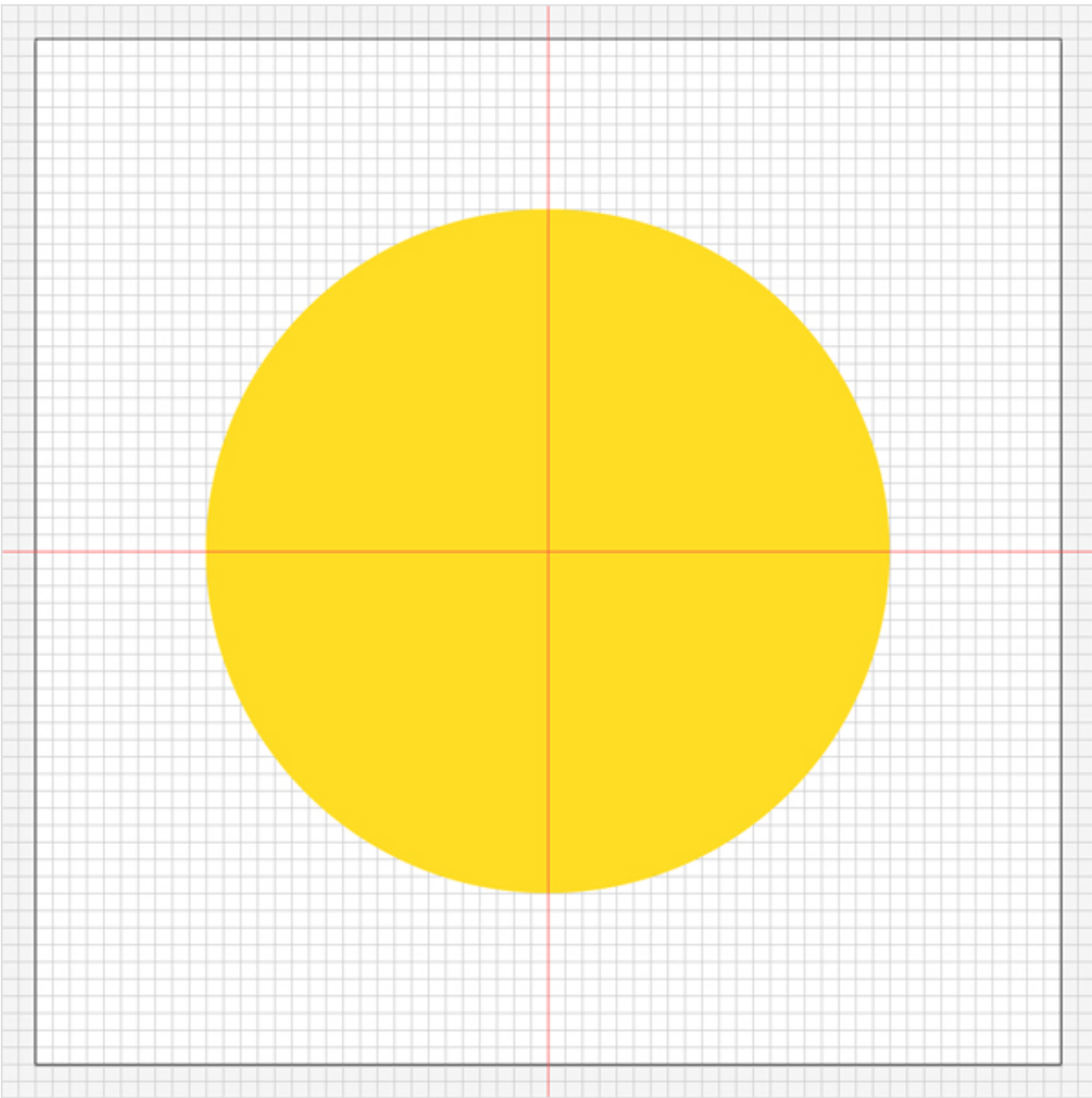
Step 2: Pick the Ellipse Tool (L), create a 40 by 40px shape and fill it with R=255, G=222, B=23.



Step 3

Select the shape created in the previous step and make sure that it's placed in the middle of your artboard.

Enable the Rulers (Command + R) **and the Guides** (View > Guides > Show Guides), then, **drag a vertical and a horizontal guide as shown** in the following image.



Step 4

Disable the Snap to Grid (view > snap to grid), then go to Edit > Preferences > General and enter 0.5 in the Keyboard Increment box. **Reselect the yellow circle and make two copies in front** (Command + C > Command + F > Command + F). Select the top copy and hit the down arrow once (to move it 0.5px down). Reselect both copies and click on the **Minus Front button from the Pathfinder panel**. Fill the resulting shape with white.

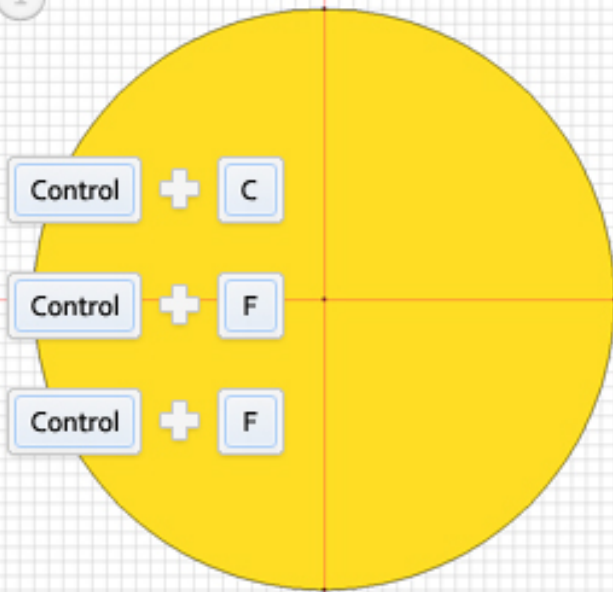
General

Keyboard Increment: 0.5 px

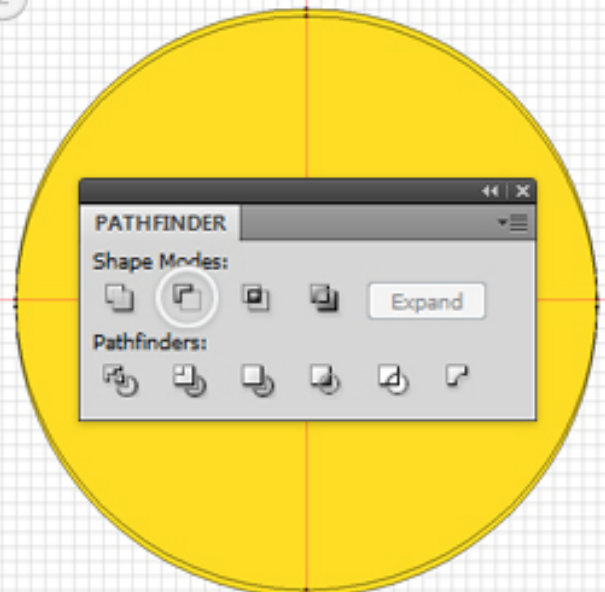
Constrain Angle: 0 °

Corner Radius: 12 px

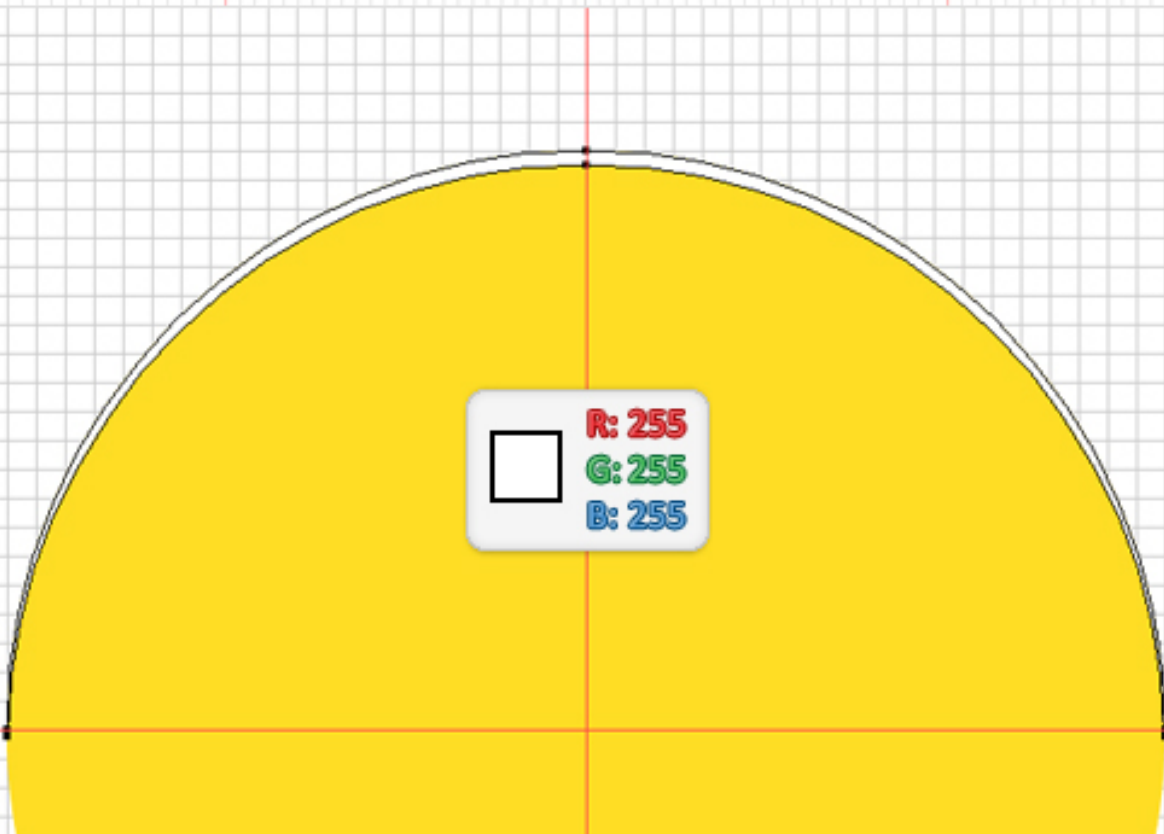
1



2



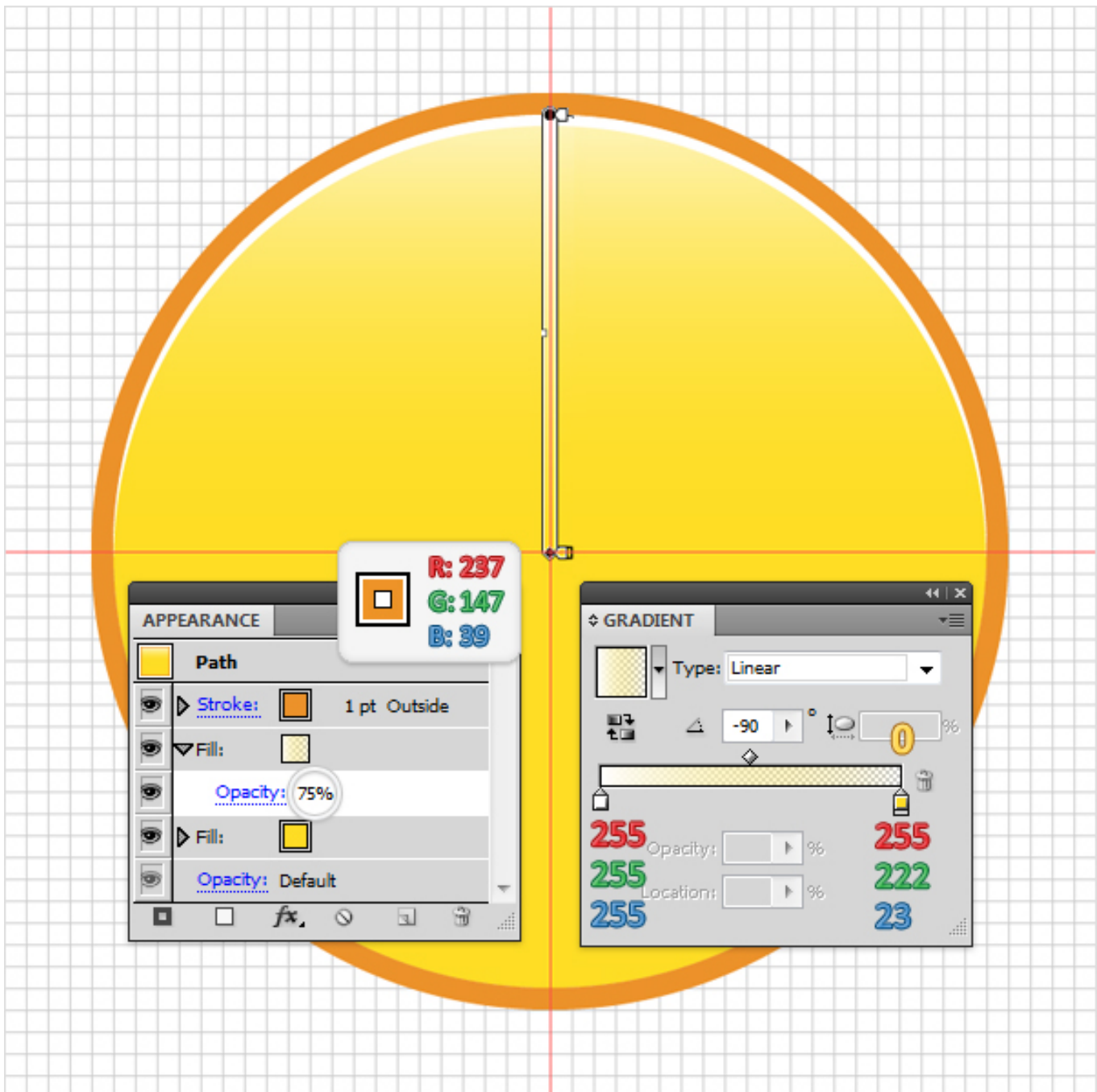
3



Step 5

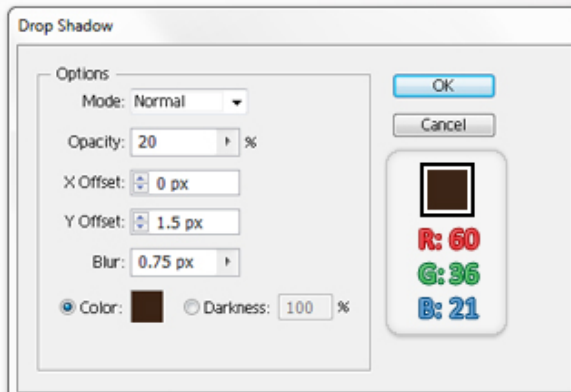
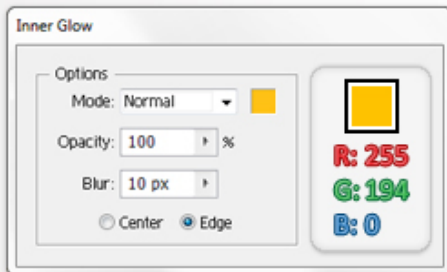
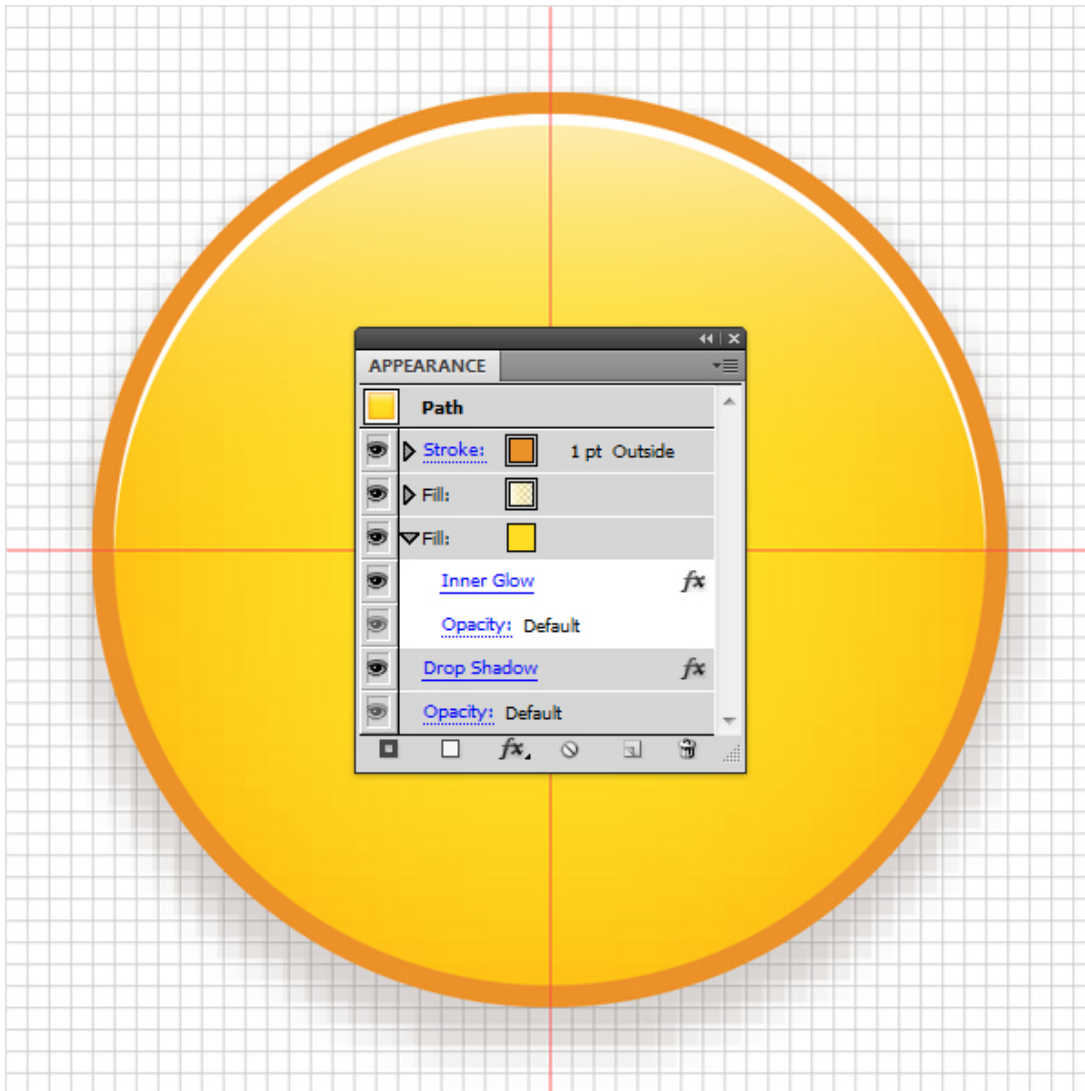
Re-enable the Snap to Grid. Reselect the yellow circle and go to the Appearance panel. Select the existing fill and click on the Duplicate Selected Item button located in the bottom of the Appearance panel. Obviously, this will create a copy of the selected fill. Select this new fill, lower its Opacity to 75% and fill it with the linear gradient shown in the following image.

Pay attention to the gradient image. The yellow "0" stands for opacity percentage. This means that you need to select the gradient slider and lower its opacity to 0%. Keep focusing on this yellow circle. Reselect it and **add a simple stroke.** Make it 1pt wide, align it to outside and set its color to R=237, G=147, B=39 or any color that works for your idea.



Step 6

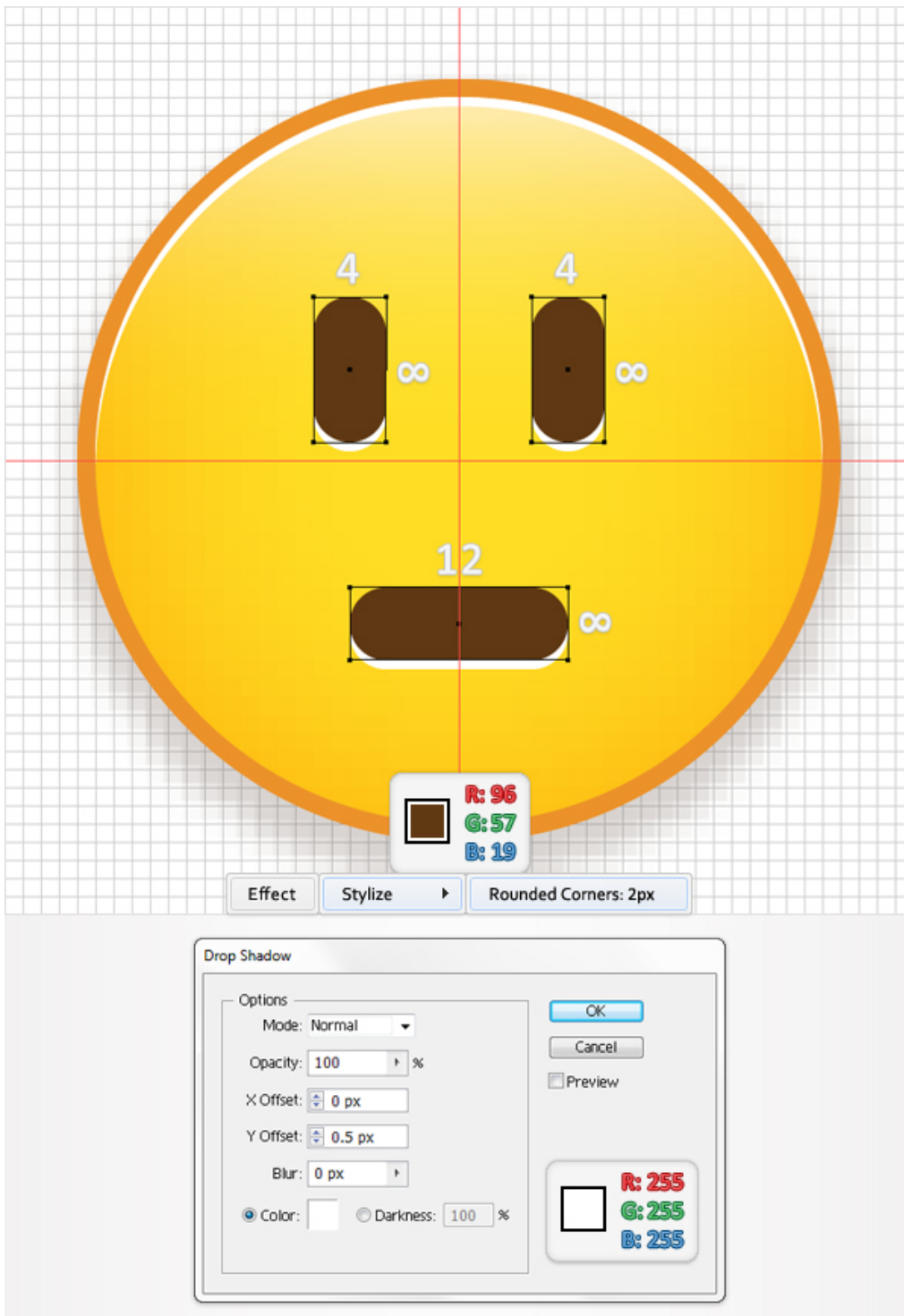
Reselect the shape edited in the previous step. Go to the **Appearance panel**, select the yellow fill and go to **Effect Stylize > Inner Glow**. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then go to **Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow**. Again, enter the data shown below and click OK. In the end your shape should look like the following image. This will be the face shape that you will use for most of the emoticons.



Step 7

Now, let's **add a mood for this face**. First, **re-enable the Snap to Grid**, then select the Rectangle Tool (M). **Create two 4 by 8px shapes and a 12 by 8px shape**, then place them as shown.

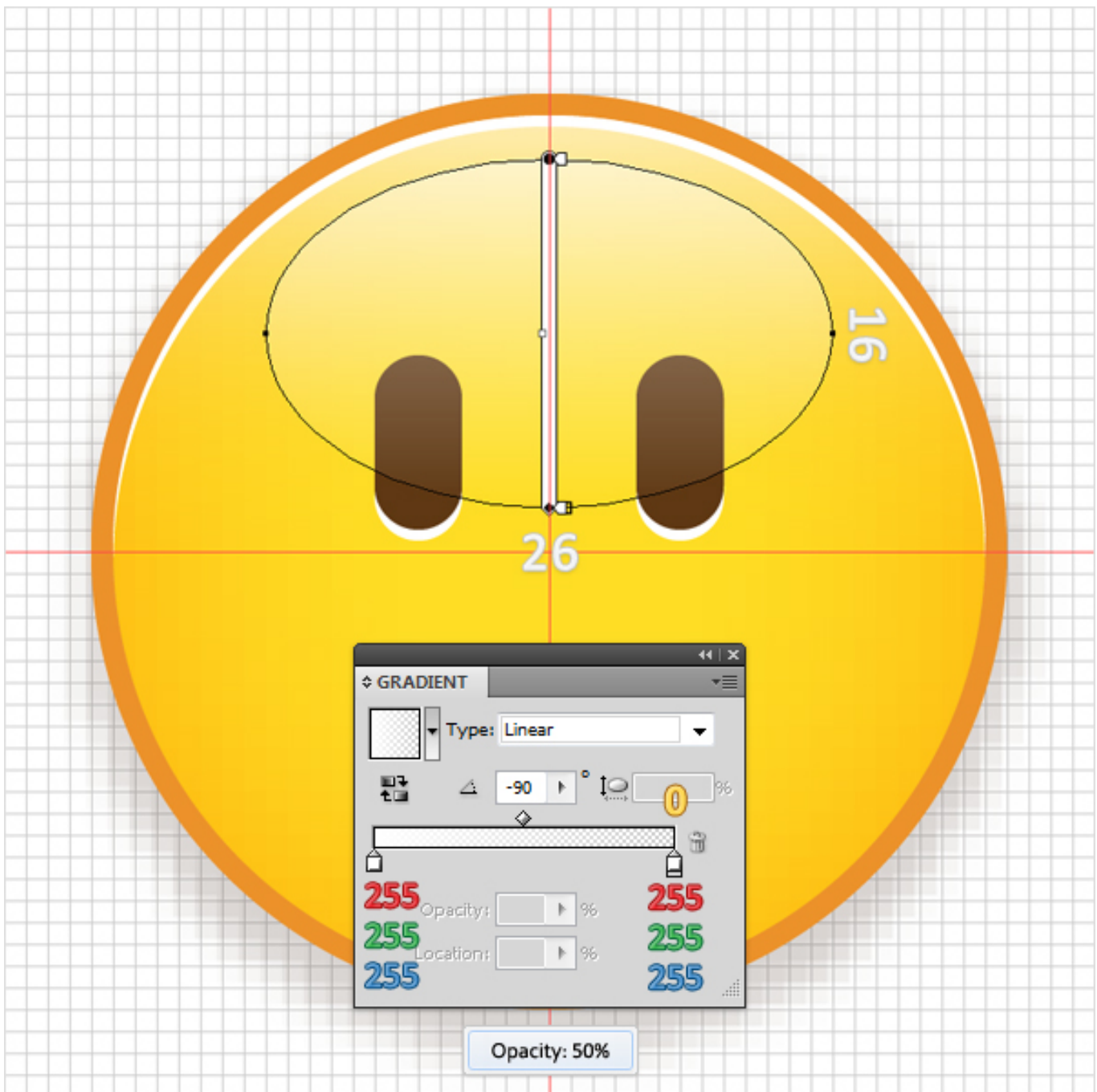
The Snap to Grid and the Guides will ease your work. Fill them all with R=96, G=57, B=19, then go to Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners. Enter a 2px radius, click OK, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below and click OK.



Step 8

Pick the Ellipse Tool (L), create a 26 by 16px shape and place it as shown. Fill it with the linear gradient shown below, then lower its Opacity to 50%. Now, let's organize the existing shapes.

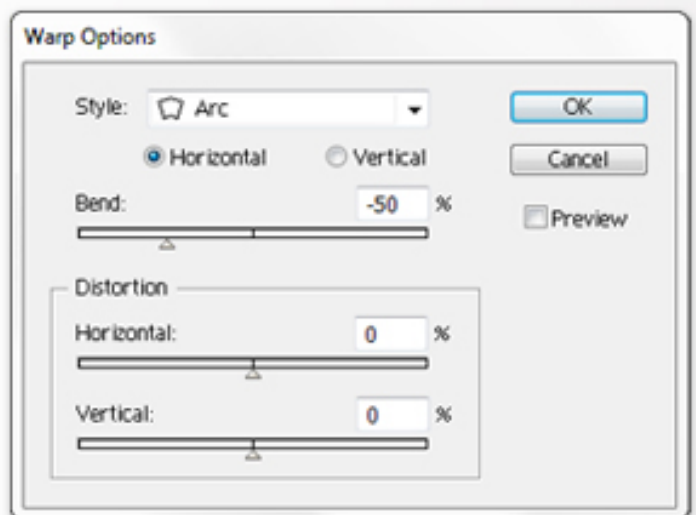
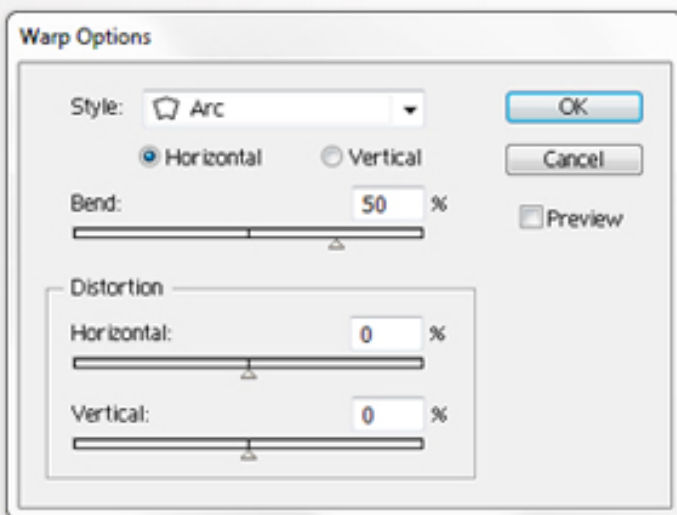
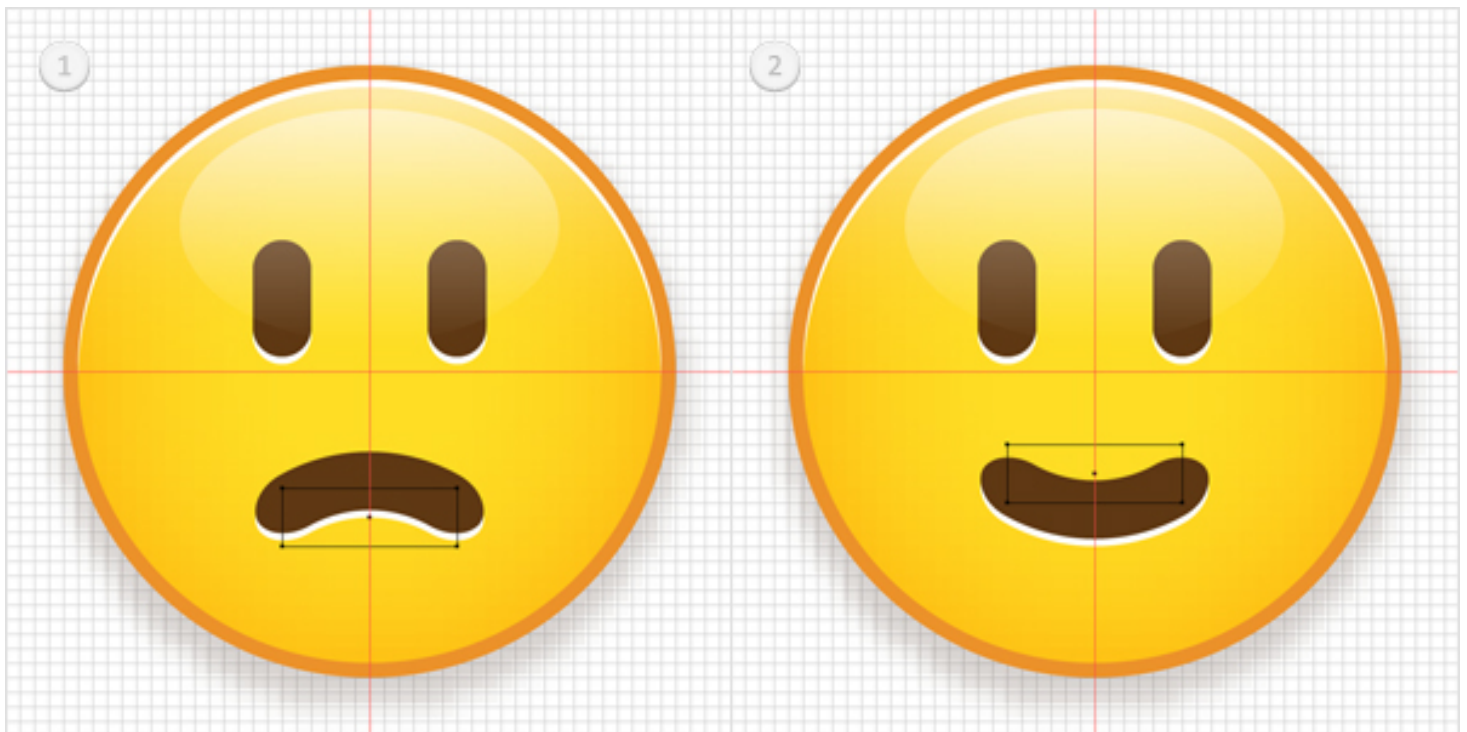
Go to the Layers panel, select the existing layer and click on the **Create New Sublayer** button from the bottom of the Layers panel. Select all the shapes created so far and move them inside this new sublayer. Double-click on this sublayer and name it "Not Amused." Now your first emoticon is complete



Step 9

Select the sublayer created in the previous step and **make a copy in front**. Focus on this new sublayer, **select the mouth shape** and go to **Effect > Warp > Arc**. Enter the data shown below image #1 and click OK.

Name this second sublayer "Sad" and duplicate it. **Select the mouth shape from this new sublayer**, then go to the **Appearance panel** and open the existing **Warp effect**. **Drag the Bend slider to -50%**, then click OK. **Name this third sublayer "Happy."**

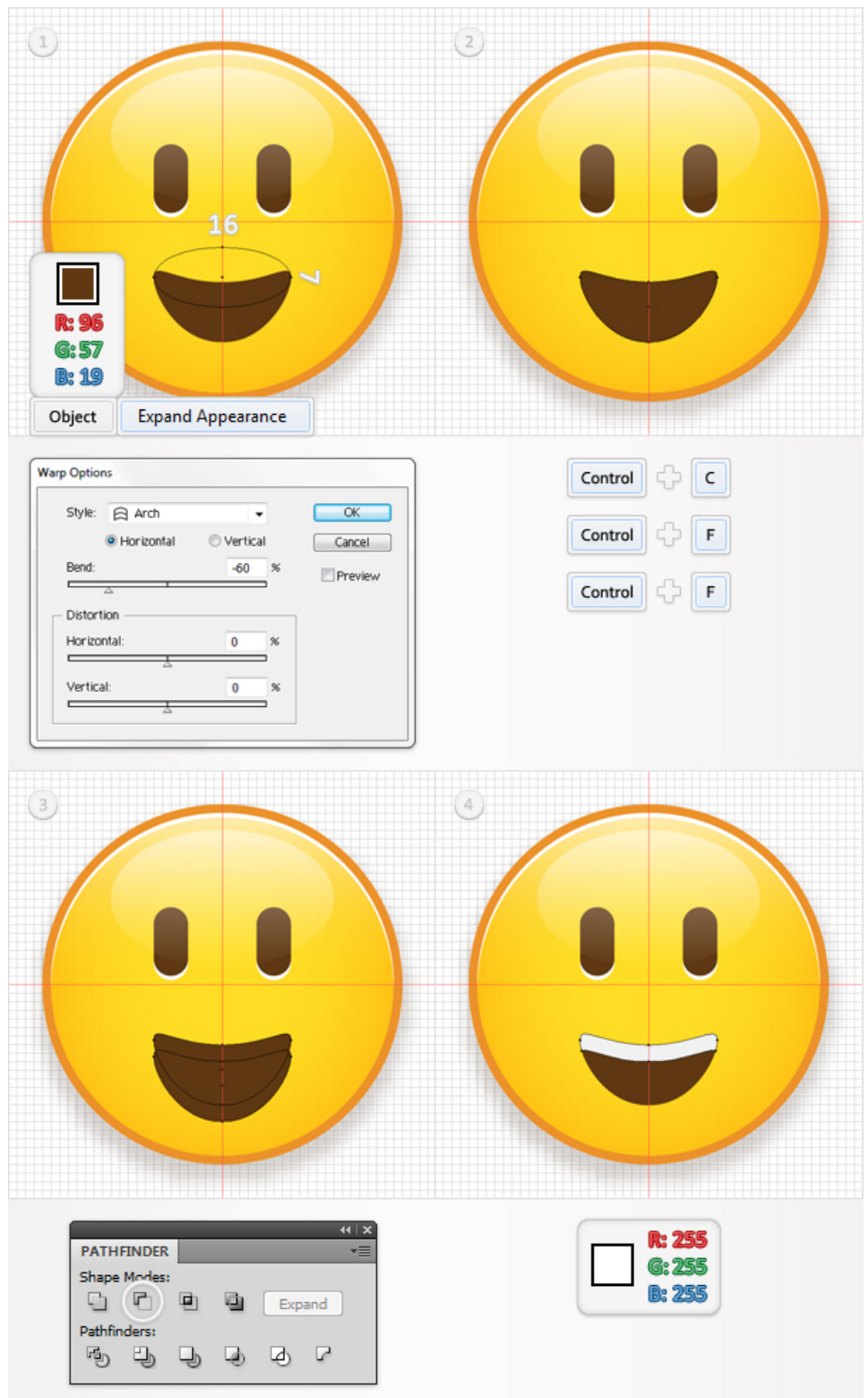


3 Done!!!

Step 10

Select the "Happy" sublayer and make a copy in front. Let's focus on this fresh sublayer. First, rename it "Grin," then select the exiting mouth shape and delete it. Pick the Ellipse Tool (L), create a 16 by 7px shape and place it as shown in the first image. Fill it with R=96, G=57, B=19. Then go to Effect > Warp > Arch. Enter the data shown to the right, click OK, then go to Object > Expand Appearance.

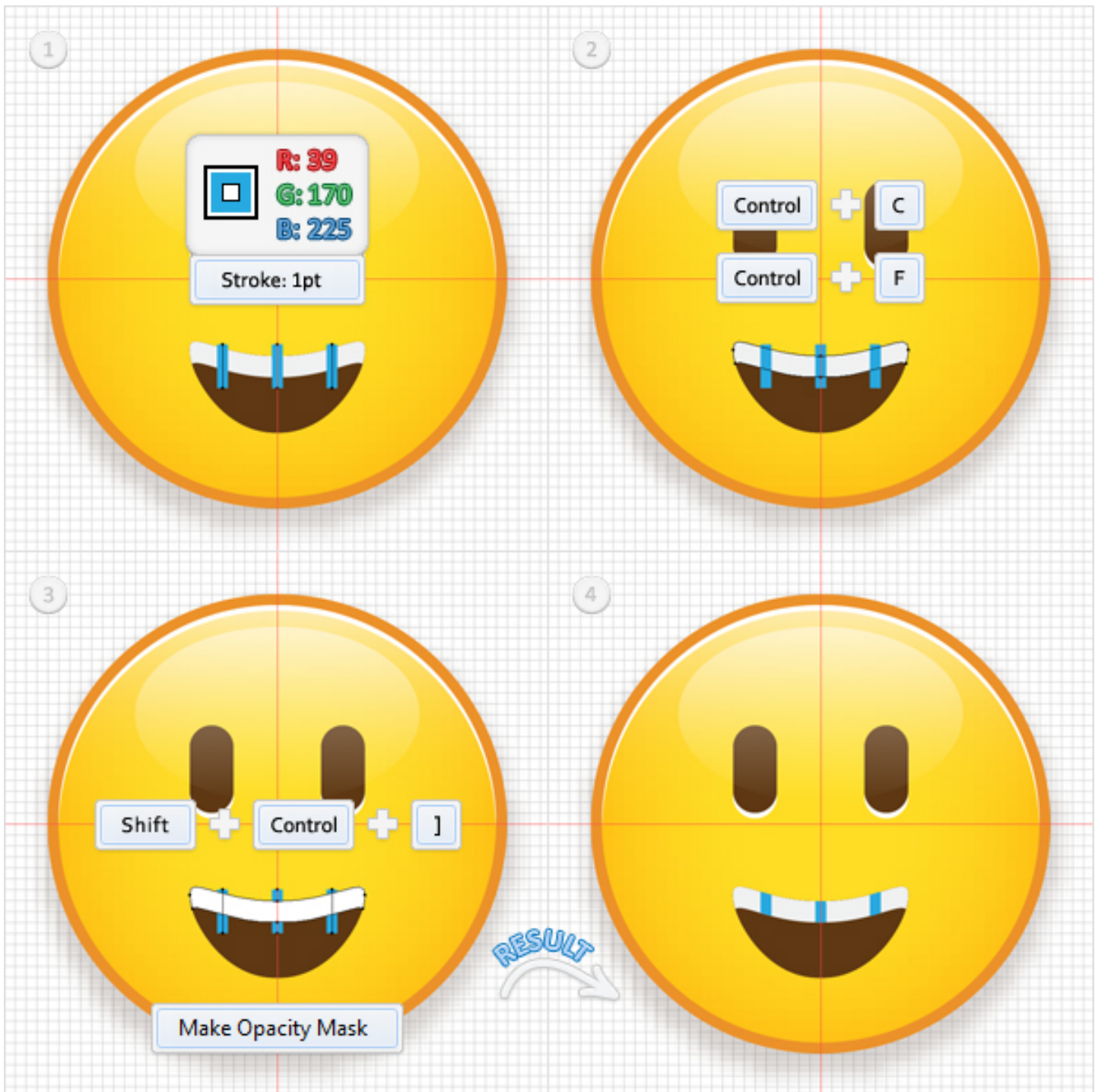
Select the resulting shape and make two copies in front, then disable the Snap to Grid. Select the top copy and hit the down arrow four times, then reselect both copies and click on the Minus Front button from the Pathfinder panel. Fill the resulting shape with white.



Step 11

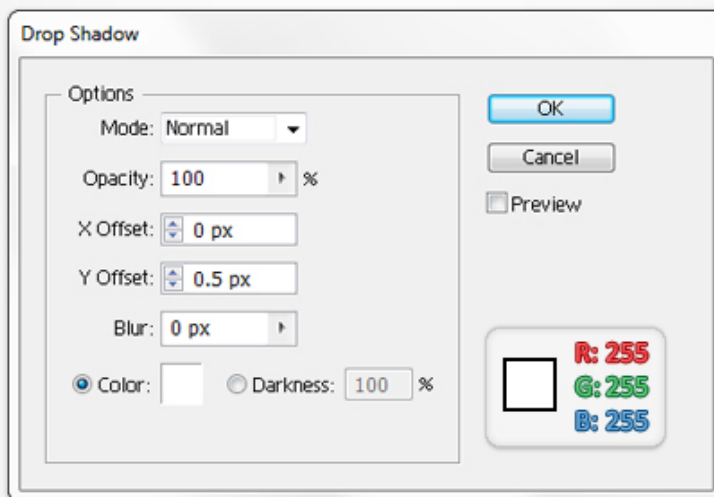
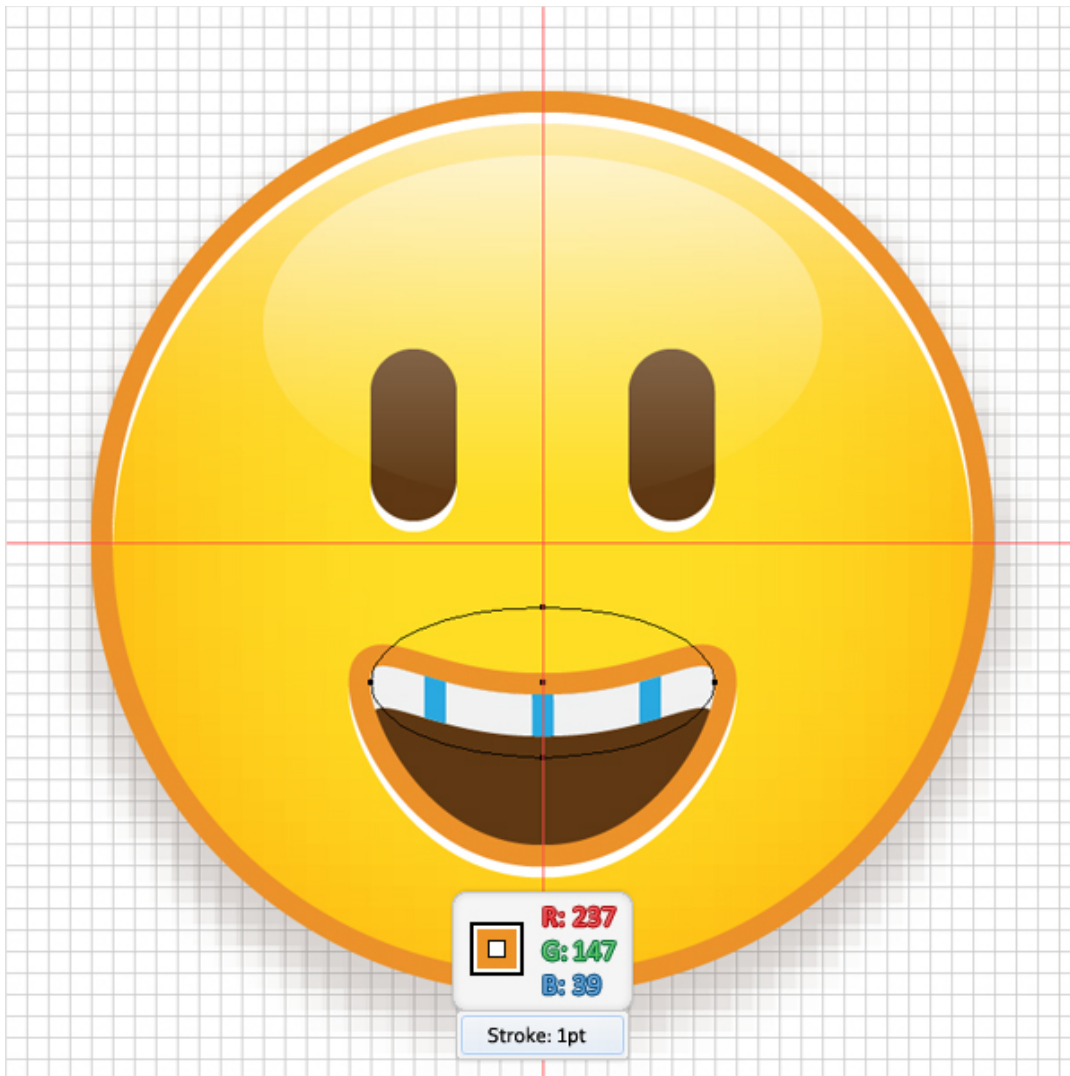
Re-enable the Snap to Grid. Pick the Pen Tool (P), **draw three vertical paths** and place them as shown in the first image. Add a 1pt stroke for these paths and set its color at R=39, G=170, B=225.

Group them (Command + G). Select the white shape created in the previous step, make a copy and bring it to front (Shift > Command + Right Bracket key). Select this fresh, white shape along with the fresh group and go to the Transparency panel. Open the fly-out menu and click on Make Opacity Mask.



Step 12

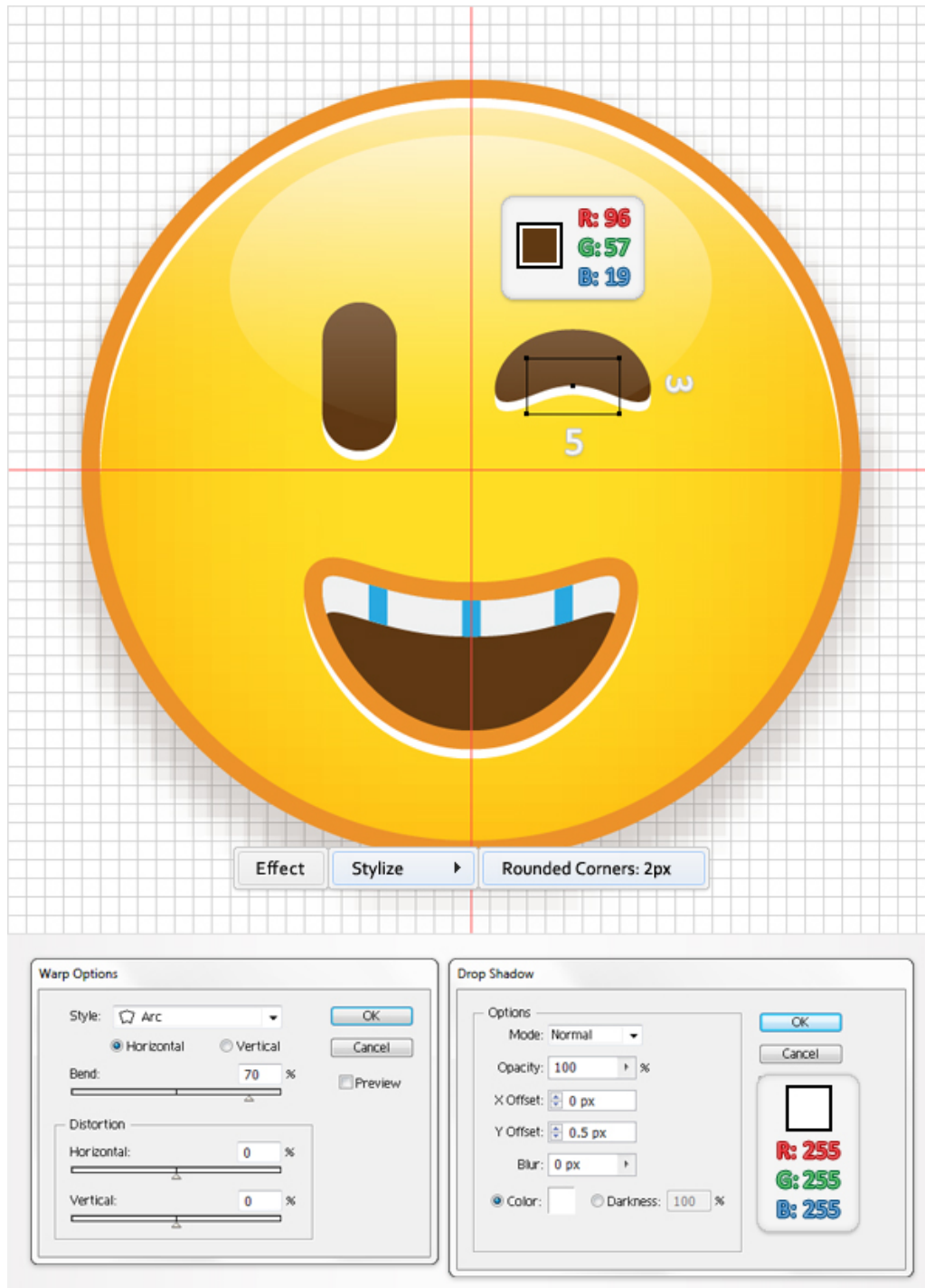
Reselect the mouth shape and go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then add a 1pt stroke. Align it to outside and set its color at R=237, G=147, B=39.



Step 13

Select the "Grin" sublayer and make a copy in front. Let's focus on this fresh sublayer. First, rename it "Winking," then select the right eye shape and delete it. Pick the Rectangle Tool (M), create a 5 by 3px shape and place it as shown.

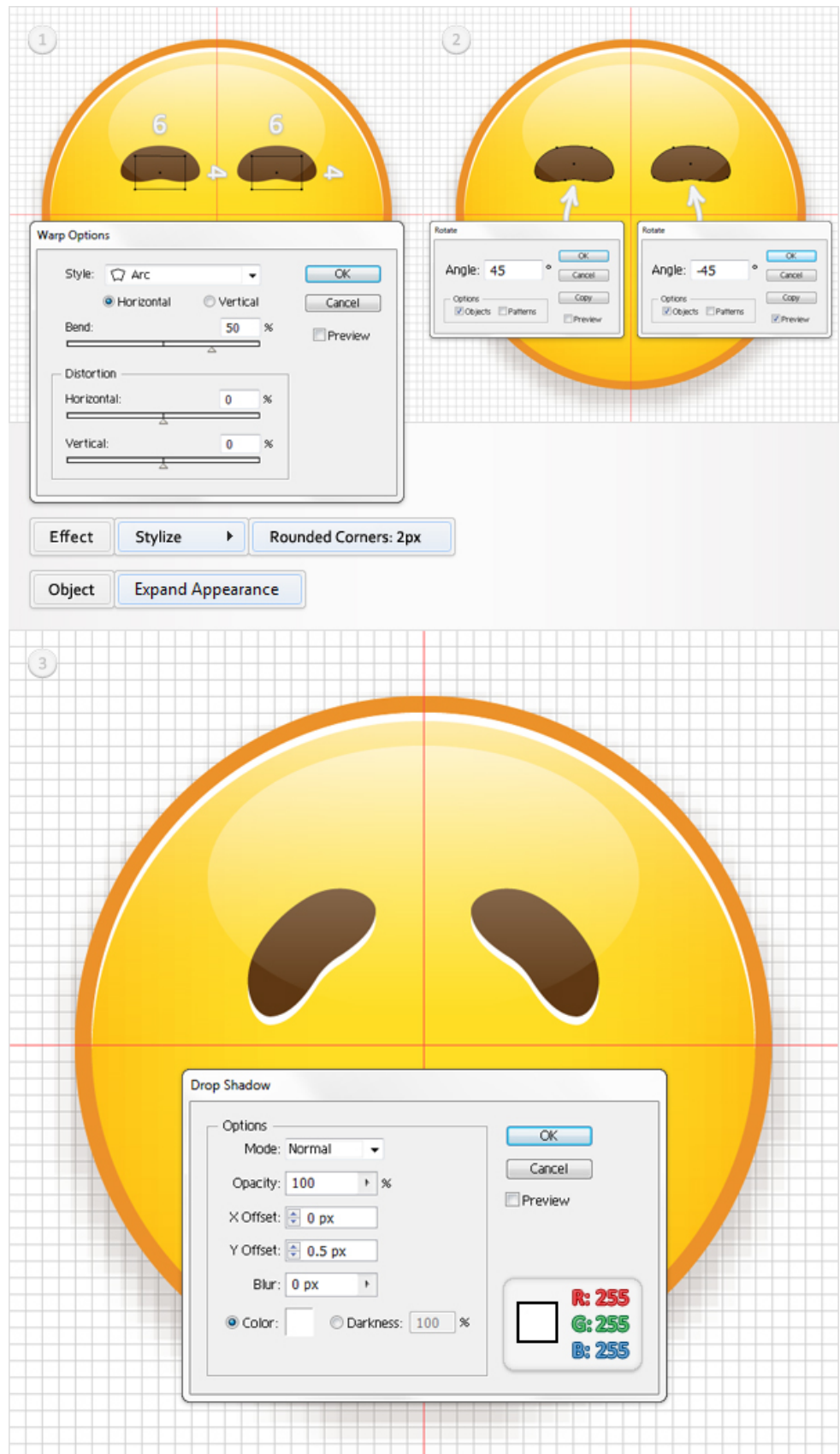
Fill it with R=96, G=57, B=19. Then go to **Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners**. Enter a 2px radius, click OK, then go to Effect > Warp > Arc. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Again, enter the data shown below then click OK.



Step 14

Select the "Winking" sublayer and make a copy in front. Let's focus on this fresh sublayer. First, rename it "Weeping," then select the eyes and the mouth components and delete them. Pick the Rectangle Tool (M), create two 6 by 4px shapes and place them as shown in the following image. Fill them with R=96, G=57, B=19. Then go to Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners. Enter a 2px radius, click OK, then go to Effect > Warp > Arc. Enter the data shown below, click OK then go to **Object > Expand Appearance**.

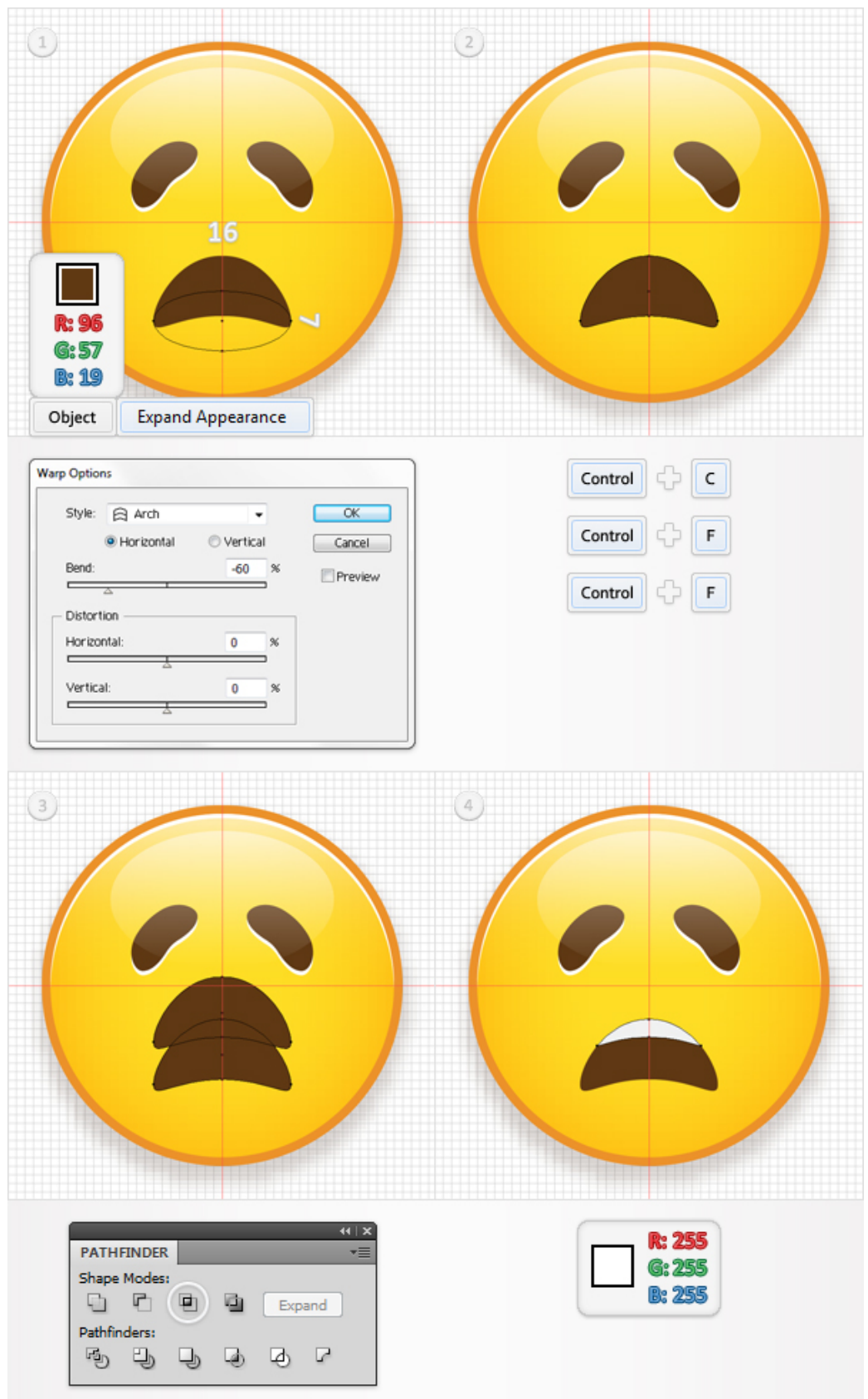
Select the left eye shape and go to Object > Transform > Rotate. Enter a 45 degrees angle, then click OK. Select the right eye shape and go to Object > Transform > Rotate. Enter a -45 degrees angle, then click OK. Reselect both eye shapes and go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown in the final image, then click OK.



Step 15

Keep focusing on the "Weeping" sublayer. Pick the Ellipse Tool (L), create a 16 by 7px shape, and place it as shown. Fill it with R=96, G=57, B=19, and go to Effect > Warp > Arch. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then go to Object > Expand Appearance.

Select the resulting shape, make two copies in front, and disable the Snap to Grid. Select the top copy and hit the up arrow ten times. Reselect both copies and click on the Intersect button from the Pathfinder panel. Fill the resulting shape with white.



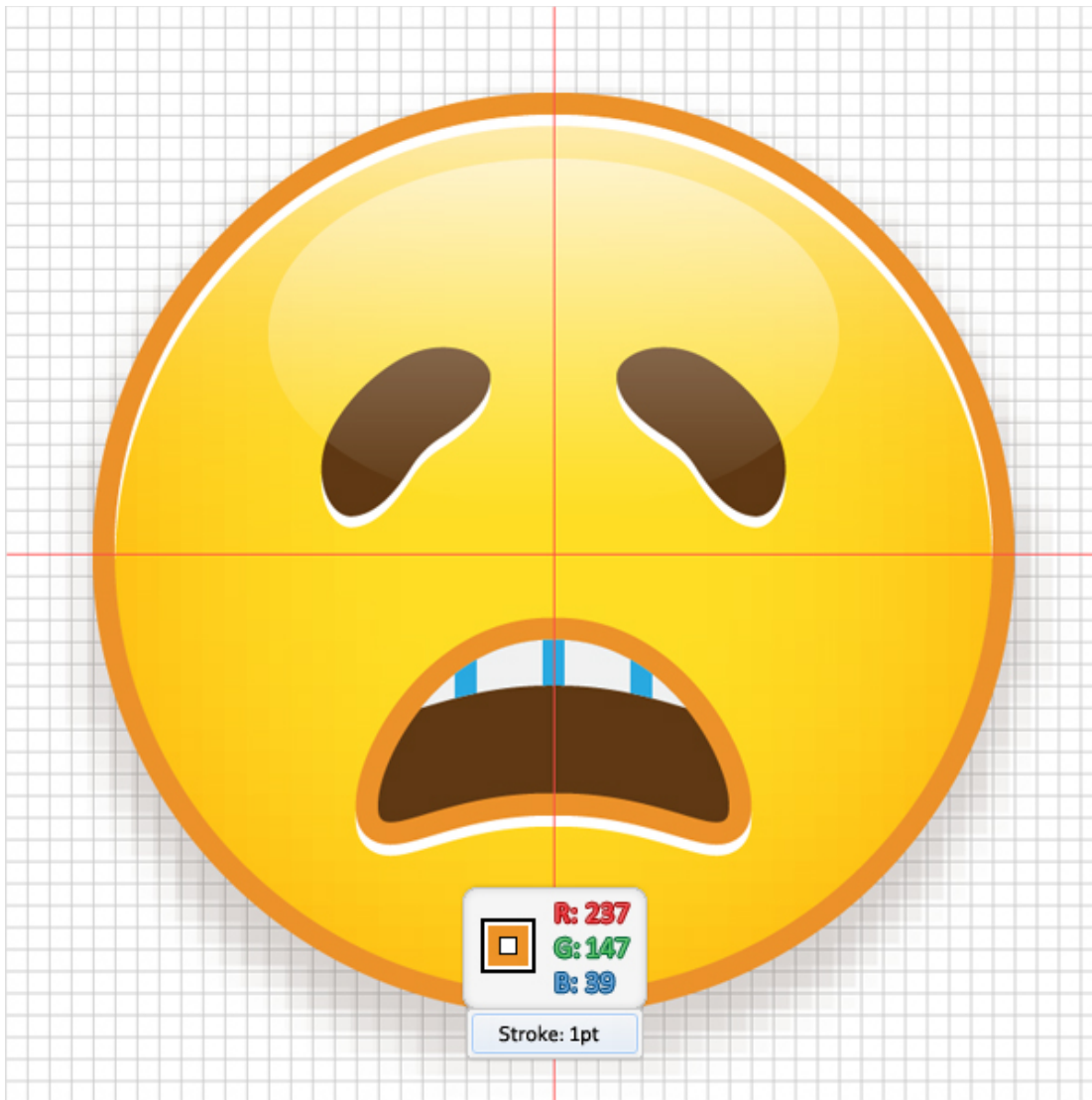
Step 16

Re-enable the Snap to Grid. Pick the Pen Tool (P), draw three vertical paths and place them as shown in the first image. Add a 1pt stroke for these paths and set its color at R=39, G=170, B=225. Group them (Command + G). Select the white shape created in the previous step, make a copy and bring it to front (Shift > Command + Right Bracket key). Select this fresh, white shape along with the fresh group and go to the Transparency panel. **Open the fly-out menu and click on Make Opacity Mask.**



Step 17

Reselect the mouth shape and go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then add a 1pt stroke. Align it to outside and set its color to R=237, G=147, B=39.



Drop Shadow

Options

Mode: Normal

Opacity: 100 %

X Offset: 0 px

Y Offset: 0.5 px

Blur: 0 px

Color: Darkness: 100 %

OK

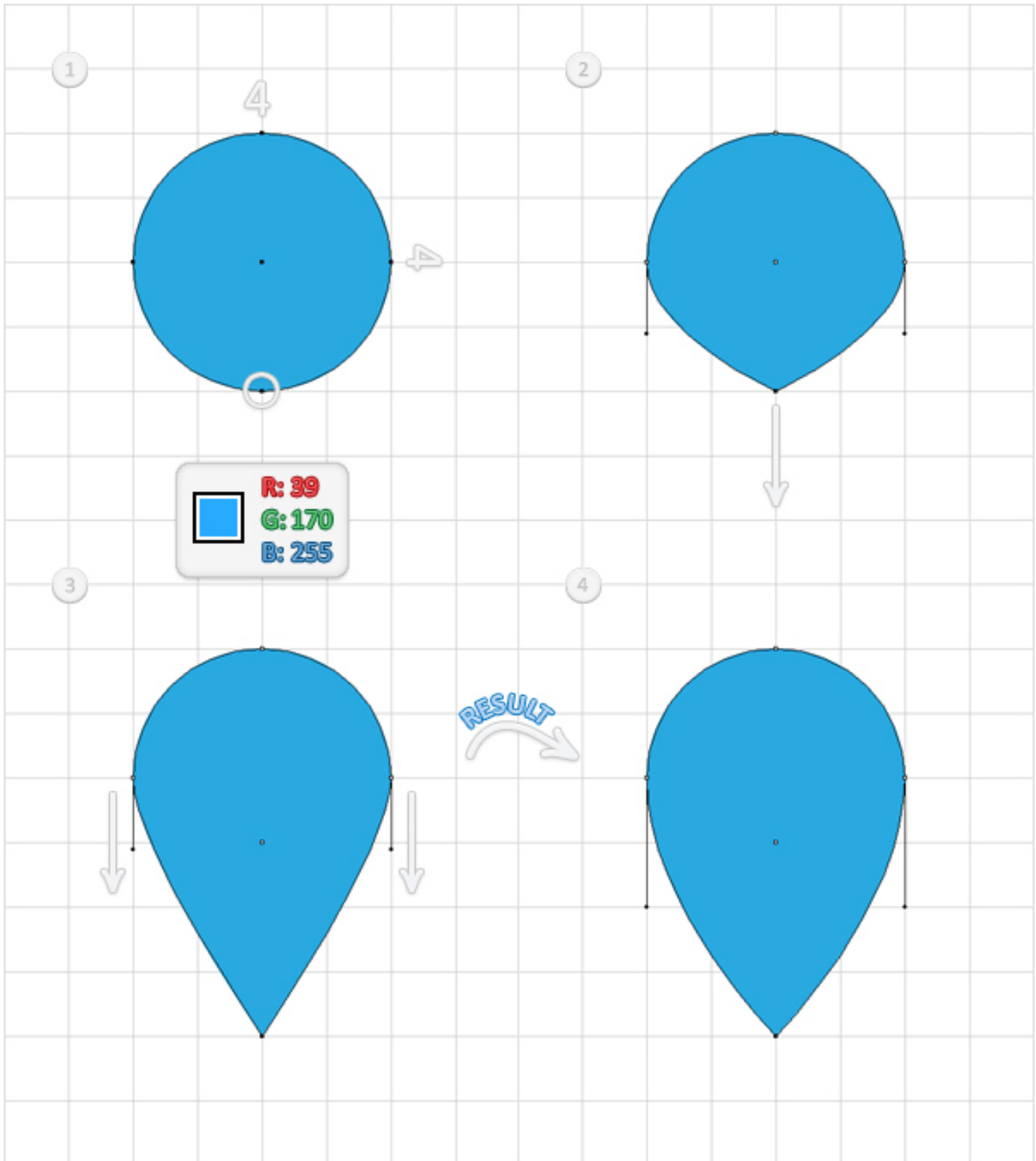
Cancel

Preview

R: 255
G: 255
B: 255

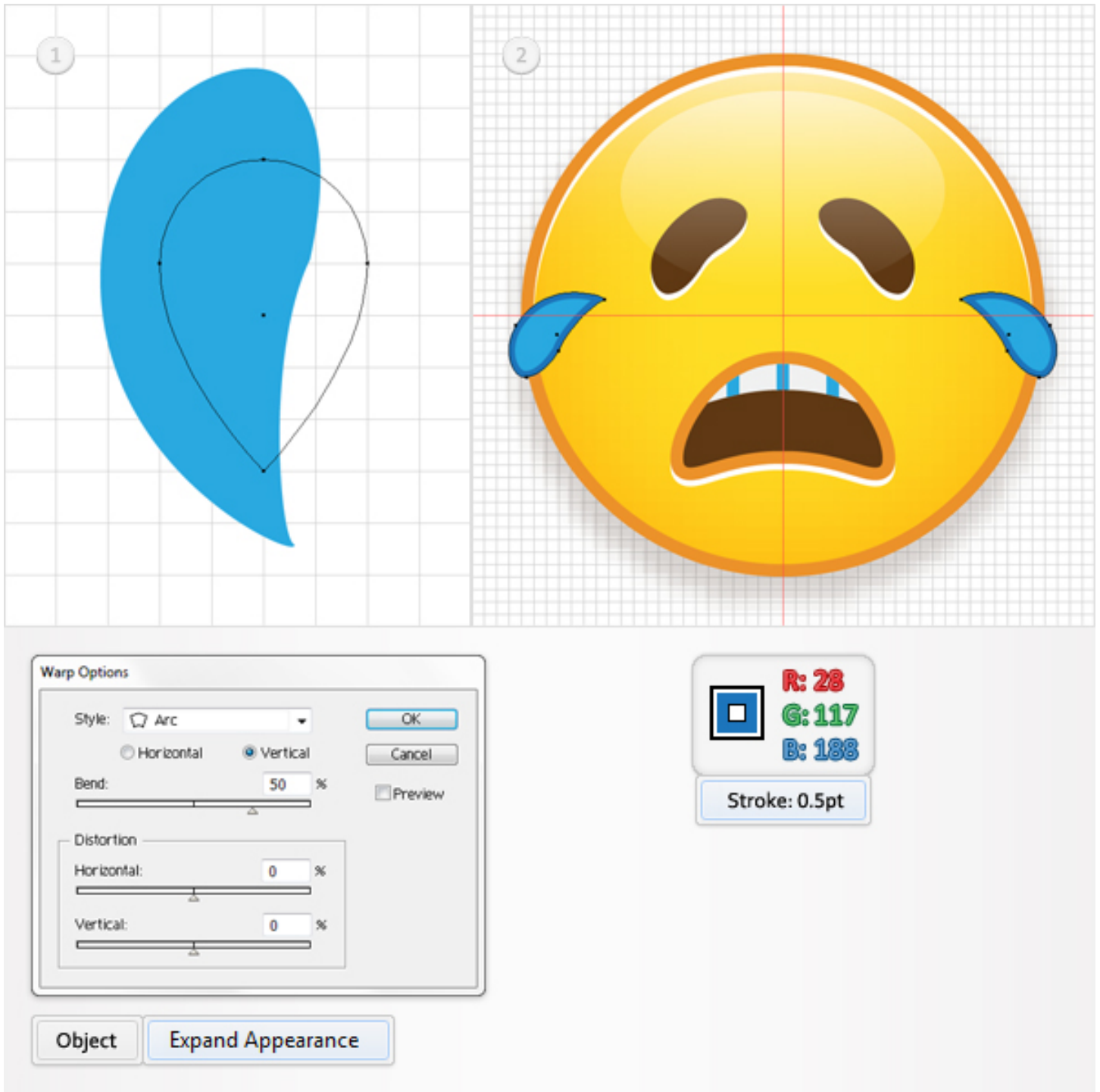
Step 18

Pick the Ellipse Tool (L), create a 4 by 4px shape, and fill it with R=39, G=170, B=255. Pick the Convert Anchor Point Tool (Shift + C) and click on the bottom anchor point. This will make your circle look like in the second image. Pick the Direct Selection Tool (A), select the bottom anchor point, and move it 2px down. Now, focus on the left and right anchor points. Use the same tool to drag the handles 1px down.



Step 19

Select the shape created in the previous step and go to Effect > Warp > Arc. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then go to Object > Expand Appearance. Duplicate the resulting shape. Rotate these two, blue shapes, and place them as shown. Finally, add a 0.5pt stroke for both of these shapes. Align it to inside and set its color to R=28, G=117, B=188.



The image shows a two-part tutorial. On the left, labeled '1', a blue teardrop shape is shown on a grid with a black arc overlaid, indicating the warp effect. On the right, labeled '2', a yellow 'Crying Face' emoji is shown with two blue teardrop shapes placed on its cheeks. Below the grid is the 'Warp Options' dialog box with the following settings:

- Style: Arc
- Horizontal: Vertical:
- Bend: 50 %
- Distortion: Horizontal: 0 % Vertical: 0 %

Buttons for 'OK', 'Cancel', 'Preview', 'Object', and 'Expand Appearance' are visible. To the right of the dialog box is a color selection tool showing the following values:

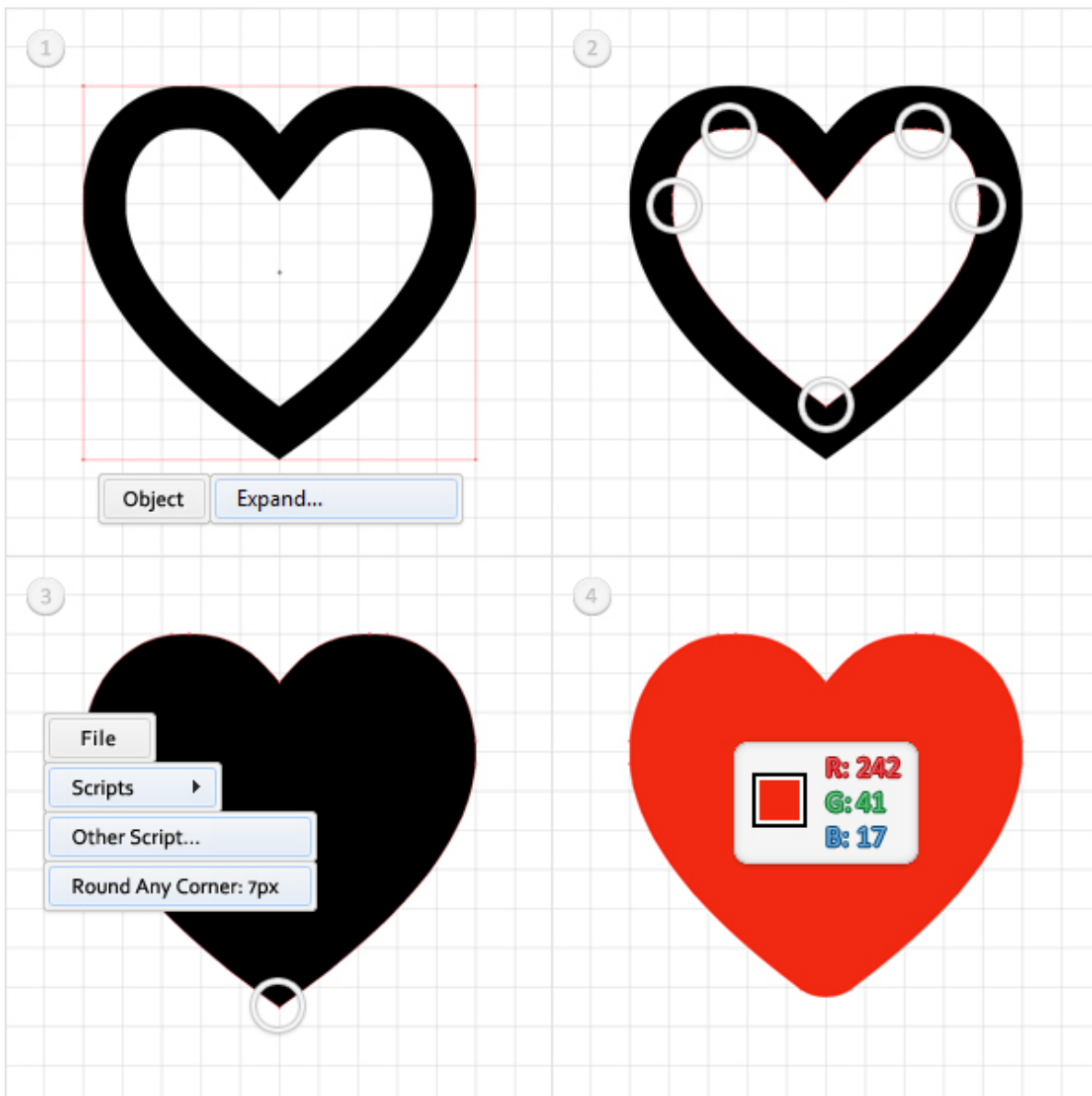
- R: 28
- G: 117
- B: 188
- Stroke: 0.5pt

Step 20

Select the "Happy" sublayer, make a copy, and move it to the top of the Layer panel. Let's focus on this fresh sublayer. First, rename it "Love," then select eye shapes and delete them. Go to the Symbols panel (Window > Symbols), open the fly-out menu, and go to Open Symbol Library > Web Icons. A window with a set of symbols should open.

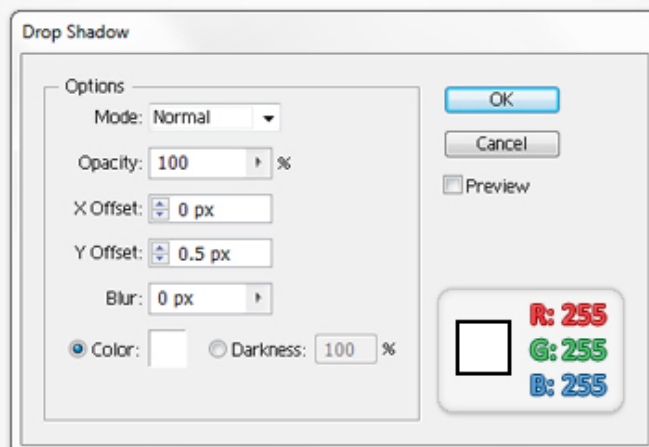
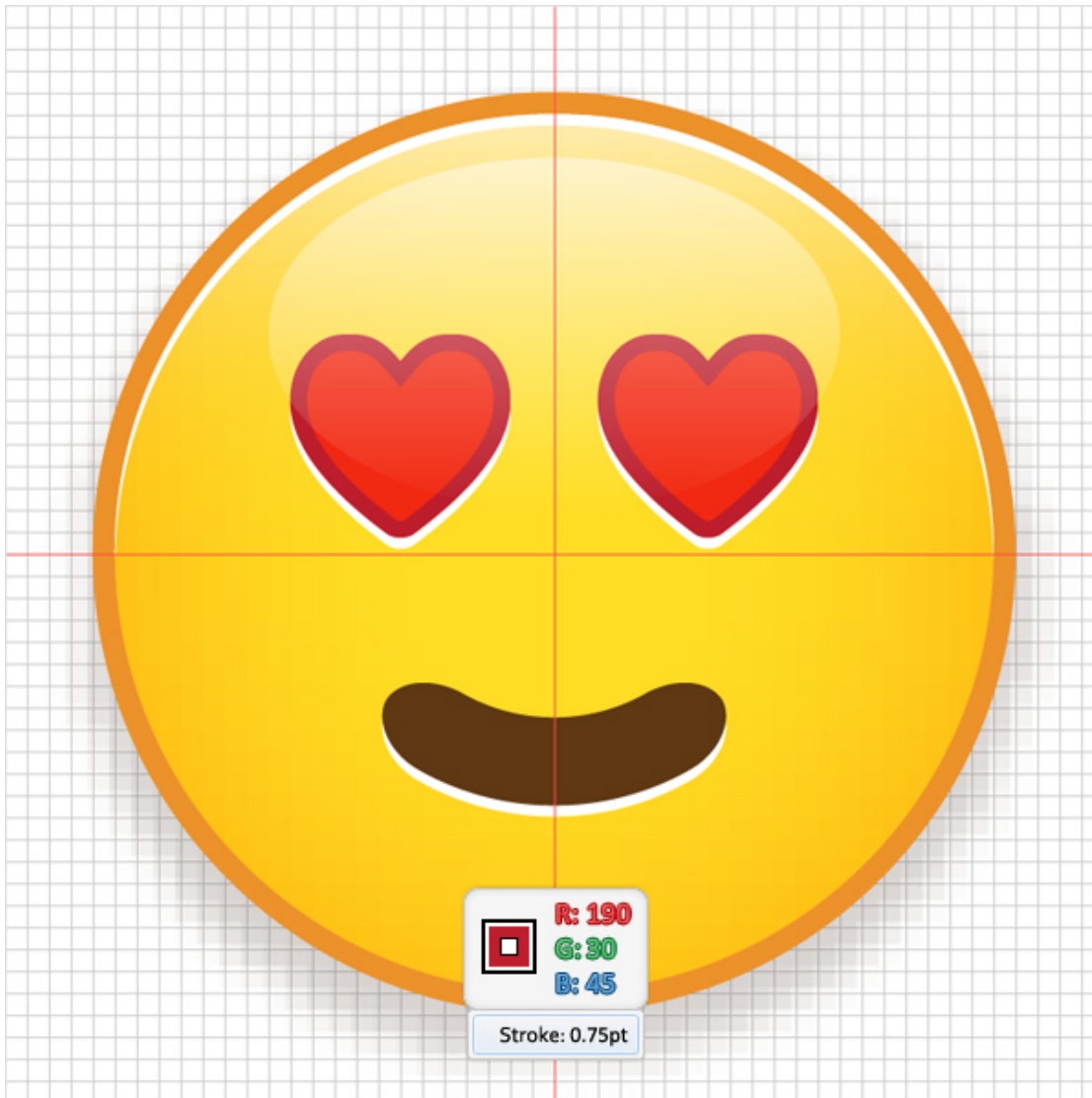
Select the "Favorite" symbol (symbol's palette), drag it onto your artboard, then go to Object > Expand. Focus on the resulting shape. First, pick the Direct Selection Tool (A), select the anchor points highlighted in the second image, and hit the Delete button. Now, the heart should look like the third image.

Next, you need to add a discrete roundness effect for the bottom anchor point. You'll need the Round Any Corner Script. Save it to your hard drive, select the bottom anchor point using the Direct Selection Tool (A), then go to File > Scripts > Other Script. Open the [Round Any Corner Script](#), enter a 7px Radius and click OK. Fill the resulting shape with R=242, G=41, B=17. In the end it should look like the fourth image.



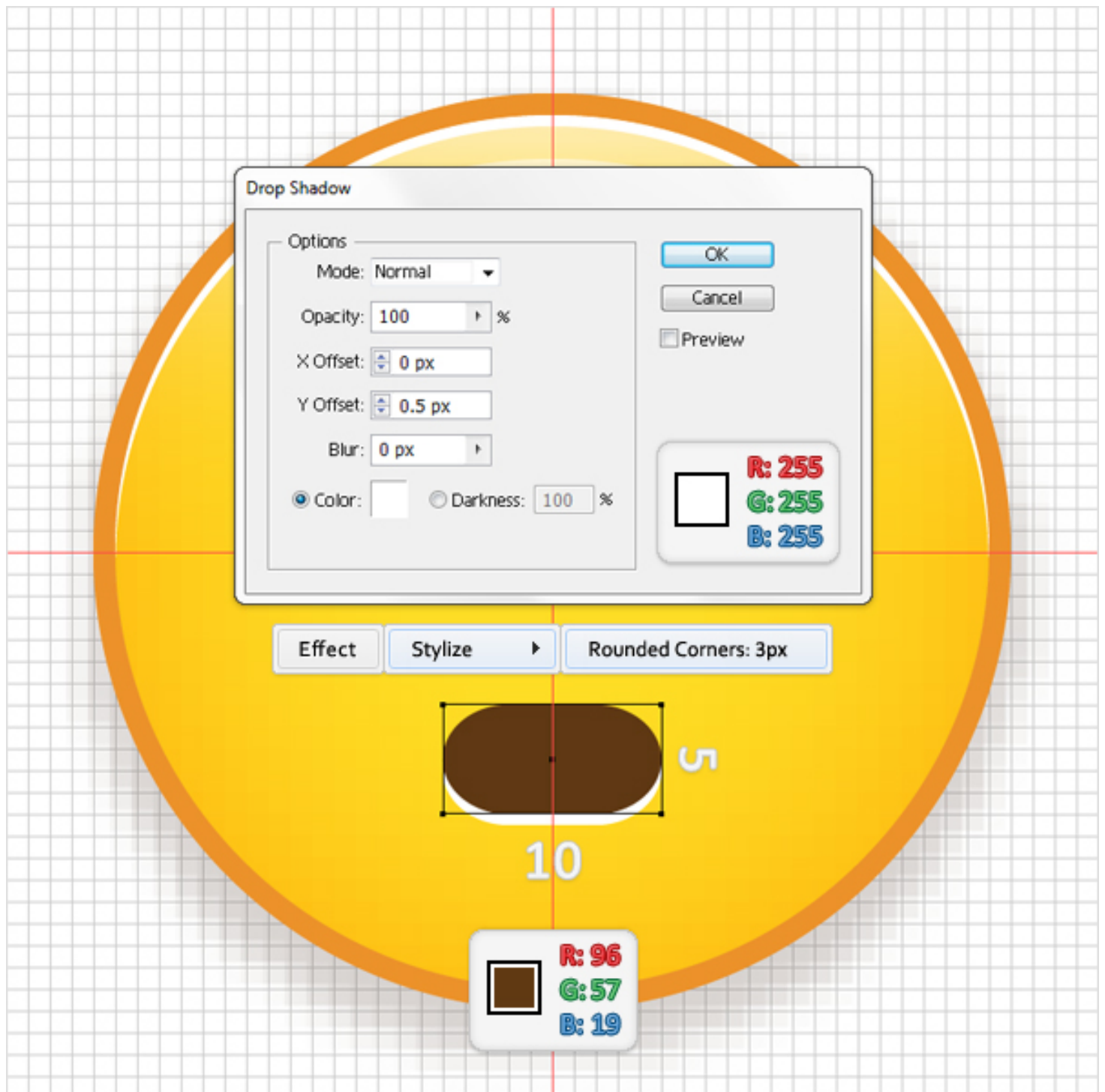
Step 21

Select the shape made in the previous step and duplicate it. Select these two heart shapes, resize them, and place them as shown. Now go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then add a 0.75pt stroke. Align it to inside and set its color to R=190, G=30, B=45.



Step 22

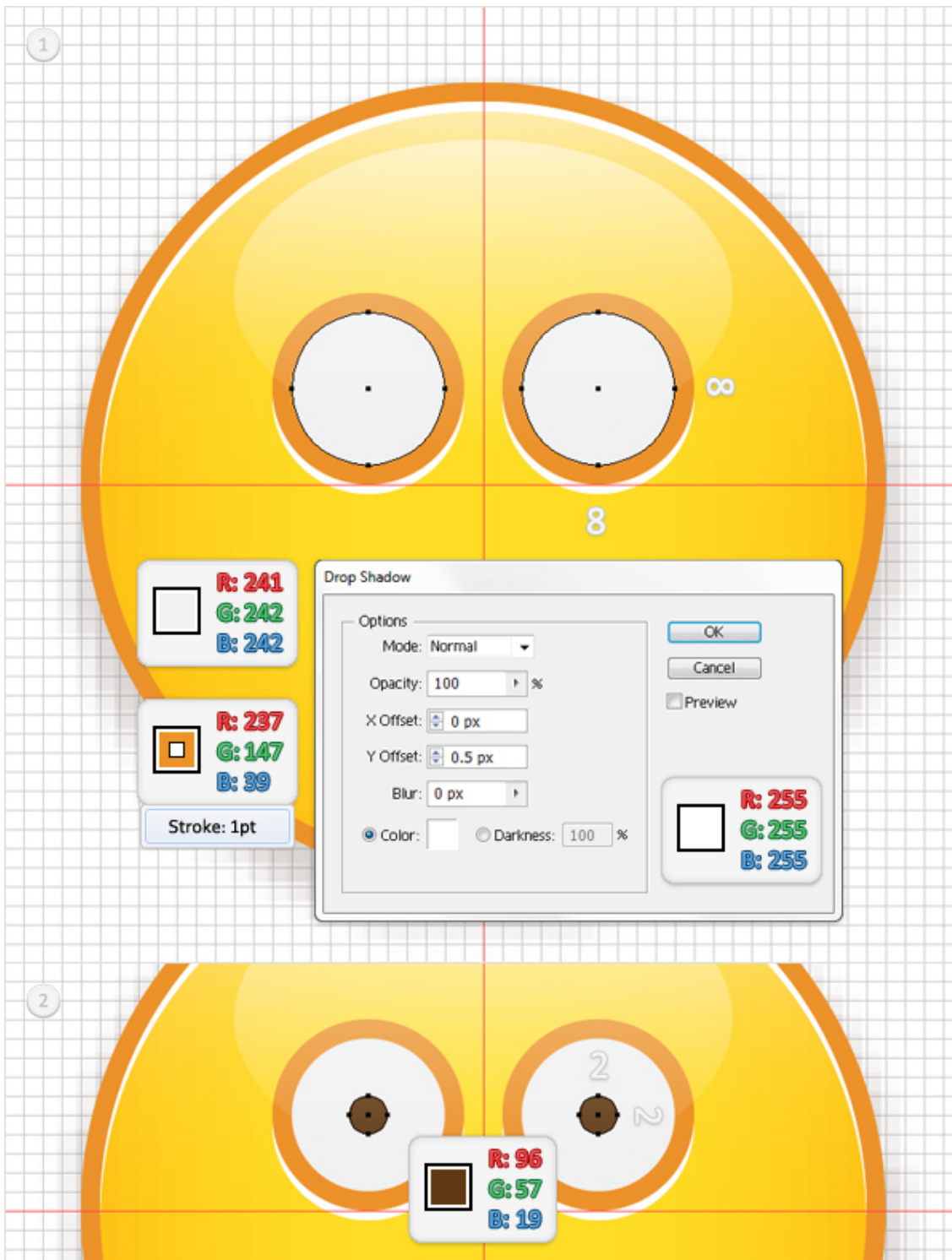
Select the "Love" sublayer and make a copy in front. Let's focus on this fresh sublayer. First, **rename it "Surprise,"** then **select eye and the mouth components and delete them.** Pick the Rectangle Tool (M), create a 10 by 5px shape, and place it as shown in the following image. Fill it with R=96, G=57, B=19. Then go to Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners. Enter a 3px radius, click OK, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below and click OK.



Step 23

Pick the Ellipse Tool (L), create two 8 by 8px shapes, and place them as shown in the first image. Fill them with R=241, G=242, B=242 and add a 1pt stroke. Align it to outside and set its color at R=237, G=147, B=39. The image shows a yellow smiley face with two white circular eyes. The eyes are positioned on a grid. A red vertical line is at the center, and a red horizontal line is at the bottom of the eyes. The number '8' is written below the eyes, indicating their width. The number '8' is also written to the right of the right eye, indicating its height. The color swatches for the eyes are R: 241, G: 242, B: 242. The stroke color is R: 237, G: 147, B: 39. The stroke width is 1pt.

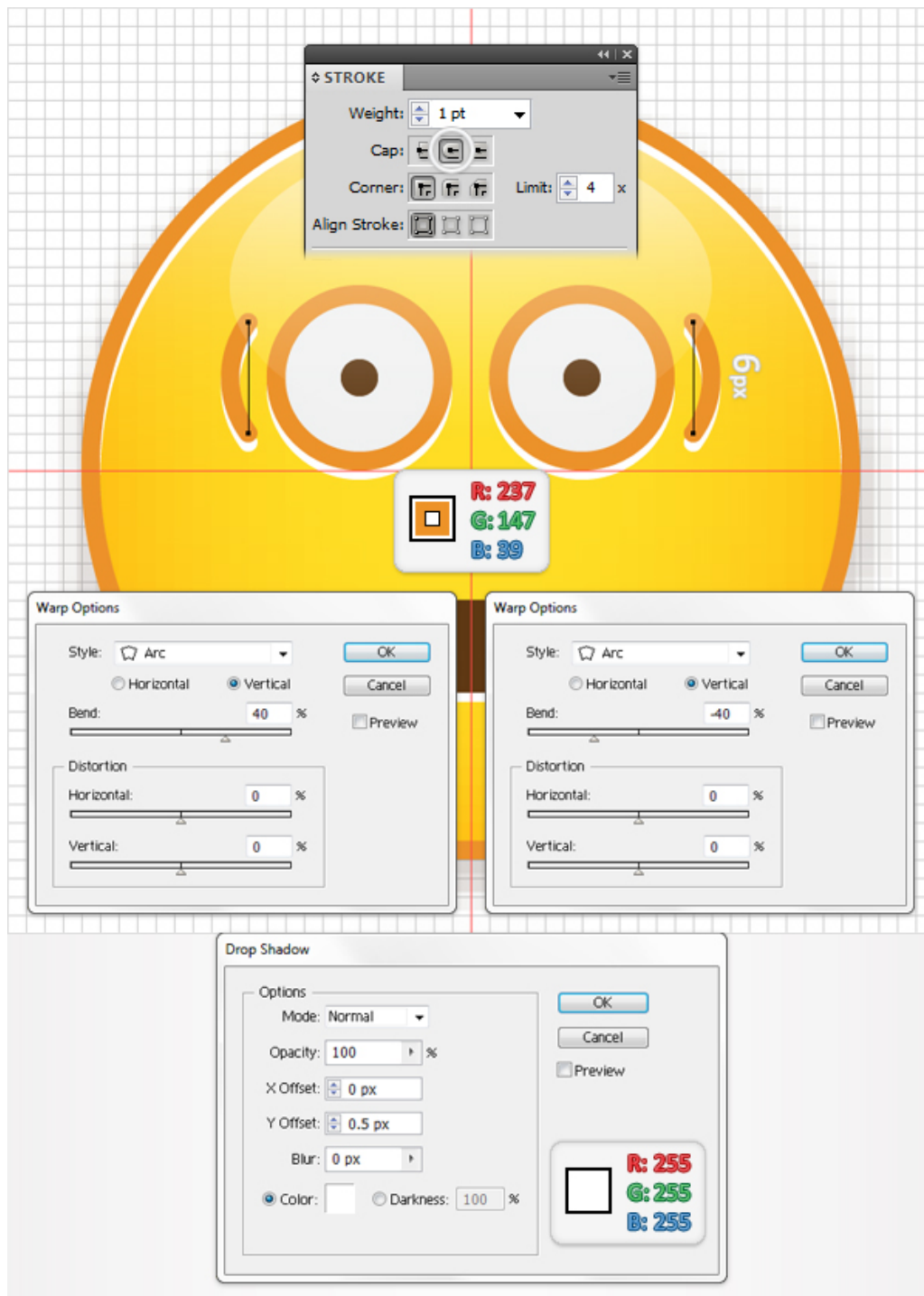
Reselect both circles and go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown in the first image and click OK. Again, pick the Ellipse Tool (L) and create two 2 by 2px shapes. Fill them with R=96, G=57, B=19, and place them as shown in the second image. The image shows the same yellow smiley face with two white circular eyes. The eyes are now filled with a dark brown color. The number '2' is written above the right eye, indicating the width of the new shapes. The number '2' is also written to the right of the right eye, indicating its height. The color swatch for the new shapes is R: 96, G: 57, B: 19.



Step 24

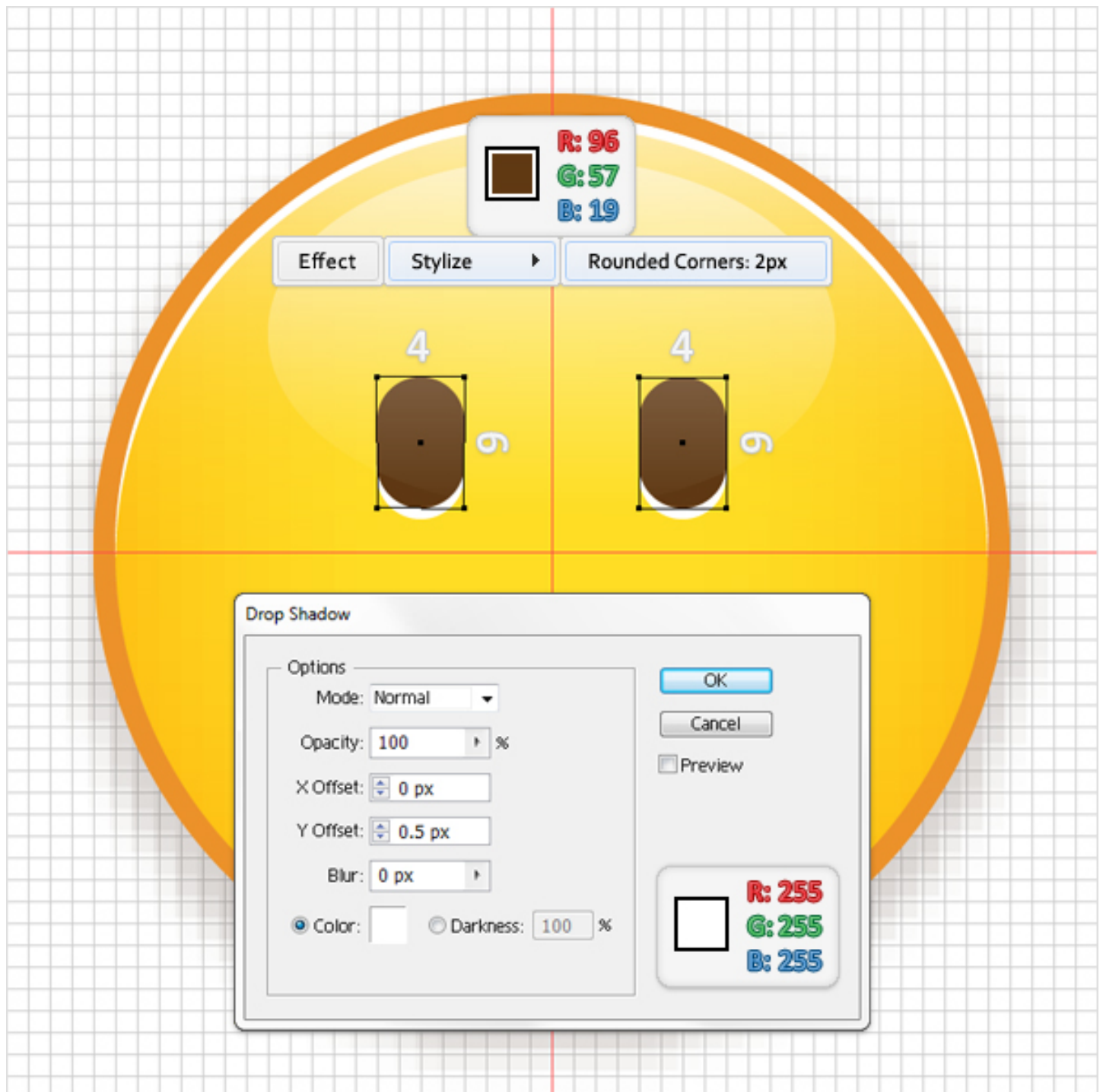
Pick the Pen Tool (P), draw two vertical paths (6px tall) and place them as shown in the following image. Add a 1pt stroke for both of these paths, set the color at R=237, G=147, B=39, and go to the Stroke panel (Window > Stroke).

Click on the Round Cap button, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then select only the left path. Go to Effect > Warp > Arc, enter the data shown below, click OK, then select the right path. Again, go to Effect > Warp > Arc, enter the data shown below, then click OK.



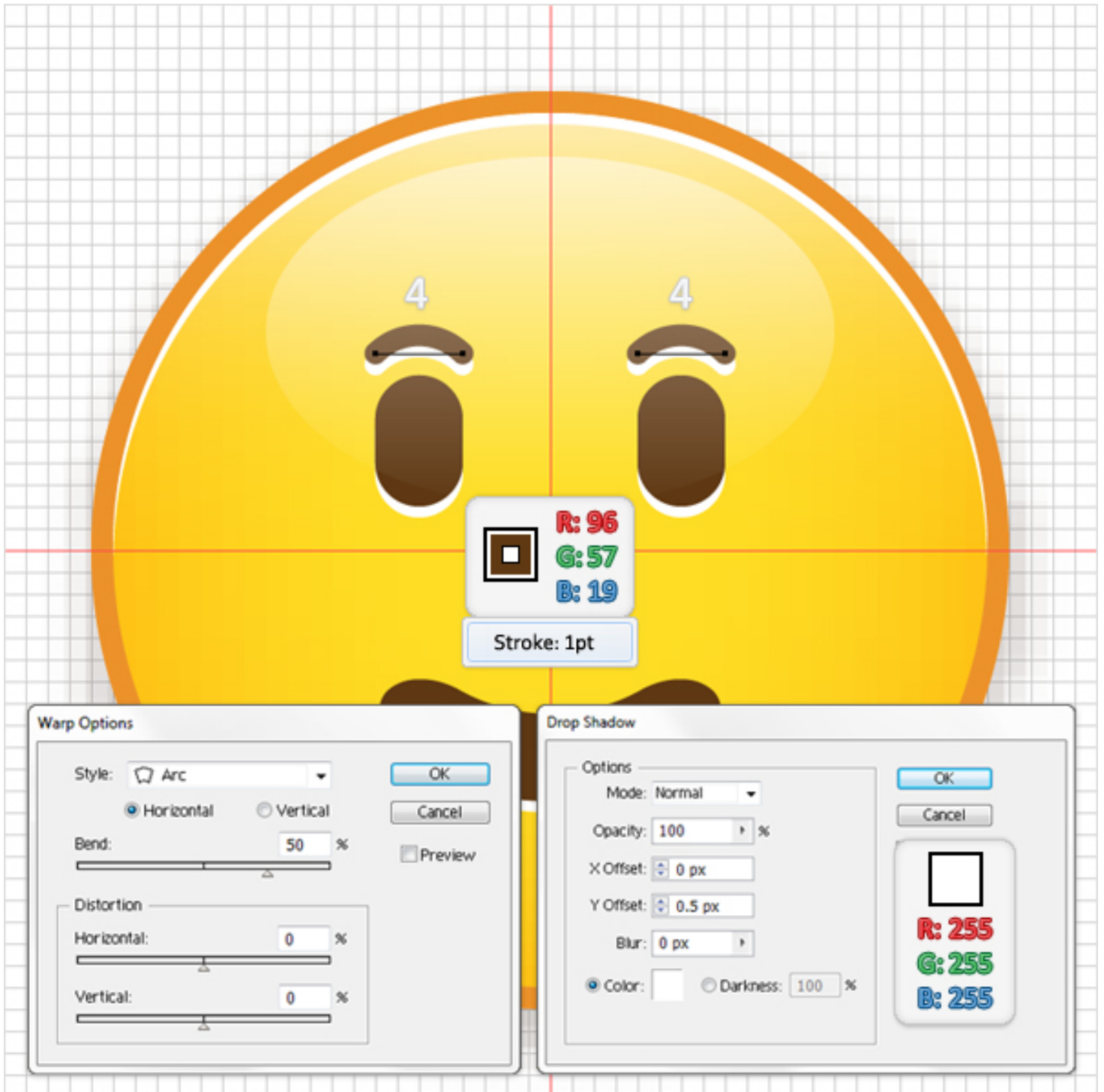
Step 25

Select the "Love" sublayer, make a copy, and move it in the top of the Layers panel. Let's focus on this fresh sublayer. First, rename it "Blushing," then select eye components, and delete them. Pick the Rectangle Tool (M), create two 4 by 6px shapes, and place them as shown in the following image. Fill them with R=96, G=57, B=19, then go to Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners. Enter a 2px radius, click OK, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below and click OK.



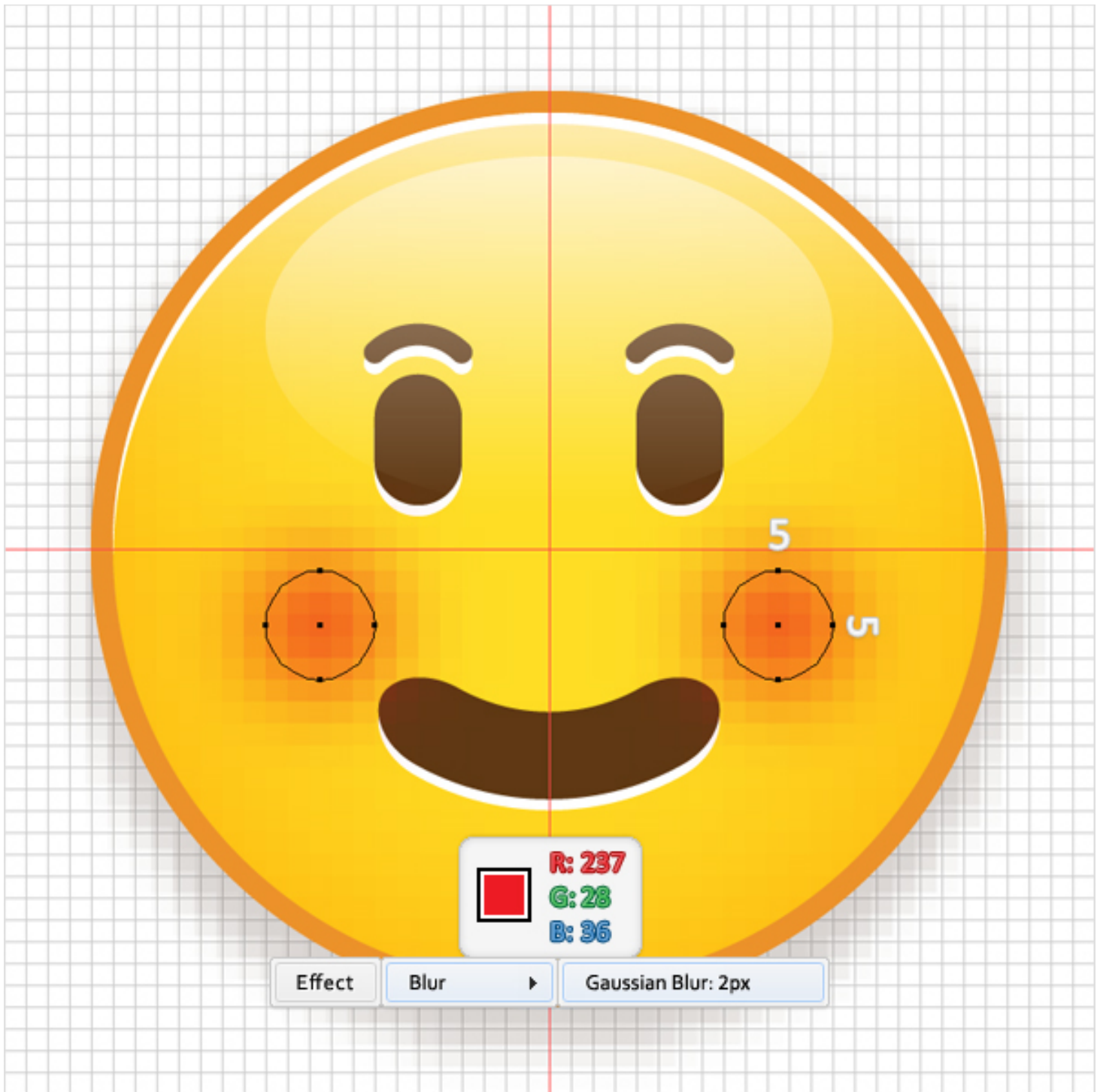
Step 26

Pick the Pen Tool (P), draw two horizontal paths (4px long), and place them as shown in the following image. Add a 1pt stroke for both of these paths, set the color at R=96, G=57, B=19, and go to the Stroke panel. Click on the Round Cap button, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then go to Effect > Warp > Arc. Again, enter the data shown below and click OK.



Step 27

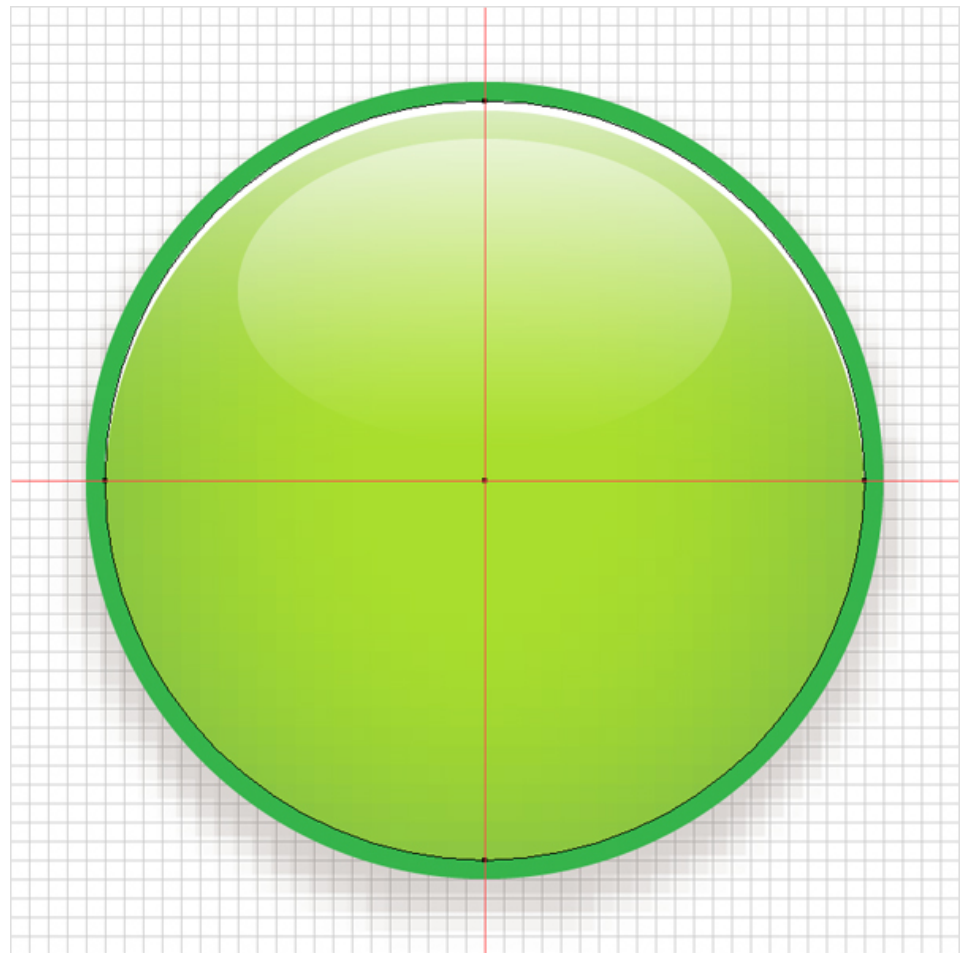
Pick the Ellipse Tool (L), create two 5 by 5px shapes, and place them as shown. Fill them with R=237, G=28, B=36, and go to Effect > Blur > Gaussian Blur. Enter a 2px radius and click OK.



Step 28

Select the "Blushing" sublayer and make a copy in front. Let's focus on this fresh sublayer. First, rename it "Sick," then delete the eyes and the mouth components. Now, you need to **change the color of the entire face.**

Go to the Appearance panel and focus on the first fill. Replace the yellow with R=171, G=223, B=35, then open the Inner Glow effect and replace the existing color with the one shown below. Move to the second fill and replace the existing gradient with the one shown. Finally, select the stroke and replace the existing color with R=57, G=181, B=74.



The screenshot shows the Photoshop interface with three panels open:

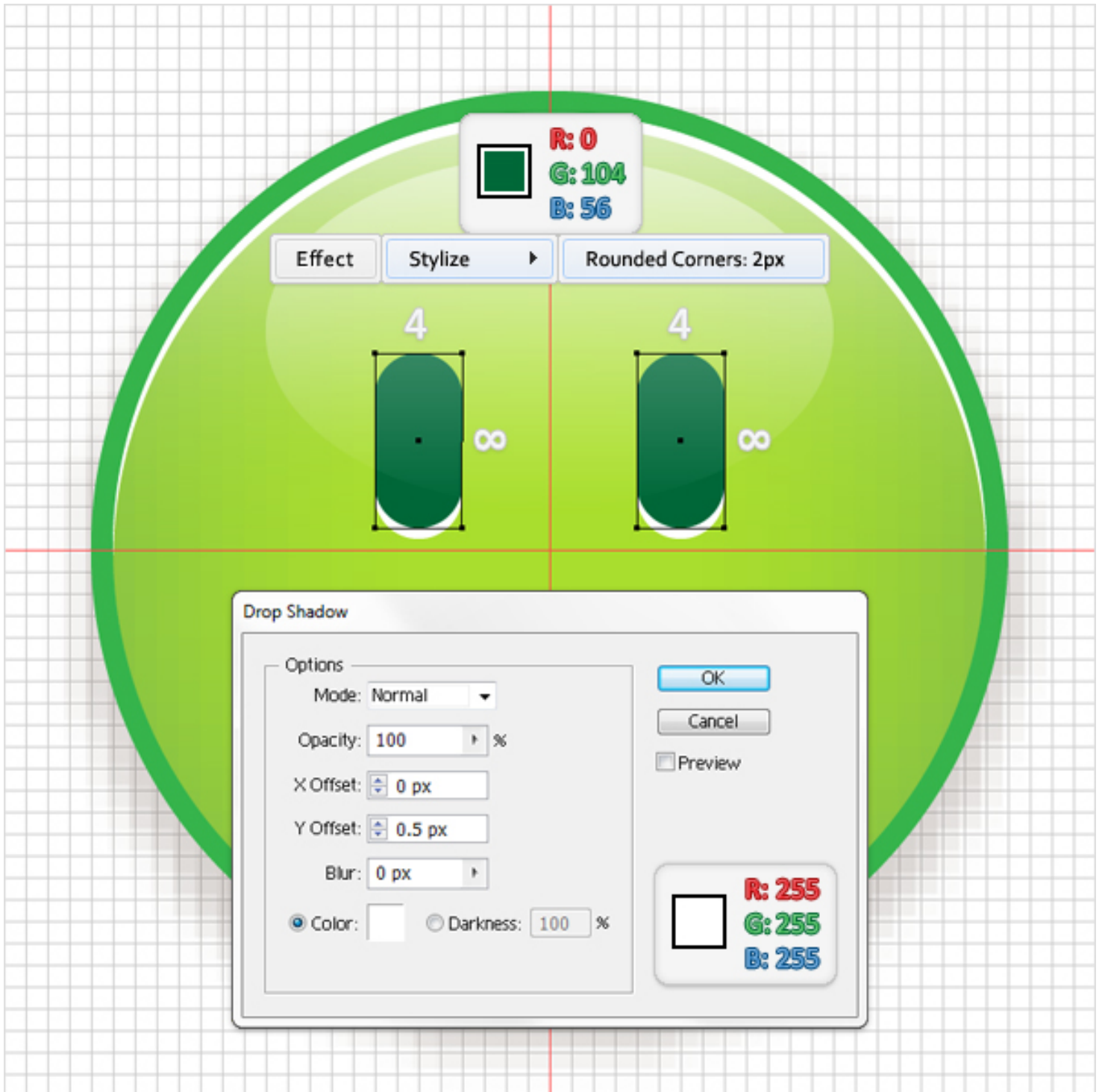
- APPEARANCE Panel:** Shows a 'Path' layer with a stroke of 1 pt Outside (green) and two fill layers. The top fill is a gradient, and the bottom fill is a solid color. Effects include Inner Glow, Drop Shadow, and Opacity (Default).
- GRADIENT Panel:** Shows a Linear gradient with a Type of Linear, rotated -90 degrees. The gradient bar shows a color transition from R:255, G:255, B:255 to R:171, G:223, B:35.
- Inner Glow Panel:** Shows the Inner Glow effect with Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%, Blur: 10 px, and the Edge option selected. The color swatch shows R:141, G:198, B:63.

Color swatches for the stroke and fills are also shown:

- Stroke: R: 57, G: 181, B: 74
- Fill 1: R: 171, G: 223, B: 35
- Fill 2: R: 141, G: 198, B: 63

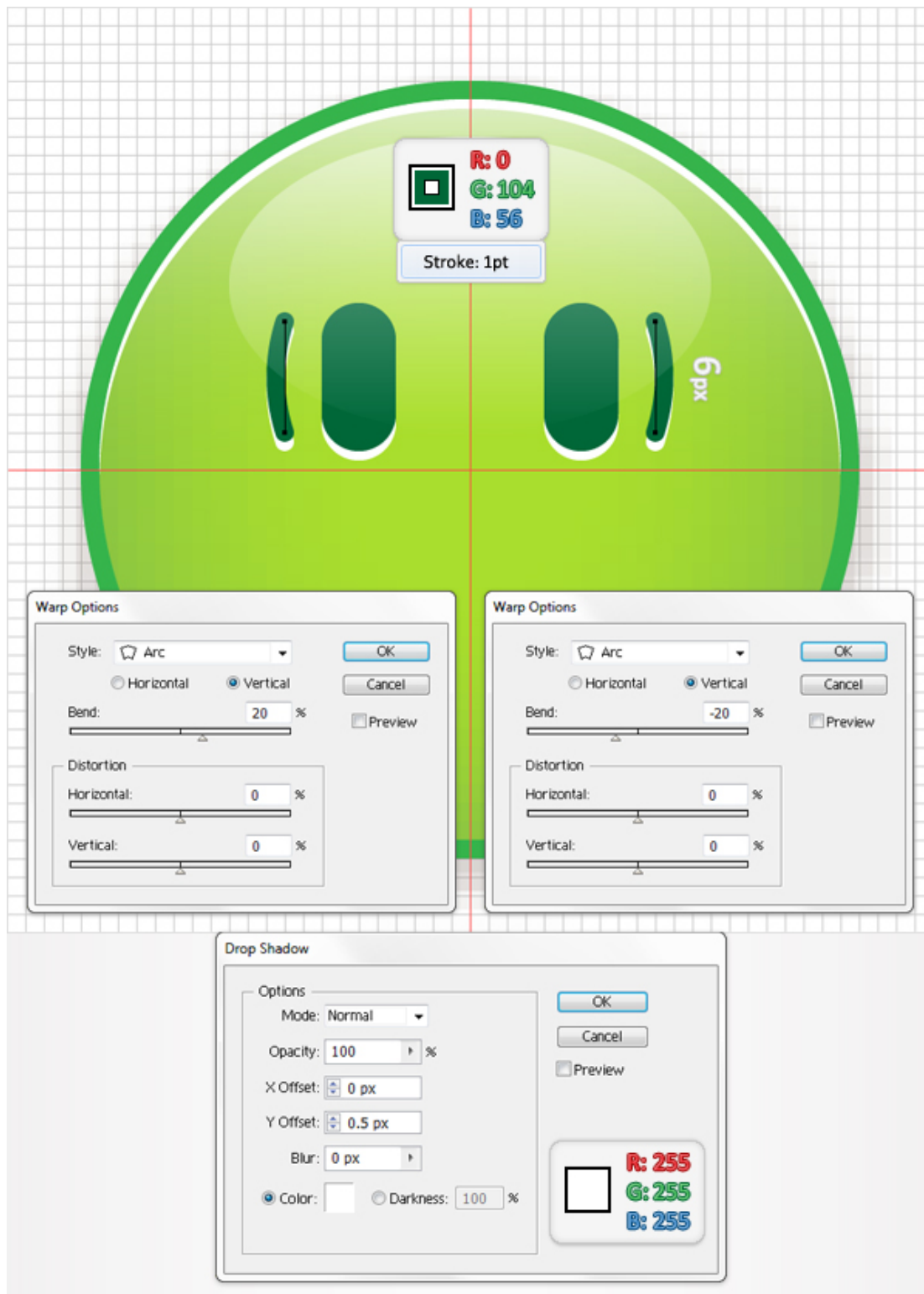
Step 29

Let's continue with the eyes. Pick the Rectangle Tool (M), create two 4 by 8px shapes, and place it as shown in the following image. Fill them with R=0, G=104, B=56, then go to Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners. Enter a 2px radius, click OK, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below and click OK.



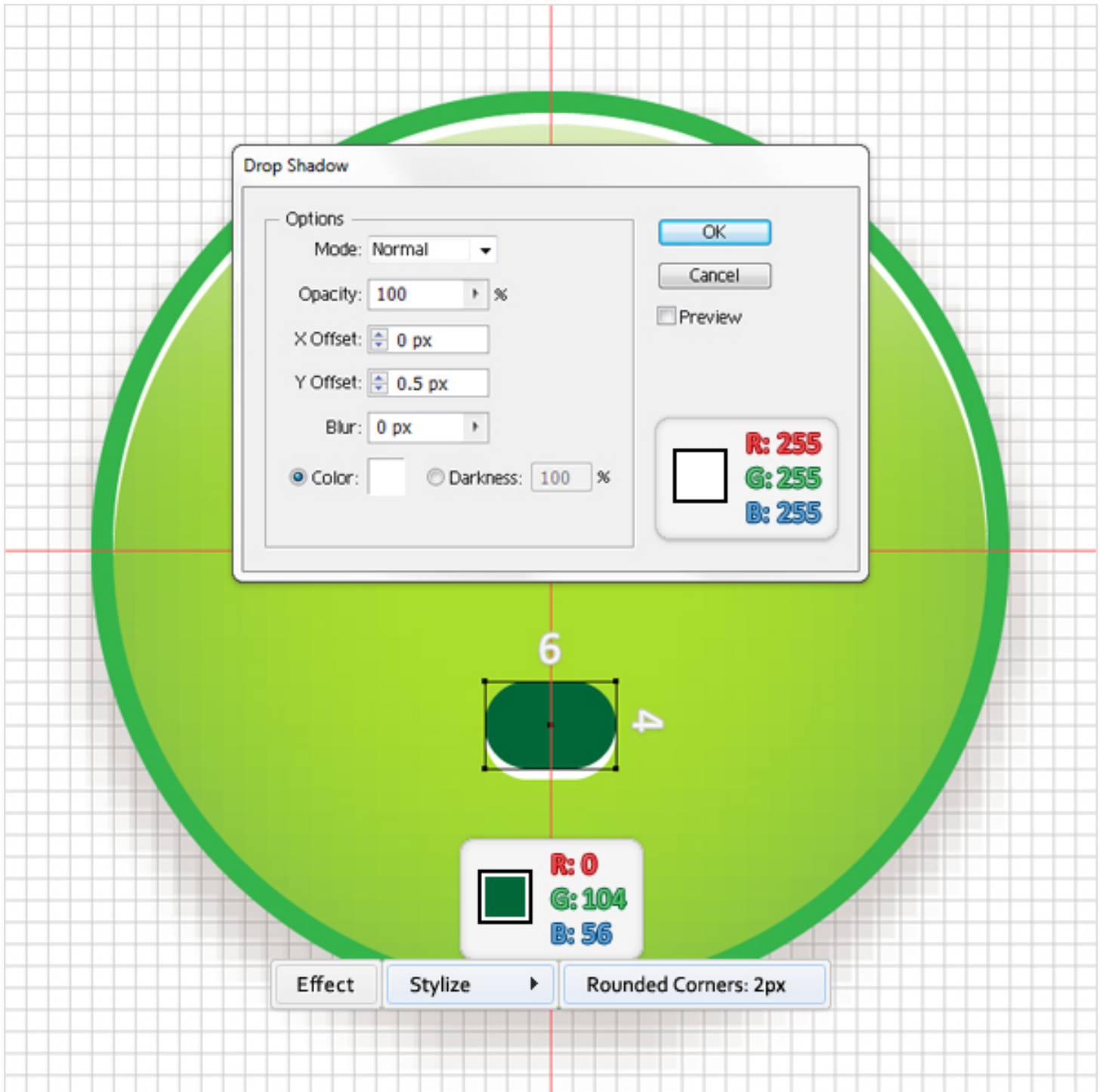
Step 30

Pick the Pen Tool (P), draw two vertical paths (6px tall), and place them as shown in the following image. Add a 1pt stroke for both of these paths, set the color at R=0, G=104, B=56, and go to the Stroke panel (Window > Stroke). Click on the Round Cap button, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below, click OK, then select only the left path. Go to Effect > Warp > Arc, enter the data shown below, click OK, then select the right path. Again, go to Effect > Warp > Arc, enter the data shown below and click OK.



Step 31

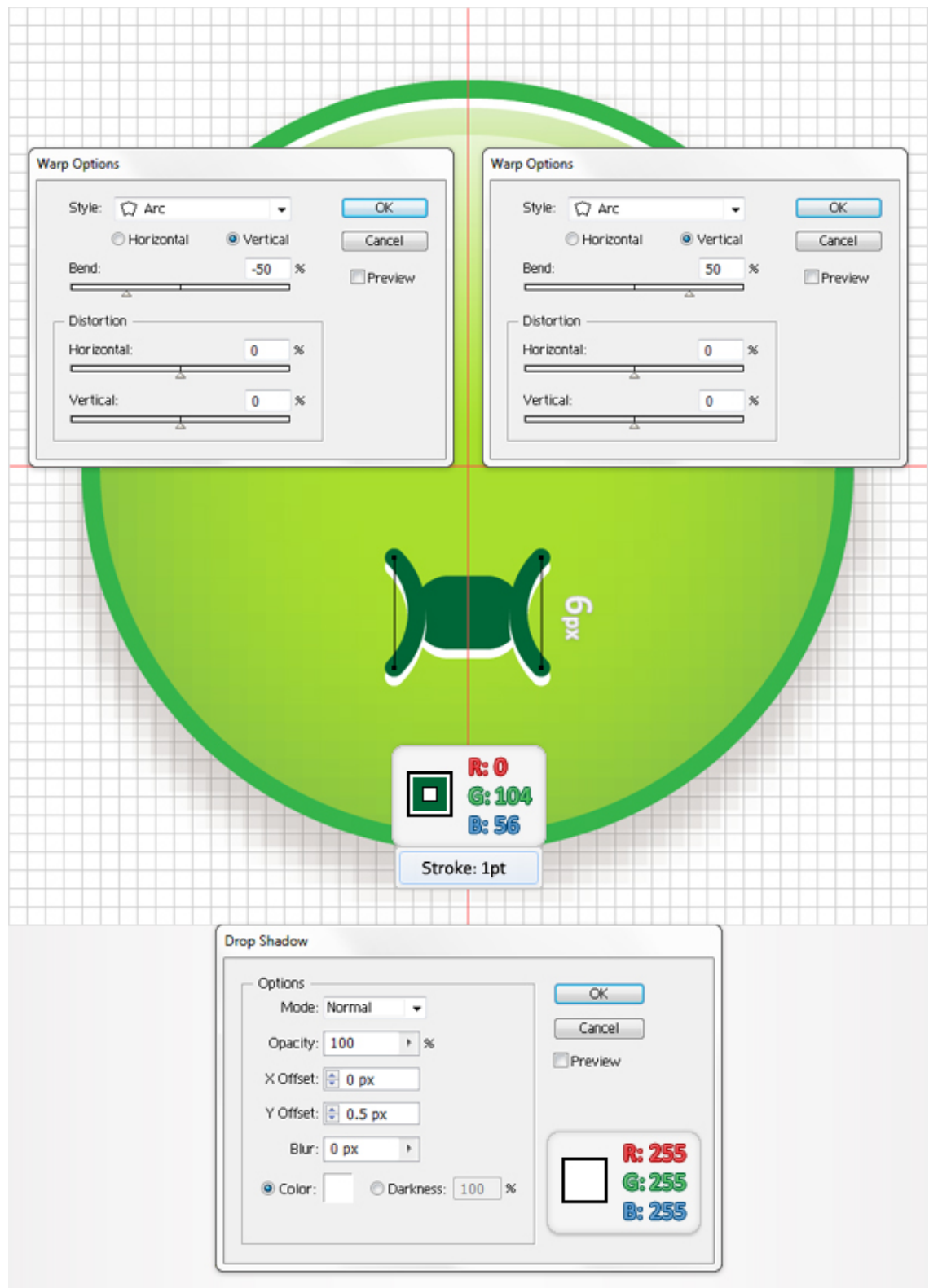
Pick the Rectangle Tool (M), create a 6 by 4px shape, and place it as shown in the following image. Fill it with R=0, G=104, B=56, then go to Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners. Enter a 2px radius, click OK, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below and click OK.



Step 32

Once again, pick the Pen Tool (P), draw two vertical paths (6px tall) and place them as shown. Add a 1pt stroke for both of these paths, set the color at R=0, G=104, B=56, and go to the Stroke panel (Window > Stroke). Click on the Round Cap button, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow.

Enter the data shown below, click OK, then select only the left path. Go to Effect > Warp > Arc, enter the data shown below, click OK. Now select the right path. Again, go to Effect > Warp > Arc, enter the data shown below and click OK.

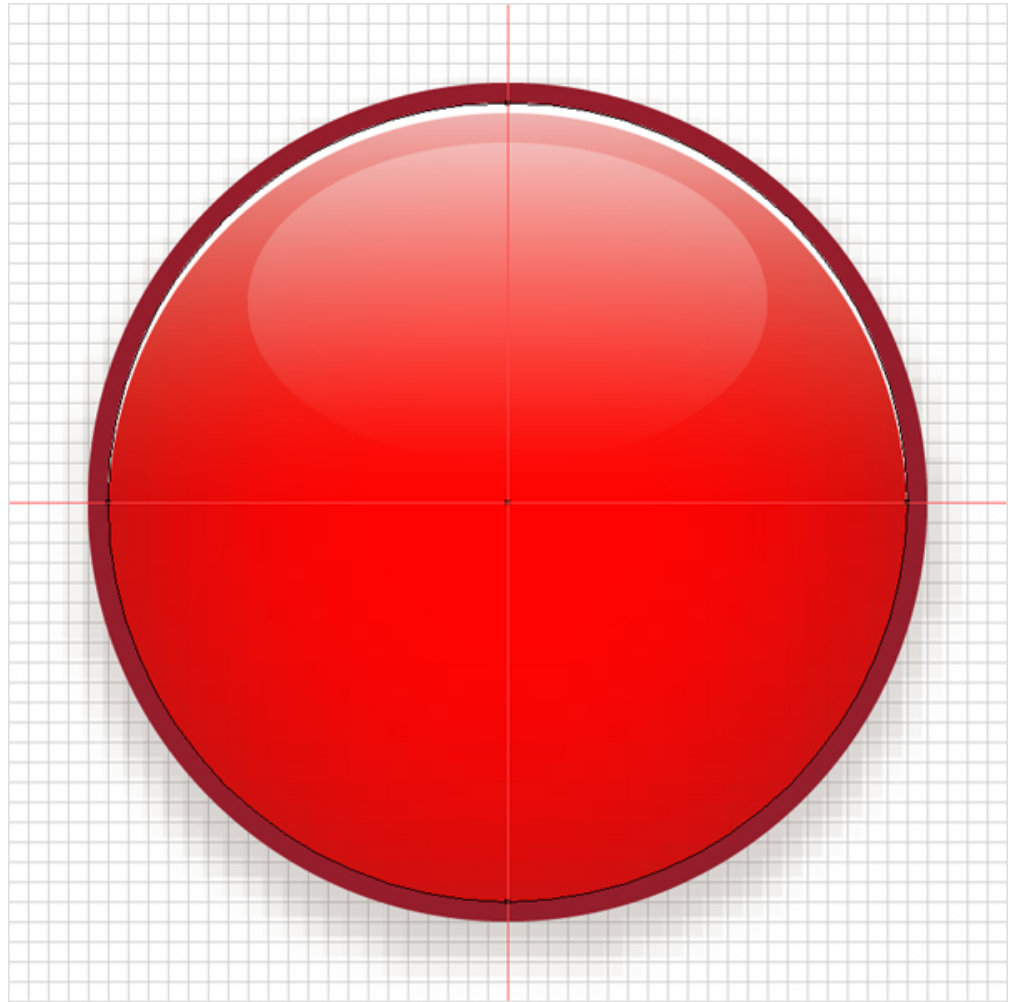


Step 33

Select the "Sick" sublayer and make a copy in front.

Let's focus on this fresh sublayer. First, rename it "Angry," then delete the eyes and the mouth components.

Again, you need to change the color of the entire face. Down below you have all the info that you need.



The screenshot shows the Photoshop interface with the Appearance and Gradient panels open for a red circle. The Appearance panel shows the following layers from top to bottom:

- Path (Stroke: 1 pt Outside, Fill: 75% Opacity)
- Fill (Red)
- Inner Glow (fx, Opacity: Default)
- Drop Shadow (fx, Opacity: Default)
- Opacity: Default

The Gradient panel shows a Linear gradient with the following settings:

- Type: Linear
- Angle: -90°
- Color 1: R: 255, G: 255, B: 255 (White)
- Color 2: R: 241, G: 90, B: 41 (Dark Red)
- Location: 90%

The Inner Glow panel shows the following settings:

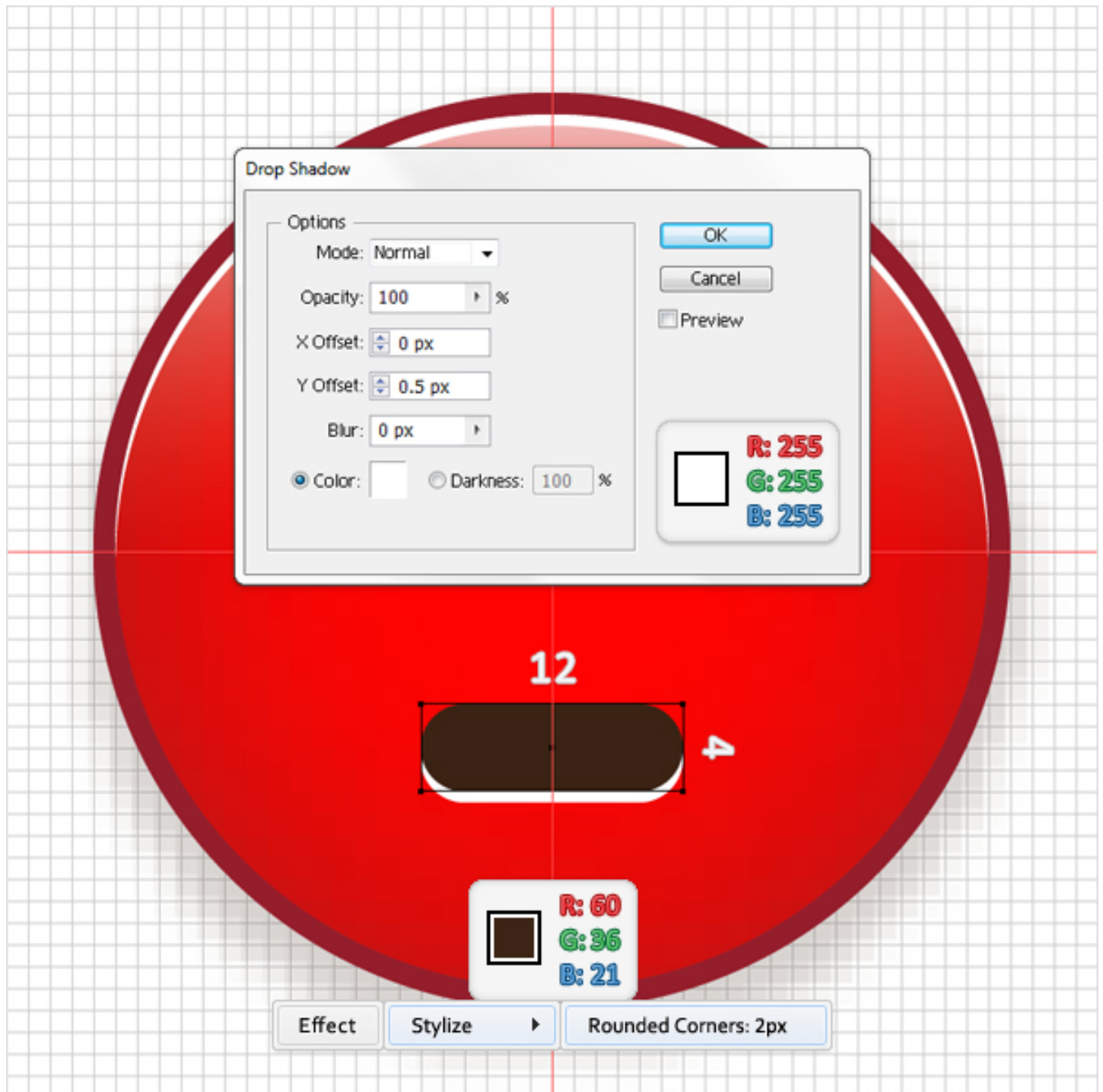
- Options: Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%, Blur: 10 px, Edge checked
- Color: R: 204, G: 17, B: 17 (Dark Red)

Color swatches for the colors mentioned are shown in the screenshot:

- White: R: 255, G: 0, B: 0
- Dark Red: R: 150, G: 90, B: 45
- Inner Glow Color: R: 204, G: 17, B: 17

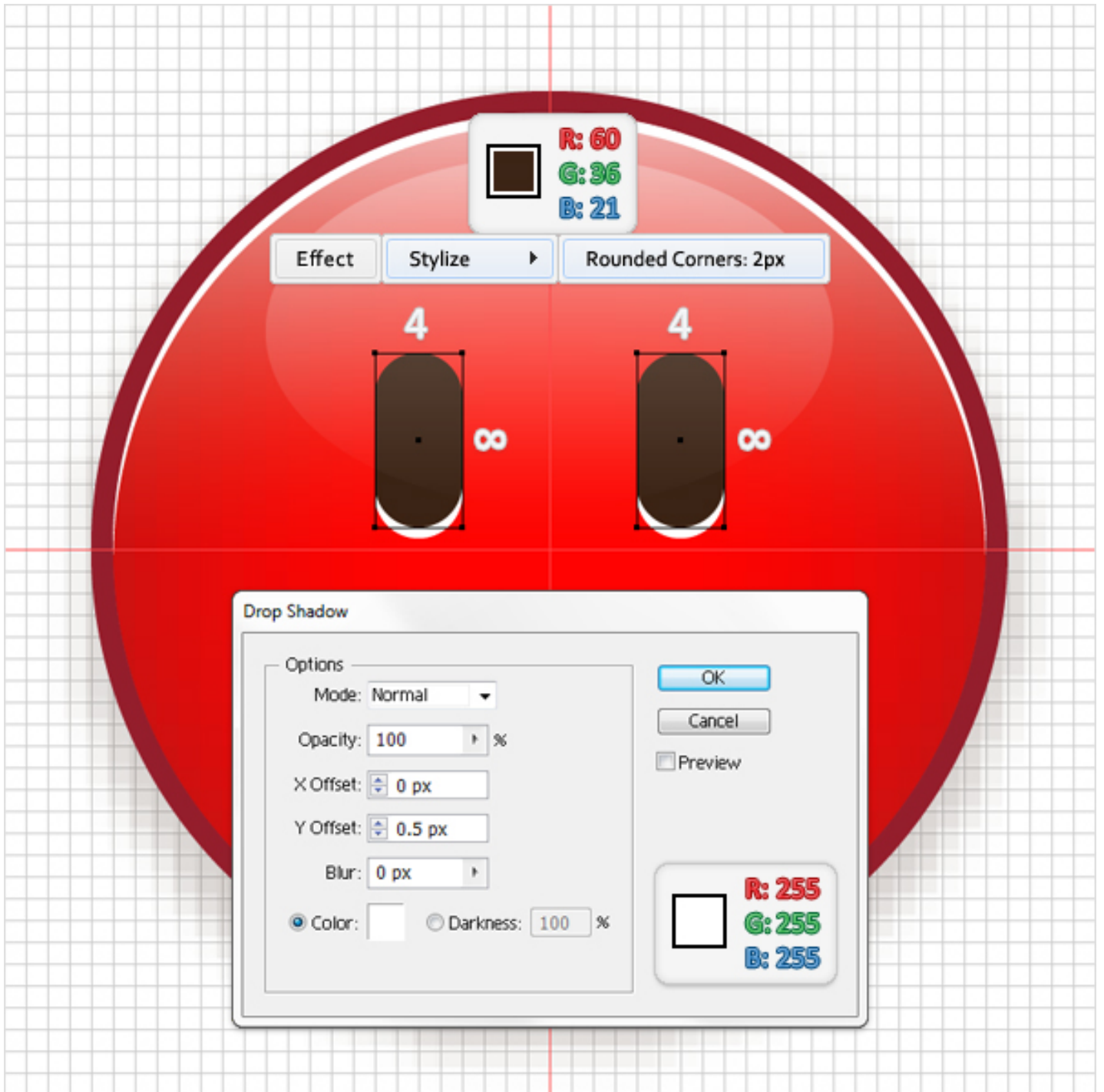
Step 34

Pick the Rectangle Tool (M), create a 12 by 4px shape, and place it as shown in the following image. Fill it with R=60, G=36, B=21, then go to Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners. Enter a 2px radius, click OK, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below and click OK.



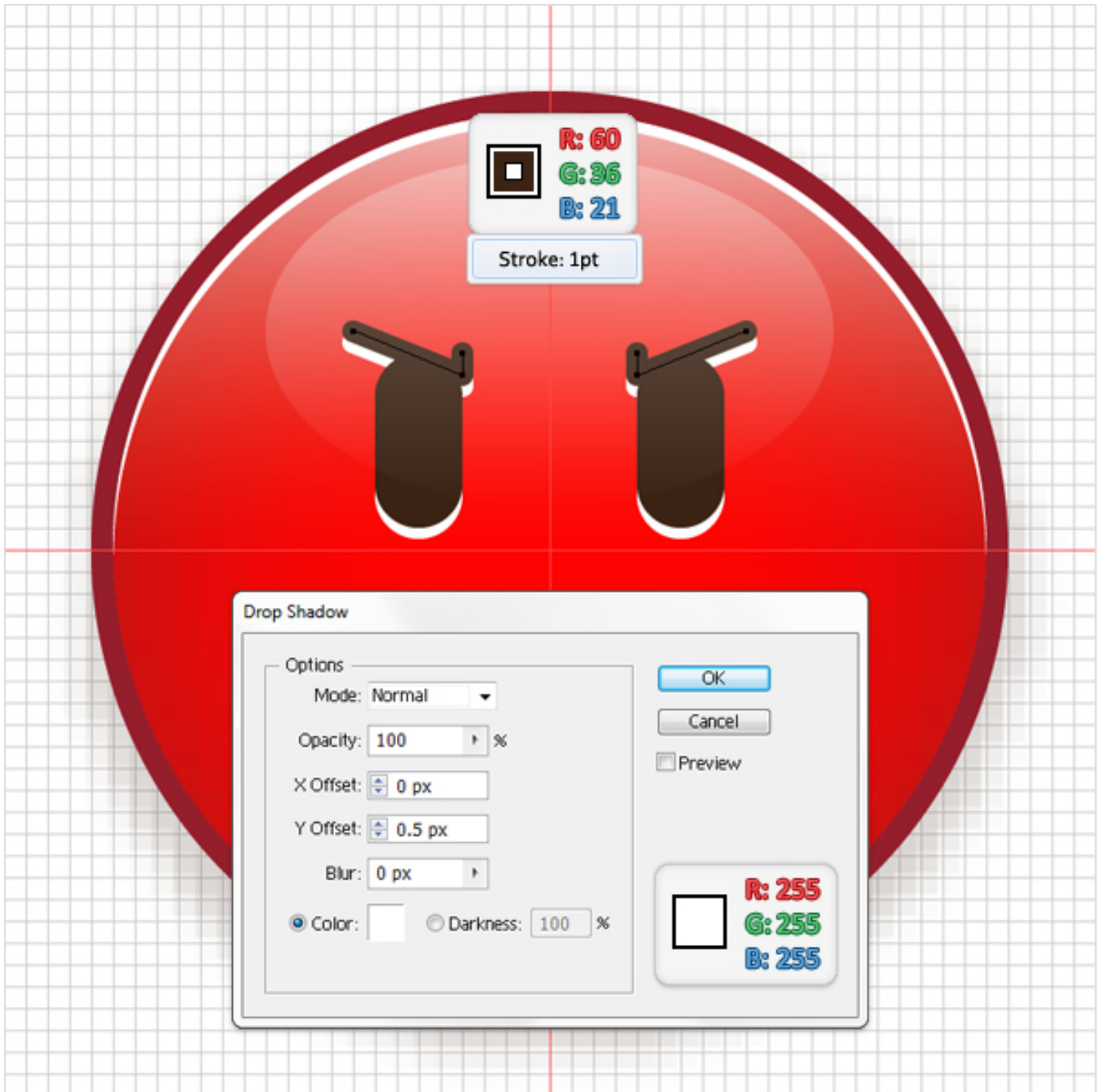
Step 35

Let's continue with the eyes. Pick the Rectangle Tool (M), create two 4 by 8px shapes, and place it as shown in the following image. Fill them with R=60, G=36, B=21, then go to Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners. Enter a 2px radius, click OK, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below and click OK.



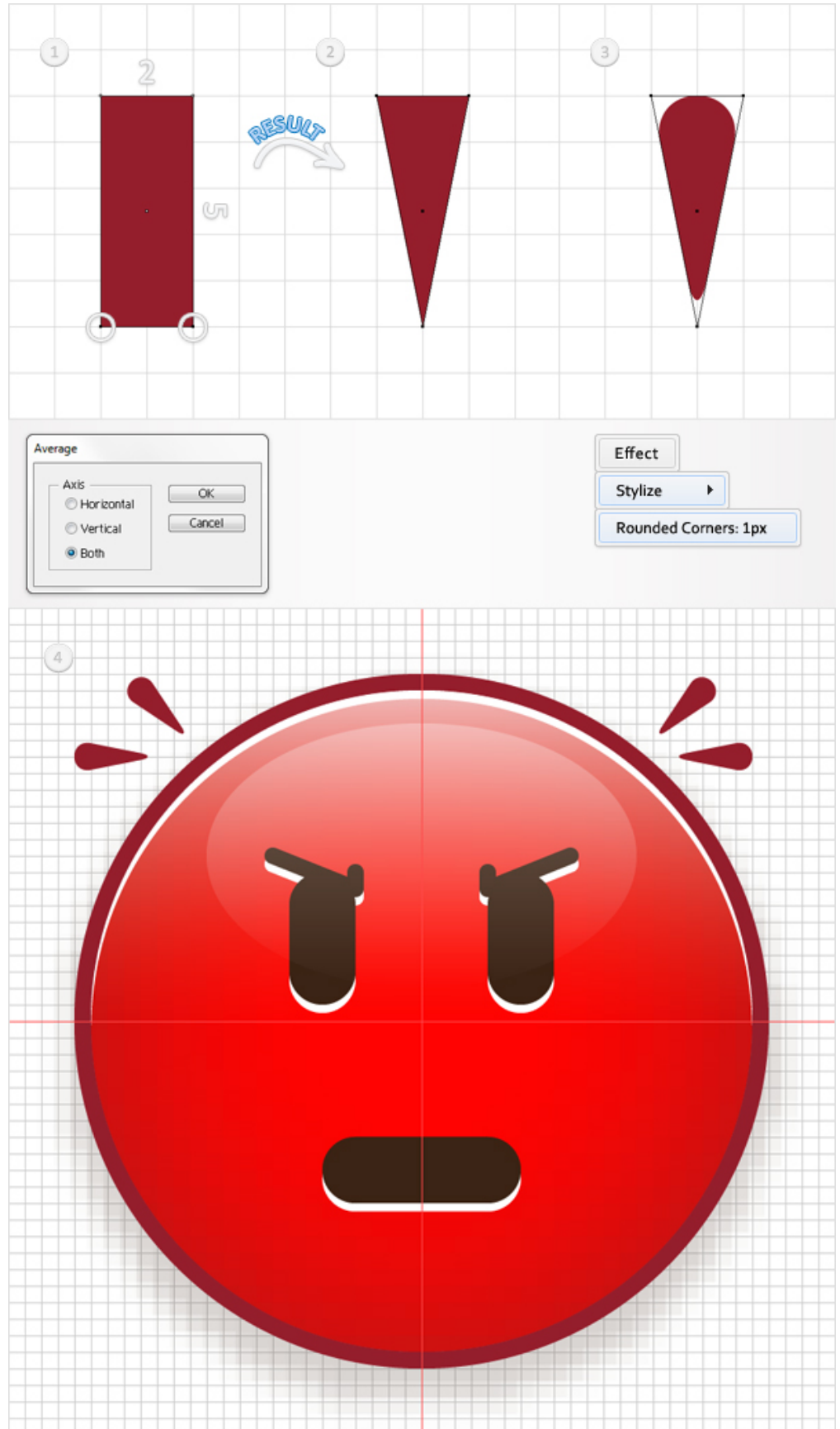
Step 36

Pick the Pen Tool (P), draw the two paths shown below, and place them as shown in the following image. Add a 1pt stroke for both of these paths, set the color at R=0, G=104, B=56, and go to the Stroke panel (Window > Stroke). Click on the Round Cap button, then go to Effect > Stylize > Drop Shadow. Enter the data shown below and click OK.



Step 37

Pick the Rectangle Tool (M), create a 2 by 5px shape, and fill it with R=0, G=104, B=56. Pick the Direct Selection Tool (A), select the bottom anchor points and go to Object > Path > Average. Check Both and click OK. This will turn your rectangle into a pretty sharp triangle. Select it and go to Effect > Stylize > Rounded Corners. Enter a 1px radius, click OK, then make three copies. Rotate them and place them as shown in the final image.



Conclusion

The final emoticons icon set is below. Yours should look similar, but will have your own theme and maybe some different expressions. Create a new file that is 3”h x 11”w and copy each completed face and paste it on our file. Make sure each face is seen. Group each face separately. Then use the align tool to align the bottom and distribute centers to create equal distance between all the emojis. Save as a .ai file, then export as a .jpg and post to your portfolio. After, make a .jpg of each face from the original .ai file. We will use these image to create emojis on your phone.

