



Creative Live Text Effects

Week 03
Instructor: Bill Bowman

CORVETTE
LIVE TEXT

RUSTY NAIL

GUN METAL **GLOSS BLACK**

Note: This tutorial assumes that you have a basic understanding of both the Appearance Panel and the Gradient Panel. I won't always tell you exactly what colours to use in your gradients. Use what you feel works best for the look that you wish to achieve.

There are many different ways to use the tools in the Adobe Creative Suite. I am a big believer in using non-destructive techniques and live effects whenever I possibly can.

Why?

Well, I'm glad you asked...

To start with, as designers, a large part of the creative process, involves changing our minds. We refine, tweak and improve our designs. Working in a non-destructive fashion, makes that so much easier because we're not continually re-inventing the wheel as we explore new creative options.

Working non-destructively not only aids the creative process, but also makes client revisions much easier and much quicker to accommodate.

Real-life scenario:

There's a message on my phone and it's the client...

"Bill, everyone here absolutely loves the shiny metallic treatment of the headline...But..." (here it comes) "You're going to want to kill me for this, but we need to change the wording of the headline a bit. Again."

"Oh and nearly forgot, did I mention that we'll need the headline in French too?"

If that metallic treatment took me an hour or so to create and knowing that it involved outlining my text, offsetting paths, outlining strokes, adding random effects and the like, I'd want to pull my hair out, assuming that I still had some.

Working non-destructively makes the client's request far less work. I know what I'm doing, and I prepared myself for just such a scenario.

The client wants to change the text in the headline (again) and now they think to tell me that they'll also need French versions as well?

No problem – Seriously, it's no big deal. I work non-destructively and my text remains live and can be edited at any time, all the while maintaining that cool shiny metallic treatment that the client loves so much!

Let me show you how it's done.

A good place to start is by examining what makes shiny metal look like shiny metal. Essentially it's a reflection of the world around us. We cannot create a truly reflective surface digitally, but we can trick the eye into "seeing" a surface as being reflective.

The simulated shiny reflective surface has three main parts. The sky, the horizon and the earth or foreground.

Since this headline is for a printed brochure, we want to be sure to set up our document for cyan, magenta, yellow and black.

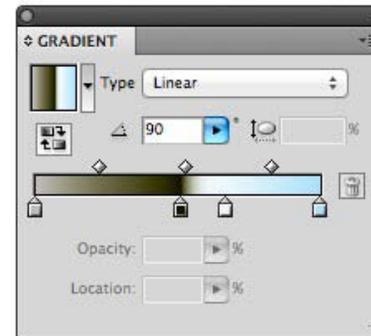
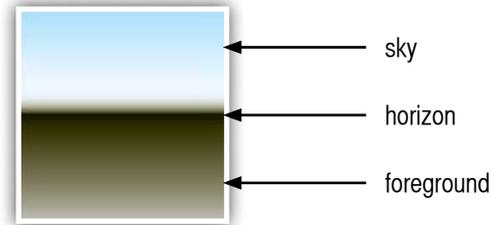
While we can set up our custom chrome gradient on the fly, I like to create it ahead of time. It's just the way that I prefer to work, but you don't have to.

Let's start by creating a shape, and filling it with a linear gradient. I think that it's best to keep this gradient rather simple so the effect doesn't compete with the text.

Our headline is being used on an automotive brochure, and since cars are most often viewed on pavement, I want the lower half of my gradient to reflect that, therefore I'll use a warm grey colour.

If my text was being used on a brochure selling boats, then I'd use some dark cool blues on the lower half of my gradient. If it was being used on a brochure selling landscaping equipment, I might use some dark earthy greens. My point? Tweak the gradient for the needs of each individual project.

Add the gradient to the swatches panel so it can quickly be called upon later.



Gradient colour stop 1: 13c, 11m, 13y, 14k

Gradient colour stop 2: 27c, 20m, 95y, 95k

Gradient colour stop 3: 6c, 0m, 0y, 0k

Gradient colour stop 4: 30c, 0m, 0y, 0k

Our headline is to read as shown.

I've used 60 pt Serpentine Bold Italic, but any bold any sans-serif font will do.

We need to use the appearance panel to create the entire effect. This makes our chrome appearance completely live and editable. Furthermore, with this technique, there is no need to convert our text to outlines, so our text remains live and editable as well.

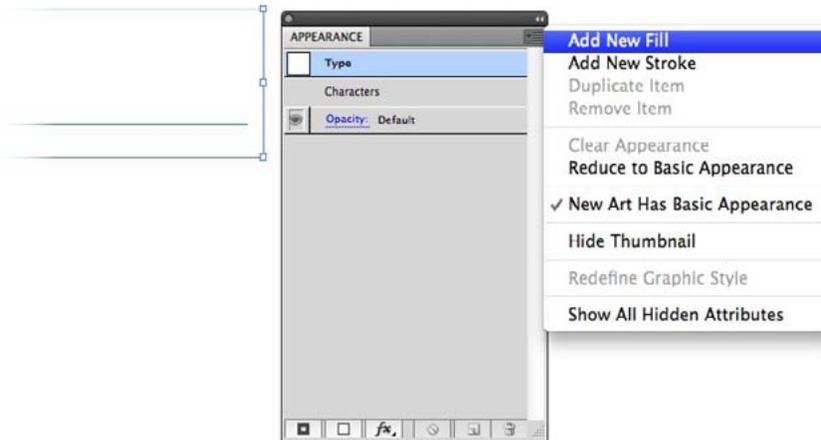
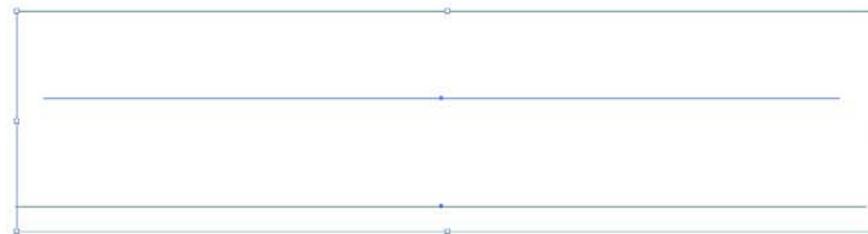
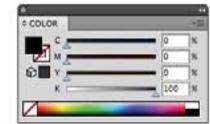
Since the effect is being looked after in the appearance panel, let's give our text a fill and stroke of none via the color panel.

Note: We want each line to have the same effect, so each line is its own text object. If it was two lines of the same text object, the chrome effect would span both lines and that's not the look that we're after.

We'll begin by focussing on the first line and when we have the chrome just the way we want it, we'll save the effect as a graphic style that can instantly be applied to the second line of text or even a French version of the headline if it was required.

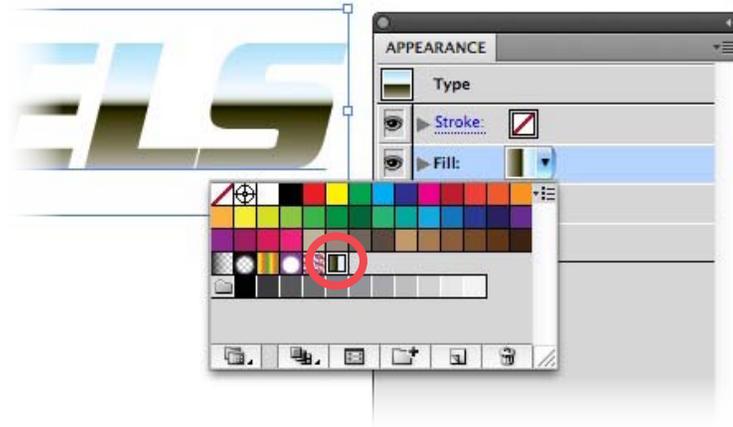
With the first line of our headline still selected, choose **Add New Fill** from the appearance panel's fly-out menu.

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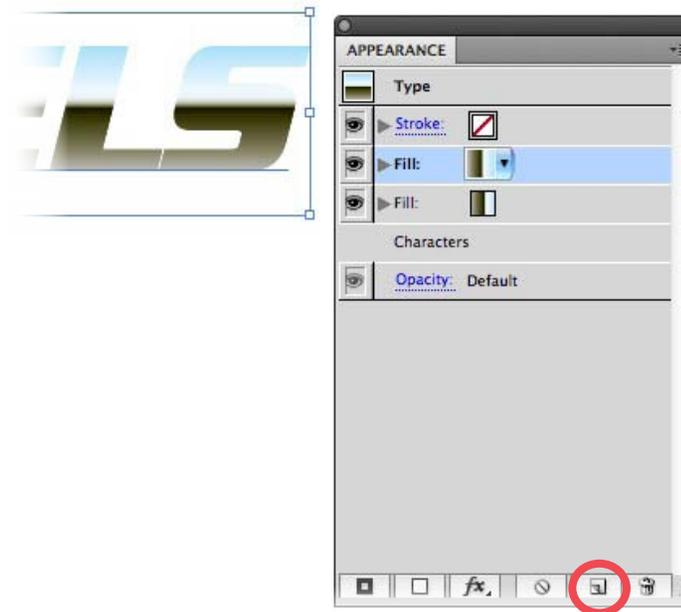


From the fill selection pop-up menu, choose the chrome gradient that we created earlier.

This gives our face of text the chrome appearance, but to complete the effect we need to give the edges of the letters some definition.



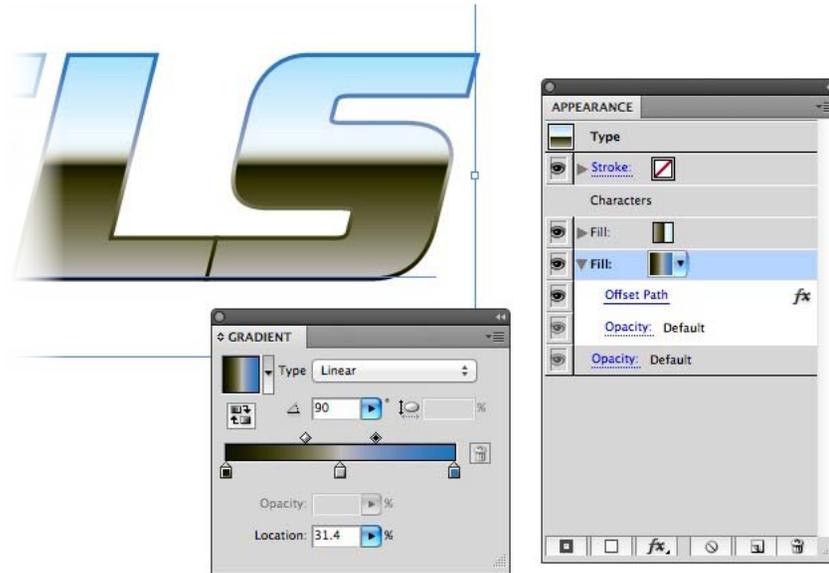
With the chrome fill appearance layer selected, click the **Duplicate Selected Item** button at the bottom of the appearance panel. The duplicate will appear directly below the original.



With the newly duplicated layer selected, click the **Add New Effect** button and choose **Offset Path...**, then enter .75 pt (.0104 in) in the Offset field.

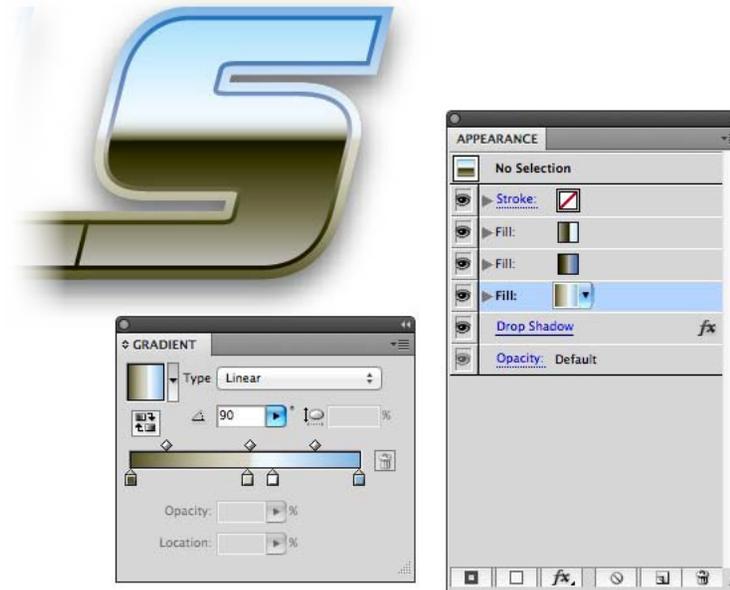
Next, we want to adjust the gradient to better define the edges of the letters.

Tip: You can duplicate a gradient colour stop by holding down the Option key while dragging it to a new location.

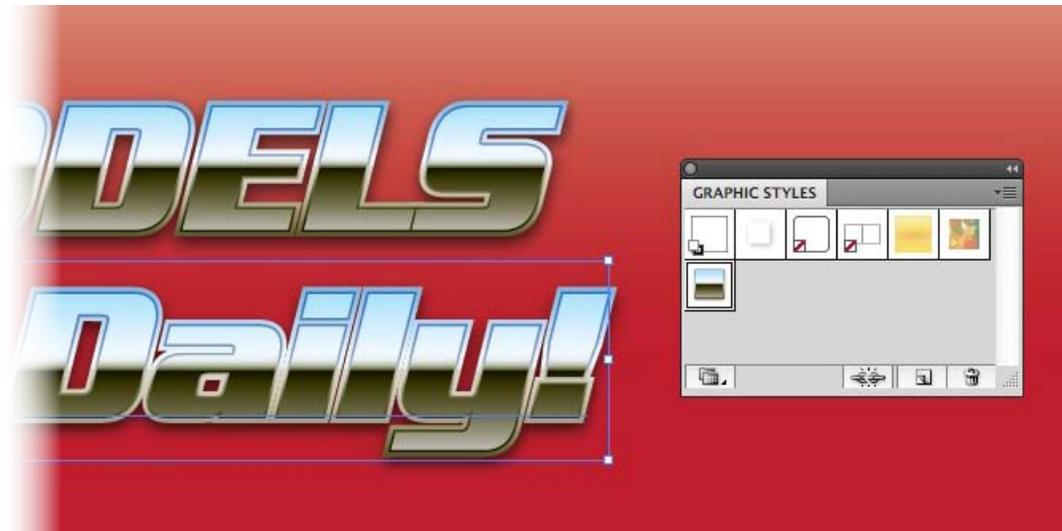


Next, duplicate this layer, by clicking the **Duplicate Selected Item** button. Select this layer, click its twirl-down triangle to reveal the **Offset Path** link. Click it, then increase the offset path and adjust the gradient to create a bevel effect for the letters.

From the **Add New Effect** button, I added a drop shadow, then added this appearance to the Graphic Styles Panel so I can easily apply this same effect to the second line of text.



Here a background has been added and the chrome effect saved as a Graphic Style then applied to the second line of type.



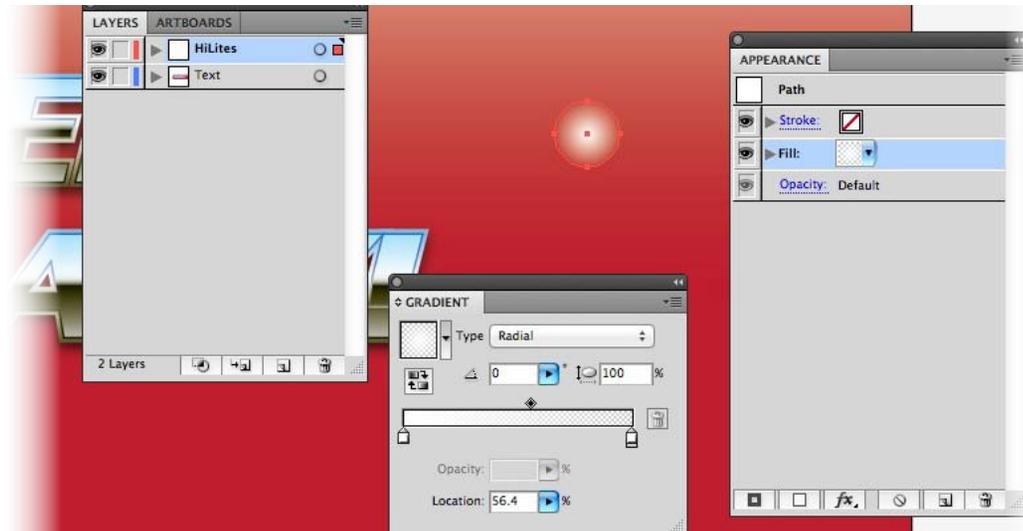
Because this effect is live, I can easily make changes to the text, such as making the second line all uppercase. No need to do anything over!



For a little added realism, let's create a small highlight star burst.

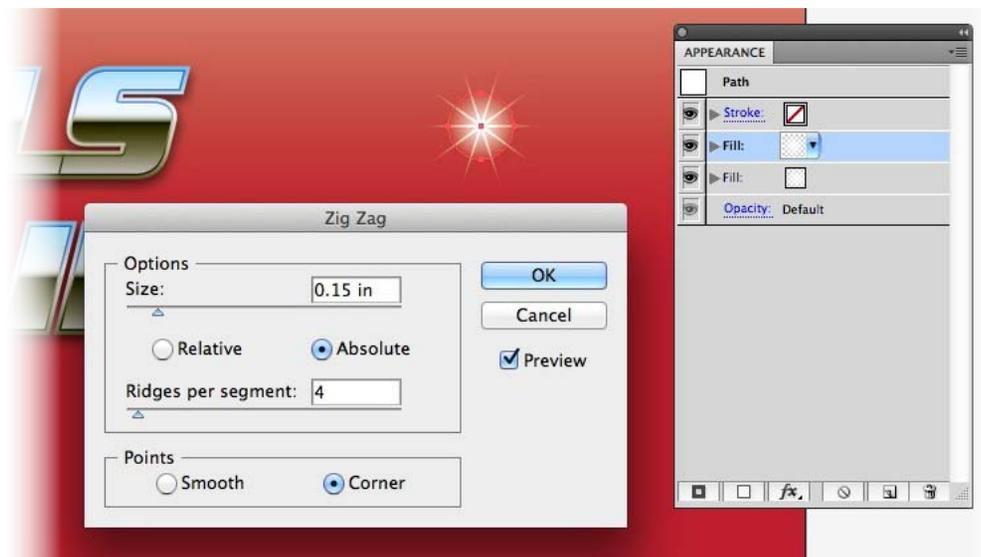
First lock the layer with the text and create a brand new layer directly above. Since this layer is where our highlights will live, let's name it something really clever like HiLites.

Draw a small circle and using the appearance panel, give it a radial fill from solid white to transparent as shown, then duplicate it using the **Duplicate Selected Item** button at the bottom of the appearance panel



With the upper most appearance of the two highlights selected, travel down to the **Add New Effect** button and then choose **Zig Zag...**, lastly tweak the settings to get a star burst that floats your boat.

Lastly, move the star burst wherever you like. Because this highlight is created via the appearance panel it remains totally live. We can change it's dynamic properties at any time.



With minimal effort you can tweak the effect for slightly different looks. In addition to being a live and easy to edit effect, it can be saved and recalled for future projects saving even more time and that should translate into more money in your pocket!



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Using basically the same procedure, I created three additional live text effects. Experiment to see what creative ways you can use the appearance panel for live text effects!



These graphic styles aren't only for text. You can use them to add visual interest to icons and symbols too!

