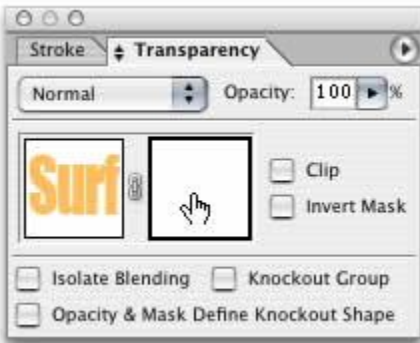


Opacity Masks in Illustrator CS

Opacity Masks in Illustrator CS Using images and objects to define transparency in text
Now click on the opacity mask that you've created in order to select it.

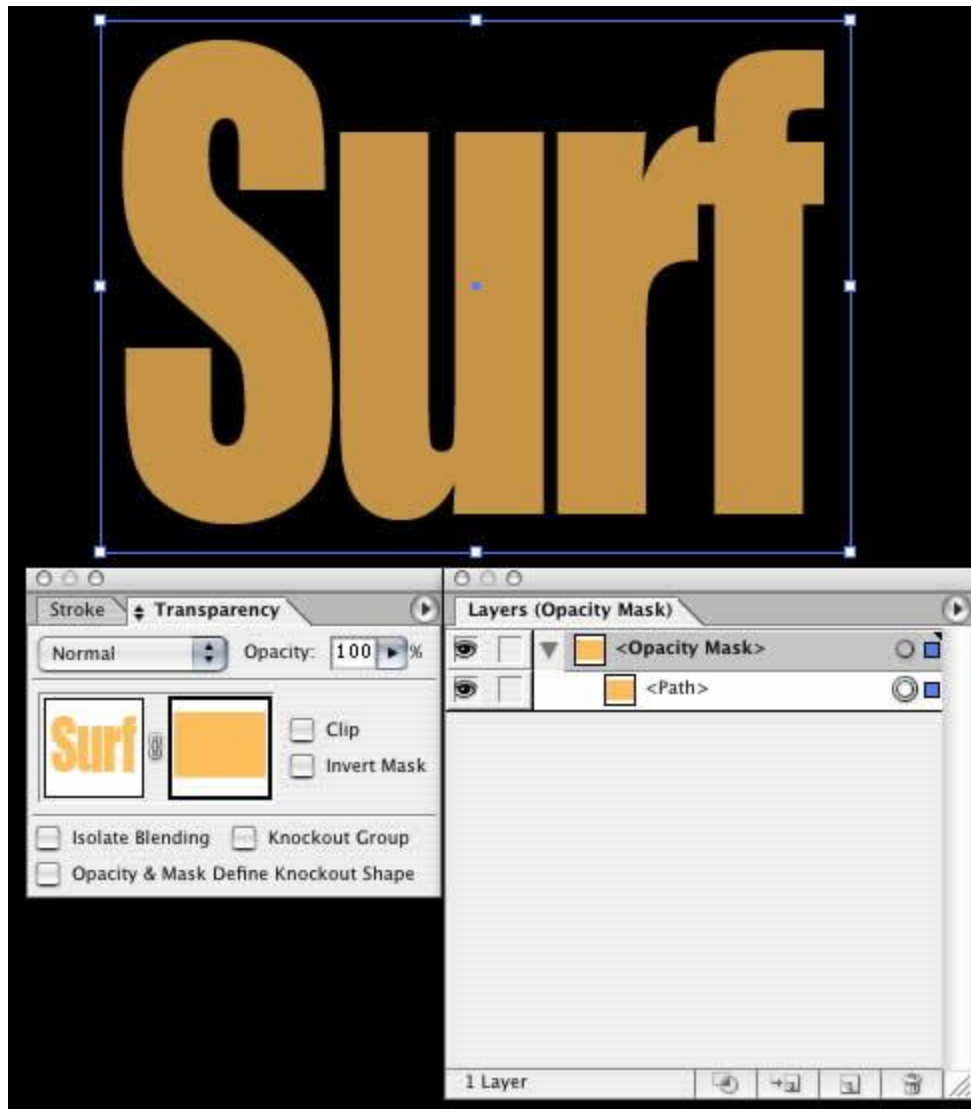


Notice what happens in your Layers palette?



You've entered into a sort of nested layer system in Illustrator in which any object you create becomes a sub-layer of your text object. You can't select any object that's currently in your document. You can only select and create objects within this special opacity mask layer.

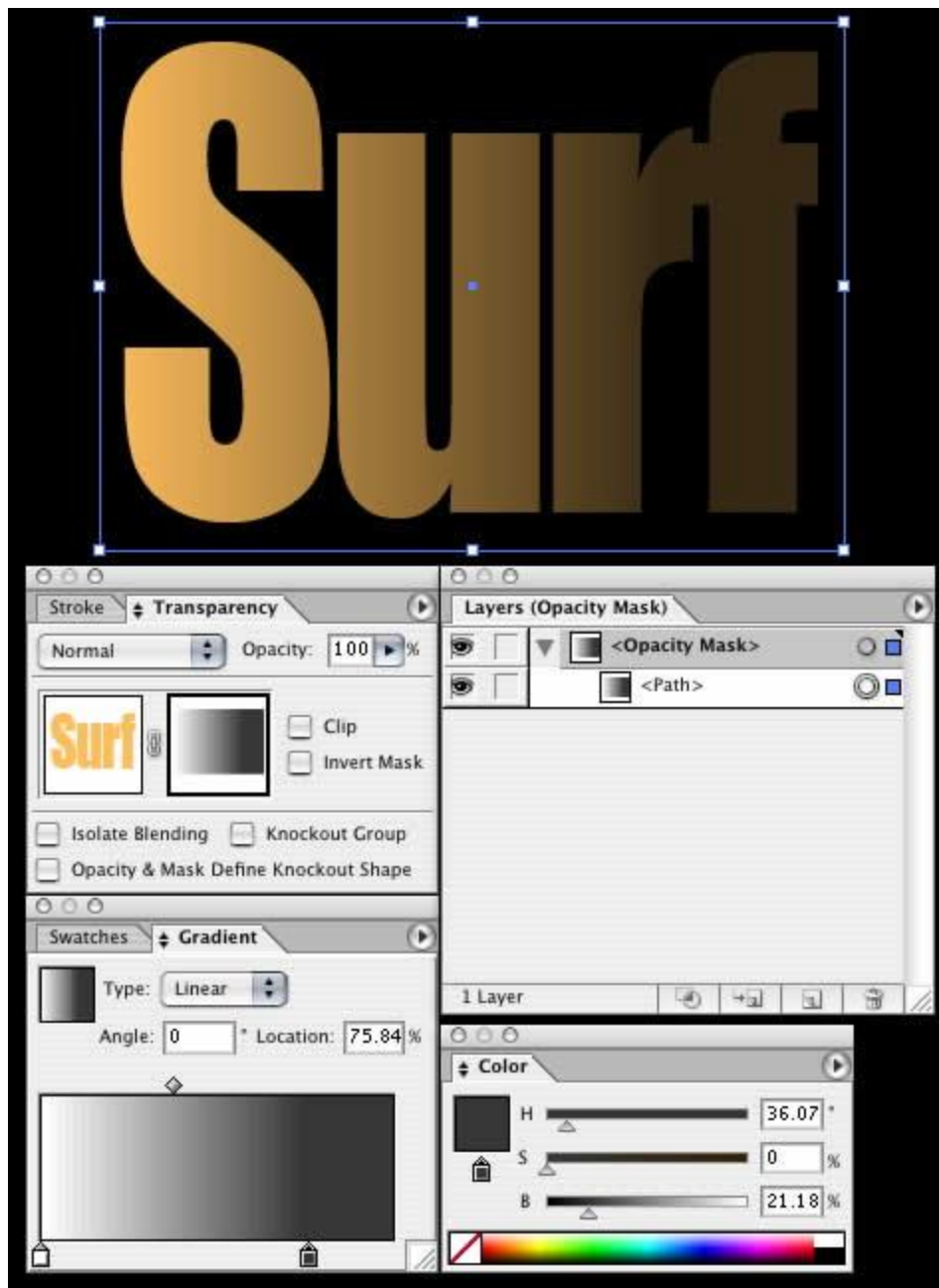
So now pick a drawing tool. I'll use the rectangle tool and draw a box around my text object, which happens to have the same fill color as my text.



And then I'll apply a gradient swatch to that box. The gradient I chose, seen below in the Layers palette and the Transparency palette, has a white center, fading out to black. Because Illustrator uses the luminance values of objects in the opacity mask, this means that my text fades from full opaque to fully transparent from the center.



Now I can continue to add objects to my mask, if desired, or modify my current object. In my case, I'll convert the radial gradient to a linear gradient. AND I'll adjust the brightness value of the black to make it a dark gray so that the text doesn't disappear completely.



Then, in the Transparency palette I'll once again select the main object so that I can manipulate the object rather than the mask. I'll drag it on top of an image in my composition, and voila! I now have live, editable text with a gradient mask.

