Inkscape FAQ: How do I crop in Inkscape?

Date: April 22, 2014   **Author: Ryan Lerch**   **45**

One of the most frequently asked questions from Inkscape users is "how do i crop an image or object?". Inkscape is primarily a vector graphics editor, so when someone asks this question, they could possibly mean something slightly different to a traditional image crop. This FAQ explains a few of the techniques that people actually mean when they say they want to crop in inkscape.

What do you mean when you say "crop"

- If you have a complex drawing with many shapes and objects, and want to trim these, then **Clipping** is probably the solution for you. (click here to jump to how to do this)

- If you have a single path or object (like a star or a rectangle), and want to trim or crop that object down, then **Boolean Operations** is probably what you need.

([click here to jump to how to do this](#))

- If you are exporting your inkscape document (SVG) to a bitmap (a PNG) with the "File > Export Bitmap" command, and want to only export a portion of your document, then **changing the document size**, and just exporting the document is probably the solution for your needs. ([click here to jump to how to do this](#))

Clipping

The *Clipping* feature is an easy and versatile way to crop vector or bitmap/raster objects in Inkscape.

Basic process for cropping / clipping in Inkscape

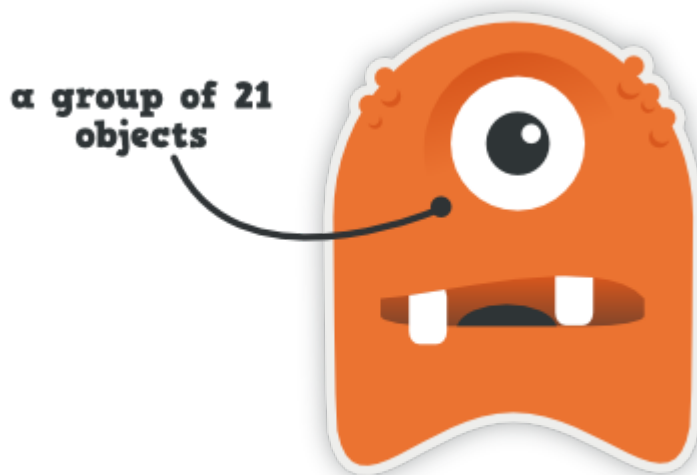The process is pretty simple to clip (crop) a group of objects in Inkscape:

1. Select all the objects that you want to clip / crop, and group them together with **Object > Group** from the menu.

2. Draw a shape over the top of the group where you want to clip / crop. This can be any single shape, a rectangle, a circle or even a star. This is our **clipping object**.

3. Finally, select both the group from Step 1, and the clipping object from Step 2, and from the Inkscape menus, choose **Object > Clip > Set**.
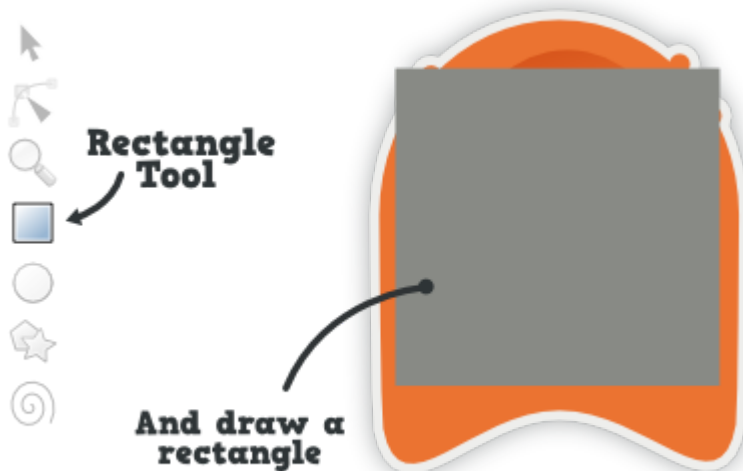
A more detailed walkthrough of clipping

If you are less familiar with Inkscape, here is a more detailed walkthrough tutorial for cropping / clipping in Inkscape. First up, we are going to start with our little monster friend here that was downloaded from the Open Clip Art Library:
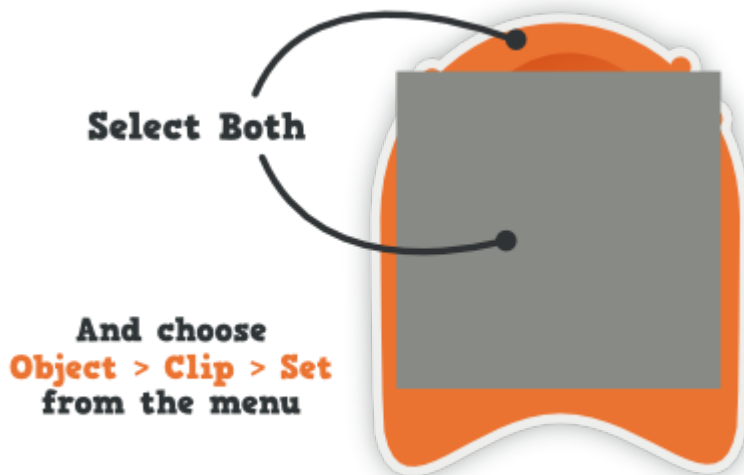

Our monster is actually a group of 21 objects (a mixture of *Ellipses* and *Paths*). When clipping, it is **always** easier to group the objects being clipped. Grouping objects is as simple as selecting 2 or more objects and choosing **Object > Group**.

a group of 21 objects

Choose the **Rectangle Tool** from the **Toolbar,** and draw
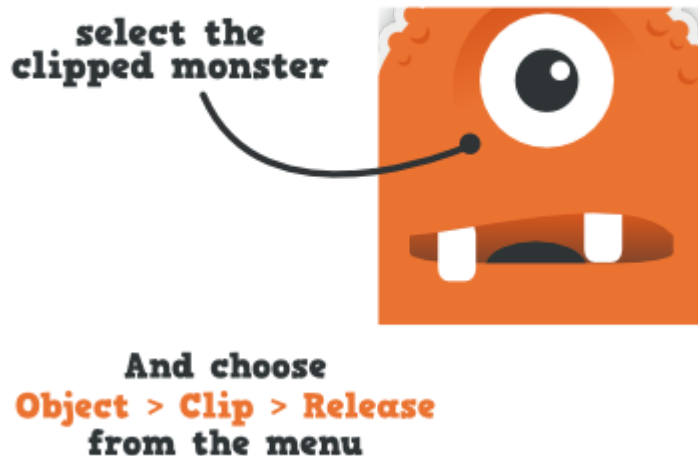a Rectangle over our poor little monster's face.

Select both the the *monster* (the group) and the *Grey
Rectangle* (a rectangle object). After selecting both,
Choose **Object > Clip > Set** from the menu.

...and our monster is now cropped in a nice neat
rectangle.

But what has happened to the rest of the monster? Well, one of the awesome things about the Clipping feature in Inkscape is that it is *non-destructive*. We can remove the clip at any time by selecting the clipped object, and then choosing **Object > Clip > Release** from the menu.

...and now our monster is back to normal! Well, the rectangle that was clipping him before is still there, but trust me, so is the monster.

back to where
we started!

But can you crop your image with something other than a rectangle? Yes! Clipping in inkscape can be done with a wide range of clipping objects, including Text Objects...

text objects

before   after

Circle and Ellipse objects...