

How to Create a Cute Bunny Vector Character

In this Illustrator tutorial, I will show you how to create a cute bunny character. This tutorial uses simple shapes and gradients that are easy to apply to other character illustrations.

Final Image Preview

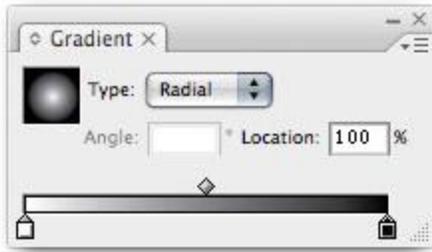
Below is the final design we will be working towards.



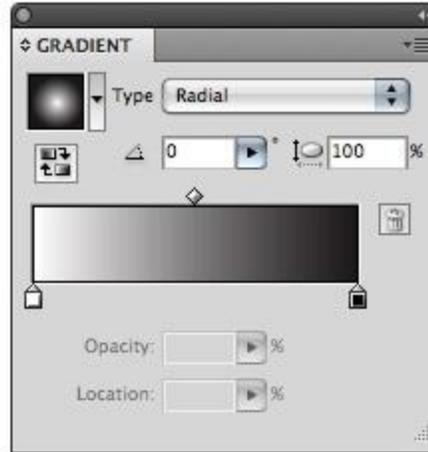
Step 1

Before we start, I wanted to let everyone know I will be using Illustrator CS4 for this tutorial. Don't worry, everything I am creating can be done in the other CS versions, I just wanted to let you know because the panels in the images will look different. Below is an example of the new Gradient Panel with a bunch of new goodies, but for this tutorial we will only be using the features that are in the other CS versions.

CS3 Panel

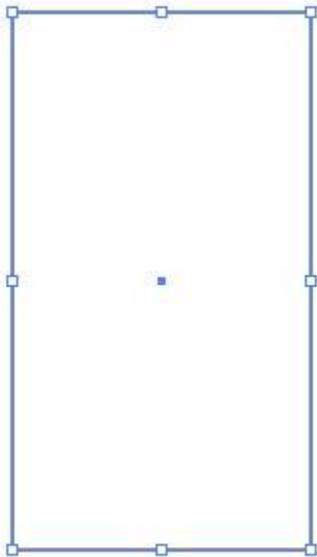


CS4 Panel



Step 2

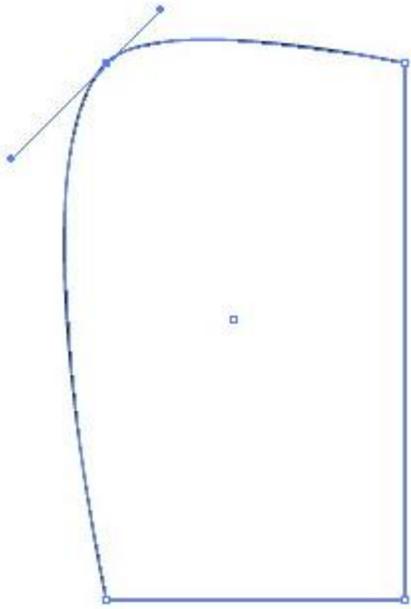
Create a new document, then make a 190 px wide by 290 px tall rectangle with the Rectangle Tool (M).



Rectangle

Step 3

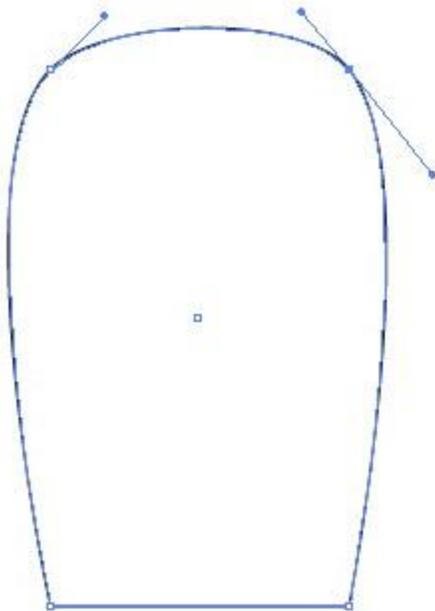
With your Direct Selection Tool (A), select the top left corner of the rectangle. With the point selected, the Control Panel defaults to the Anchor Point options. Press the second to the left button, converting the anchor point to a smooth point.



Convert Anchor Point

Step 4

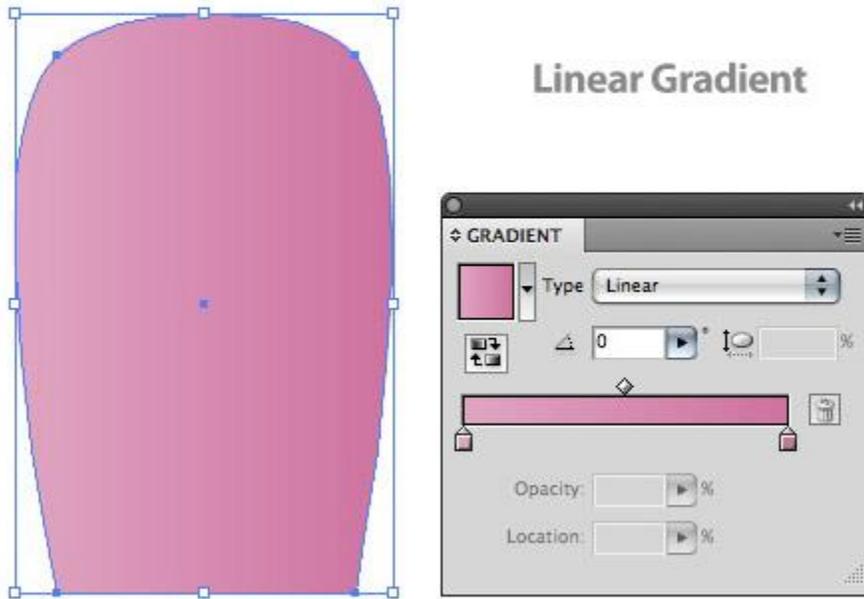
Repeat the previous step with the top right anchor point.



Convert Anchor Point

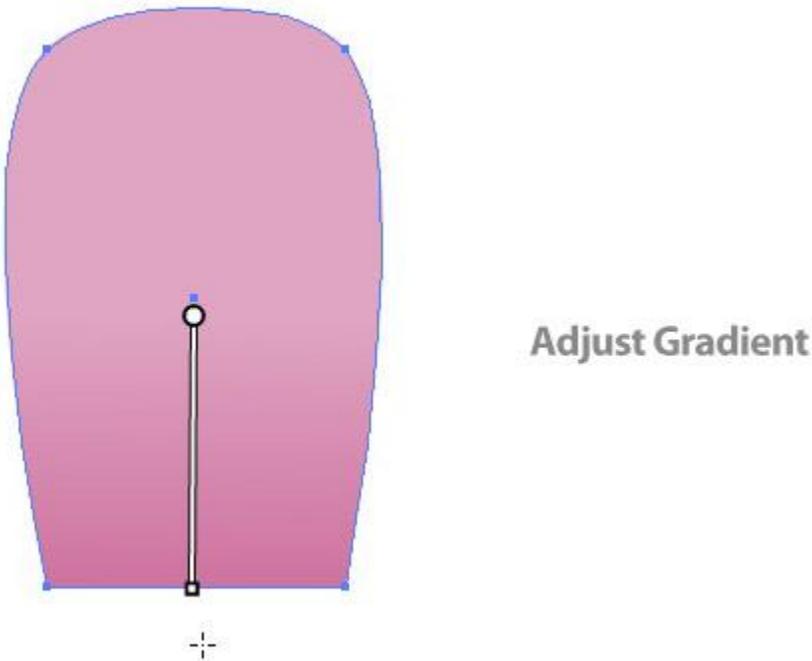
Step 5

Fill the rectangle with a Linear Gradient from the Gradient Panel and change the first swatch to a pink color and the second swatch to a darker pink color.



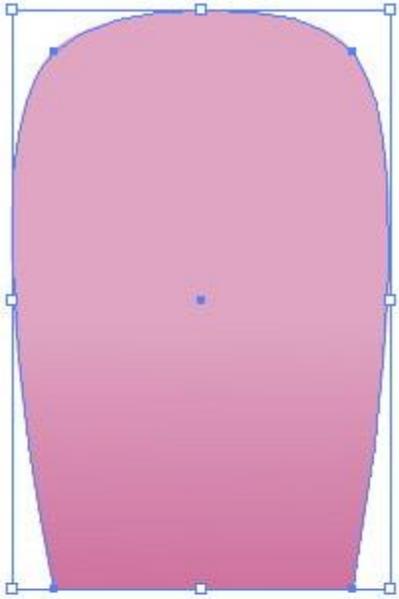
Step 6

Use the Gradient Tool to adjust the gradient by clicking and dragging from the middle of the shape to the bottom.

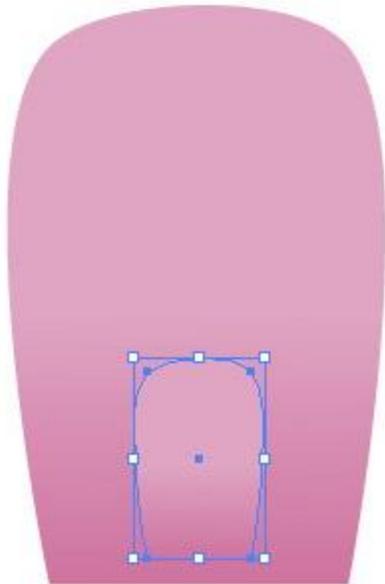


Step 7

Copy (Command + C) the shape and Paste in Front (Command + F). With the new shape selected, use the Selection Tool (V) and scale the shape to half of its original size. After scaling, place the the copied shape towards the bottom of the original.



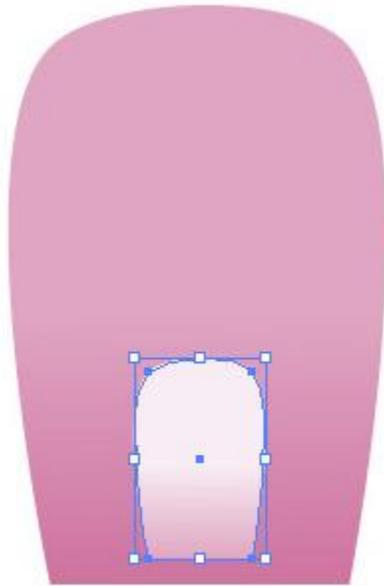
Copy and Paste in Front



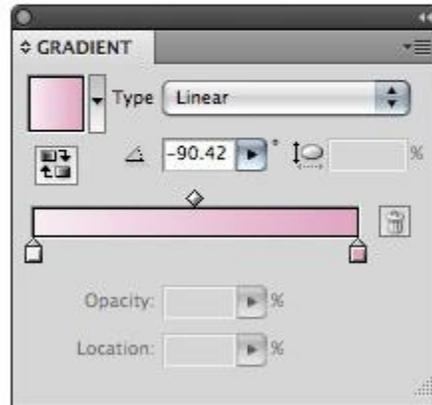
Scale and Place

Step 8

Change the first swatch in the gradient fill to a light pink and the other swatch to a slightly darker pink.

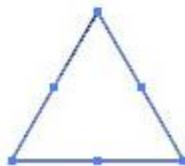
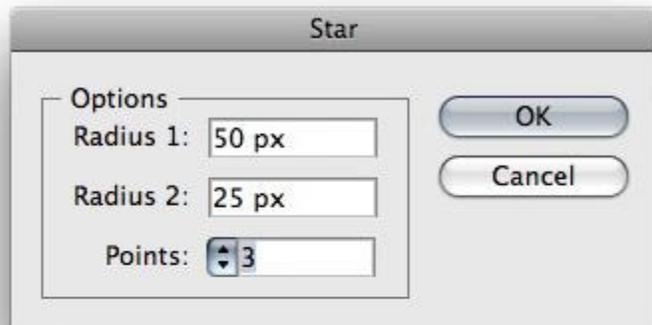


Gradient



Step 9

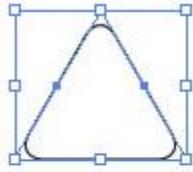
With the Star Tool, click on the artboard to bring up the Star dialog. In the dialog change Radius 1 to 50 px, Radius 2 to 25 px and the Points to 3.



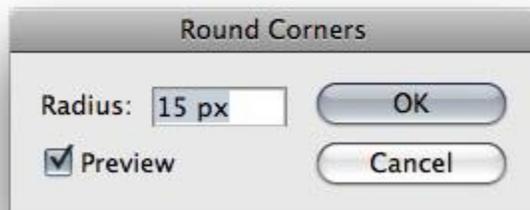
Triangle Shape

Step 10

With the triangle selected go Effect > Stylize > Round Corners. In the dialog change the radius to 15 px.

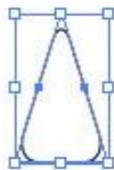


Round Corners

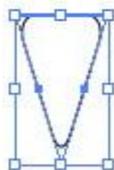


Step 11

With the Selection Tool (V), squish the triangle horizontally to half of its original size. Next rotate the triangle 180 degrees.

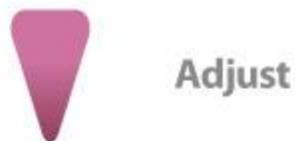
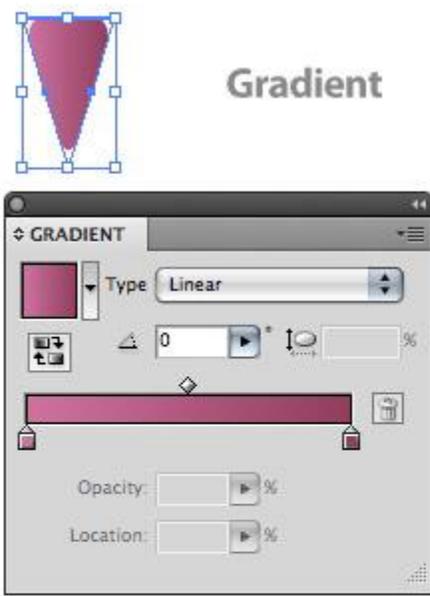


Squish



Step 12

Fill the triangle with a Linear Gradient, make the first swatch a dark pink from the previous shape and the second swatch make a darker pink. Adjust the gradient so the darkest part of the gradient is at the bottom of the triangle.



Step 13

Place the triangle at the bottom of the bigger body shape creating a leg. Once placed, drag out a copy of the leg to other side. Simply hold down Alt + Shift while dragging the shape.



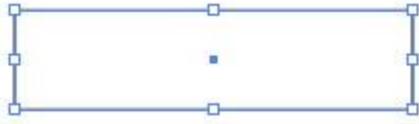
Place



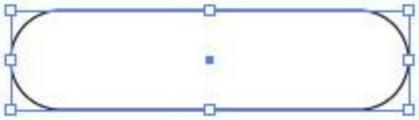
Copy

Step 14

Create a 200 px wide by 50 px tall rectangle and round the corners at 25 px.



Rectangle

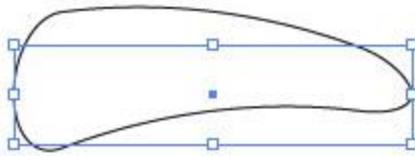


Round Corners

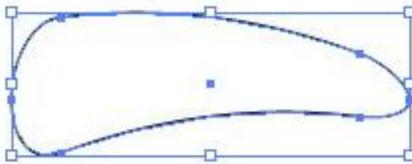
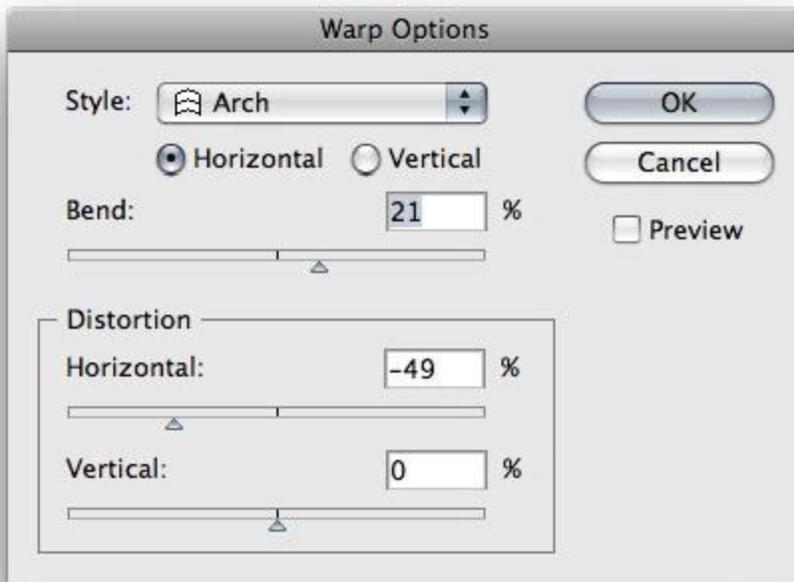


Step 15

Go to **Effect > Warp > Arch**. With the **Warp Options** dialog open, change the **Bend** to 20 and the **Horizontal Distortion** to -49. Next, make sure to expand the effects by going to **Object > Expand Appearance**. If you don't do this you will get some unexpected results as the steps continue.



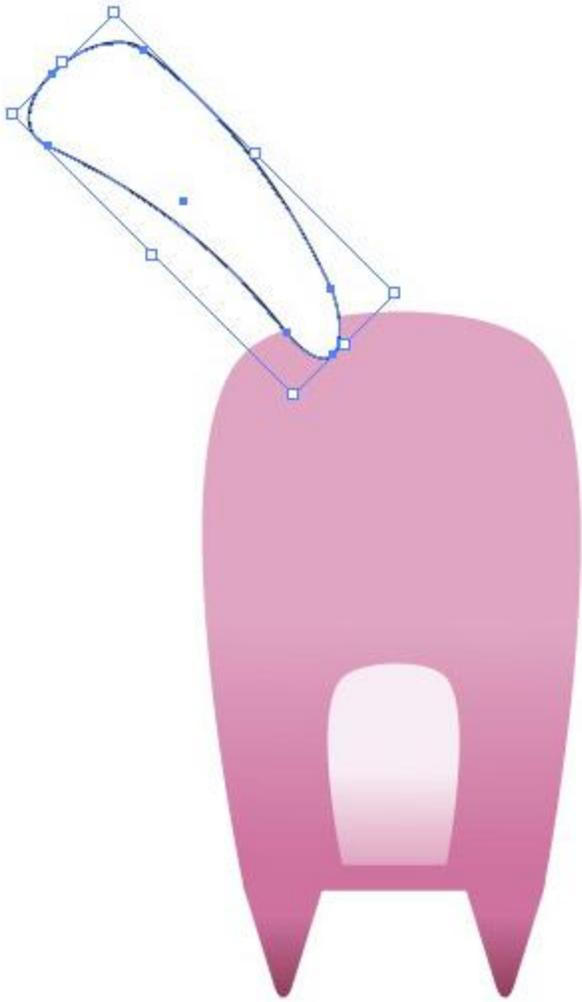
Arch Warp



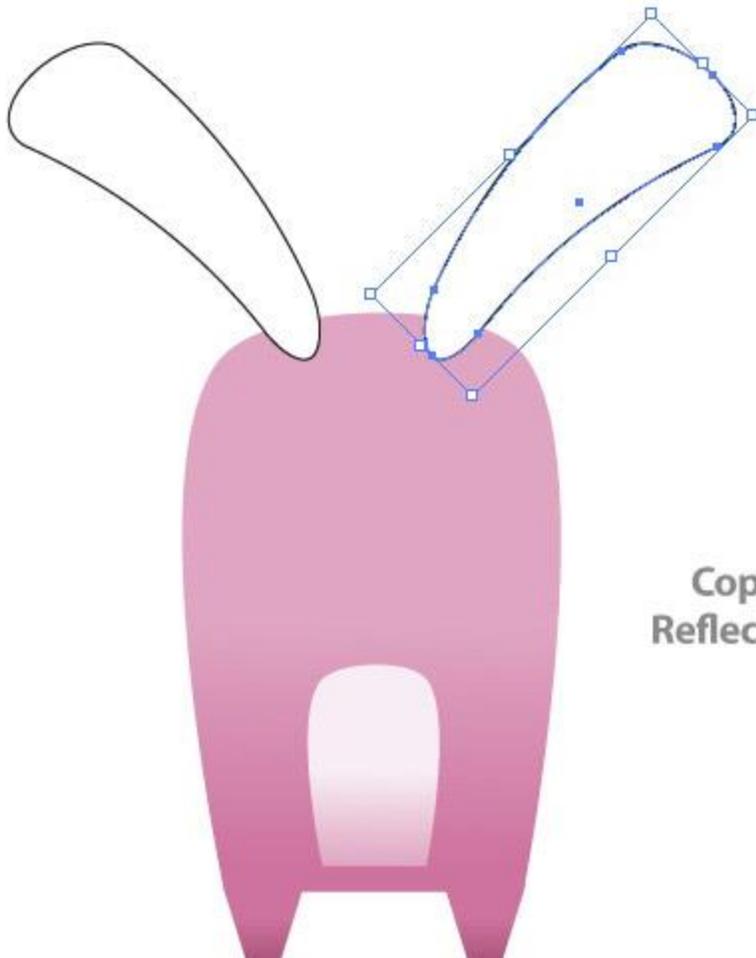
Expand

Step 16

Rotate the shape 45 degrees to the right so the shape is vertical. Next, place the shape over the top of the body shape. Once placed, Copy (Command + C) and Paste in Front (Command + F) the ear shape. Reflect the shape vertically by going to Object > Transform > Reflect and choosing the Vertical option in the dialog. Once reflected, move the copied ear to the other side of the body.



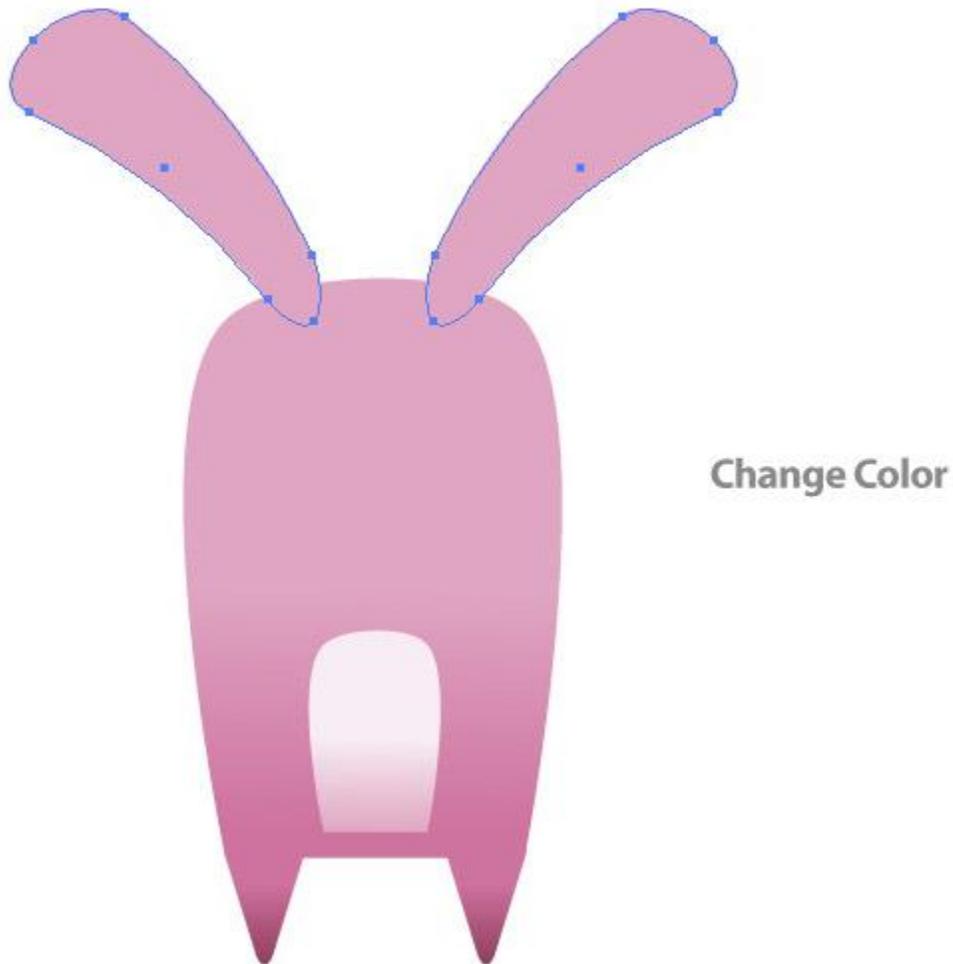
Rotate and Place



**Copy, Paste,
Reflect and Place**

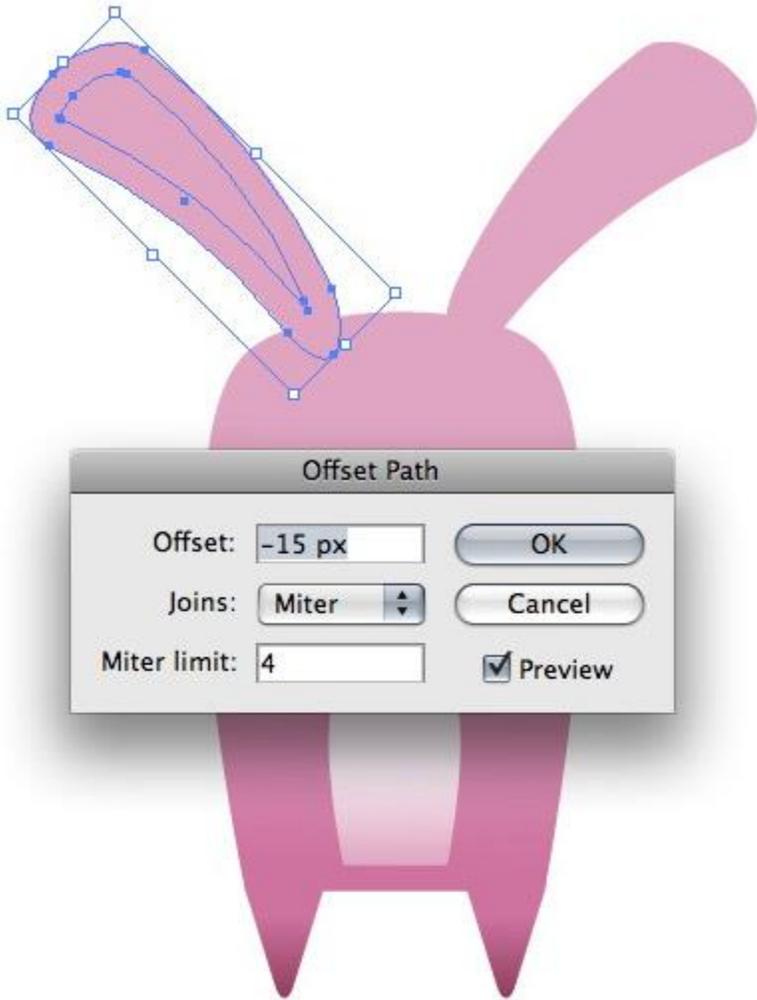
Step 17

Change the fill of the the ears to the first swatch pink color in the body shape.

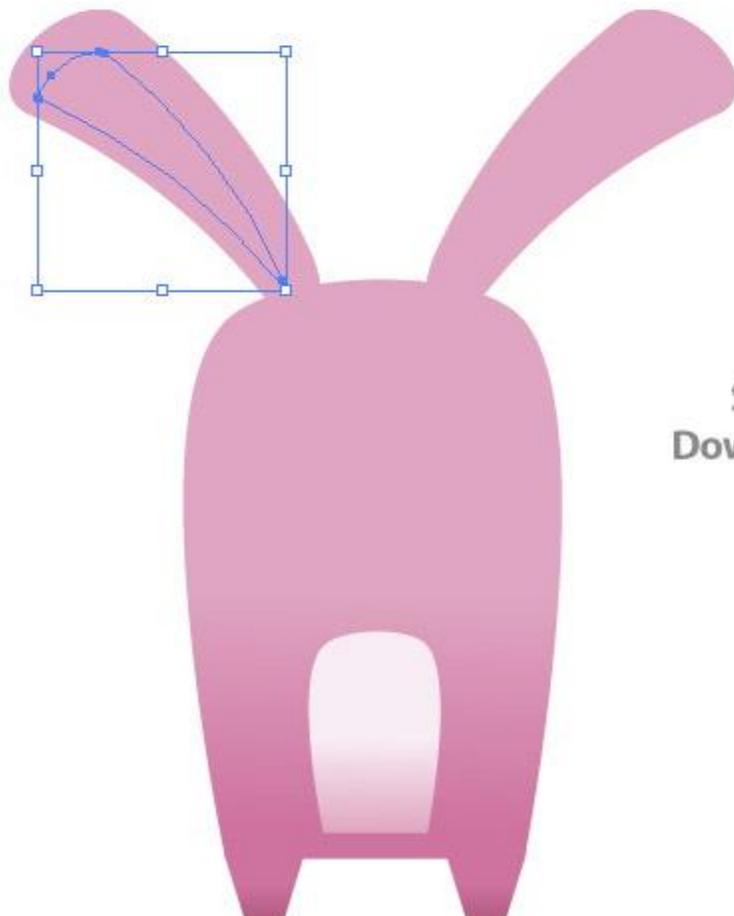


Step 18

Select the first ear and go to Object > Path > Offset to open the Offset dialog. Change the Offset to -15 px. Next, move the offset slightly down and to the left.



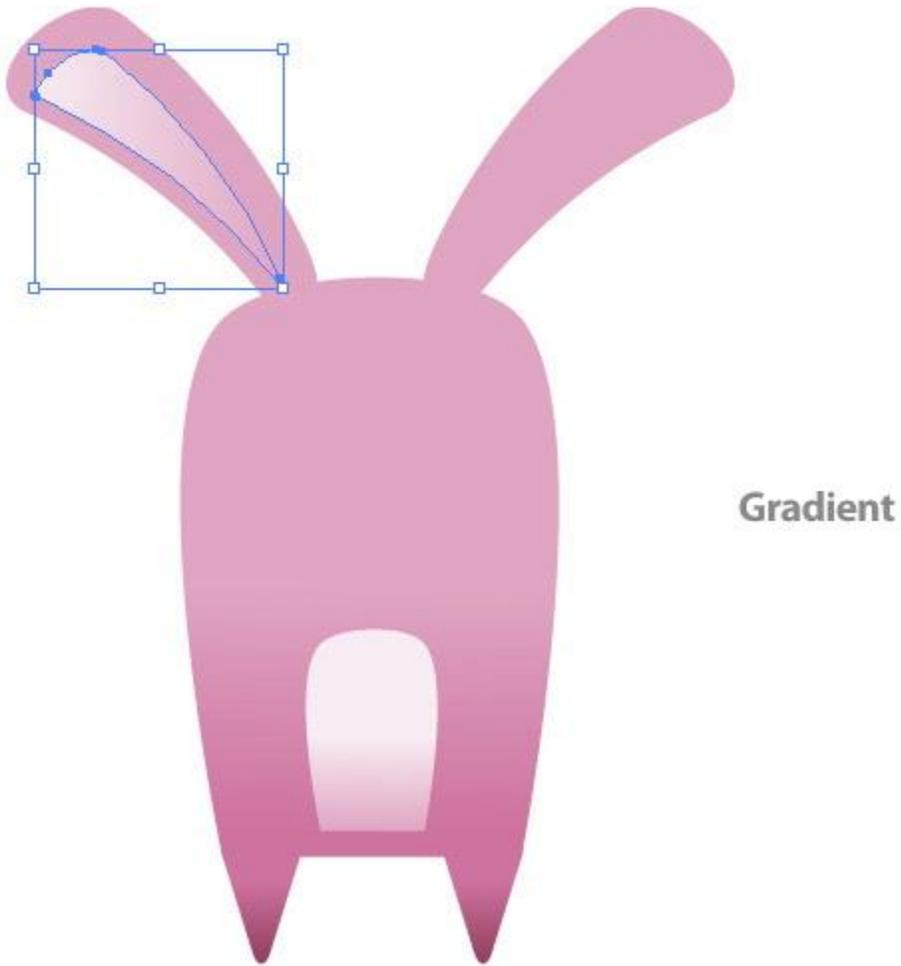
Offset



Slightly Move
Down and to the left

Step 19

Change the fill of the offset to the light Linear Gradient that was used in the belly shape of the body.



Step 20

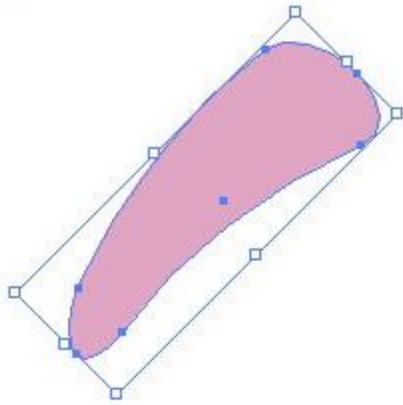
Repeat the same step for the right ear shape.



Repeat

Step 21

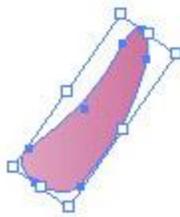
Copy (Command + C) and Paste (Command + V) the main right ear shape. Rotate the copied shape 190 degrees and scale it down to half of its original size. Fill the shape with the original body gradient and place it behind the lower left side of the body.



**Copy and Paste
Ear Shape**



Rotate and Scale



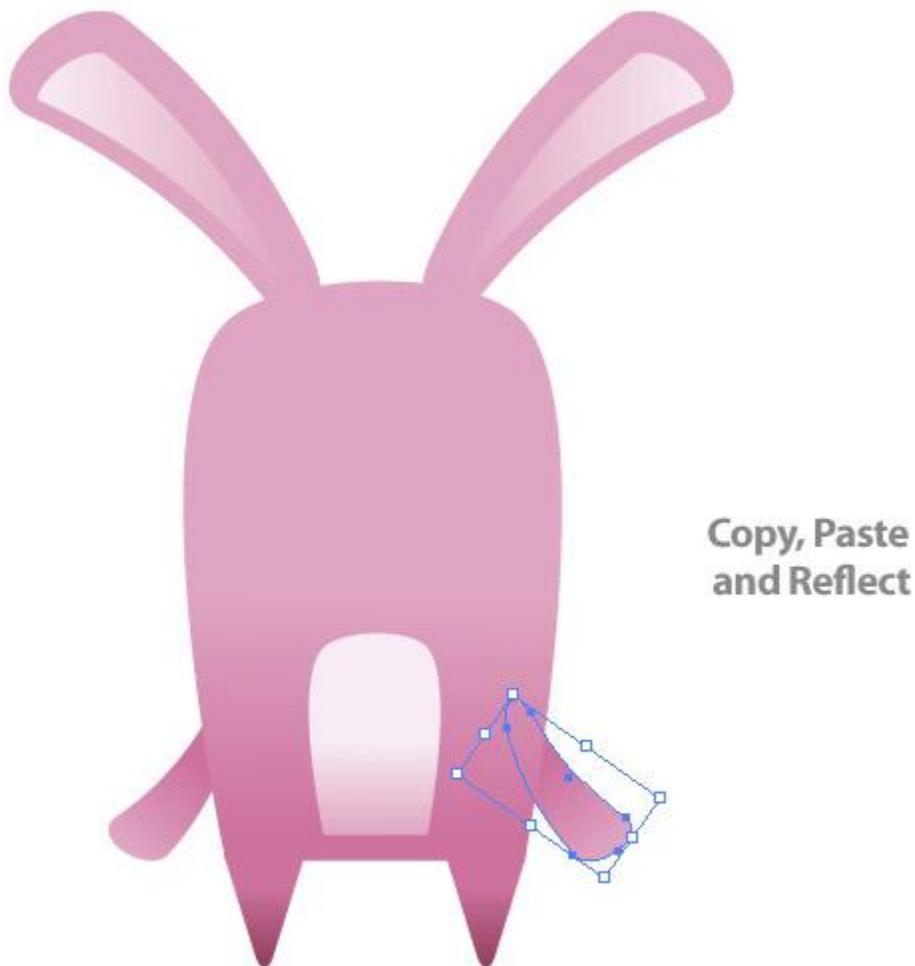
Linear Gradient



Place

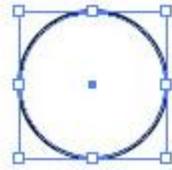
Step 22

Copy (Command + C) and Paste in Front (Command + F) the arm shape, reflect it vertically, then place it on the other side of the body.

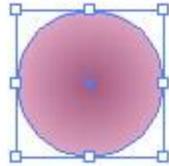


Step 23

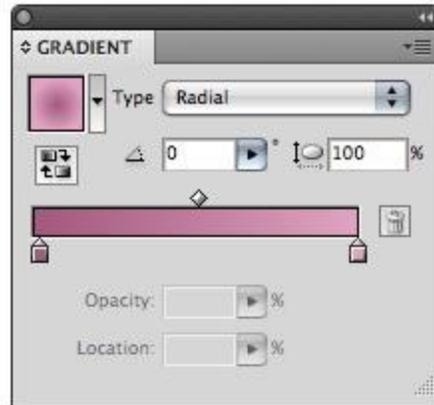
Now that the body is done, we can start adding a face to the bunny. Start by creating an ellipse with the Ellipse Tool (L) that is 37 px by 37 px. Fill the ellipse with a Radial Gradient with the first swatch a dark pink and the second swatch the same pink as in the ears.



Ellipse

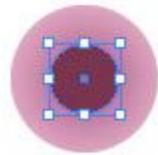


Radial Gradient

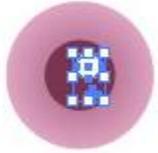


Step 24

Create another ellipse with the previous one, but smaller, and fill it with a dark pink color. Next draw two smaller white filled ellipses within the dark pink one. Now you have an eye!



Ellipse



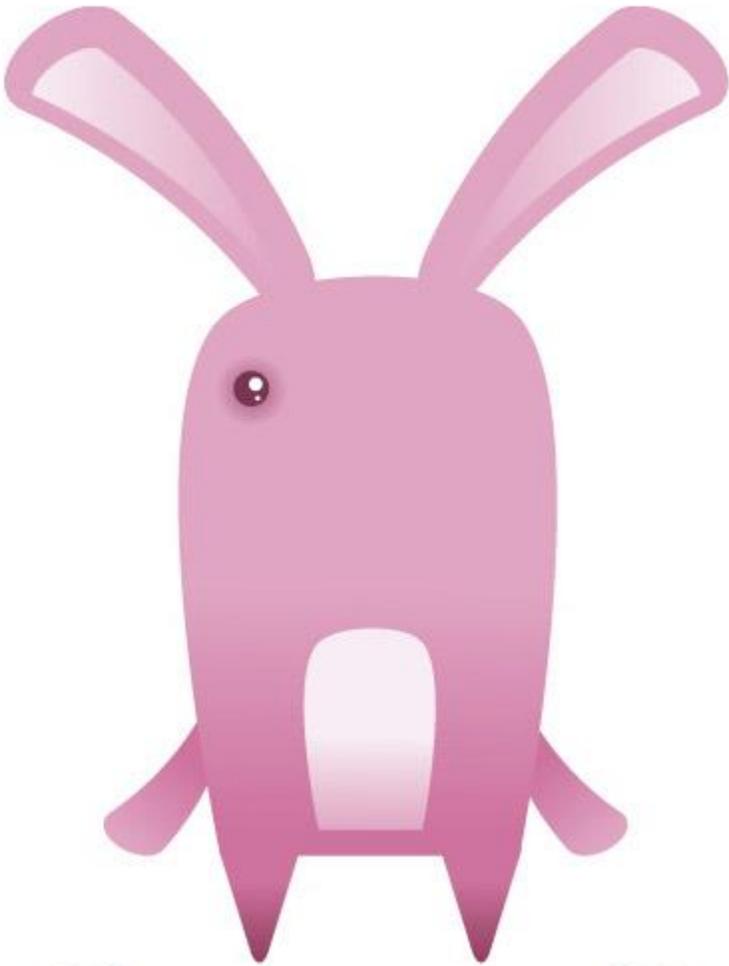
Ellipses



Eye

Step 25

Place the eye shapes over the top left part of the body shape. Once placed, Copy (Command + C) and Paste the (Command + V) the eye shapes and place them on the other side of the body.



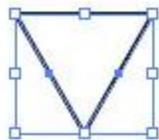
Place



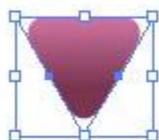
Copy and Paste

Step 26

Create a triangle like before and scale it down to half of its original size. Also like the other triangle, round the corners and fill it with the same gradient. Next, place the triangle over the middle part of the body below the eyes.



Triangle



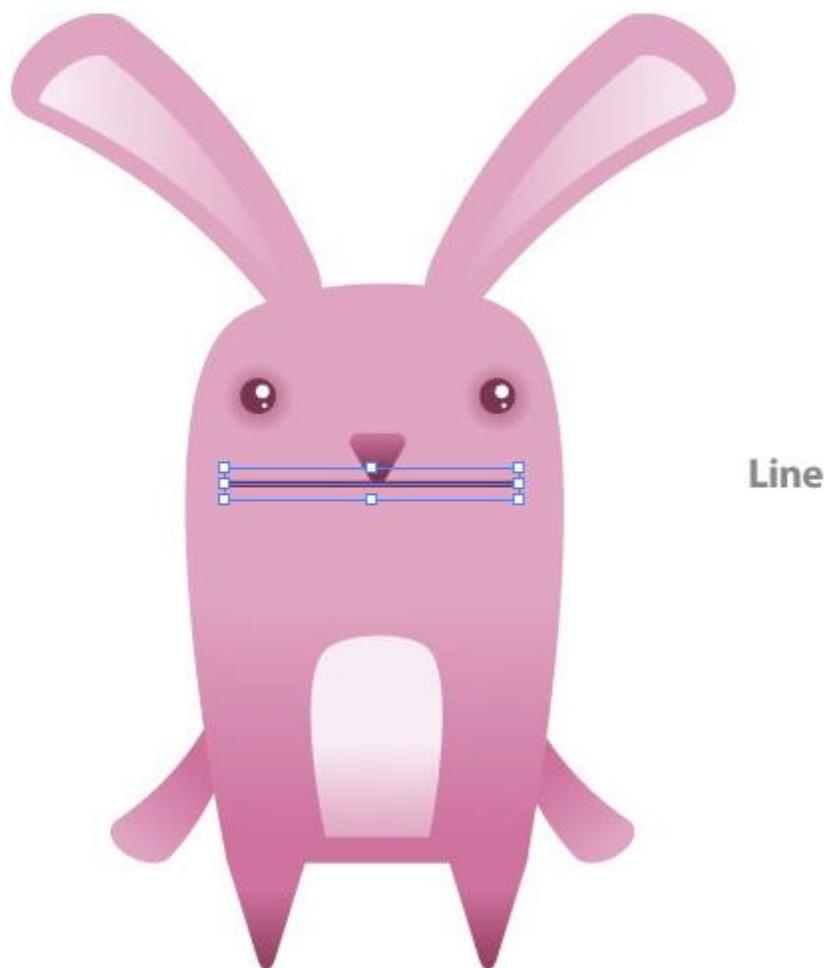
Round Corners
and Linear Gradient



Place

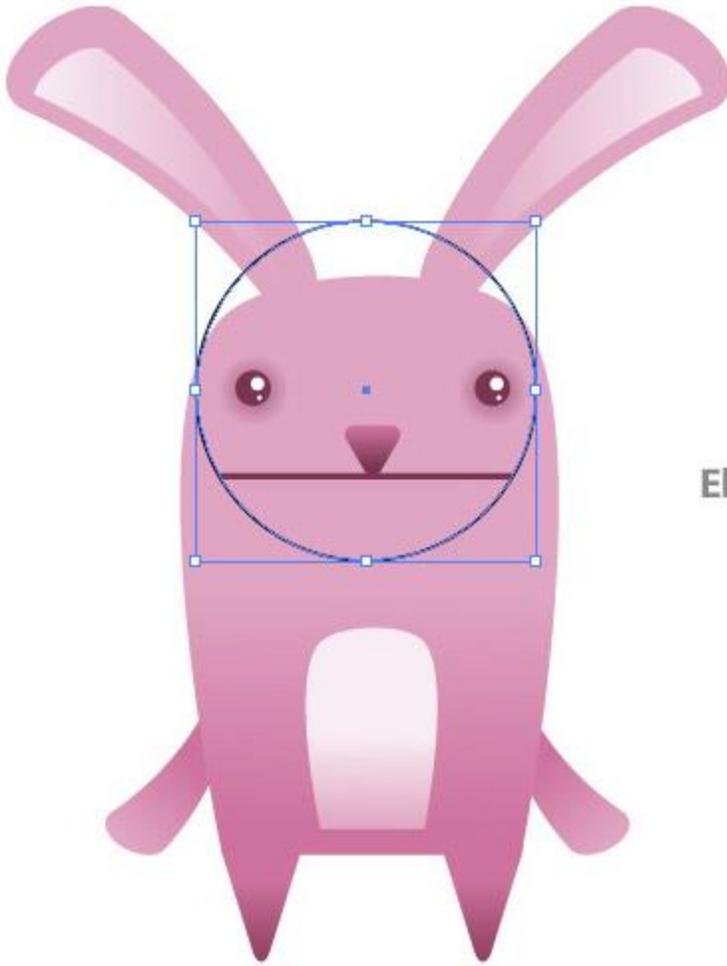
Step 27

With the Line Tool (\) draw a dark pink (same as the dark pink eye color) 3 pt line right below the nose, spanning the distance of the eyes.

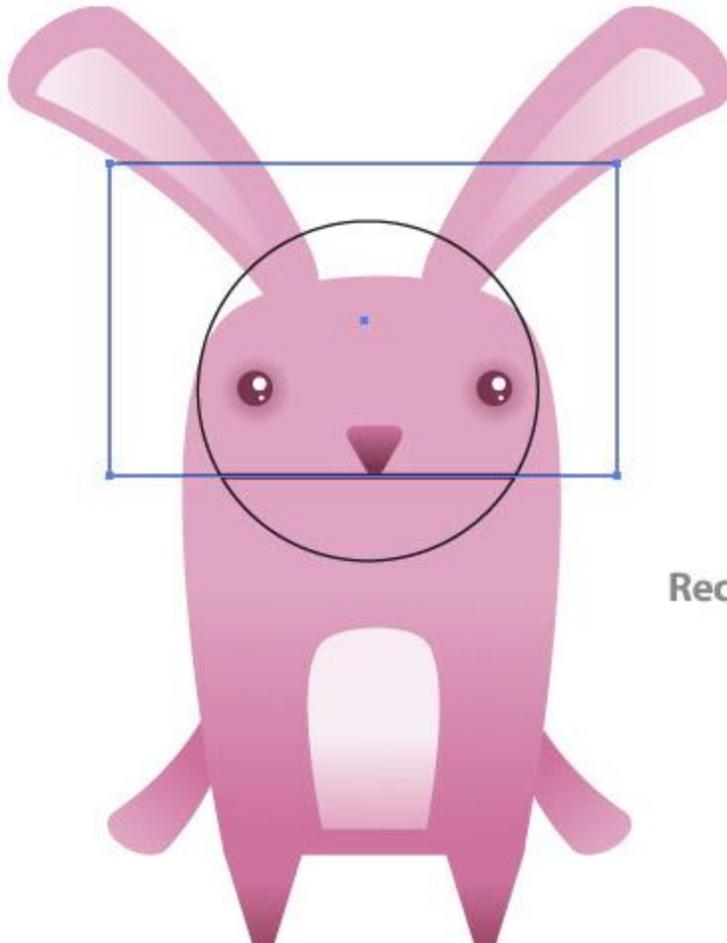


Step 28

Draw an ellipse so the bottom fourth of it is the width of the line you just drew. Next, draw a rectangle that encompasses the top half of the ellipse up to the line you drew. Select the rectangle and ellipse and press the Subtract Shape Areas button from the Pathfinder Panel. While still in the Pathfinder Panel, press the Expand button. If you own CS4, Illustrator expands it for you!



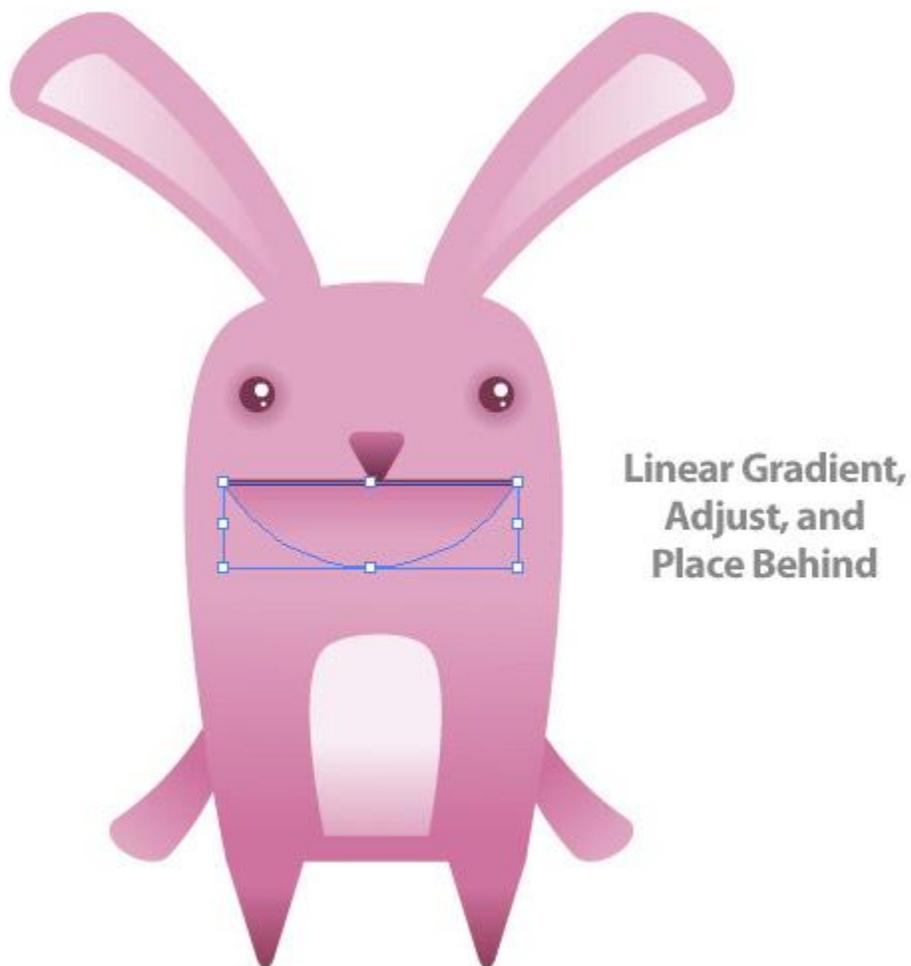
Ellipse



Rectangle

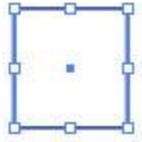
Step 29

Fill the subtracted shape with the same Linear Gradient as the body gradient, but adjust it so the darker part of the gradient is at the top. Place the shape behind the line you created before.



Step 30

Create a rectangle that is 38 px wide by 40 px tall. Like with the main body shape, select the bottom left anchor point with the Direct Selection Tool (A) and change the anchor to a Smooth Point. Do the same for the bottom right anchor point.



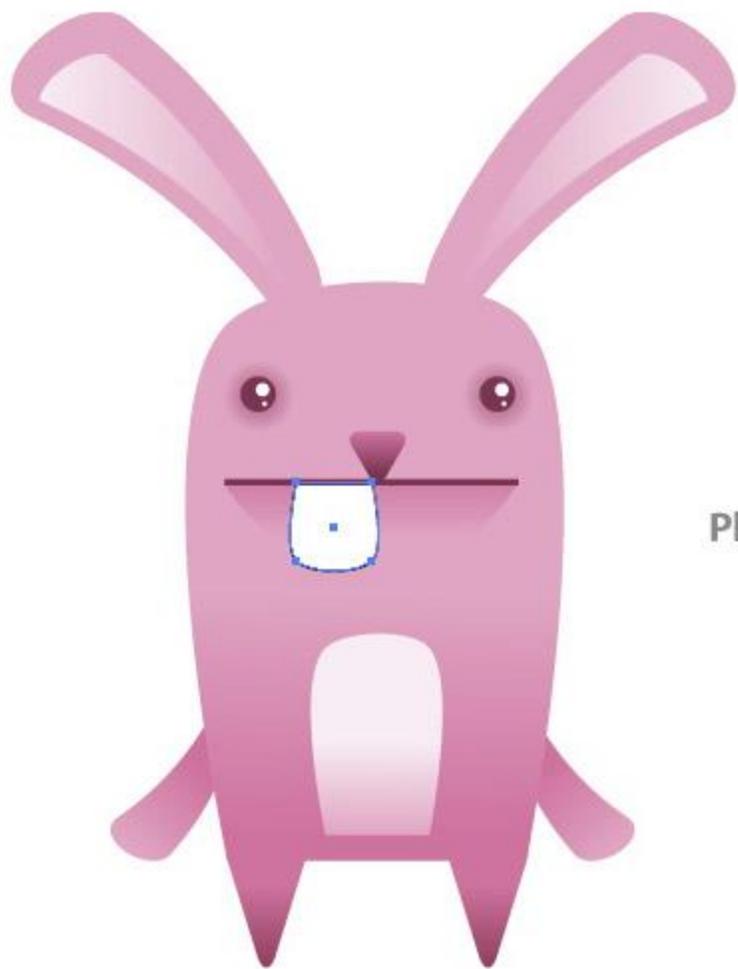
Rectangle



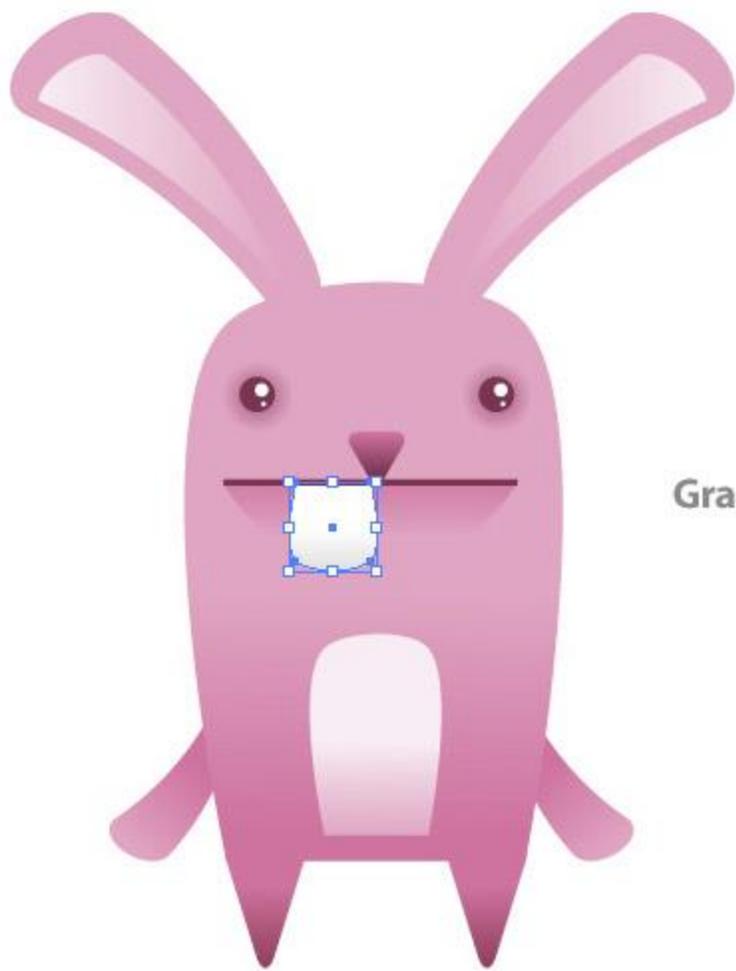
Smooth Corners

Step 31

Place the tooth shape behind and below the mouth line on the left side of the nose shape. Fill the tooth with a Linear Gradient with the first swatch white and the second swatch a light gray. Adjust the gradient so the white is at the top of the tooth.



Place



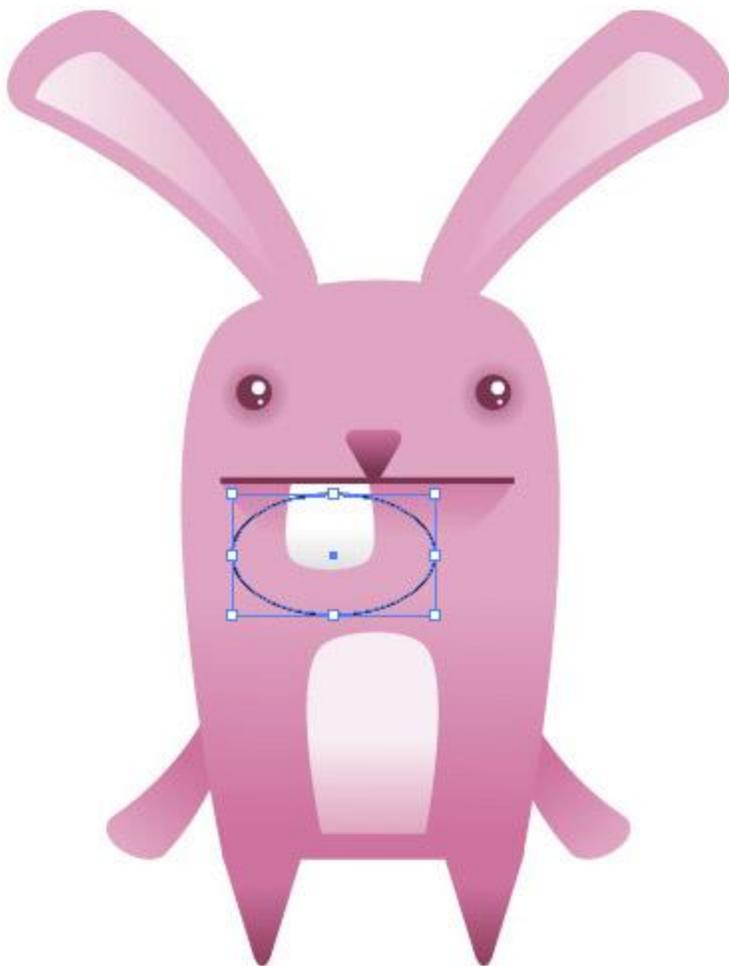
Gradient

Step 32

Copy (Command + C) the Tooth and Paste in Front (Command + F). Create an ellipse that covers the bottom two-thirds of the tooth. Select the tooth copy and the ellipse and Subtract the shapes. Once subtracted, change the color of the shape to a light gray.



**Copy and
Paste in Front**



Ellipse

Step 33

Drag out a copy of the tooth shapes to the left side.



Step 34

Now it is time to add some hair. With the Pen Tool draw a hair puff shape towards the top of the body. Fill the shape with the same Linear Gradient as the nose shape.



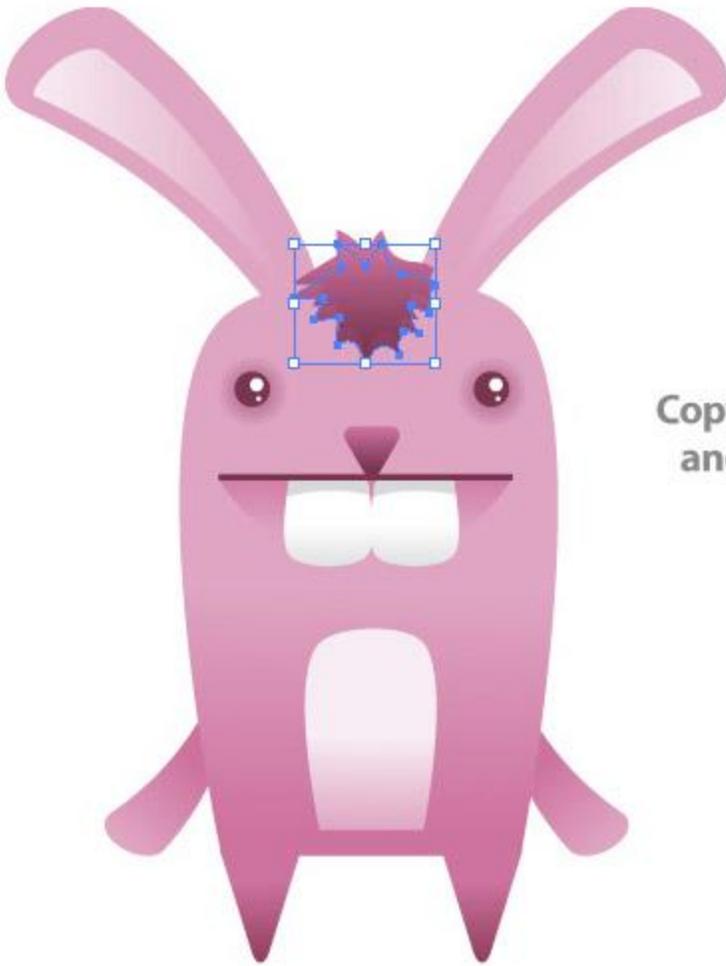
Hair Shape



Linear Gradient

Step 35

With the hair shape selected, Copy (Command + C) and Paste in Back (Command + B). With the copy selected, move it down slightly. Fill the copy with the same gradient as the main body shape and adjust it so the darker part of the gradient is at the top of the shape.



**Copy, Paste in Back
and Move Down**



Gradient and Adjust

Step 36

The bunny character is done, but let's have some more fun to it. Let's make it look like the bunny just devoured a carrot! Use your Pencil Tool (N) and draw twenty - twenty-five small ellipse like shapes over the teeth and mouth area of the bunny (make these shapes a bit rough). Fill the shapes with a Linear Gradient, set the first swatch to an orange color and the second to a darker orange color.



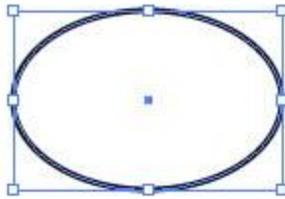
Draw Shapes



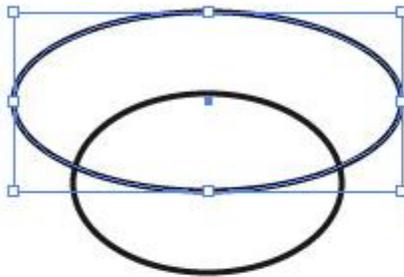
Linear Gradient

Step 37

Draw an ellipse that is 45 px wide by 30 px tall. Draw another ellipse over that one that is 65 px wide by 30 px tall. Place the second ellipse so the bottom is in the center of the first one. Select both ellipses, Intersect the Shape Areas from the Pathfinder Panel, and press Expand. Next, fill the shape with the orange linear gradient you used for the small elements around the mouth, then adjust the gradient so the lighter part of the gradient is at the top of the shape.



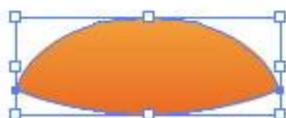
Ellipse



Ellipse



Intersect



Gradient

Step 38

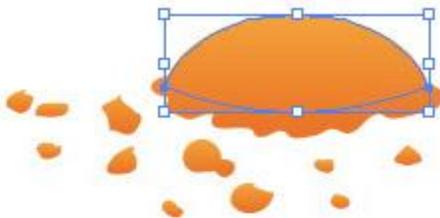
With the Pencil Tool (N), create some little ellipse like shapes around and below the previous shape. Fill these with the same orange gradient.



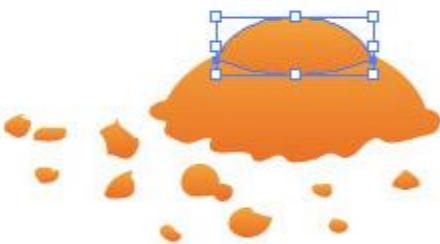
**Draw Shapes and
Fill with Gradient**

Step 39

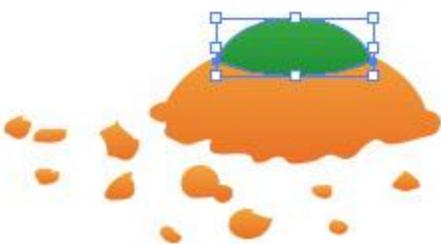
Copy (Command + C) the original top ellipse shape and Paste in Front (F). Scale the shape down to half of its original size, then place it towards the top of the original shape. Change the first swatch in the copied shape to a green color and the second swatch to a darker green color.



**Copy and
Paste in Front**



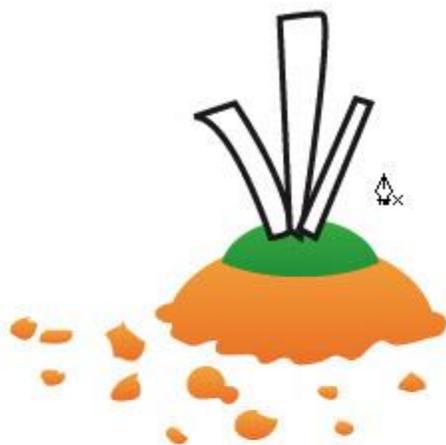
Scale



Gradient

Step 40

With the Pen Tool (P), draw a couple stems coming out of the carrot top. Fill these shapes with the same green gradient you just used.



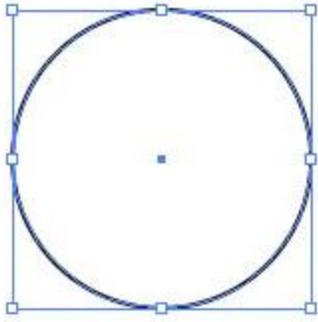
Stem Shapes



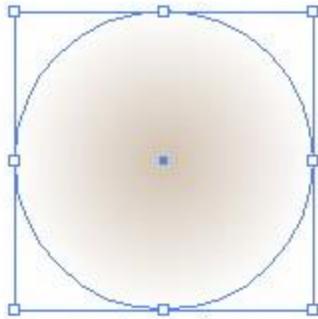
Gradient

Step 41

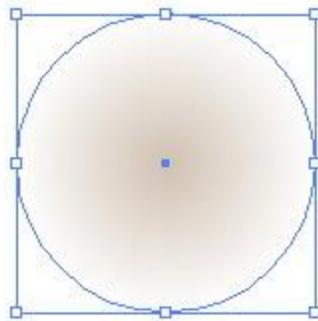
Create an ellipse that is 75 px by 75 px. Fill it with a Radial Gradient with the first swatch a light brown color, the second swatch a white color, and set the ellipse to Multiply from the Transparency Panel. Next, squish the ellipse vertically to half its original size. Place the ellipse behind all the carrot top artwork as a drop shadow.



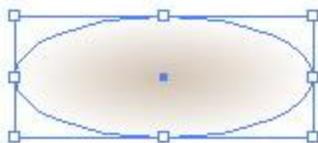
Gradient



Radial Gradient



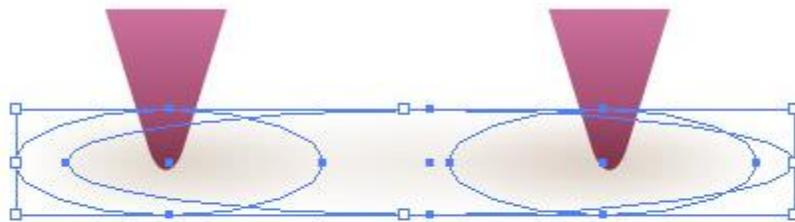
Multiply



Squish

Step 42

Create two more ellipses, as in the previous step, then place them behind the feet. Create another bigger ellipse, but make the brown color of the gradient lighter and place in between the feet shadows.



Repeat

Step 43

Create a rectangle the size of your document and fill it with a Radial Gradient. Make the first swatch white and the second swatch a light yellow color. All done!



Rectangle
and
Radial Gradient

Final Image

Below is the final image we just worked on.

