

Create A Briefcase Icon



In this tutorial, I will show you how to create a briefcase icon with rectangles, ellipses, and gradients. This briefcase icon is great for web designs and user interfaces. Moreover, you can easily apply these techniques to other icons, logos, and illustrations.

Final Image

Below is the final icon we will be working towards.

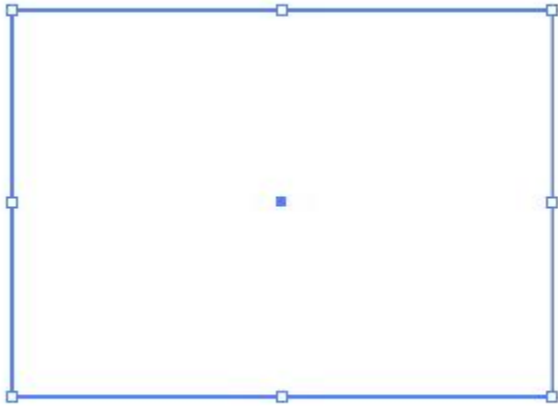


Tutorial Details

- Program: [Adobe Illustrator CS4](#)
- Difficulty: Intermediate
- Topics Covered: Shape tools, Gradient panel, Effects
- Estimated Completion Time: 20-30 minutes

Step 1

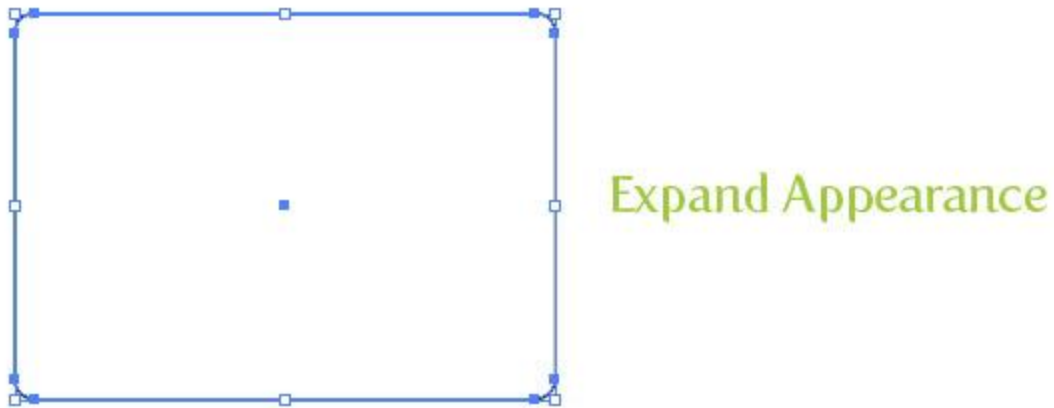
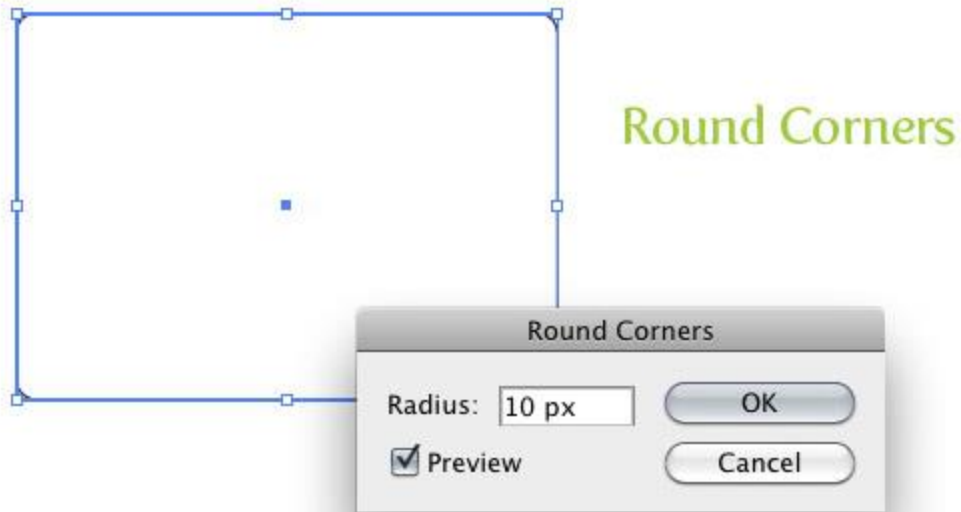
Create a new document and with the Rectangle tool (M), create a rectangle for the main body shape of the briefcase.



Rectangle

Step 2

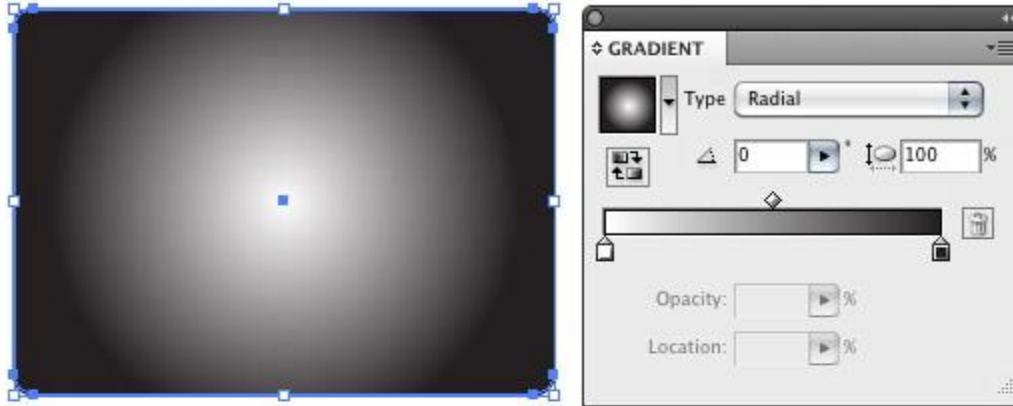
With the rectangle selected, go Effect > Stylize > Round Corners. In the Round Corners dialog, change the Radius to 10 px. This value might be different depending on the size of your main rectangle. Next, go Object > Expand Appearance.



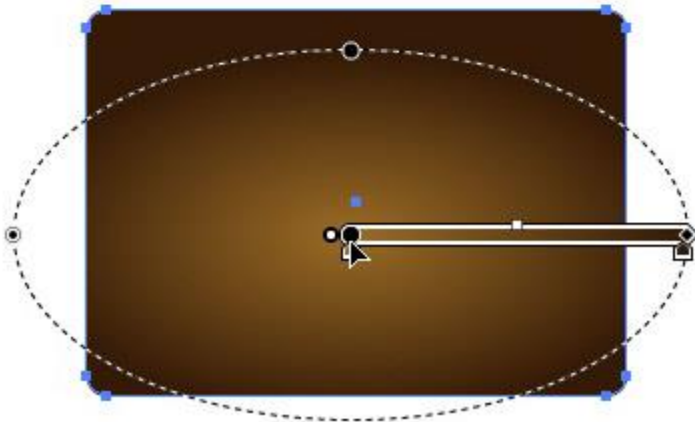
Step 3

Fill the shape with a radial gradient from the Gradient panel. Change the first color stop in the gradient to a light brown color and the second color stop to a dark brown color. With the Gradient tool (G), scale the circumference of radial gradient vertically, expand the gradient past the left and right borders of the shape, and move it slightly towards the bottom of the shape.

Radial Gradient



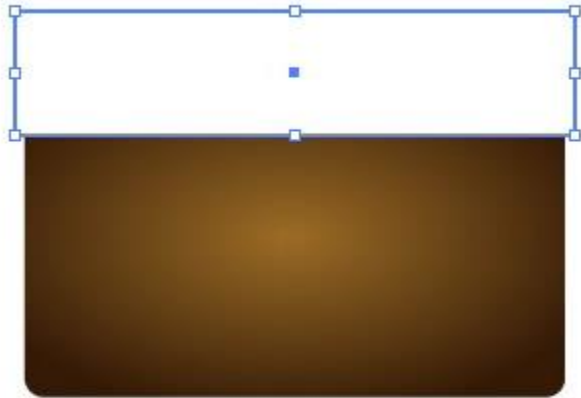
Change Color Stops



Adjust Gradient

Step 4

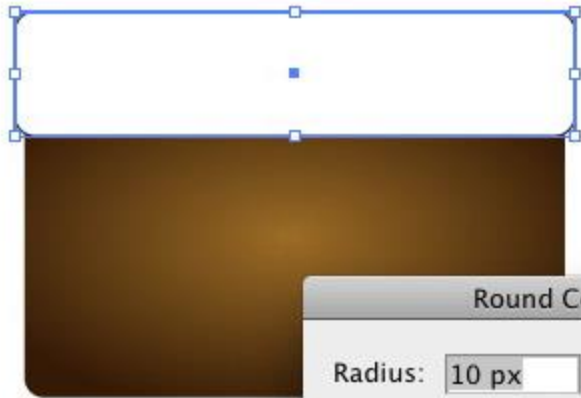
With the Rectangle tool (M), create a rectangle about a third tall and slightly wider than the size of the main shape. Place the new rectangle over the top part of the main body shape. This will be our flap.



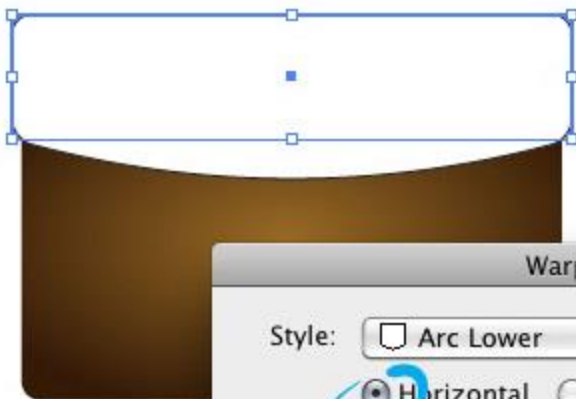
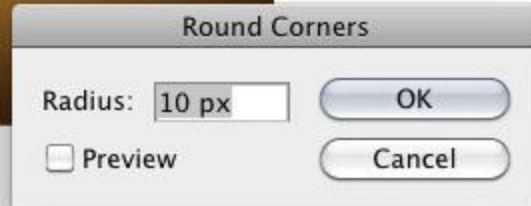
Rectangle

Step 5

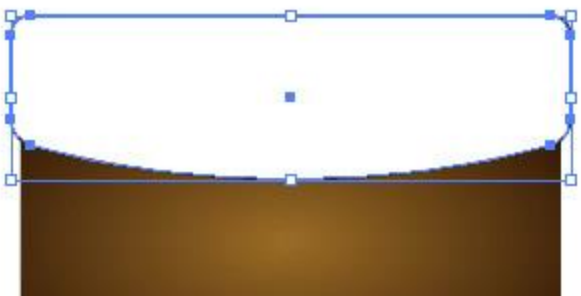
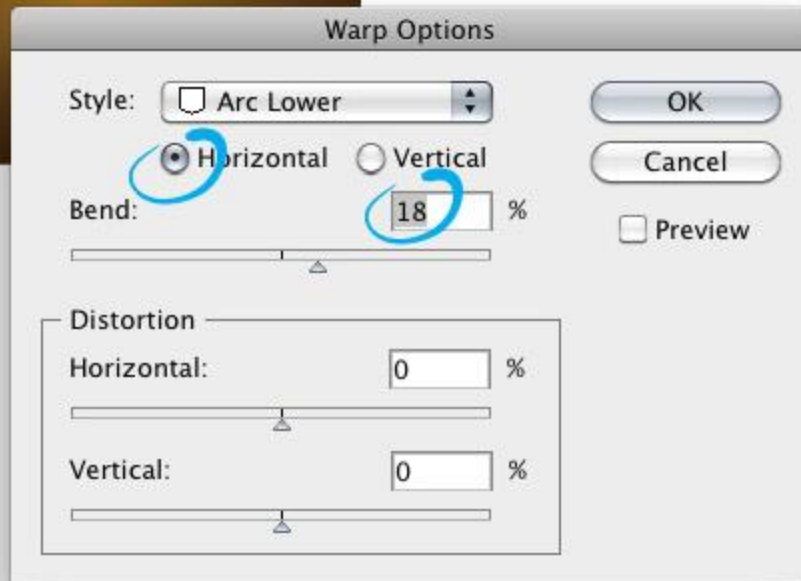
With the flap shape selected, go Effect > Stylize > Round Corners and change the Radius in the Round Corners dialog to 10 px. Next go, Effect > Warp > Arc Lower. In the Warp Options dialog make sure Horizontal is selected and change the Bend to 18. Now go Object > Expand Appearance.



Round Corners



Arc Lower

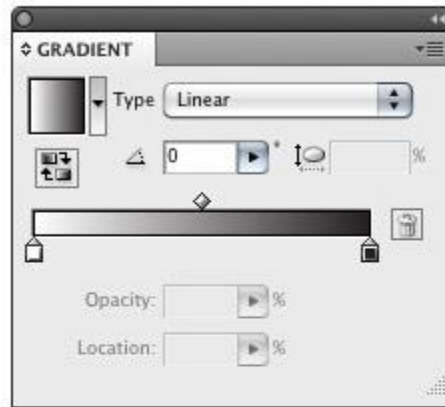
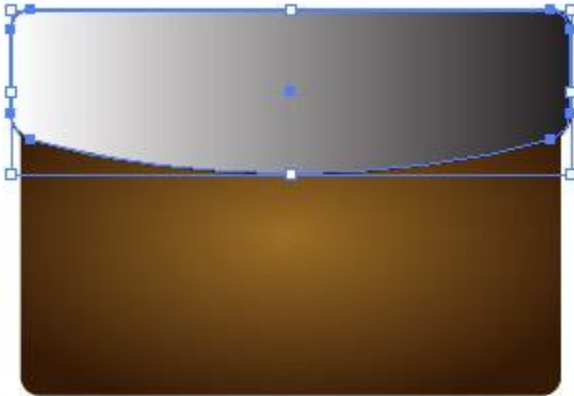


Expand Appearance

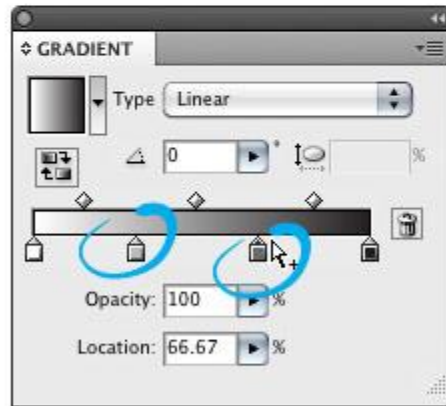
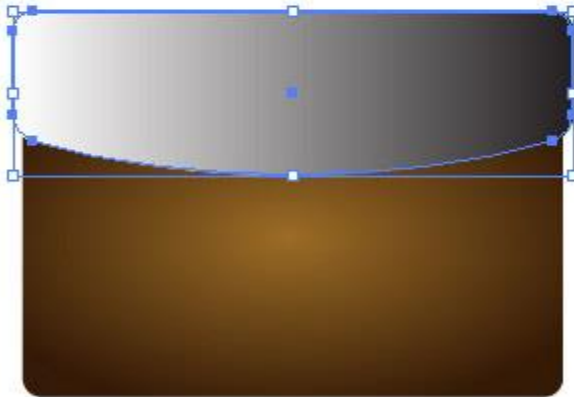
Step 6

Fill the flap shape with a linear gradient from the Gradient panel. For this gradient we are going to add two color stop giving us a total of four color stops in the gradient. To add the color stops, simply click just below the Gradient Slider in the Gradient panel twice. Change the first color to a brown color, the second to a light brown color, the third the same brown color as the first color stop, and the last one to a dark brown color. Select the second color stop and change the Location from the Gradient panel to 16 and change the Location of the third color stop to 34. Next, change the Angle of the gradient to -90.

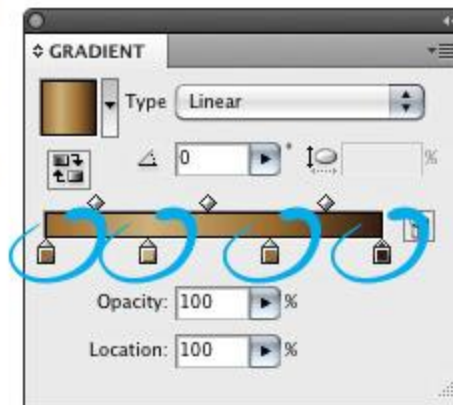
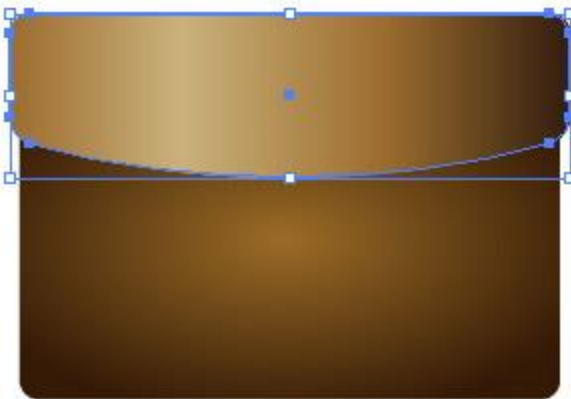
Linear Gradient



Add Color Stops



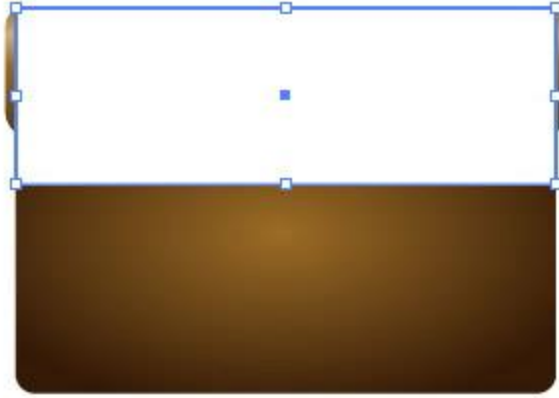
Change Color Stops



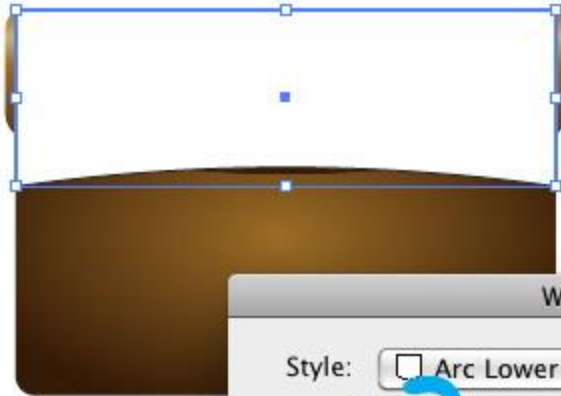
Change Location

Step 7

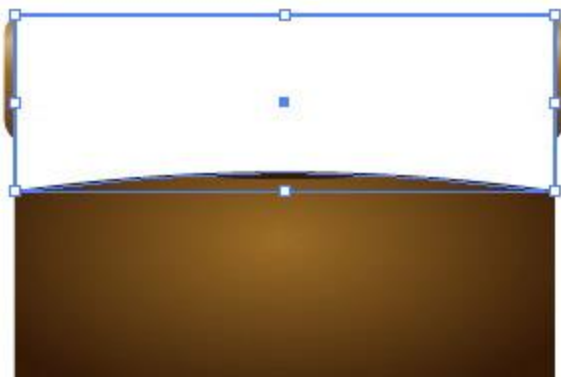
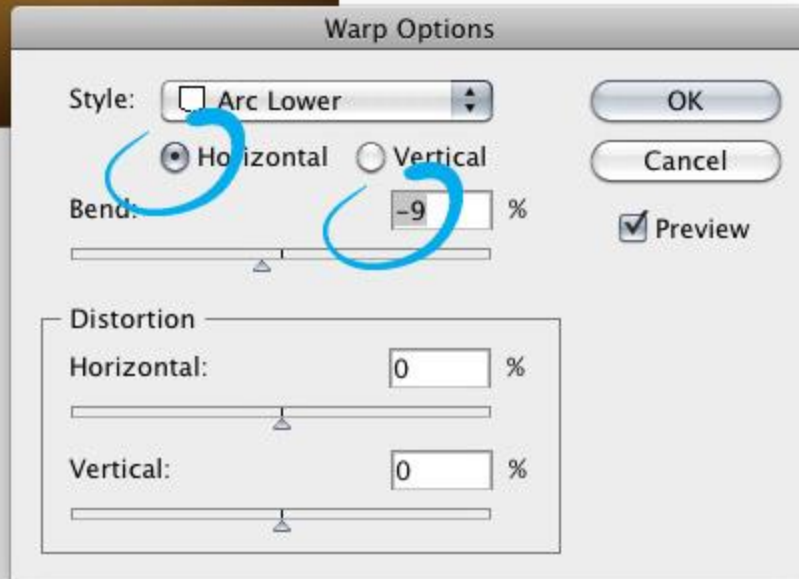
With the Rectangle tool (M), create a rectangle half the height and same width as the main shape. Go Effect > Warp > Arc Lower. In the Warp Options dialog, make sure Horizontal is select and change the Bend to -9. Expand the Appearance, fill the shape with your dark brown, and go Object > Arrange > Send Backward (Command + [).



Rectangle



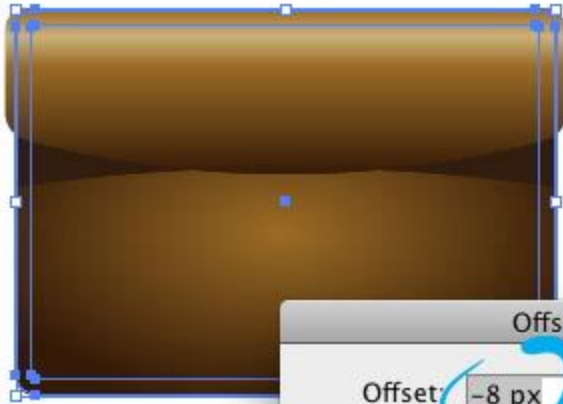
Arc Lower



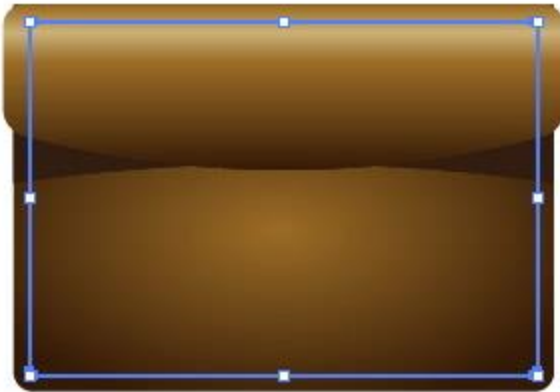
Expand

Step 8

Select the main shape and go Object > Path > Offset. In the dialog, change the Offset to -8 px. Take off any fill and change the stroke color to white. From the Stroke panel, change the Weight to 2 pt and select a 5 pt Dashed Line. From the Transparency panel, change the Opacity to 25. Next, go Object > Arrange > Bring Forward (Command +]).

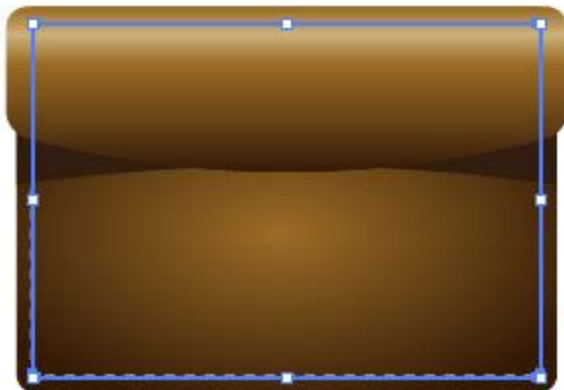


Offset



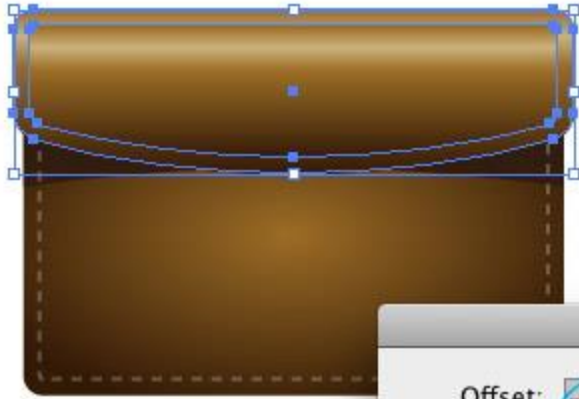
White Stroke

Stroke Weight and Dashed Line

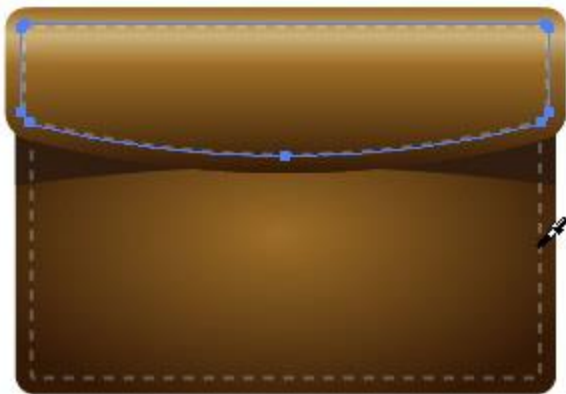


Step 9

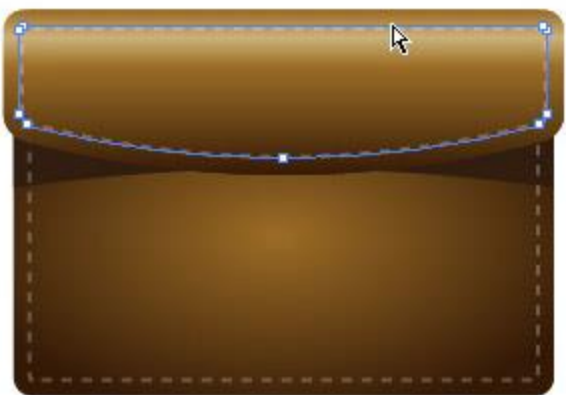
Select the flap shape and go Object > Path > Offset and change the Offset to -8 px. With the new offset still selected use the Eyedropper tool (I) and sample the dashed line you created in the first step. Next, with the Direct Selection tool (A), select the top line in the new dashed line and delete it by pressing the Delete button.



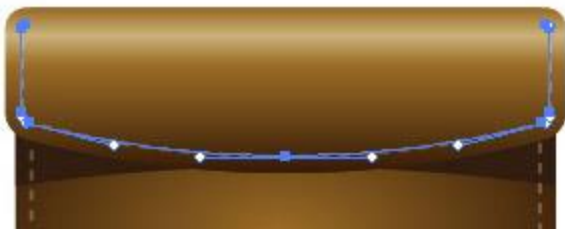
Offset Path



Eyedropper Tool



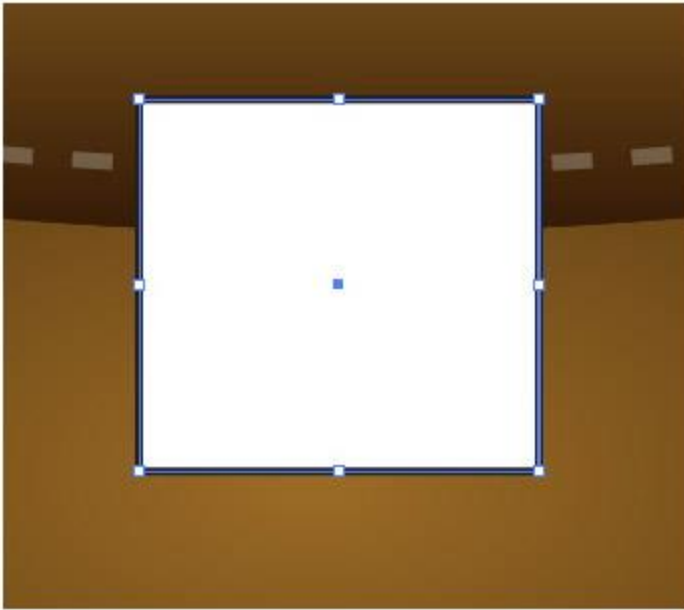
Direct Selection Tool



Delete

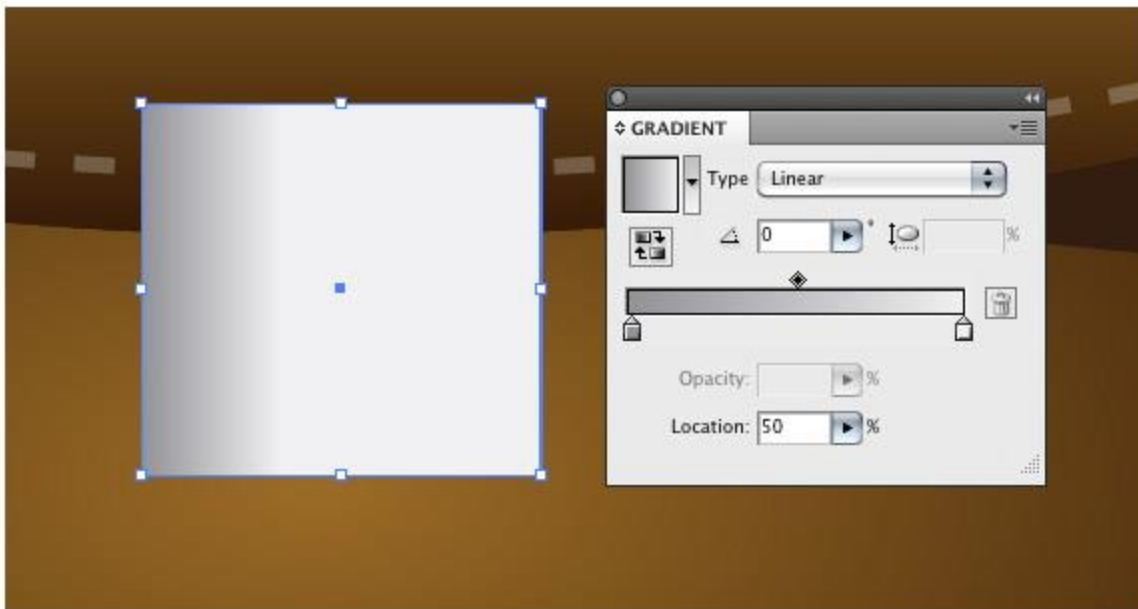
Step 10

Create a small square with the Rectangle tool (M) and place it where the bottom of the flap shape arc. Fill the square with a linear gradient with the first color stop a gray color and the second color stop white. In the Gradient panel, change the Middle Point of the gradient to 18 and the Angle to -90.

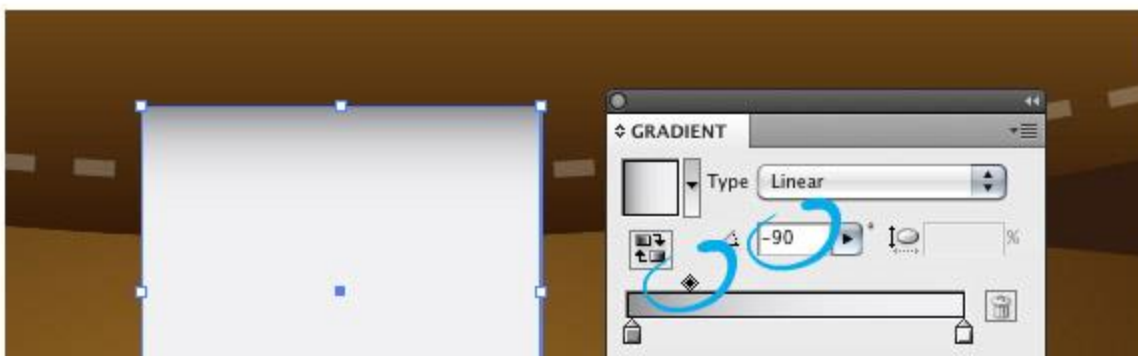


Square

Linear Gradient



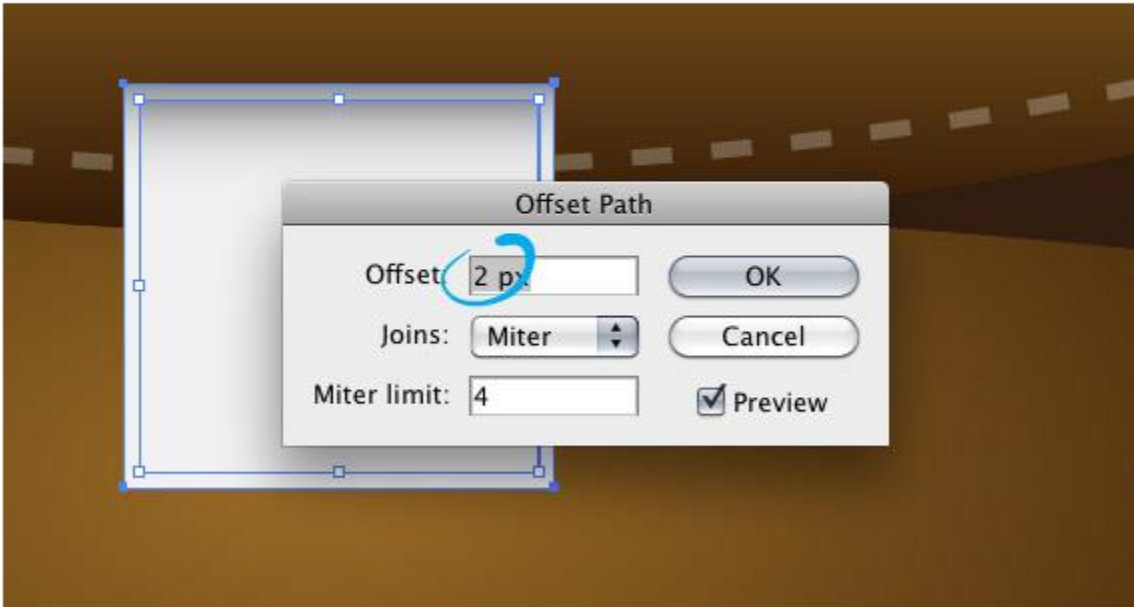
Angle and Middle Point



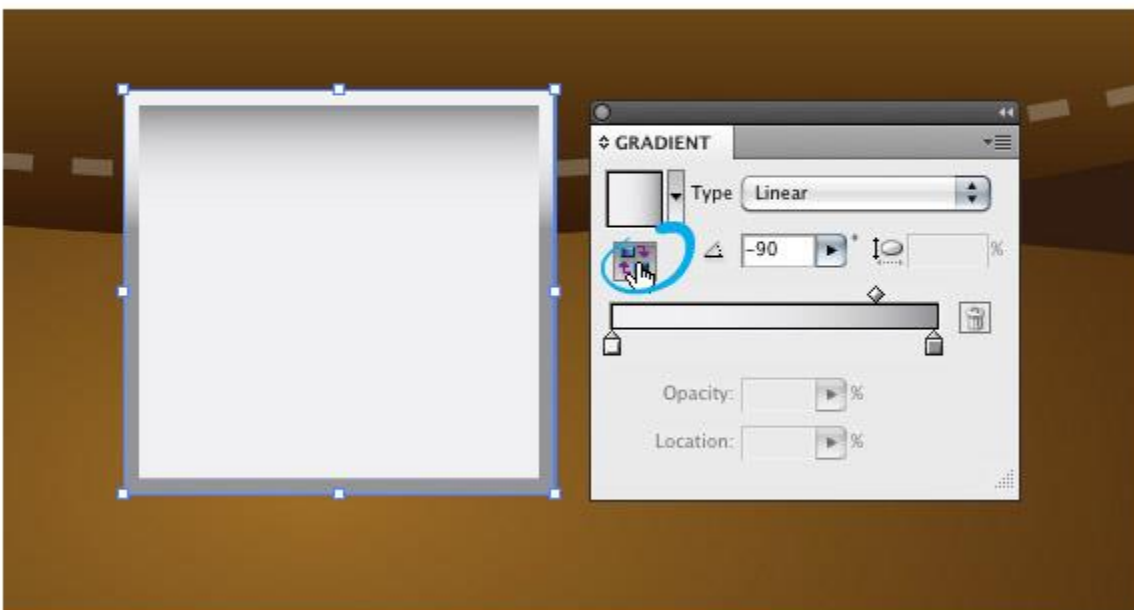
Step 11

Offset to square by 2 px and press the Reverse Gradient button from the Gradient panel.

Offset Path

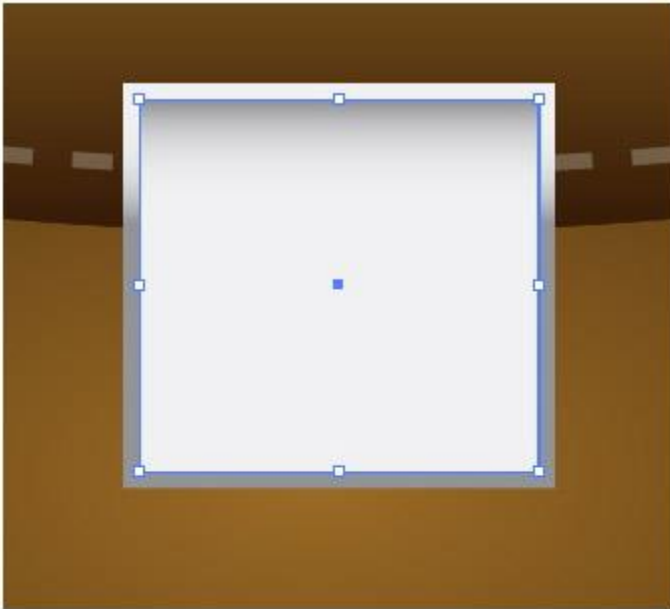


Reverse Gradient

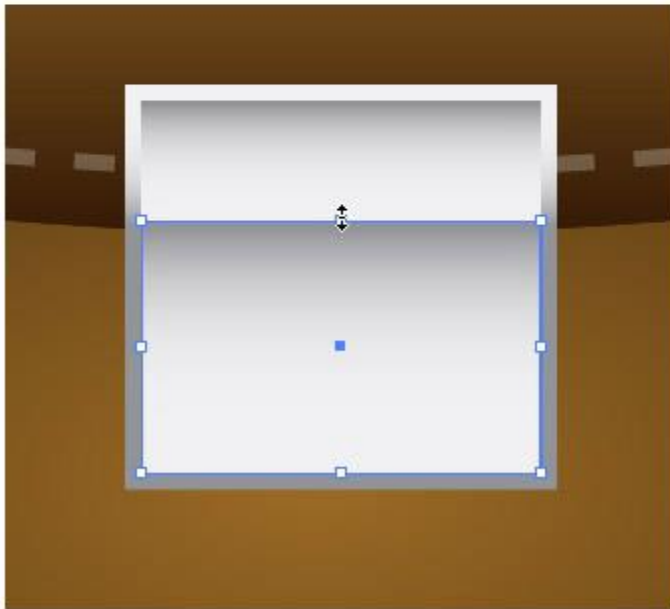


Step 12

Select the original square, Copy (Command + C), and Paste in Front (Command + F). With the Selection tool (V), select the top of the square and scale it vertically down to about two thirds of its original size.



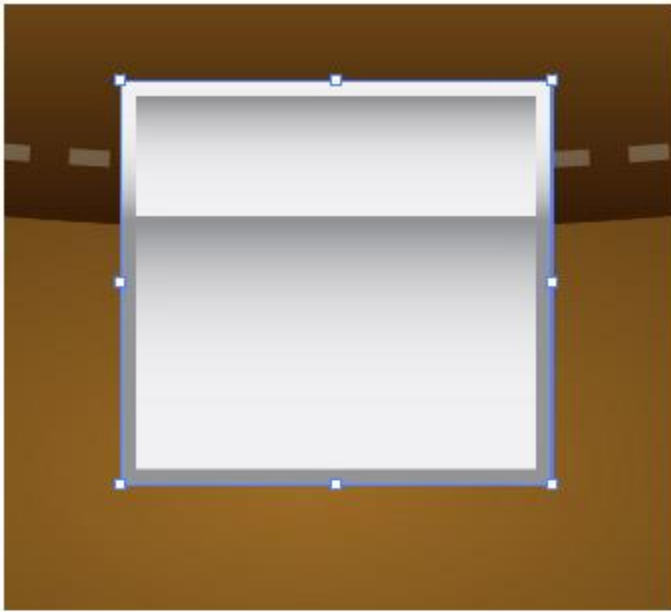
Copy and
Paste in Front



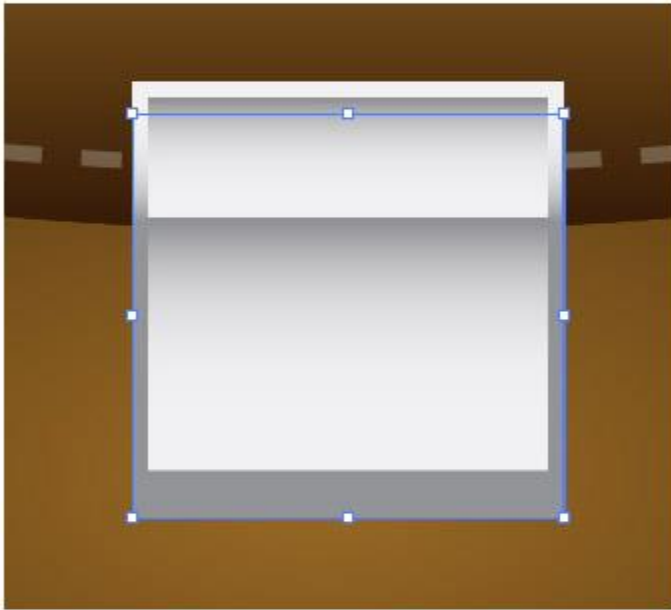
Scale

Step 13

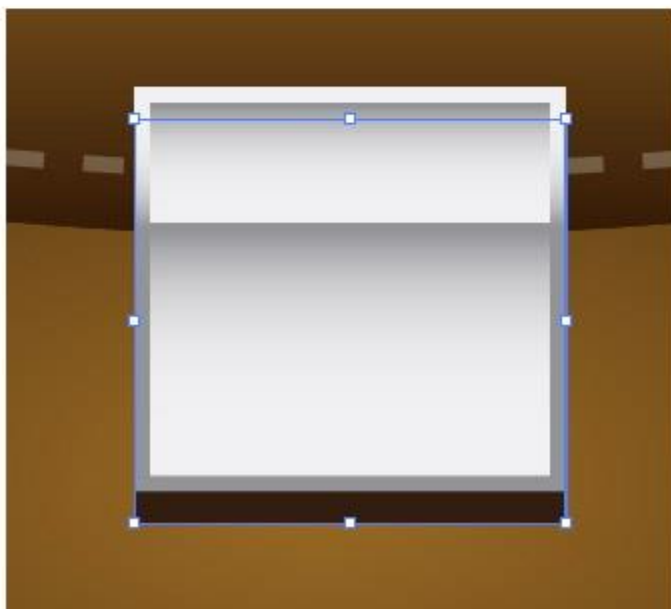
Select the offset square, Copy (Command + C), Paste in Back (Command + B), and move down slightly with the Selection tool (V). Next, change the fill to your dark brown color.



Copy and
Paste in Back



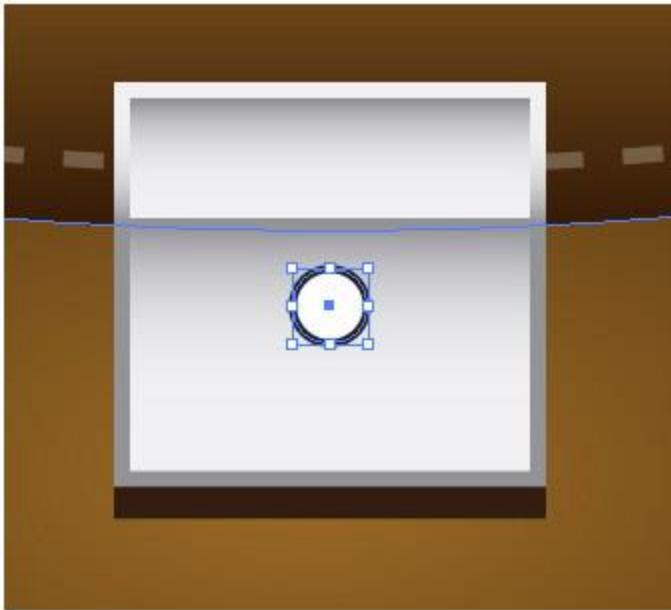
Move



Change Fill

Step 14

Draw a small ellipse in the bottom half of the square shapes and draw a thin rectangle coming out of the bottom of the circle. Select both shapes and press the Unite button in the Pathfinder panel.

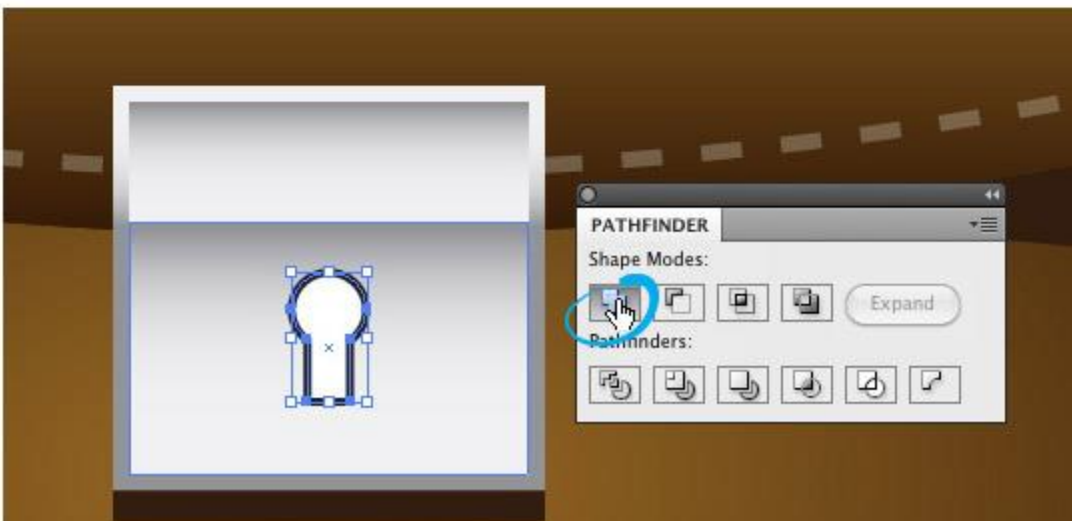


Ellipse



Rectangle

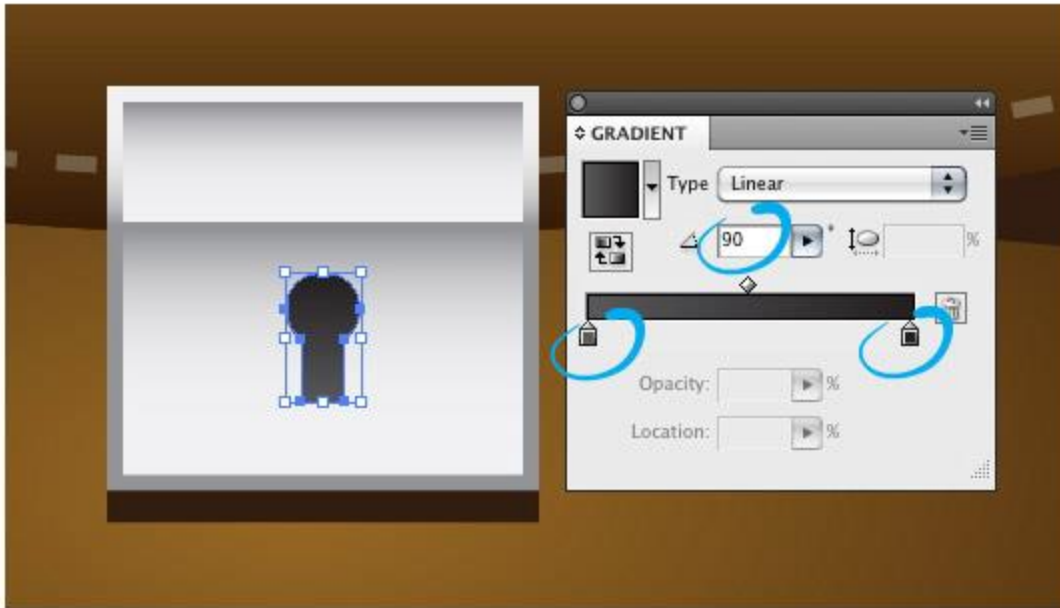
Unite



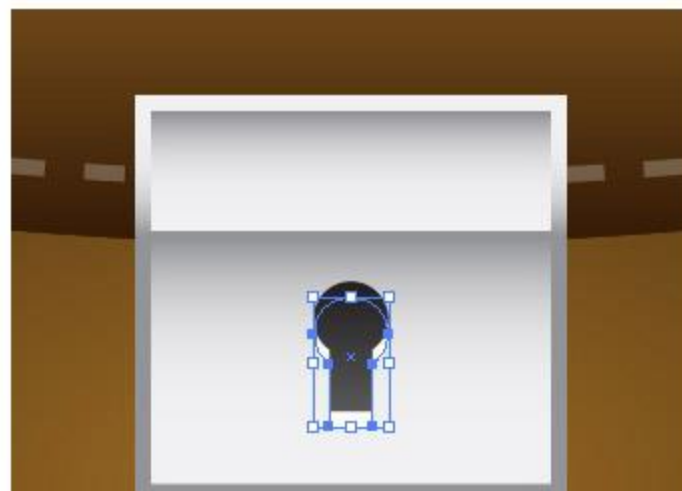
Step 15

Fill the new shape with a linear gradient, change the first color stop a dark gray color, the second an even darker gray color, and change the Angle to 90. With the shape still selected, Copy (Command + C), Paste in Back (Command + B), move down slightly, and change the fill to white.

Linear Gradient



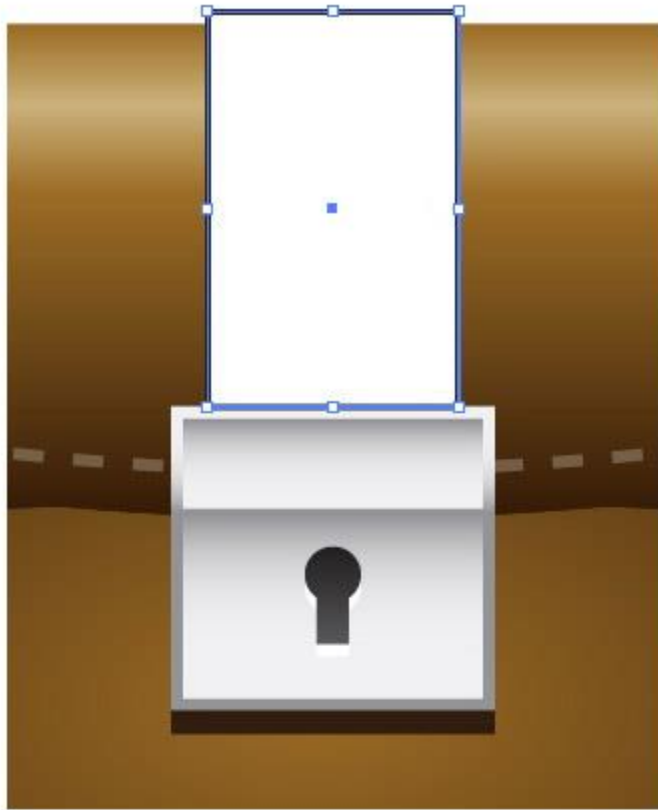
Copy and
Paste in Back



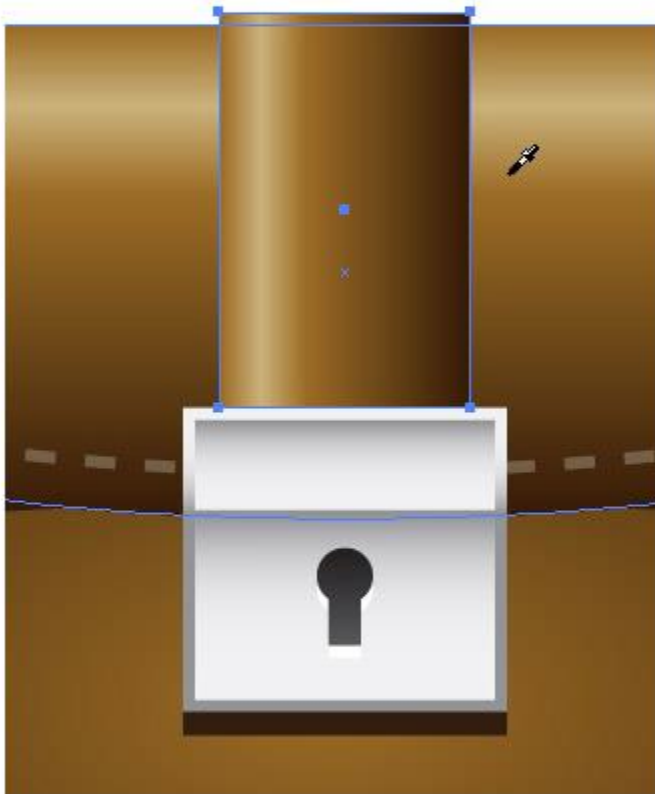
Fill and
Move

Step 16

Create a rectangle from the top of the buckle shapes to slightly above the flap shape. Use the Eyedropper tool (I) and sample to flap linear gradient and change the Angle to -90.



Rectangle



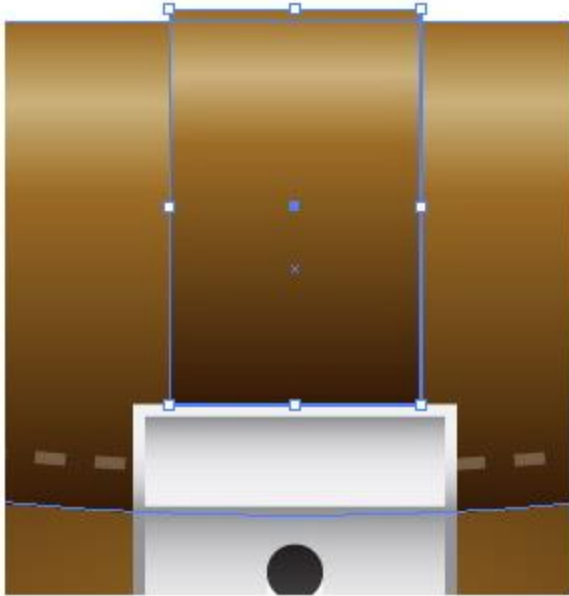
Eyedropper
Tool

Angle

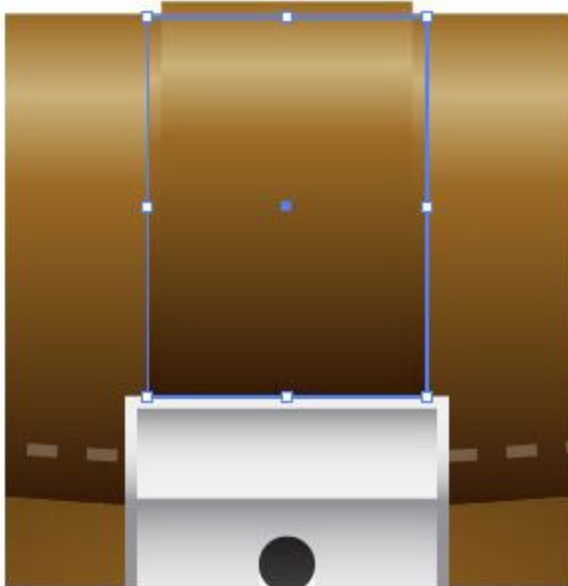


Step 17

Select the new rectangle, Copy (Command + C), and Paste in Back (Command + B). With the Selection tool (V), widen the shape slightly and make the top of the copy line up with the top of the flap. Change the copy to your dark brown color and set the Opacity to 45 from the Transparency panel.

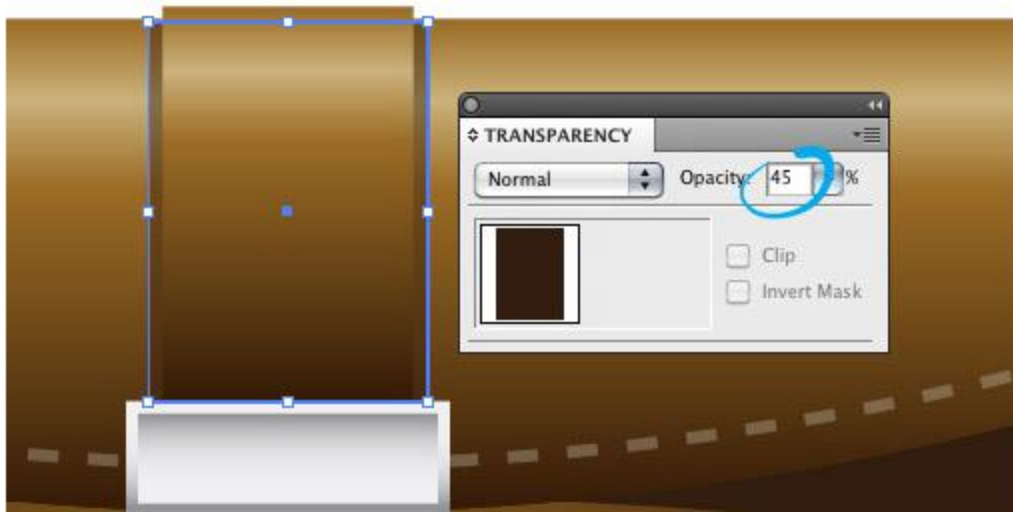


Copy and
Paste in Back



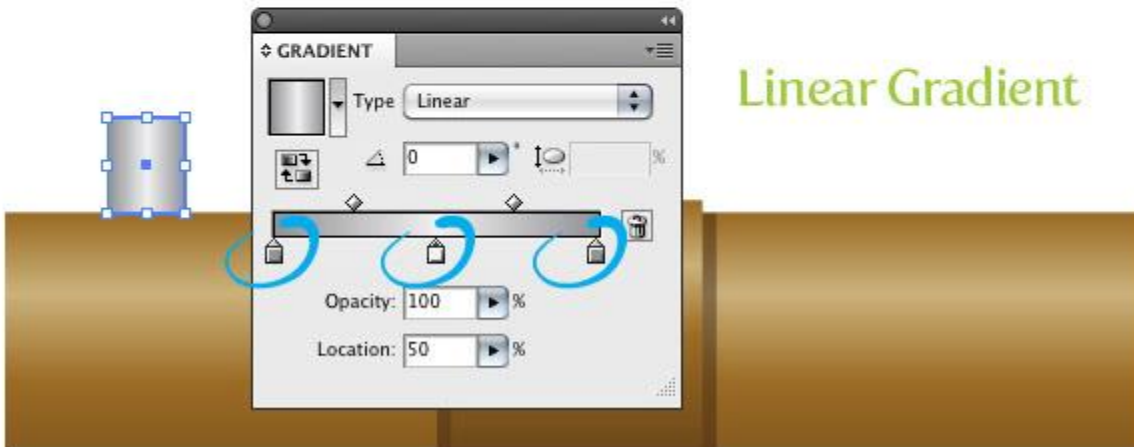
Scale

Fill and Transparency



Step 18

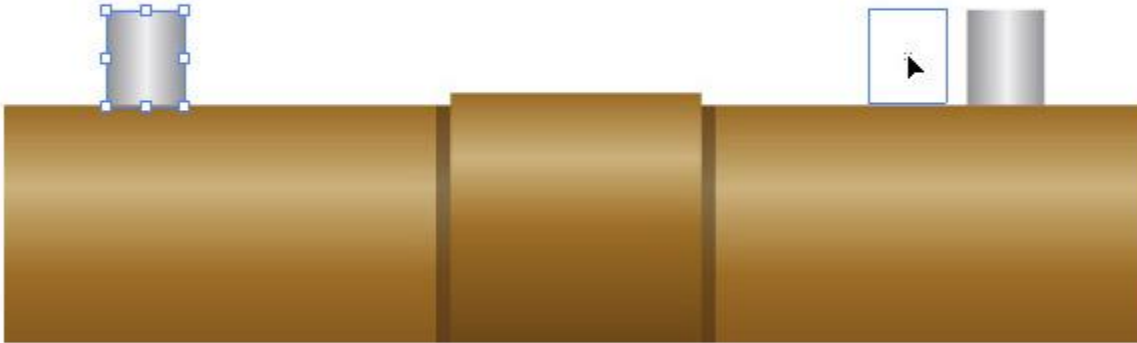
Create a small rectangle on top of the flap shape. Fill the rectangle with a three color stop gradient. Change the first color stop to a gray color, the second white, and the third to a gray color.



Step 19

Use the Selection tool (V), Hold down Alt/ Option, hold down Shift, and drag a copy of the rectangle to the opposite side of the top flap.

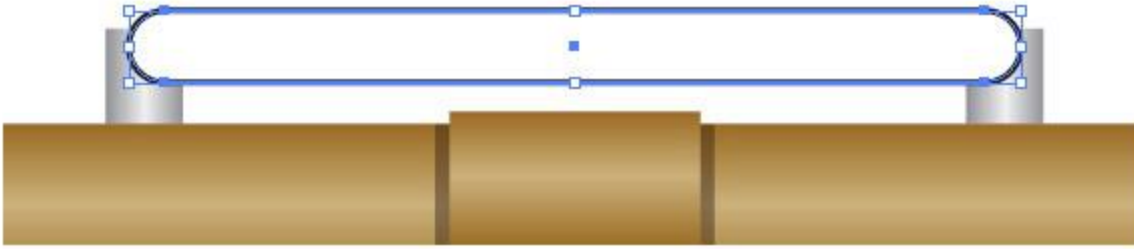
Drag Copy



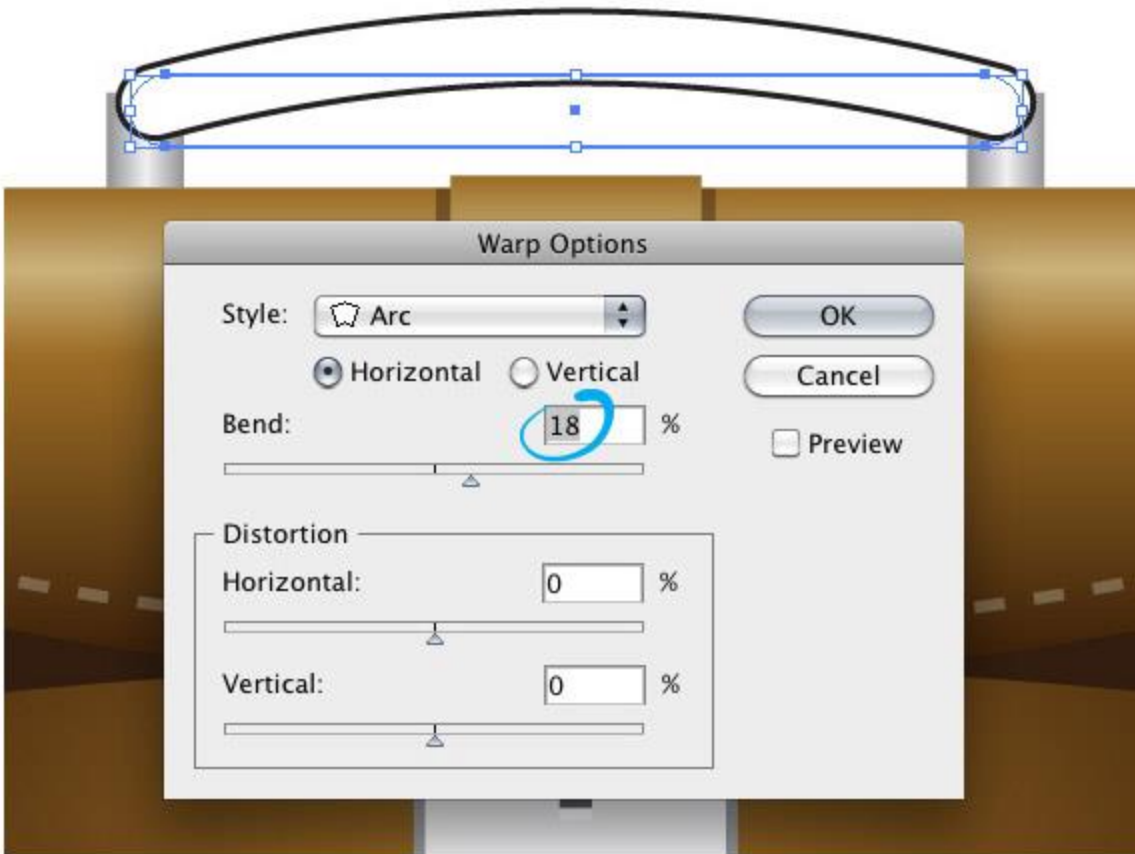
Step 20

Use the Rounded Rectangle tool and create a thin rounded rectangle connecting the two small rectangles. With the rounded rectangle selected, go Effect > Warp > Arc, make sure Horizontal is selected, and change the Bend to 18. Next, go Object > Expand Appearance.

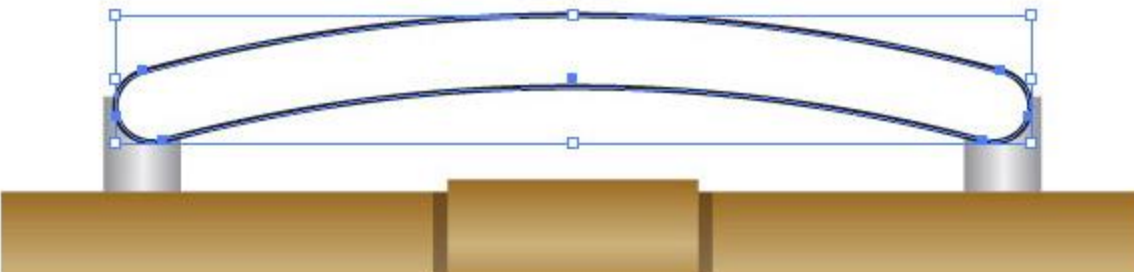
Rounded Rectangle



Arc



Expand Appearance



Step 21

Fill the arc shape with a linear gradient, change the first color stop to a dark gray color, the second color stop to black, and change the Angle to -90.

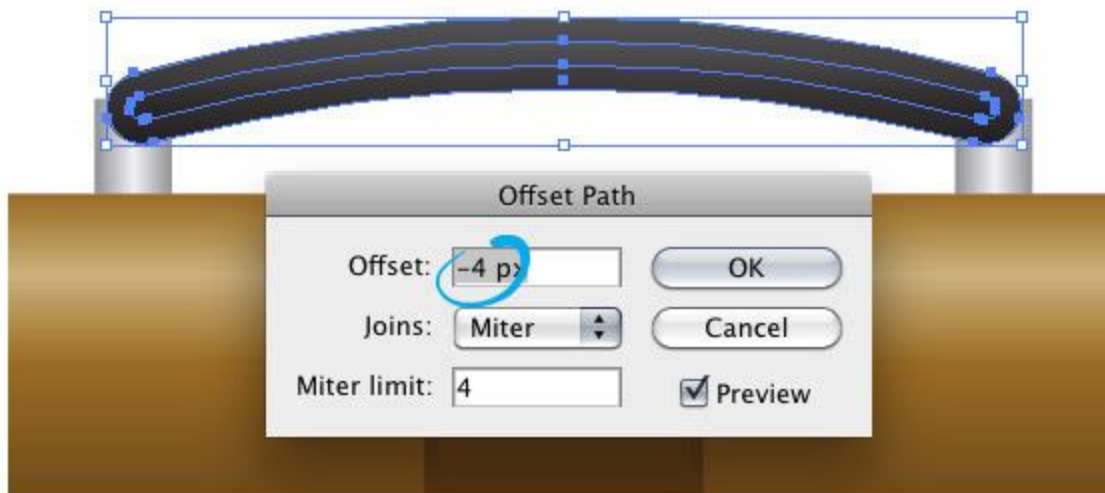
Linear Gradient



Step 22

Offset the arc shape by -4 px and change the stroke color to a gray color. Select both arc shapes and send them behind the smaller square shapes.

Offset



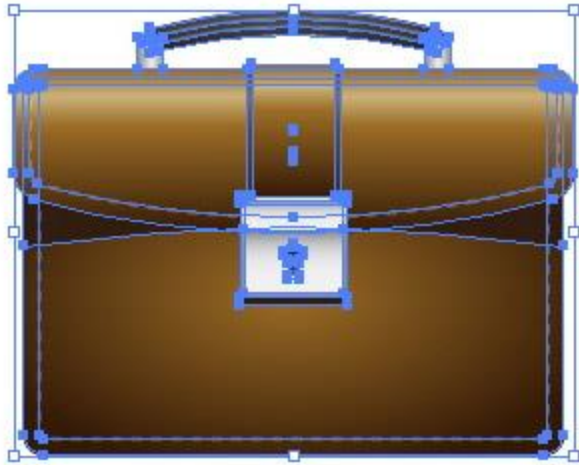
Stroke Color



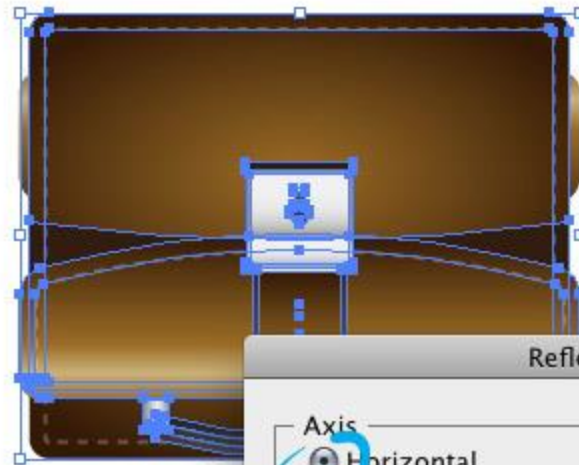
Send Backward



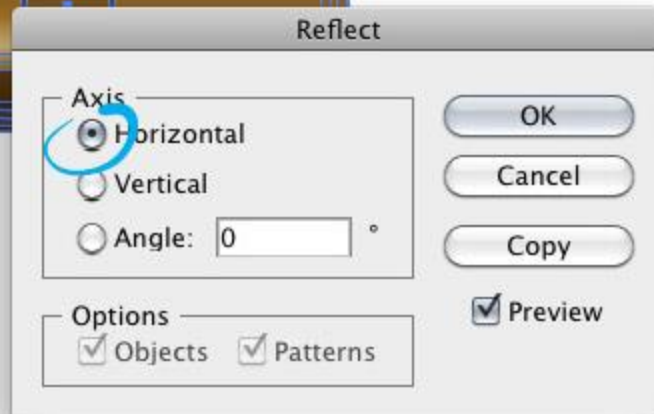
Select all the artwork we have created so far, Copy (Command + C), and Paste in Front (Command + F). With the copies still selected, go Object > Transform > Reflect. In the Reflect dialog change the Axis to Horizontal. Next, move the reflected copies right under the original artwork.



Copy and
Paste in Front



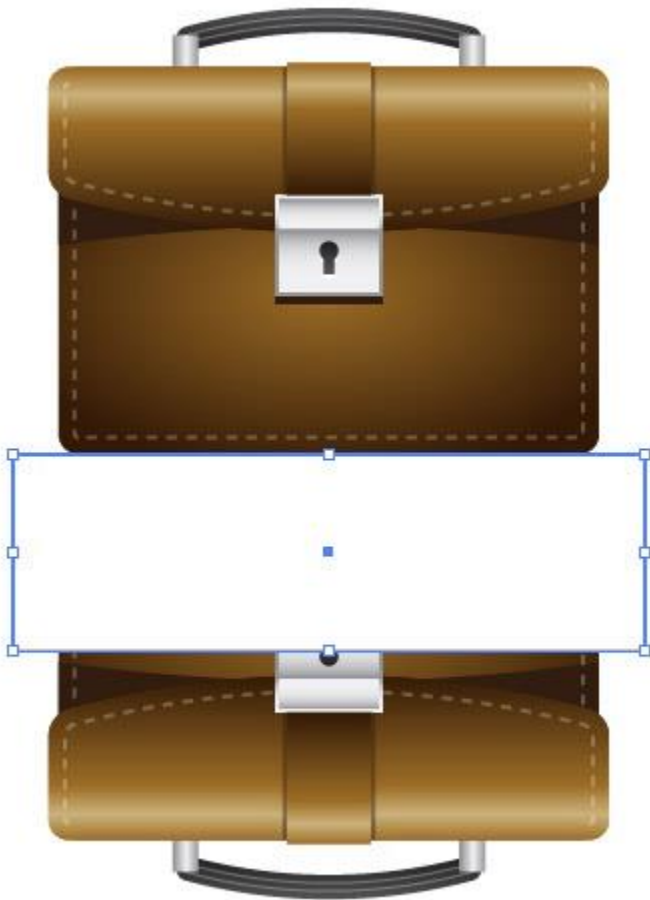
Reflect



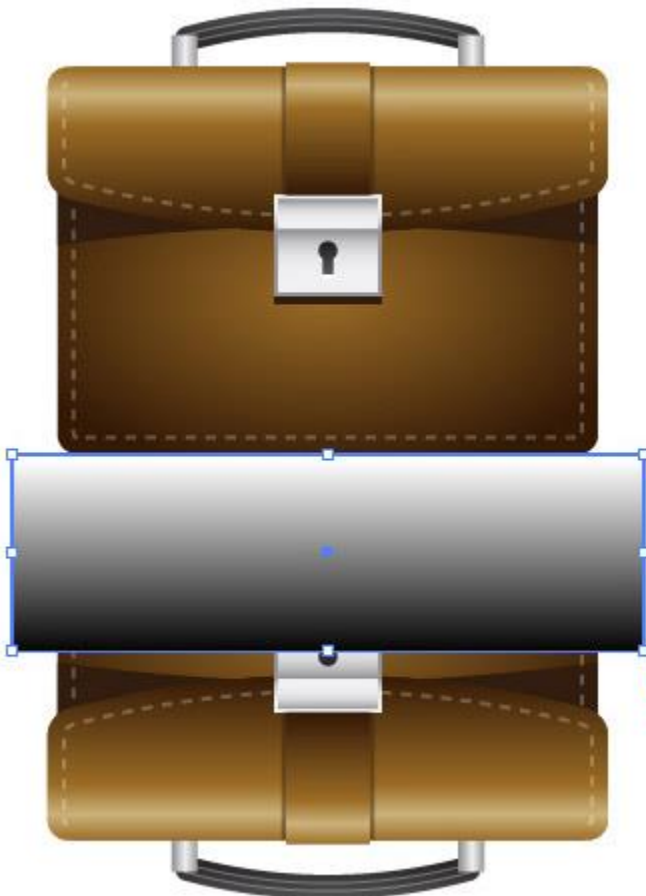
Place

Step 24

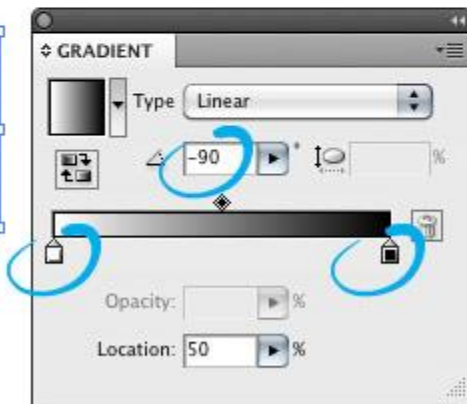
Create a rectangle over top half of the reflection. Fill the rectangle with a linear gradient, change the first color stop to white, the second color stop to a rich black and change the Angle to -90.



Rectangle



Linear Gradient



Step 25

Select the reflection and gradient and choose Make Opacity Mask from the pop-up menu of the Transparency panel. Next, change the opacity of the mask to 60.

Opacity Mask



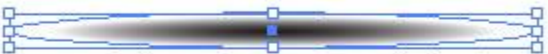
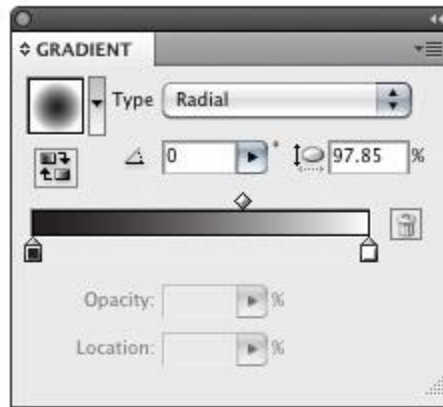
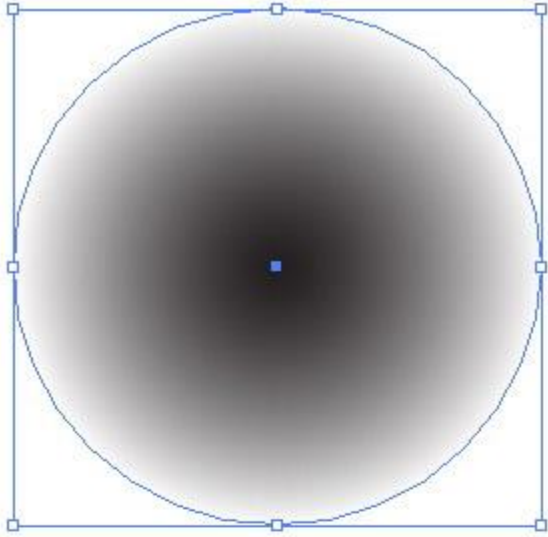
Opacity



Step 26

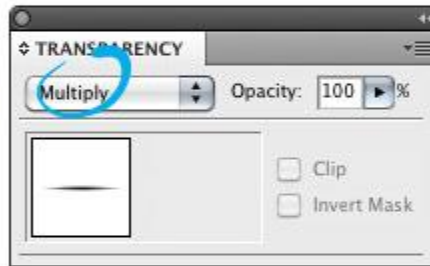
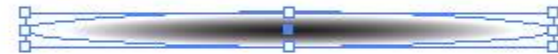
Create an ellipse bigger than the main briefcase artwork and fill it with a radial gradient. Scale the ellipse down vertically to about an eighth of its original size. Set the Blending Mode to Multiply from the Transparency panel and place the ellipse over the bottom part of the briefcase. Select the ellipse and opacity mask and send them behind all other artwork. All done! You can also place your icon on different color backgrounds. In my example I placed the icon on a dark gray radial gradient background.

Ellipse With Radial Gradient



Scale

Multiply



Place



Final Image

Below is the final image again.