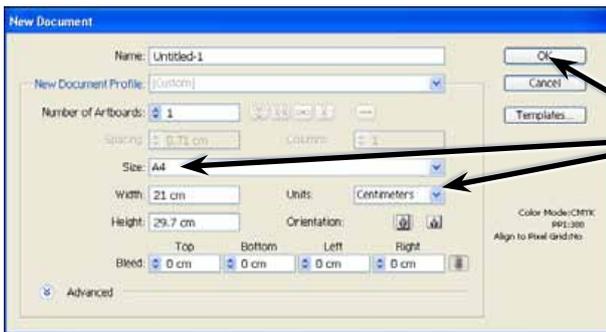# Creating Masks

Masks allow you to display part of an image through a shape. There are two types of masks in Adobe Illustrator, Opacity Masks and Clipping Masks. You have already used Illustrator's automatic Clipping Mask feature when you used the DRAW INSIDE button in Chapter 5.

Starting a New Document

1   Load Adobe Illustrator CS5 or close the current document.

2   Display the FILE menu and select NEW to start a new document.

3 Set the SIZE to A4 (or the paper size your printer uses), the UNITS to CENTIMETRES and select OK.
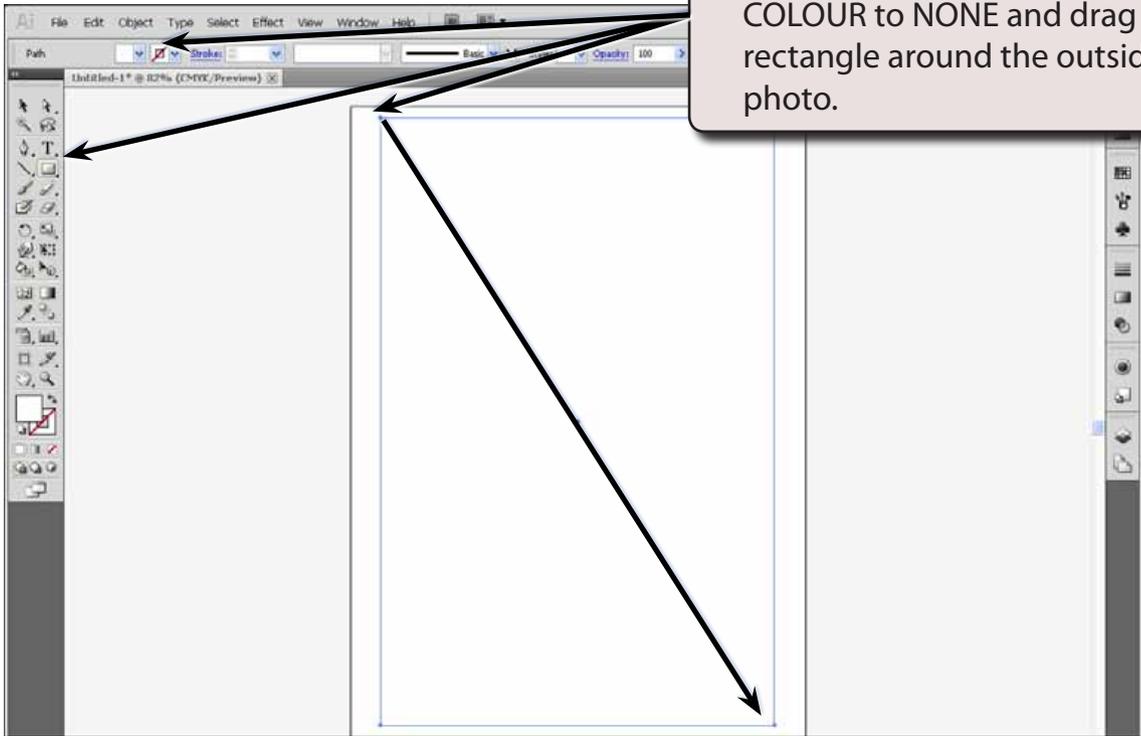
Opacity Masks

Opacity Masks allow you to fade an image using a gradient fill. The easiest way to demonstrate this is to fade a photograph.

A   Importing the Image

1   Display the FILE menu and select PLACE.

2   Access the ILLUSTRATOR CS5 SUPPORT FILES folder and open the CHAPTER 16 folder.

3   Select the BIG BEN file, check that the LINK box is turned off and click on PLACE.

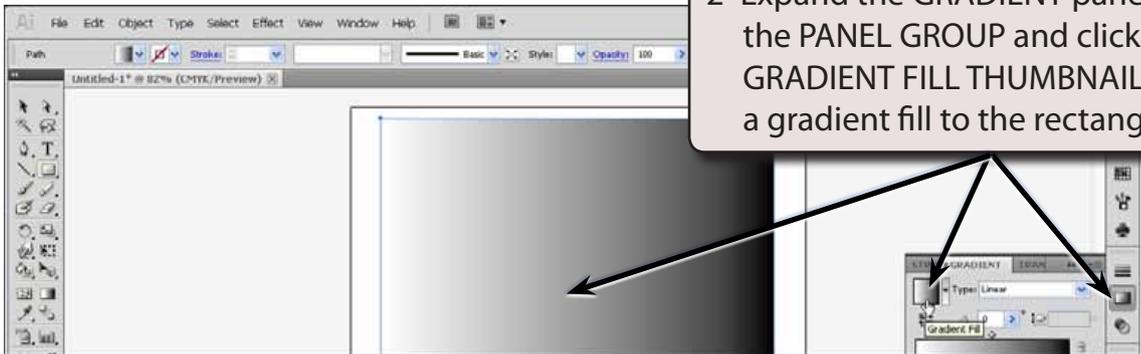4   Move the image to the top centre of the ARTBOARD.

B   Applying the Opacity Mask

1 Select the RECTANGLE TOOL, set the FILL COLOUR to WHITE, the STROKE COLOUR to NONE and drag a rectangle around the outside of the photo.

NOTE: You can use the SELECTION TOOL to adjust the corner handles of the rectangle so that it accurately covers the photo.

2 Expand the GRADIENT panel in the PANEL GROUP and click on the GRADIENT FILL THUMBNAIL to apply a gradient fill to the rectangle.

3 Expand the LAYERS panel in the PANEL GROUP and expand the LAYER 1 layer.

4 Hold down the SHIFT key and click on the circle to the right of the IMAGE so that both it and the PATH (rectangle) are targeted.

NOTE: i **Both boxes to the right of the <path> and <image> circles should be BLUE to indicate that both objects are targeted.**

ii **Targeting objects from the LAYERS panel allows you to select objects that are behind others on the ARTBOARD**

5 Expand the TRANSPARENCY panel from the PANEL GROUP and notice that there is one thumbnail box. Click on the panel's OPTIONS MENU button.
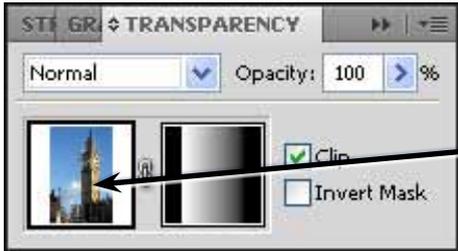
6 Select MAKE OPACITY MASK.

7 The mask is created and the MASK THUMBNAIL is added to the TRANSPARENCY panel.

NOTE: **The photo is being seen clearly through the lighter side of the gradient fill and faded through the darker side.**

8 The left thumbnail in the TRANSPARENCY panel is the image, the right thumbnail is the mask. Click on the left thumbnail so that the image is selected.
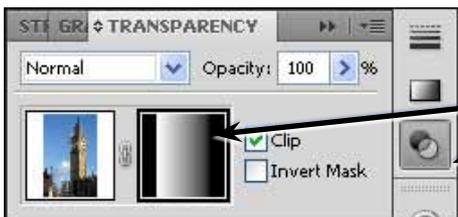
9 Expand the LAYERS panel and notice that the IMAGE is underlined to indicate that a mask is applied to it.

NOTE: **The <Path> (rectangle) has been changed to a mask and combined with the <image>.**

C   Adjusting the Mask

The mask can be adjusted at any time. To do this its thumbnail needs to be selected from the TRANSPARENCY panel.

1 Expand the TRANSPARENCY panel and click on the MASK THUMBNAIL.