



## Part 2

With Lloyd Humphreys  
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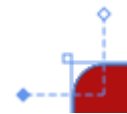
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In the previous tutorial, I touched upon Resources. Now I plunge deeper into colours and appearance of objects and shapes.

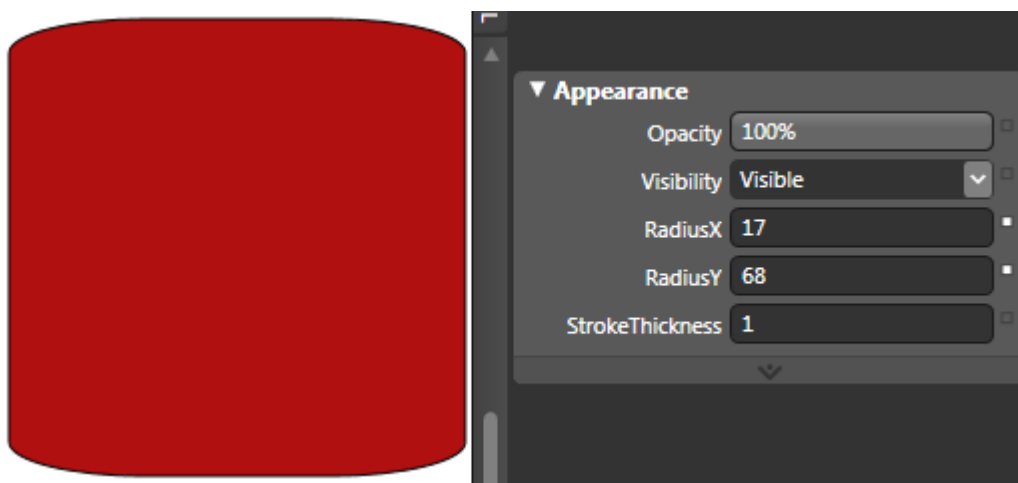
## Appearance Of Shapes

In Blend, editing shapes is extremely simple.

To change the corners of a rectangle, simply drag one of the protruding handles until you get the desired effect.



Alternatively, you can do it more manually. In the “Appearance” panel on the right hand side, under the Properties tab, there are Radial settings.



To change these settings, simply click and drag upwards or downwards, left or right, to make the numbers increase or decrease in value. I find this quite a neat feature, but should you ever want to, single clicking will allow you to enter manual values.

Apart from the Radial settings, you’ll notice that there is an Opacity, Visibility and StrokeThickness setting. The opacity is what you’d expect: it makes the whole object more or less transparent, depending on what level it’s set. The visibility setting hides or shows the object; Hidden simply removes it from view, Collapsed stops it being rendered too. StrokeThickness is the border around the object, in this case it’s black. You can change the colour of this in the Colour palette, by selecting “Stroke” instead of “Fill” at the top. Also at the top is “OpacityMask”. This simply allows you to control the opacity of the entire object, rather than the Fill or Stroke.

## Gradients

Gradients make great use of the opacity feature. Before we explore that, allow me to explain the simple controls of the gradient.



Applying gradients is simple. Simply selecting the colour draggers at the bottom of the swatch panel allows you to control the gradient. You can add more of these, for different effects. Simply click on the swatch and another marker is created.



You'll note here that one of the colour markers is invisible. This gives the effect that the gradient fades out to nothing. To apply this effect, select the colour marker you wish to make invisible, and set its "A" (Alpha) setting to 1%. This gives a really excellent effect.

Changing the direction of the gradient is quite simple, too. Simply click the "Brush Transform" tool, or press B. An arrow will pop up on the selected object, drag one of the ends around to make the gradient fade in the



direction of the arrow.

Also on the Appearance panel is a little arrow, at the bottom. This is the advanced menu, and it allows you to have greater control over how your vector graphic is displayed. There are limitations to Vector graphics, and that is that they don't have nearly as many manipulative qualities. To fix this, Expression Blend gives us "Bitmap Effects".

Click the arrow next to "New" and select the type of effect you want. If you want more than one effect, that's quite simple too. Click the arrow, and "BitmapEffect Group". A new item will expand below, named "Children (Collection)", with an ellipsis(...) next to it. Click the ellipsis and a window will open, allowing you to add and modify bitmap effects applied to that object.

