Illustrator tutorial: Fill a letterform with text

Skill level: Intermediate
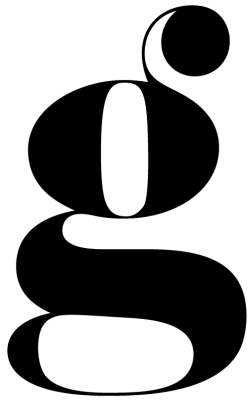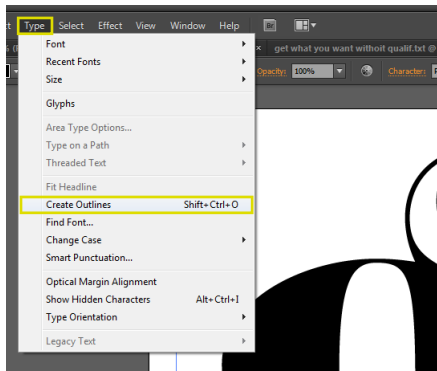Version: Illustrator CC
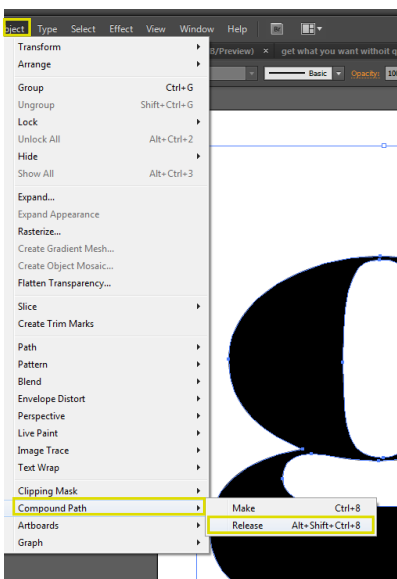
Fill a letterform with Text

Create a new document and type in a letter. I've used the letter 'g' from a free font called 'Pistilli".
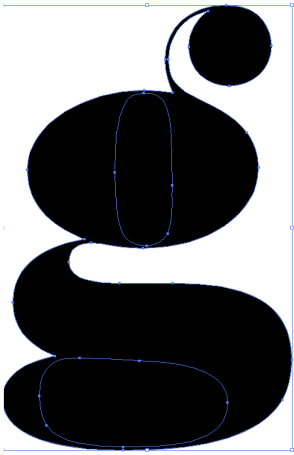

Step 1: Select the letter and go to **Type>Create Outlines**.

Step 2: With the letterform still selected, go to **Object>Compound Path>Release**.
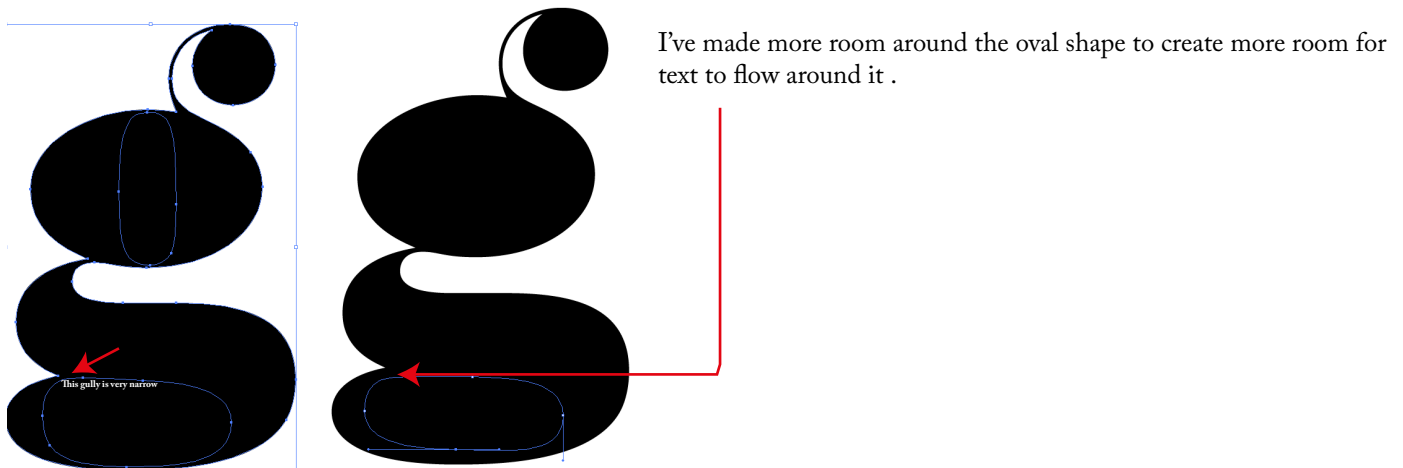
Step 3: This is how the letterform looks after being released from the compound path.
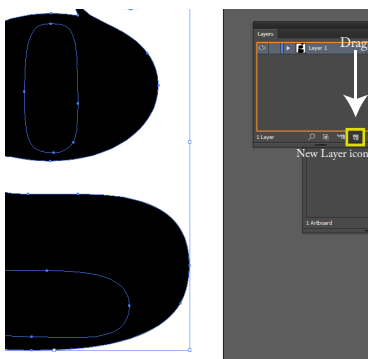

Step 4: Go to **Object>Ungroup** - this will let you tweak the size of the inner shapes to create more room for the filler text to flow around. This step isn't always necessary but you can see the space below the bottom 'ellipse' doesn't leave much of a channel for text, at least, legible text, to run.
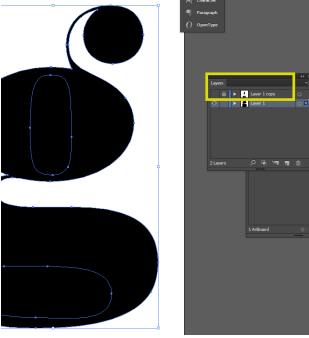
Step 5: Use the **Direct Selection Tool (A)** to click on individual nodes to make fine adjustments or select the **Direct Selection Tool (V)** to scale it generally.

I've made more room around the oval shape to create more room for text to flow around it .
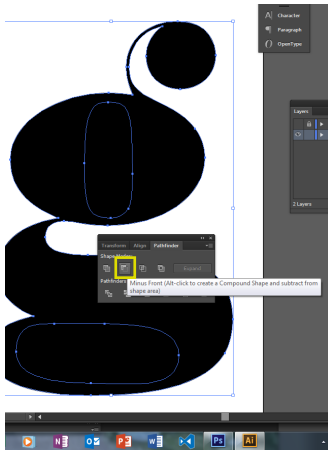
This gully is very narrow

Step 6: When you are happy with the reshaping of the inner bits, duplicate the layer by simply dragging the layer down to the duplicate layer icon in the Layers palette.
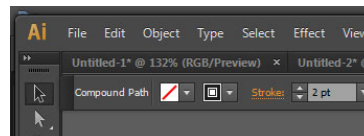

Drag

New Layer icon

Step 7: Lock and hide one of the layers. On the visible layer, select all (Ctrl+A), ie, the outline and the inner shapes.
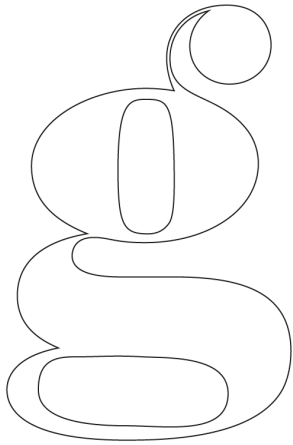

Step 8: **Go to Pathfinder>Minus Front** to cut the inner shapes from the outline.

Step 9: Select **No Fill** from the colour palette. Give the outline a **Stroke.** I've used 2pt.
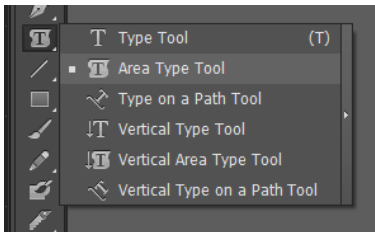
Step 10: You now have an outline with a border (stroke). Lock and hide this layer.
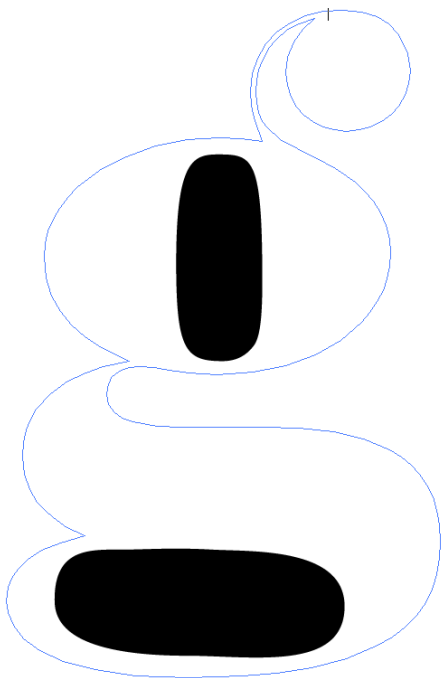

Step 11: Go back to your locked layer,; click on the eye icon to 'unhide' and unlock it.
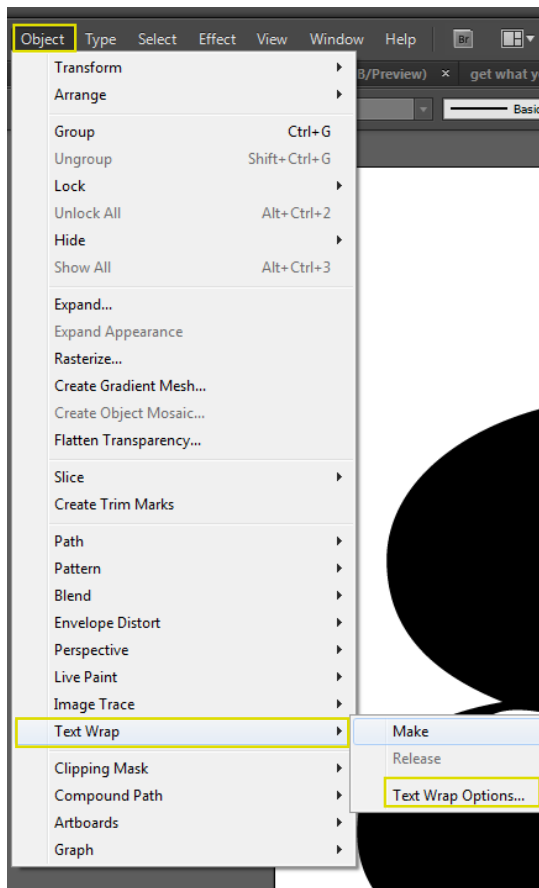
Step 12: Select the **Area Type Tool** from the Text option drop-down options in the **Tools** palette.

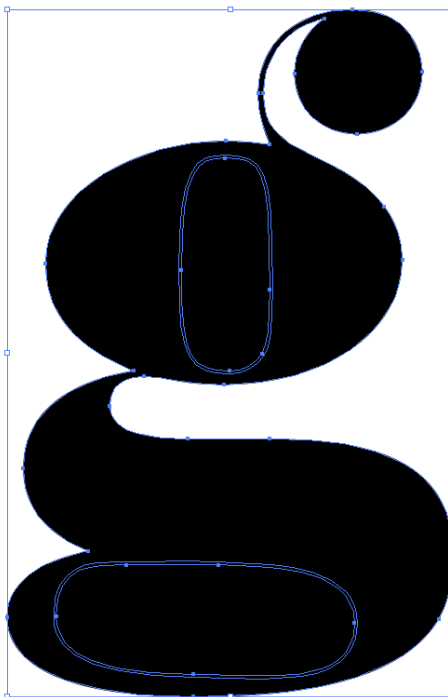Step 13: Click inside the letterform with the **Area Type Tool.**

Step 14: With the inner shapes selected, go to **Object>Text Wrap>Make**.

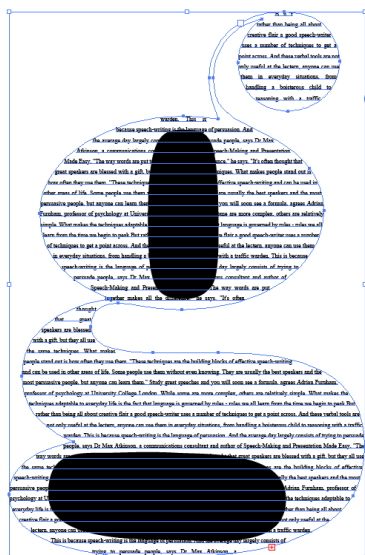Use the **Text Wrap Options** to change how much space you want to create.

Step 15: You can see the inner shapes now have a 'wrapper' around them - a buffer that text will flow around.

Step 16: With the **Area Type Tool** still selected, type in some text or paste in text from an existing document. I set mine to be fully justified using the Paragraph settings. Fully justified can result in ugly spaces so you might need to change the font size, adjust the kerning or leading, etc. You can also refine your text in the **Type>Character** settings to tweak the text as you want.

Step 17: If the image is blank, select the letterform and go to **Object>Arrange>Send to Back**.

Step 18: Click on the inner shapes and fill with White from the colour palette - you will see it needs more definition to outline the letterform.

Step 19: Go to the outline layer, unhide and unlock it. You can copy and paste it onto your top layer then position it to create a border for the outline.

Finished. I hope you found it easy to follow and find it useful and / or fun to use in the future.