


# A Perfect Combination




Using a series of InDesign tools and features, you can combine multiple individual frames and/or paths into one combined frame. You can then place an element such as a gradient swatch or photograph inside the frame. The combined frame acts as a mask, exposing only parts of the placed image. This technique only works with elements created within InDesign.




**STEP 1:** Using the Rectangle Frame tool , draw a series of individual “photo” frames. There should be no fill inside the frames. You may apply a stroke to each frame if desired. This example uses a series of two larger square frames and three smaller square frames. To make a perfectly square frame, hold the Shift key while drawing the frame shape.

**STEP 2:** The arrangement and positioning of the square frames is based upon the focal points of the image to be placed inside the frames. In this case, it is important the center of interest of the image, the two students’ faces, are exposed by the mask.

**STEP 3:** Using the Selection tool , hold Shift and select each of the square frames.

**STEP 4:** Go to Object > Compound Paths > Make. This will combine the five square frames into one combined frame.

**STEP 5:** With the Direct Selection tool , select the frame. Go to File > Place and navigate to the properly prepared digital image. Select the image file and click OK. The digital image will be placed inside the combined frame.

**STEP 6:** The placed image can be repositioned within the combined frame by clicking on the frame with Direct Selection tool  and holding down the mouse until the Direct Selection tool  changes to the Hand tool  and the entire image appears. Reposition the image so the focal points appear in the areas exposed by the square frames.

**OPTION:** To create the same effect with type, change the type elements to paths using the Type > Create Outline function.