

The Key Hole or Cookie Cutter Mask

This is a useful trick if you need to ‘hide’ or mask over features outside a given polygon feature, for example outside the Westfield city limits.

1. Add the TOWNS_POLYM data layer to your map. That gives you a layer with 351 polygons for the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts.
2. Select Westfield (or whatever city/town you are interested in).
3. Right-click on the TOWNS_POLYM layer, go to Selection, Switch selection. Now 350 cities and towns are selected, *except* for Westfield.
4. Save your selection as a new feature class or shapefile and add to your map.

Now you have a mask that leaves a ‘hole’ where Westfield is located!

5. Drag this layer to the top of your Table of Contents so it becomes the top-most map layer. Now everything outside of Westfield is hidden.



Obviously this works for any polygon layer!

You can also create a mask for more than one polygon, for example a mask that hides everything but those features located in Westfield and in Springfield.