Using the Stencil Buffer for Visualization

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1. While drawing into the Back Buffer, you can write values into the Stencil Buffer at the same time.
2. While drawing into the Back Buffer, you can do arithmetic on values in the Stencil Buffer at the same time.
3. When drawing into the Back Buffer, you can write-protect certain parts of the Back Buffer based on values that are in the Stencil Buffer.

Here’s how the Stencil Buffer works:

Using the Stencil Buffer to Create a Magic Lens

1. Clear the SB = 0
2. Write protect the color buffer
3. Fill a square, setting SB = 1
4. Write-enable the color buffer
5. Draw the solids wherever SB == 0
6. Draw the wireframes wherever SB == 1

Using the Stencil Buffer to Create a Magic Lens for Volume Data

Using the Stencil Buffer to Perform Polygon Capping
1. Clear the SB = 0
2. Draw the polygons, setting SB = ~SB
3. Draw a large gray polygon across the entire scene wherever SB ¹= 0

Using the Stencil Buffer to Perform Polygon Capping

Outlining Polygons the Naïve Way
1. Draw the polygons
2. Draw the edges

Z-fighting

Using the Stencil Buffer to Better Outline Polygons
Clear the SB = 0
for ( each polygon )
{
  Draw the edges, setting SB = 1
  Draw the polygon wherever SB ¹= 1
  Draw the edges, setting SB = 0
}

Before After

Using the Stencil Buffer to Perform Hidden Line Removal

Using the Stencil Buffer to Better Outline Polygons