



Taking Control of Adobe Illustrator®

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LORMAN®

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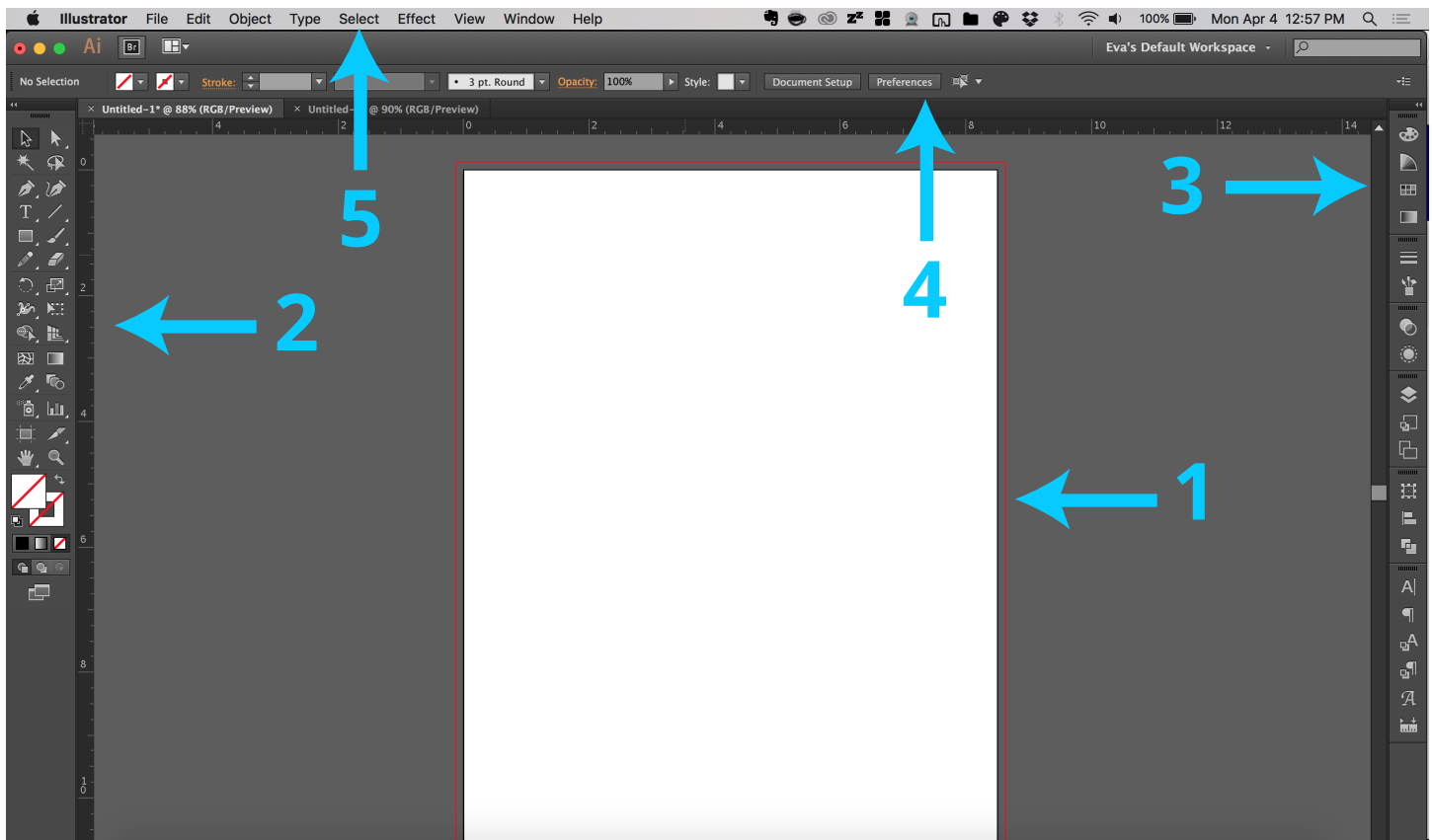
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Navigating and Customizing Your Workspace

The first step to Taking Control of Adobe Illustrator® is learning to master your workspace. You'll be spending a lot of time here, so stay a while and get to know it.



1: Artboard

Where you'll work on your graphic/document.

2: Tools Panel

Quick access to all available Tools. Can display in one column or two.

3: Panels

Complete options for specific aspects of your design, such as color, type, etc.

4: Control Panel

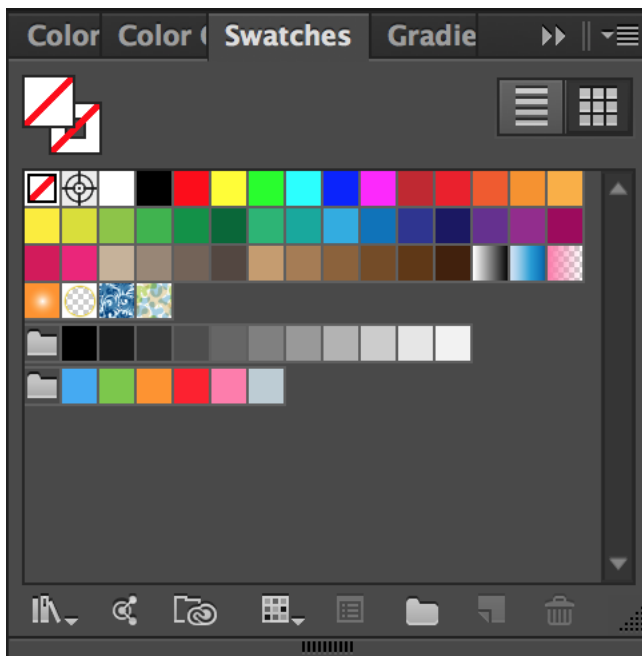
Some commonly used options for the specific Tool you have selected.

5: Application Menus

Additional commands, such as saving, adding effects, etc.

Navigating and Customizing Your Workspace

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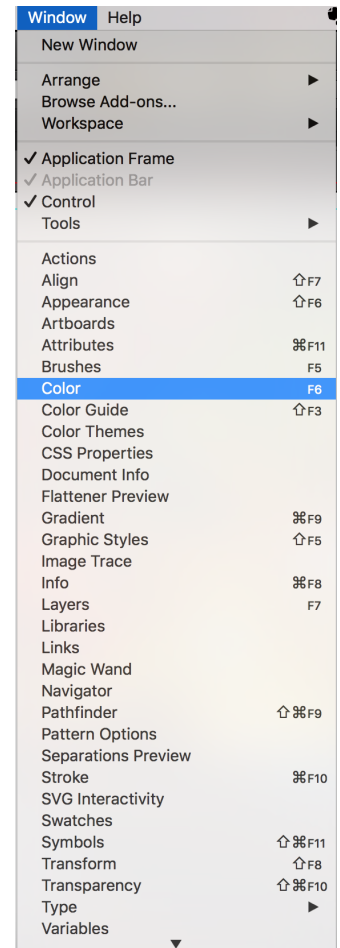
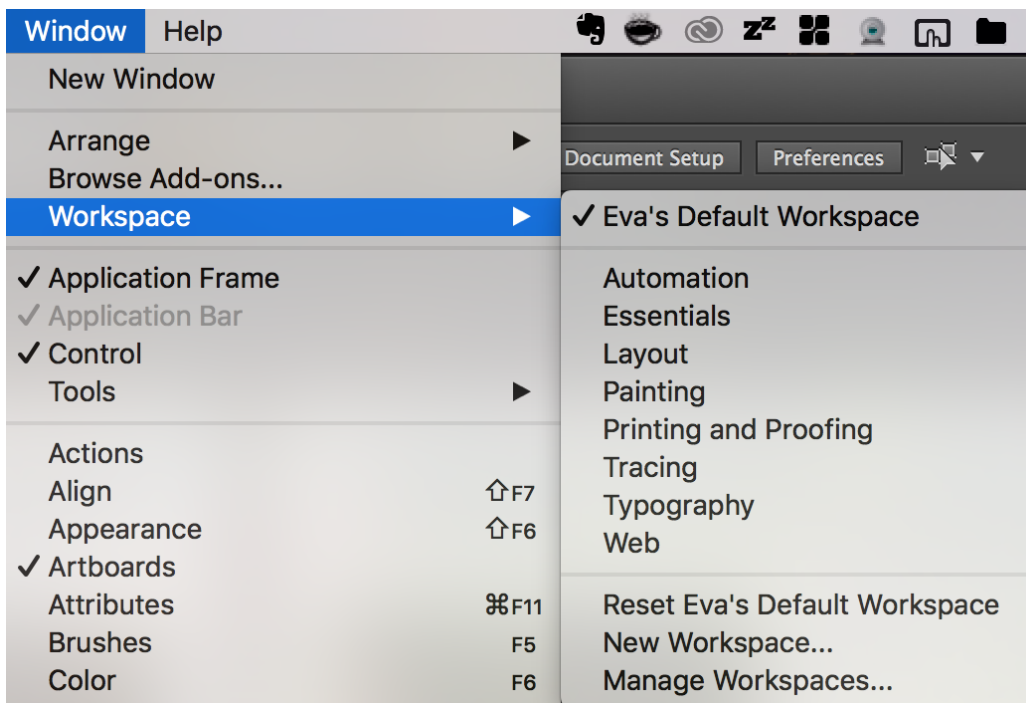


This is a Panel.

Panels are crucial to doing work in Adobe Illustrator®. If you mouse over the Panel icons, you can see what each one is called. Click on each icon to open it. Click the double-arrow in the top-right to collapse the Panel.

The other icon in the top-right corner is called a **fly-out menu**. The fly-out menu has additional options beyond what you can see in the main body of the Panel.

More panels are available under the Window menu.

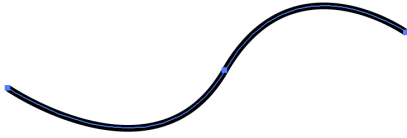


Once you get your Workspace customized how you like it, you can save it at Window > Workspace > New Workspace.

Vector Drawing Basics

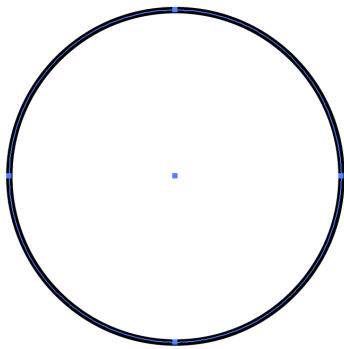
To draw your graphics in Adobe Illustrator®, you need to know the basic terminology and mechanics of vector drawing.

The basic unit of any vector drawing is a **path**. There are several types of paths:



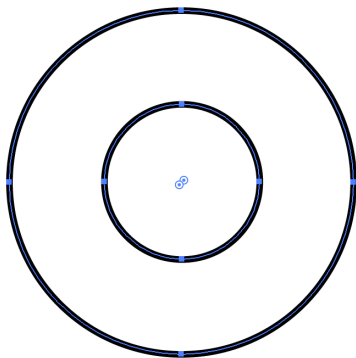
Open Path

The start point doesn't meet the end point.
Can have Stroke applied, but not Fill.



Closed Path

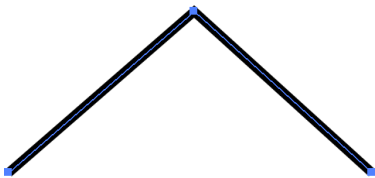
The start point meets the end point.
Can have both Stroke and Fill applied.



Compound Path

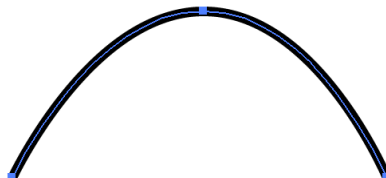
Multiple paths combined together with a cutout.
Allows for letters to exist as single paths.

Paths are composed of individual **anchor points** connected together. There are two types of anchor points:



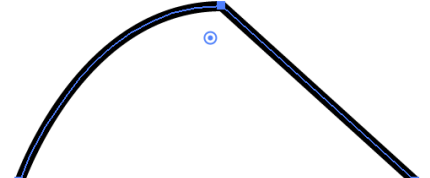
Corner Point

Path comes into point, stops, and goes out.



Smooth Point

Path gradually curves to point and out of point.

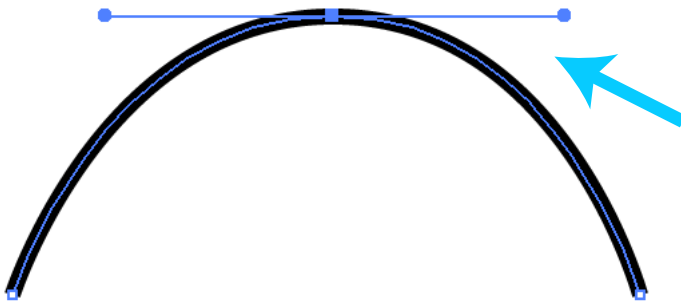


Anchor points have two sides and can combine a smooth side and corner side together.

Vector Drawing Basics

To draw your graphics in Adobe Illustrator®, you need to know the basic terminology and mechanics of vector drawing.

Smooth points create what is called a **Bézier curve**. Smooth points are controlled through **handles** coming off the anchor point.

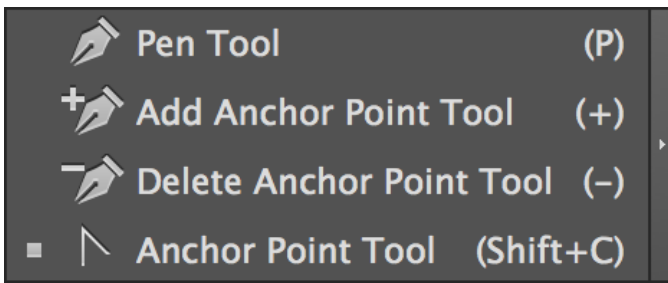


This is a handle.

There are two of them, one for each side of the anchor point (in and out).

The **direction** of the handle controls where the curve goes.

The **size** of the handle controls how gradual the curve is (smaller = less curve).



This is the Pen Tool.

It's the most common way to draw Paths and control anchor points.

Click to create a corner point. Click and drag to create smooth points.

Add or delete with Add Anchor Point Tool or Delete Anchor Point Tool.



The **Scissors Tool** splits a path into two paths by cutting along two anchor points.



The **Curvature Tool** creates smooth points by default and corner points with double-click.

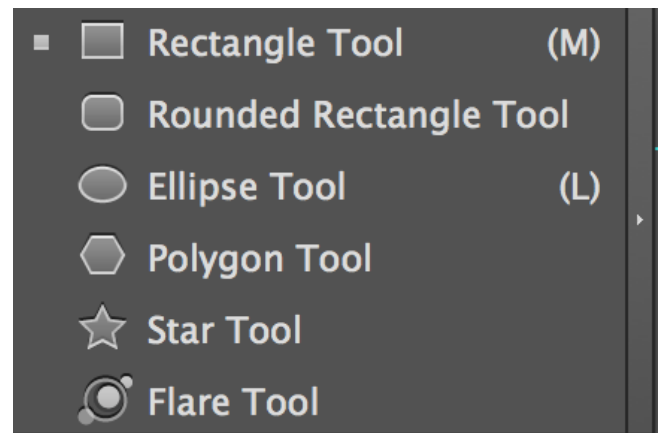


Double-click points with the **Direct Selection Tool** to select and adjust them.

Anchor Point Tool changes smooth points to corner points, corner points to smooth points, and adjusts handles on smooth points.

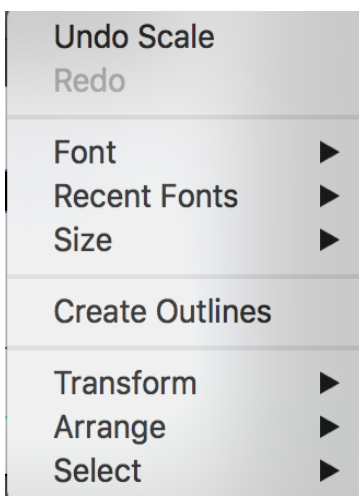
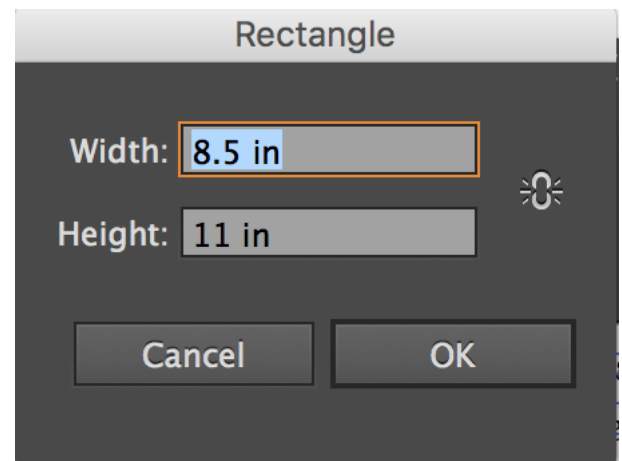
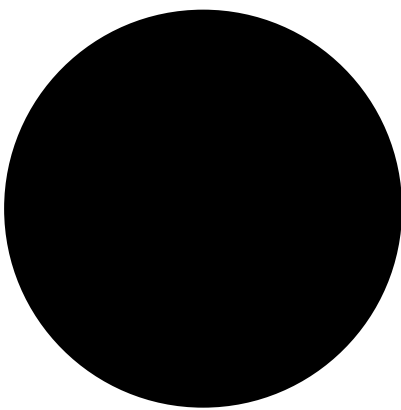
Vector Drawing Basics

To draw your graphics in Adobe Illustrator®, you need to know the basic terminology and mechanics of vector drawing.



Many drawings are made of simple geometric shapes, which can be drawn with the line and basic shape tools (pictured above). Select the tool, then either click and drag to create the shape or single-click to pull up a dialogue box.

Hold down Shift to size in proportion.



Turn Text into Vector Shapes

To manipulate letters, you'll need to turn your text into vector shapes that can be altered exactly like any other path. Right-click the text and select **Create Outlines**.

Taking Control of Objects on the Artboard

So, you've got some stuff on your Artboard, but what do you do with it now?

Selection and Direct Selection

These are the basic Tools you'll use to select objects.

Direct Selection is used for objects in a Group or anchor points in a path.



Placing

Bring in new objects (images, SVG files, etc.) through File > Place.

Grouping

Combine multiple objects together with Object > Group. Grouped objects move together and act as a single object for most commands.

Locking

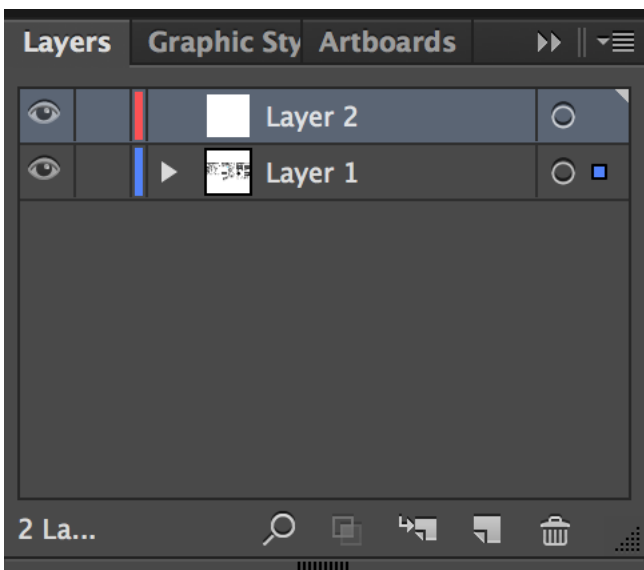
Lock an object to the Artboard and prevent it from moving with Object > Lock > Selection. Unlock all objects with Object > Unlock All.

Expanding

Divide a single object into multiple objects that work together to create the appearance of that object with Object > Expand.

Arranging

Send objects forward or backward within their Layer through Object > Arrange.



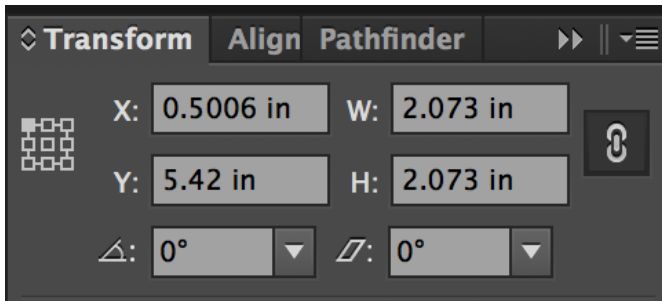
This is the Layers Panel.

While Object > Arrange is useful, there will be many times when your artwork is complicated enough that you need to use Layers.

Layers are basically different levels of a document. Put similar content on Layers and you can arrange how they display in the stack, as well as toggle them on and off and select all objects on a Layer.

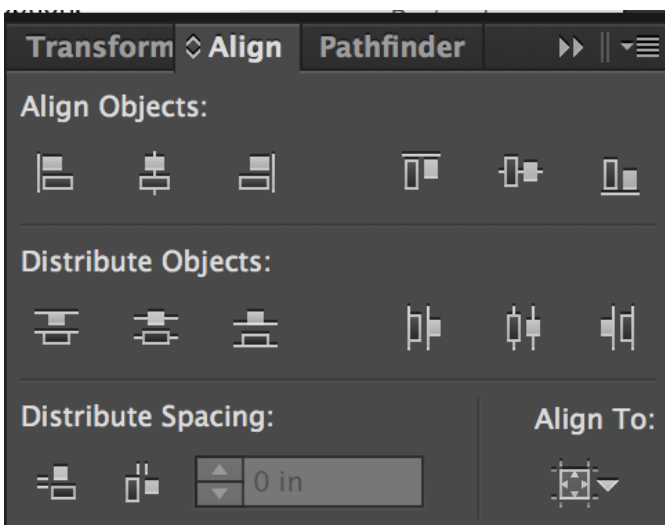
Taking Control of Objects on the Artboard

So, you've got some stuff on your Artboard, but what do you do with it now?



The Transform Panel

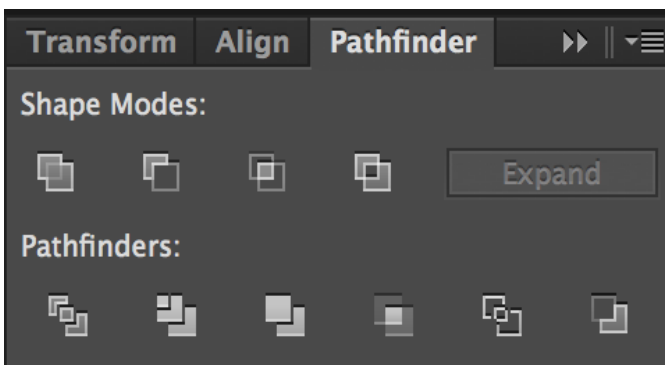
Allows you to precisely place and size objects on the Artboard. The chain icon on the right side toggles whether the object sizes in proportion or not. The grid on the left side control where on the object the X and Y values are.



The Align Panel

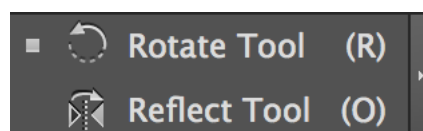
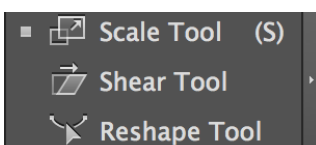
Allows you to align objects to each other or to the Artboard, as well as distribute objects and the space between them.

The "Align To" box in the bottom-right controls whether the item(s) align to each other or the Artboard.



The Pathfinder Panel

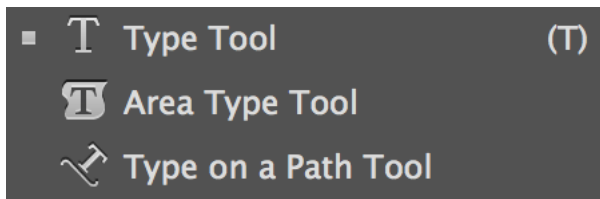
Allows you to combine objects together into compound paths. Unite combines overlapping paths into a single path. Minus Front creates a cutout from the object in front. Other commands include Intersect, Exclude, Divide, Trim, Merge, Crop, Outline, and Minus Back.



Rotating, reflecting, etc. can be done through the Transform panel, but double-clicking the tools in the Tools Panel gives you more options for each.

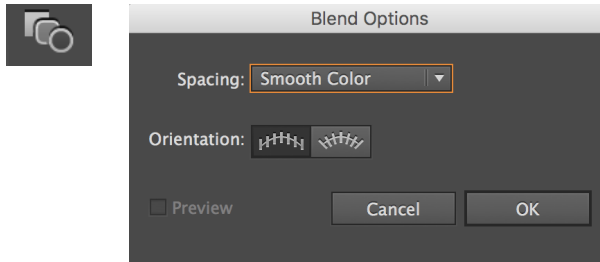
Other Essential Tools and Panels

Here's a quick look at some essential tools and panels and what they can do.



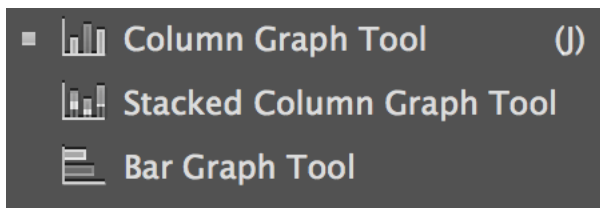
Type Tools

Create simple text boxes, text boxes with unique shapes, or make your text conform to the shape of any path.



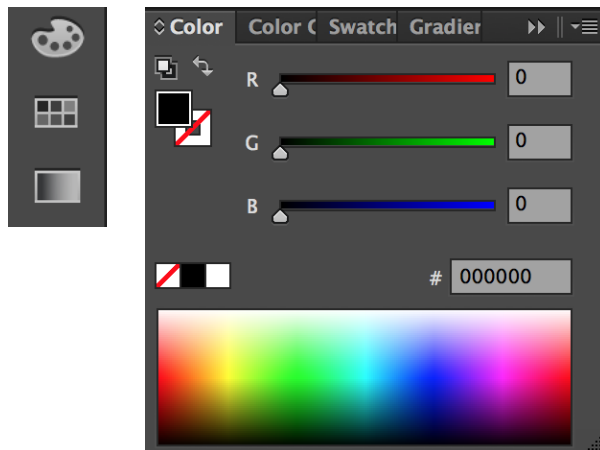
Blend Tool

Blend shapes and colors together. Used to create patterns, long drop shadows, etc.



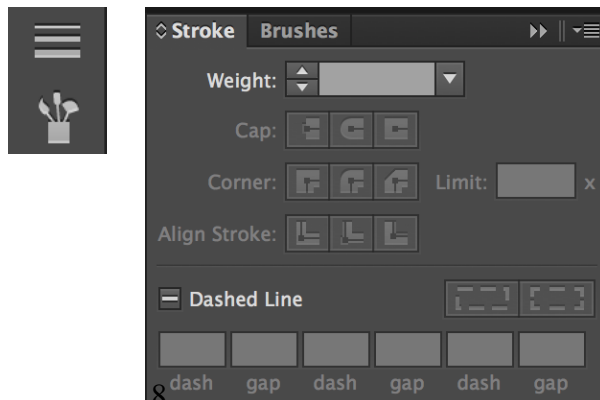
Graph Tools

Create graphs and input your data. Graphs act just like any other object and can be styled however you want.



Color Panels

There are three main color panels: Color, Swatches, and Gradient. Color lets you change individual colors. Swatches lets you save and access saved colors. Gradient lets you create and edit gradients.

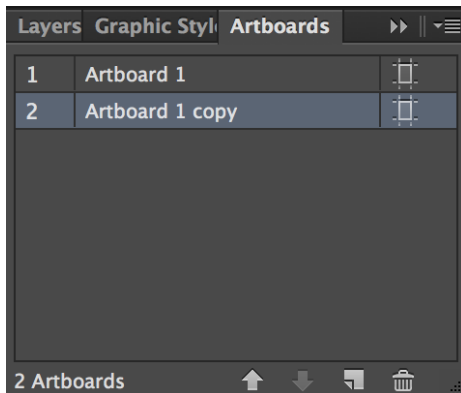


Stroke and Brushes Panels

These control your object's stroke. The Stroke Panel lets you change the weight of the stroke, as well as control caps, dashing, and arrowheads. The Brushes Panel lets you add texture to your strokes with premade brushes. You can also create your own or import brush libraries for all kinds of effects.

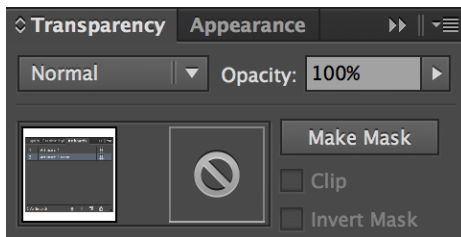
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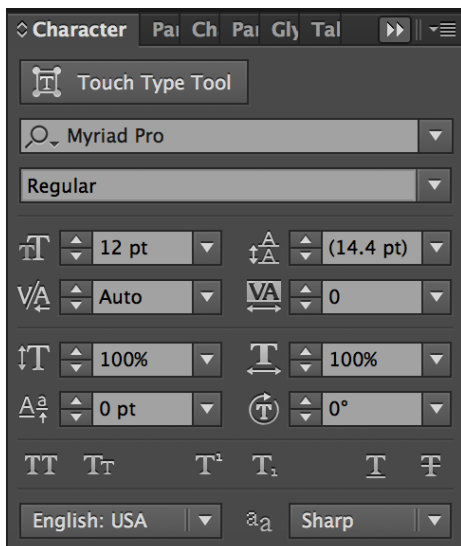
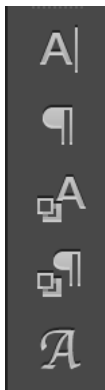
Artboards and Graphic Styles

These panels allow you to create new Artboards and edit your existing ones, as well as create graphic styles that can quickly and easily be applied to other objects.



Transparency and Appearance

Two of the most powerful panels in Adobe Illustrator®. Transparency allows you to create transparent objects, and Appearance is used for creating multiple strokes/fills and editing any aspect of an object's appearance.



Type Panels

These panels give you everything you need to handle your typography. Character and Paragraph Panels handle short and long text, respectively, while Glyphs handles special characters. Character and Paragraph Styles, like Graphic Styles, lets you save a set of typography settings and apply it to any text accordingly.

Advanced Tricks to Try

Once you've got everything else down, it's time to explore some of the more advanced things that Adobe Illustrator® can do.

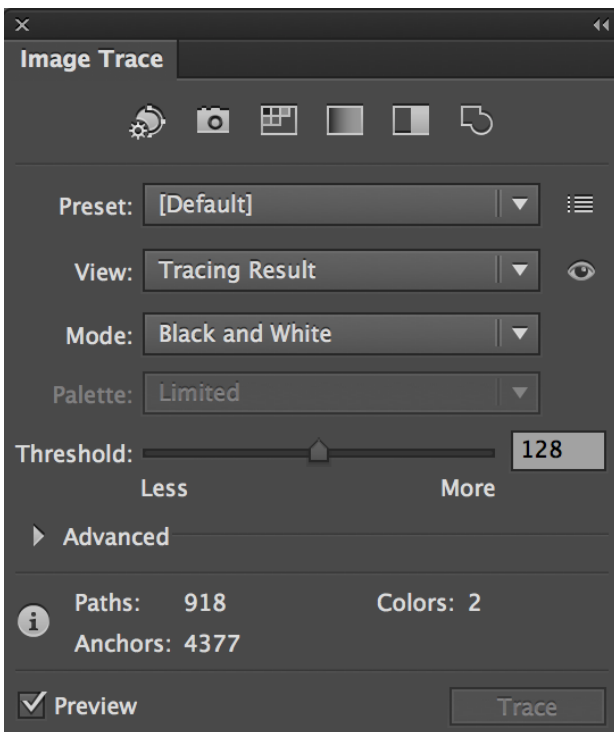
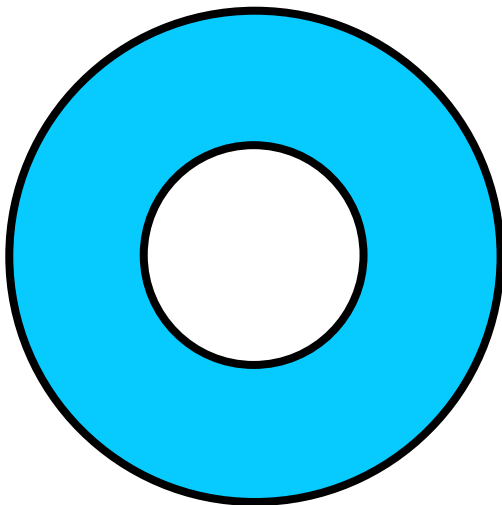


Image Trace

Create vector objects out of raster (non-vector) objects. Go to Object > Image Trace > Make, and adjust the settings by clicking the Image Trace Settings box in the Control Panel. Can be used to create vector silhouettes, paintings, line art, etc.



Live Paint

Compound paths can be tricky to fill. Take this donut. Applying a fill only fills the main part, but not the center, since it's not considered part of the path. The Live Paint Bucket Tool lets you fill in all parts of a path, even if there are gaps in the path. Go to Object > Live Paint > Make, then select the Live Paint Bucket Tool to get started.

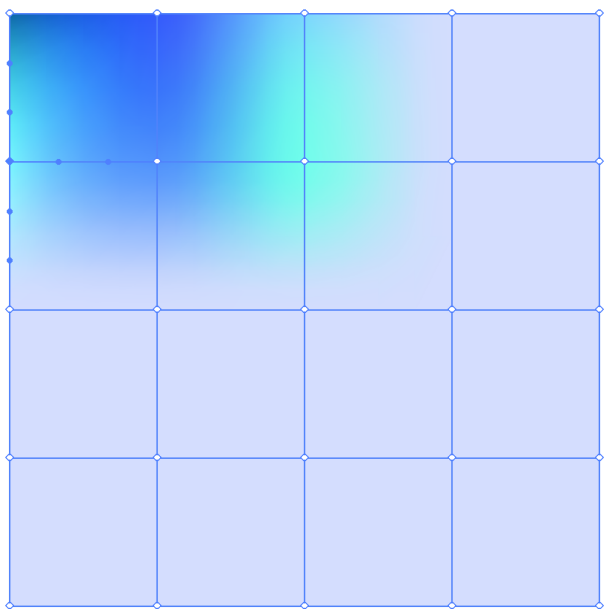
Envelope Distort

Envelope Distort

You can warp/distort objects with the Effects menu, but Object > Envelope Distort > Make with Mesh allows you precise control over any kind of warping/distortion.

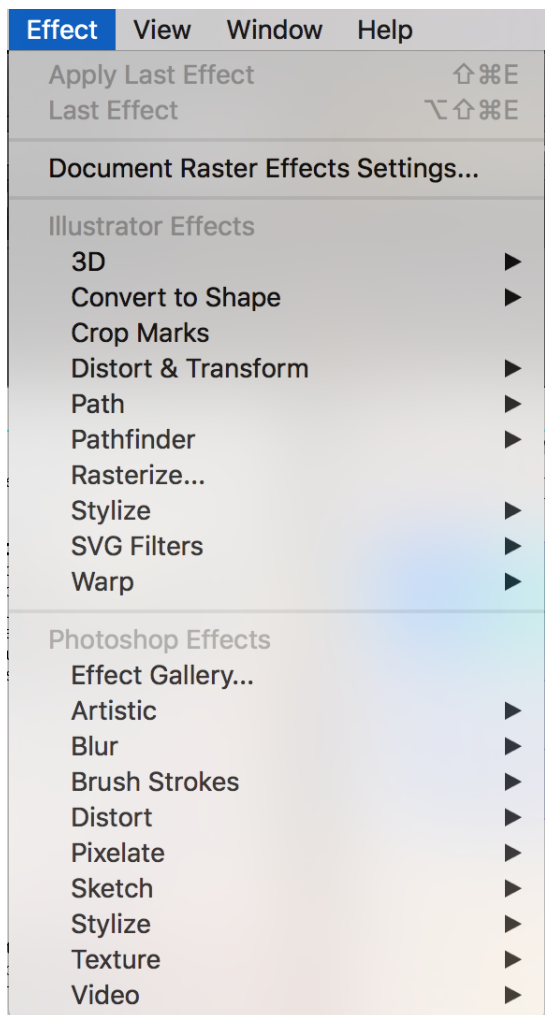
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Gradient Mesh

Creating a Gradient Mesh allows you to customize your own gradient pattern with colors shifting across a grid. Go to Object > Create Gradient Mesh, then use Direct Selection to select individual points on the grid and assign colors.



Effects

The Effects menu is divided into two sections: Illustrator Effects and Photoshop Effects. The former is all-vector effects and the latter is raster effects.

Some useful effects to try include 3D, Distort and Transform > Roughen, Path > Offset Path, Stylize, and Warp.

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