

PR 486: INTRO TO DIGITAL DESIGN TOOLS

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# ILLUSTRATOR BASICS

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## REMEMBER WHAT ILLUSTRATOR IS GOOD FOR!

- ▶ As the name suggests, it's good for drawing stuff. It's the preferred program for creating logos or illustrations, or taking something hand-drawn and digitizing it.
- ▶ Illustrator is a **vector-based** program, which means you can scale up your work to your heart's content.
- ▶ One-page layouts and small blocks of text work best in Illustrator.

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## QUICK TIPS

- ▶ You can customize your panels however you want to, but the most recommended one is “Typography.” It will give you access to the typography tools, color tools, and layers much more quickly.
- ▶ Just like in Photoshop, you can hit Command + R (Mac) or Control + R (PC) to make your rulers visible.



# DOCUMENT SETUP

PRESET DETAILS

Untitled-1

Width  
8.5 Inches

Height  
11

Orientation  
 

Artboards  
1

Bleed

Top  
0

Bottom  
0

Left  
0

Right  
0

Color Mode  
CMYK Color

More Settings

- ▶ Setting up a document is similar to Photoshop. The main difference is that Illustrator usually defaults to print settings and CMYK color.
- ▶ Unlike Photoshop, you can set the bleed right in the document setup screen. Again, Illustrator is used primarily for print work, so that's why the bleed is much easier to find.
- ▶ If you're looking for resolution, click "More Settings." It's almost always set to 300 dpi by default.

# ILLUSTRATOR TOOLS



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# COMMON SHORTCUTS

FUNCTION	MAC OS	WINDOWS
View Artwork at 100% Magnification	Command + 1	Ctrl + 1
Fit Artwork on Screen	Command + 0	Ctrl + 0
Temporarily Switch to Hand Tool while Drawing	Spacebar	Spacebar
Zoom In on Document	Command + (+)	Ctrl + (+)
Zoom Out on Document	Command + (-)	Ctrl + (-)
Lock selected Artwork	Command + 2	Ctrl + 2
Lock All Artwork	Command + Shift + Option + 2	Ctrl + Shift + Alt + 2
Unlock all Artwork	Command + Option + 2	Ctrl + Alt + 2
Duplicate an Object	Option + Drag	Alt + Drag
Change pointer to Crosshair when Selecting	Caps Lock	Caps Lock

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## OTHER HELPFUL THINGS

- ▶ Layers aren't as important in Illustrator as they are in Photoshop. It's rare you'll make an adjustment using a layer; you'll usually just manipulate the shape itself.
- ▶ Learn the difference between the Selection Tool (filled arrow) and the Direct Selection Tool (white arrow). The filled arrow selects an entire object, while the white arrow is for selecting a specific handle or point in an object.

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## SHAPES AND THE PATHFINDER TOOL

- ▶ Shapes are the building blocks of Illustrator. You can combine simple shapes to create more complex shapes, like flowers, clouds, even people. Learn to look at an object and think of all the different shapes that make up that object, and drawing becomes much easier in Illustrator.
- ▶ Group your shapes together if you want to move them as a whole. Use the Selection Tool (dark arrow) to select all the shapes you want together and hit Control/Command + G to group them. You'll also see that they're a group in your Layers panel.



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## SHAPES AND THE PATHFINDER TOOL

- ▶ The Pathfinder tool is key when it comes to combining shapes. With it, you can cut parts out of a shape (for instance, creating a donut by cutting the middle of a circle out with a smaller circle). Creating complex shapes in this fashion is sometimes more powerful than simply creating groups because you can control color fills and strokes much more easily.

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## LIVE TRACING

If you're more comfortable sketching with pen and paper, you can also open your drawing in Illustrator and use the Image Trace option.

You don't need to scan your artwork; a good-quality photograph of your art will do.

For best results, ink your design (if you drew it with pencil originally).

Make sure you have high contrast between the drawing and the paper, and take a picture in good lighting.

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# FLOURISHES

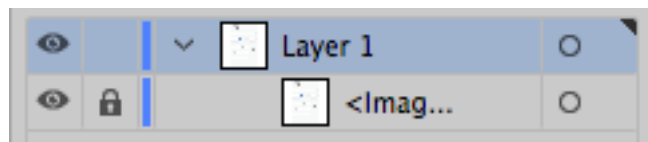
- ▶ You can open the Brushes panel to add illustrative touches to shapes. For instance, you can use a charcoal brush to give a box a stroke that looks hand-drawn, or use a pattern brush to give a shape a distinct border. There are tons of free brushes for use in Illustrator if you want to find them on Adobe Stock or on the internet.
- ▶ The Symbols panel has small symbols you can use if you want to spread them randomly over your project, or use a single symbol. These are essentially fancy shapes. One of the stock symbols is an inkblot, for instance, if you wanted quick ink spatter. To use a symbol, click the Symbol Sprayer tool (it looks like a spray can). Click once for one symbol, click and drag to randomly spray them around. If you spray symbols, they cannot be individually selected.

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## BRINGING IN OUTSIDE ASSETS

If you're going to try to trace a shape, it's helpful to bring in an image and lock it down in the background. To do this, simply drag your image onto your empty canvas. Embed it (click Embed in the top bar).

Then, under layers, click the tiny arrow to expand the objects inside that layer. Find your image and click the empty box next to the eyeball. You should see a lock when you click the empty box. That will lock the image in place so you can trace over it without moving it by accident.



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## KNOW YOUR FORMATS!

- ▶ **AI:** The native Illustrator format. Preserves all layers. It's common to have one version that had all the fonts outlined and one version that doesn't so you can actually edit the type. This is also the file type that often gets linked and embedded in Photoshop documents or InDesign documents.
- ▶ **PDF:** Similar to Photoshop, saving to a PDF will usually keep your font problems to a minimum. You can often edit these PDFs directly in Illustrator too if you check the "preserve layers" option.

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## KNOW YOUR FORMATS!

- ▶ **EPS:** Sometimes people request EPS versions of a logo. Hit "Save As" and save it as an EPS. This isn't as common as it used to be, though.
- ▶ **JPG/PNG:** You can export your AI document into JPG or PNG if it's going to be used on a website. Keep in mind, though, that once you export it to one of these formats, you lose the ability to resize without losing quality. It becomes a raster file once you export it in these formats, so make sure it's the size you need it in.