15 Exporting Assets

Lesson overview

In this lesson, you'll learn how to do the following:

- Create pixel-perfect drawings.
- Use the Export For Screens command.
- Work with the Asset Export panel.
- Generate, export, and copy/paste CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) code.

This lesson takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. Please log in to your account on peachpit.com to download the lesson files for this chapter, or go to the "Getting Started" section at the beginning of this book and follow the instructions under "Accessing the lesson files and Web Edition."

Your Account page is also where you'll find any updates to the chapters or to the lesson files. Look on the Lesson & Update Files tab to access the most current content.

You can optimize your Illustrator CC content for use on the Web, in apps, and in screen presentations using various methods. For example, you can easily export assets and save them for the web or apps, export CSS and image files, and generate SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics).

Starting the lesson

Before you begin this lesson, you'll restore the default preferences for Adobe Illustrator CC and open the lesson file.

1. To ensure that the tools function and the defaults are set exactly as described in this lesson, delete or deactivate (by renaming) the Adobe Illustrator CC preferences file. See "Restoring default preferences" in the "Getting Started" section at the beginning of the book.

Note: If you have not already downloaded the project files for this lesson to your computer from your Account page, make sure to do so now. See the "Getting Started" section at the beginning of the book.

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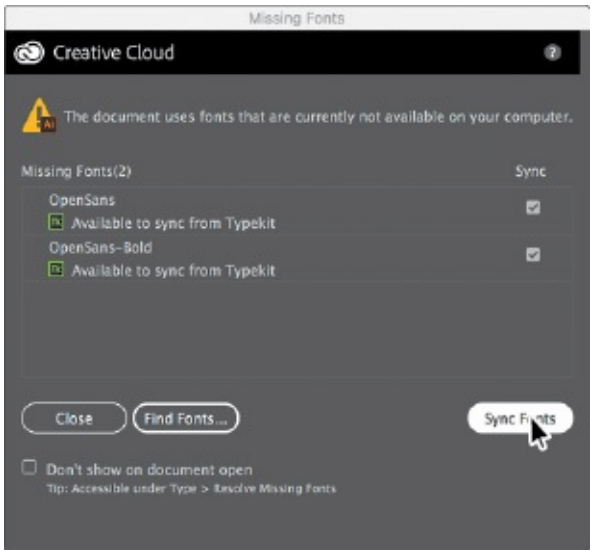
2. Start Adobe Illustrator CC.

3. Choose File > Open. In the Open dialog box, navigate to the Lessons > Lesson15 folder. Select the L15_start.ai file, and click Open. This lesson contains a fictitious business name, address, and website address for the purposes of the project.



4. The Missing Fonts dialog box will most likely appear. Click Sync Fonts to sync all the missing fonts to your computer (your list may not match the figure). After they are synced and you see the message stating that there are no more missing fonts, click Close.

Note: If you can't get the fonts to sync, you can go to the Creative Cloud desktop application and choose Assets > Fonts to see what the issue may be (refer to the section "Changing font family and font style" in Lesson 8, "Adding Type to a Poster," for more information on how to resolve it). You can also just click Close in the Missing Fonts dialog box and ignore the missing fonts as you proceed. A third method is to click the Find Fonts button in the Missing Fonts dialog box and replace the fonts with a local font on your machine.

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5. Choose Window > Workspace > Reset Essentials to ensure that the workspace is set to the default settings.

Note: If you don't see Reset Essentials in the Workspace menu, choose Window > Workspace > Essentials before choosing Window > Workspace > Reset Essentials.

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6. Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window.

7. Choose File > Save As. In the Save As dialog box, navigate to the Lessons > Lesson15 folder, and name the file **AssetExport.ai**. Leave the Format option set to Adobe Illustrator (ai) (macOS) or the Save As Type option set to Adobe Illustrator (*.AI) (Windows) and then click Save. In the Illustrator Options dialog box, leave the Illustrator options at their default settings and then click OK.
8. Choose Select > Deselect, if necessary.

Creating Pixel-Perfect Drawings

When creating content for use on the Web, in mobile apps, in onscreen presentations, and more, it's important that images saved from vector art look sharp. To enable designers to create pixel-accurate designs, you can align artwork to the pixel grid using the Snap To Pixel option. The *pixel grid* is a grid of 72 squares per inch, vertically and horizontally, that is viewable when you zoom to 600% or higher with Pixel Preview mode enabled (View > Pixel Preview).

Pixel-aligned is an object-level property that enables an object to have its vertical and horizontal paths aligned to the pixel grid. This property remains with the object when the object is modified. Any vertical or horizontal path in the object gets aligned to the pixel grid as long as the property is set for it.

Aligning new artwork to the pixel grid

When Snap To Pixel (View > Snap To Pixel) is enabled, shapes that are drawn, modified, or transformed appear crisp. This makes most artwork, including most Live Shapes, align to the pixel grid automatically. In this first section, you'll explore the pixel grid and how to align new content to it.

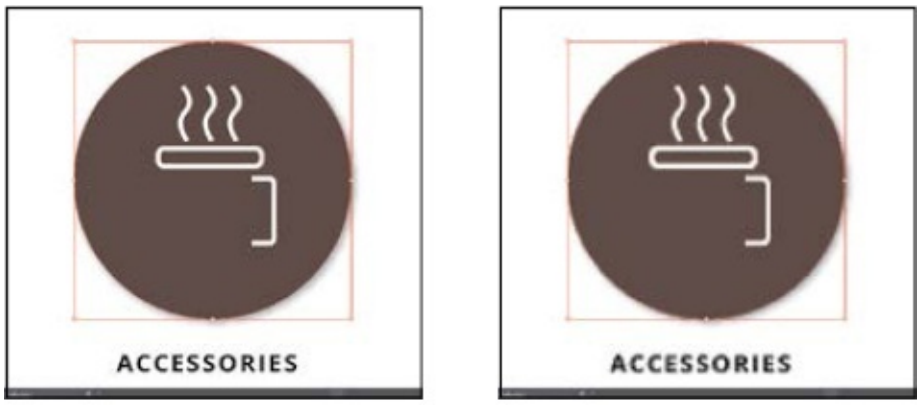
1. In the AssetExport.ai file, choose File > Document Color Mode, and you will see that RGB Color is selected.

Tip: After you create a document, you can change the document color mode using File > Document Color Mode. This sets the default color mode for all new colors you create and the existing swatches. RGB is the correct color mode to use when creating content for the Web, for apps, or for onscreen presentations.

When designing for onscreen viewing (web, apps, etc.), RGB (Red, Green, Blue) is the preferred color mode for documents in Illustrator. When you create a new document (File > New), you can choose which color mode to use with the Color Mode option. In the New Document dialog box, choosing any document profile, *except* for Print, sets Color Mode to RGB by default.

2. Select the Selection tool (), and click to select the brown circle with the word "ACCESSORIES" beneath it. Press Command++ (macOS) or Ctrl++ (Windows) several times to zoom in closely to the selected artwork.

3. Choose View > Pixel Preview to preview a rasterized version of the design.



Preview mode Pixel Preview mode

When you export assets in a format such as GIF, JPG, or PNG, any artwork that was vector is rasterized in the resulting file. Turning on Pixel Preview is a great way to be able to see what the artwork will look like when it's rasterized.

4. Choose 600% from the View menu in the lower-left corner of the Document window (in the Status bar), and make sure you can still see the brown circle above the "ACCESSORIES" text.

   By zooming in to at least 600% and with Pixel Preview turned on, you can see a pixel grid appear. The pixel grid divides the artboard into 1 pt. (1/72-inch) increments. For the next steps, you need to see the pixel grid (zoom level of 600% or greater).

▶ **Tip:** You can turn off the pixel grid by choosing Illustrator CC > Preferences > Guides & Grid (macOS) or Edit > Preferences > Guides & Grid (Windows) and deselecting Show Pixel Grid (Above 600% Zoom).

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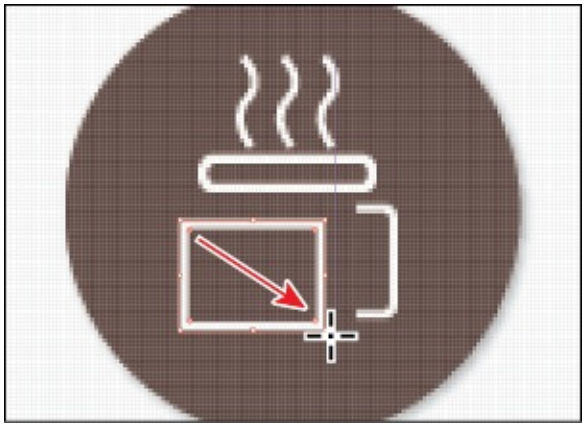
5. Click to select one of the white paths on the brown circle.

   This is an easy way to set the stroke and fill formatting for the next object drawn to match the selected artwork.



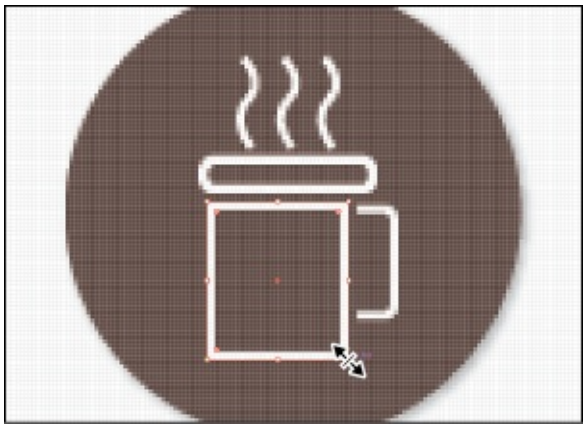
6. Select the Rectangle tool (▭) in the Tools panel. Draw a simple rectangle on the brown circle.

   You might notice that the edges of the rectangle look a little "fuzzy." That's because in this document, Snap To Pixel is turned off.

Note: As of the writing of this book, the creation tools affected by Snap To Pixel are the Pen tool, the Curvature tool, shape tools like the Ellipse tool and the Rectangle tool, the Line Segment tool, the Arc tool, Grid tools, and the Artboard tool.

7. Press Delete or Backspace to remove the rectangle.
8. Choose View > Snap To Pixel to turn on Snap To Pixel.

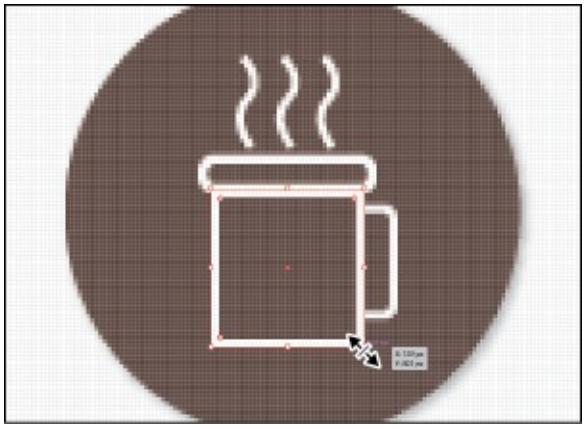
   Now, any shapes that are drawn, modified, or transformed will snap to the pixel grid if possible. By default, Snap To Pixel is turned on when you create a new document that uses the Web or Mobile document profile.



Tip: You can also click the Snap To Pixel option in the Properties panel with nothing selected and the Selection tool selected, or you can select the Align Art To Pixel Grid option ( ) on the right end of the Control panel (Window > Control).

9. With the Rectangle tool selected, draw a simple rectangle to complete the coffee cup on the brown circle, and notice that the edges are “cleaner.”

   The vertical and horizontal segments of the drawn artwork snap to the pixel grid. In the next section, you’ll see that you can snap existing artwork to the pixel grid. In this case, I had you redraw the shape just to see the difference.

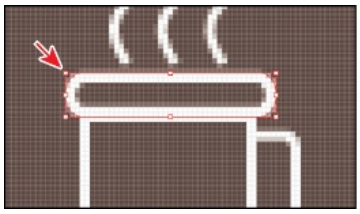


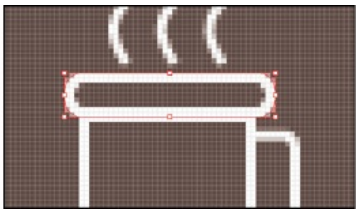
0. Select the Selection tool (▶), and drag the rectangle into position like you see in the figure. You may need to resize the rectangle to look better.

Aligning existing artwork to the pixel grid

You can also align existing artwork to the pixel grid in several ways, as you will do in this section.

1. Select the Selection tool (▶), and click to select the rounded rectangle above the rectangle you drew.
2. Click the Align To Pixel Grid button in the Properties panel to the right (or choose Object > Make Pixel Perfect).





The rounded rectangle was created when Align To Pixel Grid wasn't selected. After the rectangle was aligned to the pixel grid, the horizontal and vertical straight edges were snapped to the closest pixel grid lines. Live Shapes and Live Corners are preserved when doing this.

Objects that you pixel-align that do not have any straight vertical or horizontal segments are not modified to align to the pixel grid. For example, because a rotated rectangle does not have straight vertical or horizontal segments, it is not nudged to produce crisp paths when the pixel-aligned property is set for it.

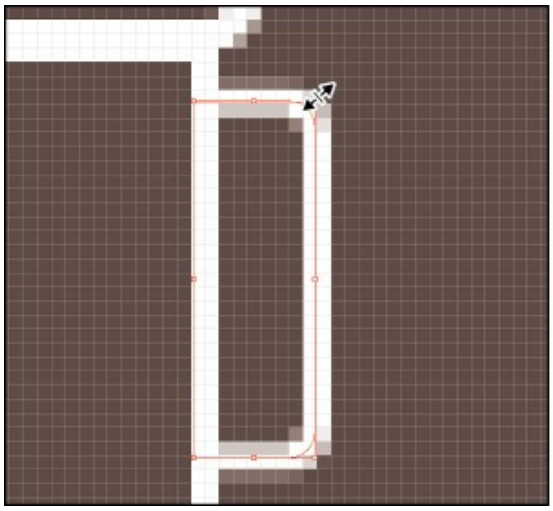
3. Click to select one of the wavy white lines above the rounded rectangle, which selects a group of lines. Choose Object > Make Pixel Perfect.

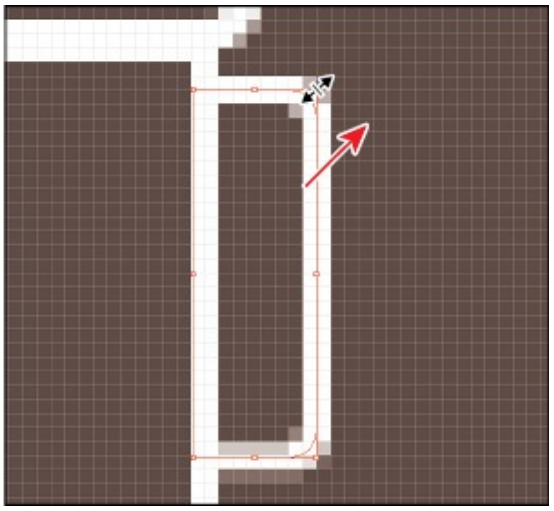
● **Note:** The Align To Pixel Grid button does not appear in the Properties panel when an open path is selected.

You will see a message in the Document window, “Selection Contains Art That Cannot Be Made Pixel Perfect.” In this case, this means there are no vertical or horizontal straight edges to align.

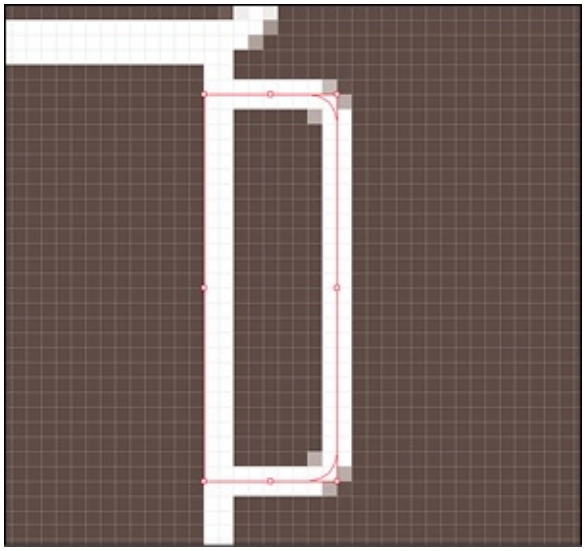
4. Click the white “handle” shape on the right side of the coffee mug. Press Command++ (macOS) or Ctrl++ (Windows) several times to zoom in closely to the selected artwork.

5. Drag the upper-right corner bounding point to make the handle a bit larger.





After dragging, notice that resizing the shape using the corner or side handles fixes the *corresponding* edges (snaps them to the pixel grid) but not all of them.



6. Choose Object > Make Pixel Perfect to ensure that all of the vertical or horizontal straight edges are aligned to the pixel grid.

Note: Moving artwork is constrained to be in whole pixels when transforming via the Selection tool, Direct Selection tool, Live Shape center widget, arrow keys, and Artboard tool. The Direct Selection tool snaps anchor points and handles to pixel or subpixel locations depending on the stroke settings of the path. This snap is similar to the Pen tool snap during creation.

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7. Choose Select > Deselect (if available) and then choose File > Save.

Exporting artboards and assets

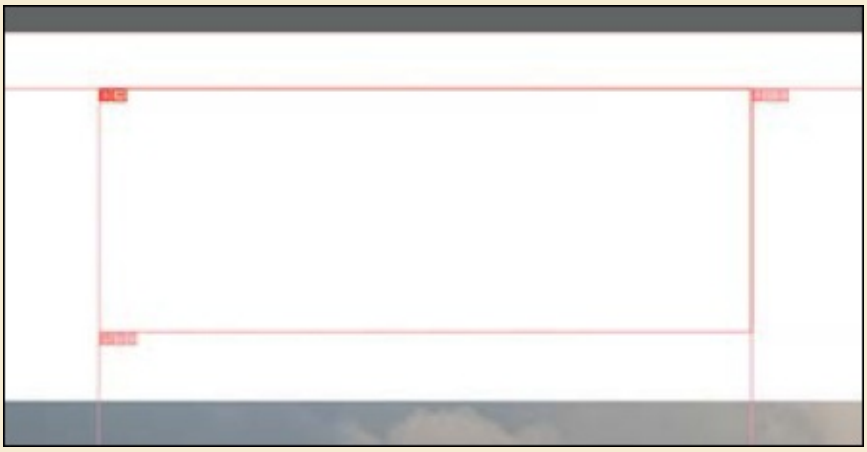
Tip: To learn more about working with web graphics, search for “File formats for exporting artwork“ in Illustrator Help (Help > Illustrator Help).

In Illustrator, using the File > Export > Export For Screens command and the Asset Export panel, you can export entire artboards, perhaps to show a design in progress, or selected assets. The exported content can be saved in several file formats, such as JPEG, SVG, PDF, and PNG. These formats are optimized for use on the Web, devices, and onscreen presentations and are compatible with most browsers, yet each has different capabilities. The selected artwork is automatically isolated from the rest of the design and saved as an individual file.

Note: To learn more about creating slices, search for “Create slices“ in Adobe Illustrator Help (Help > Illustrator Help).

Slicing content

In the past, before the Export For Screens command or the Asset Export panel, you needed to isolate artwork you wanted to export. This was done by placing the artwork on its own artboard or by slicing the content. In Illustrator, you can create slices to define the boundaries of different web elements in your artwork. When you save the artwork using the File > Export > Save For Web (Legacy) command, you can choose to save each slice as an independent file with its own format and settings.



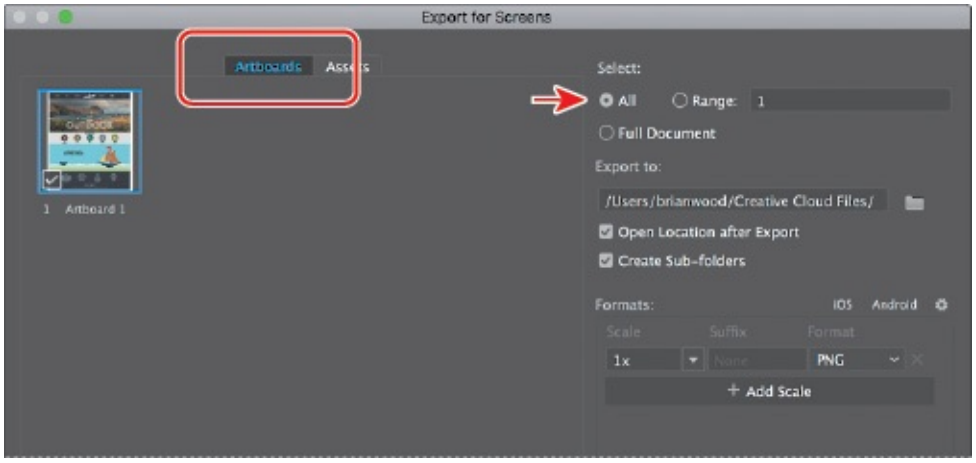
It is not necessary to isolate artwork by slicing when using the File > Export > Export For Screens command or Asset Export panel since artwork is isolated automatically.

Exporting artboards

In this section, you'll see how to export artboards in your document. This could be useful if you want to show someone a design you are working on or to capture a design for use in a presentation, website, app, or other.

1. Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window.
2. Choose File > Export > Export For Screens.

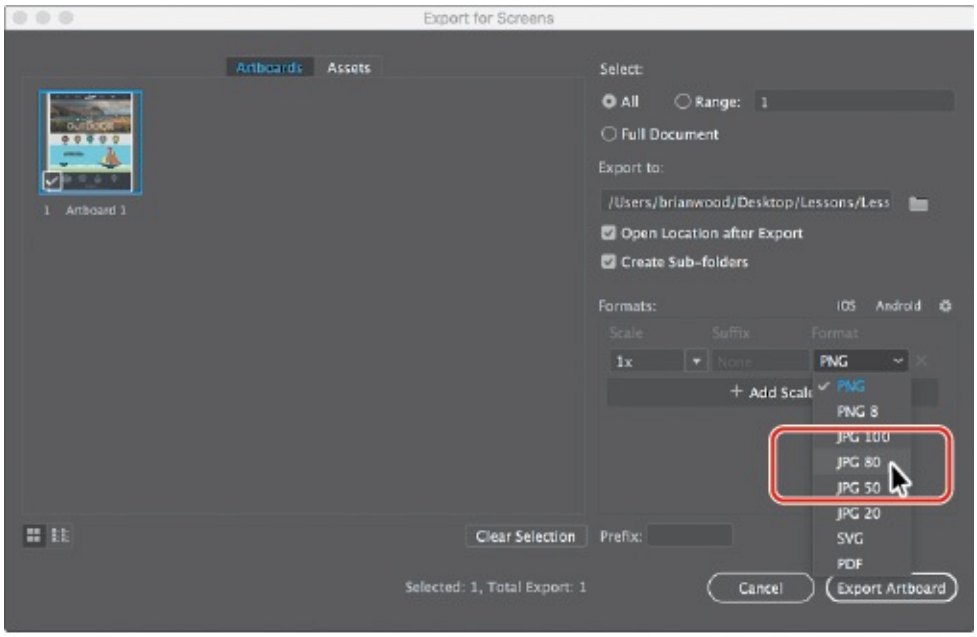
   In the Export For Screens dialog box that appears, you can choose between exporting artboards and exporting assets. Once you decide what to export, you can set export settings on the right side of the dialog box.
3. With the Artboards tab selected, on the right side of the dialog box, ensure that All is selected.



You can choose to export all or a specific range of artboards. This document has only one artboard, so selecting All is the same as selecting a range of 1. Selecting Full Document will export all artwork in a single file.

4. Click the folder icon ( ) to the right of the Export To field. Navigate to the Lessons > Lesson15 folder, and click Choose (macOS) or Select Folder (Windows).

5. Click the Format menu, and choose JPG 80.



In the Formats section of the Export For Screens dialog box, you can set a Scale factor for the exported asset, create (or in this case edit) a suffix for the filename, and change the format. You can also export multiple versions with different scale factors and formats by clicking the + Add Scale button.

6. Click Export Artboard.

Tip: To avoid creating subfolders, like the folder "1x," you can