

## 7 Using Color to Enhance Signage

### Lesson overview

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

- Understand color modes and the main color controls.
- Create, edit, and paint with colors using a variety of methods.
- Name and save colors, and build a color palette.
- Work with color groups.
- Use the Color Guide panel.
- Explore the Edit Colors/Recolor Artwork features.
- Copy and paint appearance attributes from one object to another.
- Work with Live Paint.



This lesson takes approximately 90 minutes to complete. Please log in to your account on [peachpit.com](https://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.



Spice up your illustrations with colors by taking advantage of color controls in Adobe Illustrator CC. In this information-packed lesson, you'll discover how to create and paint fills and strokes, use the Color Guide panel for inspiration, work with color groups, recolor artwork, and more.

## Starting the lesson

In this lesson, you'll learn about the fundamentals of color by creating and editing colors for an art store sign and logo, using the Color panel, Swatches panel, and more.

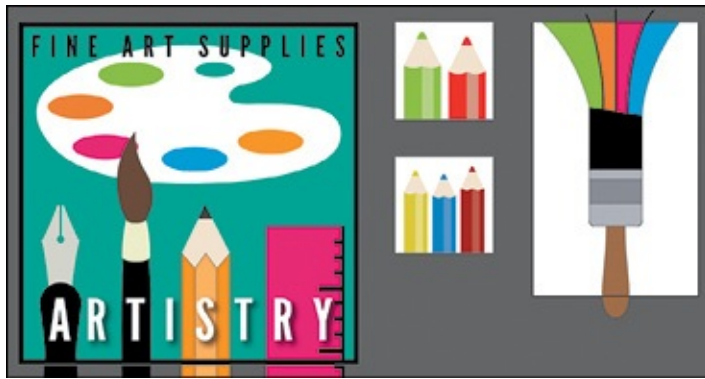
1. To ensure that the tools function and the defaults are set exactly as described in this lesson, delete or deactivate (by renaming) the Adobe Illustrator CC preferences file. See "Restoring default preferences" in the "Getting Started" section at the beginning of the book.

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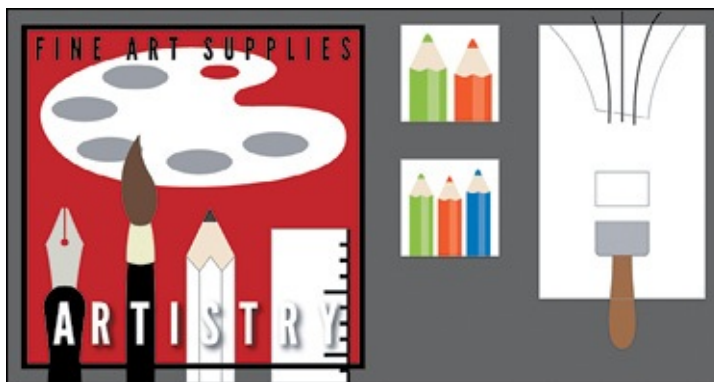
● **Note:** If you have not already downloaded the project files for this lesson to your computer from your Account page, make sure to do so now. See the "Getting Started" section at the beginning of the book.

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2. Start Adobe Illustrator CC.
3. Choose File > Open, and open the L7\_end.ai file in the Lessons > Lesson07 folder to view a final version of the artwork.
4. Choose View > Fit All In Window. You can leave the file open for reference or choose File > Close to close it.



5. Choose File > Open. In the Open dialog box, navigate to the Lessons > Lesson07 folder, and select the L7\_start.ai file on your hard disk. Click Open to open the file. This file has all the pieces already in it; they just need to be painted.
6. Choose View > Fit All In Window.



7. Choose File > Save As. In the Save As dialog box, navigate to the Lesson07 folder, and name it **ArtSign.ai**. Leave the Format option set to Adobe Illustrator (ai) (macOS) or the Save As Type option set to Adobe Illustrator (\*.AI) (Windows), and click Save.
8. In the Illustrator Options dialog box, leave the options at their default settings and then click OK.
9. Choose Window > Workspace > Reset Essentials.

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

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## Exploring color modes

There are many ways to experiment with and apply color to your artwork in Adobe Illustrator CC. As you work with color, it's important to keep in mind the medium in which the artwork will be published, such as a print piece or a

website. The colors you create need to be described in the correct way for the medium. This usually requires that you use the correct color mode and color definitions for your colors. The first part, color modes, will be described next.

Before starting a new document, you should decide which color mode the artwork should use, *CMYK* or *RGB*.

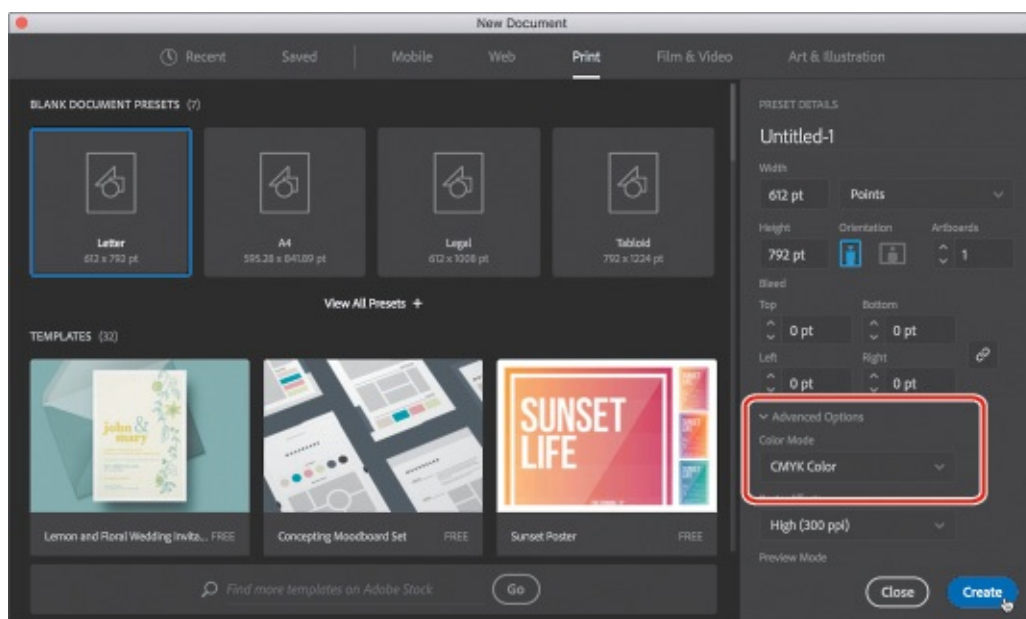
- **CMYK**—Cyan, magenta, yellow, and black are the colors used in four-color process printing. These four colors are combined and overlapped in a screen pattern to create a multitude of other colors.
- **RGB**—Red, green, and blue light are added together in various ways to create an array of colors. Select this mode if you are using images for onscreen presentations, the Internet, or mobile apps.

When creating a new document by choosing File > New, each profile has a specific color mode. For instance, the Print profile uses the CMYK color mode. You can easily change the color mode by making a selection in the Color Mode menu.

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► **Tip:** To learn more about color and graphics, search for “About color” in Illustrator Help (Help > Illustrator Help).

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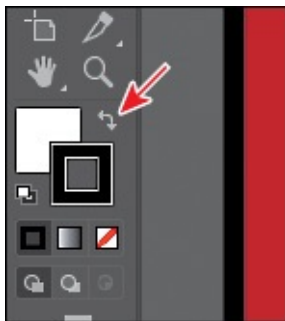


When a color mode is selected, colors in the document are displayed in the selected color mode. You can change the color mode of a document, after a file is created, by choosing File > Document Color Mode and then choosing either CMYK Color or RGB Color in the menu.

## Working with color

In this lesson, you'll learn about the traditional methods of coloring (also called *painting*) objects in Illustrator using a combination of panels and tools, such as the Properties panel, Swatches panel, Color Guide panel, Color Picker, and the paint options in the Tools panel.

In previous lessons, you learned that objects in Illustrator can have a fill, a stroke, or both. At the bottom of the Tools panel (on the left), notice the Fill and Stroke boxes. The Fill box is white (in this case), and the Stroke box is Black. If you click those boxes one at a time, you'll see that whichever is clicked is brought in front of the other (it's selected). When a color is chosen, it is applied to the fill or stroke, whichever is selected. As you explore more of Illustrator, you'll see these fill and stroke boxes in lots of other places like the Properties panel, Swatches panel, and more.



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● **Note:** The Tools panel you see may be a single column, and that just depends on the resolution of your screen.

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As you will see in this section, Illustrator provides a lot of ways to arrive at the color you need. You'll start by applying an existing color to a shape and then work your way through the most widely used methods for creating and applying color.

## Applying an existing color

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● **Note:** Throughout this lesson, you'll be working on a document with a color mode that was set to CMYK when the document was created, which means that the majority of colors you create will, by default, be composed of cyan, magenta, yellow, and black.

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Every new document in Illustrator has a series of default colors available for you to use in your artwork in the form of swatches in the Swatches panel. The first method of working with color you'll explore is to paint a shape with an existing color.

1. Click the ArtSign.ai document tab at the top of the Document window, if you did not close the L7\_end.ai document.

2. Choose 1 Art Sign from the Artboard Navigation menu in the lower-left corner of the Document window (if it's not chosen already) and then choose View > Fit Artboard In Window.
3. With the Selection tool (⬮), click to select the large red shape in the background.
4. Click the Fill box in the Properties panel (■) on the right to reveal a panel. Click the Swatches option (■) in the panel, if it isn't already selected, to show the saved default swatches. Position the pointer over a swatch in the list to reveal a tooltip with the swatch name. Click to apply the blue swatch named "Sign Bg" to change the color of the fill for the selected artwork.



5. Press the Escape key to hide the panel.

## Creating a custom color

There are lots of ways to create your own custom colors in Illustrator. Using the Color panel (Window > Color) or Color Mixer, you can apply color to an object's fill and stroke and also edit and mix colors using different color models (CMYK, for example). The Color panel and Color Mixer display the current fill and stroke of the selected content, and you can either visually select a color from the color spectrum bar at the bottom of the panel or mix your own colors, changing the color values in various ways. Next, you'll create a custom color using the Color Mixer.

1. With the Selection tool (⬮), click the gray ellipse below the word "ART," toward the top of the artboard.



2. Click the Fill box in the Properties panel (■) on the right, to reveal a

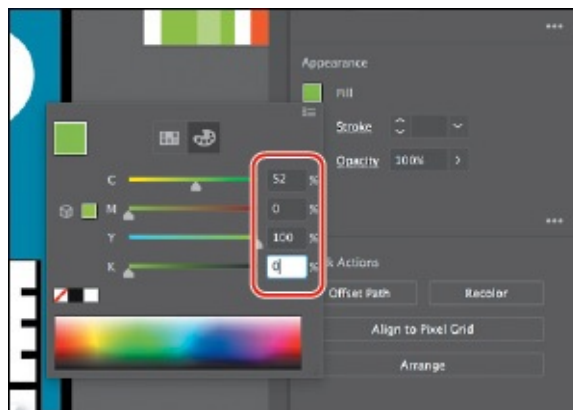
panel. Select the Color Mixer option (🎨) in the panel that appears.

3. Click in the light-green part of the color spectrum to sample a light-green color and apply it to the fill.

Since the spectrum bar is so small, you most likely won't achieve the same color as I did. That's okay, because you'll edit it shortly to match.



If artwork is selected when you create a color this way, the color is automatically applied.



4. In the Color Mixer panel, type the following values in the CMYK fields: C=52, M=0, Y=100, K=0. This ensures that we are all using the same green.

Colors created in the Color Mixer panel are not saved anywhere except for in the fill or stroke of the selected artwork. If you want to easily reuse the color you just created elsewhere in this document, you can save it as a swatch in the Swatches panel. All documents start with a default number of swatches, as mentioned earlier. Any colors you save or edit in the Swatches panel are available to the current document only (by default) since each document has its own defined swatches.

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► **Tip:** Each CMYK value is a percentage of 100.



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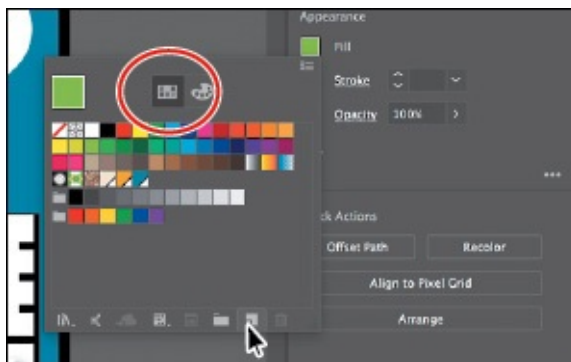


## Saving a color as a swatch

You can name and save different types of colors, gradients, and patterns in the document as swatches so that you can apply and edit them later. Swatches are listed in the Swatches panel in the order in which they were created, but you can reorder or organize the swatches into groups to suit your needs.

Next, you'll save the green color you just created as a swatch so you can easily reuse it.

1. Click the Fill box in the Properties panel () on the right to reveal a panel. Click the Swatches button at the top of the panel to see the swatches. Click the New Swatch button () at the bottom of the panel to create a swatch from the fill color of the selected artwork.



2. In the New Swatch dialog box that appears, change the following options:



- Swatch Name: **Light Green**

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► **Tip:** Naming colors can be an art form. You can name them according to their value (C=45, ...), appearance (Light Green), or description like “text header,” among other attributes.

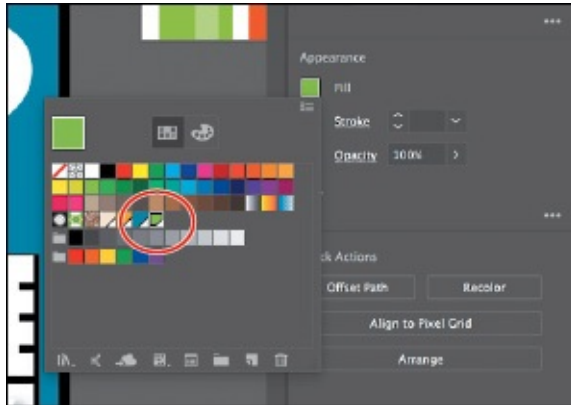
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- Add To My Library: **Deselected** (In [Lesson 13](#), “[Creating Artwork for a T-Shirt](#),” you’ll learn all about Libraries.)

Notice the “Global” option that is selected by default. New swatches you create are global by default. That means, if you later edit this swatch, everywhere it is applied, regardless of whether or not the artwork is selected, is updated.

3. Click OK to save the swatch.



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● **Note:** If the panel is hidden, click the Fill box in the Properties panel.

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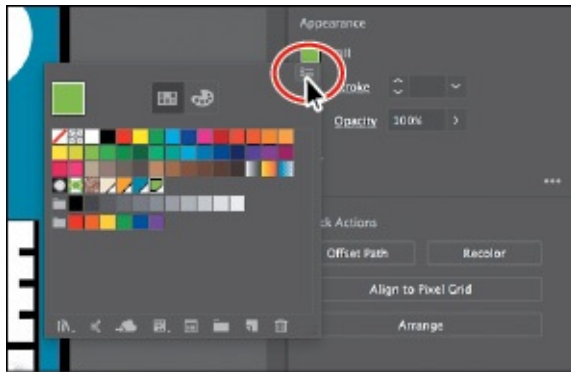
Notice that the new Light Green swatch is highlighted in the Swatches panel (it has a white border around it). That’s because it is applied to the selected shape automatically. Also notice the little white triangle in the lower-right corner of the swatch. This indicates that it’s a global swatch.

4. Leave the Light Green filled shape selected for the next section.

## Creating a copy of a swatch

One of the easiest ways to create and save a color as a swatch is to make a copy of a swatch and edit the copy. Next, you’ll create another swatch by copying and editing the Light Green swatch.

1. With the shape still selected, click the Fill box in the Properties panel (■) on the right to reveal a panel. Click the Swatches button at the top of the panel to see the swatches, if they aren’t showing. Once again, you should see that the Light Green swatch is highlighted because it’s applied to the shape.
2. Choose Duplicate Swatch from the panel menu (☰).



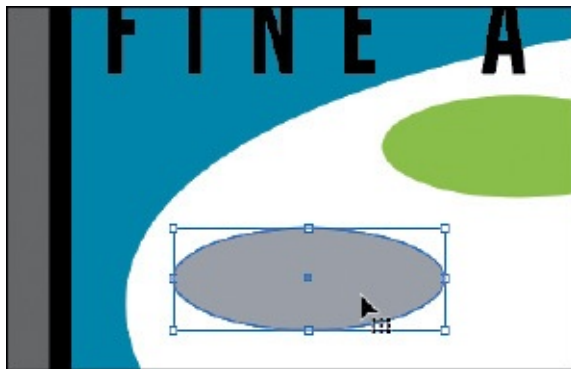
This creates a new swatch from the fill color of the selected artwork (the Light Green swatch) that is now applied to the selected shape.

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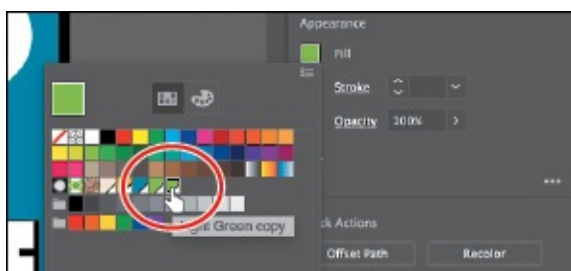
● **Note:** The figure shows where to click to show the panel menu.

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3. Click to apply the *original* Light Green swatch to the selected shape.
4. With the Selection tool (▢), click the gray ellipse below the word “FINE” to select it.



5. Click the Fill box in the Properties panel, and double-click the green swatch *copy* to both apply it to the selected artwork and edit the color settings.



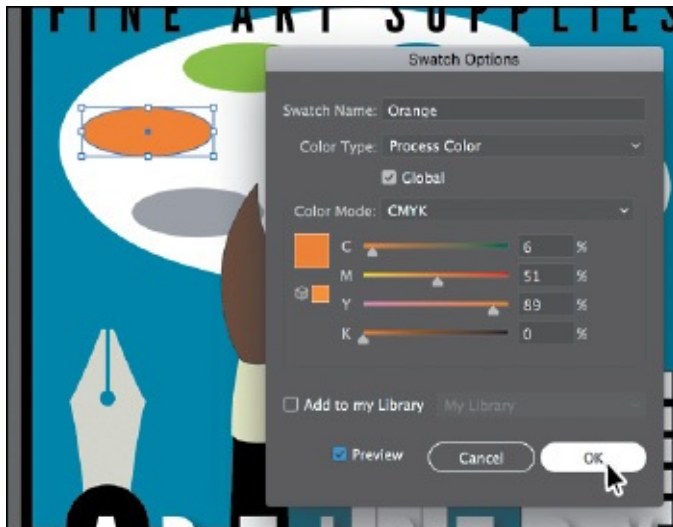
6. In the Swatch Options dialog box, change the name to **Orange**; change the values to C=6, M=51, Y=89, K=0; and make sure that Add To My Library is deselected. Select Preview and then click OK.

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► **Tip:** In the Swatch Options dialog box, the Color Mode menu lets you change the color mode of a specific color to RGB, CMYK,

Grayscale, or another mode when you create it.

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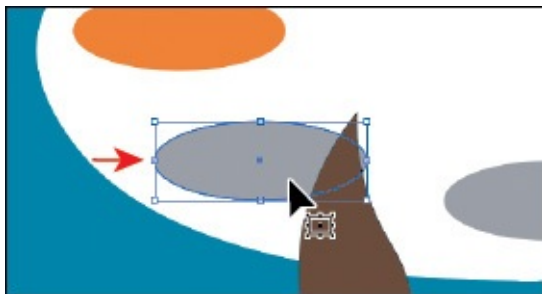


Make sure the new Orange swatch is applied to the selected shape.

## Editing a global swatch

Next, you'll save a color as a swatch and learn about *global color*. When you edit a global color, all artwork with that swatch applied, regardless of whether it's selected, is updated.

1. With the Selection tool (⌘), click to select the gray ellipse below the orange ellipse you just applied the Orange swatch to.



2. Click the Fill box (■) in the Properties panel, and click the New Swatch button (■) at the bottom of the panel.
3. In the New Swatch dialog box, change the following options:
  - Swatch Name: **Pink**
  - Global: **Selected** (the default setting)
  - Change the CMYK values to C=5, M=100, Y=60, K=0
  - Add To My Library: **Deselected**



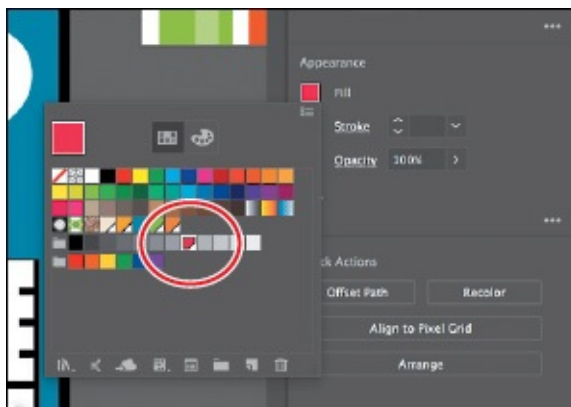
4. Click OK.

Notice that the new swatch is in the same row as the gray color swatches. When you selected the shape, it was filled with a gray swatch, which was selected in the Swatches panel. When you click the New Swatch button to make a new color, it duplicates the selected swatch and puts the new swatch next to the original in the Swatches panel.

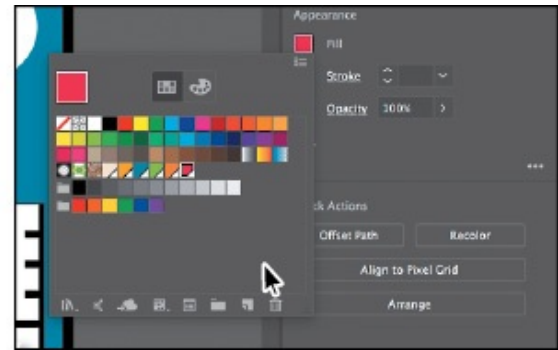
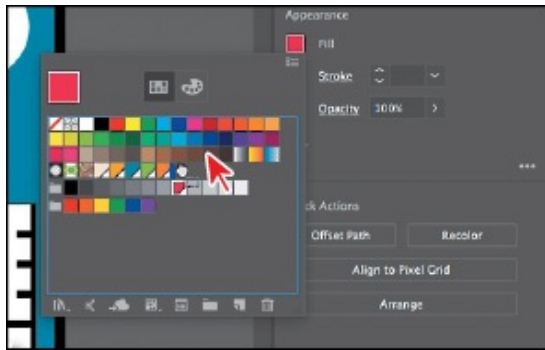
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● **Note:** If the panel is hidden, click the Fill box in the Properties panel.

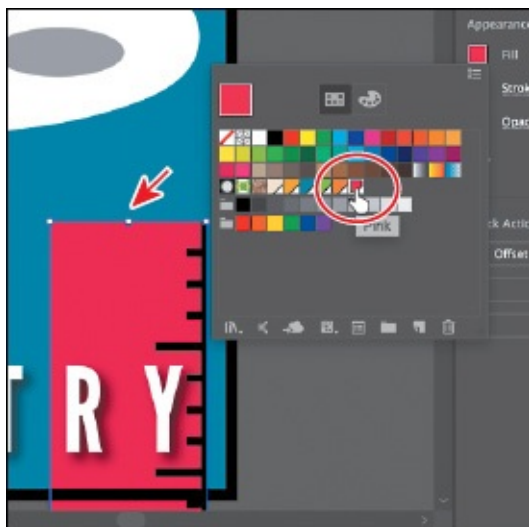
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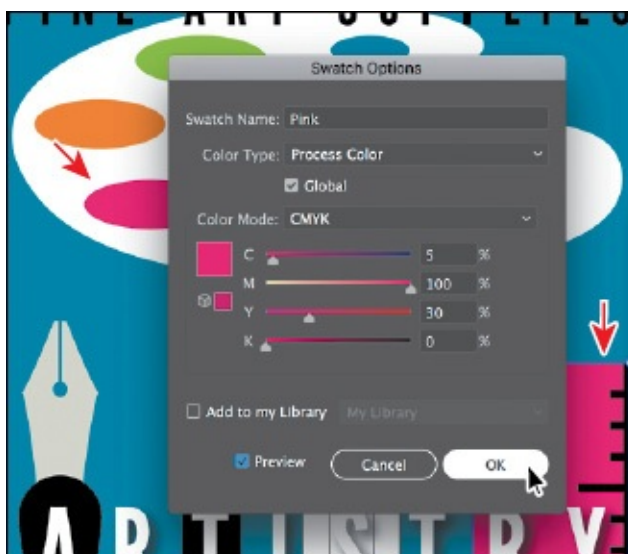
5. Drag the Pink swatch to the right of the Orange swatch to keep them together.



6. With the Selection tool, click the ruler shape at the bottom of the artboard. Click the Fill box in the Properties panel, and select the new swatch named “Pink.”



7. With the ruler shape still selected, click the Fill box (■) in the Properties panel. Double-click the swatch named “Pink.” In the Swatch Options dialog box, change the Y value (Yellow) to **30**, select Preview to see the changes (you may need to click in another field to see the change), and then click OK.



All of the shapes with the global swatch applied are updated, even if they weren't selected.

## Editing a non-global swatch

The default colors that comes with Illustrator are not saved as global swatches by default. That means that editing one of those color swatches will not update artwork that uses the color, unless that artwork is selected. Next, you'll apply and edit a swatch that was not saved as a global swatch.

1. With the Selection tool (▸) selected, click to select the large blue shape in the background that you first applied a fill color to.
2. Click the Fill box (■) in the Properties panel and then click the green color swatch with the tooltip that shows as "C=75 M=0 Y=75 K=0" to apply it.



You can tell that the green color swatch you applied is *not* a global swatch because it doesn't have the small white triangle in the lower-right corner of the swatch in the Swatches panel.

3. Choose Select > Deselect.
4. Choose Window > Swatches to open the Swatches panel as a separate panel. Double-click the swatch you just applied to edit it.



Most of the formatting options you find in the Properties panel can also be found in a separate panel in the Window menu. Opening the Swatches panel, for instance, can be a useful way to work with colors without having to select artwork.

5. In the Swatch Options dialog box, change the name to **Background** and the values to C=80, M=10, Y=45, K=2, and select Preview.



Notice that the color of the background shape doesn't change. That's because the swatch is not a global swatch (global is not selected in the Swatch Options dialog box for the swatch). Only selected shapes with the swatch applied will change if you edit a non-global swatch.

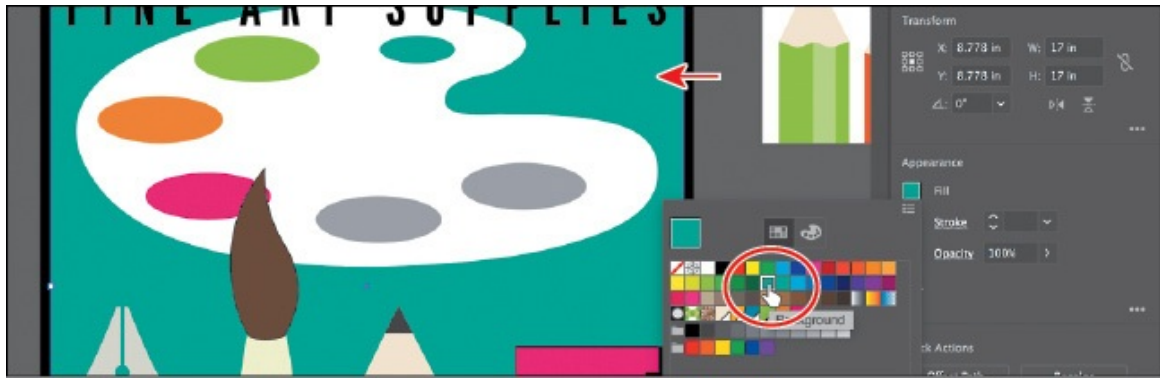
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● **Note:** You can change an existing swatch into a global swatch, but it requires a bit more effort. You either need to select all of the shapes with that swatch applied before you edit the swatch and make it global, or you edit the swatch to make it global and then reapply the swatch to the content.

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6. Click OK. Click the X at the top of the Swatches panel group to close it.
7. Click to select the background shape. Click the Fill box (■) in the Properties panel, and notice that the green color swatch is no longer applied.
8. Click the green Background swatch you just edited to apply it again.

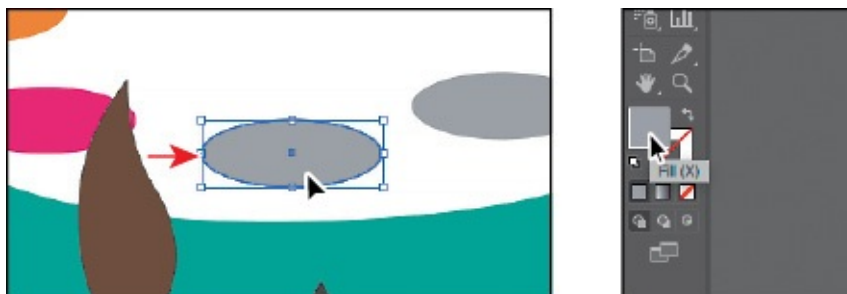




## Using the Color Picker to create color

Another method for creating color is to use the Color Picker. The Color Picker lets you select a color in a color field and in a spectrum either by defining colors numerically or by clicking a swatch, and it is found in other Adobe applications like InDesign and Photoshop. Next, you will create a color using the Color Picker and then save that color as a swatch in the Swatches panel.

1. With the Selection tool (⬮), click the gray ellipse to the right of the brown end of the paintbrush.
2. Double-click the gray Fill box at the bottom of the Tools panel, to the left of the document, to open the Color Picker.



In the Color Picker dialog box, the larger color field shows saturation (horizontally) and brightness (vertically). The color spectrum bar to the right of the color field shows the hue.

3. In the Color Picker dialog box, click and drag up and down in the color spectrum bar (labeled “B” in the following figure) to change the color range. Make sure that you wind up with the triangles in a blue color (it doesn’t have to be exact).
4. Click and drag in the color field (labeled “A” in the following figure). As you drag right and left, you adjust the saturation, and as you drag up and down, you adjust the brightness. The color you create when you click OK (don’t yet) appears in the New color rectangle, labeled “C” in the figure. Don’t worry about matching the color in the figure yet.



► **Tip:** You can also change the color spectrum you see by selecting H, S, B, R, G, or B.

5. In the CMYK fields, change the values to C=90, M=15, Y=0, and K=0.

● **Note:** The Color Swatches button in the Color Picker shows you the swatches in the Swatches panel and the default color books (the sets of swatches that come with Illustrator), and it lets you select a color from one. You can return to the color spectrum by clicking the Color Models button and then editing the swatch color values, if necessary.

6. Click OK, and you should see that the blue is applied to the fill of the shape.
7. Click the Fill box (■) in the Properties panel to show the swatches. Click the New Swatch button (■) at the bottom of the panel, and change the following options in the New Swatch dialog box:
  - Swatch Name: **Blue**
  - Global: **Selected** (the default setting)
  - Add To My Library: **Deselected**
8. Click OK to see the color appear as a swatch in the Swatches panel.
9. Choose Select > Deselect and then choose File > Save.

## Using Illustrator swatch libraries

● **Note:** Sometimes it's practical to use process (typically CMYK) and spot inks (PANTONE, for instance) in the same job. For example, you might use one spot ink to print the exact color of a company logo on the same pages of an annual report where photographs are reproduced using

process color. You can also use a spot-color printing plate to apply a varnish over areas of a process color job. In both cases, your print job would use a total of five inks—four process inks and one spot ink or varnish.

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Swatch libraries are collections of preset colors, such as Pantone and TOYO, and thematic libraries, such as Earthtone and Ice Cream. Illustrator has default swatch libraries that appear as separate panels when you open them, and these cannot be edited. When you apply color from a library to artwork, the color in the library becomes a swatch that is saved in that document only and appears in the Swatches panel. Libraries are a great starting point for creating colors.

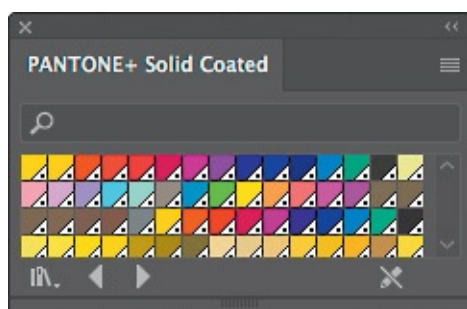
Next, you will create a spot color using a Pantone Plus library, which prints using a spot ink. You will then apply that color to artwork. When color is defined in Illustrator and later printed, the appearance of the color may vary. This is why most printers and designers rely on a color-matching system, like the PANTONE system, to help maintain color consistency and, in some cases, to give a wider range of colors.

## Adding a spot color

In this section, you'll see how to open a color library, such as the PANTONE color system, and how to add a PANTONE MATCHING SYSTEM (PMS) color to the Swatches panel.

1. Choose Window > Swatch Libraries > Color Books > PANTONE+ Solid Coated.

The PANTONE+ Solid Coated library appears in its own panel.



2. Type **137** in the Find field. As you type, the list is filtered, showing a smaller and smaller range of swatches.
3. Click the swatch PANTONE 137 C, beneath the search field to add it to the Swatches panel for this document. Click the X to the right of the search field to stop the filtering.