

Symbols

Symbols are elements, predefined shapes that can be used in Illustrator. Listed in the Symbols panel, these shapes can have multiple occurrences in a document. It is possible to modify them or create new ones easily. To add a symbol to an artboard, display the Symbols panel, select the desired symbol, and drag it onto the artboard.

Symbol libraries

To open a symbol library, click the icon in the lower left corner of the panel and choose a theme. A new panel with many symbols will then appear. You can easily switch between themes using the two navigation arrows at the bottom of the panel.

Symbol creation

Nothing could be easier than creating a symbol. To do this, you just must produce a complex shape or illustration, then select it and finally drag it into the Symbols panel. The Symbol Option window will then appear allowing you to indicate whether it is a graphic or video symbol.

Appearance panel

The Appearance panel contains all the specifics, the elements that make up a shape. Not only does it allow you to see the components of a shape, it also allows you to adjust them as well as add or subtract from them.

In the case of the shape below, we can see that the Appearance panel indicates that the shape includes an orange outline of 6 pt and a blue background, both elements having an opacity adjustment by default (i.e. 100% in normal blending mode). To change the colors, all you have to do is click the color square to choose a different shade.

To change the opacity of any of the elements, click the Opacity label (orange underlined with a dotted line), which will display an options panel including opacity, blend modes and a mask creation function.

Adding an outline

The aspect panel allows you to add a new outline to the shape or to one of the constituent elements. This means that a new outline can be applied not only to the shape, but also to an existing outline depending on the element selected in the Appearance panel.

Effects

The Appearance panel also includes the various effects applicable to vector shapes. To access it, simply click the appropriate icon at the base of the panel to choose the desired effect from the drop-down menu and display the appropriate options.