



Adobe Illustrator CS 6

Level I



Topics:

- Workspace
- Selecting Content
- Alignment
- Creating Shapes

Tour the Workspace

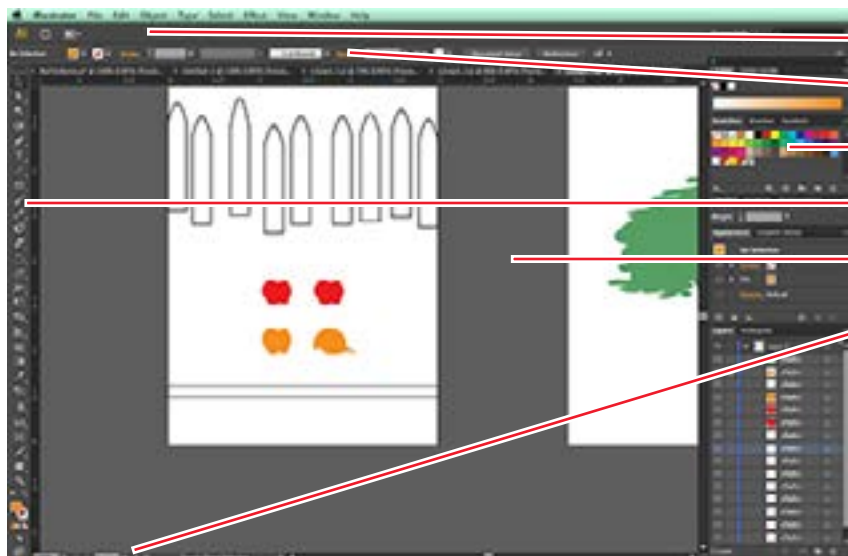
The arrangement of panels and menus you use to interact with a document is called the workspace. Much of Illustrator is customizable: you can move or show or hide the panels to suit your needs.

This lesson is an overview of the workspace and the customization options available to you.

The tools panel is like other panels in that you can expand and collapse it, move it, and dock it.

It is unique from other panels in that it has icons instead of text, it is more difficult to close, and has its own system of sub-panels.

Overview



A Application Bar

A row of menus, view options, and operating system buttons.




B Control Panel

Changes to display options for the selected object.

C Panels

Can be moved, docked, collapsed or closed. Each panel displays information or allows you to modify the document or selected object. The Window menu or workspace selector allows you to hide or show panels.

D Tools Panel

Clicking a tool changes the cursor within the document. You will use the selection tool , direct selection tool , and shape tool  in this lesson.

E Document Window

The content on which you are working.

F Status Bar

A
B
C
D
E
F

Displays some information and navigation controls.

Changing The Interface

In this example, you will change the interface brightness (it starts out rather dark by default) and move and arrange some panels, including the tools panel.

Context Sensitivity


You might follow along with one of the examples and be asked to click on a menu option that is grayed out, or maybe the computer makes a beep noise and refuses to comply. This usually means you have a different context than the lesson.

The control panel, status bar, and some panels change the way they look and the options they offer you depending on your context.

Context refers to the position of the pointer at any given moment. When you have selected an object, that object is your context. When you are navigating a menu, the menu item you have highlighted is your context. You can think of it as your location in the software.

Once you learn to identify and manipulate your context, the context-sensitive menus and panels will make more sense, and the application will not beep at you as much.

Selecting Content

Content refers to the artwork objects (shapes, points, and text boxes) that compose an Illustrator document within the artboard or pasteboard. You will use the selection tool  to select and move some content.

You can also click on an empty area to deselect the object. It is important to manage your selection, performing actions only on those objects you wish to.

Changing View and Zoom


Context-sensitive features include:
right click menu
control panel
status bar and others

The open document tab displays the zoom amount next to the file name. You will see something like “MyFile-Name.ai @ 100%”

✕ MyFileName.ai @ 100% (CMYK/Preview)

Illustrator offers many ways to change the document view, which lets you look at your work from different positions and distances. These methods are available from the View menu at the top, the Status bar at the bottom, and the Zoom Tool in the toolbox.

You can also use keyboard shortcuts to zoom.


The Hand Tool  lets you pan around the document to see different parts.


Artboards

The artboard is the area of the document ringed with a hard black outline that designates print content. Objects outside of the artboard will not be printed. You can have any number of artboards and navigate between artboards.

Your artboards can be any size you wish, and even different from each other if, for instance, you wished to make a cover sheet, an envelope, and a business card within the same Illustrator file.

Moving Content

The Selection Tool  and Direct Selection Tool  let you move objects within your document.

The Selection Tool moves complete objects. Click an object to select it and click and drag to move it. You can also duplicate an object  if you hold the Alt/Option key while dragging. This technique is called the “alt drag” and can save you a lot of time if you wish to copy objects.

The Direct Selection Tool moves anchor points of objects. Most objects in Illustrator are made up of anchor points and connecting lines called paths or splines. Click on a corner of a shape to select that anchor point, then drag that point somewhere else. You have changed the shape.


When you are finished moving content, remember to click on an empty space to deselect that content.

Aligning Objects



Illustrator takes a little getting used to. The selection tools are the first step, and should feel like your “home tool” while you work. If you are finished with a tool, you should switch back to a selection tool.

Illustrator will blithely create as many groups as you tell it, even if it makes no sense to have them. You can build groups within groups as well. The Layers panel will help you understand and navigate your groups.

As you grow more familiar with Illustrator, you will understand not only where your objects are within the page, but also relative to each other in groups, layers, and sub-layers. Arrangement commands will come to make more sense as well.

Illustrator offers many shortcuts, both in style and method, for picking objects and arranging them within an artboard. The Magic Wand Tool  can select many similar objects with a single click.

You may then arrange the selected objects using the alignment controls located both in the Control Panel and the Alignment Panel (they are the same controls, so you may use either).

Content can either be aligned relative to itself  or relative to the artboard bounds  with the Align To control. You can align whole objects or even components of objects.

The same panels allow you to distribute objects as well.

Groups

If you wish to treat several different shapes as one, move and select them at the same time, you can make a group.

Groups of objects behave like one object. Select several objects (for instance, a tree trunk, leaves, and flowers) and use the Object menu and then the Group command. You have made a group. You can return the objects to independent status by selecting the group and choosing Ungroup.



To edit the child objects of a group, you can double-click on the group to go into Isolation Mode. When you have finished your edits, double-click outside the group to return to normal mode.

Layers and Arrangement

No matter how many objects you create in Illustrator, each one has its own order in a stack and exists in a separate sub-layer from other nearby objects.



By default, any new object you make using any method will go above the working object in the layer order. You can rearrange this order afterward using the Object menu and the Arrange submenu.

The Layers panel lets you rearrange objects within the stack by clicking and dragging. You can also click the eye icon  to hide a layer or the lock icon  to disable editing for a layer.

New Document Setup

When you make a new document, Illustrator presents you with a dialog box of options for how to setup the document, including the filename, dimensions, units, and number of artboards.

You will use this fresh document to build a simple illustration from shapes.

Drawing Shapes

The rectangle tool  will let you click and drag the cursor to draw



The New Document dialog box may have an overwhelming myriad of choices right now. For this lesson, your needs are simple, so your selections here will be few.

All drawing objects use the fill and stroke color picker located at the bottom of the Tools panel to determine what colors the shape will have.




You can hold Shift or Alt/Option while using a shape tool to get different options. Many tools have alternate forms you can access by holding these command buttons while using them.



Open paths

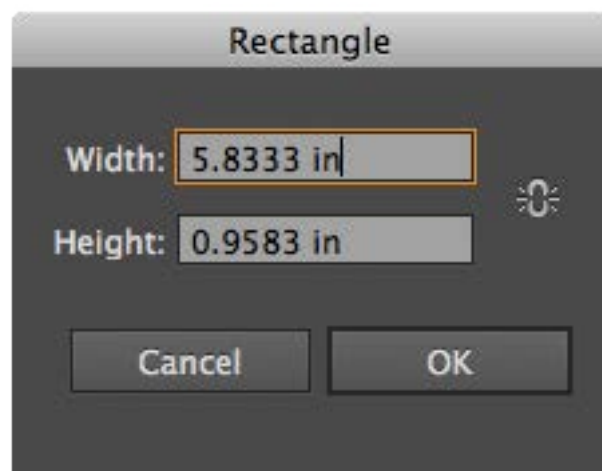


Closed paths

You can also use the Eraser tool  for a more freeform method of removing parts of shapes.

rectangles. You will choose the fill and stroke color picker to give the rectangle the colors you want.

With a shape tool selected, you can also click just once inside the document bounds to get a shape dialog box. This will let you choose precise measurements for the shape.



You can hold Shift or Alt/Option along with the shape tools to get different options.

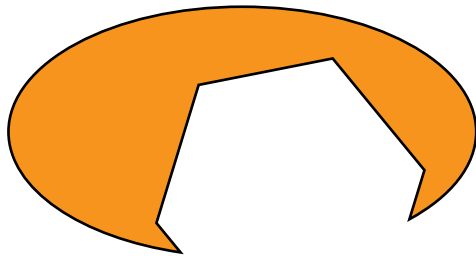
You will use the selecting and positioning techniques you learned about earlier while you make new shapes (rectangles, rounded rectangles, ellipses, and polygons) to create a more complex illustration.

The three drawing modes will change the way Illustrator handles new shapes, whether it positions them above, behind, or within existing shapes.

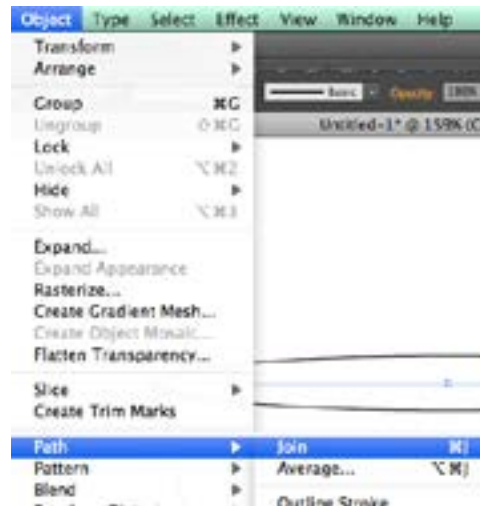
Joining Paths

If you overlap the end points of lines or shapes, you can have Illustrator join them together to make a continuous shape, which can have a background and stroke color.

If the paths you have selected do not have overlapping end points, Illustrator will draw straight lines between the nearest open end points.



This shape would be difficult to create without the shape builder tool.



This technique lets you build closed shapes from open lines, creating more complex objects one piece at a time with simple tools.

Shape Builder Tool

The shape builder tool  will let you rapidly create more complex shapes from combinations of simpler ones.

You can use the shape builder in conjunction with a shape to remove parts of other shapes, cutting corners, squaring edges, or rounding off lines.

Wrap-up

Upon completing this workshop, you should be able to do the following:

- Change the view of the document in at least two different ways
- Select from among several tools
- Change panel locations and preferences
- Select an object even if it has no fill
- Group objects together and edit in Isolation mode
- Use the Selection Tool and Direct Selection Tool
- Select an invisible or obscured object
- Align objects to themselves or the artboard
- Create basic shapes in at least two different ways
- Draw exact squares and circles
- Build a closed shape from lines
- Remove parts of a shape