

1 GETTING TO KNOW THE WORK AREA

Lesson overview

In this lesson, you'll explore the Illustrator workspace and learn how to do the following:

- Open an Adobe Illustrator file.
- Work with the toolbar.
- Move the toolbar. ■■
- Work with panels.
- Reset and save your workspace.
- Use view options to change the display magnification.
- Pan with the Navigator panel. ■■
- Rotate the canvas view.
- Navigate multiple artboards and documents.
- Arrange multiple documents. ■■



This lesson will take about 45 minutes to complete. To get the lesson files used in this chapter, download them from the web page for this book at adobepress.com/IllustratorCIB2023. For more information, see “Accessing the lesson files and Web Edition” in the Getting Started section at the beginning of this book.



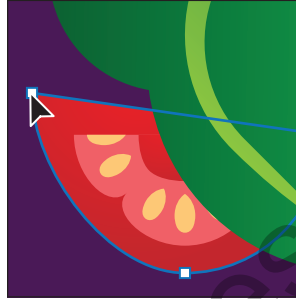
By learning how to navigate the workspace easily and efficiently, you'll be able to make the most of the extensive drawing, painting, and editing capabilities of Adobe Illustrator.

Introducing Adobe Illustrator

In Illustrator, you primarily create and work with vector graphics (sometimes called *vector shapes* or *objects*). Vector graphics are made of lines and curves defined by mathematical objects called *vectors*. You can resize vector graphics to cover the side of a building or use them as a social media icon without losing detail or clarity.



An example of vector artwork.

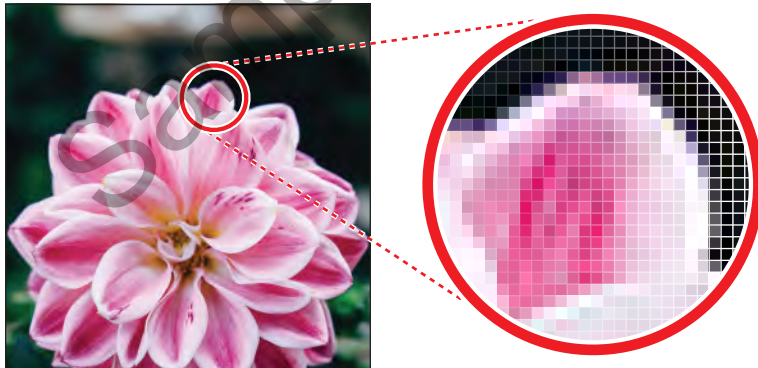


Editing vector artwork.

Vector graphics maintain crisp edges when printed to a PostScript printer, saved in a PDF file, or imported into a vector-based graphics application. As a result, vector graphics are the best choice for artwork like logos that will be used in various sizes and output media.

► **Tip:** To learn more about bitmap graphics, search for “Import bitmap images” in Illustrator Help (Help > Illustrator Help).

Illustrator also allows you to incorporate *bitmap images*—technically called *raster images*—made up of a rectangular grid of square pixels. Each pixel in the grid has a specific color. Take a look at the image below.



Example of a raster image and a zoomed-in portion to show the pixels. I added a grid to the zoomed-in part on the right to give you the idea.

Pictures you take with your phone camera are considered raster images. Raster images can be created and edited in a program like Adobe Photoshop.

Opening an Illustrator file

In this lesson, you'll open a document and use that file to begin exploring Illustrator by navigating, zooming, and investigating an Illustrator document and the workspace.

First, you'll restore the default preferences for Adobe Illustrator. You'll reset preferences at the start of each lesson in this book to ensure that the tools function as described in the lesson.

- 1 To delete or deactivate (by renaming) the Adobe Illustrator preferences file, see “Restoring default preferences” in the “Getting Started” section at the beginning of the book.

- 2 Double-click the Adobe Illustrator icon to launch Adobe Illustrator.

With Illustrator open, you will see the Home screen showing starting file sizes, resources for Illustrator, and more.

- 3 Choose File > Open or click the Open button in the Home screen.

- 4 In the Lessons > Lesson01 folder on your hard disk, select the L1_start1.ai file, and click Open to open the design for a shoe ad.

To start, with the file open, you'll reset the Illustrator interface so we all see the same thing.

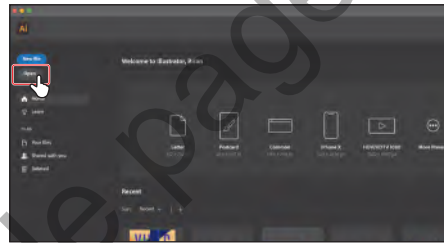
- 5 Choose Window > Workspace and make sure Essentials is selected. A checkmark appears next to the name if selected.

- 6 Choose Window > Workspace > Reset Essentials to reset the workspace.

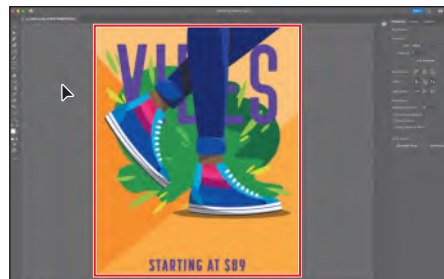
The Reset Essentials command ensures that the workspace, which includes all of the tools and panels, is set to the default settings. You'll learn more about resetting the workspace later in the section “Switching and resetting workspaces.”

- 7 Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window.

An *artboard* is the area that contains artwork that can be output and is like a page in Adobe InDesign or Microsoft Word. This command fits the whole artboard into the Document window so you can see the whole design. I added a red line around the artboard in the figure. You won't see the red line in your project.



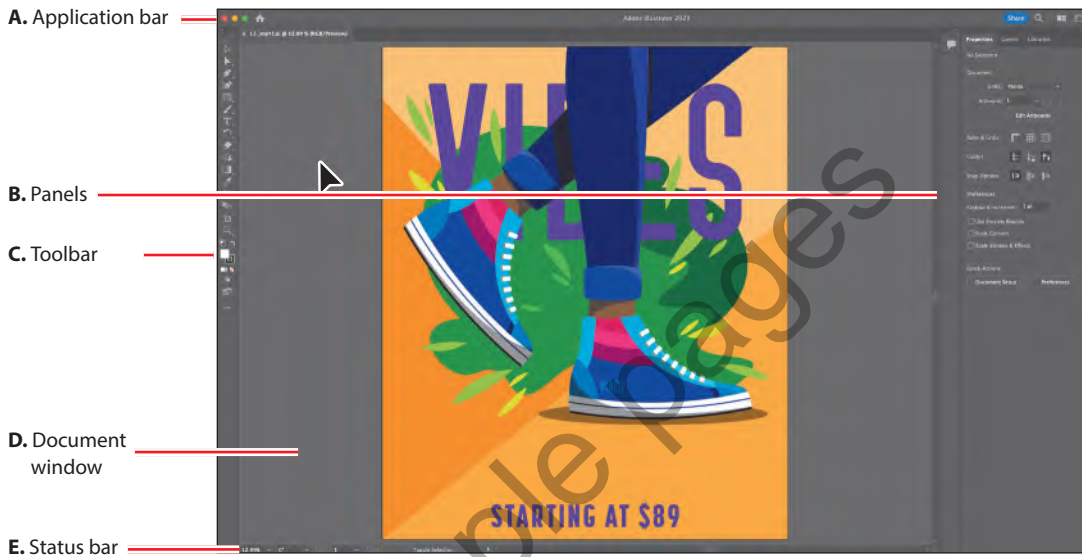
Note: If you have not already downloaded the project files for this lesson to your computer from your Account page, make sure to do so now. See the “Getting Started” section at the beginning of the book.



Exploring the workspace

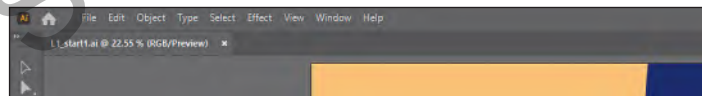
When Illustrator is launched and a file is open, the menus, Application bar, toolbar, and panels appear on the screen. The arrangement of these elements is called a *workspace*.

When you first start Illustrator, you see the default workspace, which you can customize. You can create and save multiple workspaces—one for editing and another for viewing, for example—and switch between them as you work.



Note: The screen captures in this lesson were taken using macOS and may look slightly different from what you see, especially if you are using Windows.

A. The **Application bar**, across the top by default, contains application controls, the workspace switcher, and search. On Windows, the main menu bar items appear *inline* with the Application bar—see the following figure.



- B.** **Panels** help you monitor and modify your work. Certain panels are displayed by default in the panel dock on the right side of the workspace, and you can display any panel by choosing it from the Window menu.
- C.** The **toolbar** contains tools for creating and editing images, artwork, artboard elements, and more. Related tools are grouped together.
- D.** The **Document window** displays the file(s) you're working on.
- E.** The **Status bar** appears at the lower-left edge of the Document window. It displays file information, zooming, and navigation controls.

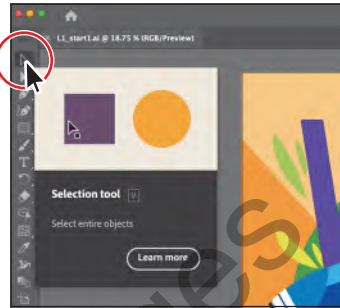
Getting to know the tools

The toolbar on the left side of the workspace contains tools for selecting, drawing, painting, editing, and viewing, as well as the Fill and Stroke boxes, drawing modes, and screen modes. As you work through the lessons, you'll learn about the specific function of many of these tools.

To start, you'll make a few changes to the design with the tools you select.

- 1 Move the pointer over the Selection tool (▸) in the toolbar on the left.

Notice that the name (Selection tool) and keyboard shortcut (V) display in a tool tip, as well as, in most cases, more information about the tool.



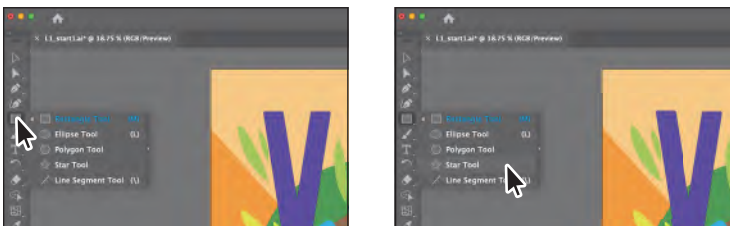
► **Tip:** You can turn the tool tips on or off by choosing **Illustrator > Preferences > General** (macOS) or **Edit > Preferences > General** (Windows) and selecting or deselecting **Show Rich Tool Tips**.

- 2 Click the text “STARTING AT \$89” to select it. Drag it up higher so it’s more centered in the area below the shoe.



The Selection tool is one tool you will use a lot and is used for moving, resizing, scaling, and rotating the artwork in your designs.

- 3 In the toolbar on the left, press and hold the Rectangle tool (▭) to reveal a menu of tools. Select the Star tool (☆).



Any tool in the toolbar that displays a small triangle contains additional tools that can be selected this way.

- 4 To the left of the “STARTING AT \$89” text in the ad, drag to draw a little star.



► **Tip:** Don't like where the star is? Don't forget about the Selection tool (▶)! You could select the Selection tool and move it.

Notice that the star you made is probably purple. That's because you selected the text, which was purple, before making the star. Whatever you make next keeps the same color!

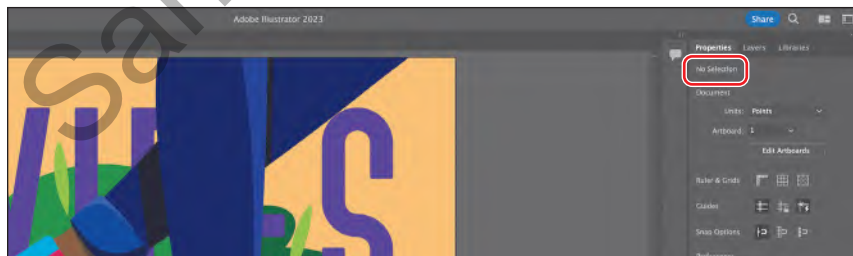
Working with the Properties panel

When you open a document in Illustrator, you'll see the Properties panel on the right side of the workspace by default. The Properties panel displays options you can set for the active document when nothing is selected. It also shows appearance properties for any content you choose. It's a panel you'll use quite a bit; it puts all the most commonly used options in one place.

Using the Properties panel, you'll change the color of the star in the poster.

- 1 Select the Selection tool (▶) in the toolbar, and look in the Properties panel on the right.
- 2 Choose Select > Deselect so the star is no longer selected.

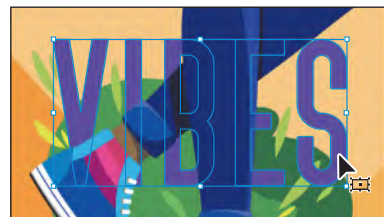
At the top of the Properties panel, you will see “No Selection.” This is the *Selection Indicator*. It's a great place to see what type of content is selected (if any).



With nothing selected in the document, the Properties panel shows the current document properties and program preferences.

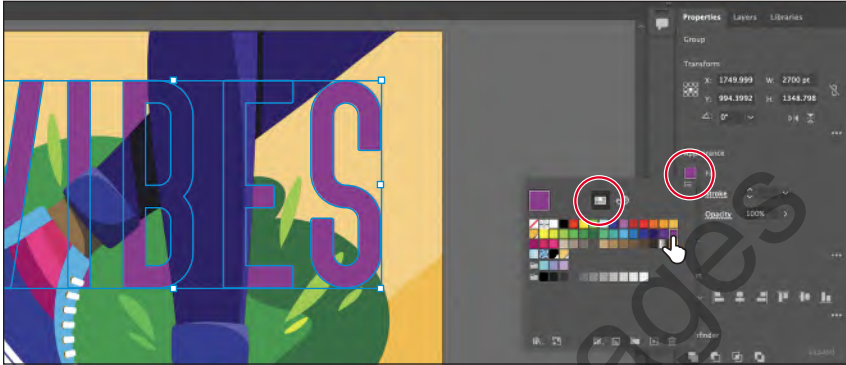
- 3 Click to select the large text “VIBES” in the background.

In the Properties panel, you should now see appearance options for the selected artwork, which is a group, as indicated



by “Group” at the top of the panel. You can change the size, position, color, and much more for the selected artwork.

- 4 Click the color box (■) to the left of the word “Fill” in the Properties panel to show a panel of colors.
- 5 In the panel that shows, make sure the Swatches option (■) is selected at the top (circled in the following figure), and then click any color you want to apply it. I chose a slightly lighter purple.

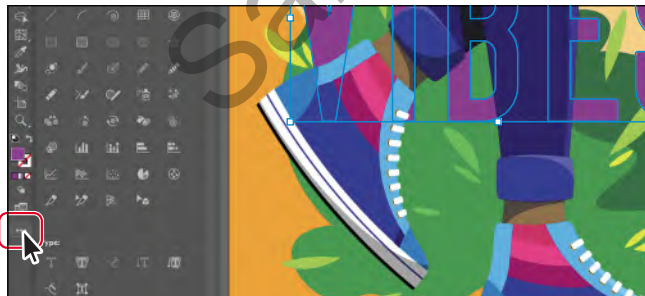


- 6 Press Escape to hide the panel.

Finding more tools

In Illustrator, not all available tools are shown in the toolbar by default. As you go through this book, you’ll explore some of those hidden tools. In this section, you’ll see how to access a hidden tool so you can use it to make a particular edit.

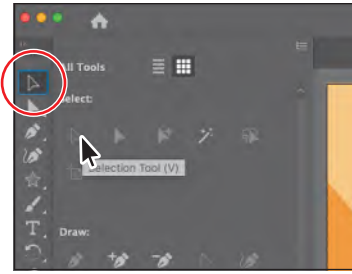
- 1 Click Edit Toolbar (⋮) at the bottom of the toolbar on the left.



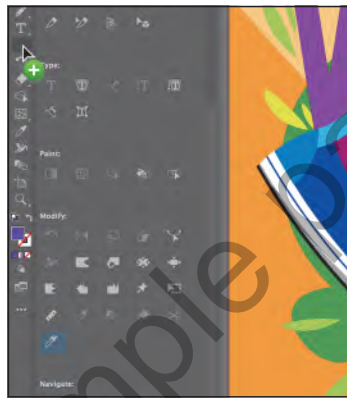
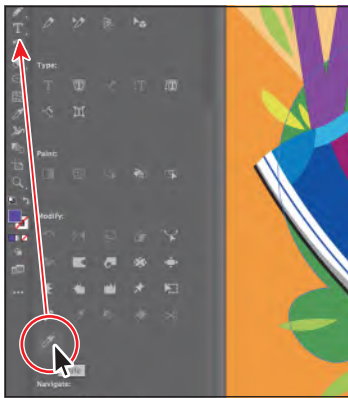
A menu appears that shows all of the available tools. The tools that appear dimmed (you can’t select them) are already in the default toolbar. You can drag any of the remaining tools you see in the menu into the toolbar so you can use them.

- 2 Move the pointer over a tool in the list that is dimmed, like the Selection tool at the top of the list (you may need to scroll up).

The Selection tool is outlined in blue in the toolbar. If you were to hover over a nested tool like the Ellipse tool, which is nested within the Star tool, the Star tool would be outlined, showing you where it is nested.



- 3 Scroll in the list of tools until you see the Knife tool (🔪) near the bottom. To add it to the toolbar, drag it *between* two tools. When a **blank space** appears, release the mouse button to add the Knife tool.
- 4 Press the Escape key to hide the extra tools.



► **Tip:** After clicking Edit Toolbar (☰), you can reset the toolbar by clicking the panel menu icon (☰) and choosing Reset.

The Knife tool will now be in the toolbar until you remove it or reset the toolbar. Now you will use the Knife tool to cut a shape in the background so you can change the color.

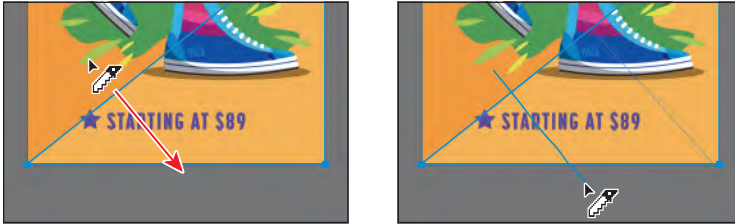
- 5 Select the Selection tool (🔍) in the toolbar. Click the lighter orange shape behind the “STARTING AT \$89” text. You’ll learn more about how to use the Knife tool in Lesson 4, but for now, know that you can cut only what is selected.



- 6 Select the Knife tool (🔪) you just added to the toolbar.
- 7 To zoom out a little and give yourself some room to work, choose View > Zoom Out once or twice.

- 8 Drag across the selected shape to cut it into two pieces. Use the following figure as a guide for where to drag.

The cut line won't be perfectly straight—that's how the Knife tool is supposed to work.



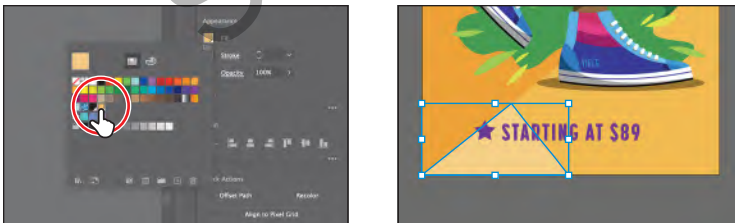
- 9 Choose Select > Deselect so the two parts of the shape are no longer selected.
- 10 Select the Selection tool (▸) in the toolbar. Click the smaller orange shape behind the “STARTING AT \$89” text.



- 11 Click the color box to the left of the word “Fill” in the Properties panel to show a panel of colors.

You did this in the previous section when you changed the color of the star!

- 12 In the panel that shows, make sure the Swatches option (■) is selected at the top, and then click any color you want to apply it. I chose a lighter yellow/orange color.



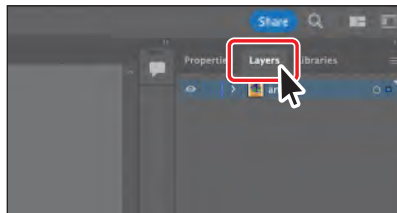
Moving the toolbar

To learn about how to customize the appearance and location of the toolbar, check out the video *Moving the toolbar*, which is part of the Web Edition. For more information, see the “Web Edition” section of “Getting Started” at the beginning of the book.

Working with panels

On the right side of the workspace, the Properties panel is grouped with a few other panels by default. Sometimes those panels can get in the way. Next, you'll explore how to minimize those panels and how to get them back the way they were.

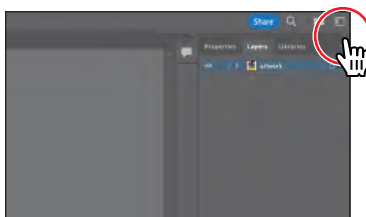
- 1 In the upper-right corner of the application, click the Layers panel tab to the right of the Properties panel tab.



The Layers panel is grouped with two other panels—the Properties panel and the Libraries panel.

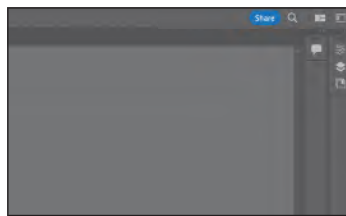
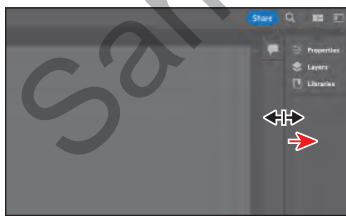
► **Tip:** Press Tab to toggle between hiding and showing all panels. You can hide or show all panels at once, except for the toolbar, by pressing Shift+Tab to toggle between hiding and showing them.

- 2 Click the double arrow at the top of the dock to collapse the panels.




You can use this method of collapsing the panels to create a larger area for working on your document. You'll learn more about docking in the next section.

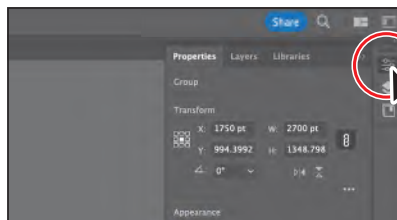
- 3 Drag the left edge of the docked panels (Properties, Layers, and Libraries) to the right until the panel text disappears.



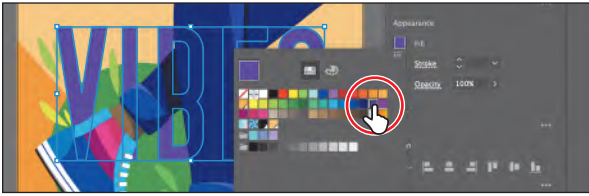
This hides the panel names and collapses the panel dock to icons only.

- 4 Click to select the large text “VIBES” in the background of the ad.
- 5 Click the Properties panel icon () to show it.

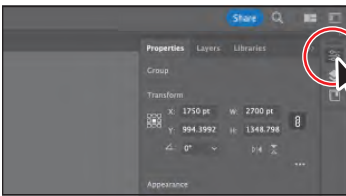
Now you'll change the color of the text again.



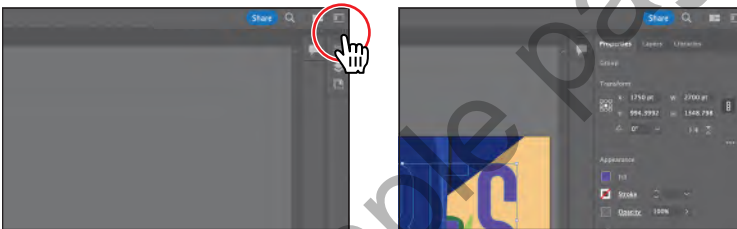
- 6 Click the color box to the left of the word “Fill” in the Properties panel to show a panel of colors, and select another color. I went back to the original purple.



- 7 Click the Properties panel icon () to hide it.



- 8 Click the double arrow again to expand the panels.



- 9 Choose Window > Workspace > Reset Essentials to reset the workspace.
You’ll learn more about resetting and switching workspaces in the section “Switching and resetting workspaces.”

Moving and docking panels

Panels in Illustrator can be moved around in the workspace and organized to match your working needs. Next, you’ll open a new panel and dock it with the default panels on the right side of the workspace.

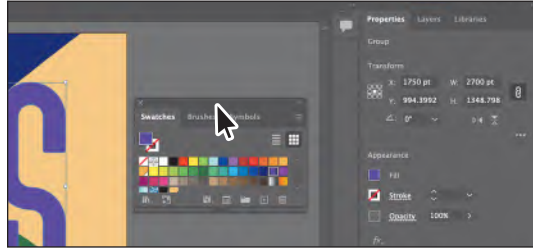
- 1 Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window to fit the ad in the window.
- 2 Click the Window menu at the top of the screen to see all of the panels available in Illustrator. Choose Swatches from the Window menu to open the Swatches panel and the panels grouped with it by default.

► **Tip:** A checkmark next to a panel name in the Window menu means it’s already open and in front of other panels in its panel group. If you were to choose a panel name already selected in the Window menu, the panel and its group would either close or collapse.

● **Note:** You’ll most likely need to click the icon twice. Once to hide the Swatches panel, and a second time to hide the Properties panel.

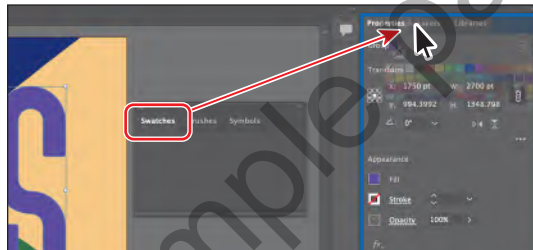
Panels you open that do not appear in the default workspace are free-floating. That means they are not docked and can be moved around. You can dock free-floating panels on the right or left side of the workspace.

- 3 Drag the Swatches panel group by the title bar above the panel names to move the group closer to the docked panels on the right.



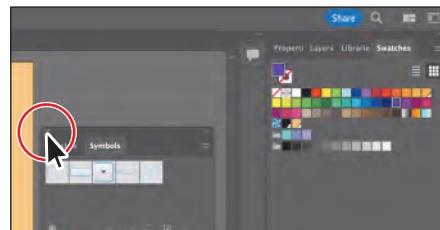
Next, you'll dock the Swatches panel with the Properties panel group.

- 4 Drag the Swatches panel by its panel tab onto the Properties, Layers, and Libraries panel tabs on the right. When a blue highlight appears *around* the entire panel dock, release the mouse button to dock the panel in the group.



- 5 Click the X at the top of the Brushes and Symbols panel group, which is free-floating, to close it.

► **Tip:** To remove a panel from the dock, you can drag a panel by its tab away from the dock.

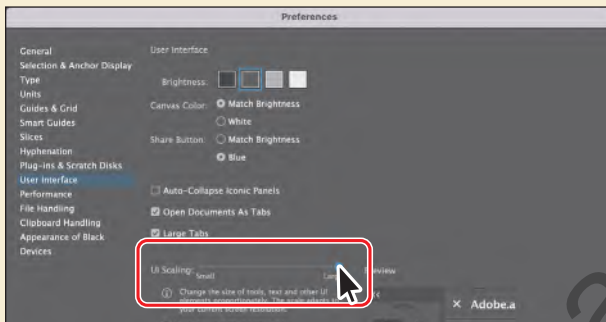


You might be thinking to yourself, “The Swatches panel has the same colors I see when clicking the Fill color in the Properties panel!” Why put the panel out here when you can see the same colors by clicking the Fill color in the Properties panel? I put the Swatches panel out here because with the Properties panel, artwork needs to be selected to see the swatches. If I want to make a color without having anything selected, for instance, you can use the Swatches panel!

Scaling the Illustrator interface

When you launch Illustrator, it identifies your screen resolution and adjusts the application scale factor accordingly. You can scale the user interface of Illustrator based on your screen resolution to make the tools, text, and other UI elements easier to see.


Choose **Illustrator > Preferences > User Interface (macOS)** or **Edit > Preferences > User Interface (Windows)** to change the UI Scaling settings. The change will take place after restarting Illustrator.

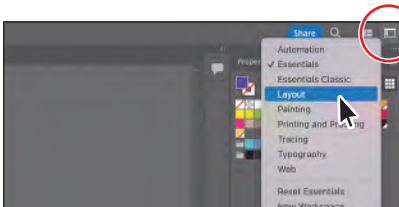


Switching and resetting workspaces

As you've seen, you can customize the parts of your workspace, like rearranging panels. As you make changes, like opening and closing panels and changing their position (among other things), you can save that arrangement as a workspace—and switch between workspaces while you work. Illustrator also comes with a host of workspaces that are tailored to various tasks.

Next, you'll switch workspaces and learn about some new panels.

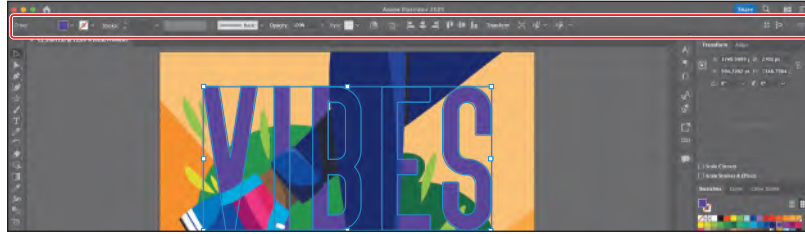
- 1 Above the docked panels, click the workspace switcher () at the right end of the Application bar.



You'll see a number of workspaces listed; each has a specific purpose and will open panels and arrange your workspace accordingly.


► **Tip:** You can also choose **Window > Workspace > Layout** (or another workspace).

- 2 Choose Layout from the workspace switcher menu to change workspaces.

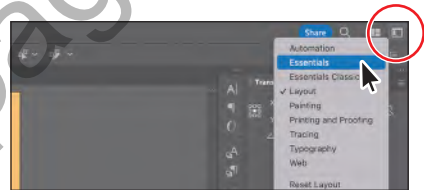


You'll notice a few major changes in the workspace. One of the biggest is the Control panel, which is now docked at the top of the workspace, just above the Document window (it's highlighted in the previous figure). Similar to the Properties panel, it offers quick access to options, commands, and other panels relevant to the currently selected content.

Also, notice all of the collapsed panel icons on the right side of the workspace. In workspaces, you can create groups of panels that are stacked on top of others. That way, a lot more panels are visible.

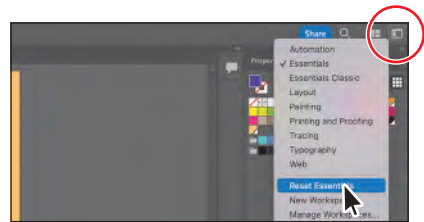
- 3 Choose Essentials from the workspace switcher () above the docked panels to switch back to the Essentials workspace.

Notice that the Swatches panel is still docked in the panels.



- 4 Choose Reset Essentials from the workspace switcher in the Application bar.

When you switch back to a previous workspace, it remembers any changes you made, like grouping the Swatches panel. To completely reset a workspace to its default settings, the Essentials workspace in this case, you'll need to reset it.



Saving your own workspace

If you get all the panels you want out and set them right where you want them, you can save a custom workspace.

To save your own workspace, make sure your panels are where they should be and then choose Window > Workspace > New Workspace. Change its name to whatever makes sense to you in the New Workspace dialog box, and click OK.

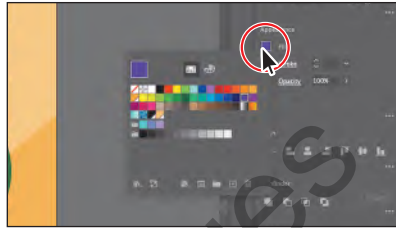
You can now select that workspace from the workspace switcher!

Using panel and context menus

Most panels in Illustrator have more options available in a panel menu, found by clicking the panel menu icon (☰ or ≡) in the upper-right corner of a panel.

These additional options can be used to change the panel display, add or change panel content, and more. Next, you'll change the display of the Swatches panel using its panel menu.

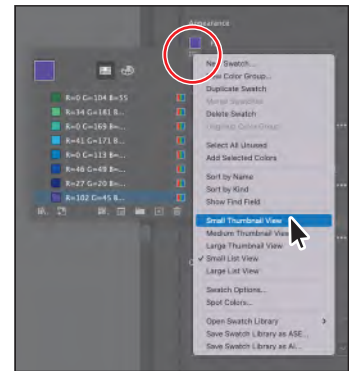
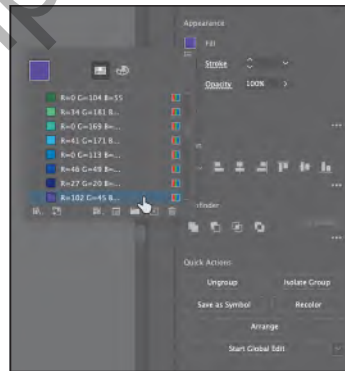
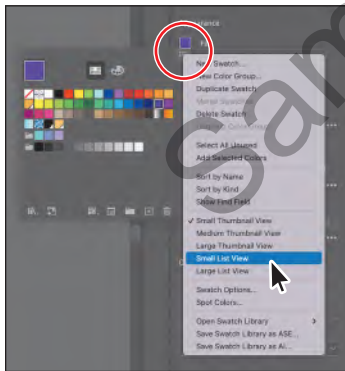
- 1 With the Selection tool (▸) selected in the toolbar, make sure the large “VIBES” text is selected.
- 2 Click the Fill color box, to the left of the word “Fill,” in the Properties panel.



- 3 In the panel that appears, called the Swatches panel, make sure that the Swatches option (☰) is selected toward the top of the panel. Click the panel menu icon (☰) in the upper-right corner, and choose Small List View from the panel menu.

This displays the swatch names, together with thumbnails. Because the options in the panel menu apply only to the active panel, only the Swatches panel view is affected.

- 4 Click the same panel menu icon (☰) in the panel showing, and choose Small Thumbnail View to return the swatches to their original view.



In addition to the panel menus, context-sensitive menus display commands relevant to the active tool, selection, or panel. Usually the commands in a context menu are available in another part of the workspace, but using a context menu can save you time.

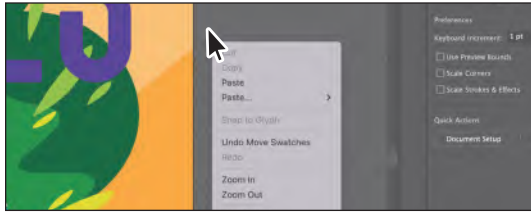
- 5 Press Escape to hide the Swatches panel.

- 6 Choose Select > Deselect so the text is no longer selected.

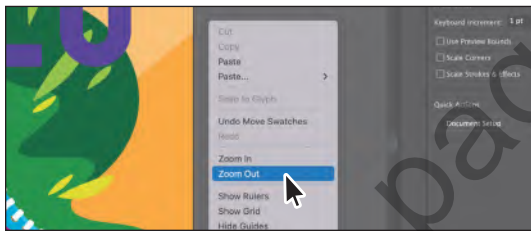
Another type of menu you can show is a context menu, which appears wherever you right-click.

► **Tip:** If you move the pointer over the tab or title bar for a panel and right-click, you can close a panel or a panel group from the context menu that appears.

- 7 Move the pointer over the dark gray area surrounding the ad. Then, right-click to show a context menu that displays commands specific to the open document.



- 8 Choose Zoom Out to make the ad appear a little smaller.



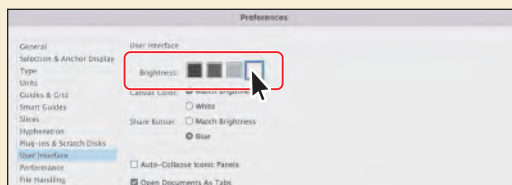
The content of context-sensitive menus will change depending on what the pointer is positioned over; in other words, it changes depending on its context.

Adjusting the brightness of the user interface

As with Adobe InDesign and Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator supports a brightness adjustment for the application user interface. This is a program-wide preference setting that allows you to choose a brightness setting from four preset levels.

To change the user-interface brightness, you can choose:

- Illustrator > Preferences > User Interface (macOS)
- Edit > Preferences > User Interface (Windows)



Changing the view of artwork

While working in files, you'll likely need to change the magnification level and navigate between artboards. The magnification level, which can range from 3.13% to 64000%, is displayed in the title bar (or document tab) next to the filename and in the lower-left corner of the Document window.

There are many ways to change the zoom level in Illustrator, and in this section, you'll explore several of the most widely used methods.

Using view commands

View commands are found in the View menu and are an easy way to enlarge or reduce the view of artwork. I zoom into and out of my artwork most often using these commands.

- 1 Choose View > Zoom In twice to enlarge the display of the artwork.

Using the viewing tools and commands affects only the display of the artwork, not the actual size of the artwork. Each time you choose a Zoom option, the view of the artwork is resized to the closest preset zoom level. The preset zoom levels appear in a menu in the lower-left corner of the Document window, identified by a down arrow next to a percentage.

- 2 Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window to see the entire ad again.



By choosing View > Fit Artboard In Window or using the keyboard shortcut Command+0 [zero] (macOS) or Ctrl+0 [zero] (Windows), the entire artboard (page) is centered in the Document window.

If you need to zoom in to a specific area of your design—like the “STARTING AT \$89” text, you can select that content first and then use the View > Zoom In command to zoom in to what's selected.

▶ **Tip:** The keyboard shortcut for the View > Zoom In command is Command and + (macOS) or Ctrl and + (Windows). You can zoom out using the keyboard shortcut Command and - (macOS) or Ctrl and - (Windows).

▶ **Tip:** Choose View > Actual Size to display the artwork at actual size.

- 3 Click the text “STARTING AT \$89” to select it. Choose View > Zoom In.



- 4 Press the Shift key and select the star to select it as well.
- 5 Choose Object > Group to group the text and star together. You’ll learn more about grouping in Lesson 2, “Techniques for Selecting Artwork.”
- 6 Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window to see the whole ad.
- 7 Choose Select > Deselect so the group is no longer selected.

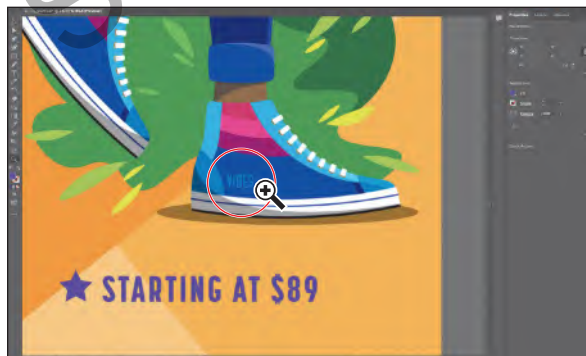
Using the Zoom tool

In addition to the View menu commands, you can use the Zoom tool (Q) to magnify and reduce the view of artwork to predefined magnification levels. I tend to use the Zoom tool when I need to zoom in to a particular area and zoom in or out a lot.

- 1 Select the Zoom tool (Q) in the toolbar, and then move the pointer into the Document window.

Notice that a plus sign (+) appears at the center of the pointer.

- 2 Move the Zoom tool pointer over the word “VIBES” on the shoe, and click once.

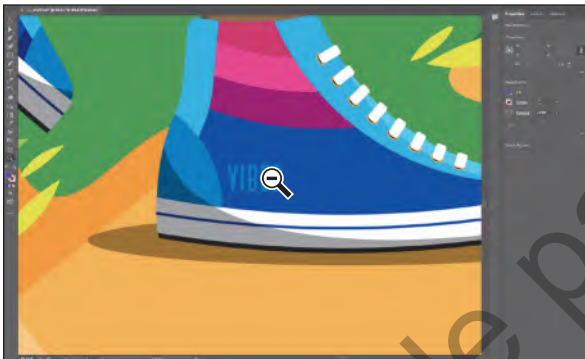


The artwork is displayed at a higher magnification, depending on your screen resolution. Notice that where you clicked is now in the center of the Document window.

- 3 Click two more times on the same “VIBES” text.

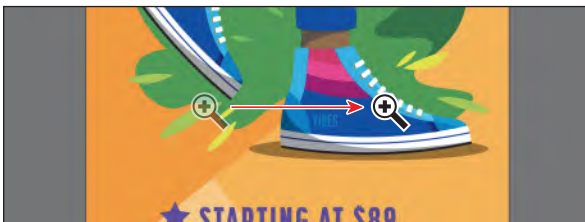
The view is increased again, and you’ll notice that the area where you clicked is centered in the document window. Being this close to the artwork can make it easier to see smaller details and possibly make it easier to select things.

- 4 With the Zoom tool still selected, press the Option (macOS) or Alt (Windows) key. A minus sign (–) appears at the center of the Zoom tool pointer. With the Option or Alt key pressed, click the artwork twice to *reduce* the view of the artwork.



Using the Zoom tool, you can also drag in the document to zoom in and out. By default, if your computer meets the system requirements for GPU performance and it’s enabled, zooming is animated. To find out if your computer meets the system requirements, see the sidebar “GPU performance” following this section.

- 5 Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window.
- 6 With the Zoom tool still selected, drag from the left side of the document to the right to zoom in. The zooming is animated. Drag from right to left to zoom out.



Zooming this way can be challenging at first. If you pause before dragging, like I say in the tip at right, it will zoom without control. The secret is not to pause—rather, just drag.

► **Tip:** With the Zoom tool selected, if you move the pointer into the Document window and press the mouse button for a few seconds, you can zoom in using the animated zoom.

● **Note:** If your computer does not meet the system requirements for GPU performance, you will instead draw a dotted rectangle, called a *marquee*, when dragging with the Zoom tool.