

Illustrator Fundamentals and Basic Tools

MMP 100

Creating a new document in Illustrator

Once you've launched Illustrator go to *File > New* (or click on the *New* button in the pop-up window).

Name your file (i.e: firstVector), set the Profile to *Web*, and the Width and Height to 1200px.

Saving a document in AI format

Next, we'll save our new file in AI format. This file will track all your layers, effects etc. even after you close and reopen it. This is the equivalent of Photoshop's PSD format (sometimes referred to as the "working" or "master" file).

Go to *File > Save As...*

The name should be the one you entered when you created the file.

Make sure the Format dropdown is set to *Adobe Illustrator (ai)*.

Select a location to save the file (i.e: a folder in your Documents) and press *Enter*.

(If you do not see the location options, toggle the little arrow next to the name.)

Saving while you work

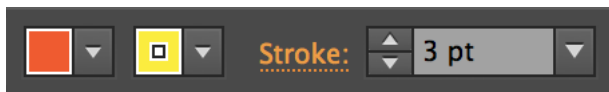
Get in the habit of saving your file regularly as you work to avoid any losses if the program crashes. You can do so by clicking *Cmd+S*.

Basic shapes

Illustrator includes a number of basic shapes for you to draw with.

If you click and hold on the Rectangle Tool (M), you'll see all the basic shapes at your disposal. Every tool has a set of properties in the top menu bar.

Lets select the ellipse. Before we use it we'll set its Fill to orange, its Stroke to yellow, and its Stroke Weight to 3pt in the top menu bar.

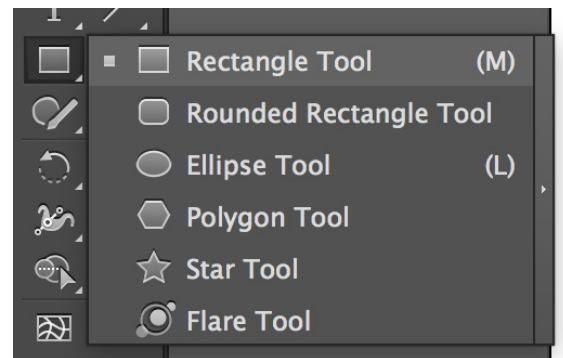
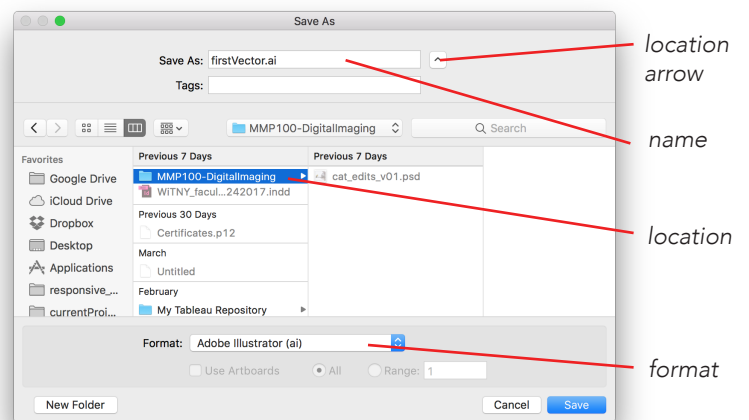
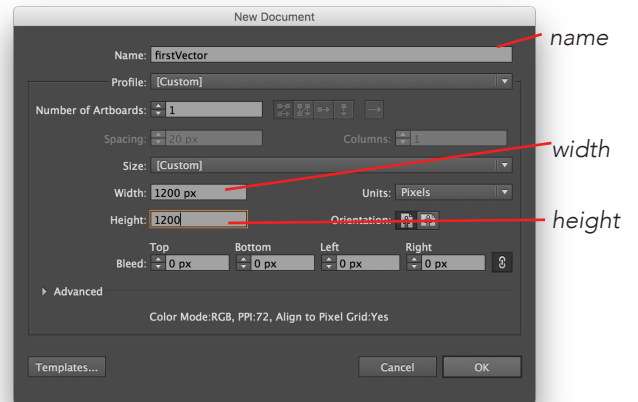


fill stroke, and stroke weight properties.

Click and drag on the artboard to create your ellipse. If you want a perfect circle, hold *Shift* while doing so.

You can always change a shape's properties after it is drawn.

Make sure it is selected (click on it), and change the desired property (i.e: stroke) in the top menu bar.



basic shapes options within the rectangle tool

Centering objects

To center an object on the Artboard, you must first select it by clicking on it.

In the top menu bar, select *Align to Artboard* in the Align dropdown, and click on the **Horizontal Align Center** and **Vertical Align Center** icons.

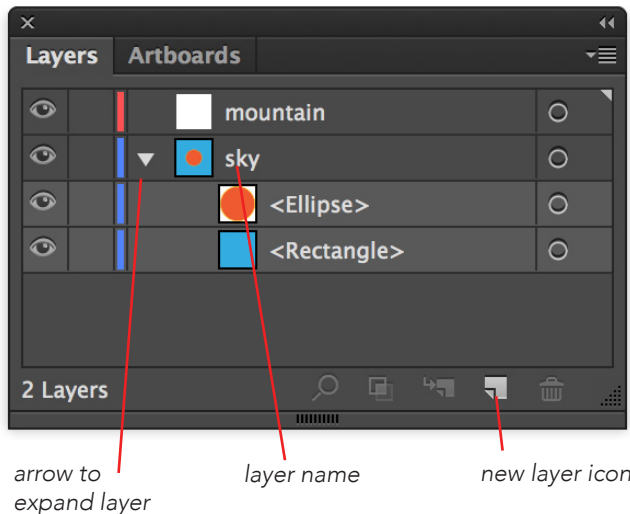


Layers

Like in Photoshop, Illustrator organizes content in a Layers panel. If you don't see it, you can bring it up by going to *Window > Layers*. You should see the circle you created earlier on the first layer.

Don't forget to keep your Layers panel labeled and organized. To rename a layer, double click on its name and type.

New objects will automatically be drawn above the existing ones. Let's make a large rectangle to cover the entire Artboard: Click and hold the Ellipse Tool icon and select the Rectangle Tool. Change the Fill to blue and the Stroke to "none". Now click and drag from the top left corner to the bottom right corner of the Artboard.



Notice that the rectangle is now covering the circle. That's because of the order in which the shapes were drawn. We need to reorder our content so that the circle is above the rectangle: Expand the layer by clicking on the little arrow to the left of the layer. Click and drag the ellipse layer so it's above the rectangle.

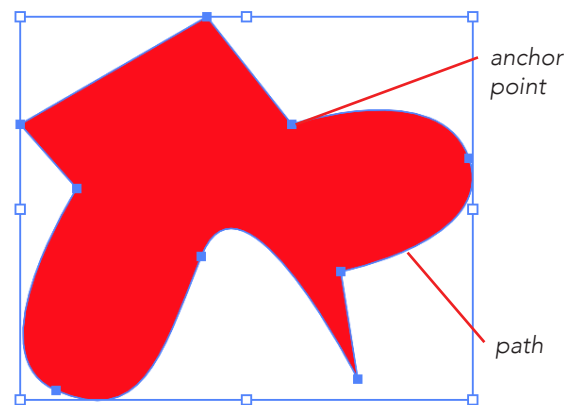
You can also create a brand new layer by clicking on the New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel.

Pen tool

The Pen Tool (P) allows you to create custom shapes. By choosing a color for its Fill in the top menu bar, the shape will be filled in. If you just want the outline to be drawn, set the Fill to none and pick a color for the Stroke.

The Pen Tool works by defining anchor points and drawing paths between them. Click once where you want your shape to start. Click again where you want the next path to start. Continue doing this until you're back at the origin point.

You can always adjust your shape after it's been drawn by moving the anchor points: Activate the Direct Selection Tool (A). Click and drag the desired anchor point to its new location.



shape created with the pen tool

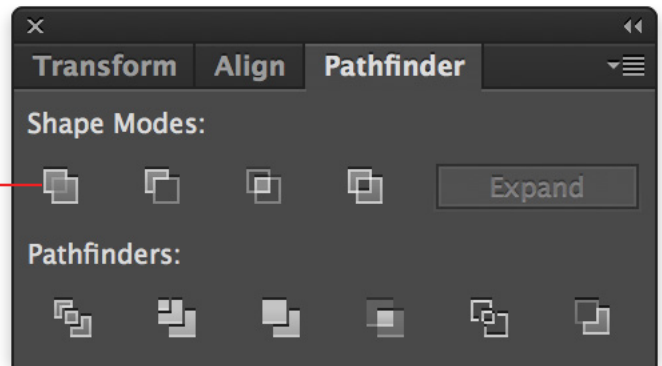
The pen tool doesn't just create straight lines. It can also produce curves. Instead of just clicking, click and drag when creating an anchor point.

Compound shapes

Combining basic shapes together is a good way of creating complex ones.

Select the Ellipse Tool (M) and set its Fill to grey and its Stroke to “none”. Click and drag to create your first ellipse. Go to the Selection Tool (V), click outside the Artboard and reselect the Ellipse Tool. Create an ellipse that overlaps with your first one. Repeat one more time.

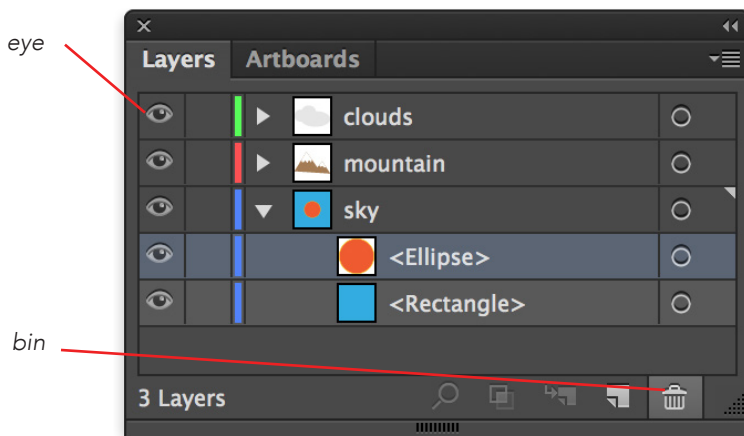
To combine these three shapes into a single one, select all of them by clicking and dragging over them. Go to Window > Pathfinder and click on the unite icon



Hiding and erasing

You can temporarily hide or completely remove a layer. To hide it, click on the little eye icon to the left of the layer in the Layers panel. To remove it completely, select it and click on the little bin icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel.

You can also delete a shape rather than an entire layer by selecting it on the Artboard and hitting delete on your keyboard.



Exporting

An Illustrator file cannot be displayed on the web. To do so, you must export it to JPG or PNG.

Go to *File > Save for Web...* Select *PNG-24* in the Preset Name dropdown. Select the size you want to save it in. You can make it bigger or smaller than the original (i.e: 500px * 500px). Just make sure the ratio stays the same (the little link icon should be “on”). Check *Clip to Artboard* to discard anything outside the Artboard boundaries. Click *Save*.

