

Creating a Poster with Adobe Illustrator CS5

A University of Michigan Library Instructional Technology Workshop

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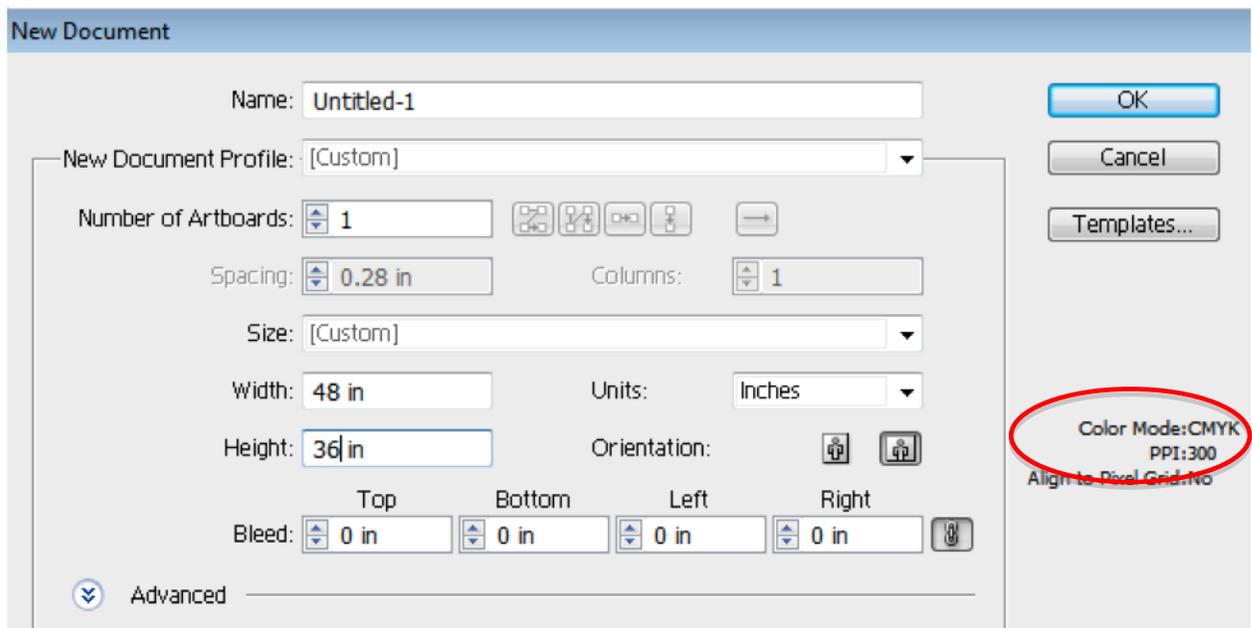
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SETTING UP THE POSTER FILE

When you use Illustrator to make a poster, you'll want to make sure you create the document at the size you want to print, and that it has the correct color settings. You can download a template from Groundworks at http://www.dc.umich.edu/groundworks/Docs/poster/illust/ai_templates rather than starting from scratch if you'd like. The template has red boxes to indicate columns, but the red lines will not print.

This is a shortened version of our Illustrator handout that focuses just on the common tools used to create posters. To see our full Illustrator handout, please visit <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/graphics>.

1. Choose *Print Document...* from the **Create New** dialog box, or go to the **File** menu and select **New**. The **New Document** dialog box will appear.
2. For a poster, you only need one artboard.
3. Change the *Units*: to inches, if you want, and set the height and width as needed.
4. For posters, you'll want to use the **CMYK color mode** – look below the *OK* button to verify this (**C**yan, **M**agenta, **Y**ellow, and **B**lack are the ink colors of ink by printers). If you need to change this for some reason, click on the arrow next to *Advanced* and you will see other options.
5. Click *OK* to create the new blank document.



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COMMON TOOLS

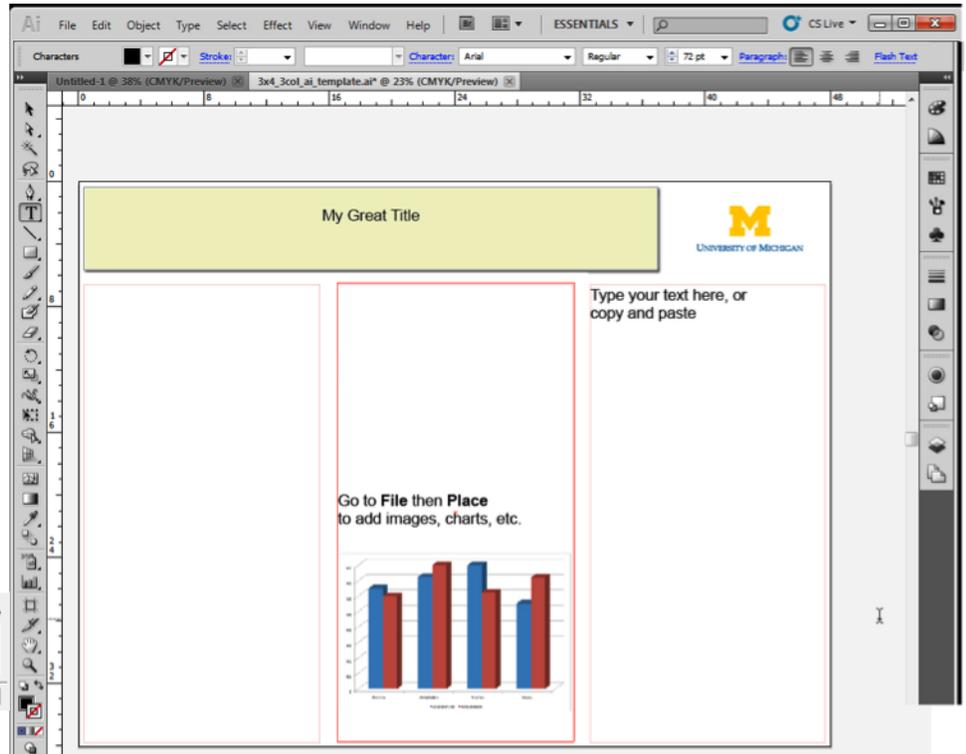
If you start with a template from Groundworks, it comes with a spot for your title, three columns, and a University of Michigan logo as shown below (other UM logos are at <http://logos.umich.edu>). Otherwise, you will start with a blank document. The main tools you'll use for a poster are:

Black Arrow  to move & resize objects

White Arrow  to select anchor points, and to change the inside (fill) & outline (stroke) of text boxes and shapes

Text Tool  to add & edit text

Stroke/Fill icons to change the inside (fill) & outline (stroke) colors of objects



WORKING WITH TEXT

Illustrator is not great as a word-processing tool, so edit long pieces of text in a word processing program such as Word. You can create new text in Illustrator, copy and paste from Word, or you can “place” a whole document into your Illustrator file, however, all text in Illustrator needs to live inside either text boxes or shapes.

CREATING TEXT BOXES

Most often, you will probably use text boxes for your text. The boundaries of a text box control the flow of characters; when text reaches a boundary, it will automatically wrap to fit inside the defined area. To create a text box,

1. Select the **Type Tool** () from the **Toolbox**.
2. **Click and drag** on the document to define a text box. If you simply click and start typing, you will get a line of text that expands as you keep typing rather than wrapping.
3. Type in the box – use the **Character** or **Paragraph** choices in the **Options Bar** or the **Type** menu.

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PLACING (INSERTING) EXISTING TEXT

Unlike most programs, Illustrator doesn't have an **Insert** menu, so for graphics and text from other documents use the **Place** command. Either create a text box as described above then follow the step below, or as you place the text, drag a text box. If you have more text than will fit in the text box (or shape), a red plus sign will appear in the lower right corner.

1. Go to the **File** menu and select **Place**.
2. Navigate to your document and click **Place**.

Sometimes placed documents often have strangely overlapping text – to fix it,

1. Select the text box or shape with the Selection Tool ()
2. Click on the Character Panel link in the Options Bar and set the font sizes to any value you like.
3. Set the leading to *Auto* – this should fix the overlap problem.



EDITING TEXT PROPERTIES

To change all of the text in a text box or shape, use the Selection Tool (the black arrow) to do the below steps. If you want to affect only certain words or characters, use the Type Tool.

1. Select the text you wish to edit (using either tool suggested above).
2. Use the choices in the Options Bar to set font, size, etc. For more specificity,
 - a. Click on the Character Panel or Paragraph Panel links in the Options Bar, or
 - b. Use the **Type** menu (and whatever choice is appropriate).
3. To change the color of the letters (the fill color), use the solid color square in the Options Bar. To change the outline color (stroke), use the color square with the white square in the middle.



4. To change the fill or the stroke of the text box itself,
 - a. Choose the Direct Selection Tool (white arrow) from the Toolbox.
 - b. Click and release once on a corner handle of the text box itself – the Options Bar should change from *Type* (as shown in the screen shot above) to *Anchor Point*.
 - c. Change the stroke and fill as described in the [Working With Color](#) section on page 5.

To move a text box, use the Selection Tool (black arrow) to click and drag it to its new location.

To resize a text box, drag the “handles” with the Selection Tool – hold down the *Shift* key to keep it proportionate.

Remember that fonts used in an Illustrator document can only be displayed and printed correctly when the viewer has those fonts installed on their computer. If working on more than one computer, you may have to carry font files on a disk with your Illustrator file.

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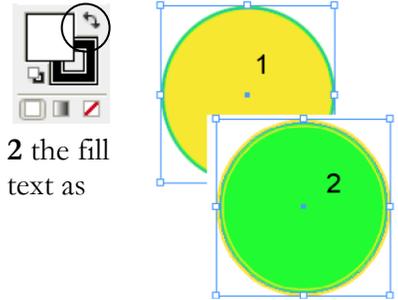
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WORKING WITH COLOR

Remember, **stroke** refers to the outline (path) of your object; **fill** refers to the area enclosed by that outline. In circle 1 at the right, for example, the fill is yellow (■) and the stroke (■) is green. The icons for each overlap each other (■), and the icon in front shows which is selected.

The two-headed arrow between the two will swap the colors, so in circle 2 the fill is now green and the stroke is now yellow. The same principle applies to text as well.



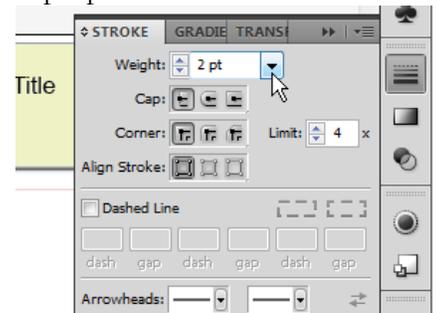
To change the stroke or fill color of an object or text,

1. Select the object or highlight the text.
2. Double-click on the Stroke (the square within a square: ■) or Fill icon in the Toolbox.
3. In the dialog box that appears, use thin color bar to select the hue, and then click on a specific color in the large color box.
4. To use no color at all, select the None button (■) under the Stroke and Fill icons in the Toolbox. Applying None to Stroke will give you a patch of color with no bordering line. Applying None to Fill will give you a line with no fill color (this setting is frequently used with the Pencil Tool).

Note: If no object is selected, the next object that you draw will have these properties.

Change the weight (thickness) of the stroke in the Stroke Panel at the right of your screen. Note this is where you can also add arrowheads to lines.

For the outline around a text box, remember to use the Direct Selection Tool (white arrow) to select it first (otherwise you will be changing the outline of your text!)



SWATCHES

You may want to save your color choices as swatches for easy re-use. Swatches are saved along with your Illustrator document (i.e. they will show up in the Swatch Panel the next time you open your document). To add a new swatch, click the New Swatch icon (■) in the Swatches Panel, or drag the color from the Fill/Stroke Tools of the Toolbox to the Swatches Panel. To remove a color from your Swatches, click on that swatch, and then click the Trash icon (■).

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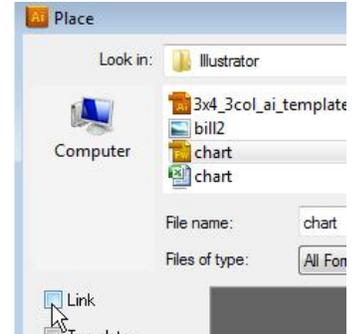
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WORKING WITH IMAGES, CHARTS, ETC. AND SHAPES

You can add photos and other images to your Illustrator document by placing them on the page. You can copy and paste charts from Excel, or save the chart as an image and doing the below.

1. To insert an image, go to the **File** menu and select **Place**.
2. Choose the file you wish to insert.
3. Make sure that the *Link*: box is **unchecked** – this embeds the image into the Illustrator file, so you don't need to make sure you have it with you when you change computers.
4. Click the *Place* button.

The image will appear in the center of your poster. **To move** the image, use the Selection Tool to click and drag it to its new location.

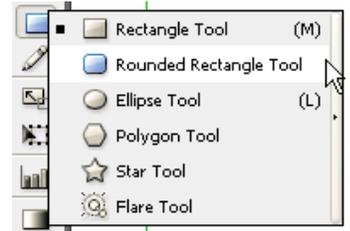


SHAPES

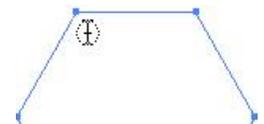
There are a few different tools that you can use to create predetermined shapes in your document. The colors of your shape are determined by the colors selected in the Stroke and Fill area of your Toolbox (or in the Appearance Panel on the right) – you can always change them as described in the [Working With Color](#) section on page 5.

Click and hold on the Rectangle Tool () to choose a rectangle, ellipse, polygon, etc.

1. Click and drag on your workspace to create the shape. Thin lines will appear indicating the outline of your shape. If you are using the Polygon Tool, use the *Up* and *Down Arrow* keys on your keyboard to add or remove sides while making a polygon. Holding down the *Shift* key as you draw a rectangle or ellipse will restrict you to a perfect square or circle.
2. Release the mouse to complete the shape.



To add text inside a shape, with the Type Tool selected, make sure you move your cursor to the edge of the shape until the cursor changes to rounded sides (as seen at right).



TRANSFORMING OBJECTS

You've already seen how the Direct Selection Tool can be used to move individual points of an object, and the Selection Tool can manually scale or re-size any object. There are also several built-in options for transforming objects. The two easiest options are the **Transform** menu and the Transform Tools. To use the basic Transform Tools, select an object, then the tool or the right item in the **Transform** menu.

To apply transformations to an object using the menus, select the object, then go to the **Object** menu and select **Transform**. The advantage of the menus is that numeric values can be specified – Scale 150%, Rotate 32°, etc.

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- **Rotate**  – dragging with the Rotate Tool rotates the object around a point; by default, the center point. You can move the point of rotation, by clicking before you begin dragging. Hold down the *Shift* key to rotate in 15-degree increments.
- **Reflect**  – click once, then again in a different location to indicate a line over which to reflect the object.
- **Scale**  – drag to resize the object. Hold down the *Shift* key to maintain original proportions.
- **Shear**  – drag to skew the object. Hold down the *Shift* key to stick to 15-degree increments.
- **Reshape**  – to change a shape by adding additional anchors. Use the Direct Selection Tool to drag the edges of the shape by an anchor.

To **move** the shape, use the Selection Tool to click and drag it to its new location.

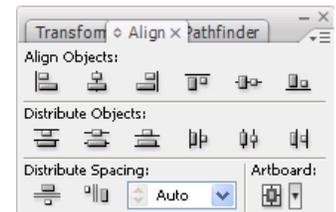
To **resize** the shape, drag the “handles” with the Selection Tool – hold down the *Shift* key to keep it proportionate.

To **move individual points** of the shape, use the Direct Selection Tool ().

ALIGNING AND DISTRIBUTING OBJECTS

Go to the **Window** menu and choose **Align** to see the Align Panel; you can also find these icons on the Options Bar towards the top of your screen.

1. Choose the Selection Tool. Select multiple objects by drawing a box around them (or click on one, hold down *Shift*, click on another, etc.).
2. Click the appropriate button on the Align Panel or Options Bar to align or distribute the objects, or to distribute the spacing between them. This will align or distribute them relative to the bounding box of all of the objects you have selected. To align or distribute selected objects relative to a specific object in the selection, click that object once more (you needn't hold down *Shift* this time).



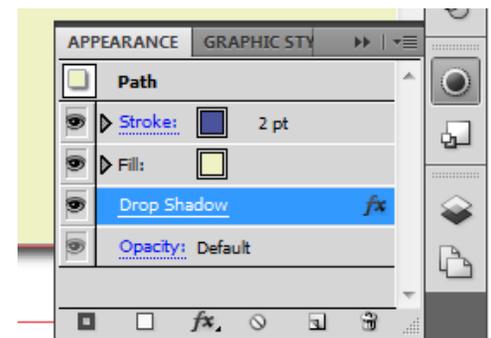
To align individual anchor points, use the Direct Select Tool. Click on one anchor point, and then holding the *Shift* key, click on the others. Apply the alignment tools as described above.

ADDING EFFECTS

You can add effects such as drop shadows, outer glows, blurs and so on to any object by going to the **Effects** menu and choosing what you would like. Once you've added an effect, use the Appearance Panel on the right to change it by clicking on the effect (so, in the example at right, the words *Drop Shadow*).

Use the eyeball icon to **hide** the effect without removing it.

To **remove it**, click on it once, then click on the tiny trash can in the Appearance Panel.



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USEFUL TIPS AND TRICKS

- Use the **Selection Tool** to drag a box around objects to select all of them in that area.
- Use the **Zoom Tool** () to drag a box on the work area to zoom to the size of that box.
- Go to the **View** menu and select **Show Rulers** to see rulers on the top and left edges of your document. The units on the rulers are the units you specified when creating the document; you can change by going to the **Edit** menu, then **Preferences**, and select **Units & Display Performance...**
- Once the rulers are visible, click and drag from either ruler to display a vertical or horizontal **Guide** line. These Guides are not part of your artwork. They can be moved around the screen, but you may have to go to the **View** menu, then **Guides** and choose **Lock Guides** to unlock them. You can remove Guides by dragging them back to the ruler they came from, or by going to the **View** menu, then **Guides**, and select **Clear Guides**.
- Go to the **View** menu and choose **Show Grid** to show a grid behind your artwork. Go to the **View** menu and choose **Snap To Grid** or **View** and **Snap to Point** and this will help your artwork line up.
- Set your page size to the actual size of the poster when creating a new document. If the page size needs to be changed, double click on the artboard icon.
- To quickly copy a font color and size, highlight the text you want to change and select the eyedropper tool, then select the text from which you want to copy the formatting.

PRINTING YOUR POSTER

Save your poster as an Illustrator file and save a copy as a PDF, which should embed the fonts you've used. There are several places to print posters, including

- TechDeck – first floor Shapiro Library (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/techdeck>). You can also go there to get help making your poster. The cost is \$12.50 per linear foot (36 inch glossy paper); we accept cash, credit, or shortcode.
As an example, a 3 foot by 4 foot poster would cost is \$50.
- Groundworks – Duderstadt Center, North Campus. (<http://www.dc.umich.edu/posterprinting>). The cost is \$14/linear foot (36 inch glossy paper).
- Angell Hall – Central Campus (<http://www.its.umich.edu/sites/printing>). The cost is \$8.40 per linear foot (42 inch heavy coated paper).

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