

Making Adobe Illustrator (“AI”) Your Friend

Some points before we dive in:

- A big caveat: all I can offer is what I’ve found useful, or what makes things go more quickly for *my* needs. So, I’ll state up front what I do/don’t use this code for. I use it for original content schematic drawings/figures, post-GMT (or other codes) sprucing up, or doctoring content pilfered from PDFs, etc. I probably don’t use 90% of AI’s capabilities, especially for web things, desk top publishing, etc.
- I currently have AI 10.0.3 on a PC. I don’t know if this affects users of newer or MAC versions regarding things I pass on.
- We will refer to all graphics/content as *artwork*.
- If I want to direct you to the *Edit* menu, then select *Undo*, in this document I will notate that as *Edit>Undo*
- I’m big on short cuts, as they save *major* time and allow a higher level of functionality of AI. On the PC, many short cuts involve the *CTRL* key. However, on the MAC, you use the “Apple” key. Similarly, on the PC, there are short cuts that involve the *ALT* key, on the MAC, this becomes _____.
- You should start to develop a relationship with AI’s help page. Half of the time it will drive you nuts. But the other half of the time, you learn things that save you a factor of 5 in the amount of time you spend doing what you do. Share your tips w/ each other, and ask each other or me for help, as this can sometimes save your hours and days.

Overview of topics of AI usage

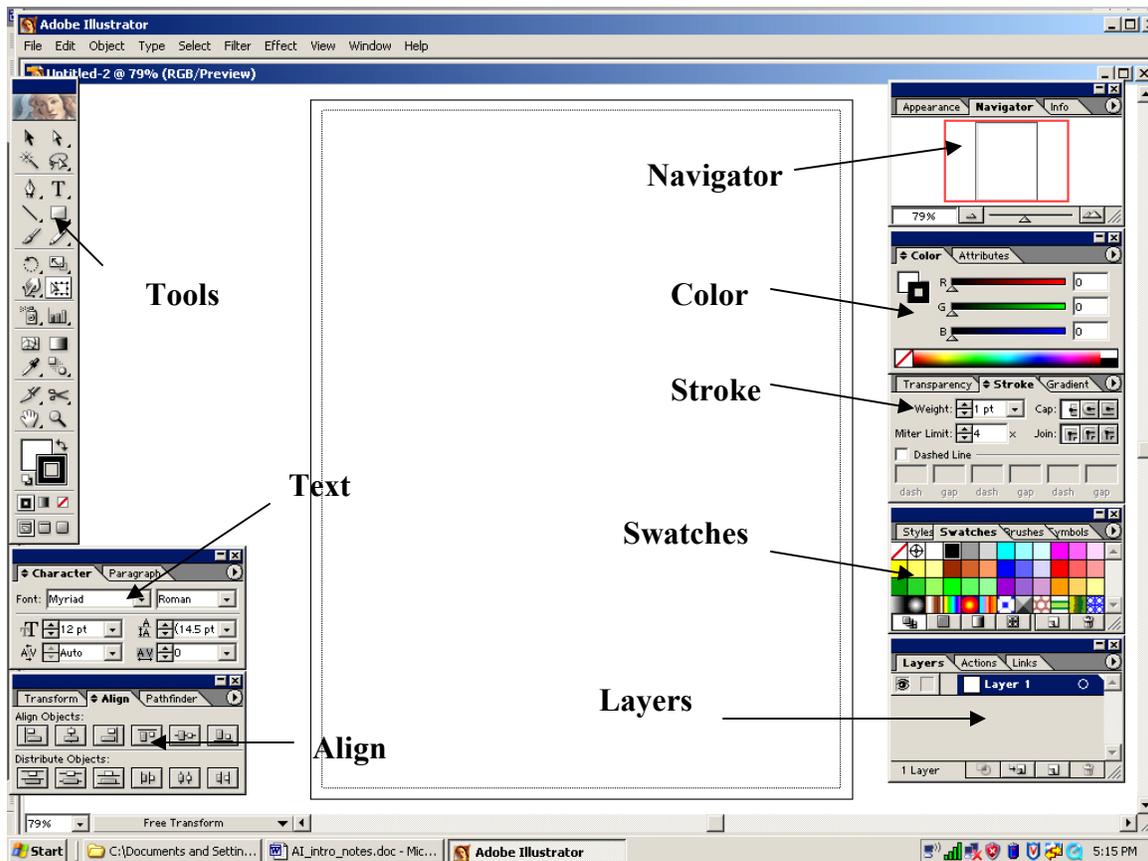
1. Getting Started: General AI appearance, environment, and tool windows
2. Input/Output (I/O): or rather starting materials and the ultimate artwork destination
3. Most used tools and shortcuts
4. Making or editing artwork: e.g., drawing, shape making, object editing, text, alignment

1. Getting Started: General AI appearance, environment, and tool windows

Open AI. We will load up the work space with the tool boxes I regularly use. You can always close them later. Many of these may already be open, and the following tasks might toggle them away. Just select again to bring them back. For the hell of it, open a blank slate for artwork: *File>New...* Then click OK in the dialog box

- Window>Tools* The main Toolbar. **A Must.**
- Window>Navigator* A useful “where am I” in the art space utility (and more)
- Window>Color* For all color options. **A Must.**
- Window>Stroke* For line thicknesses, etc. **A Must.**
- Window>Swatches* Some color utility. Useful.
- Window>Layers* Important utility for posters, busy artwork.
- Window>Align* I wish I knew this one in my first few AI years. **A Must.**
- Type>Size>Other...* Opens the text/paragraph utility box. **A Must.**

Many of the above tool boxes have other tools associated with them. They appear as tabs in the tool box. After years of doinking w/ AI, I’ve gravitated towards pushing tools to the side, keeping artwork in the middle (rather than also tools at top and bottom). Here’s my default layout:



NOTE: you may or may not see any particular entire tool box. If this is the case, click the arrow in the upper right of that tool box and look for something to click that says *Show Options*.

Finally, you may want (or need) to play with *File>Document Setup* and *File>Print Setup*. This will allow control of Portrait vs. Landscape, and artwork size. For example, making a poster? Say you're making a 40" tall by 80" wide poster. Set this up in the *File>Document Setup* dialog box. There are four boxes to change:

Size: Custom

Units: Inches

Width: 40 in

Length: 80 in

Of course, this size has to be compatible with your poster plotter's abilities.

A note on *Document Color Mode....* (see *File>Document Color Mode*). I was weaned on RGB (Red Green Blue), mostly from web page building. Saturated is value=255, value=0 means R, G, or B color does not contribute (see color tool box). You can web search (Google) for *RGB color charts*, which may be useful for getting colors you want to start with, in coldes like GMT that use RGB.

2. Input/Output (I/O): or rather starting materials and the ultimate artwork destination

You're probably asleep by now. But this is important, as it may govern how you go about setting up or sizing your artwork. Are you starting from scratch, making something that ends up in JGR? Single column? Double column? Or is this something that will go into a PDF (e.g., from MS Word), like a proposal?

More on this section later. In general: make artwork as close to its destination size as possible. Some quickies:

To make a JPG: *File>Export* then pull down menu in "Save as type" box, choose JPEG

To make a PDF: *File>Save As* then pull down menu in "Save as type" box, choose PDF

SAVE OFTEN, especially w/ large files and other jobs running on your computer.

3. Most used tools and shortcuts

Puleeease learn short cuts. It's painful to think how long we take on things by 100% reliance of mouse clicking. In this first lesson, I'm putting the top 10 or so short cuts. They fall into different categories: Viewing, Tools, and Editing.

Below I put the PC short cuts.

MAC USERS: replace CTRL with APPLE, and ALT with _____

VIEWING SHORTCUTS

<u>You type:</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Extra steps or Comments</u>
TAB	Hide/Show all tools	(this is a toggle)
CTRL 0	Resize view to full page	(CTRL “zero”)
CTRL +	Zoom in by an increment	(i.e., the “+” key, no caps req’d)
CTRL -	Zoom out by an increment	

TOOL SHORTCUTS

<u>You type:</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Extra steps or Comments</u>
z	Zoom tool	Click & drag over region to be zoomed into. “CTRL 0” is a nice toggle back to full screen
v	Select tool	Your best friend. This should be your “reference state”. You can select specific objects.
a	Direct selection tool	With this one, you can select parts of artwork for editing
t	Text tool	Click in artwork where you want your text, then start typing. Selection tool (or other tool) needed to escape
p	Pen tool	A love-hate tool, until you know it, then it is all love. Two ways (you’ll use both) click-click-click, etc click-drag (for curves: muy importante)

EDITING SHORTCUTS

<u>You type:</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Extra steps or Comments</u>
CTRL g	Group selected objects	
CTRL SHIFT g	Ungroup selected group(s)	
CTRL 2	Lock selected objects	(thus, can’t be edited)
CTRL ALT 2	Unlock all	

4. Making or editing artwork: e.g., drawing, shape making, object editing, text, alignment

Probably for a later date, but many of these things are used most times you use AI:

Grid/no grid: when and why

Snapping to grid?

Arrows

Rotating and scaling

Eye dropping

Artwork layers and locking: when and why?.

Text boxes

Editing, adding, or subtracting points in an object.

Filling objects with colors/patterns

Line styles.

Scatter brushes.

Selecting similar objects

Aligning things

Arrangement (what's in front of or behind what)

Clipping masks and compound paths of imported artwork (e.g., GMT, TauP, etc)

Interactivity w/ Photoshop (we can spend a whole hour on this)

Animations (animated gifs)

Smoothing or roughening things

Filtering and effects (Getting more artsy w/ shapes, shadows, etc.)

Guides

Masks