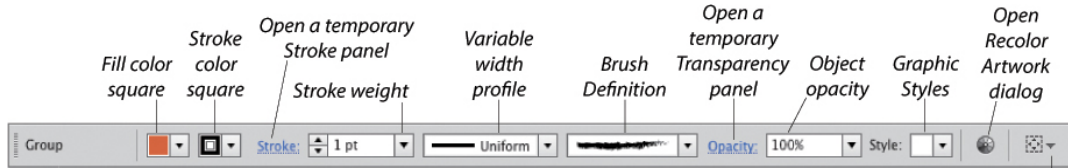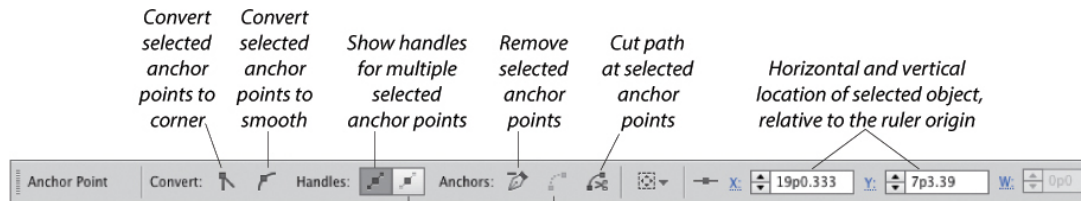# Control Panel

The Control panel houses many frequently used controls conveniently under one roof, and changes contextually depending on what tool and kind of object are selected. Two of the many variations are shown below. For example, you can use this panel to apply fill and stroke colors; change an object's brush stroke definition or opacity; apply basic type attributes, such as the font family and point size; align and distribute multiple objects; and embed or edit linked images.

When no objects are selected, you can use this panel to choose default fill, stroke, brush, style, and opacity settings for the current document and quickly access the Document Setup or Preferences dialog by clicking the button with that name.
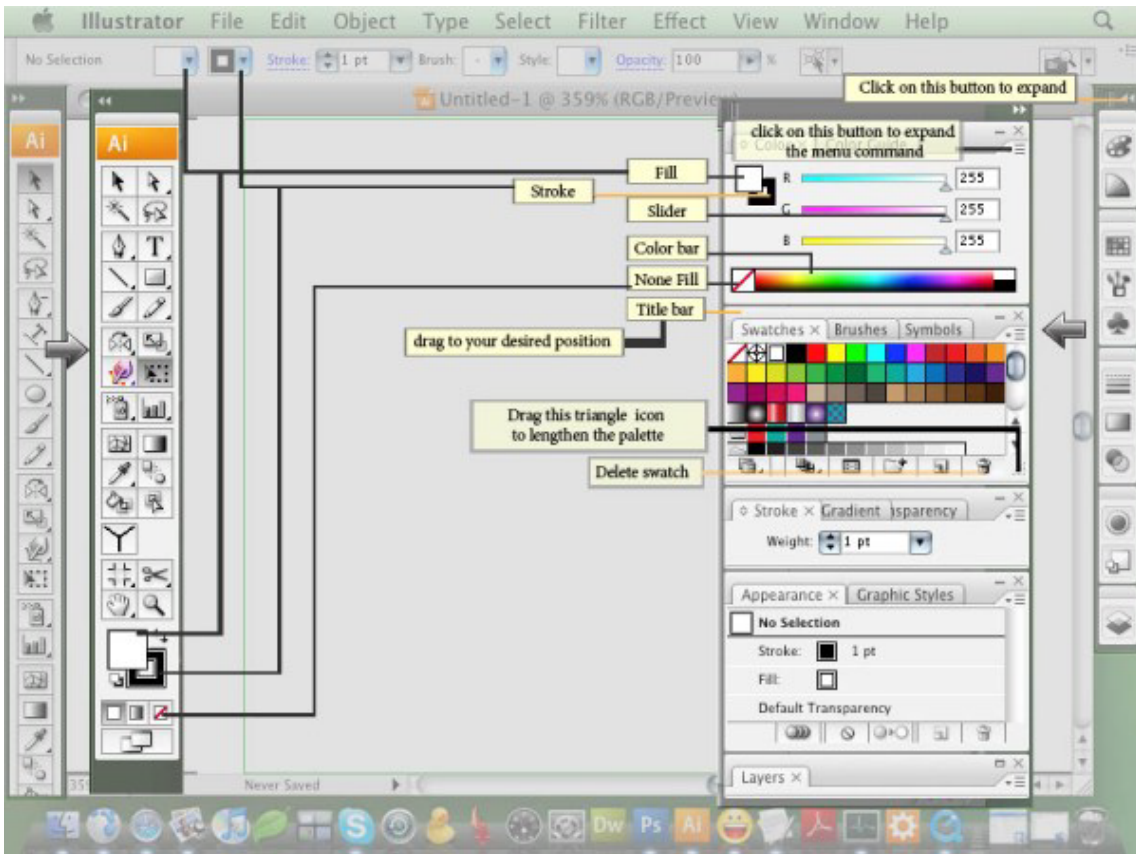

These options are available on the Control panel when a whole path, group, compound path, or symbol set is selected in a document.

These options are available on the Control panel when an anchor point is selected on an object. Clicking the X, Y, W, or H opens a temporary Transform panel.
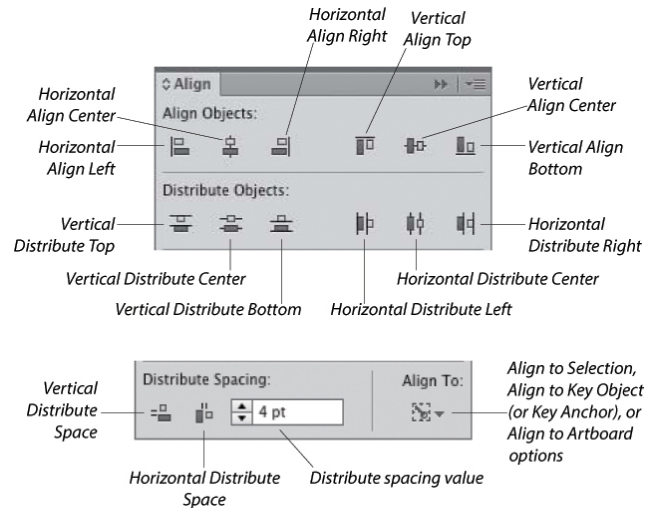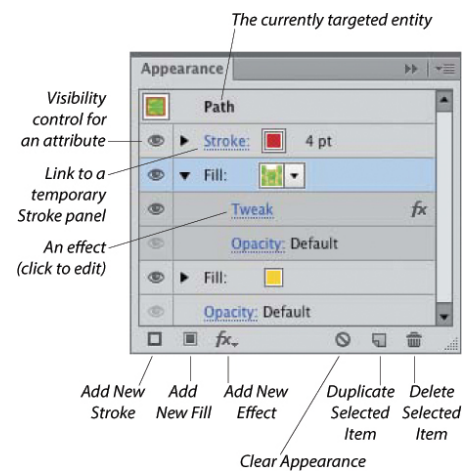
Control Panel

Align panel

The buttons on the top two rows of the Align panel align and/or distribute two or more objects along their centers or along their top, left, right, or bottom edges. Objects can be aligned to a selection, an artboard, or a key object (one of the selected objects). Buttons in the lower part of the panel redistribute (equalize) the spacing among three or more objects. This panel can also be used to align anchor points. Align buttons also appear on the Control panel when two or more objects are selected.

Horizontal Align Right
Vertical Align Top
Horizontal Align Center
Vertical Align Center
Horizontal Align Left
Vertical Align Bottom
Vertical Distribute Top
Horizontal Distribute Right
Vertical Distribute Center
Horizontal Distribute Center
Vertical Distribute Bottom
Horizontal Distribute Left

Vertical Distribute Space
Align to Selection, Align to Key Object (or Key Anchor), or Align to Artboard options
Horizontal Distribute Space
Distribute spacing value

Appearance panel

The appearance attributes of an object consist of its fill and stroke color, Stroke panel settings, effects, and Transparency panel settings. The Appearance panel lists the specific appearance attributes and settings for whichever layer, group, or object is currently targeted on the Layers panel. You can use the panel to add extra fill or stroke attributes, edit or remove attributes, apply and edit effects, and edit individual attributes within an applied graphic style.

The currently targeted entity
Visibility control for an attribute
Link to a temporary Stroke panel
An effect (click to edit)
Add New Stroke
Add New Fill
Add New Effect
Duplicate Selected Item
Delete Selected Item
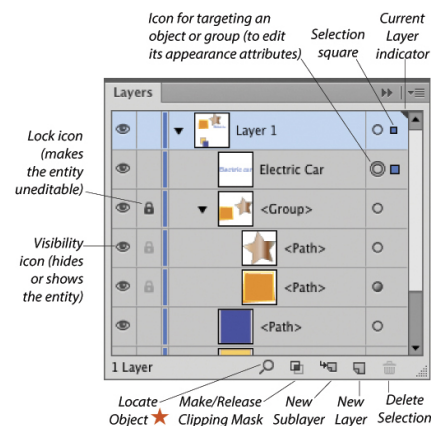Clear Appearance

Pathfinder panel

Depending on how they are applied, the Shape Mode commands on the top row of the Pathfinder panel combine selected, overlapping objects into one or more standard paths or into a compound shape. The Expand button converts a compound shape into either a path or a compound path. The Pathfinder buttons on the bottom row of the panel produce flattened, cut-up shapes from multiple selected objects.

Intersect
Exclude
Expand compound shape
Unite
Minus Front
Divide Trim Merge Crop Outline Minus Back
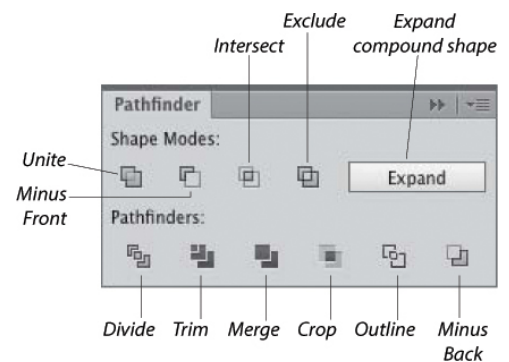
Layers panel

The indispensable Layers panel lets you add and delete layers and sublayers in a document, and create layer groups. You can also use this panel to select, target, restack, duplicate, delete, hide, show, lock, unlock, merge, change the view for, or create a clipping set for a layer, sublayer, group, or individual object. When your artwork is finished, you can use a command on the panel menu to flatten the document into one layer or release all the objects to separate layers for export as a Flash animation.

Icon for targeting an object or group (to edit its appearance attributes)
Selection square
Current Layer indicator
Lock icon (makes the entity uneditable)
Visibility icon (hides or shows the entity)
Locate Object
Make/Release Clipping Mask
New Sublayer
New Layer
Delete Selection

Control Panel

Character panel
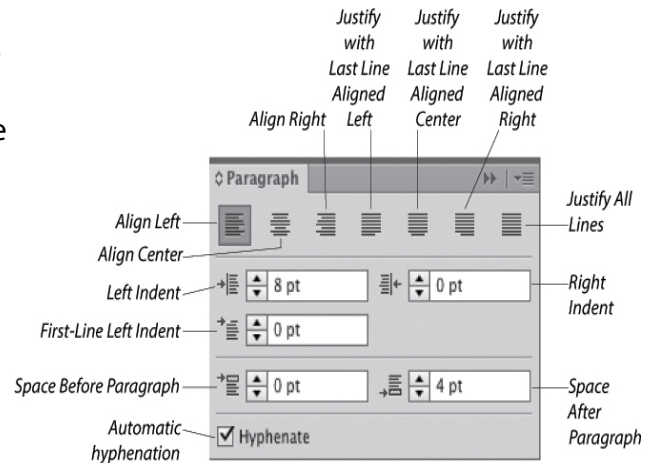You will use the Character panel to apply type attributes: font family, font style, font size, leading, kerning, tracking, horizontal scale, vertical scale, baseline shift, character rotation, special glyphs, a language to be used for hyphenation, and an anti-aliasing method.

Character panel labels: Font Family, Font Style, Font Size, Kerning, Vertical Scale, Baseline Shift, Leading, Tracking, Horizontal Scale, Character Rotation, Anti-aliasing method, All Caps, Small Caps, Superscript, Subscript, Underline, and Strikethrough, Hyphenation language for the current document
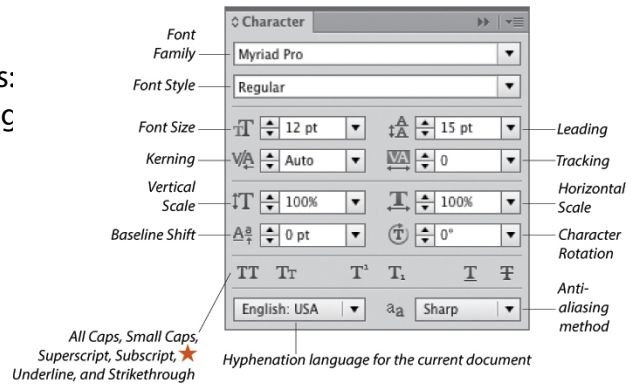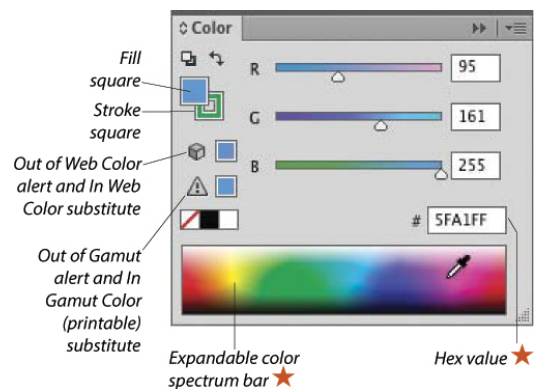
Paragraph panel
Use the Paragraph panel to apply settings that affect entire paragraphs, such as horizontal alignment, indentation, spacing before or after, and automatic hyphenation. Via the panel menu, you can choose hanging punctuation and composer options and open a dialog for choosing justification or hyphenation options.

The Align Left, Align Center, and Align Right buttons are also available on the Control panel when a type object is selected. To open a temporary Paragraph panel, click Paragraph on the Control panel.

Paragraph panel labels: Justify with Last Line Aligned Left, Justify with Last Line Aligned Center, Justify with Last Line Aligned Right, Align Right, Align Left, Align Center, Left Indent, First-Line Left Indent, Space Before Paragraph, Automatic hyphenation, Justify All Lines, Right Indent, Space After Paragraph
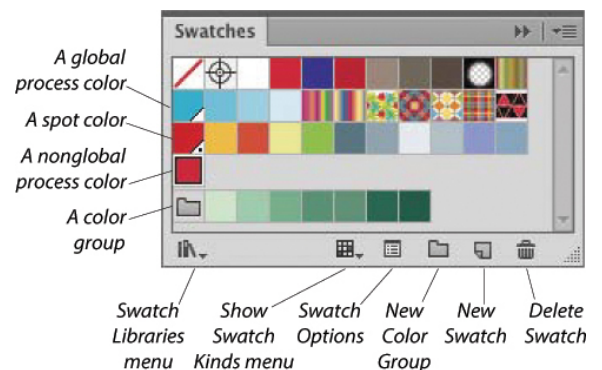
Color panel
In Illustrator, colors are applied to an object's fill (interior) or stroke (edge). Use the Color panel to mix a global process color, enter a hexadecimal code, or set a tint percentage for a spot color. Choose a color model for the panel, such as RGB or CMYK, from the panel menu. Quick-select a color by clicking in the spectrum bar at the bottom of the panel, or click the black, white, or None button.

Color panel labels: Fill square, Stroke square, Out of Web Color alert and In Web Color substitute, Out of Gamut alert and In Gamut Color (printable) substitute, Expandable color spectrum bar, Hex value

Swatches panel
Use the Swatches panel to choose, store, and apply solid colors, patterns, gradients, and color groups. If you click a swatch, it becomes the current fill or stroke color (depending on whether the Fill or Stroke square is active on the Tools panel and Color panel), and it is applied to all currently selected objects.
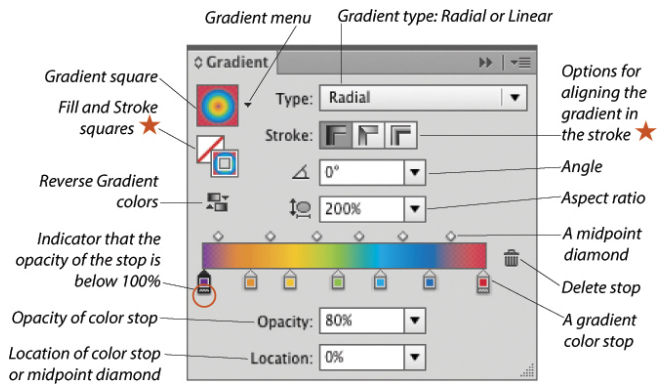
Double-clicking a swatch opens the Swatch Options dialog, in which you can change the swatch name or change its type to global process, nonglobal process, or spot.

Swatches panel labels: A global process color, A spot color, A nonglobal process color, A color group, Swatch Libraries menu, Show Swatch Kinds menu, Swatch Options, New Color Group, New Swatch, Delete Swatch
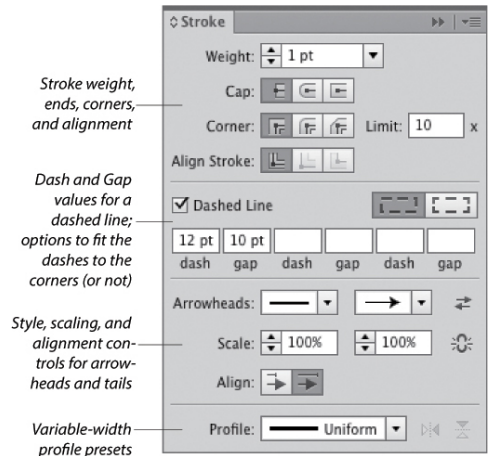
Control Panel

Gradient panel

The Gradient panel lets you create, apply, and edit gradients, which are soft, gradual blends between two or more colors. You can use the panel to apply a gradient to an object's fill or stroke.

Gradient menu
Gradient type: Radial or Linear
Gradient square
Fill and Stroke squares ★
Reverse Gradient colors
Indicator that the opacity of the stop is below 100%
Opacity of color stop
Location of color stop or midpoint diamond

Options for aligning the gradient in the stroke ★
Angle
Aspect ratio
A midpoint diamond
Delete stop
A gradient color stop

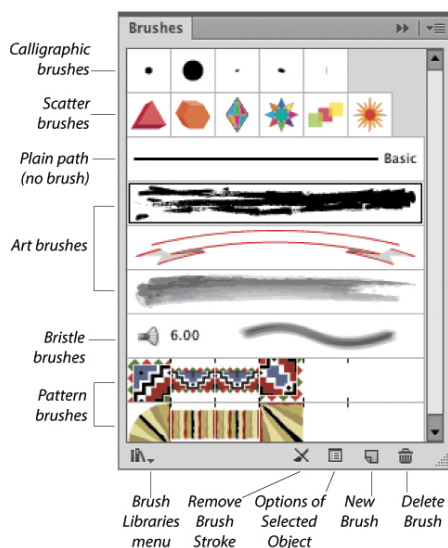Type: Radial
Stroke:
0°
200%
Opacity: 80%
Location: 0%

Stroke panel

Stroke settings control the appearance of an object's path (edge). By using the Stroke panel, you can specify a stroke weight (thickness), cap (end) style, and corner (join) style, and an alignment option to control the position of the stroke on the path. You can also use the panel to create a dashed (or dotted) line or border, apply an arrowhead and/or tail style, and change the stroke width profile.

Stroke weight, ends, corners, and alignment
Dash and Gap values for a dashed line; options to fit the dashes to the corners (or not)
Style, scaling, and alignment controls for arrowheads and tails
Variable-width profile presets

Weight: 1 pt
Cap:
Corner: Limit: 10 x
Align Stroke:
☑ Dashed Line
12 pt 10 pt
dash gap dash gap dash gap
Arrowheads:
Scale: 100% 100%
Align:
Profile: Uniform

Brushes panel

There are five varieties of decorative brushes that you can apply to paths: Calligraphic, Scatter, Art, Bristle, and Pattern. You can apply a brush either by choosing the Paintbrush tool and a brush and then drawing a shape, or by applying a brush to an existing path.

Calligraphic brushes
Scatter brushes
Plain path (no brush)
Art brushes
Bristle brushes
Pattern brushes

Basic
6.00

Brush Libraries menu
Remove Brush Stroke
Options of Selected Object
New Brush
Delete Brush

Links panel

When you place an image from another application, such as Photoshop, into an Illustrator document, you can opt to have Illustrator **embed** a copy of the image into the file (and thereby increase the file size but allow the program to color-manage it) or merely link the image to your document (and minimize the file size but require the original file to be available for print output). Using the Links panel, you can monitor the status of linked images, convert a linked image to an embedded one, open a linked image in its original application for editing, update an edited image, and restore the link to an image that is missing or modified.

Links
woman red.ps
Missing Image indicator
green coupe
Modified Linked Image indicator
Hudson flat.psd

Relink Go to Link Update Link Edit Original