

Adobe Illustrator Study Notes (Beginner Level)

What is Adobe Illustrator?

Adobe Illustrator is a **vector-based design software** used to create logos, illustrations, icons, posters, and scalable artwork.

Unlike Photoshop (which uses pixels), Illustrator uses **vector graphics**, meaning:

- Designs stay sharp at any size (no blur)
 - Best for logos, branding, print design
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Basic Definition You Must Know

✓ Vector Graphics

Artwork made using **mathematical paths (points, lines, curves)** instead of pixels.

✓ Artboard

The **working canvas** where you design your artwork.

✓ Path

A line or shape made using anchor points.

✓ Anchor Point

A point that controls the shape of a path.

✓ Stroke

The outline of a shape.

✓ Fill

The inside color of a shape.

✓ Layers

Like transparent sheets stacked on top of each other to organize design elements.

Adobe Illustrator Interface (Layout)

When you open Illustrator, you will see:

■ 1. Menu Bar (Top)

- File, Edit, Object, Type, Select, Effect
- Used for all major commands

■ 2. Control Panel (Below Menu)

- Shows tool options depending on selection

■ 3. Tools Panel (Left Side)

- All drawing + editing tools

■ 4. Artboard (Center)

- Main working area

■ 5. Panels (Right Side)

Important panels:

- Layers
 - Color
 - Properties
 - Stroke
 - Appearance
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Important Tools (Very Important for Exams)



Selection Tools

- **Selection Tool (V)** → Select, move, resize objects
- **Direct Selection Tool (A)** → Select anchor points



Drawing Tools

- **Pen Tool (P)** → Create curves and paths (MOST IMPORTANT)
- **Line Tool (L)** → Draw straight lines
- **Rectangle Tool (M)** → Rectangles/squares
- **Ellipse Tool (L)** → Circles/ovals
- **Polygon Tool** → Shapes with multiple sides



Color Tools

- **Fill Color** → Inside color
- **Stroke Color** → Outline color
- **Eyedropper Tool (I)** → Copy colors from objects



Editing Tools

- **Scissors Tool (C)** → Cut paths
- **Eraser Tool (Shift + E)** → Erase parts of shapes
- **Shape Builder Tool (Shift + M)** → Combine shapes



Text Tool

- **Type Tool (T)** → Add text
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Essential Shortcut Keys (VERY IMPORTANT)

File Shortcuts

- Ctrl + N → New file
 - Ctrl + O → Open file
 - Ctrl + S → Save
 - Ctrl + Shift + S → Save As
 - Ctrl + P → Print
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Editing Shortcuts

- Ctrl + Z → Undo
 - Ctrl + Shift + Z → Redo
 - Ctrl + C → Copy
 - Ctrl + V → Paste
 - Ctrl + X → Cut
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Tool Shortcuts

- V → Selection Tool
 - A → Direct Selection Tool
 - P → Pen Tool
 - T → Type Tool
 - M → Rectangle Tool
 - L → Ellipse Tool
 - I → Eyedropper Tool
 - B → Brush Tool
 - E → Eraser Tool
 - Z → Zoom Tool
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View Shortcuts

- Ctrl + + → Zoom In

- Ctrl + - → Zoom Out
 - Ctrl + 0 → Fit Artboard to Screen
 - Ctrl + R → Show Rulers
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Object Shortcuts

- Ctrl + G → Group objects
 - Ctrl + Shift + G → Ungroup
 - Ctrl +] → Bring forward
 - Ctrl + [→ Send backward
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Important Concepts (Exam Questions)

1. What is Pen Tool used for?

Used to create **custom shapes and curves using anchor points**

2. Difference between Fill and Stroke

- Fill = inside color
- Stroke = outline color

3. Why Illustrator is used?

- Logo design
- Vector illustrations
- Print designs (banners, posters)

4. What is Layer?

A system to organize design elements separately.

Basic Rules for Beginners

- ✓ Always work in layers
 - ✓ Keep shapes grouped for easy editing
 - ✓ Use Pen Tool carefully (practice daily)
 - ✓ Save frequently (Ctrl + S)
 - ✓ Use rulers and guides for alignment
 - ✓ Keep design scalable (vector advantage)
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Quick Exam Revision Points

- Illustrator = Vector software
- Artboard = Working area
- Pen Tool = Most important tool
- Ctrl + Z = Undo
- V = Selection Tool
- Fill = Inside color
- Stroke = Outline
- Layers = Organization system

Basic Adobe Illustrator Terms

- **Artboard** → The white working area where you create designs
- **Toolbar** → Left side panel containing tools
- **Panel** → Right side settings area like Layers and Color
- **Anchor Point** → Small point used to control shapes and paths
- **Path** → A line created using anchor points
- **Stroke** → Outline color of a shape
- **Fill** → Inside color of a shape
- **Selection Tool** → Tool used to select and move objects
- **Direct Selection Tool** → Used to select anchor points only
- **Resize Handle** → Small corner points used to resize objects
- **Bounding Box** around selected object for resizing
- **Layer** → Separate section used to organize design elements
- **Group** → Combining multiple objects together
- **Ungroup** → Separating grouped objects
- **Vector** → Design that does not lose quality
- **Pixel** → Tiny square used in image-based graphics
- **Opacity** → Transparency level of an object
- **Gradient** → Smooth blend of two or more colors
- **Alignment** → Arranging objects evenly
- **Guide** → Helper lines used for accurate placement
- **Ruler** → Measurement tool around artboard
- **Zoom Tool** → Tool used to zoom in or out
- **Pen Tool** → Tool used to create custom shapes and curves
- **Shape Tool** → Tool used to create rectangles, circles, polygons
- **Type Tool** → Tool used to write text
- **Eyedropper Tool** → Tool used to copy colors
- **Brush Tool** → Tool used for drawing brush strokes
- **Clipping Mask** → Used to hide parts of an object or image
- **Workspace** → Complete layout of Illustrator interface
- **Smart Guides** → Automatic alignment helper lines
- **Properties Panel** → Panel showing object settings
- **Appearance Panel** → Panel controlling effects and styles
- **Transform** → Resize, rotate, or move objects
- **Scale** → Increase or decrease object size
- **Rotate** → Turn object around
- **Duplicate** → Create copy of object
- **Export** → Save design in different formats like PNG or JPG
- **Resolution** → Quality/detail level of image
- **RGB Color Mode** → Used for screens and digital design
- **CMYK Color Mode** → Used for printing designs

Basic Adobe Illustrator Shortcuts

- **Ctrl + N** → New File
- **Ctrl + O** → Open File
- **Ctrl + S** → Save File
- **Ctrl + Shift + S** → Save As
- **Ctrl + P** → Print

- **Ctrl + Z** → Undo
- **Ctrl + Shift + Z** → Redo
- **Ctrl + C** → Copy
- **Ctrl + V** → Paste
- **Ctrl + X** → Cut

- **V** → Selection Tool
- **A** → Direct Selection Tool
- **P** → Pen Tool
- **T** → Type Tool
- **M** → Rectangle Tool
- **L** → Ellipse Tool
- **B** → Brush Tool
- **I** → Eyedropper Tool
- **Z** → Zoom Tool
- **H** → Hand Tool

- **Ctrl + G** → Group Objects
- **Ctrl + Shift + G** → Ungroup Objects
- **Ctrl + D** → Duplicate Action
- **Delete** → Delete Selected Object

- **Ctrl + +** → Zoom In
- **Ctrl + -** → Zoom Out
- **Ctrl + 0** → Fit Artboard to Screen
- **Ctrl + R** → Show/Hide Rulers
- **Ctrl + ;** → Show/Hide Guides

- **Spacebar** → Temporary Hand Tool
- **Shift** → Keep shape proportion while resizing
- **Alt + Drag** → Duplicate Object
- **Ctrl + A** → Select All
- **Ctrl + Shift + A** → Deselect All