

2026 ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR FUNDAMENTALS

Welcome to Adobe Illustrator 2026. Build a strong foundation in vector design while learning essential tools, modern workflows, and AI-assisted features. This course focuses on practical skills that help you create clean, scalable artwork for print, web, and digital media.

Lesson 1: Introduction to Adobe Illustrator

Learn the core concepts of vector design, navigation, and modern Illustrator workflows.

- What's new in Illustrator 2026
- Lecture: Raster vs Vector (real-world usage)
- Lecture: Artificial Intelligence: (Automation vs Generative)
- Creating New Documents, Presets, and Workspaces
- Working with Images: Open, Place, Embed, Export
- Core Vector Design Workflows used in professional projects

Lesson 2: Shape Tool Fundamentals

Create artwork efficiently using shape tools and precision drawing features.

- Working with Shapes, Lines, and Smart Guides
- Hidden Shape Tool features and dynamic controls
- Combining shapes to create clean vector artwork
- Popular graphic design techniques using simple geometry

Lesson 3: Geometric Artwork Basics

Build confidence creating and modifying custom vector artwork.

- From clip art to clean design assets
- Introducing the Pen Tool with no fear required
- Why the Pen Tool is easier than you think
- Anatomy of the Pen Tool: anchors, handles, curves
- No-skills-needed drawing techniques

Lesson 4: Typography Fundamentals

Understand type fundamentals and create professional typography layouts.

- Typography basics in Illustrator and Adobe Fonts
- Paragraph text versus Display text
- Making text look intentional and readable
- Introduction to text effects (shadows, glows, and outlines)

Lesson 5: Fundamental Vector AI Generation

Explore AI-powered vector creation and variation workflows.

- AI fundamentals: automation versus generative systems
- Vector Generative Art panels and menus
- Prompt structure and refinement strategies
- Exploring controlled variations and filters

Lesson 6: Exporting Your Artwork

Export clean, optimized artwork for screen, print, and digital delivery.

- Essential file formats and when to use them
- Exporting for Screen: Web, Social Media, Video
- Exporting for Digital Distribution: PDF and Interactive PDFs
- Exporting for Print: CMYK workflows and best practices

Lesson 7: Professional Graphic Foundations

Learn the core power tools used in professional Illustrator workflows.

- Compound Paths explained clearly
- Compound Shapes with Pathfinder
- Refining complex artwork
- Common mistakes and cleanup strategies

Lesson 8: Putting Compound Shapes to Work

Create advanced artwork using compound paths and precision edits.

- Logo, branding, and icon techniques
- Shattering designs, cut effects, and offsets
- Faux texturing and controlled complexity
- Troubleshooting tools that appear broken
- The Mockup Tool fully integrated in Illustrator 2026

Lesson 9: The World of Symbols

Speed up production using symbols and reusable artwork.

- What symbols are and why they matter
- Creating, editing, and managing symbols
- Symbol Tool deep dive
- Building complex artwork with symbols

Lesson 10: Next Level Typography

Push typography further with advanced controls and creative effects.

- Character and Paragraph panel deep dive
- Glyphs, ligatures, and stylistic alternates
- Custom typography for branding
- Text effects and Text on a Path workflows

Lesson 11: Interesting Tools and Creative Power

Unlock expressive tools that expand Illustrator's creative range.

- Warp tools and controlled chaos
- Blend Tool techniques both retro and modern
- Pencil, Smooth, Shaper, and Path tools
- Magic Wand, Lasso, and hidden selection tricks

Lesson 12: Raster vs Vector Effects Design

Combine raster and vector effects intelligently.

- Raster Effects in Illustrator and resolution control
- Why raster effects exist in vector workflows
- Professional use cases for raster effects
- Typography versus artwork versus effects rendering
- Exporting artwork with effects intact

Lesson 13: Creating & Working with Color

Build, manage, and reuse professional color systems.

- Swatches, Gradients, and Color Theme Libraries
- Sampling and extracting color from artwork
- Working with Spot Colors
- Color management and file format implications

Lesson 14: Recoloring Artwork*

Use AI-powered and traditional recoloring tools.

- How Recolor Artwork works in Illustrator 2026
- Applying AI recolor to existing artwork
- Saving alternate color themes to Libraries
- Understanding limitations and best practices

Lesson 15: Working with Brushes

Create expressive and production-ready brush artwork.

- Brush types explained clearly
- Creating basic and advanced brushes
- Applying and editing brush strokes
- Performance considerations and cleanup

Lesson 16: Understanding Color Settings

Deliver accurate color across print and screen workflows.

- Color Settings and synchronization
- Working with color libraries including Pantone
- Print-focused color setups
- Screen-based color workflows
- Fundamental color correction techniques

Lesson 17: Adobe Firefly and AI Integration*

Go further with AI in Illustrator to explore useful web tools and functions like Adobe Express.

- Extend Illustrator using Adobe's AI ecosystem.
- What Firefly is and where it appears
- Illustrator and Adobe Express workflows
- Moving designs between Express and Illustrator
- Using Firefly web tools alongside Illustrator

Lesson 18: Generated A.I. Fundamentals*

Generate, refine, and adapt AI-created vector artwork.

- Vector Generative Art fundamentals
- Applying AI to media creation workflows
- AI color continuity and style control
- Working with references and stylization
- Deconstructing and redesigning AI artwork
- Using third-party generative content responsibly

This outline represents a general overview of topics covered in class. Lesson order and content may be adjusted or combined as needed to create the most effective learning experience. Due to frequent application updates, provided books and materials may not always reflect every feature discussed in class, including Adobe's own documentation, which can occasionally lag behind current versions. We will always strive to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available. Students are encouraged to take notes during class and to take full advantage of Training Connection's audit option, which allows you to retake the course at your convenience.

