2 TECHNIQUES FOR SELECTING ARTWORK

Lesson overview

In this lesson, you'll learn how to do the following:

- Differentiate between the various selection tools and use different selection techniques.

- Recognize Smart Guides.

- Save selections for future use.

- Hide and lock items.

- Use tools and commands to align shapes and points to each other and the artboard.

- Group and ungroup items.

- Work in Isolation mode.

This lesson will take about 45 minutes to complete. Please log in to your account on peachpit.com to download the files for this lesson, or go to the "Getting Started" section at the beginning of this book and follow the instructions under "Accessing the lesson files and Web Edition." Store the files on your computer in a convenient location.

Your Account page is also where you'll find any updates to the lessons or to the lesson files. Look on the Lesson & Update Files tab to access the most current content.

Selecting content in Adobe Illustrator is one of the more essential things you'll do. In this lesson, you learn how to locate and select objects using the Selection tools; protect other objects by grouping, hiding, and locking them; align objects to each other and the artboard; and much more.

Starting the lesson

Creating, selecting, and editing are the cornerstones of creating artwork in Adobe Illustrator. In this lesson, you'll learn the fundamentals of selecting, aligning, and grouping artwork using different methods. You'll begin by resetting the preferences in Illustrator and opening the lesson file.

1 To ensure that the tools function and the defaults are set exactly as described in this lesson, delete or deactivate (by renaming) the Adobe Illustrator CC preferences file. See "Restoring default preferences" in the "Getting Started" section at the beginning of the book.

2 Start Adobe Illustrator CC.

3 Choose File > Open. Locate the file named L2_end.ai, which is in the Lessons > Lesson02 folder that you copied onto your hard disk, and click Open.

This file contains the finished illustration that you'll create in this lesson.

4 Choose File > Open, and open the L2_start.ai file in the Lessons > Lesson02 folder on your hard disk.

5 Choose File > Save As. In the Save As dialog box, name the file **ZooPoster.ai**, and save it in the Lessons > Lesson02 folder. Leave Adobe Illustrator (ai) chosen from the Format menu (macOS) or Adobe Illustrator (*.AI) chosen from the Save As Type menu (Windows), and click Save.

6 In the Illustrator Options dialog box, leave the Illustrator options at their default settings, and click OK.

7 Choose View > Fit All In Window.

8 Choose Window > Workspace > Essentials, make sure it's selected, and then choose Window > Workspace > Reset Essentials to reset the workspace.

Selecting objects

Whether you're creating artwork from scratch or editing existing artwork in Illustrator, you'll need to become familiar with selecting objects. There are many methods and tools for doing this, and in this section, you'll explore the most widely used, which use the Selection (▶) and Direct Selection (▷) tools.

Using the Selection tool

The Selection tool (▶) in the Tools panel lets you select, move, rotate, and resize entire objects. In this section, you'll become familiar with it.

1   Choose 2 Pieces from the Artboard Navigation menu in the lower left of the Document window. This should fit the artboard on the right into the window.

2   Select the Selection tool (▶) in the Tools panel on the left. Move the pointer over the different artwork on the artboards, but don't click.

The icon that appears next to the pointer as it passes over objects (▶) indicates that there is artwork under the pointer that can be selected. When you hover over an object, that object is also outlined in a color, like blue in this instance.

3   Select the Zoom tool (🔍) in the Tools panel, and click a few times on the beige circles to zoom in.

4   Select the Selection tool (▶) in the Tools panel and then move the pointer over the edge of the beige circle on the left.

A word such as "path" or "anchor" may appear because Smart Guides are turned on by default (View > Smart Guides). *Smart Guides* are temporary snap-to guides that help you align, edit, and transform objects or artboards.

5 Click anywhere inside the
circle on the left to select it.
A bounding box with eight
handles appears around the
selected circle.

The *bounding box* can be used
to make changes to artwork (vector or raster), such as resizing or rotating. The
bounding box also indicates that an item is selected and ready to be modified.
The color of the bounding box indicates which layer the object is on. Layers are
discussed more in Lesson 9, "Organizing Your Artwork with Layers."

6 Using the Selection tool, click in the circle on the right. Notice that the circle on
the left is now deselected and only the circle on the right is selected.

7 Pressing the Shift key, click the circle on the left to *add* it to the selection and
then release the key. Both circles are now selected, and a larger bounding box
surrounds them.
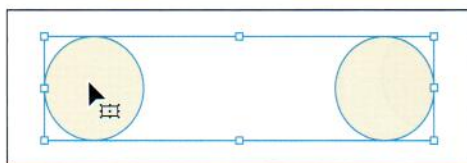
8 Move the circles a short distance by pressing and dragging from inside either
selected circle (in the beige color). Because both circles are selected, they
move together.
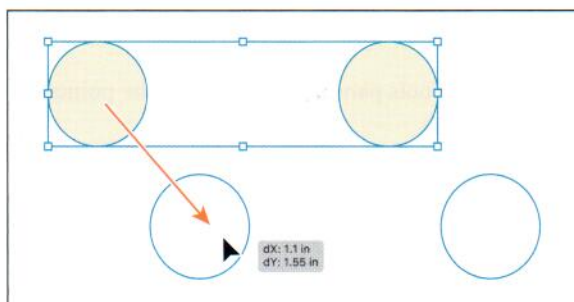
As you drag, you may notice that magenta lines appear. These are called
alignment guides. They are visible because Smart Guides are turned on
(View > Smart Guides). As you drag, the objects align to other objects in the
document. Also notice the measurement label (gray box) next to the pointer
that shows the object's distance from its original position. Measurement labels
also appear because Smart Guides are turned on.

9 Revert to the last saved version of the document by choosing File > Revert.
In the dialog box that appears, click Revert.

Selecting and editing with the Direct Selection tool

In Illustrator, as you draw, you create vector paths that are made up of anchor points and paths. Anchor points are used to control the shape of the path and work like pins holding a wire in place. A shape you create, like a square, is composed of at least four anchor points on the corners with paths connecting the anchor points.
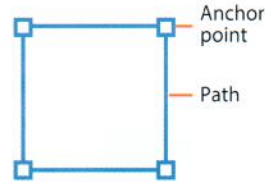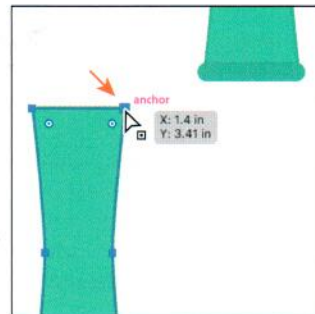
Anchor point

Path

One way to change the shape of a path or shape is by dragging its anchor points. The Direct Selection tool (▷) lets you select anchor points or paths within an object so that it can be reshaped. Next, you'll become familiar with selecting anchor points using the Direct Selection tool to reshape a path.

1 Choose 2 from the Active Artboard menu in the Properties panel on the right.

2 Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window to make sure you see the whole artboard.

3 Select the Direct Selection tool (▷) in the Tools panel on the left.
   Click inside one of the larger green bamboo shapes to see the anchor points.

   Notice that the anchor points are all filled with a blue color, which means they are selected.

4 Move the pointer directly over the upper-right anchor point.

   With the Direct Selection tool selected, when the pointer is right over an anchor point, the word "anchor" appears. The "anchor" label is showing because Smart Guides should be turned on (View > Smart Guides). Also notice the little white box next to the pointer (▷). The small dot that appears in the center of the white box indicates that the cursor is positioned over an anchor point.

5 Click and release to select that anchor point and then move the pointer away.

   Notice that only the anchor point you selected is now filled with blue, indicating that it is selected, and the other anchor points in the shape are now hollow (filled with white), indicating that they are not selected.
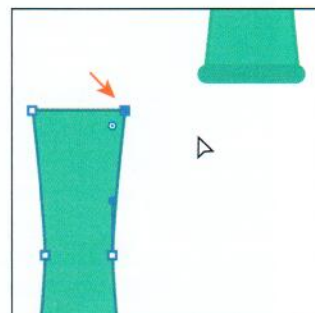
● **Note:** The gray
measurement label that
appears as you drag the
anchor point has the
values dX and dY. *dX*
indicates the distance
that the pointer has
moved along the x-axis
(horizontal), and *dY*
indicates the distance
that the pointer has
moved along the
y-axis (vertical).

6 With the Direct Selection tool still selected, move the pointer over the selected
anchor point and then drag it to edit the shape.
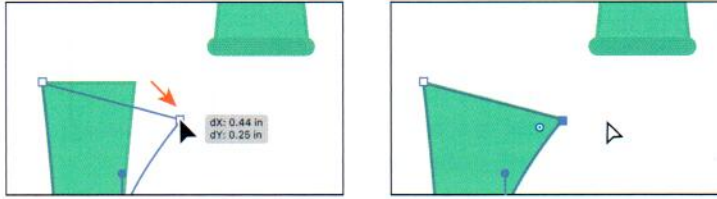
7 Try clicking another point on a corner of the shape. Notice that when you select
the new point, the previous point is deselected.
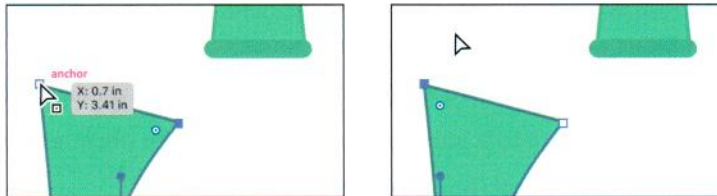
8 Revert to the last saved version of the file by choosing File > Revert. In the dialog
box that appears, click Revert.

Changing the size of anchor points, handles, and bounding box display

The anchor points, handles, and bounding box points may be difficult to see at
times. In the Illustrator preferences, you can adjust the size of those features. By
choosing Illustrator CC > Preferences > Selection & Anchor Display (macOS) or
Edit > Preferences > Selection & Anchor Display (Windows), you can drag the Size
slider to change the size.
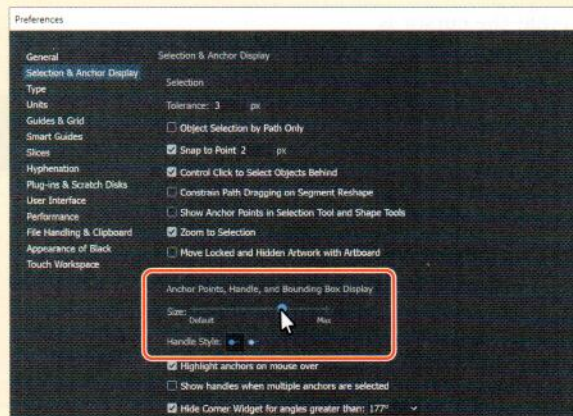
Creating selections with a marquee

Another way to select content is by dragging across what you want to select (called a *marquee selection),* which is what you'll do next.

1 Select the Zoom tool (Q) in the Tools panel, and click the beige circles several times to zoom in closely.

2 Select the Selection tool (▶) in the Tools panel on the left. Move the pointer above and to the left of the leftmost beige circle and then drag downward and to the right to create a marquee that overlaps the tops of both circles. Release the mouse button. When dragging with the Selection tool (▶), you need to encompass only a small part of an object to select it.

3 Choose Select > Deselect, or click where there are no objects.

Now you'll use the Direct Selection tool to select multiple anchor points in the circles by dragging a marquee around anchor points.

4 Select the Direct Selection tool (▷) in the Tools panel. Starting off the top left of the leftmost circle (see the first part of the following figure), drag across the top edges of the two circles and then release the mouse button.
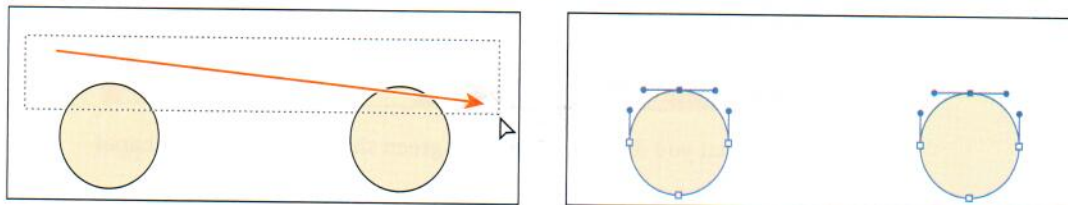
Only the top anchor points become selected. With the anchor points selected, you may see what look like little handles coming from the anchor points. Those are called *direction handles,* and they can be used to control the curve of the path. In the next step, you'll drag one of the anchor points. Make sure you drag the square anchor point and not the round end of one of the handles.

5 Move the pointer over one of the selected anchor points at the top of a circle. When you see the word "anchor," drag it to see how they move together.
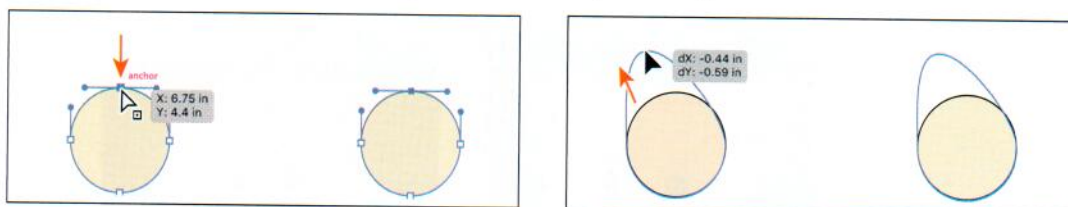
You can use this method when selecting points so that you don't have to click exactly on the anchor point that you want to select.

6 Revert to the last saved version of the file by choosing File > Revert. In the dialog box that appears, click Revert.

Hiding and locking objects

Selecting artwork may be more difficult when there are objects stacked one on another or when there are multiple objects in a small area. In this section, you'll learn a common way to make selecting objects easier by locking and hiding content. Next, you'll attempt to drag across artwork to select it.

1　Choose 1 Final Artwork from the artboard navigation menu in the lower-left.

2　Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window.

3　With the Selection tool (▶) selected, move the pointer into the blue-green area to the left of the animal artwork (the "X" in the following figure) and then drag across the head of the animal to select the whole thing. See the following figure.
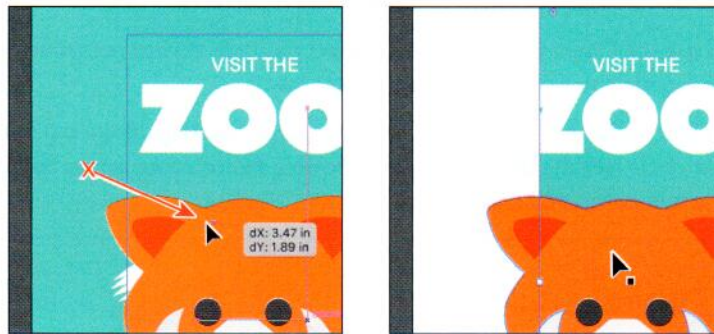

Notice that you drag the large blue-green shape, not the head shapes.

4　Choose Edit > Undo Move.

5　With the large blue-green background shape still selected, choose Object > Lock > Selection, or press Command+2 (macOS) or Ctrl+2 (Windows).

Locking objects prevents you from selecting and editing them. You can unlock artwork by choosing Object > Unlock All.
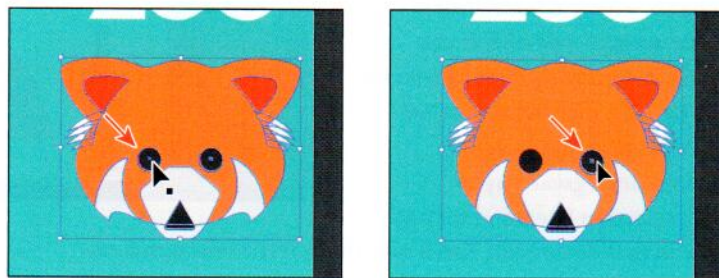
6　Move the pointer into the blue-green area to the left of the animal artwork and then drag across the head of the animal again, this time selecting the whole thing.
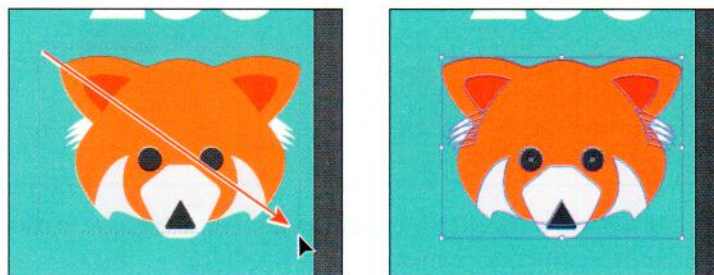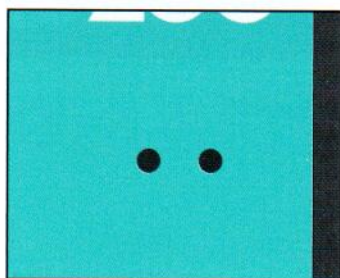
Next, you'll hide all of the shapes that make up the head of the animal, except for the eyes.

7 Press the Shift key and click each eye shape, one at a time, to *remove* the eyes from the selection.

8 Choose Object > Hide > Selection, or press Command+3 (macOS) or Ctrl+3 (Windows).

The selected shapes are temporarily hidden so that you can more easily select other objects.

9 Choose File > Save to save the file.

Selecting similar objects

You can also select artwork based on similar fill color, stroke color, stroke weight, and more, using the Select > Same command. The stroke of an object is the outline (border), and the stroke weight is the width of the stroke. Next, you'll select several objects with the same fill and stroke applied.

1 Choose View > Fit All In Window to see all of the artwork at once.

**2** With the Selection tool (▶), click to select one of the larger green "bamboo" shapes on the right.

3 Choose Select > Same > Stroke Color to select all objects on any artboard with the same stroke (border) color as the selected object.

All of the shapes with the same stroke (border) color are now selected. If you know that you may need to reselect a series of objects again, like the shapes you just selected, you can save that selection. Saved selections are a great way to easily make a selection later, and they are saved only with that document. You'll save the current selection next.

4 With the shapes still selected, choose Select > Save Selection. Name the selection **Bamboo** in the Save Selection dialog box, and click OK.
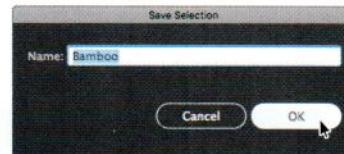
Now that you've saved it, you'll be able to choose this selection quickly and easily when you need it.

5 Choose Select > Deselect.

Selecting in Outline mode

By default, Adobe Illustrator displays all artwork with their paint attributes, like fill and stroke, showing. However, you can choose to display artwork so that only outlines (or paths) are visible. The next method for selecting involves viewing artwork in Outline mode. It can be useful if you want to select objects within a series of stacked objects.

1 Choose Object > Show All so you can see the artwork you previously hid.

2 Choose Select > Deselect.

3 Choose View > Outline to view artwork as outlines.

4 With the Selection tool (▶), click within one of the eye shapes to select it (*not* the X in the center).
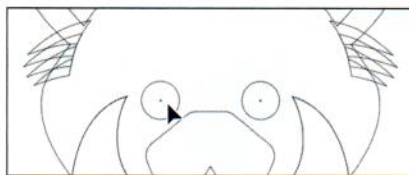
You can't select the object by clicking the fill using this method. Outline mode displays artwork as outlines without fill. To select in Outline mode, you can click the edge of the object or drag a marquee across the shape to select it.

5 With the Selection tool selected, drag across both eye shapes. Press the Up Arrow key several times to move both shapes up a little bit.
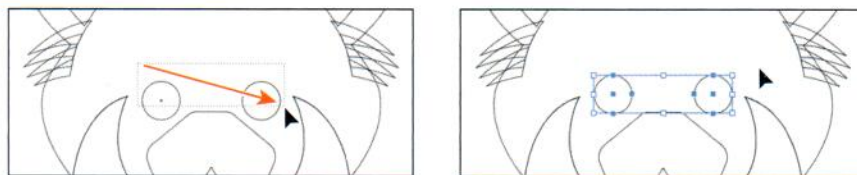
6 Choose View > Preview (or GPU Preview) to see the painted artwork.

Aligning objects

Illustrator makes it easy to align or distribute multiple objects relative to each other, the artboard, or a key object. In this section, you'll explore the different options for aligning objects.

Aligning objects to each other

One type of alignment is aligning objects to each other. This can be useful if, for instance, you want to align the top edges of a series of selected shapes to each other. Next you'll align the green shapes to each other.

1 Choose Select > Bamboo to reselect the green shapes on the right artboard.

2 Click the Next Artboard button (▶) in the lower-left corner of the Document window to fit the artboard with the selected green shapes in the window.

3 Click the Horizontal Align Center button (🗒) in the Properties panel on the right.
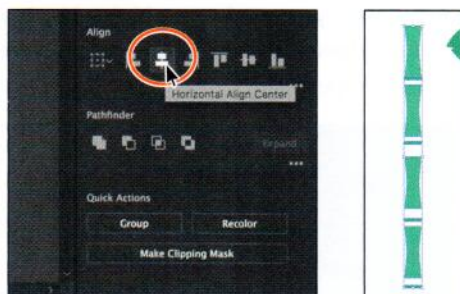
Notice that all of the selected objects move to align to the horizontal center.

4 Choose Edit > Undo Align to return the objects to their original positions. Leave the objects selected for the next section.

Aligning to a key object

A *key object* is an object that you want other objects to align to. This can be useful when you want to align a series of objects and maybe one of them is already in the perfect position. You specify a key object by selecting all the objects you want to align, including the key object, and then clicking the key object again. Next, you'll align the green shapes using a key object.

1   With the shapes still selected, click the leftmost shape with the Selection tool (▶). See the first part of the following figure.

    When selected, the key object has a thick outline indicating that other objects will align to it.

2   Click the Horizontal Align Center button (▦) in the Properties panel again. Leave the shapes selected for the next section.

Notice that all of the selected shapes moved to align to the horizontal center of the key object.

3   Click the key object (an arrow is pointing to it in the last part of the previous figure) to remove the blue outline, and leave *all* of the green shapes selected. The selected content will no longer align to the key object.
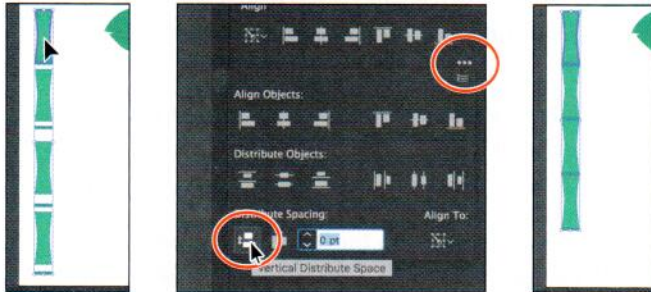
Distributing objects

Distributing objects using the Align panel enables you to select multiple objects and distribute the spacing between the centers or edges of those objects equally. Next, you will make the spacing between the green shapes even.

1   With the green shapes still selected, click More Options (⬤⬤⬤) in the Align section of the Properties panel (circled in the figure). Click the Vertical Distribute Center button (▤) in the panel that appears.
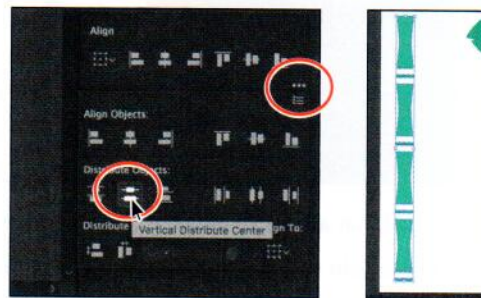
Distributing moves all the selected shapes so that the spacing between the *center* of each of them is equal.

2 Choose Edit > Undo Align.

3 With the shapes still selected, click the topmost shape of the selected shapes to make it the key object.

4 Click More Options (■■■) in the Align section of the Properties panel (circled in the following figure). Ensure that the Distribute Spacing value is 0 (zero) and then click the Vertical Distribute Space button (▤).

Distribute Spacing distributes the spacing *between* selected objects, whereas the Distribute Objects alignments distribute the spacing between the centers of selected objects. The value you can set is a great way to set a *specific* distance between objects.

5 Choose Select > Deselect and then choose File > Save.

Aligning anchor points

Next you'll align two anchor points to each other using the Align options. Like setting a key object in the previous section, you can also set a key anchor point that other anchor points will align to.

1 Select the Direct Selection tool (▷), and click in the orange shape at the bottom of the current artboard to see all of the anchor points.

2 Click the lower-right corner point of the shape. Press the Shift key and click to select the lower-left point of the same shape to select both anchor points (see the second part of the following figure).

● **Note:** Currently, dragging across anchor points will not set a key anchor point.
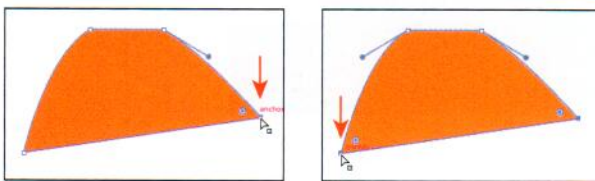
The last selected anchor point is the key anchor point. Other points will align to this point.

3 Click the Vertical Align Top button (▢) in the
Properties panel to the right of the document.
The first anchor point selected aligns to the
second anchor point selected.
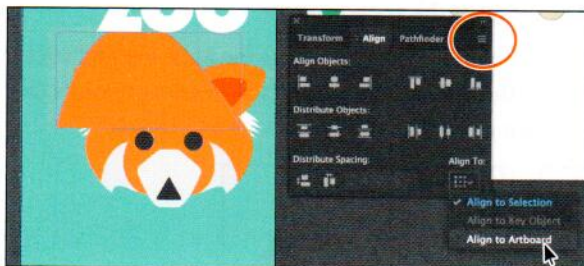
4 Choose Select > Deselect.
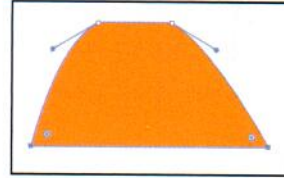
Aligning to the artboard

You can also align content to the active artboard (page) rather than to a selection
or a key object. Aligning to the artboard aligns each selected object separately to
the edges of the artboard. Next, you'll align the orange shape to the artboard with
the final artwork.

1 With the Selection tool (▶) selected, click the orange shape at the bottom of the
right-hand artboard to select it.

2 Choose Edit > Cut.

3 Click the Previous artboard button (◀) in the lower-left corner of the
Document window to navigate to the first (left) artboard in the document,
which contains the final artwork.

4 Choose Edit > Paste to paste the shape in the center of the Document window.

5 Choose Window > Align to open the Align panel.

As of the writing of this book, there is no option in the Properties panel to
align a single selected object to the artboard. That's why you're opening the
Align panel.

6 Choose Show Options from the Align panel menu (▤) (circled in the
following figure). If you see Hide Options in the menu, then you are all set.

7 Click the Align To Selection button (▦) in the Align panel, and choose Align
To Artboard in the menu that appears. Any content you align will now align to
the artboard.

8 Click the Horizontal Align Right button (▤) and then click the Vertical
Align Bottom button (▥) in the Align panel to align the orange shape to the
horizontal right and vertical bottom of the artboard.
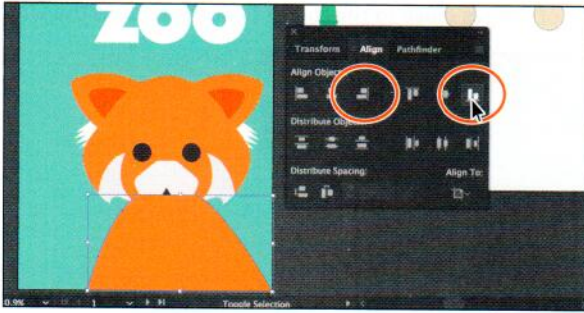
9 Choose Select > Deselect. Leave the Align panel open.

The orange shape will be on top of the other artwork. Later, you will put it behind the other animal artwork.

Working with groups

You can combine objects into a group so that the objects are treated as a single unit. This way, you can move or transform a number of objects without affecting their individual attributes or positions relative to each other. It can also make selecting artwork easier.

Grouping items

Next you'll select multiple objects and create a group from them.

1 Choose View > Fit All In Window to see both artboards.

2 Choose Select > Bamboo to select the green shapes on the right artboard.

3 Click the Group button in the Quick Actions section of the Properties panel on the right to group the selected artwork together.
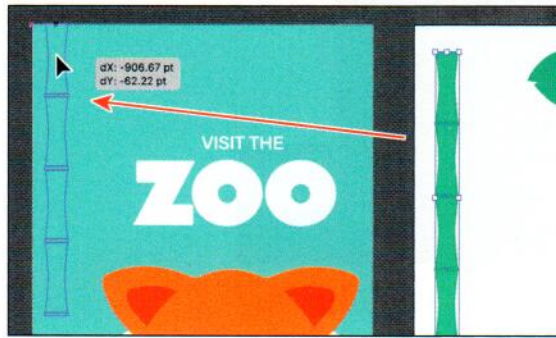
▶ **Tip:** You can also choose Object > Group to group content.
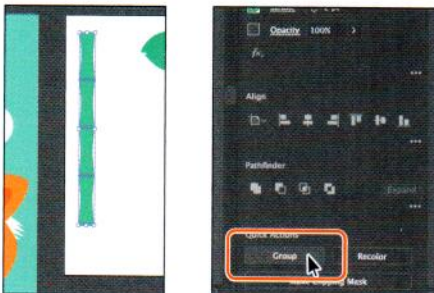
4 Choose Select > Deselect.

5 With the Selection tool (▶) selected, click one of the shapes in the new group. Because they are grouped together, all are now selected.
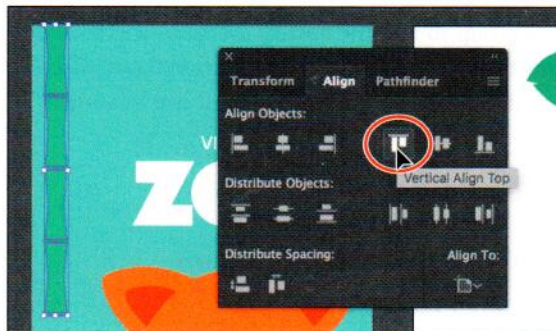
6 Drag the bamboo group of shapes close to the top of the artboard on the left.

Next you'll align the bamboo group to the top of the artboard.

7 With the group still selected and Align To Artboard (📄) chosen from the Align To menu in the Align panel, click the Vertical Align Top button (📊). Click the X at the top of the Align panel group to close it.

8 With the Selection tool selected, press the Shift key and then drag the lower-right corner of the bounding box down to the bottom of the artboard to make the bamboo shapes larger. When the pointer reaches the bottom of the artboard, release the mouse and then the key.

9 Choose Select > Deselect and then choose File > Save.

Editing a group in Isolation mode

Isolation mode isolates groups (or sublayers) so that you can easily select and edit specific objects or parts of objects without having to ungroup the objects. When in Isolation mode, all objects outside of the isolated group are locked and dimmed so that they aren't affected by the edits you make. Next, you will edit a group using Isolation mode.

1 With the Selection tool (▶), drag across the two green leaves on the right artboard to select them. Click the Group button at the bottom of the Properties panel to group them together.

2 Double-click one of the leaves to enter Isolation mode.

Notice that the rest of the content in the document appears dimmed (you can't select it). At the top of the Document window, a gray bar appears with the words "Layer 1" and "<Group>." This indicates that you have isolated a group of objects that is on Layer 1.

3 Click to select the smaller leaf shape. Click the Fill color box in the Properties panel on the right, and making sure the Swatches option (■) is selected in the panel that appears, click to select a different green color.
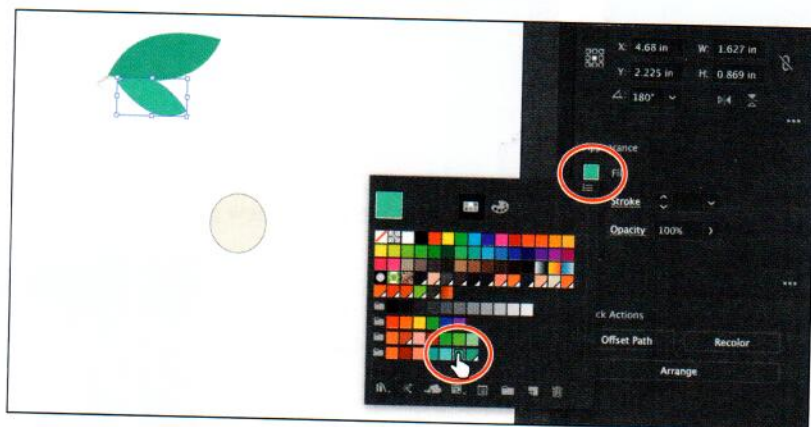
When you enter Isolation mode, groups are temporarily ungrouped. This enables you to edit objects in the group or to add new content without having to ungroup.

4 Double-click outside of the shapes within the group to exit Isolation mode.

5 Click to select the leaf group, and leave it selected for the next section.

Notice that the leaves are once again grouped, and you can also now select other objects.

Creating a nested group

Groups can also be *nested*—grouped within other objects or grouped to form larger groups. Nesting is a common technique used when designing artwork. It's a great way to keep associated content together. In this section, you'll explore how to create a nested group.

1   Drag the group of leaves onto the bamboo on the left artboard, and leave them selected.

2   Shift-click the bamboo group to select it as well. Click the Group button in the Properties panel.

   You have created a *nested group*—a group that is combined with other objects or groups to form a larger group.
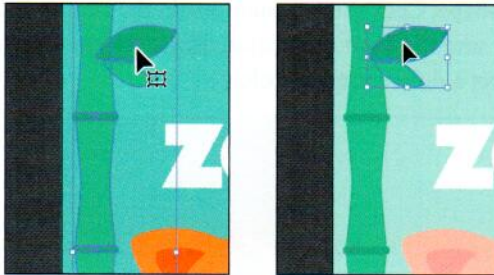
3   Choose Select > Deselect.

4   With the Selection tool, click the leaves to select the nested group.

5   Double-click the leaves to enter Isolation mode. Click to select the leaves again, and notice that the leaf shapes are still grouped. This is a nested group.

6   Choose Edit > Copy and then Edit > Paste to paste a new group of leaves.

7   Drag them lower onto the bamboo.

8   Press the Escape key to exit Isolation mode; then click a blank area of an artboard to deselect the objects.

Exploring object arrangement

As you create objects, Illustrator stacks them in order on the artboards, beginning with the first object created. This ordering of objects, called *stacking order*, determines how they display when they overlap. You can change the stacking order of objects in your artwork at any time, using either the Layers panel or the Arrange commands.

Arranging objects

Next you'll work with the Arrange commands to change how objects are stacked.

1 With the Selection tool (▶) selected, click the orange shape at the bottom of the artboard.

2 Click the Arrange button in the Properties panel. Choose Send To Back to send the shape behind all of the other shapes.
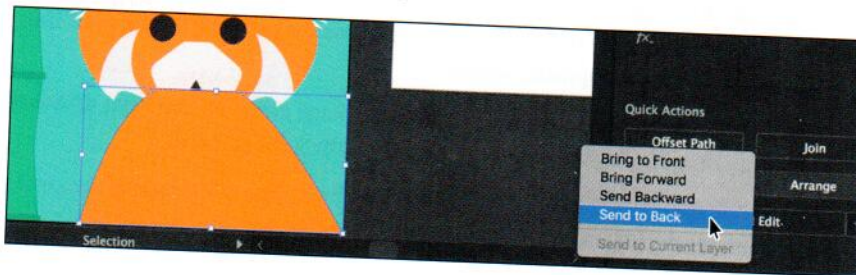

3 Click the Arrange button again, and choose Bring Forward to bring the orange shape on top of the large blue-green background shape.

Selecting objects behind

When you stack objects on top of each other, sometimes it becomes difficult to select objects that are underneath. Next, you'll learn how to select an object through a stack of objects.

1 Drag across both beige circles on the artboard on the right to select them. Pressing the Shift key, drag a corner to make them smaller. When the measurement label shows a width of approximately 1.3 inches, release the mouse button and then the key.
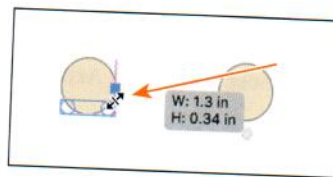
2 Click away from the circles to deselect them and then drag either of them on top of one of the dark eye shapes on the animal. Release the mouse.
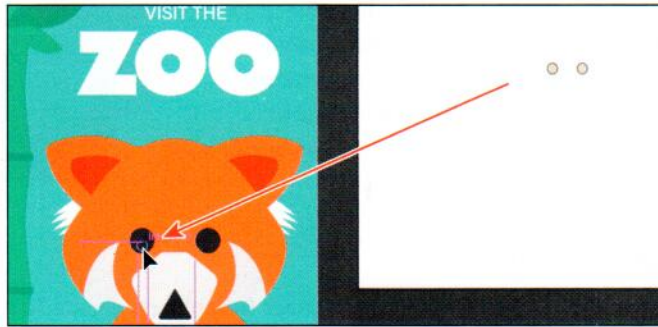
The circle disappears but is still selected. It went behind the dark circle (the eye) because it was created before the eye shape, which means it is lower in the stacking order.

3 With the circle still selected, click the Arrange button in the Properties panel, and choose Bring To Front. This brings the smaller circle to the front of the stack, making it the topmost object.

4 With the Selection tool (▶), select the other beige circle on the right artboard and then drag it onto the other eye shape on the left artboard.

This circle disappears like the other, but this time, you will deselect the circle and then reselect it using another method.

5 Choose View > Zoom In a few times.

6 Choose Select > Deselect.

Because it is behind the larger eye shape, you can no longer see the smaller beige circle.

● **Note:** To select the hidden beige circle, make sure that you click where the circle and the eye overlap. Otherwise, you won't be able to select the beige circle.

7 With the pointer over the location of the beige circle you just deselected, the one behind the eye shape, hold down the Command (macOS) or Ctrl (Windows) key, and click until the smaller circle is selected again (this may take several clicks).

▶ **Tip:** To see where the beige shape is, you can choose View > Outline. When you see it, you can choose View > Preview (or GPU Preview) and attempt to make the selection.

8 Click the Arrange button in the Properties panel, and choose Bring To Front to bring the circle on top of the eye.

9 Choose View > Fit Artboard In Window.

10 Choose File > Save and then File > Close.

Review questions

1 How can you select an object that has no fill?

2 Explain how you can select an item in a group without choosing Object > Ungroup.

3 Of the two Selection tools (Selection [▶] and Direct Selection [▷]), which allows you to edit the individual anchor points of an object?

4 What should you do after creating a selection that you are going to use repeatedly?

5 To align objects to the artboard, what do you need to first change in the Properties panel or Align panel before you choose an alignment option?

6 Sometimes you are unable to select an object because it is underneath another object. Explain two ways to get around this issue.