

Illustrator

Interface

All of those palettes and be moved and resized to suit your tastes. I like to have Swatches, Colors, Stroke and Appearance handy all the time.

Shapes

Click and drag to draw a shape.

Click and let go to enter a shape by numbers.

Use “Shift” key to make squares and circles and orthogonal lines.

Move/Select Tool

This should be your default, “fall back,” position. It’s helpful to grab the Move tool and click on nothing all the time to prevent making appearance changes to artwork you already like. Sort of like hitting Esc all the time in AutoCAD.

Basic Appearance

Stroke and Fill. Look on the Stroke panel for arrowheads.

Use “Select Similar” to grab objects that look the same.

For working with CAD, it is good to move like objects into separate layers.

Pen Tool

Click and let go to make a pointy point.

Click and drag to make a curvy point.

Direct Select Tool

Sometimes you have to use Shift-Click. or drag a window to select what you are trying to select.

The Other Pen Tools

Add and delete anchor points. Use the tool to Convert Anchor Tool.

Advanced Appearance

Using the Appearance Palette you can add extra strokes and fills to a shape.

For the “crossing streets” effect, apply appearances to layers or groups

If you will use an Appearance more than once, create a new Graphic Style that you can apply to new objects.

Effects: Drop Shadow is good but it is also considered overused and a crutch. Be careful

Effects: Round Corners is awesome

Effects: Add Arrows is the best way to just get some arrows in your diagram

Clipping Mask

Select more than one object. Object: Clipping Mask: Make. The object on top clips all the other ones.

When you do this, the mask object becomes invisible but you can select it in the Layer palette and add appearance back on if you want.

Brushes

Brushes allow complex artwork to be applied as a stroke. There are a ton of brushes included in Illustrator. There are another ton on the web. And you can make your own.

Just draw some art. Select “New Brush” on the tiny menu on the Brushes palette and go to town.

Segmented Art Brushes look like the best solution to custom arrows.

Other Toys to Explore

All of them ;-)

Gradient fills - you seem to have to apply a gradient swatch to an object before you can edit the gradient.

Blob Brush and Mesh are fun.

Chart & Graph tools.

Symbols - great for random repeats of similar objects. Landscape students might get the best use here.

Text On A Path - I could have sworn you could attach existing text to an existing path. Draw a path then select it with this tool and start typing. You can paste text from somewhere else if it already exists.

Blend - create one or more pieces of art. Select them and Make a blend. Then you can adjust the Blend Options.

Pathfinder can be a bit mysterious but it is worth getting to know for creating complex shapes.

Live Paint is a nice way to throw down some color in existing line work (like a CAD drawing).

Other Resources

The web. Actually googling an Adobe question seems to be a quicker way to get to the correct Adobe documentation page than using the help in program. There are countless tutorials on web sites and YouTube. Adobe itself has lots of good videos.

InDesign

Three Most Important Things

Master Pages - so all your pages have similar structure

Swatches - so all your colors are coordinated

Paragraph Styles - so all your time is coordinated and easy to modify

Interface

All of those palettes can be moved and resized to suit your tastes. I like to have Pages, Swatches, Align, and Paragraph Styles open almost all the time. But you can rearrange them and even save different configurations that you find handy in different circumstances; say doing a lot of layout vs. doing a lot of typing.

If you are looking for a tool you know exists, all the palettes are on the Window menu. It's probably in there somewhere.

Navigation

In the Pages palette you can double-click on a page to zoom that page, on the page numbers of a spread to zoom that spread.

Use alt-pgup / alt-pgdn to scroll a document vertically by single pages when zoomed to fit.

Frames

InDesign is really about moving a few different kinds of things around on a page. It can have vector art just like Illustrator (but with a more limited toolset). It can also manage blocks of text and placed external graphics. Text and graphics are placed inside special vector art called "frames."

You can use the edges of a frame to crop its contents.

You can transform the contents of a frame inside the frame.

Bridge

Use Bridge or Mini Bridge or Explorer to locate your image files. Then you can just drag and drop them right into your document. Drop an image onto blank space to insert it where you want, or drop it onto an existing image to replace the existing.

Links

InDesign does not typically import graphics, it links to them. This helps keep document sizes small and lets you edit graphics independently in the appropriate program.

Remember to keep your images where your InDesign document can link to them.

If a link is broken InDesign will still display a thumbnail of the image to allow you to get work done.

If a link is broken there are three common scenarios: you deleted or renamed the source image; you took the document in to school and all the images are at home; you moved the document or images and should relink them on the Links palette.

Visual Display

On the View menu there are two important options: Display Performance. Set this to "High" to make your graphics look good. If a graphic still looks bad with High, then maybe it is a broken link.

The other option is Screen Mode. Switch between Normal and Preview to check the look of your page while you work. This is so important there's a shortcut key for it - W.

Paragraph and Character Styles

Never (seriously, never) use the type tools at the top of the screen. Always create a paragraph style for each kind of text you have in your document. If you want to change a few letters or words, *set up* a Character Style for that.

Book

For InDesign the word "Book" is something special. It is a coordinated sequence of documents. Each document might be a chapter or a volume in a larger publication. If you modify a style in one document you can use the Book to spread that change to the other documents, or correct the modified document. InDesign also uses the Book to keep page numbers coordinated.

Normally the Book is beyond the scope of a BAC student's needs, but for your Gateway book, it can be handy. You will have a handful of people all working on the same publication. But only one person can open and modify a document at a time. If you break that publication into different documents, one for each person, and assemble those into a book then you can keep everything coordinated while letting everybody work at the same time.

Other Resources

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