

FOUNDATIONS

Adobe Illustrator

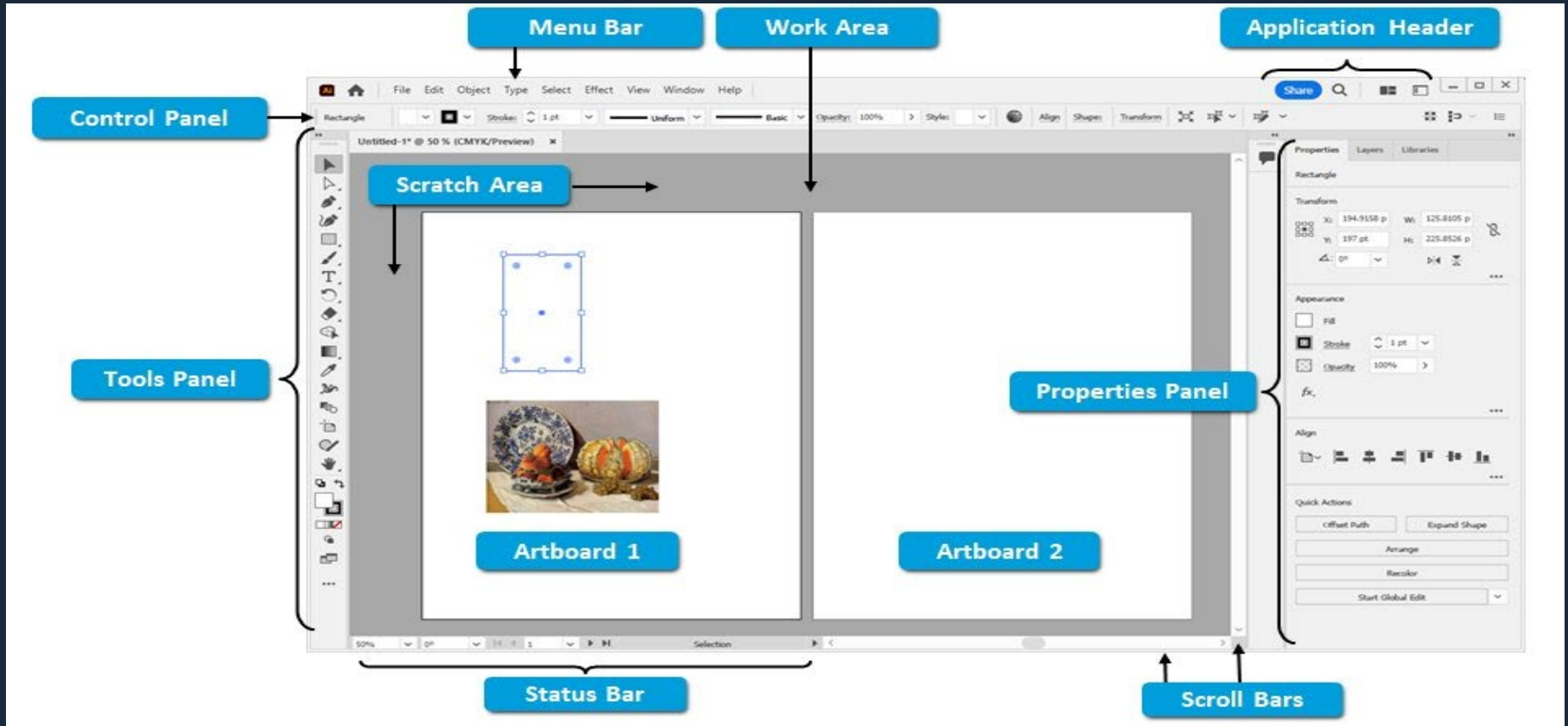
User Interface

A visual guide to every panel, bar, and region of the workspace

Work Area · Artboards · Tools Panel · Control Panel · Properties Panel · Status Bar · Menu Bar

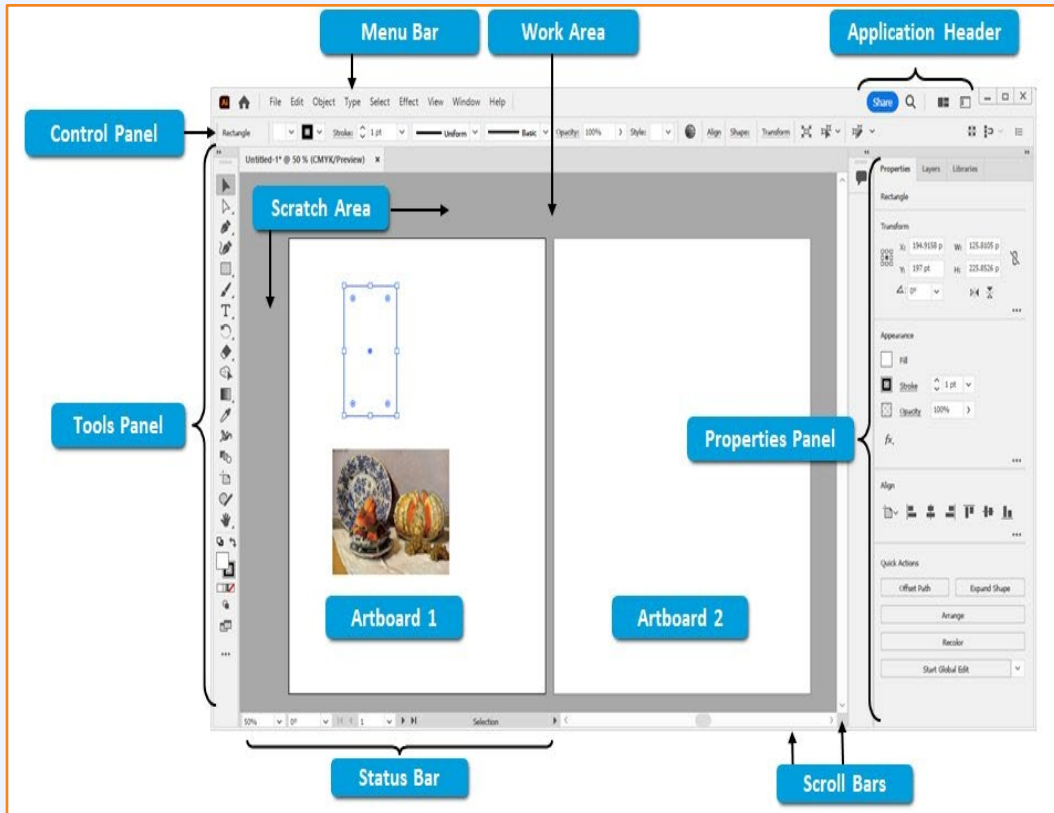
The Interface at a Glance

Every key area labelled



Work Area, Artboards & Scratch Area

The canvas environment where all Illustrator work happens



Work Area

The central region of the UI where you open and build Illustrator documents. Documents can be a single window, floating, or tiled.

Artboard

The virtual canvas inside the Work Area — your printable/exportable page. One document can hold multiple artboards for different layouts or sizes.

Scratch Area

The grey area surrounding the artboards. Use it to 'park' objects or tools temporarily — anything here won't appear in the final output.

Control Panel & Menu Bar

Quick-access commands at the top of the workspace

Rectangle ▼ Fill:  Stroke:  1pt ▼ Opacity: 100% ▼ Align Shapes Transform

CONTROL PANEL

Control Panel

Runs across the very top of the document window, just below the Menu Bar. Its contents change dynamically based on the currently selected object — if a rectangle is selected you see fill, stroke, and opacity options; select a text box and you see font and size controls instead.

File Edit Object Type Select Effect View Window Help

MENU BAR

Menu Bar

Contains the same tools and commands as the Tools Panel, plus document-level controls and system tools. Also handles Illustrator's interoperability with other Adobe Creative Cloud apps. On smaller screens it may merge with the Application Bar.

Application Bar & Status Bar

Navigation, zoom, and workspace controls

File Edit Object Type Select Effect View Window Help



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APPLICATION BAR

Application Bar / Header

- Home icon — returns to the Illustrator Start screen
- Arrange Documents — choose how open documents are displayed
- Workspace switcher — toggle between predefined workspace layouts
- Search — search Adobe Stock or find Illustrator help topics

50% ▼ 0° ◀ 1 ▶ ▶ Selection

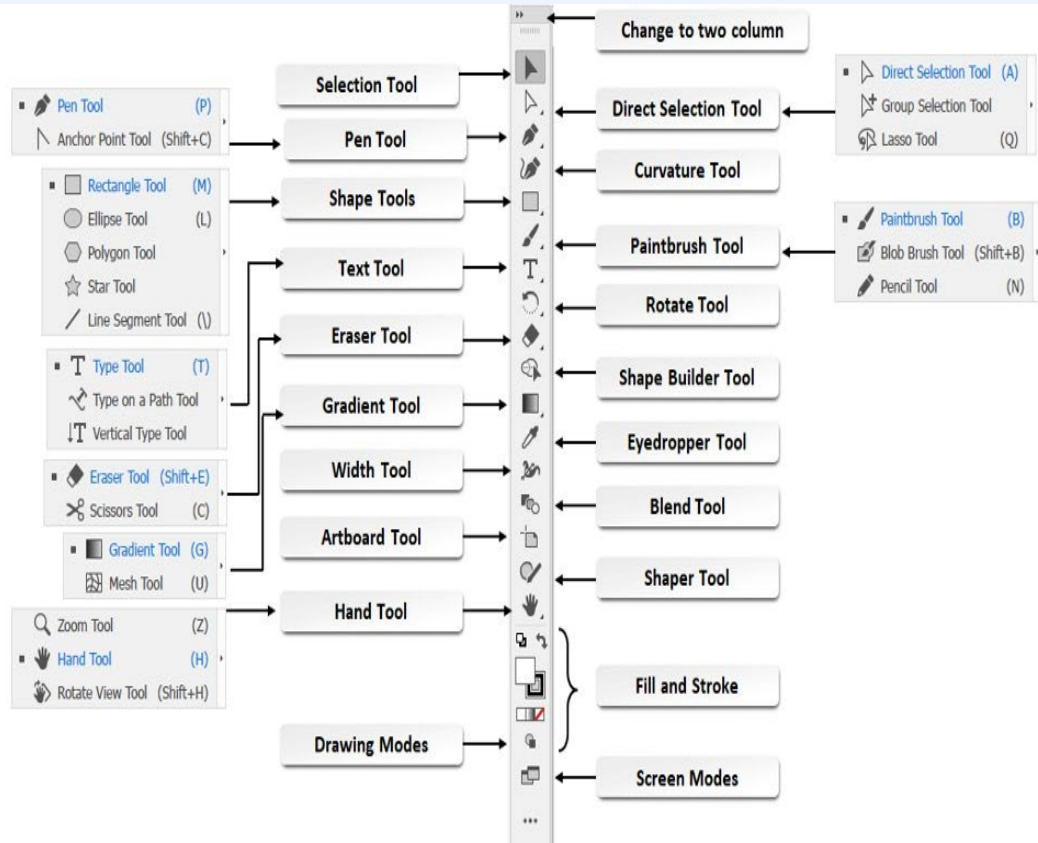
STATUS BAR

Status Bar

- Zoom level — type a percentage or use the drop-down
- Rotation angle of the current artboard view
- Artboard navigation — jump between artboards with ◀ ▶ arrows
- Active tool name — shows which tool is currently selected

Tools Panel

All Illustrator tools organised by function — with support for custom tool panels



Grouped by Function

Tools are arranged in functional groups: Selection, Drawing, Text, Transformation, Navigation, and more. The panel can be displayed as one or two columns.

Alternate Tools (▶ Arrow)

A small triangle in the lower-right corner of a tool icon means alternate tools are hidden beneath it. Click and hold to reveal them — e.g. Shape Tools include Rectangle, Ellipse, Polygon, Star, and Line Segment.

Custom Tool Panels

Illustrator lets you create your own custom tool panels containing only the tools you use regularly. This saves space, speeds up your workflow, and keeps your most-used tools at your fingertips.

Properties Panel

Window → Properties · A dynamic panel that adapts to your current selection

Properties Layers Libraries

RECTANGLE

Transform

X: 194px
Y: 197px
W: 126px
H: 226px

Appearance

Fill white
Stroke 1pt
Opacity 100%

Align

Quick Actions

Offset Path Expand Shape
Arrange Recolor

Context-Sensitive

The Properties panel is dynamic — its content changes based on what you have selected. Select a rectangle and you see Transform, Appearance, and Align. Select a text frame and you see Character and Paragraph options instead.

Key Sections

Transform (position, size, rotation) · Appearance (fill, stroke, opacity, effects) · Align (alignment and distribution) · Quick Actions (common shortcuts for the selected object type)

Location

Fixed to the right side of the application window. Also accessible at Window → Properties. Works alongside the Layers and Libraries tabs in the same panel group.

Interface — Quick Reference

Every UI component at a glance

Component	Description
● Work Area	Central region — where documents are opened and worked on
● Artboard	Virtual canvas inside the work area; one file can contain multiple artboards
● Scratch Area	Grey zone around artboards — park objects temporarily without affecting output
● Tools Panel	Left strip — drawing, selection, transformation, and navigation tools grouped by function
● Control Panel	Top bar — dynamically shows options and commands for the currently selected object
● Properties Panel	Right panel — context-sensitive tools and settings for whatever is selected
● Menu Bar	Top menu — document and system-level commands; integrates with Creative Cloud
● Application Bar	Top right — Home, Arrange Documents, Workspaces, and Search
● Status Bar	Bottom strip — zoom %, artboard navigation, and active tool name