How to use object styles

You may be familiar with paragraph and character styles from other guides in this course or from word processing programs. You can use paragraph and character styles to control the appearance of text throughout your documents. Paragraph and character styles track text characteristics such as font, font weight, and font size.

In Adobe InDesign CS6, you can use styles with other kinds of objects. *Object styles* work like paragraph and character styles but can be applied to frames and shapes. For example, you can define an object style with a red stroke (border) 2 points wide, a dark-gray drop shadow, and a slight bevel. Then you can apply this object style to multiple frames throughout your document. After you have applied an object style to multiple objects, you can change the way these objects appear by just changing the style.

Like other styles, object styles help you achieve a uniform design. They give a document consistency by ensuring that every graphic frame on a page has the same appearance.

The image frames in the example (**Figure 1**) all have a pink stroke and a purple drop shadow. Without object styles, you would have to apply these characteristics to each frame separately. With object styles, you define these characteristics once and then apply them multiple times.

Figure 1 Example of object styles applied

Defining object styles

The easiest way to define an object style is to apply multiple effects to a frame and then save the frame's style through the Object Styles panel.

In the following steps, you apply characteristics to a graphic frame, save these characteristics as an object style, and then apply these characteristics to other graphic frames.

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To apply characteristics to a frame:

1. Start InDesign and open a document.
2. If the document does not already have multiple graphic frames, use the Rectangle Frame tool to create some. You can also fill these with images by using the File > Place command.

   You should end up with a document something like the example (**Figure 2**).

   Note: For more information on creating graphic frames or placing images, please see the guides titled "How to work with graphic frames" and "How to place images on the page." You can also consult InDesign Help.
3. Choose the Selection tool in the Tools panel (**Figure 3**).
4. Click one of the graphic frames to select it.
5. Choose Object > Effects > Drop Shadow.

   The Drop Shadow category of the Effects dialog box appears (**Figure 4**).
6. Under Blending, choose a color for the drop shadow by clicking the color box beside Mode.

   The Effect Color dialog box appears (**Figure 5**). When the Swatches option is selected, you can choose from a list of predefined colors. You can also define colors by selecting the RGB or CMYK options from the Color pop-up menu. For more information on defining colors, see InDesign Help.
7. Select a color and click OK.

   The Effect Color dialog box closes.
8. In the Effects dialog box, modify some of the settings, including:
   - *Opacity* Changes the relative transparency of the drop shadow.
   - *Distance* Changes the virtual distance from the page surface.
   - *Angle* Change the angle of the drop shadow by dragging in the Angle circle.
   - *Size* Changes the overall size of the cast shadow.

   Select the Preview option to see the changes.

Figure 2 Sample InDesign document

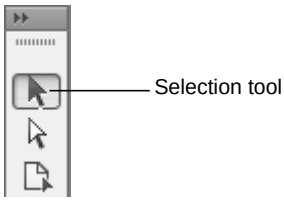

Figure 3 Tools panel

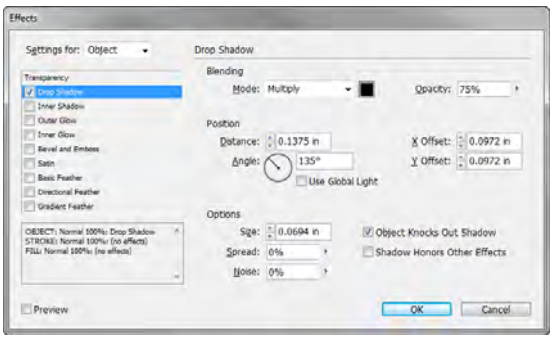

Figure 4 Drop Shadow category of the Effects dialog box

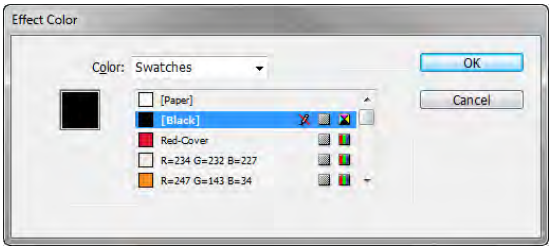

Figure 5 Effect Color dialog box

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9. Click OK when you are satisfied with the settings .

   The Drop Shadow effect is applied to the graphic frame (**Figure 6**).

10. With the frame still selected, choose Window > Stroke.

    The Stroke panel appears (**Figure 7**).

11. Type **5 pt** in the Weight text box.

12. Double-click the Stroke box in the Tools panel (**Figure 8**).

    The Color Picker appears.

13. Click in the large box to the left to select a color.

14. Click OK.

    The Color Picker closes, and the colored stroke is applied to the graphic frame.

15. Choose View > Screen Mode > Preview.

    The Preview screen mode shows the document as it will appear when exported or printed (**Figure 9**).

16. Choose View > Screen Mode > Normal to return to Normal screen mode.

Figure 6 Drop shadow applied to graphic frame

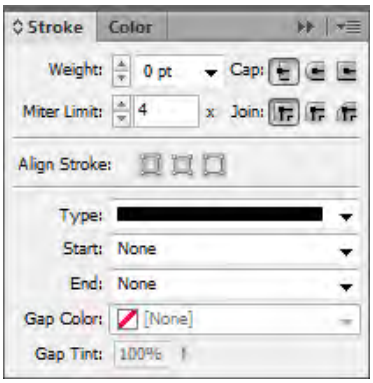

Figure 7 Stroke panel

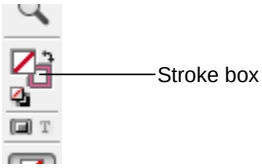

Figure 8 Tools panel

Figure 9 Previewing effects

To create an object style:

1. Click the Selection tool in the Tools panel.
2. Click the graphic frame to which you have applied characteristics.
3. Choose Window > Styles > Object Styles.

   The Object Styles panel appears (**Figure 10**).
4. Click the Create New Style button.
5. A new style appears in the Object Styles panel.

   In **Figure 11**, the style is called Object Style 1.
6. Double-click the style.

   The Object Style Options dialog box appears, in which you can make changes to the style and name the style (**Figure 12**).
7. In the Style Name text box, enter a descriptive name for the style and click OK.

   You can now apply the new style to other graphic frames.

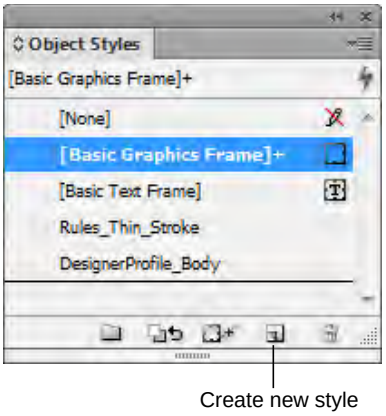

Figure 10 Object Styles panel

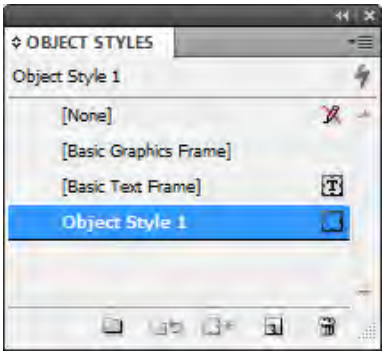

Figure 11 New style created

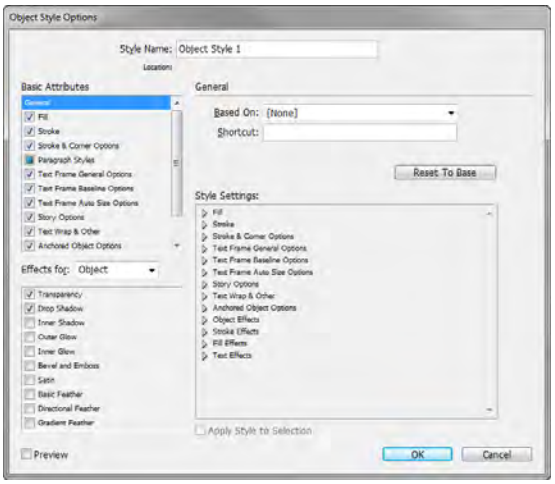

Figure 12 Object Style Options dialog box

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To apply an object style:

1. Click the Selection tool in the Tools panel.
2. Click one or more graphic frames to select them.

   To select multiple frames, hold down Shift while you click.
3. If the Option Styles panel is not already visible, choose Window > Object Styles to display it.
4. Click the name of the new style to apply it to the selected graphic frames.
5. Choose View > Screen Mode > Preview.

   The Preview screen mode shows the document as it will appear when exported or printed.
6. Choose Edit > Deselect All to deselect the frames.

   All of the frames have the same appearance. In **Figure 13**, for example, all the frames have a pink stroke and purple drop shadow.

Figure 13 Preview mode of applied object styles