Overview of Adobe Illustrator CS6 workspace

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

- Work with the Adobe Illustrator CS6 workspace, tools, document windows, and panels.
- Learn how to customize the workspace.
- Change the magnification of the document.
- Navigate through a document by using the artboard and navigator panels.

Exploring the workspace

The Illustrator workspace encompasses everything you see when you first open or create a document: the Tools panel, document window, artboard, and panels. You can customize and save the workspace to suit your work style. For example, you can choose to display only those panels you frequently use, minimize and rearrange panel groups, resize windows, add additional document windows, and so on.

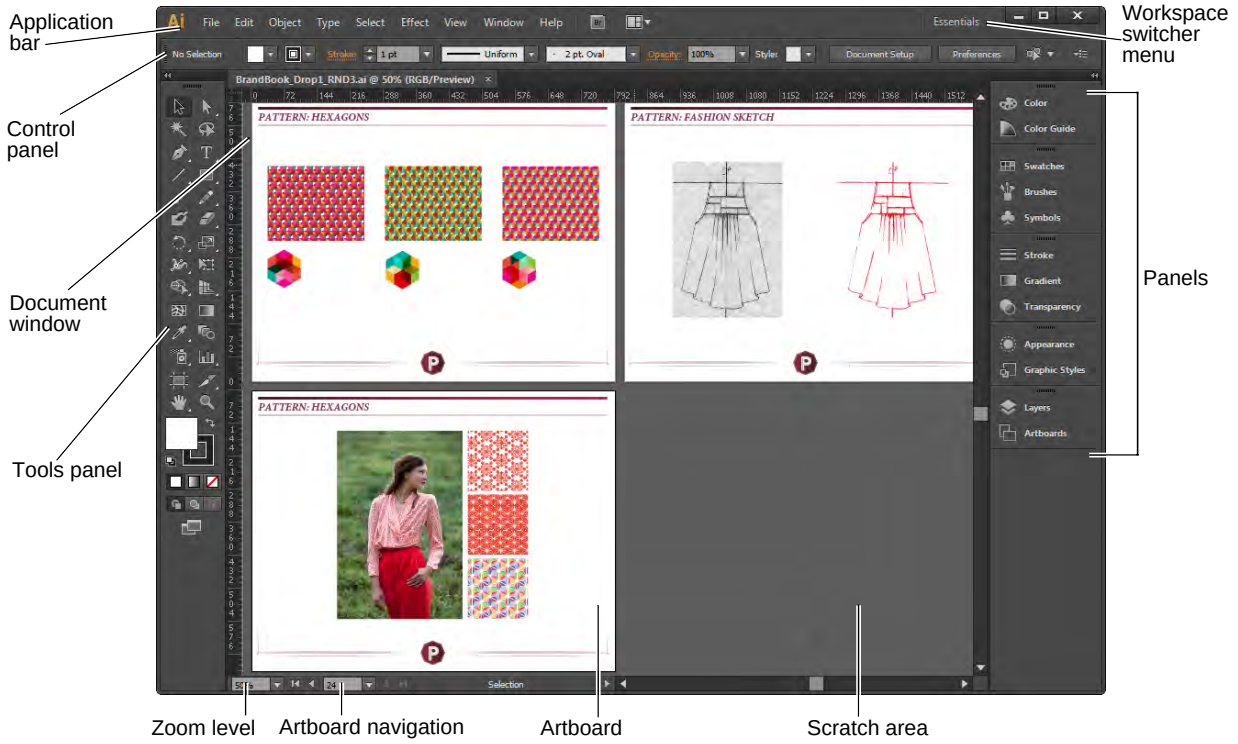

Figure 1 Adobe Illustrator CS6 interface

The default workspace in Illustrator (**Figure 1**) includes an Application bar at the top of the screen. Within this Application bar are the Illustrator application icon, main menu (Windows only), Go To Bridge button, Arrange Documents button, and workspace switcher. Below this bar are the Control panel, the Tools panel on the left, panels to the right, and one or more document windows, which are opened separately.

- The main menu across the top organizes commands under menus.
- The Tools panel contains tools for creating and editing images, artwork, page elements, and so on. Related tools are grouped together.
- The Control panel displays control options for the currently selected tool.

- Document windows display document pages for files you're currently working on. Each page in the document is surrounded by its own artboard, which represents the maximum printable area. Outside the artboard is the scratch area, on which you can create, edit, and store elements of artwork before moving them to the artboard. Objects on the scratch area are visible on-screen, but they do not print.
- Panels help you monitor and modify your work. You can reorganize, group, stack, or dock panels.

Customizing the workspace

By saving the current size and position of panels in the Illustrator interface as a named workspace, you can restore that arrangement even if you move or close a panel. The names of saved workspaces appear in the workspace switcher.

To create a custom workspace:

1. Move and manipulate the interface layout in Illustrator to suit your needs (**Figure 2**).
2. From the workspace swticher menu, select New Workspace (**Figure 3**).

   The New Workspace dialog box appears (**Figure 4**).
3. Name your workspace.
4. Click OK to close the New Workspace dialog box.

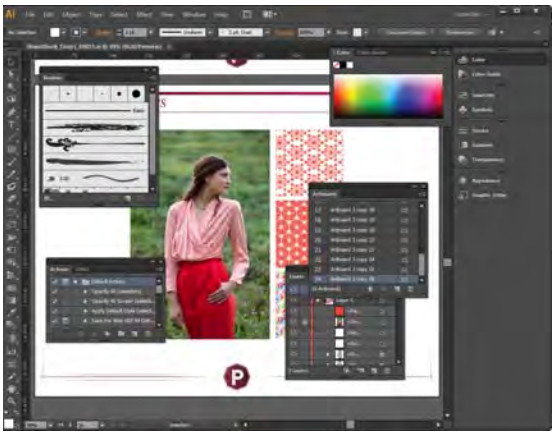

Figure 2 Custom interface layout

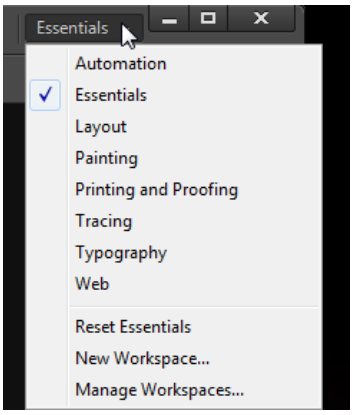

Figure 3 Workspace switcher menu

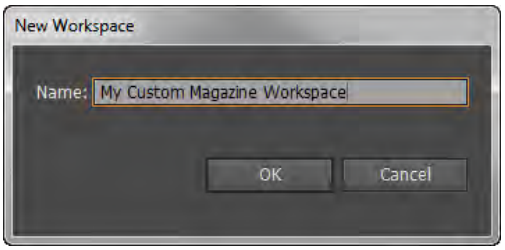

Figure 4 New Workspace dialog box

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5. Choose Window > Workspace.

   Notice that your new workspace now appears at the top of the Workspace menu.

   Even if you make changes, you can return to the workspace you saved by selecting it from the menu or from the workspace switcher (**Figure 5**).

   You can restore the saved workspace at any time by choosing Reset [your named] Workspace from the workspace switcher menu.

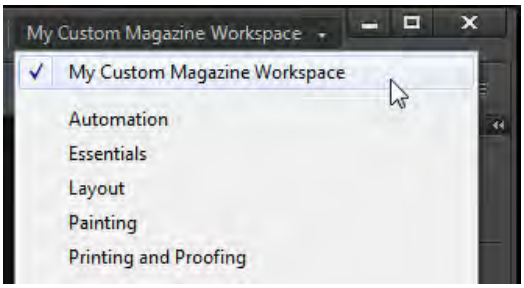

Figure 5 Selecting a saved workspace from the workspace switcher

Creating a new Illustrator document

You can create new Illustrator documents from a new document profile or from a template. Creating a document from a new document profile gives you a blank document with the selected profile's default fill and stroke colors, graphic styles, brushes, symbols, actions, viewing preferences, and other settings.

To create a new Illustrator document:

1. To create a new Illustrator document, choose File > New from the main menu.

   The New Document dialog box appears, with all options set to the optimized values for the selected new document profile (**Figure 6**).

2. Change any of the preset values as desired:
   - Give your document a new name.
   - Change or customize the document profile.
   - Add or delete artboards.
   - Modify the document size.
   - Choose to have a bleed area around the trimming edge of the page.

3. Click OK to create the new document (**Figure 7**).

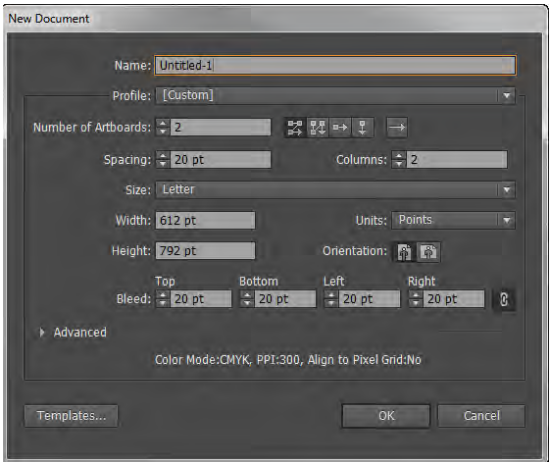

Figure 6 New Document dialog box

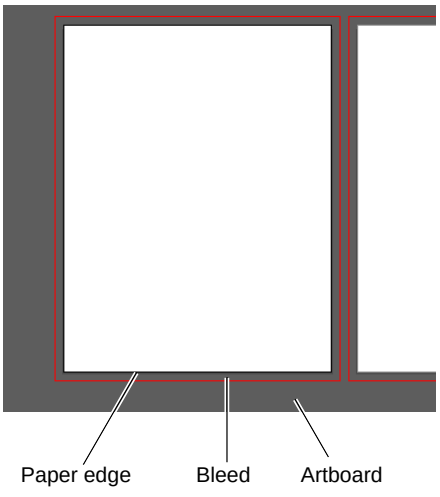

Figure 7 New blank document

Tools panel overview

The first time you start the application, the Tools panel (**Figure 8**) appears at the left side of the screen. You can move the Tools panel by dragging its title bar or the Illustrator icon. You can also show or hide the Tools panel by choosing Window > Tools.

You use tools in the Tools panel to create, select, and manipulate objects in Illustrator. Some tools have options that appear when you double-click the tool. These include tools that let you use type and select, paint, draw, sample, edit, and move images.

You can expand some tools to show hidden tools beneath them. A small triangle at the lower right corner of the tool icon signals the presence of hidden tools. To see the name of a tool, position the pointer over it.

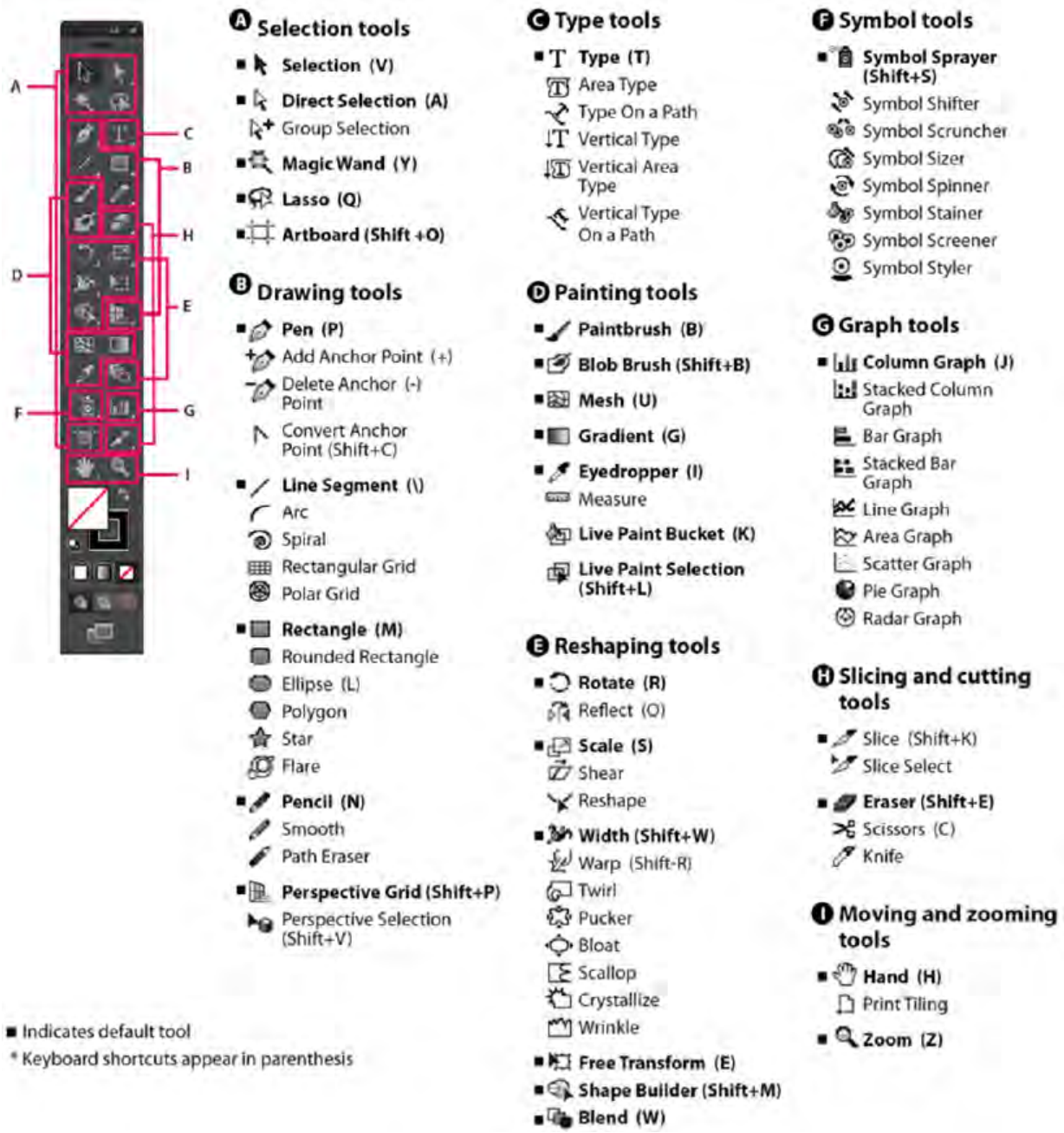

Figure 8 Overview of the Tools panel

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How to use the Zoom tool to navigate your document

You can zoom in or out of artwork to manipulate fine elements of a layout.

To use the Zoom tool to change the magnification of your document:

1. Open a document, examine the filename at the top of the document window, and notice the percentage listed at the end of the filename (**Figure 9**).

   This represents the current enlargement view of the image, or *zoom level*.

2. Select the Zoom tool by clicking the Zoom tool button in the Tools panel (**Figure 10**) or by pressing Z, the keyboard shortcut for the Zoom tool.

3. Click anywhere in the document window.

   The image zooms in according to a preset percentage level, which replaces the previous value in the document window. The location you clicked when you used the Zoom tool becomes the center of the enlarged view.

4. Using the Zoom tool, drag a rectangle to enclose a region of the document (**Figure 11**).

   The selection enlarges to fill the entire document window.

5. To zoom out, hold down the Alt key (Windows) or the Option key (Mac OS) (**Figure 12**).

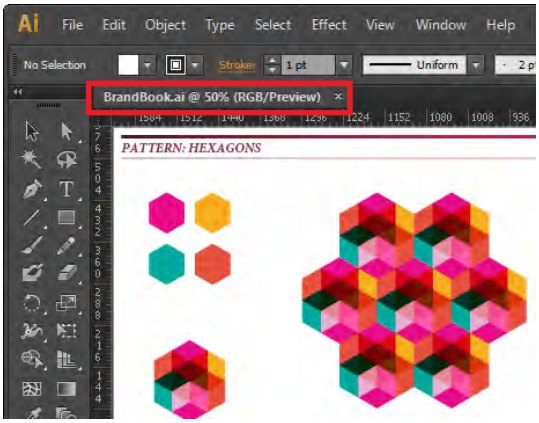

Figure 9 Filename with zoom level

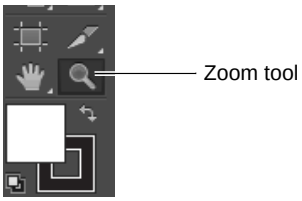

Figure 10 Tools panel

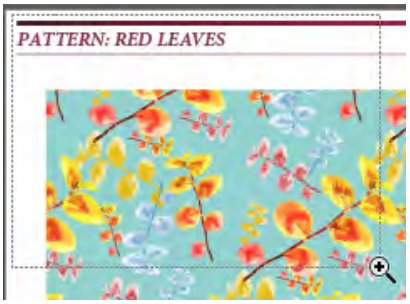

Figure 11 Selecting a rectangular region

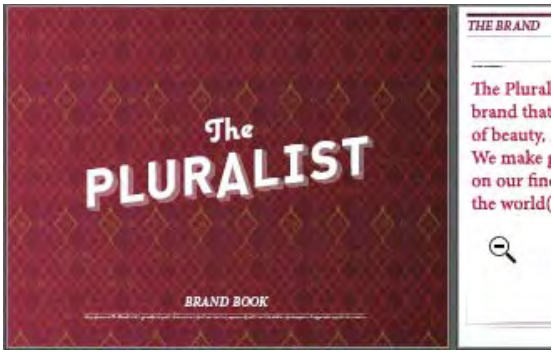

Figure 12 Zooming out in a document

How to scroll around a document with the Hand tool

The Hand tool moves a document within the document window. This is useful if you want to see a part of the document that is currently out of view.

To use the Hand tool:

1. Zoom into an area of your document until some of the content is out of view (**Figure 13**).
2. Select the Hand tool from the Tools panel (**Figure 14**). You can also press Shift+H.
3. Using the Hand tool, drag to scroll around and view different parts of the document (**Figure 15**).

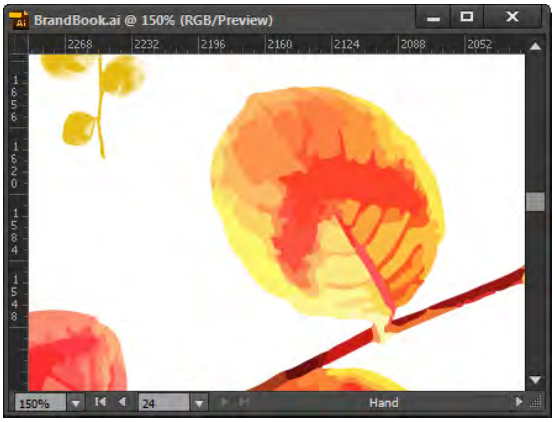

Figure 13 Document window with scroll bars

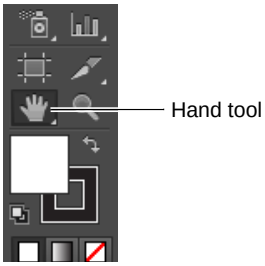

Figure 14 Tools panel

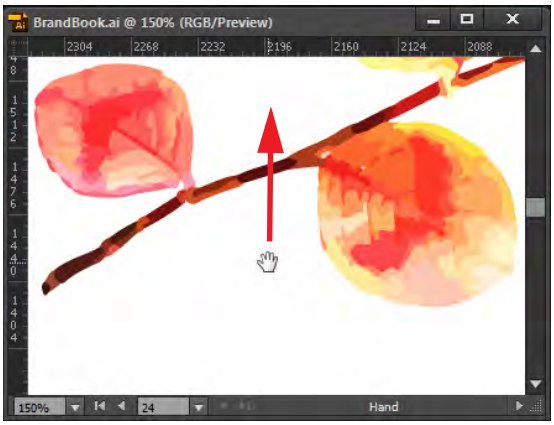

Figure 15 Using the Hand tool to move around a document

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How to select an object and work with the Control panel

The Control panel (Window > Control) offers quick access to options, commands, and other panels related to the current page item or objects you select (this is called *contextual*). By default, the Control panel is docked to the top of the document window; however, you can dock it to the bottom of the window, convert it to a floating panel, or hide it altogether.

To use the Selection tool:

1. With a document open, choose the Selection tool from the Tools panel (**Figure 16**), and then select an object in your document.

   Notice that the Control panel information reflects such things as the path color, stroke, and brush options (**Figure 17**).

2. Next, choose the Type tool and select a region of text.

   The Control panel changes to show options that provide control over text formatting (**Figure 18**).

Figure 16 Tools panel

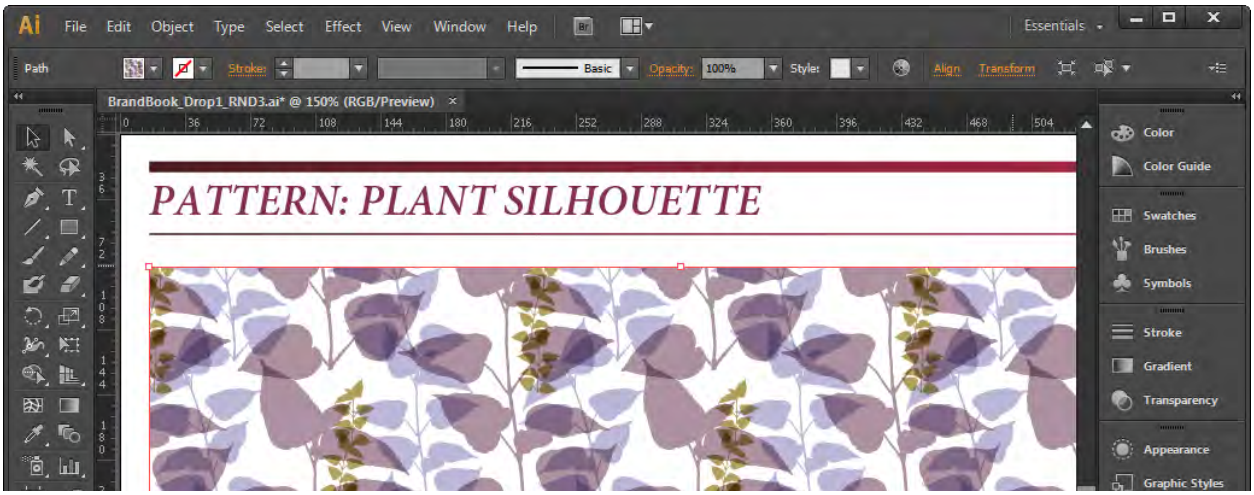

Figure 17 Control panel with a path selected

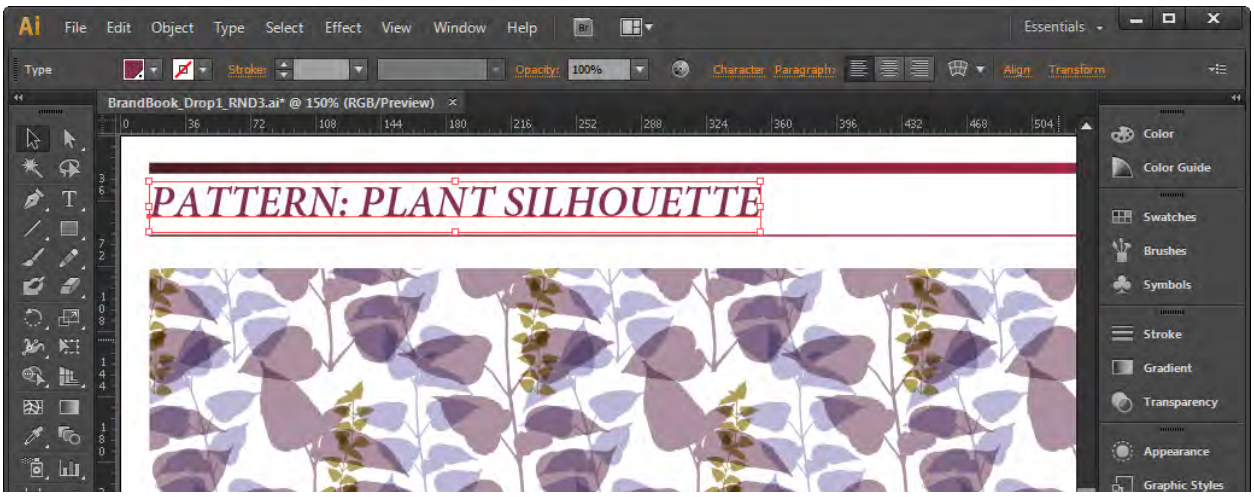

Figure 18 Control panel with text selected

Navigator panel overview

You use the Navigator panel (Window > Navigator) to quickly change the view of your artwork by using a thumbnail display. The colored box in the Navigator (called the *proxy view area*) corresponds to the currently viewable area in the Illustrator window.

To use the Navigator panel:

1. At the lower-left part of the document window, you can move from one page to another by using the arrow controls. Click the forward arrow to go to the next page and the back arrow to go to the previous page.

   The arrow will be dimmed if there is no page to go to. There is also a pop-up menu that allows you to navigate by page number (**Figure 19**).

2. Open the Navigator panel by choosing Window > Navigator.

3. Locate the slider under the image thumbnail in the Navigator panel and drag it to the right. (If your document has only one page, this slider is inactive.)

   The image in the image window enlarges.

4. Now drag the slider to the left to reduce the scale of the image in the image window.

   Note: The red rectangular outline represents the portion of the image that appears in the image window (**Figure 20**). When you zoom in until the image window shows only part of the image, you can drag the red outline to pan around other areas of the thumbnail image. This also is an excellent way to verify which part of an image you're working on when you work at very high zoom levels.

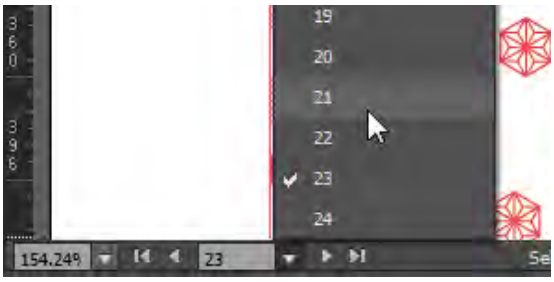

Figure 19 Using the page number controls

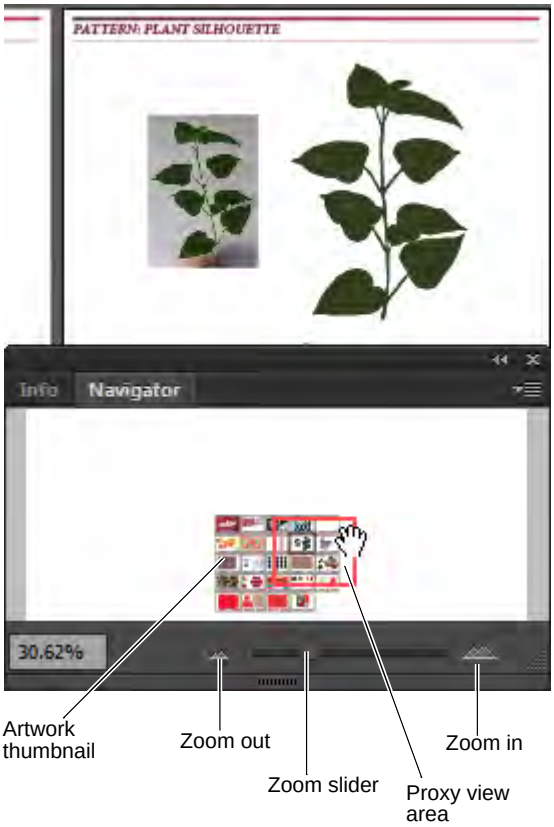

Figure 20 Navigator panel

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