# How to use layout tools

Adobe Illustrator can be used to design for mobile, web, print, film and video, and art and illustration projects. All work created with Illustrator is laid out on artboards. Imagine an artboard is like a piece of paper on a physical desk where you can begin to design the artwork on the paper and elements you are not using are on the desk outside the edges of the piece of paper. They are still close by for easy access, but they don't interfere with the artwork taking shape on the paper. Several easy-to-use tools including the control panel, rulers, grids, and guides help you to align and arrange your work. Also, export options are available to prepare your projects to be professionally printed.

## Artboards

Artboards represent the regions that can contain printable artwork. You can use artboards as crop areas for printing or placement purposes. Multiple artboards are useful for creating a variety of things such as multiple page PDFs, printed pages with different sizes or different elements, independent elements for websites, video storyboards, or animation.

You can have 1 to 100 artboards per document depending on size (**Figure 1**). You can specify the number of artboards for a document when you first create it, and you can add and remove artboards at any time while working in a document. You can create artboards in different sizes, resize them by using the versatile Artboard tool, and position them anywhere on the screen—even overlapping one another.
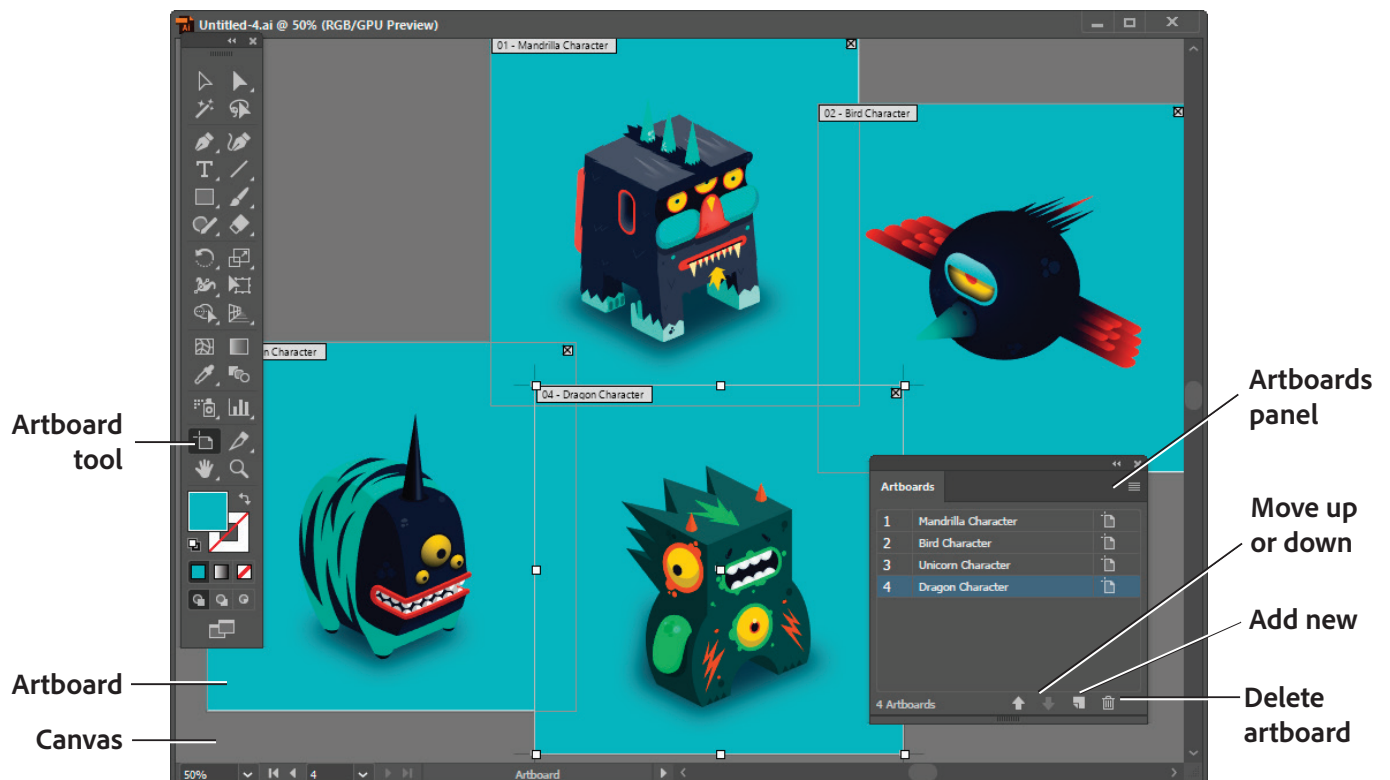


*Figure 1 Artboards and Artboards panel in a document window*

## How to add and edit artboards:

1. To access the Artboards panel, click **Window > Artboards**.

   The **Artboards** panel opens (**Figure 1**).

2. To add artboards, click the New Artboard icon at the bottom of the Artboards panel.

   A new artboard the same size as the first is added to the document window and appears in the **Artboard** panel (**Figure 2**).

3. To create a custom artboard, select the Artboard tool (**Figure 1**) and drag in the workspace to define the shape, size, and location.

   Smart Guides and dimension values appear to help you align and resize the new artboard (**Figure 3**).

4. With the Artboard tool selected:

   - To resize the artboard, position the pointer on an edge or corner until the cursor changes to a double-sided arrow, and then drag to adjust.
   - To change the orientation of the artboard, click the Portrait or Landscape button in the Control panel.
   - To move the artboard and its contents, position the pointer in the artboard and drag (**Figure 4**).
   - To resize the artboard using a preset, click the **Presets** button to show the selections. Options included common print, film and video, and mobile formats.

5. To delete an artboard, select the artboard in the Artboard panel and click the Delete icon, or click the Delete icon in an artboard's upper-right corner. You can delete all but the last remaining artboard.

6. To commit the artboard and exit the artboard-editing mode, click a different tool in the Tools panel or click **Esc**.
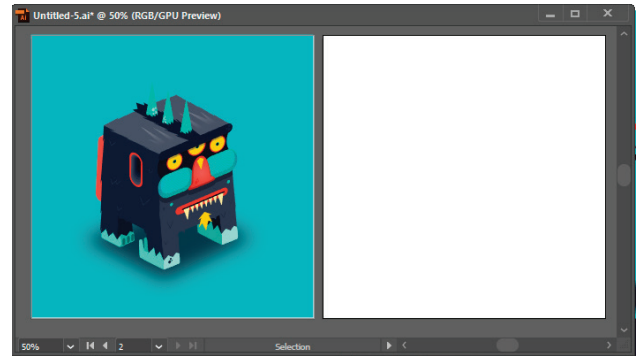


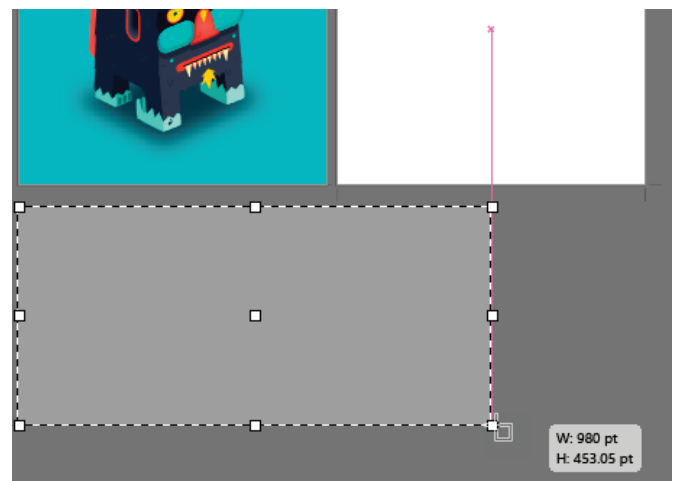*Figure 2 Artboard added to document window*



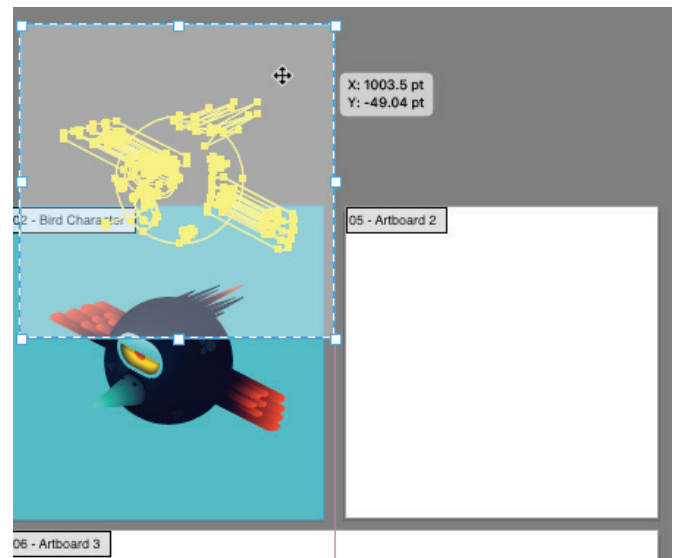*Figure 3 Drag in the workspace to create new artboard*



*Figure 4 Drag the artboard to reposition*

## How to select an object and work with the Properties panel

The Properties panel (Window > Properties) 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 Properties panel is docked to the right side of the document window; however, you can dock it to any side of the document window, convert it to a floating panel, or hide it altogether.

### *How to use the Selection tool:*

1.  With a document open, choose the Selection tool from the Tools panel (**Figure 5**), and then select an object in your document.

2.  If the Properties panel is not open, choose **Window** > **Properties**.

    Notice that the **Properties** panel information reflects such things as the **Fill**, **Stroke**, and **Opacity** (**Figure 6**).

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

    The **Properties** panel changes to show options that provide control over text formatting (**Figure 6**).

**Figure 5** *Tools panel*

— Selection tool

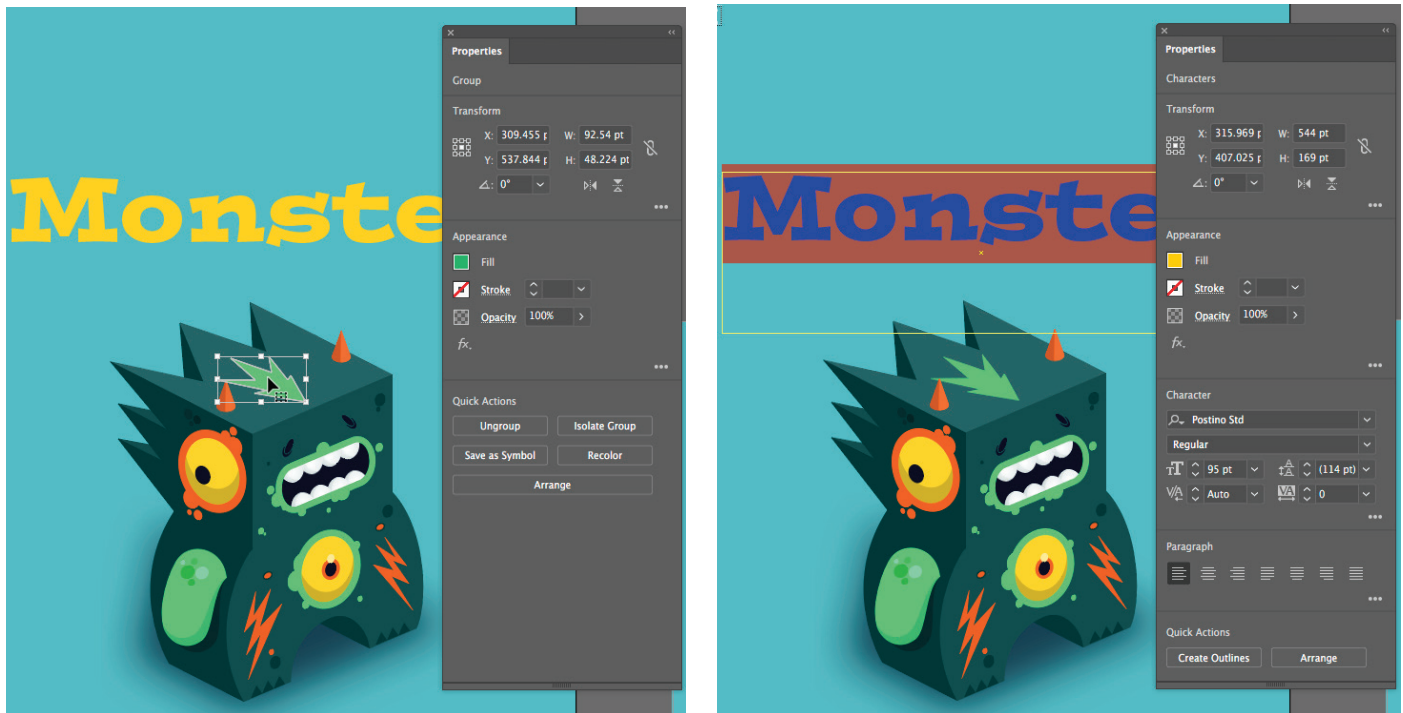**Figure 6** *Properties panel with a path selected (left) and Properties panel with text selected (right)*

## Using rulers, grids, and guides

You can easily align and size objects and artboards in Illustrator by using rulers, grids, and guides (**Figure 7**).

*Rulers* help you accurately place and measure objects in an artboard. The point where 0 appears on each ruler is called the *ruler origin*. Illustrator provides separate rulers for documents and artboards. You can select only one of these rulers at a time.

The *grid* appears behind your artwork in the illustration window and helps you align items on the artboard, and it does not print.

*Guides* help you align text and graphic objects. You can create ruler guides (straight vertical or horizontal lines) and guide objects (vector objects you convert to guides). Like the grid, guides do not print. Smart Guides are temporary snap-to guides that appear when you create or manipulate objects or artboards. They help you align, edit, and transform objects or artboards relative to other objects, artboards, or both by snap-aligning and displaying X, Y location and delta values. Smart Guides are on by default.
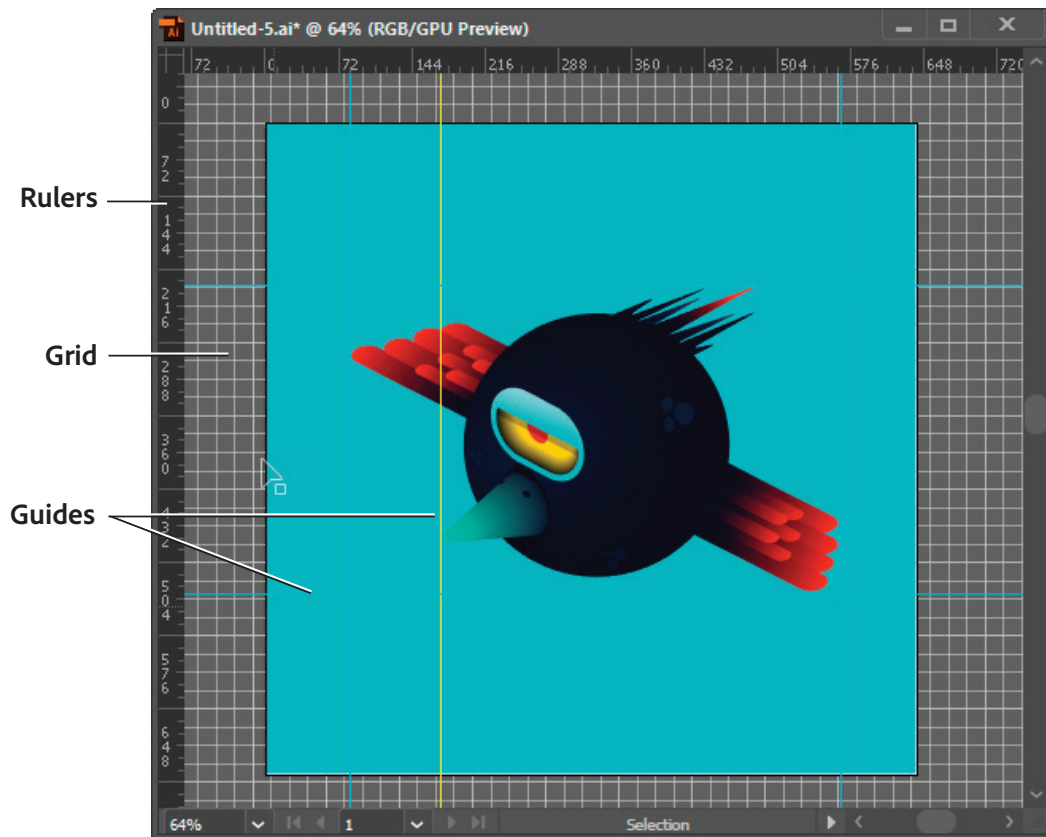


*Figure 7 Artboard in a document window*

## How to use rulers, grids, and guides:

1. To show rulers, choose **View** > **Rulers** > **Show Rulers**. To turn off rulers, choose **View** > **Rulers** > **Hide Rulers**.

2. To set the general unit of measurement for rulers in the current document, choose **File** > **Document Setup**.

   The **Document Setup** dialog box opens (**Figure 8**).

3. Choose the unit of measure you want to use from the Units menu, and click **OK** to close the **Document Setup** dialog box.

   **Note**: You can also set the default unit of measurement for all your Illustrator documents by choosing **Edit** > **Preferences** > **Units** (Windows) or **Illustrator** > **Preferences** > **Units** (Mac OS), and then select units for the **General**, **Stroke**, and **Type** options.

4. To use the grid, choose **View** > **Show Grid**. To hide the grid, choose **View** > **Hide Grid**.

5. To snap objects to gridlines, choose **View** > **Snap To Grid**, select the object you want to move, and drag it to the desired location.

   When the object's boundaries come within 2 pixels of a gridline, it snaps to the point.

   **Note**: To specify the spacing between gridlines, grid style (lines or dots), grid color, or whether grids appear in the front or back of artwork, choose **Edit** > **Preferences** > **Guides & Grid** (Windows) or **Illustrator** > **Preferences** > **Guides & Grid** (Mac OS).

6. To show guides, choose **View** > **Guides** > **Show Guide**s. To hide guides, choose **View** > **Guides** > **Hide Guides**.



**Figure 8** *Document Setup dialog box detail*



**Figure 9** *Drag a guide to position*

7. Position the pointer on the left ruler for a vertical guide or on the top ruler for a horizontal guide.

8. Drag the guide into position (**Figure 9**).

9. Move the guide by dragging or delete the guide by pressing **Backspace** (Windows) or **Delete** (Mac OS), or by choosing **Edit** > **Cut or Edit** > **Clear**.

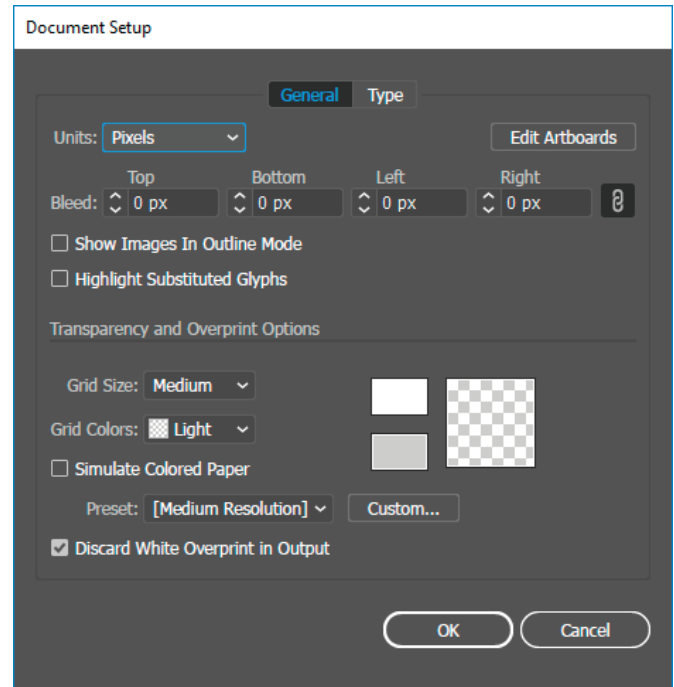10. Choose **View** > **Smart Guides** to turn guides on or off.
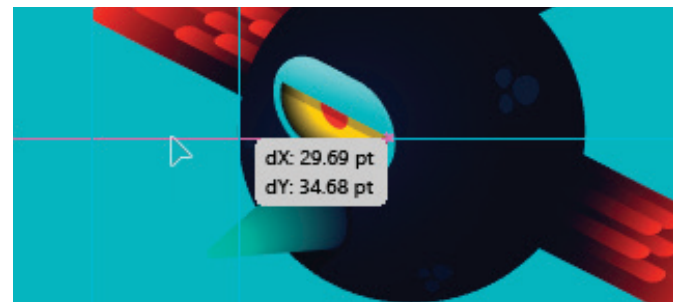
11. Use Smart Guides in the following ways:

- When you create an object, use the Smart Guides to position a new object's position relative to an existing object. Or, when you create a new artboard, use Smart Guides to position it relative to another artboard or an object.

- When you move an object or artboard, use the Smart Guides to align the selected object or artboard to other objects or artboards. The alignment is based on the geometry of objects and artboards. Guides appear as the object approaches the edge or center point of other objects (**Figure 10**).

- When you transform an object, Smart Guides automatically appear to assist the transformation.

You can change when and how Smart Guides appear by setting Smart Guide preferences. Choose **Edit** > **Preferences** > **Smart Guides** (Windows) or **Illustrator** > **Preferences** > **Smart Guides** (Mac OS).



**Smart Guides**

*Figure 10* *Positioning an object by using Smart Guides*

## About printer's marks and bleeds

If you intend to send your Adobe Illustrator design project off to be professionally printed, it's important to make sure the files are properly prepared with printer's marks and bleeds (**Figure 11**). Printer's marks help print companies to understand exactly where artwork should be cropped. Bleeds consist of edges of artwork that falls outside the printer's marks and are used to make sure colors or images print right to the edge of the paper.
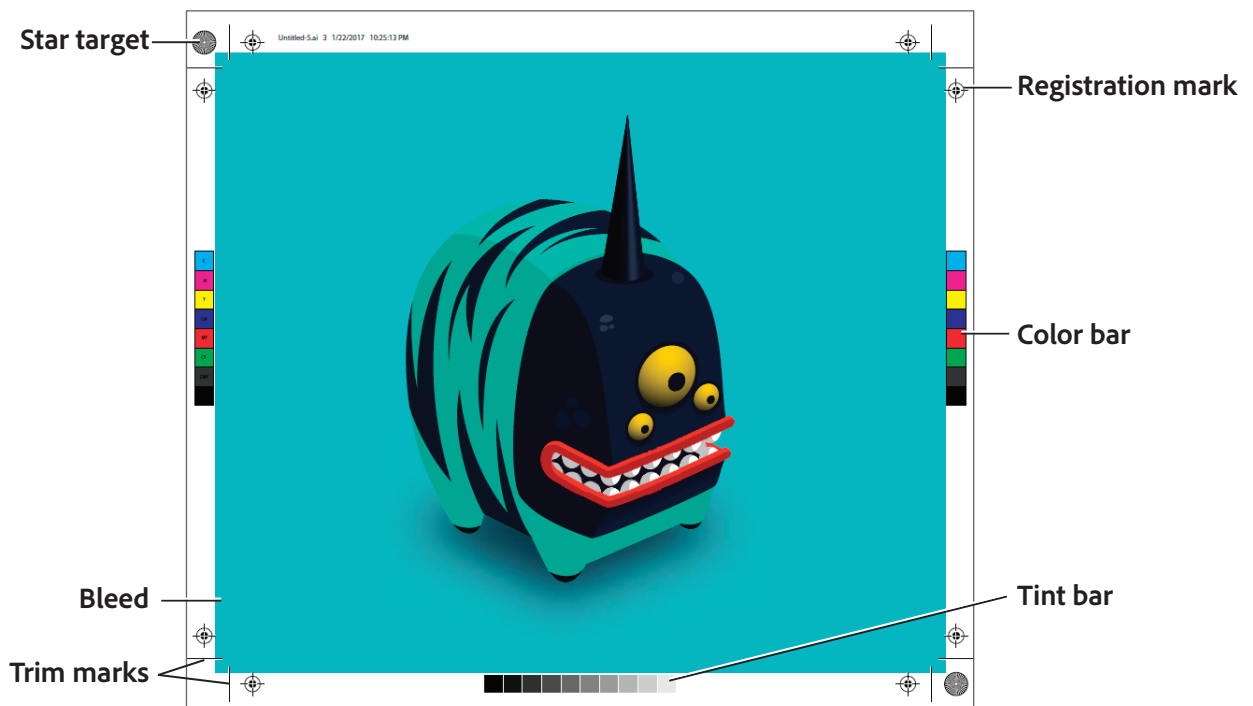


Star target — Registration mark — Color bar — Tint bar — Bleed — Trim marks

*Figure 11* *Printer's marks and bleed*

You can set the printer's marks and bleed settings using the Print dialog box (**Figure 12**).
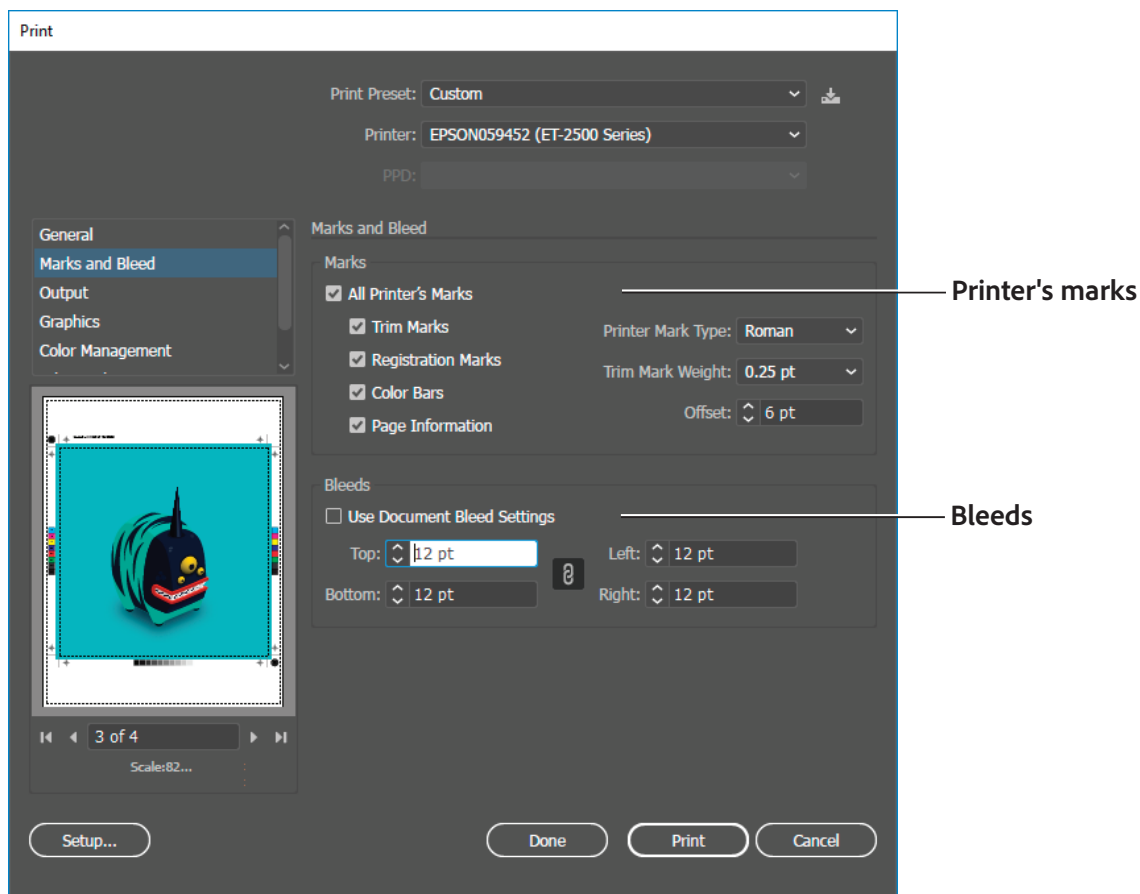


Printer's marks

Bleeds

*Figure 12 Print dialog box*

## Printer's marks

When you prepare artwork for printing, a number of marks are needed for the printer device to register the artwork elements precisely and verify correct color. You can add the following kinds of printer's marks to your artwork:

- *Trim Marks* Fine (hairline) horizontal and vertical rules that define where the page should be trimmed. Trim marks can also help register (align) one color separation to another.
- *Registration Marks* Small targets outside the page area for aligning the different separations in a color document.
- *Color Bars* Small squares of color representing the CMYK inks and tints of gray (in 10% increments). Your service provider uses these marks to adjust ink density on the printing press.
- *Page Information* Labels the film with the name of the artboard number, the time and date of printout, the line screen used, the screen angle for the separation, and the color of each particular plate. These labels appear at the tops of the images.

## *How to add printer's marks:*

1. Choose **File > Print**.

2. Select **Marks & Bleed** on the left side of the **Print** dialog box (**Figure 12**).

3. Select the kinds of printer's marks you want to add.

4. (Optional) If you select **Trim Marks**, specify the width of trim-mark lines and the offset distance between the trim marks and the artwork.

    **Note**: To avoid drawing printer's marks on a bleed, be sure to enter an **Offset** value greater than the **Bleed** value.

## Bleeds

Bleed is the amount of artwork that falls outside of the printing bounding box or outside the crop area and trim marks. You can include bleed in your artwork as a margin of error—to ensure that the ink is still printed to the edge of the page after the page is trimmed. Once you create the artwork that extends into the bleed, you can use Illustrator to specify the extent of the bleed. Increasing the bleed makes Illustrator print more of the artwork that is located beyond the trim marks. The trim marks still define the same size printing bounding box, however.

The size of the bleed you use depends on its purpose. A *press bleed* (that is, an image that bleeds off the edge of the printed sheet) should be at least 18 points. The maximum bleed you can set is 72 points; the minimum bleed is 0 points. Your print shop can advise you on the size of the bleed necessary for your particular job.

When you first create a document, you can set the bleed in the New Document dialog box (shown previously) or in the Document Setup dialog box. When the document is ready to be printed, you can use the Print dialog box.

### How to add a bleed:

1. Choose **File > Print**.

2. Select **Marks & Bleed** on the left side of the **Print** dialog box (**Figure 12**).

3. Do one of the following:
    - Enter values for **Top**, **Left**, **Bottom**, and **Right** to specify the placement of the bleed marks. Click the link icon to make all the values the same.
    - Select **Use Document Bleed** to use the bleed settings defined in the **New Document** dialog box.

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