

Adobe Illustrator 10

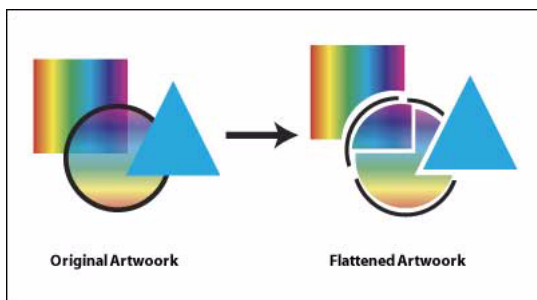
## The basics about printing transparency

When Adobe® introduced transparency in Illustrator®, it also introduced a new approach to printing.

To master this new technique, you first need to understand transparency in Illustrator terms. It's more than simply using the Transparency palette to reduce an object's opacity. For example, when you apply a drop shadow, Illustrator interprets the fade-out as transparency. Feathering, layer masks with gradient edges, and many layer effects are all treated as transparency.

Before printing an Illustrator file that includes transparency, be sure to check the settings in the Document Setup dialog box (choose File > Document Setup). This is where Illustrator determines how transparent effects are flattened. Whoa! What's this idea about flattening?

Flattening removes transparency information from a file. When you print Illustrator artwork or export it to a format that doesn't support native Illustrator transparency, Illustrator breaks overlapping transparent objects into individual pieces. Depending on the complexity of the art, those pieces may be vectors, rasters, or both.

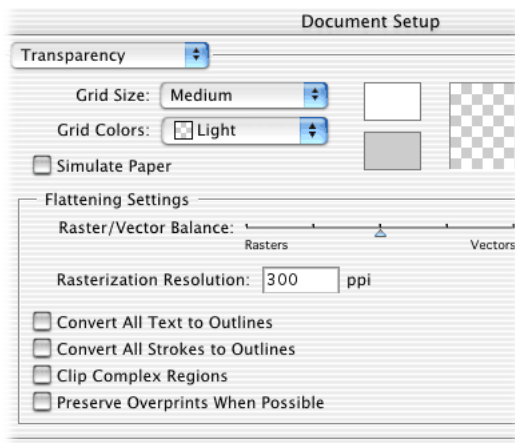


That last point is so important, it bears repeating: Even if you create an all-vector file, segments of the artwork may be converted to bitmap objects when the file is flattened. It all depends on the settings in the Document Setup dialog box.

For most images, the Illustrator 10 defaults deliver excellent results. However, if your artwork contains complex, overlapping areas, and you plan to print at high resolution, you may need to make some adjustments.

To modify the flattening settings, choose File > Document Setup, and choose Transparency from the pop-up menu at the top of the dialog box. By default, the Raster/Vector slider is set all the way to the right. This setting preserves as many vectors as possible—but preserving vectors in a complex image may result in a mega-memory file. You can reduce the file size—and increase the level of rasterization—by moving the Raster/Vector slider to the left. (At the far left position, everything in the image is rasterized.) The goal is to find a Raster/Vector balance that delivers both high quality and reasonable file size. That's where the options in the Document Setup dialog box can help. They let you control the way artwork is flattened.

For example, you can specify the resolution for rasterized artwork (maybe you don't need to preserve all the vectors when 300 dpi resolution will deliver great print results), and you can clip complex regions to eliminate *stitching* (color shifts between rasters and vectors). The Preserve Overprints When Possible option retains overprint settings that don't interact with transparent objects. (For the full scoop on the advanced flattening options available in Illustrator 10, see "Printing and saving transparent artwork" in the user guide.)



Power users can control flattening with the Flattening Preview palette, an optional plug-in that ships with Illustrator 10. The palette includes additional controls, plus a preview window that lets you gauge the results before artwork is flattened.



If you adjust the settings in the Flattening Preview palette, the changes are reflected in the Document Setup dialog box, and vice versa. So you don't need to open them both—choose one or the other.

**Tip:** For the most accurate preview of the print results, choose View > Overprint Preview before flattening. This view even gives you a good approximation of spot colors.

Here, we've covered the basics of working with transparency in Illustrator. For in-depth information, see "Achieving Reliable Print Output with Transparency" and the "Illustrator 10 Flattening Guide," both available on Adobe's Web site ([www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)).

