

Adobe Illustrator 10

Build complex designs quickly with symbols

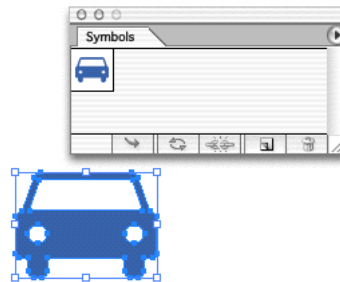
Symbols may have been developed to keep file sizes small, but with Adobe® Illustrator® 10, they're the building blocks for exciting and intricate designs. You can turn any graphic element into a symbol. Then use duplicates of the symbol to build repeating patterns, or apply the symbolism tools to manipulate the duplicates interactively.



1. Define a symbol.

Choose Window > Symbols to open the Symbols palette. Simply select the object you want to use as the symbol and drag it to the Symbols palette.

You can use any Illustrator object—including paths, compound paths, groups, text, and raster images—to create a symbol. Symbols can also include live features such as brush strokes, blends, and effects. For our symbol, we drew a simple car graphic.



2. Create duplicates of the symbol.

You can add a copy of the symbol—called an *instance*—to your art by dragging it from the Symbols palette. Once you drag one instance into your Illustrator design, you can Alt-drag (Windows®) or Option-drag (Mac OS) the instance to create additional duplicates.

You can adjust the transparency of individual instances, change their appearance attributes, add effects, or use the transformation tools to modify them. We scaled and rotated instances of our car symbol and changed the transparency settings to add variety to the design.

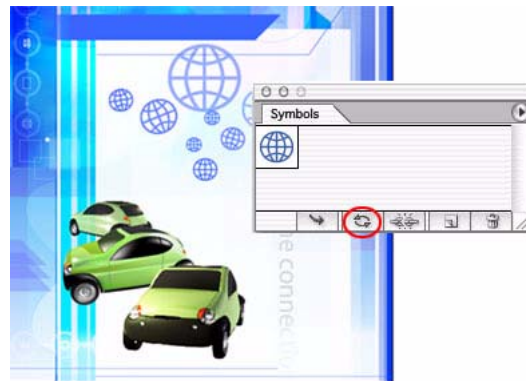


3. Redefine the symbol.

To replace a symbol with another object, first select the object on the artboard. In the Symbols palette, select the icon of the symbol you want to replace, and click the Replace Symbol button. All the instances of the symbol update automatically.

You can also edit an instance and then replace your original symbol with the new version. First, select an instance in the artwork. Click the Break Link button at the bottom of the Symbols palette to turn the instance into an independent object that can be edited.

Once your edits are complete, select the original symbol in the palette, along with the edited version on the artboard. Choose Redefine Symbol from the palette's pop-up menu, and Illustrator replaces all the instances with the updated version.



4. Use the symbol sprayer to create instances.

When you want to build up masses of instances, use the symbol sprayer tool. First, select the symbol in the Symbols palette. To add instances one at a time, click the symbol sprayer tool on the artboard. Or drag the symbol sprayer to apply a stream of instances.

If you go overboard and create too many instances, you can remove some of them by Alt-dragging (Windows) or Option-dragging (Mac OS) with the symbol sprayer. We used the symbol sprayer to build a random pattern of blue squares.



5. Vary the instances with the symbolism tools.

Make sure the symbol is still selected in the Symbols palette. Then select the symbol spinner tool in the toolbox and drag it over the instances. The instances rotate in the direction you drag.

For quick access to the symbolism tools, click any symbolism tool in the toolbox, and drag to the right to tear off the tool set. We used several symbolism tools to modify the color, size, and position of the instances in our design.



6. Adjust the tool options.

Double-clicking any symbolism tool in the toolbox (or in the tear-off tool set) opens the Symbolism Tool Options dialog box. Click a tool icon in the dialog box to set the options for that tool—there's no need to reopen the dialog box for each tool.

We adjusted the brush size and intensity of the symbol screener tool, which adds transparency to symbol instances. (For more information on setting options for the symbolism tools, see the Illustrator 10 user guide.) We used the symbolism tools to build an abstract design. You can also use them to create natural-looking patterns—a field of flowers, for example, or clouds in the sky.

