

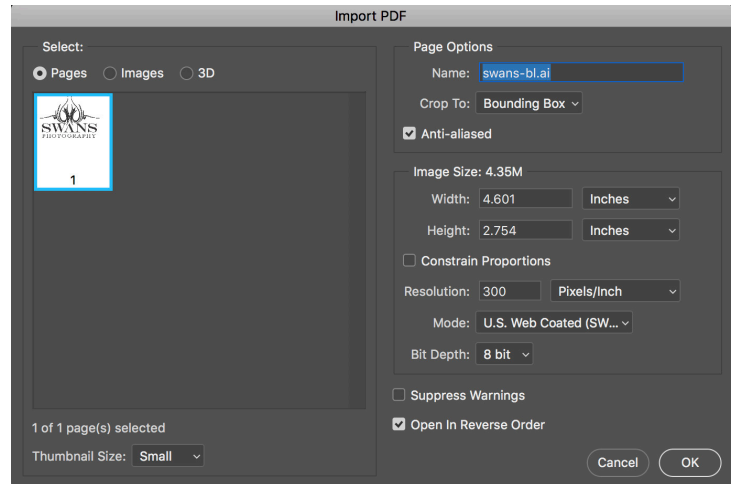
Using Illustrator with Photoshop

with Dave Cross

From Illustrator to Photoshop

1. File>Open

When you open an Illustrator file in Photoshop you will see a dialog box with options for sizing, mode, resolution etc. Imagine this dialog is asking you “at what resolution do you want to Rasterize the Illustrator artwork?” That should remind you that using the Open command, you basically have one opportunity to get the file the size that you want – and that rasterizing means there is no longer a link back to the original graphic.

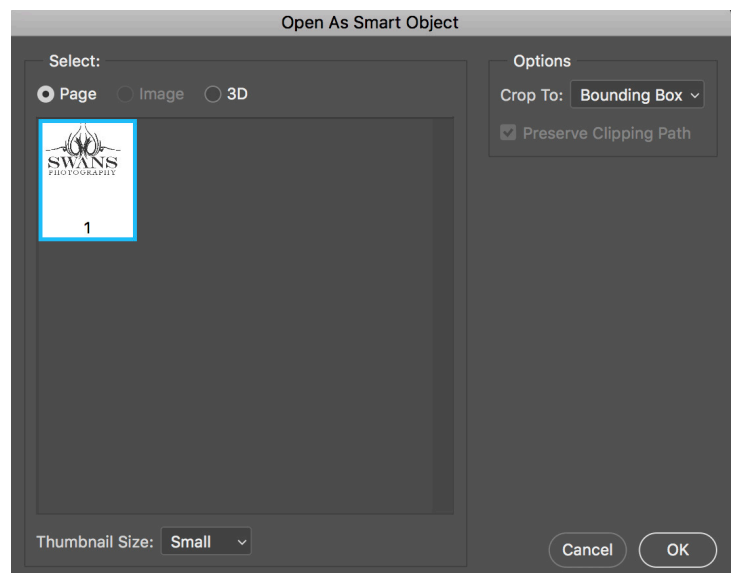


2. File>Place Linked

Placing an Illustrator file into an existing Photoshop document means that you will be creating a link back to the original file. Note that the dialog is called “Open as Smart Object” (although it should really be called Open as Vector Smart Object).

Once the file is placed, you can double-click on the Photoshop thumbnail to open and edit the original artwork in Illustrator.

Keep in mind that if you edit the Illustrator artwork for this Photoshop document, any other document that uses this artwork will be affected. Also, if you move the Photoshop document you would need to move the Illustrator file as well to preserve the link.

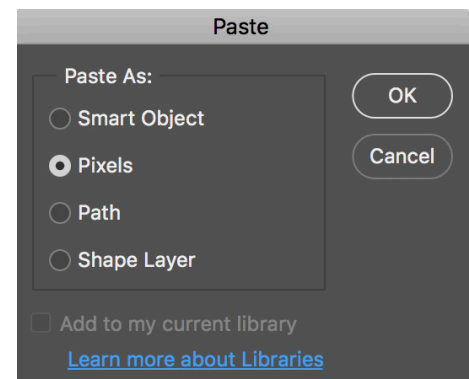


3. File>Place Embedded

The result is the same as Place Linked, (including the ability to edit the original in Illustrator), except you do not need to include the Illustrator file if you were to move the file.

4. Copy and Paste

If you Copy in Illustrator and then switch to a Photoshop document and Paste, you’ll see these options in the Paste dialog. Paste as Smart Object creates a link back to Illustrator that’s similar to Place Linked – except that the artwork you’d be editing in Illustrator is not the original artwork. Paste as Pixels means Rasterize.



Paste as Path would be used if you wanted to paste just the path, without any fill or stroke, to then do some Photoshop operation using the Path (this is perhaps the least common use).

Paste as a Shape Layer can be used to then create a Custom Shape in Photoshop. To do this, after pasting select the shape with the Selection tool and then use Edit>Define Custom Shape.






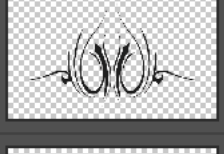

5. Library

Drag selected artwork in Illustrator into a Library, and then in Photoshop drag from that Library into a document. The result acts similar to a Vector Smart Object, except if you edit and save in Illustrator, it will also update the graphic in the Library.

If you wish to take a graphic from a Library and “break the link” to the Library, hold down Option (PC: Alt) when you drag from the Library into the document.

Here are the different icons that appear on the Layer thumbnail depending on which method you use. (Note there is no icon on the Paste as Pixels layer thumbnail since there is no option to edit the original once it is rasterized).

Also, double-clicking on the Shape layer opens the Color Picker. There is no option to edit the original artwork.

Place Embedded		swans-bl
Place Linked		swans-bl
Drag from Library with Option/Alt		Artwork 7
Drag from Library		Artwork 7
Paste as Shape Layer		Shape 1
Paste as Pixels		Layer 3
Paste as Smart Object		Vector Smart Object

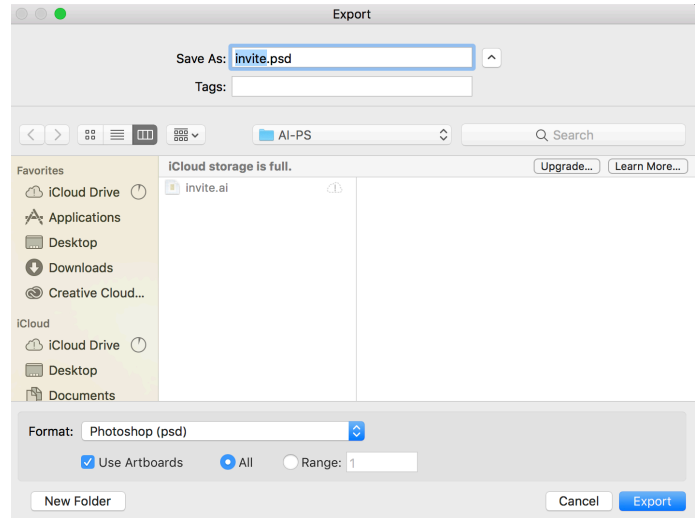
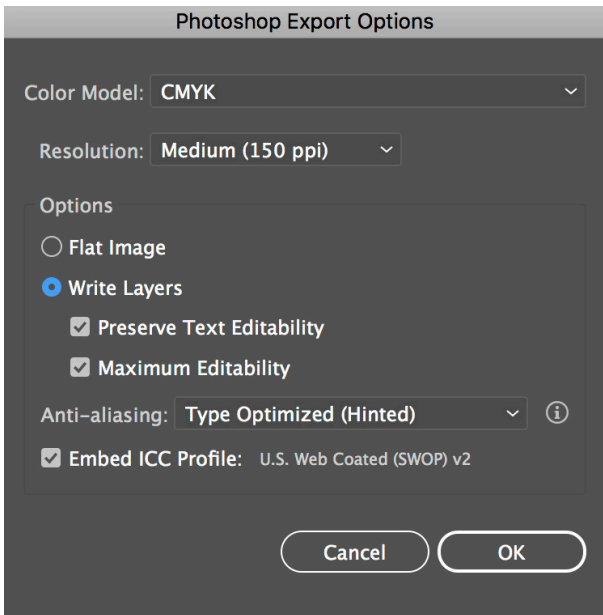
6. Export as a PSD file

This one is more unusual and is intended for times when you've started a document in Illustrator and want to continue editing in Photoshop – in layers.

In Illustrator use File>Export>Export As.

Change the Format to Photoshop (psd)

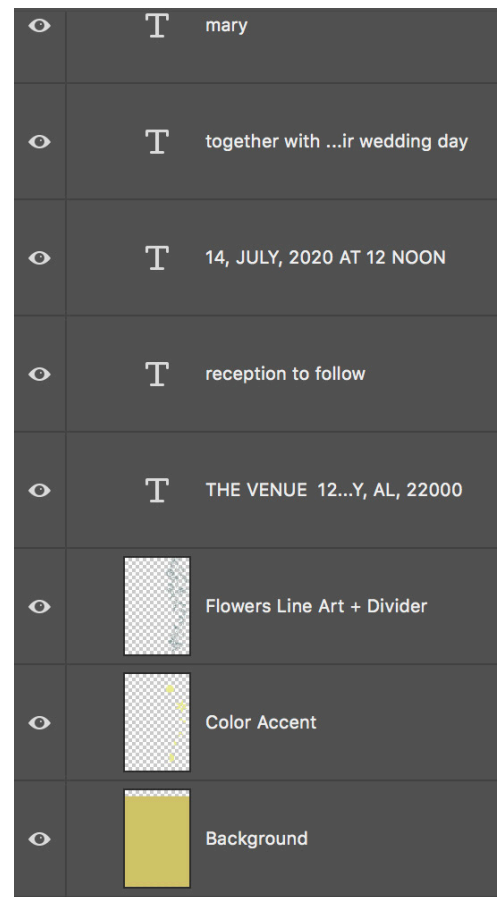
In the Export Options dialog change the Color Model to CMYK*, choose the Resolution and check Write Layers.



*Even if you need an RGB file, start with CMYK or else you will be unable to export the layers

Here's a portion of the Layers panel in Photoshop after opening the resulting psd file. Generally it does a very good job of separating the Type layers.

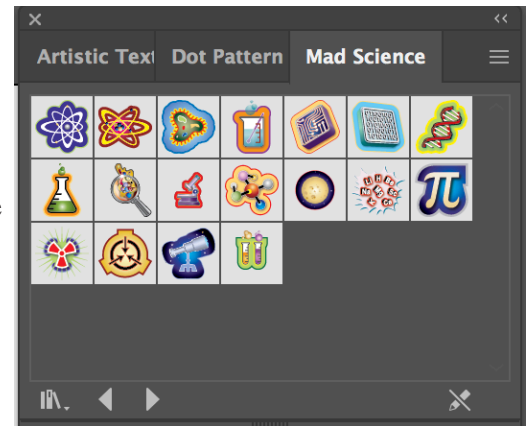
The only disadvantage of this method is the graphic elements are rasterized using the setting you chose in the Export Options dialog, so you no longer have any options of editing the original artwork in Illustrator.



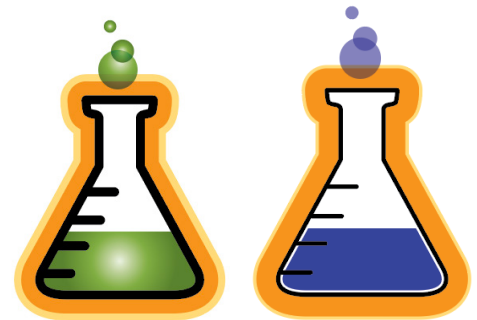
Examples

1. Symbols

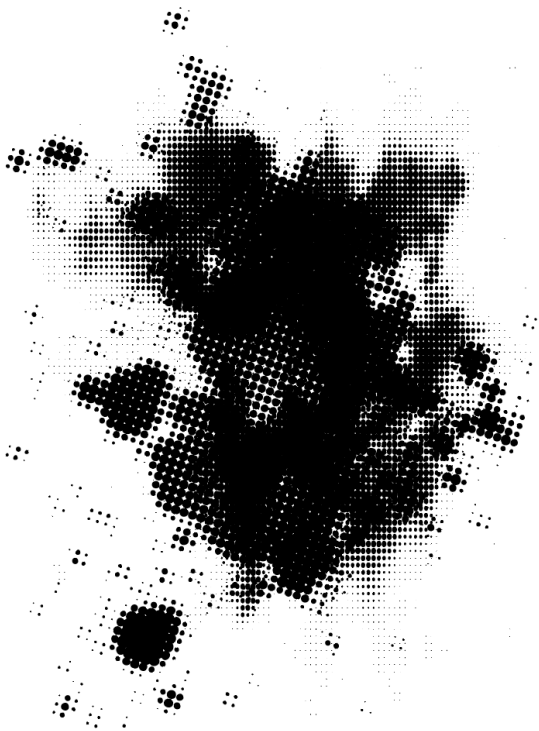
Illustrator doesn't have much in the way of "clip art", but you can use artwork found in the Symbol Libraries. Under the Window menu use Symbol Libraries and open one of the 25+ libraries. Click and drag one of the symbols into a document.



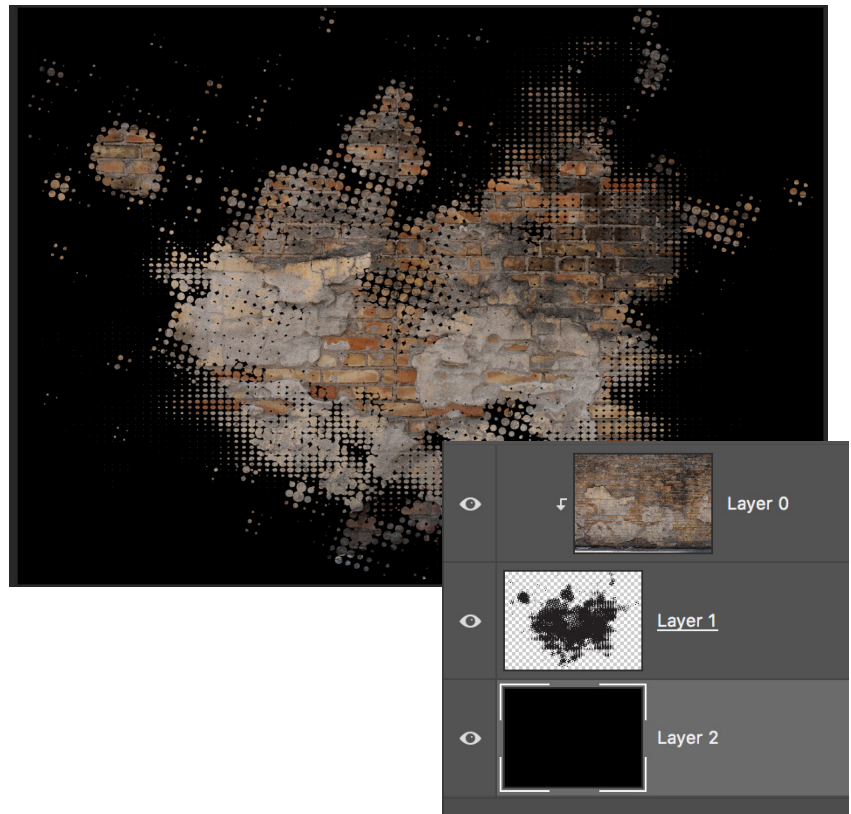
You can either use the symbol as is [left], or use Object>Expand to access the elements that make up the design and edit accordingly [right]. (Then use one of the methods for moving the design into Photoshop).



There are all kinds of options in the Symbol libraries, from complete graphics to design elements. In this example, I used 2 different elements from the Dot Pattern Vector Pack to create a design in Illustrator.



After pasting into Photoshop, I rotated the graphic and used it as a Clipping Mask.



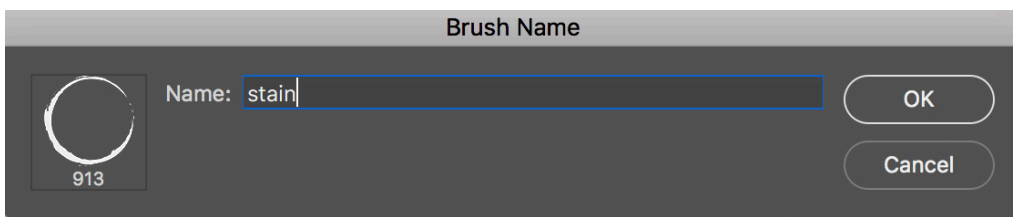
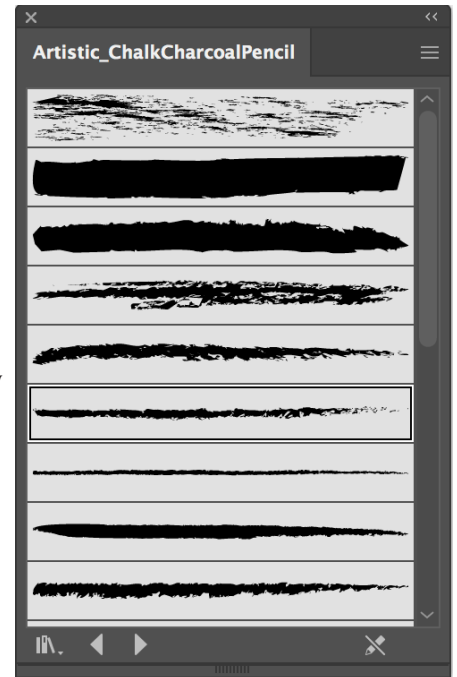
2. Brushes

Look inside the Brush Libraries to find some interesting design elements that can be used in Photoshop as borders, edges, or even to make a Photoshop brush. In this example I dragged a brush from the Artistic ChalkCharcoalPencil Brush Library.



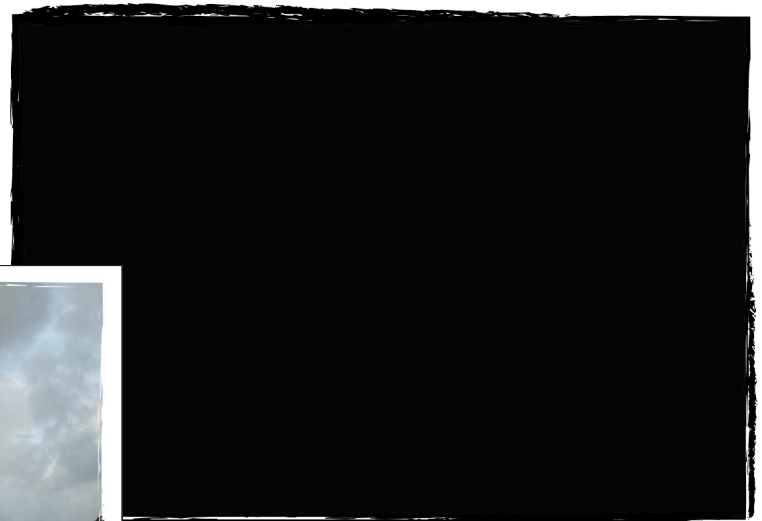
You can also make a shape and apply the Brush to the stroke of the object.

In this example I copied and pasted this artwork to Photoshop (as a Smart Object so I could tweak the results) and then used Edit>Define Brush to make this into a Photoshop brush [below].



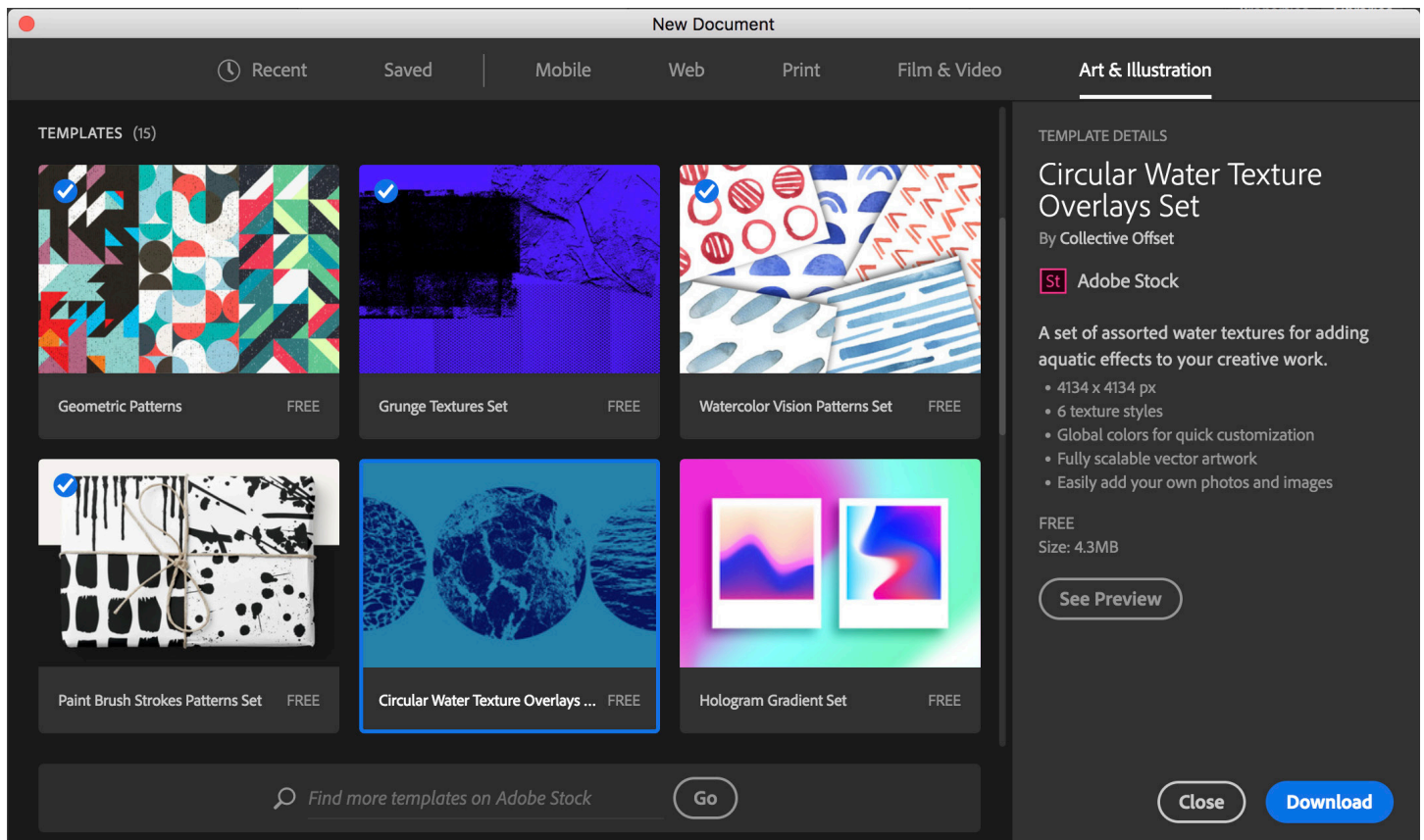
In this example I created a rectangle in Illustrator and used a couple of the above brushes as a stroke.

Again, this was copied and pasted in Photoshop to use as a Clipping Mask.



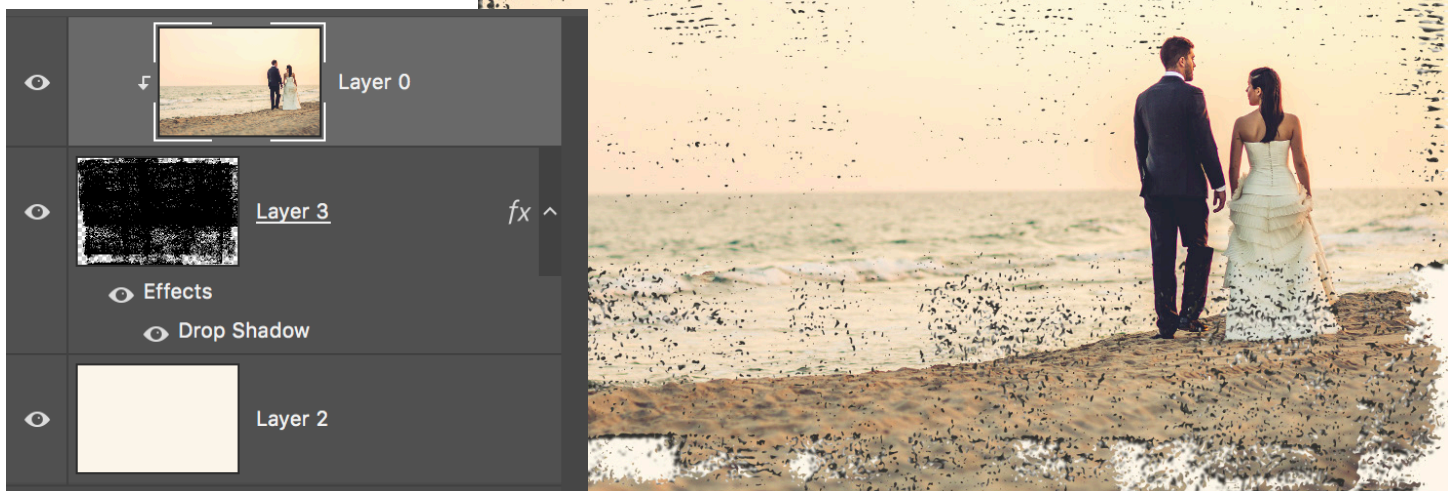
3. “Hidden” Artwork

The latest version of Illustrator CC has some “hidden” artwork, some of which might be useful for Photoshop projects. To access it, use File>New and then click on the Art & Illustration tab at the top.



You’ll see a series of templates that are from Adobe Stock, but provided for free. Download the file, open it in Illustrator and use one of the methods to move the artwork (or portions thereof) into Photoshop.

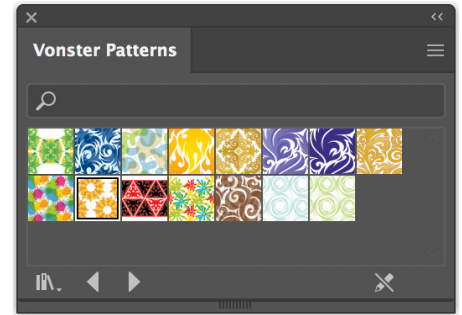
Here part of the Grunge Textures set was used to create a Clipping Mask.



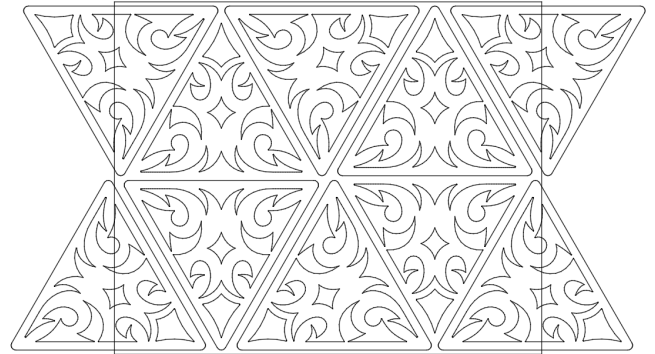
4. Patterns

Unfortunately you cannot take Illustrator patterns and use them directly in Photoshop (or vice versa), but with a bit of work you can (often) take advantage of Illustrator patterns to make Photoshop Patterns.

Drag a pattern swatch from an Illustrator Pattern library into a document.



Change to Outline View (Command/Control-Y) to see where the “bounding box” is that defines the pattern. With the Direct Selection tool, Option/Alt click on the rectangle and then Copy and Paste in Front.



Now switch back to normal (Preview) view. Select all.

Use the Shape Builder tool with Option/Alt held down to drag over the areas outside the rectangle. You may want to zoom in closer to make sure that you’ve removed every area outside the rectangle.

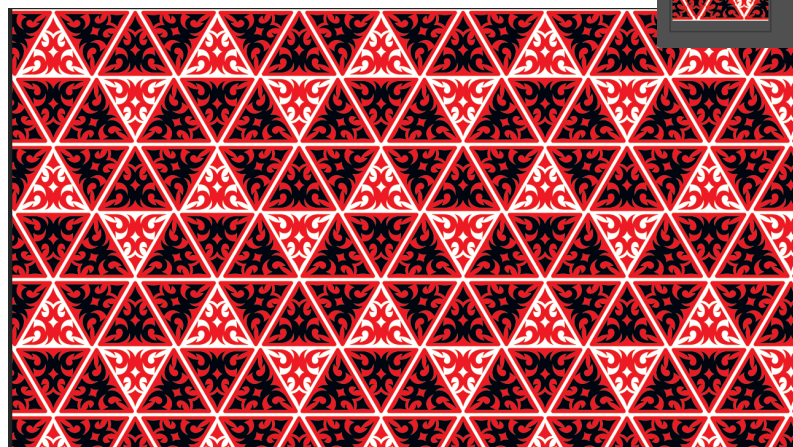
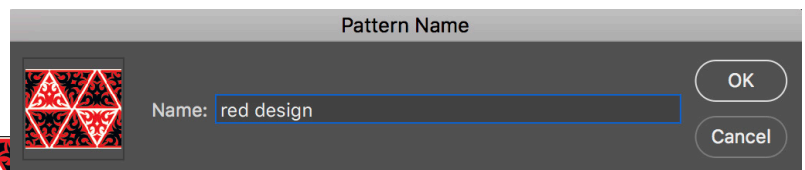
Select all and copy.

Go to Photoshop and create a New document. It should automatically create the size based on the information in the clipboard (that you copied).

Paste as a Smart Object and press Enter.



Go to Edit>Define Pattern.



In Photoshop apply the pattern using the Pattern Overlay Layer Style.

From Photoshop to Illustrator

For the first methods, it's important to remember that the pixels from Photoshop can be used as part of a design, but will remain pixels. You can scale everything else up without losing quality but the Photoshop elements may lose quality depending on the resolution you started with.

1. Copy and Paste

In Photoshop select a photo (or an area of a photo), Copy, switch to Illustrator and Paste onto a document. There is no connection between the original photo and the pasted information.

2. Place

Use File>Place and find the Photoshop file. Unless the document contains Layer Comps (see below) it will appear as a single image. To edit the original Photoshop document, hold down Command and Option (PC: Control and Alt) and double-click on the placed image. Save changes in Photoshop and when you return to Illustrator you'll see a dialog about missing or modified files. Click OK to update the placed file.

3. Open

You can Open a PSD file in Illustrator, but the results will vary depending on the contents of the file. For example, a layered file with shape layers and type layers will turn into editable paths and type in Illustrator.

You'll see this Import Options dialog with the option to Convert Layers to Objects and "make text editable where possible".

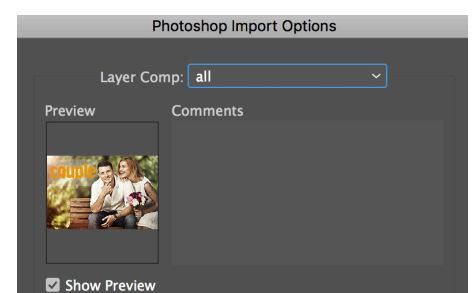
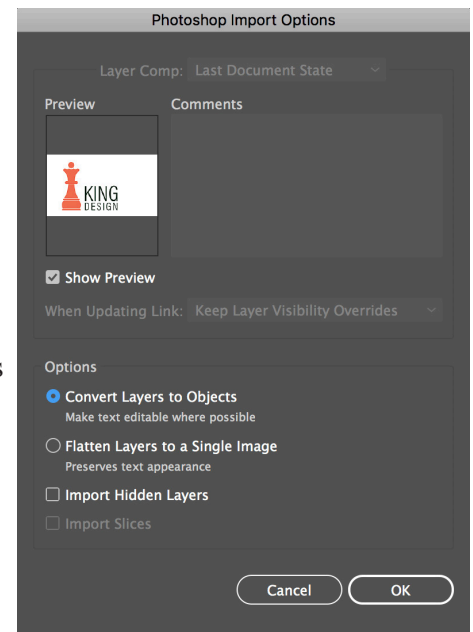


Here the shape layer and type layers are all editable, and transferred nicely.

If text does not come across properly you could choose to Flatten Layers to a Single Image.

Note: a PSD file without layers will open as a single image much like copying and pasting.

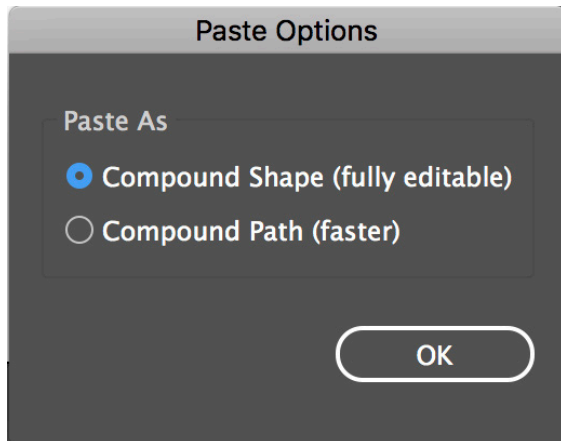
If your Photoshop document contains Layer Comps you can choose between the comps before opening (or placing) the document. Later if you'd like to switch to another comp you have to relink the file (in the Links panel).



Note: working with jpeg files works the same as a PSD without layers.

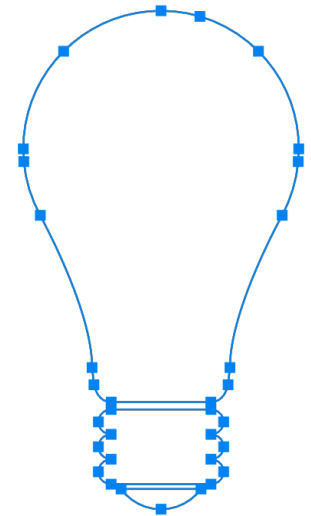
4. Paths

You can use Photoshop Custom Shapes as basic artwork in Illustrator. Change the Options Bar setting to Path and drag out the shape. Copy, switch to Illustrator and Paste.



In the Paste Options dialog choose Compound Path (fully editable).

Note: the pasted shape will have no stroke and no fill, so if you deselect it, it will “disappear”.



For 32 years Dave Cross has been helping photographers and creative professionals get the most out of their Adobe software. Since 1987, Dave has taught Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign to thousands of users around the world. He has a Bachelor of Education, is an Adobe Certified Instructor, a Certified Technical Trainer and in 2017 and 2018 was named an Adobe MAX Master Instructor. Dave has taught for Adobe, at Photoshop World, Creative Pro Week, Imaging USA and at numerous corporate locations. Dave has written many articles and multiple books, and has taught many online courses for Kelby Training, Creative Live and now through his own training site LearningPhotoshop.CC,.

Over the last 20 years, Dave has taught Photoshop in every state in the United States, throughout Canada and in Europe, consistently earning rave reviews. In 2009 Dave was inducted into the Photoshop Hall of Fame.