Digital Lab / Illustrator Quick Reference Guide

Vector vs. Raster Files
Vector images are composed of mathematical equations creating shapes from one point to the next. Raster images use pixels as the basis for image creation. Illustrator uses vector files to create designs as these types of files can be infinitely resized without quality loss.

Line Segment Tool (\)
Creates lines. Click and drag to make a line segment.
Tip: Hold down the Shift key while creating a line in order to make a straight line.

Rectangle Tool (M)
Creates simple rectangles. Click and drag to make a new shape.
Tip: Hold down the Shift key while creating a shape to make a square or circle or to resize a shape and maintain its proportions.

Eyedropper Tool (I)
Selects a desired color for use in a shape.
Tip: Use this tool to sample and apply font styles and colors to desired text.

Selection Tool (V)
Moves selected objects. Click and drag to select multiple objects.
Tip: Click the Command key and then click on the screen. Type V or A to quickly switch to desired selection tool.

Direct Selection Tool (A)
Selects specific objects.

Type Tool (T)
Creates customizable text. Click and drag to make a resizable text box.
Tip: Use the Stroke and Fill boxes above to select colors for the inner and outer portions of each character.

Note: These tools can also be used for any shape or symbol.

Artboard Tool (Shift + O)
Creates additional artboards (editing spaces).
Tip: Use multiple artboards to create different designs within a single file.
Example:

Create text using the Type Tool.

Drag and drop images into the design.

Note:
Images placed on artboards are linked files.

Illustrator Keyboard Shortcuts

Spacebar
Activates the hand tool.

Command - +
Zooms into an image.

Command - - (minus)
Zooms out of an image.

Tab
Toggles menu visibility.

Command - ’
Toggles grid lines.

F key
Toggles different screen modes.

Use the Rectangle Tool to create rectangles or borders for objects.

Swatches Panel
Allows for the selection of color or symbols.