

Module 1 - Brushes and Freehand Drawing

Introduction

Not all vector artwork needs to be made from strict shapes and straight lines. Sometimes, you want a more **hand-drawn, organic, or artistic feel**.

That's where Illustrator's **freehand drawing tools and brushes** come in.

These tools allow you to:

- Draw naturally with your mouse, stylus, or drawing tablet
- Create artistic strokes like calligraphy, watercolor, or textures
- Turn your own designs into reusable brushes

Paintbrush Tool (B)

The **Paintbrush Tool** lets you draw **freehand paths** that Illustrator smooths and applies a brush style to.

How to Use:

1. Select the **Paintbrush Tool (B)**.
2. Choose a brush style from the **Brushes Panel** (Window > Brushes).
3. Click and drag to draw – Illustrator creates a path and applies the chosen brush.

Features:

- Automatically follows the **brush shape** (e.g., calligraphy, artistic, scatter, bristle).
 - Can be **edited like any vector path** using the Direct Selection Tool (A).
 - Stroke thickness can be changed in the **Control Bar** or **Stroke Panel**.
- ◆ **Tip:** Adjust **smoothing** in the Paintbrush Tool Options for cleaner or more natural lines.

Blob Brush Tool (Shift + B)

The **Blob Brush Tool** is different from the Paintbrush because it **creates filled shapes** instead of strokes.

Why it's useful:

- Perfect for coloring areas or building solid forms.
- Great for tablet drawing because it reacts to pressure sensitivity.

How to Use:

1. Select the **Blob Brush Tool**.
2. Choose a **fill color** (not stroke).
3. Draw – each stroke becomes a solid vector shape.
4. Overlapping strokes with the same fill color automatically **merge** into one shape.

◆ **Tip:** Use the **Eraser Tool (Shift + E)** to trim shapes made with Blob Brush.

Pencil Tool (N)

The **Pencil Tool** is best for **quick sketches or outlines** that can be refined later.

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 ICSE

 NTSE

 Banking & Insurance

 Central Govt. Service

 State Govt. Services

 LAW Entrance

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Advanced Drawing & Layer Management

1. Select the **Pencil Tool (N)**.
2. Click and drag to draw a freehand path.
3. Release the mouse/stylus – the path is created.

Editing:

- Double-click the Pencil Tool icon to open settings.
 - Adjust **Fidelity** (smoothness) and **Fill New Pencil Strokes** options.
 - To edit a path, redraw over part of it – Illustrator replaces that section.
- ◆ **Tip:** The Pencil Tool is more basic than the Paintbrush, but great for rough shapes.

Creating Custom Brushes

You can design your own brush style in Illustrator.

Steps:

1. Draw the shape or pattern you want as a brush.
2. Select it, then open **Brushes Panel > New Brush**.
3. Choose a brush type:
 - **Calligraphic** - Flat, angled, or round tip
 - **Scatter** - Scattered copies of your shape
 - **Art** - Stretches along the stroke path
 - **Bristle** - Simulates real paintbrush bristles
 - **Pattern** - Repeats a design along a path
4. Name and save your brush.

💡 Once saved, your custom brush appears in the Brushes Panel for future use.

Types of Brushes:

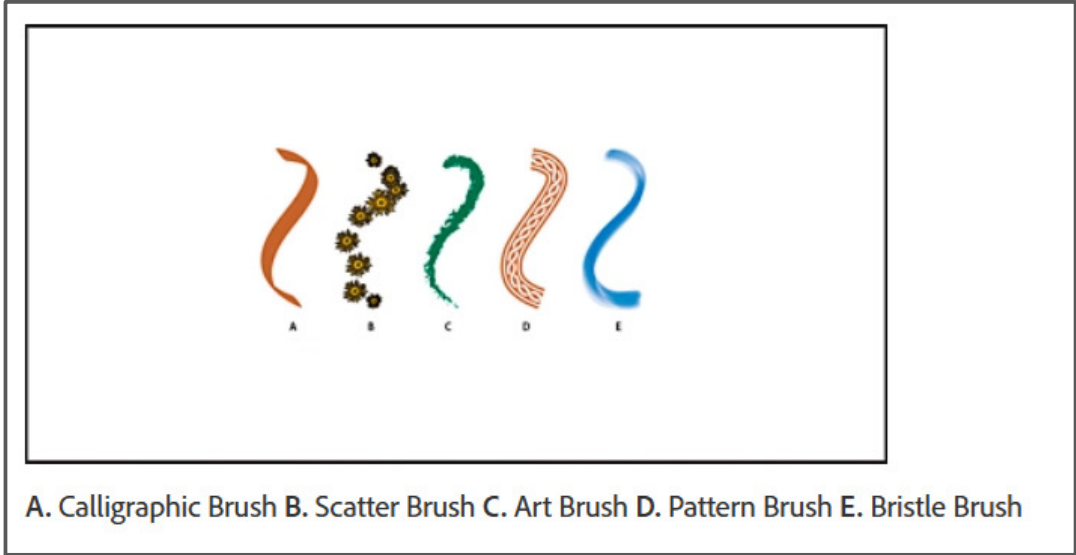
There are different types of brushes in Illustrator: calligraphic, scatter, art, pattern, and bristle. You can achieve the following effects using these brushes:

1. **Calligraphic brushes:** Create strokes that resemble those drawn with the angled point of a calligraphic pen and are drawn along the center of the path. When you use the Blob Brush tool, you can paint with a calligraphic brush and automatically expand the brush stroke into a fill shape that merges with other filled objects of the same color that intersect or are adjacent in stacking order.
2. **Scatter brushes:** Disperse copies of an object (such as a ladybug or a leaf) along the path.
3. **Art brushes:** Stretch a brush shape (such as Rough Charcoal) or object shape evenly along the length of the path.
4. **Bristle brush:** Create brush strokes with the appearance of a natural brush with bristles.
5. **Pattern brushes:** Paint a pattern—made of individual *tiles*—that repeats along the path. Pattern brushes can include up to five tiles, for the sides, inner corner, outer corner, beginning, and end of the pattern.

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Real-World Uses

- **Paintbrush Tool** - Decorative borders, floral designs, artistic illustrations.
- **Blob Brush Tool** - Cartoon coloring, comic shading, flat style illustration.
- **Pencil Tool** - Rough sketches, concept art, quick path edits.
- **Custom Brushes** - Signature strokes for brand identity or unique textures.

Assignment

Scenario: You're designing an artistic greeting card.

Tasks:

1. Open a new Illustrator document (A5 size, RGB Mode).
2. Use the **Paintbrush Tool** with an Artistic Brush to create a wavy border.
3. Switch to the **Blob Brush Tool** and add solid floral shapes in the corners.
4. Use the **Pencil Tool** to draw a handwritten "Happy Birthday" (or similar message).
5. Create a **custom scatter brush** of small stars and apply it to a path around the card.
6. Save the file as .ai and export as .png.



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