

Module 1 - Importing and Tracing Images

**Introduction**

In Illustrator, you can work with **two main image types**:

- **Raster images** (made of pixels) - e.g., JPG, PNG, BMP, TIFF
- **Vector images** (made of paths and anchor points) - scalable without losing quality

Sometimes, you need to:

- Place an existing raster image in your Illustrator project
- Convert it into vector format for scalability and easy editing

That's where **Image Trace** comes in – it automatically converts raster images into editable vector shapes.

Importing (Placing) Raster Images

◆ **Steps to Import:**

1. Go to **File > Place**.
2. Choose your image file (e.g., JPG, PNG).
3. Select **Link** if you want the file to remain separate (updates when the original changes)  
OR **Uncheck Link** to embed the image in the Illustrator file.
4. Click **Place**.
5. Click anywhere on the artboard OR click-drag to size the placed image.

Linked vs Embedded Images:

- **Linked:** Smaller AI file size, but you must keep the original image file in the same location.
  - **Embedded:** Larger AI file size, but all data is stored in the Illustrator file.
- 💡 Tip: You can see if an image is linked or embedded in the **Links Panel** (Window > Links).

What is Image Trace?

**Image Trace** automatically converts raster images into **editable vector shapes**.

This is useful for:

- Converting a hand-drawn sketch into vector art
  - Turning a low-quality logo into a scalable version
  - Creating a flat, colored vector from a photo
- ◆ Remember: Image Trace is best for images with **clear shapes and limited colors**.

Using Image Trace

**Steps:**

1. Select the placed image.
2. Open the **Image Trace Panel** (Window > Image Trace).
3. Choose a **Preset**:

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 **ICSE**

 **NTSE**

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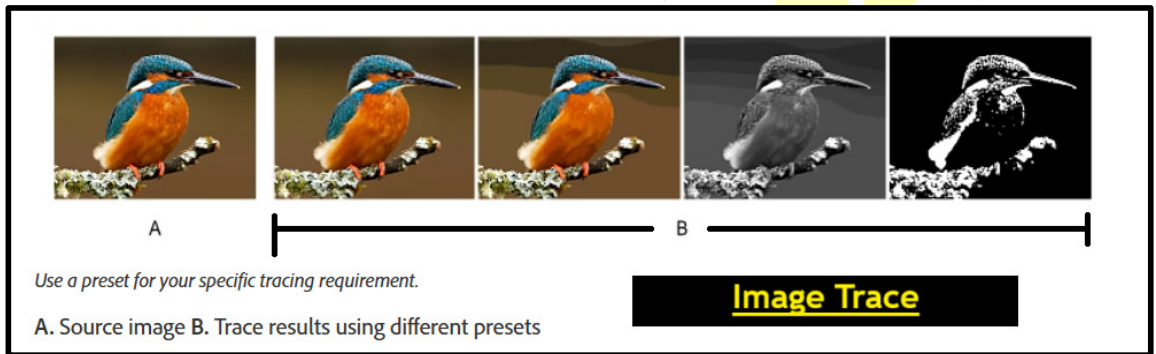
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- **Black and White Logo** - for solid shapes in black and white
  - **High Fidelity Photo** - keeps more details and colors
  - **Low Fidelity Photo** - fewer details, artistic look
  - **3 Colors / 6 Colors / 16 Colors** - limited color vectorization
  - **Line Art / Technical Drawing** - for outlines
4. Adjust Settings:
- **Mode:** Color, Grayscale, or Black & White
  - **Threshold:** (Black & White mode) - controls what's black vs white
  - **Paths:** More = detailed, Less = smoother
  - **Corners:** More = sharper edges, Less = rounded
  - **Noise:** Ignores small details/noise
5. Click **Preview** to see changes before applying.



**Expanding the Traced Image**

When you're happy with the Image Trace:

1. Click **Expand** in the Control Bar.
2. The traced object becomes editable vector shapes.
3. Use the **Direct Selection Tool (A)** or **Group Selection Tool** to edit individual shapes and colors.

💡 Tip: After expanding, you may need to **ungroup** objects (Object > Ungroup) for easier editing.

**Best Practices for Image Trace**

- Start with the **highest-quality raster image** possible.
- Use **simpler images** for cleaner results.
- Reduce image noise and unnecessary background before tracing.
- Keep an **original copy** in case you need to redo the trace.

**Real-World Applications**

- Digitizing hand-drawn artwork.
- Re-creating old logos in vector format.
- Making clipart from photos.

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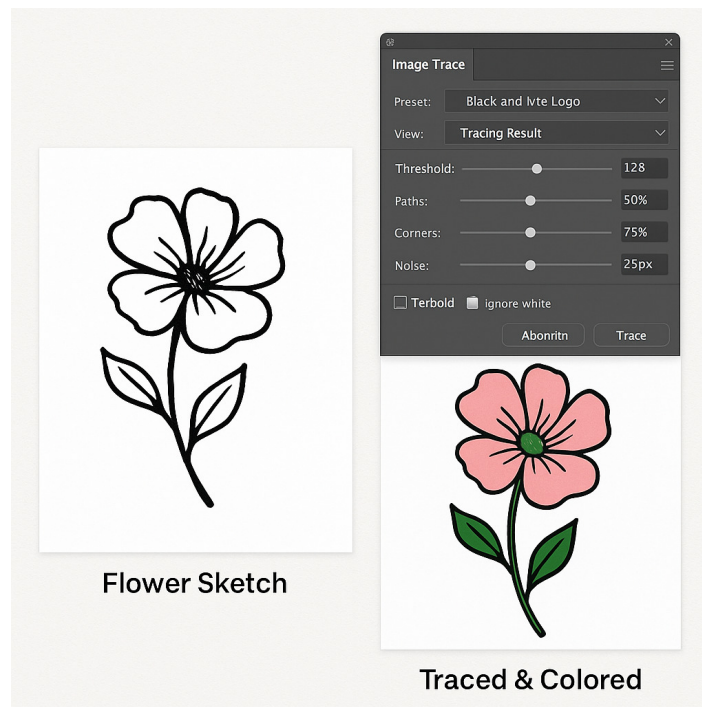
## Working with Images & Exporting Projects

### Assignment

**Scenario:** You have a hand-drawn flower sketch scanned as a JPG file.

**Tasks:**

1. Create a new Illustrator document (A4 size, RGB Mode).
2. Place the scanned flower sketch into your artboard.
3. Use **Image Trace** with the "Black and White Logo" preset.
4. Adjust **Threshold** to keep all main details of the flower.
5. Expand and **ungroup** the traced shapes.
6. Color the petals with pink and the stem with green.
7. Save the file as .ai and export a .png.



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