

How to Export an Illustrator File as a PDF

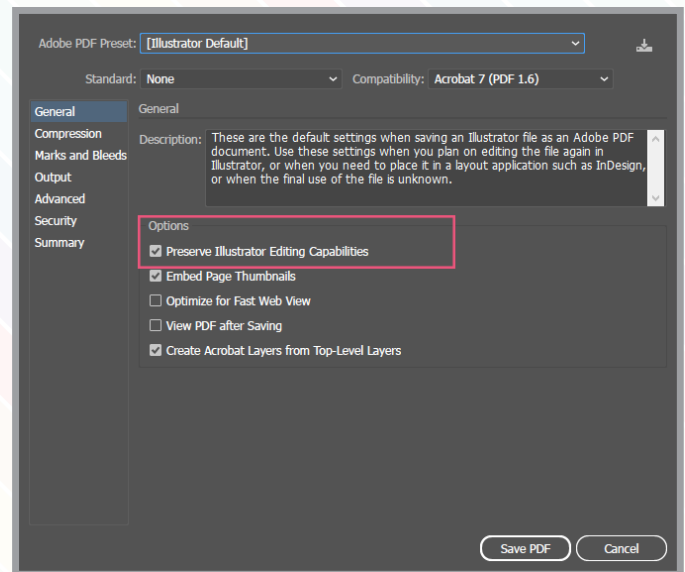
Last Updated: June 2023

1. Export settings

To begin exporting your Illustrator document as a PDF, open up the Save As panel (File > Save As or [Ctrl/Cmd]+Shift+S) and select where you want your file to be saved.

1a. General

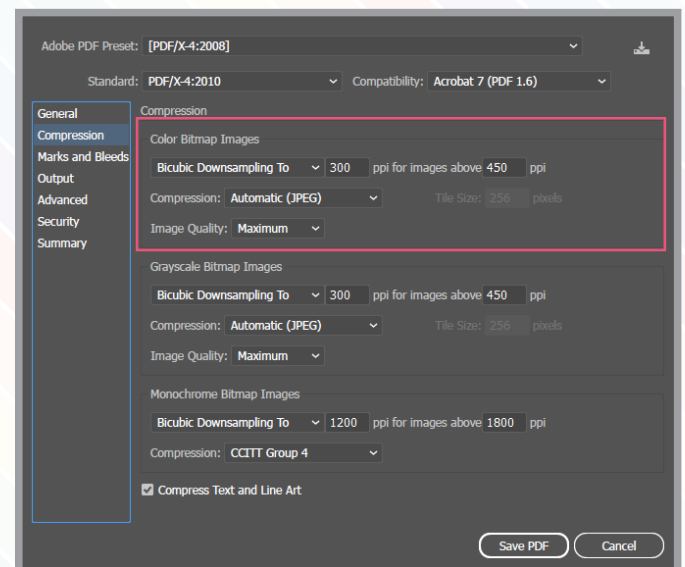
The first setting to address when exporting is Preserve Illustrator Editing Capabilities. Enabling this setting allows someone to edit the PDF in Illustrator very easily at the cost of greatly increasing the final file size. Therefore, it is recommended to leave this option disabled unless you want further edits made. If your artwork needs changes, and you have many linked objects in your document, it is recommended to package the file instead to ensure print quality does not degrade during the editing process. It is important to note that you can still edit a PDF that doesn't have this option enabled, albeit not as easily.



General menu

1b. Compression

Compression is a useful tool for reducing your PDF's file size. However, it is important to understand that excessive compression will lead to a loss of detail in your images. To make sure your document exports with the highest quality, you should keep the settings for color images set as shown in this image. If you are exporting a document which contains many high-res pictures, it might become necessary to lower the image quality or resolution (ppi) to make the final file size more manageable. Compression for Grayscale and Monochrome bitmap images should be kept as they are. Additionally, you should ensure that the option to Compress Text and Line Art is enabled.



Compression menu

1c. Output

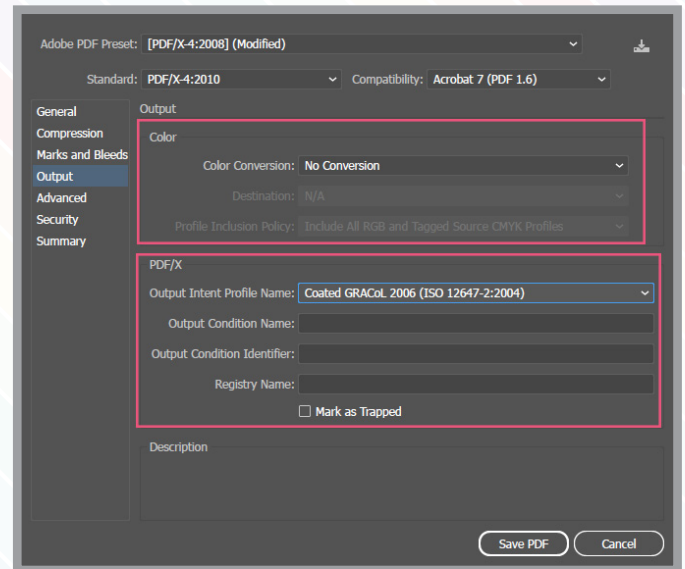
First, you should make sure that Color Conversion is set to say No Color Conversion to prevent unintended shifts in color. As well, it is recommended to change the Output Intent Profile Name to Coated GRACoL 2006, as this is another way to aid in color consistency.

1d. Marks and Bleeds

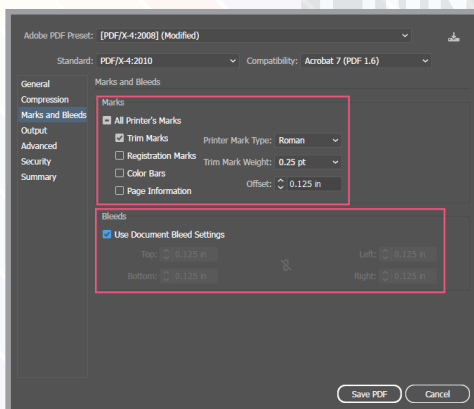
The Marks and Bleeds menu allows you to include information in your export that will greatly aid in the printing process. The settings you will select in this menu depend on if you intend for your document to bleed (print to the edge of the sheet) once printed.

If bleeds are present: Enable Crop Marks and change the offset to 0.125". Under Bleed and Slug, check Use Document Bleed Settings which will automatically set your export bleed margins to match the values set when creating your document. If you enable this setting and see that the values are 0", your document does not have a bleed margin. You can add a bleed margin in your document settings, although changes here may require modification to your artwork. It is recommended to use a bleed margin of 0.125" when creating a document.

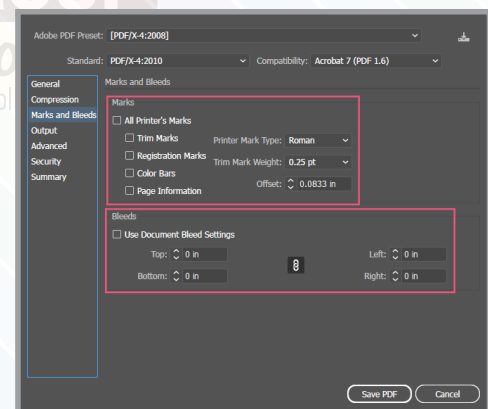
If bleeds are not present: Disable all printer marks and make sure your bleeds are set to 0". If the values are greyed out and set to anything besides 0", uncheck Use Document Bleed Settings and manually change the values to 0".



Output menu



Marks and Bleeds settings if you want your document to bleed



Marks and Bleeds settings if you do not want your document to bleed

2. Completing the Export

Once finished, ensure that all of the settings are correctly set and click Save PDF. After Illustrator has finished saving your file, you are now able to share the PDF for production.