

Adobe Illustrator

Mountain Sunset



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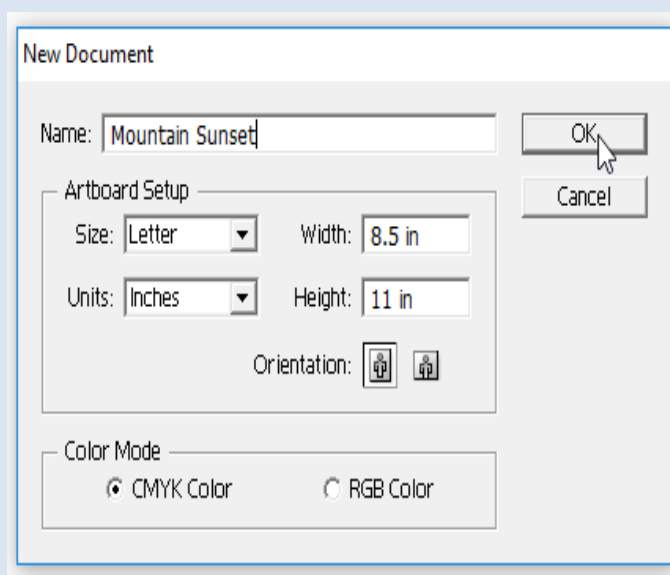
Introduction

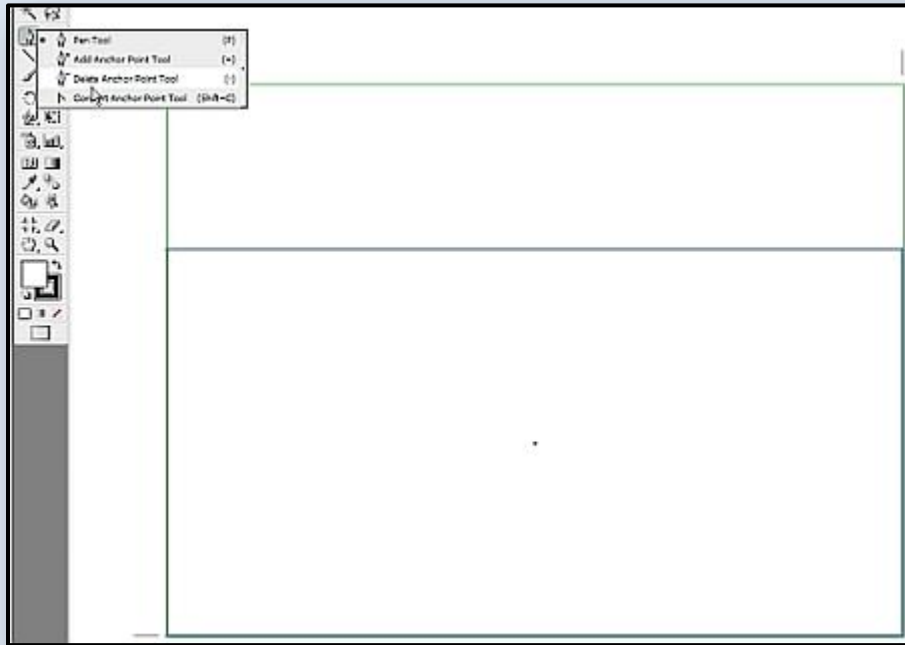
Today we're going to be doing a very simple yet very appealing mountain sunset tutorial. You can see the finished product pictured above. To create it you'll need Adobe Illustrator and of course to read this article.

Part 1 - Setting up the Drawing

Today we're going to start out with a letter sized drawing board, 8.5 inches by 11 inches wide. We will set the units to inches and the orientation to landscape. When you click on New in the File Menu, the menu on the right will appear. Make your settings match those in the picture.

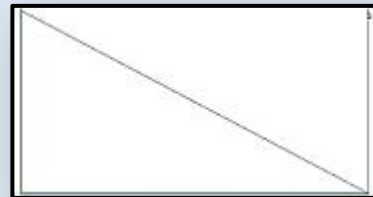
Ok, now that we have our drawing board set up, lets get to making our sunset. First off we need to make two rectangles, so go to your Tool Pallet and select the **Rectangle Tool**. Make two rectangles. The first one will be the size of the art board. The second one should be about 2/3 the height of the art board and be it's full width. Don't worry if you get outside the board, just don't make it smaller. The **Rectangle Tool** should snap to the edges by default.



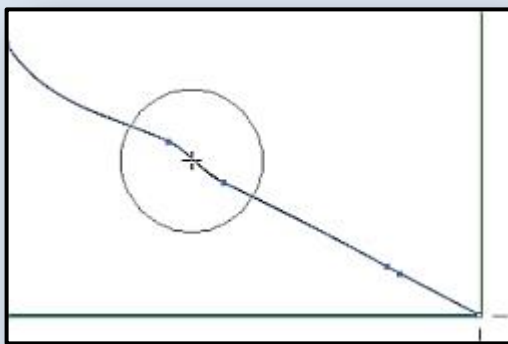


Part 2 - Mountains

Now we need to make a triangle out of our smaller rectangle. First select the smaller rectangle with the **Selection Tool** then go back to your tool pallet and pick the **Delete Anchor Point Tool**. Select the upper right anchor point and delete it. You should now have a triangle like this one.

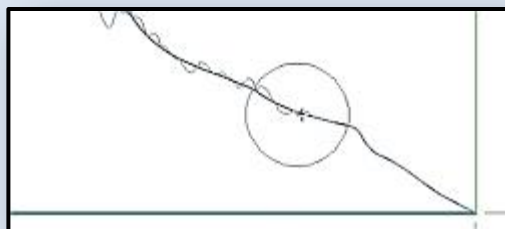


Next we need to make our triangle look like it's a tree covered mountain. Select the **Warp Tool** from the Tool Pallet while your triangle is still highlighted. We need to roughen the angled line without touching the other lines. Double click on the **Warp Tool** to get the warp tool options dialog. (This was one of the reasons I had



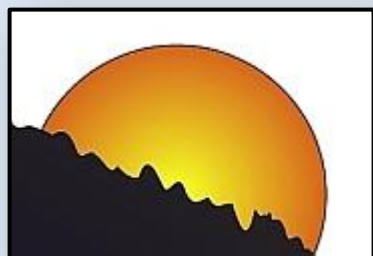
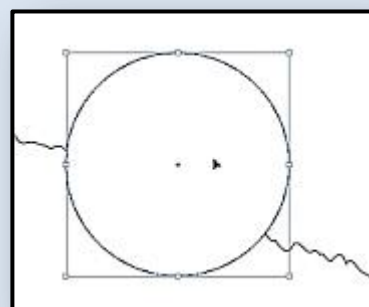
you use a specific size art board.) We wouldn't want some freaky results from anyone doing the tutorial so we need to make sure the settings are right. Don't worry about making any option changes, just select the **Reset** button to make sure your using the default settings, and **OK** out of the dialog. Finally you can drag the warp tool down the angled line in a wavy motion. You don't want big changes to the line. Just some subtle variation of the slope to make it more interesting. Remember not to touch the straight vertical or horizontal lines.

Now that we have our mountains definition, we need to put some trees on this puppy. Select your **Wrinkle (Roughen) Tool**. Once again we need to double click the icon for it's settings dialog. Select **Reset** then **OK** to close the window. This time we're going to do the same thing we did last time, but without the wavy motion. Just select the screen over our slanted line and drag along it's axis. You'll see some nice spiky changes as you go. Normally I would alter the settings a little to make them a little less rounded, but this work well too. When your finished hit it with a splash of color, ultimately it will be black, but any color will work for now. We'll get to that later, we just want it to stand out for the moment.



Part 3 The Sun and Sky

This is the easiest part of the tutorial. Select your **Ellipse Tool** from the Tool Pallet, and while holding the **Shift** key, make a circle on the screen the size you want to make your sun. Now right click on the circle and from the menu select **Arrange -> Send Backward**. This will put your sun between the background rectangle and your freshly made mountains.



Now that we have our three main elements, we need to start looking at the whole picture. If you had not already, use your **Selection Tool** to highlight your mountains and set the fill to black. For our sun, we're going to use a mild yellow to reddish orange gradient. So use the **Selection Tool** to highlight your sun. Go to your Gradient window and select **Radial** under the drop down menu. On the bar set the right site to an orangy color and the left to a mild yellow. Finally set the stroke to

transparent, and move onto the sky.

Finally, it's time to use the rectangle we drew at the very beginning of the tutorial. Use the **Selection Tool** to highlight the background rectangle. Now I want to use the same orange as I did before with the sun, so we can use the sun as a quick color reference. Select the **Eyedropper Tool** and select the sun. You're background should now be the same color as your sun. Go to your **Gradient Window** and select the yellow. We want to use a red burgundy color, so hope over to your **Color Window** and set the yellow to burgundy. But wait! Our colors are "inside-outside" as my son might say. No problem, just reverse the color placement on the **Gradient Window** slider, and all's good.



One last thing you may, or may not, want to do is change the length or amount of gradient of your sun or background. Select the one you want to change with the **Selection Tool**. Now pick the **Gradient Tool** from the tool pallet. click on the screen near the center of your sun and pull outward until you

want the gradient to stop. If you are just looking for a flat image, you can stop here. If your looking to really make this image “pop”, then read on.

Part 4 - Final Touches

Now that we have the basic appearance of our sunset finished, I want to make some changes to really make the image pop. This is where whenever you do a drawing, regardless of how quick and easy it may be, you need to take a break. Some call it “refreshing the visual pallet”. Get a drink, walk outside, smoke, whatever, just don’t look at the monitor for at least 10 minutes. Think of it as part of the design process. I garentee that it will make your designs better, and your eyes will love you for it too.

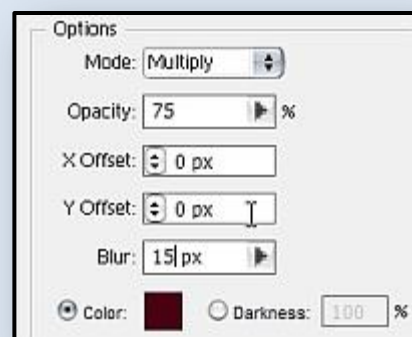
After coming back I like the way everything looks as it is, but the reds and oranges overwhelm the image so I’m going to add a second mountain to the right side to offset some of the color. This should bring out the remaining colors even more on a black background. Another thing is that the image is a little flat. The color ranges and overall depth to the image could be better. We’ll fix that next. Other then that, everything looks as it should.

Go to your **Selection Tool** in the Tool Pallet and select your existing mountains. Use **Ctrl + C** to copy the image then use **Ctrl + F** to paste a copy of the mountains on top of the other. Now right click on your mountain and select **Transform -> Reflect** from the menu. A small dialog will appear. Select the **Vertical** radio button and hit **OK**. Now that you have a mirrored copy of your mountains use your **Selection Tool** to make them slightly shorter then the first.



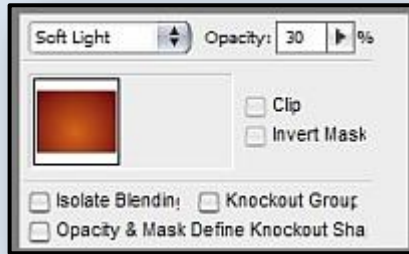
Did you notice the other change in the picture above? Our next tweak will be adding depth to this image. The simplest way to do this is to add a gradient to our sun and the tops of our mountains. Why the mountains you ask? Because we want to amplify the reflected sunlight aura at the tree line from the sunward side of our mountainous sunset. It’s a mouth full I know. Let’s just say it will make it look prettier :)

Select both mountains and the sun using the **Selection Tool**. Now go to **Effect -> Stylize -> Drop Shadow** in the main menu. A little dialog should pop up with some default settings. We want to add effect, not shadow, so we’ll have to make some changes here. First off we need to leave the Mode setting as multiply. We don’t want any type of offset, so set the **Offset** fields to zero. Next we want our effect to be fairly broad, so make the Blur field 15 pixels. Finally we want to use



a burgundy for the shadow color. Once you have all the settings ready click OK, and enjoy.

Finally! We're almost done drawing, so hang in there. We have an nice image, we have a little more depth, but it doesn't quite pop yet. For this I want to do some blending. This will bring our colors together, and give an overall warmth to the image.



Pick the **Selection Tool** from the Tool Pallet and select your background rectangle. Use **Ctrl + C** to make a copy and **Ctrl + F** to paste a copy in front of the other. Now we want this new object to be on top of the others. Right click on the rectangle and choose **Arrange -> Bring to Front**. You should only see the rectangle. Now go to your **Transparency Window**, and set your mode to **Soft Light**, and your **Opacity** to 30%. Leave the rest of the options as default. Now take a long look. Much better overall.

Yeah! We're done. You should now have an image similar to the one at the top of the page. I know this tutorial might have been a little longer then we both thought it would be at the beginning, but if you try to draw the image a second time you will realize that there really wasn't much involved in accomplishing what we did. In fact, the original image took me about five minutes to draw.

I know I usually add examples at the end of tutorials, but I have something special in mind for this one. You will just have to wait, so stick around for the second part.

