# How to use object styles

You may be familiar with paragraph and character styles from the "*How to use styles, lists, columns, and table of contents*" guide or from word processing programs. You can use paragraph and character styles to control the appearance of text throughout your documents. Paragraph and character styles track text characteristics such as font, font weight, and font size.

In Adobe InDesign, you can use styles with other kinds of objects. Object styles work like paragraph and character styles but can be applied to frames and shapes. For example, you can define an object style with a red stroke (border) 2 points wide, a dark-gray drop shadow, and a slight bevel. Then you can apply this object style to multiple frames throughout your document. After you have applied an object style to multiple objects, you can change the way these objects appear by just changing the style.

Like other styles, object styles help you achieve a uniform design. They give a document consistency by ensuring that every graphic frame on a page has the same appearance. In **Figure 1**, the image frames all have a pink stroke and a purple drop shadow. Without object styles, you would have to apply these characteristics to each frame separately. With object styles, you define characteristics once and then apply them multiple times. Download the assets used in this tutorial here.



*Figure 1* Example of object styles applied

## Defining object styles

The easiest way to define an object style is to apply multiple effects to a frame and then save the frame's style through the Object Styles panel.

In the following steps, you apply characteristics to a graphic frame, save these characteristics as an object style, and then apply these characteristics to other graphic frames.

## To apply characteristics to a frame:

1. Start InDesign and open a document.

2. If the document does not already have multiple graphic frames, use the Rectangle Frame tool to create some. You can also fill these with images by using the **File** > **Place** command.

   You should end up with a document that looks something like the example (**Figure 2**).

   **Note**: For more information on creating graphic frames or placing images, please see the guides titled "*How to work with graphic frames*" and "*How to place images on the page.*"

3. Choose the Selection tool in the Tools panel (**Figure 3**).

4. Click one of the graphic frames to select it.

5. Choose **Object** > **Effects** > **Drop Shadow**.

   The **Drop Shadow** category of the **Effects** dialog box appears (**Figure 4**).



*Figure 2* Sample InDesign document
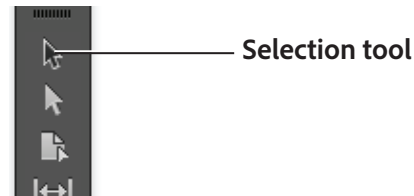


Selection tool
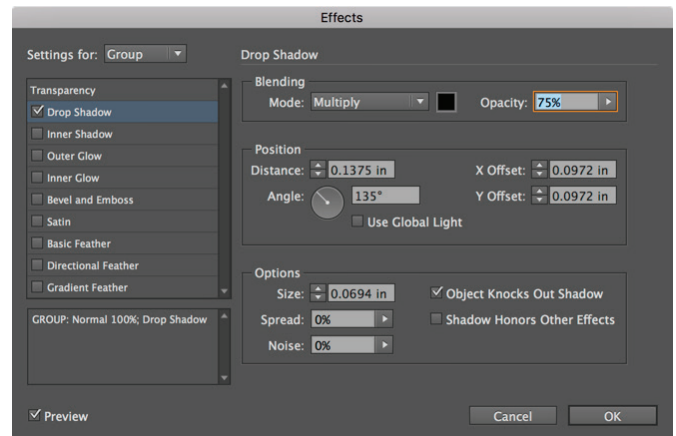
*Figure 3* Tools panel



*Figure 4* Drop Shadow category of the Effects dialog box

6. Under **Blending**, choose a color for the drop shadow by clicking the color box beside **Mode**.

   The **Effect Color** dialog box appears (**Figure 5**). When the **Swatches** option is selected, you can choose from a list of predefined colors. You can also define colors by selecting the **RGB** or **CMYK** options from the **Color** pop-up menu.

7. Select a color and click **OK**.

   The **Effect Color** dialog box closes.

8. In the **Effects** dialog box, modify some of the settings, including:

   • *Opacity* Changes the relative transparency of the drop shadow.

   • *Distance* Changes the virtual distance from the page surface.

   • *Angle* Change the angle of the drop shadow by dragging in the Angle circle.

   • *Size* Changes the overall size of the cast shadow.

   Select the **Preview** option to see the changes.

9. Click **OK** when you are satisfied with the settings .

   The **Drop Shadow** effect is applied to the graphic frame (**Figure 6**).

10. With the frame still selected, choose **Window** > **Stroke**.

    The **Stroke** panel appears (**Figure 7**).

11. Type **5** pt in the **Weight** text box.

12. Double-click the Stroke box in the Tools panel (**Figure 8**).

    The **Color Picker** appears.

13. Click in the large box to the left to select a color.

14. Click **OK**.

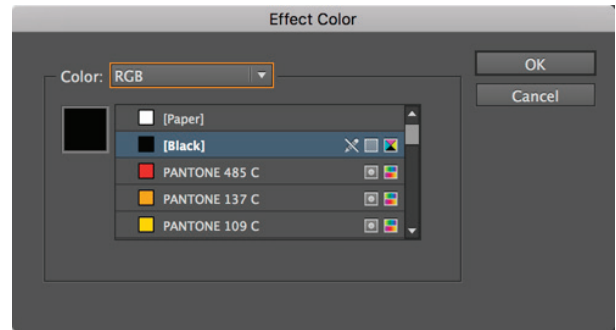    The **Color Picker** closes, and the colored stroke is applied to the graphic frame.



**Figure 5** *Effect Color dialog box*
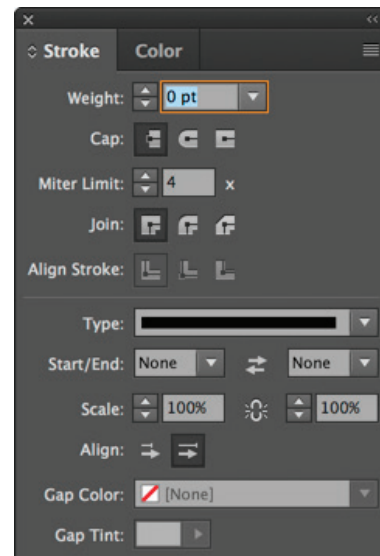


**Figure 6** *Drop shadow applied to graphic frame*



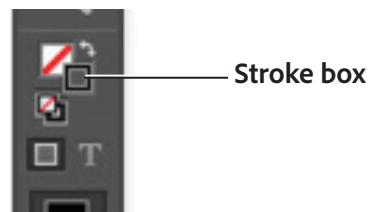**Figure 7** *Stroke panel*



**Figure 8** *Tools panel*

15. Choose **View** > **Screen Mode** > **Preview**.

    The **Preview** screen mode shows the document as it will appear when exported or printed (**Figure 9**).

16. Choose **View** > **Screen Mode** > **Normal** to return to **Normal** screen mode.



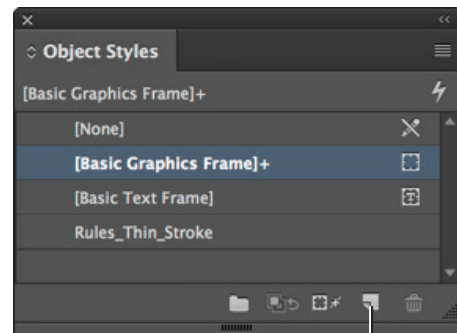*Figure 9* Previewing effects

## To create an object style:

1. Click the Selection tool in the Tools panel.

2. Click the graphic frame to which you have applied characteristics.

3. Choose **Window** > **Styles** > **Object Styles**.

    The **Object Styles** panel appears (**Figure 10**).

4. Click the Create New Style button.

5. A new style appears in the **Object Styles** panel.

    In **Figure 11**, the style is called **Object Style 1**.



**Create new style**

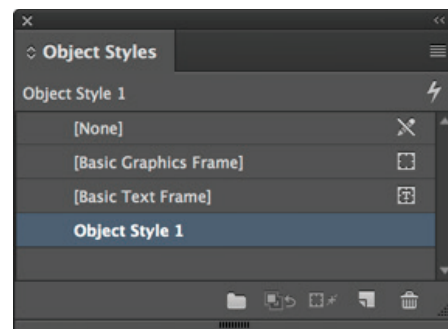*Figure 10* Object Styles panel



*Figure 11* New style created

6. Double-click the style.

   The **Object Style Options** dialog box appears, in which you can make changes to the style and name the style (**Figure 12**).

7. In the **Style Name** text box, enter a descriptive name for the style and click **OK**.

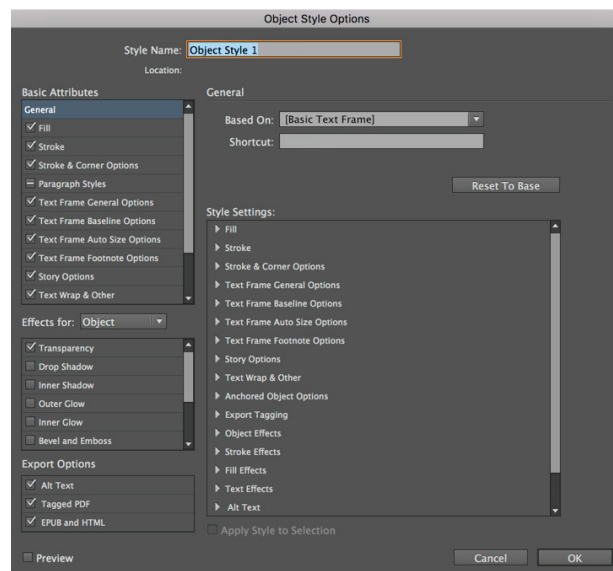   You can now apply the new style to other graphic frames.



*Figure 12* Object Style Options dialog box

## To apply an object style:

1. Click the Selection tool in the Tools panel.

2. Click one or more graphic frames to select them.

   To select multiple frames, hold down **Shift** while you click.

3. If the **Option Styles** panel is not already visible, choose **Window** > **Object Styles** to display it.

4. Click the name of the new style to apply it to the selected graphic frames.

5. Choose **View** > **Screen Mode** > **Preview**.

   The **Preview** screen mode shows the document as it will appear when exported or printed.

6. Choose **Edit** > **Deselect All** to deselect the frames.

   All of the frames have the same appearance. In **Figure 13**, for example, all the frames have a pink stroke and purple drop shadow.



*Figure 13* Preview mode of applied object styles

## For more information

Get instant access to free courses, workshops, & teaching materials and connect with the creative education community on the Adobe Education Exchange: https://edex.adobe.com/.

**Adobe Systems Incorporated**
345 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110-2704
USA
*www.adobe.com*

Adobe and the Adobe logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

© 2017 Adobe Systems Incorporated. All rights reserved.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.

**5**