

Tosa Skills Framework

Illustrator

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Introduction to Tosa Skills Framework

For Tosa Assessment and Certification

Tosa® (Test on Software Applications)

Tosa assessments and certifications determine and validate a candidate's proficiency and skill level in software applications used in a professional environment. Tosa assessments are designed to validate the professional Illustrator software skills of individuals (students, trainees, employees, or jobseekers) in supporting their employment, professional, or academic objectives.

Tosa assessments employ the Adaptive Testing Methodology, which creates a personalized testing experience adapted to a candidate's skill level for a selected software application. The score is based on the Item Response Theory using a 3-parameter logistic model, similar to the GMAT scoring method. Adaptive-based testing selects questions that challenge candidates to the limit of their knowledge and abilities.

Tosa Skills Framework Objective

This Tosa framework provides an overview of the subject areas being assessed during the Tosa Assessment and Certification Exams. Tosa validates candidate proficiency in the most popular professional Illustrator software programs using a score on a scale from 1-1000 for the Certification Assessment, and a score divided into five levels, from "Beginner" to "Expert," for the Diagnostic Assessment.

The objective of this document is to present an overview of the technical skills associated with each of the four main Illustrator domains within each proficiency level. This information will also support educators and trainers in tailoring their training program to achieve desired proficiency levels.

Unique Tosa Scoring

The Tosa assessments and certifications are based on a unique score, divided into five levels.

- ranging from 1 to 1000 for the certification.
- divided into five levels, from Beginner to Expert, for assessment.

| Tosa® levels | Corresponding Tosa® score | Certification status & documents issued |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Expert | 876 - 1000 | Certification earned - diploma & Credly digital badge issued |
| Advanced | 726 – 875 | Certification earned - diploma & Credly digital badge issued |
| Productive | 551 – 725 | Certification earned - diploma & Credly digital badge issued |
| Basic | 351 – 550 | Certification failed - certificate of completion issued |
| Beginner | 1 – 350 | Certification failed - certificate of completion issued |

Illustrator domains and subdomains

| | |
|---|---|
| Interface, digital workspace and fundamentals | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Managing Illustrator workspace environment■ Creating and transforming objects■ Managing typography, justification, and text objects |
| Work on objects | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Distorting objects, extracting illustrations■ Managing PDF files■ Using styles, exporting them to libraries |
| Specific functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Managing RGB and CMYK color types, color charts and color guides■ Creating graphs, structuring data■ Formatting |
| Production | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Exporting■ Generating resources■ Extracting and exporting parts of artwork■ Managing printing |

About the Illustrator certification

The Tosa Illustrator certification relies on a database of around 100 questions. It is composed of 35 questions and lasts one hour. The algorithm adapts to each answer of the candidates to adjust the difficulty level of the questions until they reach the exact definition of the candidates' level by calculating the limit of their skills.

Since the test is adaptive, the series of questions that each candidate gets is unique for each test. This uniqueness allows for a more accurate evaluation of the candidate's level. It also limits cheating and the memorization of questions on different passages.

Our platform allows individuals to take the certification in class, in an approved testing center, or remotely via our integrated asynchronous online proctoring solutions.

Our remote proctoring solutions provide added flexibility for both the administrator and the candidate, allowing the certification exam to be taken anywhere, at any time. The candidate only needs an internet connection and a computer equipped with a working webcam and microphone.

Candidates receive a numeric score out of 1000 points associated to a proficiency level on a five-level scale. Candidates who score between 1 and 550 points don't earn the certification. They will not receive a diploma but a certificate of completion. Candidates who score 551 points or above earn the certification. They will receive a diploma by email within five (5) business days and are eligible to a Credly digital badge.

There is no requirement to be eligible to take the exam, but our recommendations to be well prepared on exam day are:

- Take at least one Tosa Illustrator adaptive assessment to estimate your level and get familiar with the test format
- Use free practice tests on our website for training
- Follow e-learning or training courses (average duration per level is between 10 and 15 hours per certification so around 150 hours total)

Tosa certification diplomas are valid for three years from the date of issue as skill levels evolve or decline over time, depending on the use of the software. New software and software versions are released every year, and skills must be updated. We cannot legitimately certify a digital skills level for more than three years. Limiting the certification validity reinforces the need for life-long learning and professional development.

Tosa certifications can be retaken when it is expired. Earners willing to improve their score and level can also retake the exam at any time.

Level 1 – Beginner User

Between 1 and 350 points

The Beginner Proficiency is set for a score from 1 to 350, which is the lowest Tosa score category. Attaining the Beginner score defines little or limited knowledge of the Illustrator application, including the application's basic functions and features, highlighting the inability of the candidate to use the application in a professional environment.

Overview

| Domain | Skills Assessed |
|--|---|
| Interface, Workspace, and Fundamentals | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identifying and adapting the various panels for personal useIdentifying basic toolsKnowing what Illustrator is used forCreating a document |
| Work on Objects | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Drawing basic objectsApplying fill and stroke color to an object |
| Specific Functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Using the Text tool |
| Production | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Saving the file in AI (native) or .PDF (generic) format |

Level 2 – Basic User

Between 351 and 550 points

Prior to the acquisition of the skills of the Basic level, the candidate will have mastered the skills of the Beginner level.

Interface, Workspace, and Fundamentals

Interface

Candidates know how to start Illustrator and know the specific features of the illustrations produced with the software. They are familiar with general user interface elements and know how to adapt their work environment to their needs by displaying the necessary panels.

Candidates know how to open a file and modify it, either in Preview mode or Outline mode, depending on the specific needs and requirements. They know how to choose the appropriate selection tool from the Selection tools (Arrows) available.

Fundamentals

The concept of an object is acquired by candidates. They can manage objects and identify the selected element of an illustration in the Layer panel to modify it in a simple way. They also understand the objects group concept and know how to manipulate their objects simply.

Work on Objects

Knowledge of the interface is good enough to make object management more efficient. Objects piles are no longer a problem for candidates who know how to identify and manipulate them. Plans management is acquired.

Candidates know how to use the Object-Arrange Menu article to arrange objects further forward or backward in an illustration. Candidates can use the text in a non-linear way and associate it with various shapes. The use of the Curvature text tool is acquired.

They can arrange texts on more complex shapes created with predefined tools such as Rectangle or Ellipse. They also know how to duplicate, move, and distort objects with the corresponding tools and functions in the Object > Transform menu.

Specific Functions

As the various text tools are known to candidates, they can also incorporate special characters with the Glyphs panel, if necessary. Their object management also includes the basics of the Transparency panel's blending modes to start mixing objects colors and achieve subtle visual effects.

Production

Candidates know the basic constraints related to the different types of work they can produce (print/screen) and can therefore identify, set, and modify the different areas of their illustration: artboard, bleed, etc.

Overview

| Domain | Skills Assessed |
|---|---|
| Interface, Workspace, and Fundamentals | Interface <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customizing a workspace Working in Preview mode or Outline mode Using the right selection tools Fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigning a fill and stroke color to an object Managing the stroke of objects Grouping objects |
| Work on Objects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying objects on different layers Writing on a shape Duplicating an object in a specific way, other than copy and paste |
| Specific Functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding and typing special characters Knowing the most common blending mode |
| Production | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the specific areas of the document |

Level 3 – Productive User

Between 551 and 725 points

Prior to the acquisition of the skills of the Productive level, the candidate will have mastered the skills of the Basic level.

Interface, Workspace, and Fundamentals

Interface

Candidates know how to identify all the interface elements available. They know how to create a workspace specifically tailored to their needs by including all the necessary panels.

Fundamentals

Candidates can create complex objects using more specialized tools. Object creation and management is completely mastered, as in object manipulation and the operations that can be applied to them, like cutouts. The stacking of objects and the structure of an illustration are also fully mastered.

Candidates' object management skills include creating specific colors. Pattern creation is also assimilated.

Illustration placement and the overall management of illustrations are not a problem for candidates regardless of the method used: linked, embedded, or from Cloud library. Flexible use of CC Libraries is also part of the candidates' skills. Candidates also know how to choose their work units effectively.

The different methods of text generation and management are mastered.

Business application: For example, for a communications manager, these skills allow them to optimize his workspace and the creative process. They are thus able to adapt their creative projects to their needs and to develop their promotional campaigns on different channels.

Work on Objects

Objects interactions are known and fluid. Candidates know how to add, subtract, and divide their shapes to create new more complex ones just as they know how to manage the transparencies of objects. Creating dynamic, complex objects is also part of candidates' skills.

The alignments and precise arrangement of the objects are well-assimilated subjects. The identification, creation, and management of masks are also acquired.

Candidates are aware of the different swatch books available, know how to find them, and create the colors adapted to their needs.

Candidates streamline their production using symbols and text styles in complex illustrations.

Business application: For example, for a communication manager, these skills allow them to rework and edit their own communication supports containing illustrations (brochures,

leaflets, emailings, templates, etc.) as part of the evolution of the company's offer or products.

Specific Functions

Candidates are familiar with the Image Trace and Live Paint functions. They can also present illustrations in several color variants. The creation of very complex gradients, especially with the Mesh Tool, is acquired.

The deformation of objects is known, either in shape blending or in envelope distortion. Work on the perspective grid is mastered, especially in its constraints. Importing images for template purposes is easily managed by candidates, as is the web preview work and the resulting pixel grid constraints.

Candidates can create and manage symbols that include automatic deformations in the graphs they generate. Candidates also know how to create text tables.

Business application: For example, for a communications manager, these skills allow them to optimize the process of creating and updating content for their many marketing materials, such as digital ads, flyers, or brochures.

Production




Candidates' knowledge of the various production constraints, related to the different types of work, allow them to decide to vectorize text on demand if needed.

They also know how to package a document to make it stand-alone and send it for outsourcing, production, or archiving.

Font installation principles and constraints are mastered by the candidates on their machines. These are specific to an operating system, but the candidates are also able to explain the process to any external technical contacts and even know the how-to for other operating systems.

Business application: For example, for a communications manager, these skills allow them to import and export common file formats such as PDF, JPEG, PNG and thus be able to share their communication materials more easily with all his contacts.

Overview

| Domain | Skills Assessed |
|---|--|
| Interface, Workspace, and Fundamentals |  Managing all interface panels  Drawing regular objects using shape or position constraint shortcuts  Coloring objects with colors and patterns created on demand |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Cutting out objects in various ways ✎ Changing the stacking of objects ✎ Identifying and applying patterns to objects ✎ Importing illustrations in various ways ✎ Using CC libraries ✎ Managing units based on the purpose of the work ✎ Accurately identifying text tools |
| Work on Objects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Mixing objects by adding, subtracting, or cutting them and creating complex shapes with the achieved results ✎ Managing the transparency of objects ✎ Using masks ✎ Using colors from other swatch books ✎ Aligning the different points of the shapes or dynamically modifying the shapes with the appropriate functions and then aligning or arranging them precisely ✎ Creating and using symbols ✎ Managing a text with styles |
| Specific Functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Coloring an illustration with Live Paint ✎ Using the Mesh Tool ✎ Creating programmed deformations between two shapes ✎ Distorting objects with effects or with envelope distortion ✎ Using symbols for graphs ✎ Working on the perspective grid ✎ Using an image as a template or vectorizing it ✎ Working with a web-specific preview mode ✎ Arranging text in a table |
| Production | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Vectorizing text when necessary ✎ Packaging a file to send it to outsource |

Level 4 - Advanced User

Between 726 and 875 points

Prior to the acquisition of the skills of the Advanced level, the candidate will have mastered the skills of the Productive level.

Interface, Workspace, and Fundamentals

Interface

Candidates have a complete knowledge of Adobe Illustrator's interface. They know how to set up their tools and their workspace.

Object management in the layer panel raises no difficulty for candidates who know how to identify and select objects accurately according to their needs. Using the Object article in the Selection menu is also an acquired skill for candidates who know how to select hard-to-select objects.

Workspace

Artboard management is fully acquired and used to respond effectively to print or web production issues.

Fundamentals

Candidates know how to use all the Object Selection Tools available or change Adobe Illustrator's functions to access hard-to-select objects. Vector paths and related tools are used fluidly.

Managing the specific colors for web or print illustrations is fluid. They know how to choose the color mode when creating or identifying the colors they create. RGB/CMYK conversion errors are identified and managed immediately.

Business application: For example, for an advertising manager, these skills allow them to optimize the design process. They are thus able to adapt the creative projects created upstream by their teams to the needs of his clients and to develop promotional campaigns on different channels.

Work on Objects

Gradient tool and panel knowledge is complete. Candidates master the creation and application of complex gradients on all object's components.

The cutting of objects and their different effects are not a problem for candidates who know, at the Advanced level, how to create compositions of dynamically editable objects. The duplication and precise arrangement of the objects are managed with ease.

The concept of drawing inside another object allows candidates to accelerate their productions by creating clipping masks faster.

The texts are managed within the illustration: candidates understand the difference between a character style and a paragraph style and know when to use each one. The overall change in the texts of an illustration is understood.

The illustrations produced are structured appropriately, making modifications or variations easier and faster.

Business application: For example, for an advertising manager, these skills allow them to easily create and edit the graphic aspect of their advertising campaigns while respecting marketing imperatives and technical constraints.

Specific Functions

Candidates know how to use the transparency panel and create objects with advanced transparency features. They are also able to use these options to obtain specific transparency in groups of objects.

All the options in the color panel that differentiate the colors created by candidates are used to produce CMYK and/or spot color illustrations. The use of standard swatch books is fluid.

Candidates know the different ways to save and share their colors and patterns created in their swatch panel via -.ai file, -.ase file, or CC library. They know how to communicate information depending on the context.

Candidates' knowledge of the composition of objects in the Appearance panel is complete. They know how to create objects with multiple fills or strokes, as well as effects on specific components without difficulty. The management and modification of these complex appearances is fluid. Symbols are also part of the mastered functions, they are created and used without problems. Candidates know how to identify and then modify these symbols in their illustrations.

Candidates are familiar with the perspective grid. They have integrated the specific constraints of the function and know how to set it up. They can draw on it without losing the benefit of editability through symbols. They can also integrate text objects into their grids while keeping them editable.

Business application: For example, for an advertising manager, these skills allow them to rework and edit the graphic creations of their advertising campaigns themselves and thus respond quickly to their clients' requests for modifications.

Production

Candidates can produce any type of illustration, Web or print. Specific knowledge for both applications is complete. Overprinting, which often must be managed on an individual basis in the packaging industry, for example, is a parameter that candidates can use via the Attributes panel but also via the Transparency panel blending options.

Supported colors are also known to candidates: they can plan and manage the printing of their work. The export of illustrations in all necessary formats is done smoothly. Candidates have integrated the ins and outs of all the main file formats used in web or print domains and therefore immediately know which format is best suited. The use of export interfaces for the Web is perfectly handled.

Business application: For example, on an advertising manager's profile, these skills allow them to export, share and present their files to his numerous contacts (clients, art directors, layout artists, printers, etc.).

Overview

| Domain | Skills Assessed |
|---|--|
| Interface, Workspace, and Fundamentals | Interface <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mastering the Layers panel Manipulating objects in various ways Workspace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handling and modifying Artboards Fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using precise vocabulary on the different parts of a vector path Identifying out of gamut colors corresponding to the nature of the work in progress (RGB/CMYK) |
| Work on Objects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying multiple types of gradients to different components of objects Duplicating/distributing objects with precision Merging/dividing objects Using text styles Changing objects appearance |
| Specific Functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the perspective grid Using symbols effectively Managing the transparency of objects Precisely identifying the colors in the color scheme Using the Aspect panel, generating complex aspects Identifying symbols Drawing inside objects |
| Production | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mastering the notions of overprinting and color supporting Knowing the specifics of each file format during an export Exporting perfectly sharp illustrations for the web |

Level 5 – Expert User

Between 876 and 1000 points

Interface, Workspace and Fundamentals

Interface

Candidates have an in-depth knowledge of Illustrator's parameters and know how to modify and adapt them to the needs of their work. They can easily change work units on-the-fly in an illustration. They manage their rulers and measures according to one or more artboards.

Object creation is smooth and efficient using keyboard shortcuts and drawing tools specific to each task: drawing from the center, on-the-fly variation of the number of sides on a polygon or the star inset tool. Shortcuts are also used when transforming objects.

All the object Selection tools are known and used. The various Selection tools previously used are now complemented by the Magic Wand tool and Lasso tool which are set up, if necessary, via the Magic Wand panel. Using these advanced tools, candidates exploit items from the Selection menu to make selections on identical types of objects or select objects based on attributes that are assigned to them. For this, full knowledge of the ability to assign attributes to an object is necessary and fully integrated. Memorizing its selections in complex illustrations allows candidates to navigate freely and easily and find objects or groups of objects in illustrations.

Fundamentals

Candidates know how to make guides with any object and are no longer limited to orthogonal guides only. They manage the guides and all the information Illustrator provides in the View menu. Therefore, the knowledge of these different types of information (guides, rulers, linked text, document grid, perspective grid, slices, etc.) and their effects (snap to point, snap to grid, smart guides, etc.) is thorough.

Candidates also know how to work in Outline, Preview, or Pixel Preview modes according to their needs. The web purpose of an illustration does not raise difficulty for them in managing the alignments of objects on the pixel grid, which, they know how to activate if necessary, during creation to present perfectly sharp illustrations when displayed on screen.

Candidates' use of the Gradient panel is fluid. They can identify their different types of elements: colors, groups, and themes of colors, as well as gradients and patterns.

The knowledge of typography is comprehensive enough for candidates to make full use of all the advanced features that Adobe Illustrator offers.

They know precisely in which case to produce Area Type objects or, on the contrary, Point Type objects. Candidates not only use all basic functions of the Text menu but also have perfect knowledge of justification options. They can use the OpenType functions in the OpenType panel.

Business application: For example, for an art director profile, these skills allow them to perfectly set up their workspace and thus optimize their graphic design and creativity.

At this level, the candidate can train on this software.

Work on Objects

General object handling is fully mastered by the candidates. They can create complex objects using tool-specific keyboard shortcuts such as polygon or star. They also know the shortcut for drawing objects from the center and for proportion constraints. Deformation of objects using specific tools or distributed transformation is easy. The repetition of the transformations is also managed thoroughly.

The use of specific functions for dynamic modification of shapes such as ellipses or rounded angles with Properties or Transformation panels is commonly practiced.

Candidates can immediately identify complex objects such as compound paths or clipping masks in the Layers panels. The use of these functions is natural and fluid and their manipulation when retrieving illustrations or exploring PDF files for extracting elements is effective. The simplification of illustrations when opening PDF files is done with ease.

Candidates have fully integrated the use of the Appearance panel specifically for text objects. These objects, which require special attention in their treatment especially for strokes, are perfectly manipulated and the illustrations thus produced contain texts that remain editable despite the complex functions that are applied.

To further speed up, facilitate, and make their work more reliable, candidates use graphic styles. They know how to create them easily as well as export them to custom libraries or CC libraries.

Business application: For example, for an art director profile, these skills allow them to develop complex visual identities in the form of models (or "rough") that they produce for their clients.

At this level, the candidate can train on this software.

Specific Functions

Candidates know, in addition to the proficiency already acquired on the different types of colors (RGB/CMYK, coming from another swatch book - global or not, process/spot color), on the different swatch books available, and how to make their color choices with the Color Guide panel. Skills on rules of color association are acquired. The generation of color variants in their illustrations is done easily using the Color Guide panel.

They also master the use of the Adobe Color Themes panel to search and prepare their color harmonies. Creating color is easy, as is registering in CC libraries to eventually share with collaborators or customers.

Candidates, since they know how to use simple patterns from the Productive level, have perfected their technique to create repetitive patterns. Using and editing these patterns in an illustration is easy.

Candidates manage the creation of complex objects via the Appearance panel. This panel becomes an essential element of illustrations, enabling multiple strokes, multiple backgrounds, and multiple effects to be applied to the same object. Identifying the attributes

of complex appearance of an object in the Layers panel is easy and candidates can modify or duplicate those attributes from one object to another, or from object to group of objects. They also easily simplify the aspects if necessary, by expanding them. Object expanding or appearance expanding are well-known.

Isolation Mode is commonly used to edit different components of objects, groups of objects, or symbols. Creating graphs of all available types is fluid: candidates know how to structure their data – if necessary, with a spreadsheet - to introduce it into the interface of the Graph Tools in the order required by the type of graph chosen. Graph modification and coloring with the right selection tools are acquired.

Candidates can also create specific symbols that will be used to enhance their graphs. The generation of symbols stretching over particular areas in a programmed way is not a problem. The integration and possible replacements of these symbols in the graphs are easy. Finally, candidates can use character and paragraph styles to reliably caption graphs.

Business application: For example, for an art director profile, these skills allow them to quickly adapt their graphic creations to respond to requests for modifications from their teams or clients.

At this level, the candidate can train on this software.

Production

Candidates thoroughly manage exporting their work in all the available ways. They can generate web or print illustrations, pixelated, or vectored without distinction.

Their technical knowledge of web imperatives is enough for the use of the File Export panel to be transparent. Generating the resources needed for all uses (different sizes for Responsive Design or different device screens) is mastered. Extracting and exporting specific parts of the illustration to generate interfaces is not a problem in the same panel.

Candidates are aware of the color management system that they will have adjusted themselves in Illustrator in the Edit menu. They also know how to apply these same color management settings to a complete CC suite through Adobe Bridge.

Candidates' knowledge of printing is comprehensive enough for the most technical terms such as overprinting, supporting colors, or knockout being commonly used with contractors. Candidates are familiar with Offset printing, but they also know what constraints other printing methods may involve: such as screen printing, which normally does not support any overprinting, and as a result requires sometimes deep modifications in the illustrations.

Candidates also manage their paths and especially their texts when sending their illustrations to production, as digital cutting induces other constraints at the production level. Candidates thoroughly understand the production method for their work and apply the necessary modifications to their illustrations.

Business application: For example, for an art director profile, these skills allow them to import and export common file formats: AI, EPS, GIF, JPEG, and PNG and thus be able to export,

share and present their files to his numerous contacts (clients, graphic designers, web designers, layout artists, printers, etc.).

At this level, the candidate can train on this software.

Overview

| Domain | Skills Assessed |
|---|--|
| Interface, Workspace, and Fundamentals | Interface <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Drawing complex objects by combining keyboard shortcuts ✎ Selecting objects accurately with all existing tools Fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Drawing and creating guides with any shape ✎ Manipulating swatches ✎ Managing typography accurately |
| Work on Objects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Repeating transformations ✎ Using widgets for dynamic object transformation ✎ Identifying and managing compound paths ✎ Using different text tools ✎ Assigning outside strokes to text ✎ Creating graphic styles ✎ Generating new objects directly by manipulating them ✎ Making full use of appearances |
| Specific Functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Using the Color Guide ✎ Creating graphs of different types ✎ Changing graphs ✎ Using symbols to enhance graphs ✎ Exporting and sharing swatches ✎ Generating patterns ✎ Creating and expanding complex objects ✎ Managing appearances accurately and duplicating as needed ✎ Working in isolation mode for objects, groups of objects, and symbols |

| | |
|------------|--|
| Production | <p>Print</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✎ Printing a document in spreads and saving predefined print settings✎ Using the ink manager <p>Automation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✎ Knowing paragraph and character styles and spotting style overrides in the style panels✎ Setting up cascading styles by using the next style parameter✎ Creating paragraph styles with nested character styles✎ Creating table styles containing nested cell styles✎ Adapting the layout during a document size change✎ Anchoring a frame within a text flow✎ Setting up the table of contents✎ Inserting a text variable✎ Creating object styles |
|------------|--|

