CHAPTER 7
INFOCUS

WORKING WITH COLOUR

Colour is a very important aspect of graphic design. Colour selection and representation are important in conveying a message, attracting certain kinds of audiences, improving aesthetic appeal and many other elements associated with document production. Because of this Adobe InDesign provides you with many tools and settings to allow you to apply colours to your projects in bold and dynamic ways.

In this session you will:

- ✓ gain an understanding of colour terminology
- ✓ gain an understanding of stroke and fill
- ✓ gain an understanding of the colour panel
- ✓ learn how to apply a fill colour
- ✓ learn how to apply a stroke colour
- ✓ learn how to select a foreground colour using the ***Eyedropper*** tool
- ✓ learn how to select colours using the ***Swatches*** panel
- ✓ learn how to add colours to the ***Swatch*** panel
- ✓ learn how to create a gradient
- ✓ learn how to create a colour group
- ✓ learn how to create a colour theme
- ✓ learn how to remove colour.

UNDERSTANDING COLOUR

There are many ways to represent colour. The methods you use to represent colour in an InDesign document will vary depending upon factors such as whether the document will be printed or displayed as a PDF, what your printing budget is, what technology you'll be using to print and so on. This page explains some of the colour concepts you'll need to understand.

Process Colours

Process printing, also known as four-colour offset printing and the CMYK system, uses a blend of four colours to achieve colour printing. The process colours are **C**yan, **M**agenta, **Y**ellow and Blac**k**, where **K** also stands for **K**ey. In many professional printing projects, such as those created in InDesign, colours are specified as a percentage blend of these colours. In the printing process, a film is created for each colour and then used to create four printing plates, making four-colour offset printing quite an expensive process. However, CMYK achieves the best results.

Spot Colours

A cheaper way to achieve a high-quality colour print job is to use spot colours. Spot colours are pre-mixed colours which are made up of the colours cyan, magenta, yellow and black. In InDesign, they are shown as CMYK colours. In the printing process, only a film for the spot colour and maybe black would be required.

The Pantone Matching System is the most commonly used selection of pre-mixed spot colours. To get an accurate result, they provide samples of pre-mixed colours to select from.

Spot colours can be used to create several 'colours' by the process of tinting or reducing the amount of colour printed in an area. A colour printed at 100% colour will be more intense than the same colour at 50% colour or at 15% colour.

Lab Colours

A less frequently used option is ***Lab*** colour. Colours are determined by their percentage lightness (**L**), where L=100 is white and L=0 is black, as well as a position between magenta and green (**a**) and yellow and blue (**b**). Positive **a** and **b** values indicate magenta and yellow respectively, while negative values indicate green and blue respectively.

RGB

Where the final product is to be viewed on screen, such as in a PDF or on a website, the colours chosen are based on **R**ed, **G**reen and **B**lue values. This is because instead of mixing colours to create new colours, a computer screen mixes red, green and blue light to achieve different colours. RGB colours should not be used for printing documents because the colour shown on the screen is unlikely to match the desired printed colour. It is very important to check the printed proof copy to ensure that the colours are what you expected and wanted.

Colour Gamut

The reason that different colouring systems give different results is because the colours are created in different ways – mixes of colours, mixes of light or mixes of position in a spectrum. While the human eye is capable of distinguishing a wide range of colours, only a subset of these colours can be reproduced by modern equipment. The range of colours produced by a specific item of equipment such as a printer is known as the colour gamut.

Gradients

A gradient is a graduated blend between two colours or two tints of the same colour. Gradients can be created and modified using the ***Gradient*** panel. This panel displays a bar that has a number of ***stops***. A ***stop*** is the point where a gradient changes from one colour to the next. By adding colours to stops, changing stop locations or adding and removing stops you can modify and create gradients.

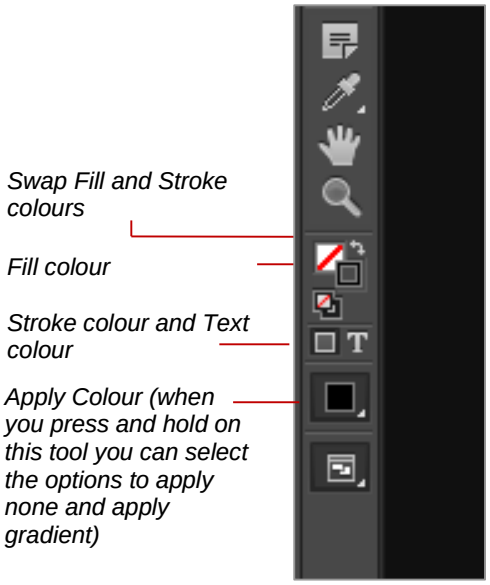
Tint

A ***tint*** is a lighter version of a spot or process colour. It is achieved by printing less of the coloured ink in an area – effectively increasing the amount of white in the mix. Tints are a cheap way to create a wide range of different print colours for a single or two spot colour job. Tints are expressed as percentages of the colour, where 100% is the initial colour and 0% is white.

STROKE AND FILL

Before you begin selecting and applying colour there are some fundamental concepts you need to understand. ***Fill*** and ***Stroke*** colours are located in the ***Tool*** panel. ***Fill*** is the way InDesign identifies the colour that will be applied to the inside of a shape, frame or path. ***Stroke*** is the colour that will be applied to the outside of a shape, frame or path.

The fill and stroke colours are displayed together as small swatches on the ***Tools*** panel. By default the fill appears as no colour and the stroke appears black. To swap the fill and stroke colours click on ***Swap Fill and Stroke***. It is important to select either the fill or the stroke before you choose a colour, otherwise the colour may be applied to the wrong part of the object. If ***Fill*** is selected, the colour will be applied to the inside of the object. If ***Stroke*** is selected, the colour that will be applied to the outside of an object. To select the fill or stroke you can click on the ***Fill*** or ***Stroke*** icons in the ***Tools*** panel or the ***Colour*** panel.



Understanding Fill

A ***fill*** is the ***solid colour***, ***gradient*** or ***pattern*** applied to the inside of an object or enclosed path.

- ***Solid colour*** is a single colour fill
- ***Gradient*** is the graduated blend of two or more colours
- ***Pattern*** refers to repetitive art elements (such as tartan or a series of dots) applied to the inside of the object. InDesign has hundreds of patterns available for you to apply and edit.

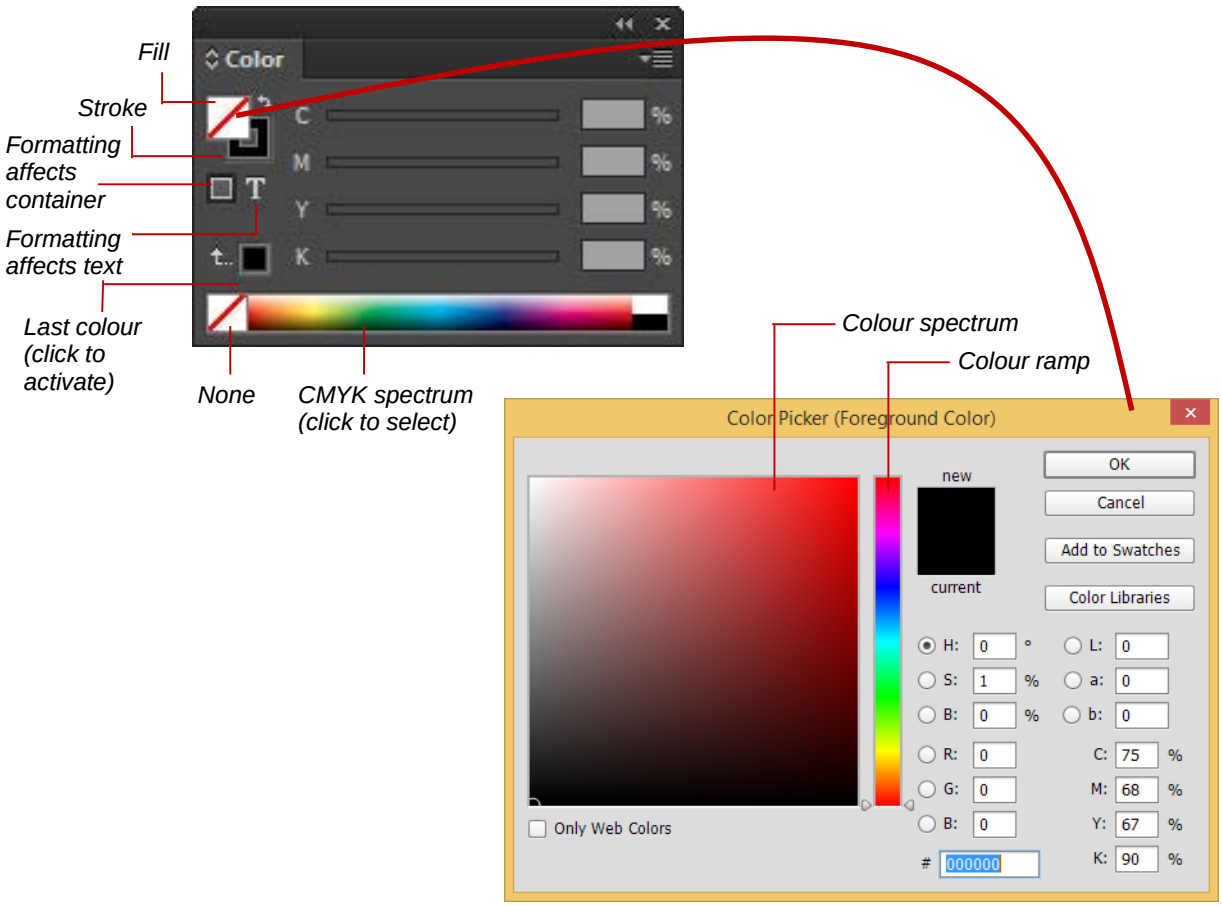
Fill is applied to objects using the various ***colour controls*** available in InDesign (such as the ***Colour*** tools on the ***Tools*** panel, the ***Colour*** panel and the ***Swatches*** panel). This chapter will focus on applying solid colours to fills and strokes.

Understanding Stroke

When you apply colour to the path or outline of an object, a ***stroke*** appears along the path. You can apply colour to paths to create strokes using the same methods as for applying colour to fills. For example, select the ***Stroke*** icon in the ***Tools*** panel and then use any of the available colour controls to apply a stroke. As well as applying strokes, you can apply effects to the stroke, such as increasing or decreasing the ***weight*** (thickness), changing solid strokes to dashed lines, and so on.

UNDERSTANDING THE COLOUR PANEL

The ***Colour*** panel plays an important role in working with documents in InDesign. It displays the colour values for the selected fill and stroke colours and provides you with a number of ways to choose the exact colour you require.



The Colour Panel

The ***Colour*** panel appears in the ***Panel dock*** by default in most workspaces. If you need to display the ***Colour*** panel you can do so by selecting **Window** > **Colour**. The panel displays ***stroke*** and ***fill*** icons that contain whatever colour is currently selected for the stroke and fill. If you have not selected stroke and fill colours, the fill will be assigned no colour and the stroke will be black by default. Ensure that you click on either the stroke colour or fill colour before you pick a colour. The main area of the panel is the spectrum. Click anywhere in the spectrum to select that colour. Alternatively click on the colour ramp to display a different selection of colours in the spectrum.

The Panel Options Menu

Click on the menu to display a menu of options relating to colour. Using this menu you can choose different colour models such as ***RGB***, ***CMYK*** and much more. A ***colour*** model is a way of describing how that colour will appear on a computer screen or in print. For instance the ***CMYK*** model is used for print work and all colours are based on ***Cyan***, ***Magenta***, ***Yellow*** and ***Black***. The ***RGB*** model is used for colours that will appear digitally and are based on the colours ***Red***, ***Green*** and ***Blue***.

Colour Picker Dialog Box

The colours that appear in the ***Colour Picker*** are based on whatever colour model you selected in the ***Colour*** panel menu. You can use the ***Colour*** field or the ***slider*** to preview and select colours. If you know the specific values for the colour you require you can type them in the fields provided.

APPLYING A FILL COLOUR

Many objects in InDesign consist of ***stroke*** and ***fill***. The fill is the area inside the stroke (outline), so the fill may be inside a frame, within a drawing, or the area inside lettering. Colour can be applied to a fill in much the same way colour can be applied to a stroke. You must simply select ***Fill*** in the ***Tools*** panel or one of the ***Colour*** panels.

Try This Yourself:

Open File

Before starting this exercise you MUST open the file IN1410 Working With Colour_1.indd…

1. Ensure layer ***4*** is selected in the ***Layers*** panel, click on the ***Type*** tool in the ***Tools*** panel, then click and drag to select the words ***The Park***
2. Click on ***Colour*** in the ***panel*** dock to display the ***Colour*** panel
3. Double-click on the text ***Fill*** icon to display the ***Colour Picker***
4. Ensure the values are entered as shown to select a shade of red
5. Click on **[OK]** to apply the colour

   Notice the Colour panel now displays sliders for the CMYK values…
6. Click on the scrubby slider for ***C*** (Cyan) and drag so the value appears as ***219***, as shown
7. Click on the ***Select*** tool in the ***Tools*** panel to deselect the text and view the result

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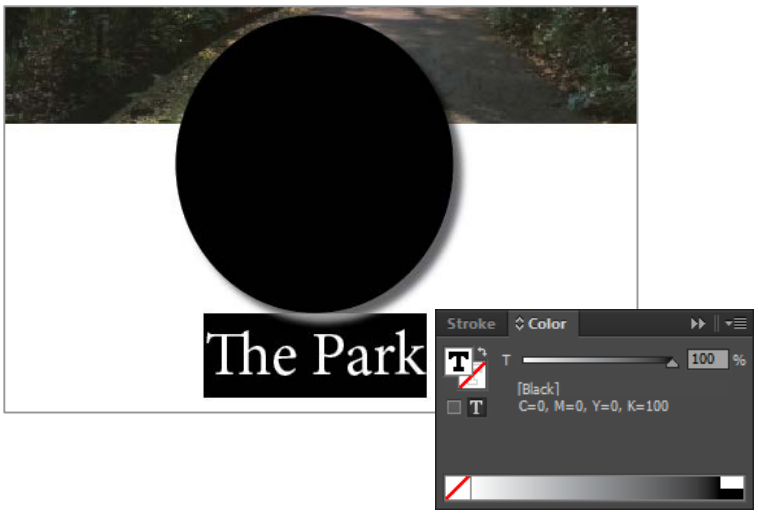

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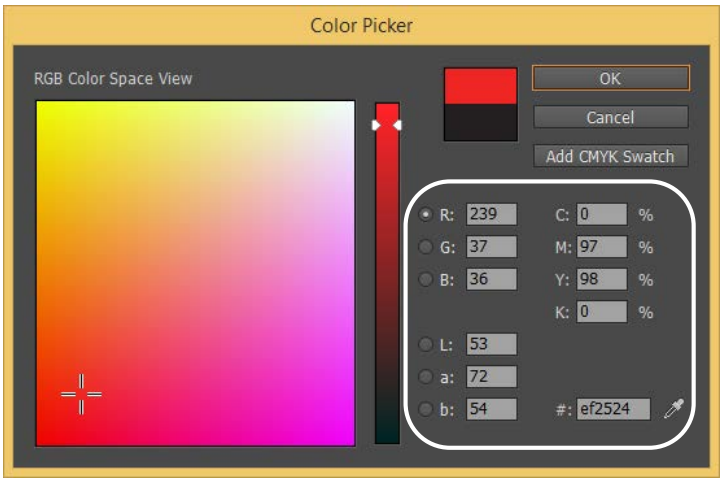

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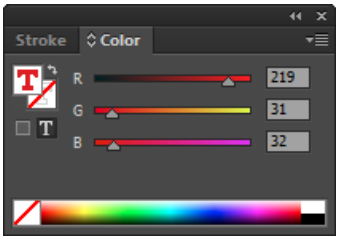


For Your Reference…

To ***apply fill colour using*** the ***Colour panel***:

1. Select the object and click on ***Colour*** in the ***Panel*** dock
2. Click on a colour in the colour spectrum, or

   Drag the sliders, or

   Type the required values

Handy to Know…

- You can apply a fill colour to several objects at once by selecting the objects first and then applying the colour. To select multiple objects either drag the mouse to lasso them with the ***Selection*** tool or click on the first object, hold down Shift and click on other objects.

APPLYING A STROKE COLOUR

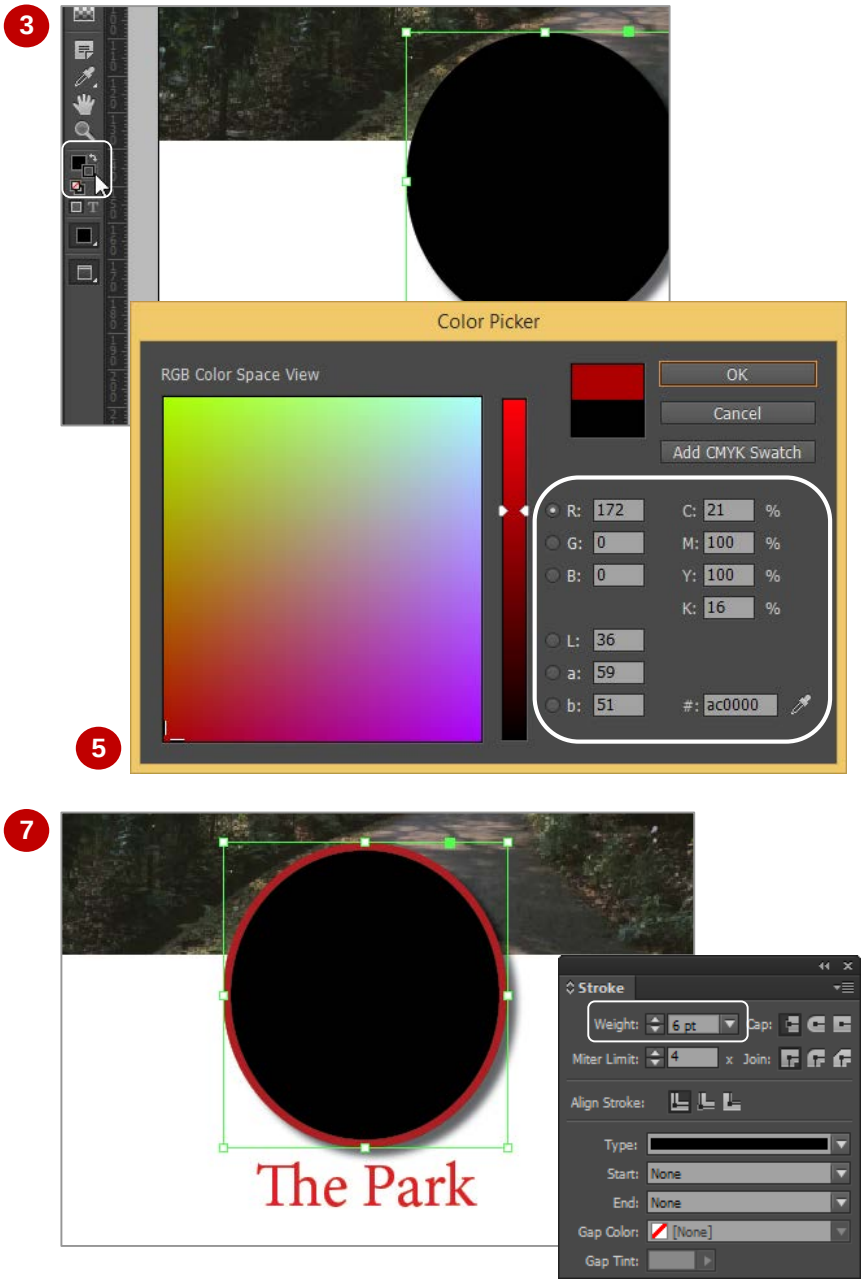
Where the ***fill*** of an object is the space inside the outline, the ***stroke*** is the outline itself. You can apply colour to the stroke of an object in the same way you can apply colour to the fill – simply click on the ***Stroke*** icon first. You can also modify other aspects of the stroke, such as the ***weight***, using the ***Stroke*** panel.

Try This Yourself:

Same File

Continue using the previous file with this exercise, or open the file IN1410 Working With Colour_2.indd...

1. Click on the ***Selection*** tool in the ***Tools*** panel, then click on the black circle to select it
2. Press Ctrl + 2 to zoom in
3. In the ***Tools*** panel click on the ***Stroke*** icon to select it
4. Double click on the ***Stroke*** icon to display the ***Colour Picker*** window
5. Enter the values as shown, then click on **[OK]** to apply red stroke (outline) to the shape
6. Select **Window** > **Stroke** to display the ***Stroke*** panel if it is not already displayed
7. Click on the up spinner arrow for ***Weight*** to change it to ***6***



For Your Reference…

To ***apply*** a ***stroke colour***:

1. Click on the object to select it
2. Double-click on the ***Stroke*** icon in the ***Tools*** panel
3. Select the colour you require, then click on **[OK]**

Handy to Know…

- You can also change the colour of stroke using the ***Colour***, ***Stroke***, ***Swatches*** or ***Gradient*** panels.

SELECTING COLOURS USING THE EYEDROPPER

As well as being able to select a colour from a colour palette, such as those on the ***Swatches*** or ***Colour*** panels, you can select a new fill colour from an existing colour in an open image. Using the ***Eyedropper*** tool, you can click over the desired area in an image and the colour directly beneath the pointer will display in the top half of the colour wheel that surrounds the pointer.

Try This Yourself:

Same File *Continue using the previous file with this exercise, or open the file IN1410 Working With Colour_3.indd...*

1. Ensure nothing is selected, then press D to reset the fill and stroke colours
2. Select the black circle as shown, then ensure ***Fill*** is selected in the ***Tools*** panel
3. Click on the ***Colour Theme*** tool icon in the ***Tools*** panel and ensure the **Eyedropper Tool** is selected
4. While holding the mouse button down, drag around the image to see the different green hues displayed in the ***Fill*** swatch on the ***Tools*** panel
5. Release the mouse button to select a light green hue

   The green hue will be loaded as the new fill colour, until another colour is selected. You can now use this colour to paint with in the current image or in a new image

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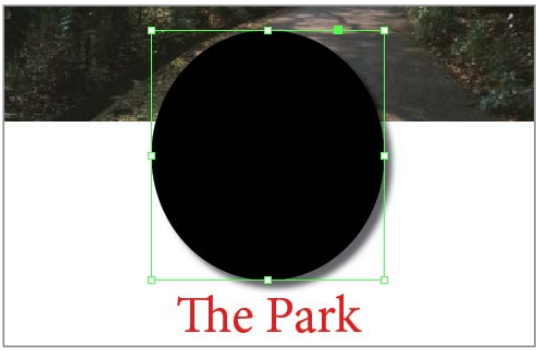

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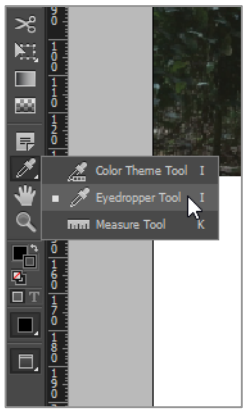

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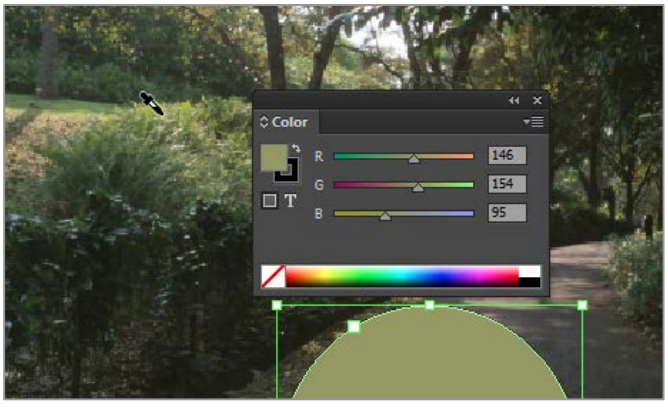


For Your Reference…

To ***select colours using*** the ***Eyedropper tool***:

1. Click on the ***Eyedropper*** tool or press I
2. Click and hold on the image until the desired colour is selected

Handy to Know…

- If you want to quickly use the ***Eyedropper*** tool to pick up a new fill colour from an open image, you can hold down Alt to temporarily activate it and replace the tool you are currently using. When you have loaded the new colour, release Alt to reinstate the previous tool.

SELECTING COLOURS USING THE SWATCHES PANEL

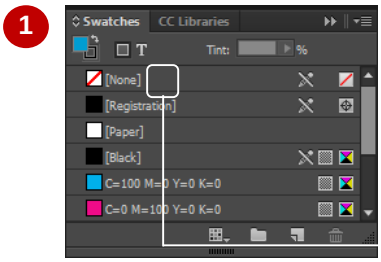
You can use the ***Swatches*** panel to select from a small range of commonly used colours. The ***Swatches*** panel is useful if you want a quick way to trial various colours in an image, without having to seek colours in the more complex hue cube. You can also load colours into the ***Swatches*** panel.

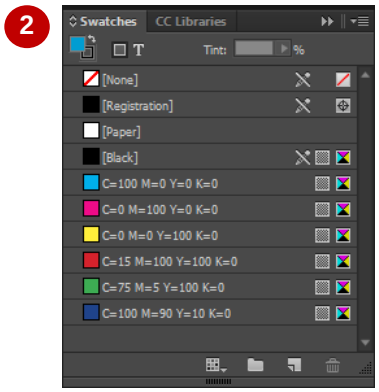
Try This Yourself:

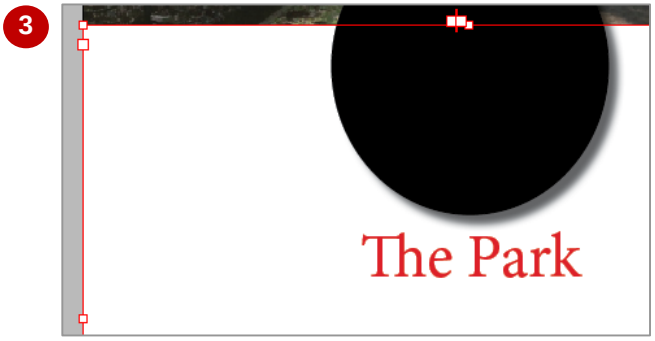
Continue using the previous file with this exercise, or open the file IN1410 Working With Colour_4.indd...

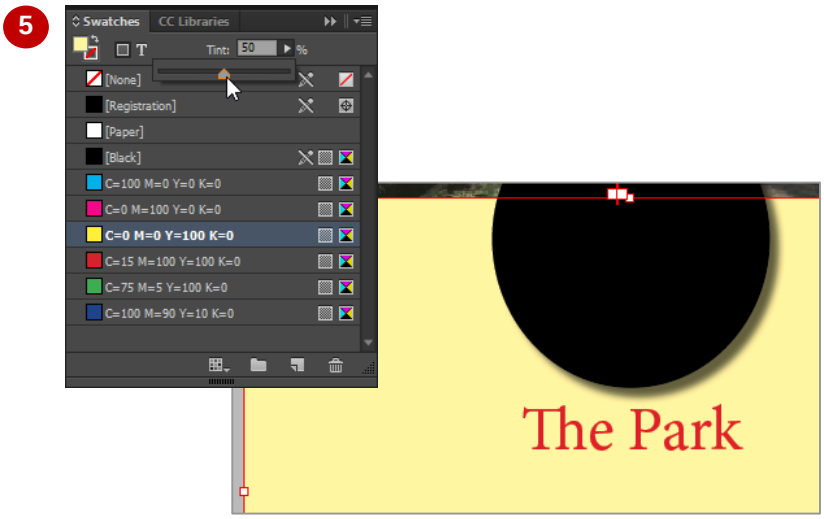
1. Click on the ***Swatches*** panel tab or select **Window** > **Swatches** to display the ***Swatches*** panel
2. Point to the bottom of the panel so that the cursor appears as a two-headed arrow, then click and drag down to display all of the available swatches
3. Ensure the ***Select*** tool is active in the ***Tools*** panel, then select the frame that fills the lower half of the page
4. Click on the ***Fill*** icon in the ***Tools*** panel, then click on yellow in the ***Swatches*** panel to apply this colour to the frame

   This colour is too bright. Let's create a tint…
5. Click in the drop arrow for ***Tint*** at the top of the panel then slide the scrubby slider so that the tint is ***50%***









For Your Reference…

To ***select colours using the Swatches panel***:

1. Open the ***Swatches*** panel
2. Click on a colour swatch to set the fill colour, or

   Press Ctrl and click on a colour swatch to set the stroke colour

Handy to Know…

- If the ***Eyedropper*** tool is loaded with a colour picked up from an open image, you can add it to the ***Swatches*** panel by clicking on a blank tile in the panel – this enables you to also name the swatch.

ADDING COLOURS TO THE SWATCHES PANEL

You can create your own colour swatches and store them in the ***Swatches*** panel. This is particularly useful if you create a colour that you want to use in multiple documents. Rather than looking up the exact settings for the shade, or trying to remember the hue, you can simply select the appropriate swatch from the ***Swatches*** panel.

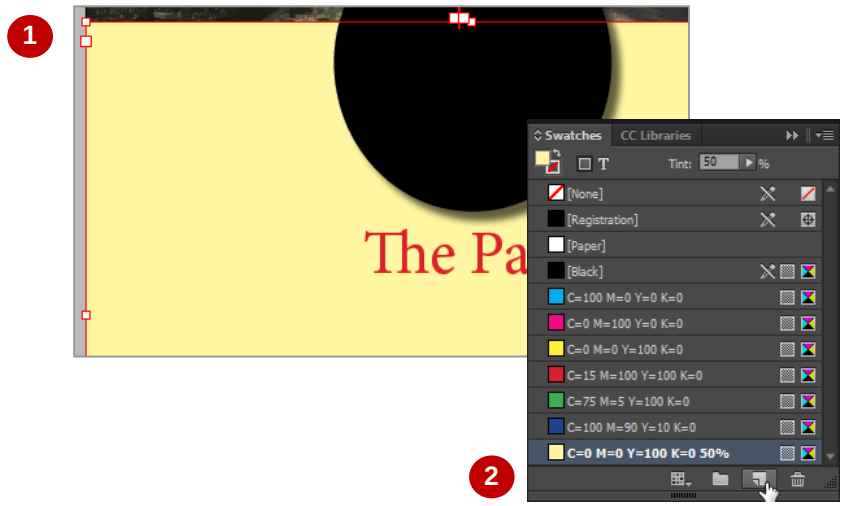
Try This Yourself:

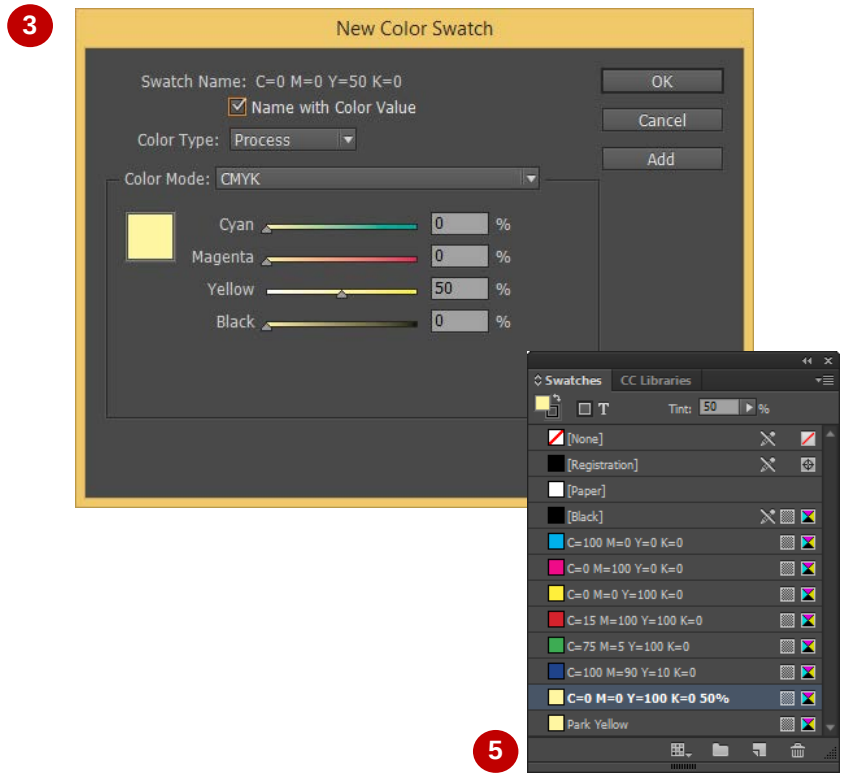
Same File

Continue using the previous file with this exercise, or open the file IN1410 Working With Colour_5.indd...

1. Ensure the frame with the light yellow fill is selected
2. In the ***Swatches*** panel click on ***New Swatch*** to add the selected colour to the ***Swatches*** panel

   Let's rename the colour swatch…
3. Right click on the swatch in the ***Swatches*** panel and select **New Colour Swatch**
4. Click on ***Name with Colour Value*** so it appears unticked
5. Type **Park Yellow** in ***Swatch Name***, then click on **[OK]**





For Your Reference…

To ***add colours*** to the ***Swatches panel***:

1. Select a colour
2. Click on ***New Swatch*** in the ***Swatches*** panel

Handy to Know…

- You can use the ***Eyedropper*** tool to select a colour in the document, then click on ***New Swatch*** in the ***Swatches*** panel to add that colour as a new swatch.

CREATING A GRADIENT

A ***gradient*** is a graduated blend of two or more colours or of two or more tints of the same colour. Gradients can include process and spot colours, no colour (paper) and mixed ink colours (where a colour is made of a blend of spot and process colours). ***Gradients*** work around stops – points where the gradient changes from one colour to the next. Stops can be moved, to change gradients.

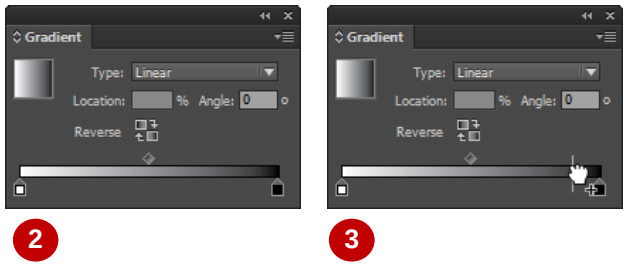
Try This Yourself:

Same File

Continue using the previous file with this exercise, or open the file IN1410 Working With Colour_6.indd...

1. Click on the ***Pasteboard*** to deselect all objects, then select **Window** > **Colour** > **Gradient** to display the ***Gradient*** panel
2. Click on the drop arrow for ***Type*** and select **Linear**
3. In the ***Swatches*** panel click on ***Park Yellow*** and drag it over the far right side of the slider in the ***Gradient*** panel

   You should see a closed hand icon
4. Release the mouse to replace the black gradient box with a yellow one
5. Repeat steps ***3*** and ***4*** to add the ***Park Yellow*** swatch from the ***Swatches*** panel to the left end of the gradient, to form a three colour gradient (yellow, black and white)
6. Click on the black ***stop*** and drag it away from the ***Gradient*** panel to remove it, then click and drag the second yellow stop until ***Location*** is ***65***
7. Drag the ***gradient*** swatch to the bottom of the ***Swatches*** panel to add it, then double-click on it to display the ***Gradient Options*** dialog box
8. Type **Park Yellow Gradient** in ***Swatch Name*** and click on **[OK]**
9. Select the frame in the lower half of the document and select the gradient swatch to fill the frame with this colour



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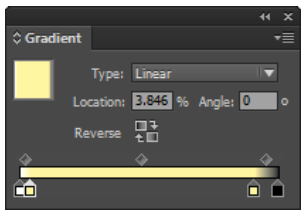

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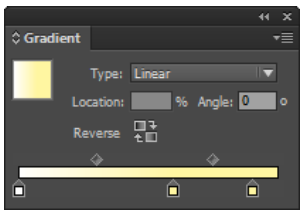

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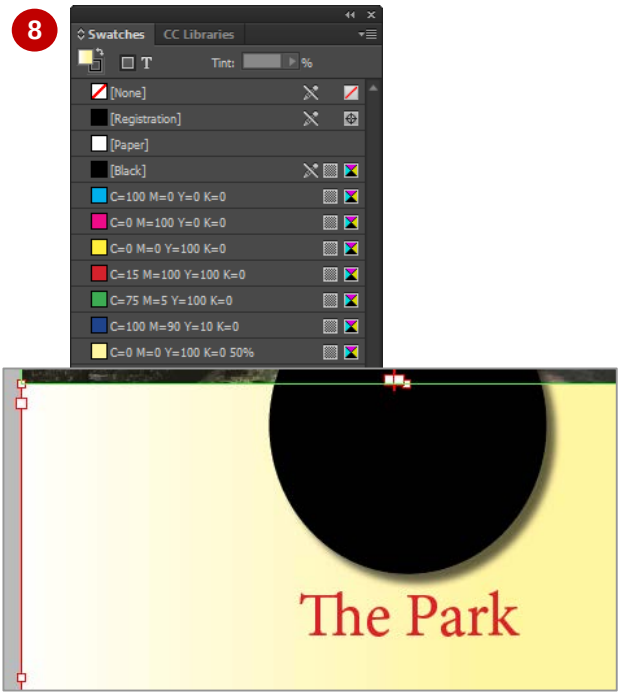

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For Your Reference…

To ***create*** a ***gradient***:

1. On the ***Gradient*** panel, select the colours, position of the stop point, angle and gradient type
2. Drag the ***Gradient*** swatch into the ***Swatches*** panel

Handy to Know…

- There are two types of gradient – linear and radial. ***Linear*** gradients blend from one colour to another from one side of an object to the other. ***Radial*** gradients create a circular effect where one colour blends to the other from the centre of a circle out to the edges.

CREATING A COLOUR GROUP

Colour groups are an excellent way of organising colours for specific projects or specific purposes. You can add all kinds of colour swatches to a colour group including gradient swatches and pattern swatches. If you save these colour groups to your Creative Cloud library you can then access them across all of the Adobe applications.

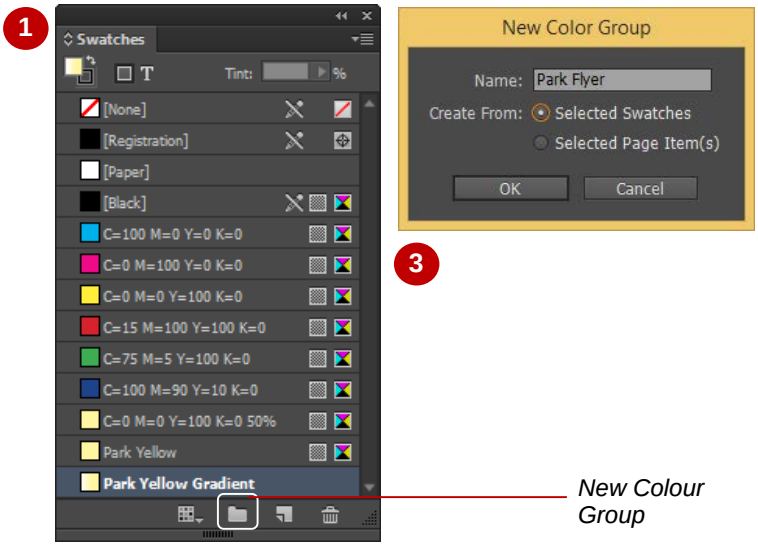
Try This Yourself:

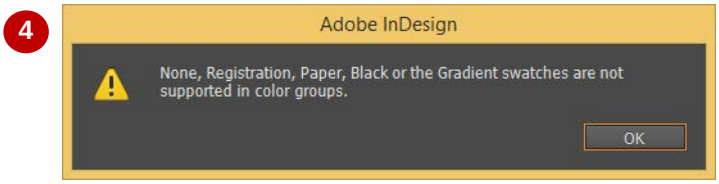
Same File

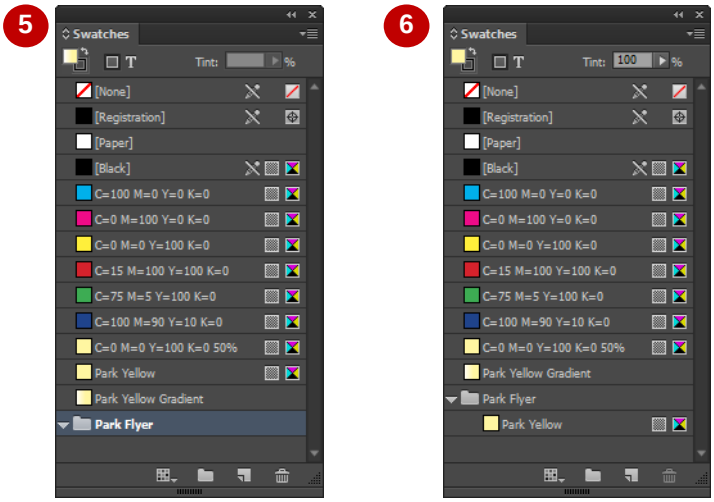
Continue using the previous file with this exercise, or open the file IN1410 Working With Colour_7.indd...

1. Ensure the ***Swatches*** panel is displayed
2. At the bottom of the ***Swatches*** panel click on ***New Colour Group*** to display the ***New Colour Group*** dialog box
3. Type **Park Flyer** in ***Name*** and ensure ***Selected Swatches*** is selected in ***Create From***
4. Click on **[OK]**

   A message may appear informing you of the swatches that are not supported in colour groups…
5. If necessary click on **[OK]** to close the dialog box, then click on the ***Park Yellow*** swatch
6. Hold down the left mouse button and drag the swatch into the ***Park Flyer*** group







For Your Reference…

To ***create*** a ***colour group***:

1. Click on ***new Colour Group*** in the ***Swatches*** panel
2. Type a name
3. Click on **[OK]**

Handy to Know…

- You can rename a colour group once it is created by clicking on the colour group name in the ***Swatches*** panel.

CREATING A COLOUR THEME

Colour themes are a quick and effective way of ensuring your documents appear as professional-looking and polished as possible. With the help of the ***Colour Theme*** tool in the ***Tools*** panel you can create colour themes based on a range of different things such as photographs, drawings and other projects.

Try This Yourself:

Same File

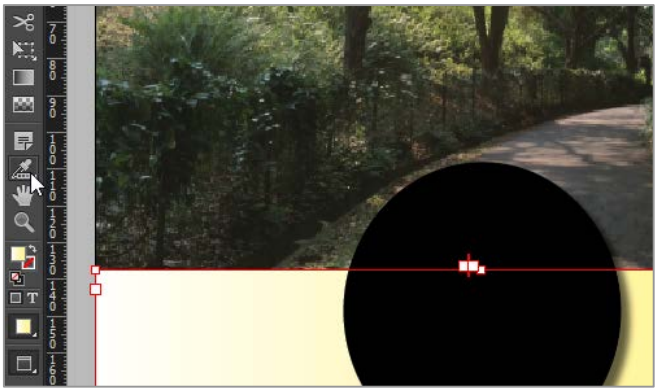
Continue using the previous file with this exercise, or open the file IN1410 Working With Colour_8.indd...

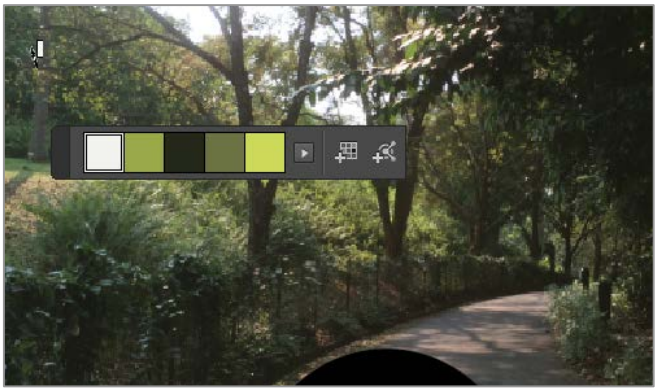
1. Click on ***Colour Theme Tool*** in the ***Tools*** panel
2. Click once on the left side of the photo

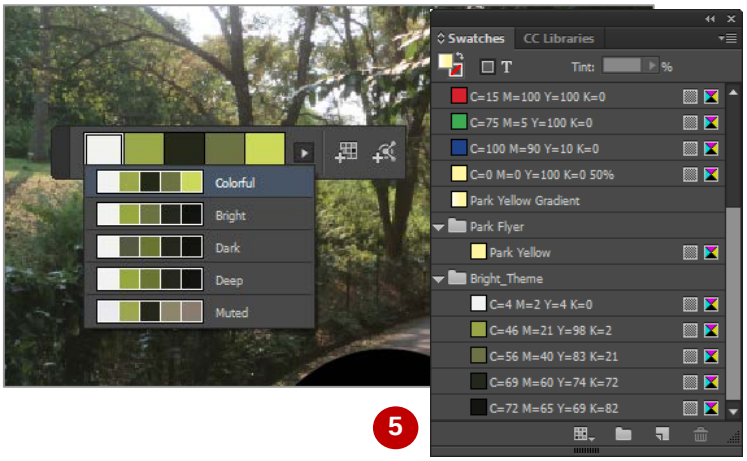
   A colour theme will display based on the colour you selected…
3. Click on the arrow to the right of the colour swatches to view other themes
4. Click on **Bright** to select this colour theme
5. Click on ***Add this theme to swatches*** to add this colour theme to the swatches

   Notice a folder has been created in the Swatches panel titles Bright_Theme and each individual colour swatch is listed in this folder.

   You can apply this colour theme to other documents or other elements within this document







For Your Reference…

To ***create*** a ***colour theme***:

1. Click on the ***Colour Theme*** tool icon in the ***Tool*** bar
2. Click in the document
3. Click on ***Add this theme to swatches***

Handy to Know…

- Press I to toggle between the ***Eyedropper*** tool and the ***Colour Theme*** tool.

REMOVING COLOUR

Colour can be ***removed*** from an object in much the same way in which it was added in the first place. The option ***None*** is the first colour in the ***Swatches*** panel. This option is used to replace the existing colour applied to the fill or stroke. For instance, if you want lettering to be an outline only, you can apply black as the stroke and ***None*** as the fill.

Try This Yourself:

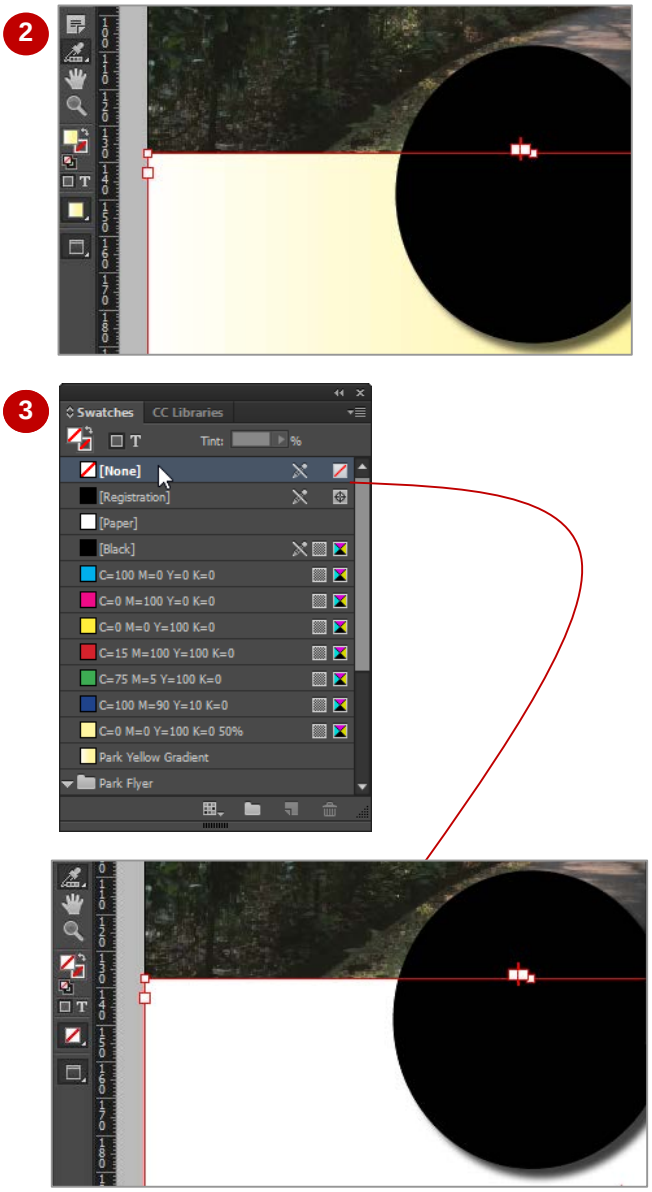
Same File

Continue using the previous file with this exercise, or open the file IN1410 Working With Colour_9.indd...

1. Click on the rectangular frame currently filled with the ***Park Yellow*** gradient

   The object should now be selected and the fill colour displayed and selected in the Swatches panel...

2. Click on the ***Fill*** icon in the ***Swatches*** panel to ensure it appears in front of the ***Stroke*** icon
3. Locate and click on ***[None]*** in the ***Swatches*** panel to remove the colour from the object
4. Click on ***Close*** in the ***Swatches*** panel to close the ***Swatches*** panel



For Your Reference…

To ***remove colour***:

1. Select the object
2. Click on the ***Stroke*** or ***Fill*** icon in the ***Swatches*** panel
3. Click on ***[None]***

Handy to Know…

- The ***Paper*** swatch in the ***Swatches*** panel specifies the colour of the paper so that you can get a realistic idea of how the final product will look. If you apply ***Paper*** as a colour to the ***Fill*** or ***Stroke***, it will take on the same colour as the paper and, in effect, remove the colour.