City Perceptive Part 1: Illustrator

STEP 1: Create a new file:

Launch Illustrator. Click File>New to make a new file. When the "New Document" box pops up, choose "Letter" as your size, and under "Orientation," choose the button on the right, for landscape.

STEP 2: Save your file:

Save your Document to YOUR Documents folder as "LastnameFirst Initial_city.ai".

STEP 3: Activate the perspective grid:

Click Shift+P to make your perspective grid active. Look at your toolbar and take notice of the tool that is gray. This is your Perspective Grid tool. You will need to access it several times during this project.

STEP 4: Observe the aspects of the Perspective Grid:

Before you draw your first building, take notice of the little circle with a cube in it that appears in the upper left of your screen. This is a little options button for the Perspective grid. The panel on the **left** of the cube is **blue**, and the panel on the **right** of the grid is **orange**. These colors correspond to the grid lines on your document: everything to the left of the center line is blue, while everything to the right is orange. And in the cube and on the grid, **anything below the horizon line** is represented by the color **green**. The circle behind the cube, when clicked, highlights in **aqua**.

STEP 5: Draw your corner building:

Now it is time to draw your first building. Choose a side--either left(blue) or right(orange)--on the cube. Then click the "M" key to get your rectangle tool. Line your cursor up with the center vertical line, where the blue and orange grids meet. Click and drag and draw a rectangle to represent a side of your corner building. When you let go, switch to the other side of the cube, then draw a rectangle on that side of the center vertical line. Make this rectangle match up with the height of your first rectangle. This shape will complete your corner building. Don't worry about the color of the building for now; that step will come later.

STEP 6: Draw your other buildings:

Now that you understand how to draw with the rectangle tool in the Perspective Grid, you just have to repeat the process to complete your city corner. You must have seven buildings total, so the easiest thing is to make three more buildings on the left and three more on the right. Pay attention to the panel on the cube that is selected, and work on that side of your grid. Click the other panel to work on the other side. Make your buildings different heights for visual interest.

STEP 7: Making the other side of taller buildings.

Most likely, you now have buildings that need to be completed by drawing the other side. To do that, you have to click the OPPOSITE color on the cube than the side you are working in. For instance, if you have a tall building on the left that is next to a short building, and you need to draw the side of that building, you will be creating a shape that goes back into space TOWARD THE RIGHT. Therefore, even though you are on the blue side, you want to click the orange plane of the cube, then click and draw the rectangle to complete that building. Just make sure the bottom of this rectangle goes below the top of the shorter building next to it. You must then click Object>Arrange>Send to Back to arrange that shape accordingly within your design.

Other Helpful Hints

1. Fill your buildings with gradients. You do not have to create custom gradients, although you may if you choose. Instead, you may just choose from the hundreds of pre-existing gradient swatches available by clicking on the bottom-left icon in your Swatches palette, choosing Gradients from the menu, then choosing whatever palettes you like from the next menu, which is ALL gradient swatch palettes.

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2. At least ONE of your buildings must be filled in with a pattern superimposed over or under a gradient. We did this method in the "Patterns" lesson, but just to refresh your memory: click on a building, then go do Edit>Copy, then click Edit>Paste in Front (or Paste in Back). Fill this new shape with a pattern from a pattern swatch palette (accessible the same way you accessed gradient palettes, in Step 1). Play with the Transparency palette to create an interesting interplay between the gradient and the pattern. Your Transparency palette features both blending modes (the pull-down menu that begins with "Normal") and Opacity. If you need to click on the shape that is BEHIND another shape, you can select and lock (Object>Lock Selection) the shape in front.

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3. Windows and doors: Each building needs a door and some windows. I *STRONGLY* recommend you do a little Internet research and look at photos of city buildings, to get an idea for the various kinds of window looks/shapes there are. To make windows, you use the rectangle tool, and once again you must pay attention to what side of the grid you are on, and make sure you are working in the corresponding color in the widget. Use the grid (graph paper-isn) lines to help you. The easiest way to make multiple windows quickly and accurately is to make ONE window, then SWITCH TO THE PERSPECTIVE SELECTION TOOL (tap Shift-V to get it). This will allow you to both duplicate it (click-and-drag while holding down the Alt/Option key) AND while you move it over to where you would like it, the window will automatically scale to be in proper perspective. Repeat this process with all of windows you create.

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4. Create a sky: click on the aqua-blue background of the widget to get into the neutral zone of the Perspective Grid. Then, simply click-and-drag with the Rectangle tool (shortcut: M) to create a rectangle that goes from the top of the page to the horizon line. Fill this in with a gradient to represent whatever type of sky you like. You may draw shapes, bring in dint imagery that has been converted to vector art (Type>Create Outlines), and/or Live Traced imagery to decorate your sky.

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5. Create the sidewalk and street: For the first step of the sidewalk and street, you may remain in the aqua-blue area of the widget. I recommend drawing a plain rectangle and filling it in with a solid or a gradient to represent the color of your SIDEWALK. Then, for the street, click on the green panel of the widget. Starting on either the left or the right of your page, at or below the green horizon line, click and drag a rectangle toward the center. Take it slow; the computer can get a little kooky when you are doing this! This step will allow you to create an angled shape to represent your street meeting the sidewalk. Repeat for the other side-left or right--that you didn't do yet. Fill these shapes in with black, or another color for your street. Here, I recommend a SOLID, not a gradient.

   It is OK if you go WAAAAAAY BEYOND the bottom perimeter of your document; that stuff won't print. You also might end up with some white areas in the bottom corners of your page that *should* be black, but aren't. Feel free to just create simple shapes to fill those areas (you should be in the aqua part of the widget for this), and fill them in with the EXACT same color as your street.

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6. Create lines in the street: You should be in the neutral (aqua) part of the widget for this. On top of your street, use the Line Segment tool (it looks like this: /). Click-and-drag at an angle to make a line in your street. Access your Stroke palette (Window>Stroke) and make sure it is fully expanded (if not, double-click the word Stroke until it is). Give your line a yellow stroke color, adjust the stroke width to the point size that looks good to you, and click the box next to "Dashed Line" in the Stroke palette. Then, fill in the boxes for "dash" and "gap" with numbers to create your desired dashed line. Note: fill in ALL of those boxes, keep all of the dashes the same number as EACH OTHER, and all of the gaps the same number as EACH OTHER. Once you are happy with your dashed line, switch to the Selection Tool (tap "v"), Alt/Option-click-and-drag to duplicate your dashed line, and then either rotate it to work on the other side of your street, OR, go to Object>Transform>Reflect.

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7. Bringing your logos into your city file, and placing them on the buildings: Go to the file in which you placed and LiveTraced your logos for this project. Double-check: have they actually been LiveTraced properly? Here's how you know: Go to View>Outline. Do you see the path/outline for every logo? If not, which are missing? Go to View>Preview, and complete the LiveTracing job.....Then, with the Selection (black arrow) tool, click on a logo. Go to Edit>Copy. Then switch to your city file, put yourself into the neutral (aqua on the widget) zone and click Edit>Paste. Your logo should appear somewhere. Switch to the PERSPECTIVE SELECTION TOOL (Shift-v), then switch to the blue or orange panel on the widget, depending on which building you want to put this logo. Click and (slowly) drag the logo to the building. You should see it morph to be in proper perspective. After you let go of the mouse, you can always move it again and/or scale it (just like you would scale an object with the regular Selection tool--remember to hold Shift!)--just stay in that Perspective Selection tool. Repeat for the rest of your logos. [Note: I'm requiring seven buildings or more, and asked you to LiveTrace ten logos. You might have logos left over, unused.]

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8. Adding extras:
