

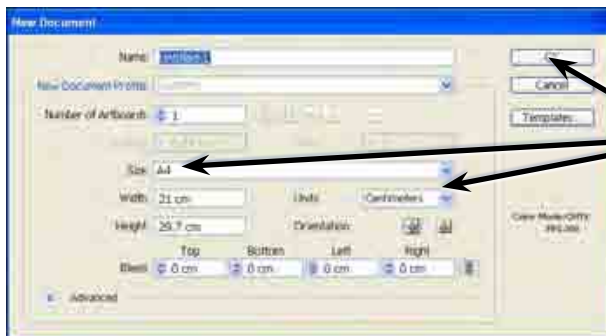
Live Tracing

One of Adobe Illustrator's most powerful tools is the LIVE TRACE tool. It allows you to draw a rough sketch on paper and scan it (or scan a sketch that you find), import the scan into Illustrator and convert it to a vector image using the LIVE TRACE tool. The image then acts like it was created in Illustrator.

Live Trace can also be used to convert photos to artwork. This can be useful if you have a poor quality photo that you want to use in a document and displaying it as artwork can hide the deficiencies in the photo. Setting a photo to a vector image can also reduce the file size of the photo.

Starting a New Document

- 1 Load Adobe Illustrator CS4 or close the current document.
- 2 In the CREATE NEW section of the WELCOME screen click on PRINT DOCUMENT to start a new document.
- 3 The PRINT DOCUMENT option will ask you for the settings of the printer you will be printing to.



- 4 Set the SIZE to A4 (or the paper size your printer uses), the UNITS to CENTIMETRES and select OK.

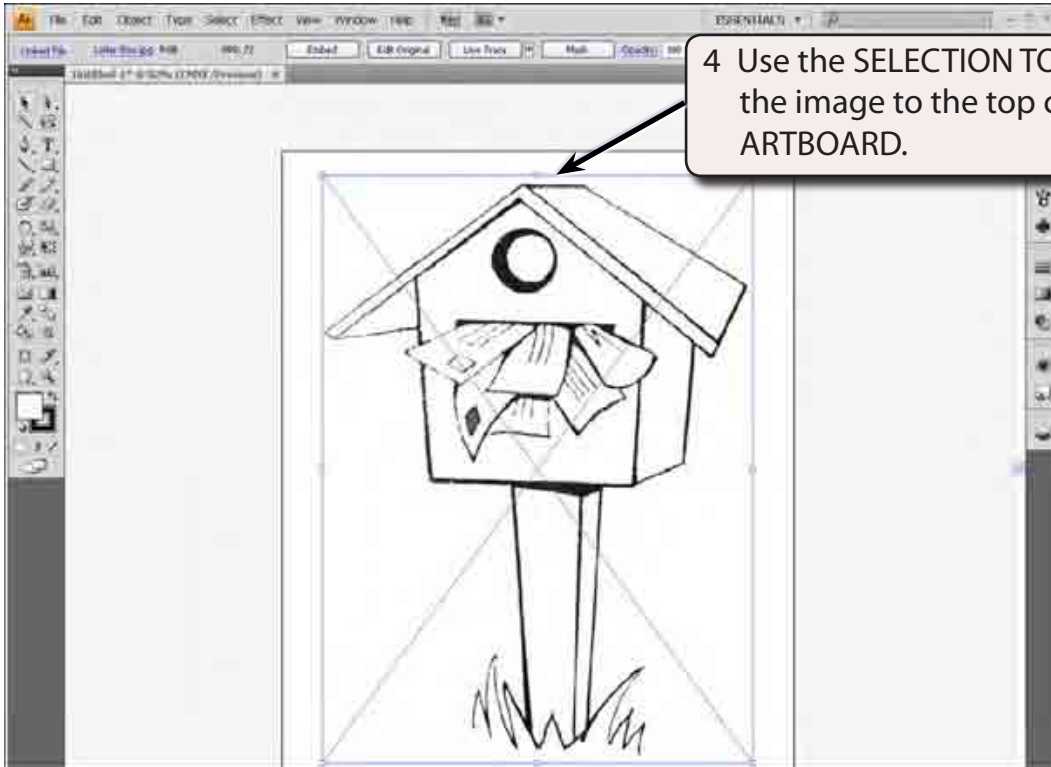
Tracing a Scanned Sketch

A scan of a letter box overflowing with letters has been prepared for you. It needs to be traced and converted into artwork.

A Importing the Scan

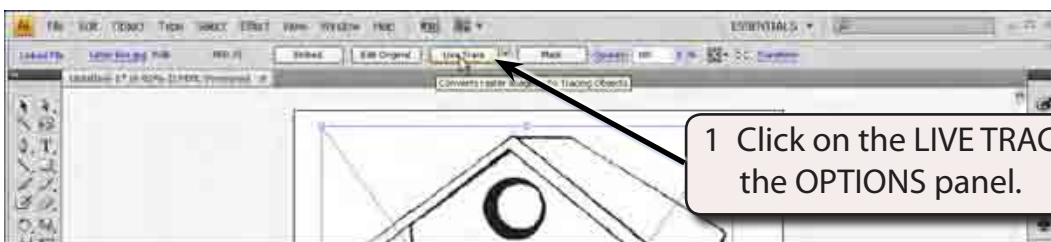
- 1 Display the FILE menu and select PLACE.

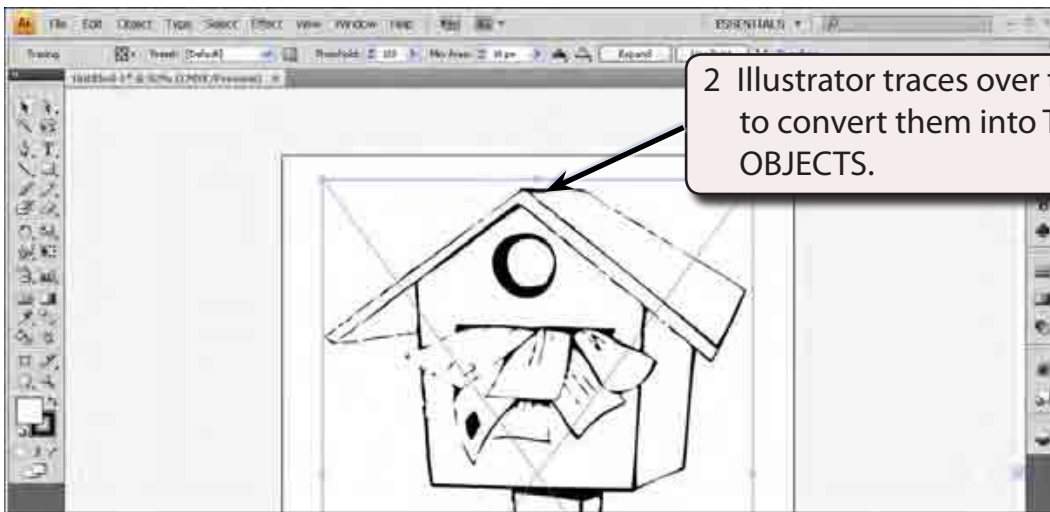
- 2 Access the ILLUSTRATOR SUPPORT FILES folder and open the CHAPTER 14 folder.
- 3 Select the LETTER BOX file and select PLACE.



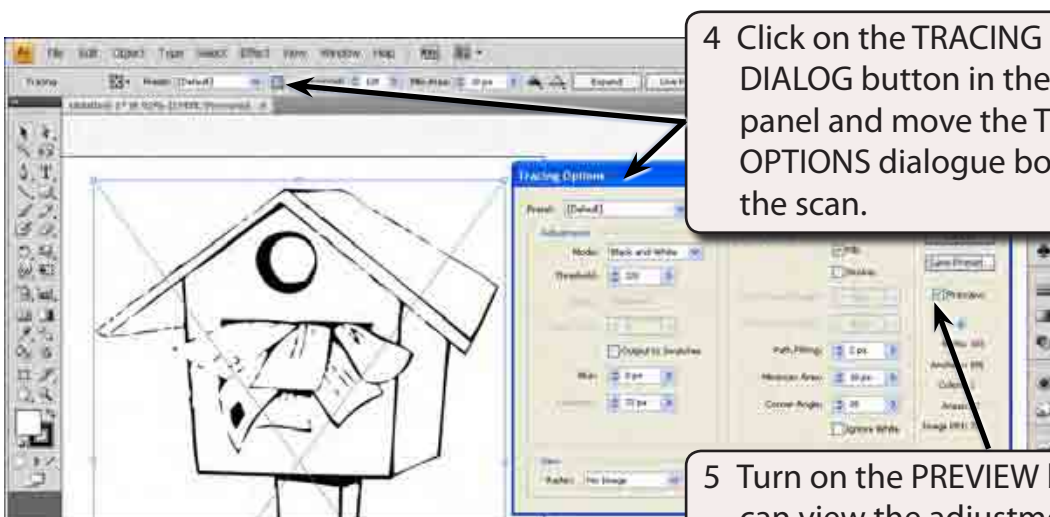
NOTE: The image has been increased in size so that you will be able to see its sections more clearly. It will be reduced in size once its sections have been coloured in.

B Tracing the Scan





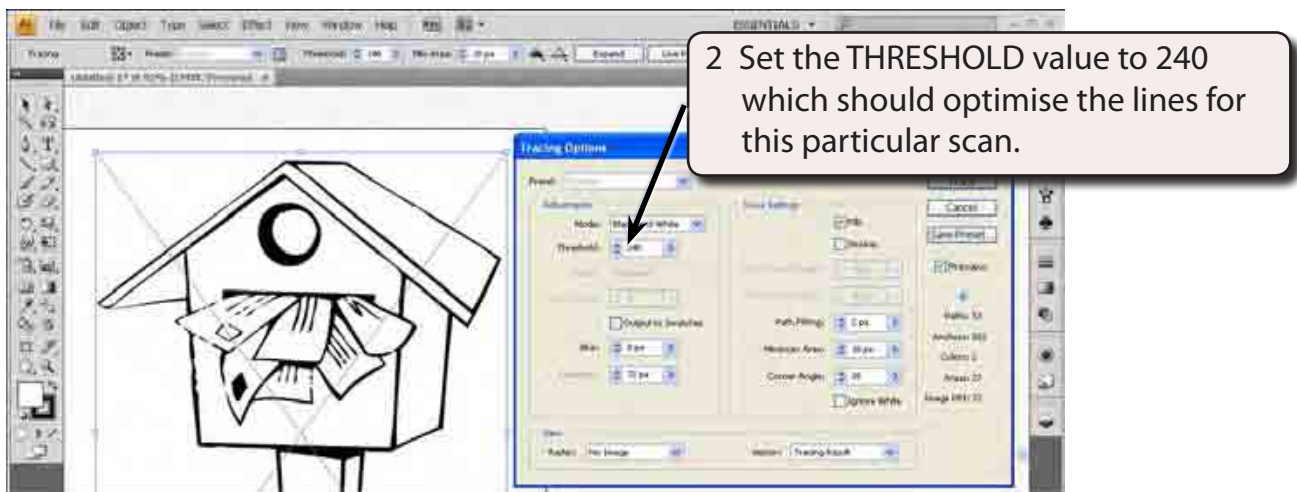
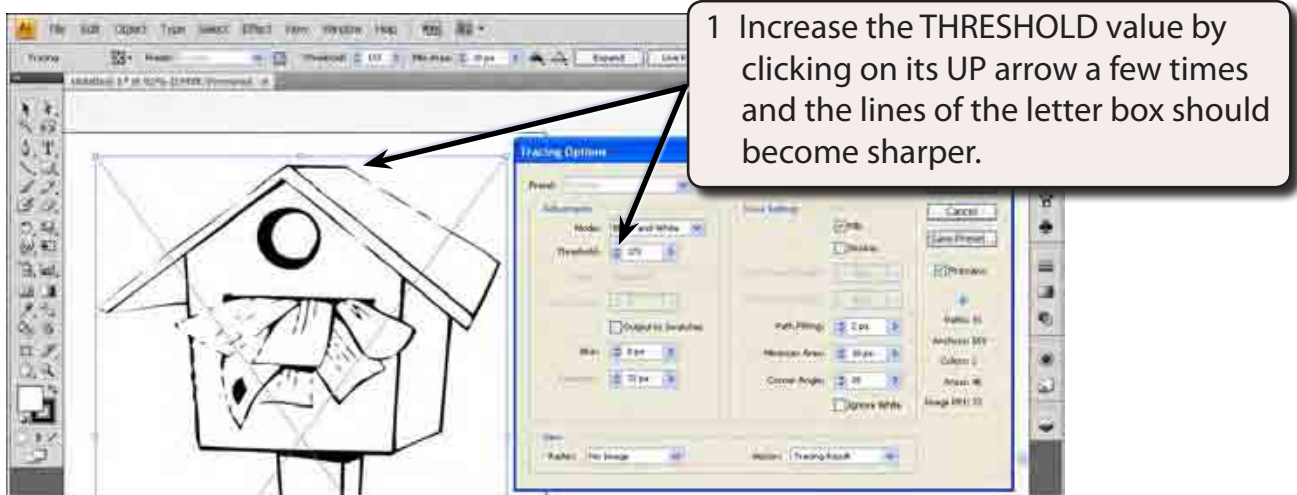
3 The trace needs some help.



NOTE: There are tracing presets in the OPTIONS panel that can be applied to TRACING OBJECTS and these will be looked at a little later once you are familiar with the adjustment process.

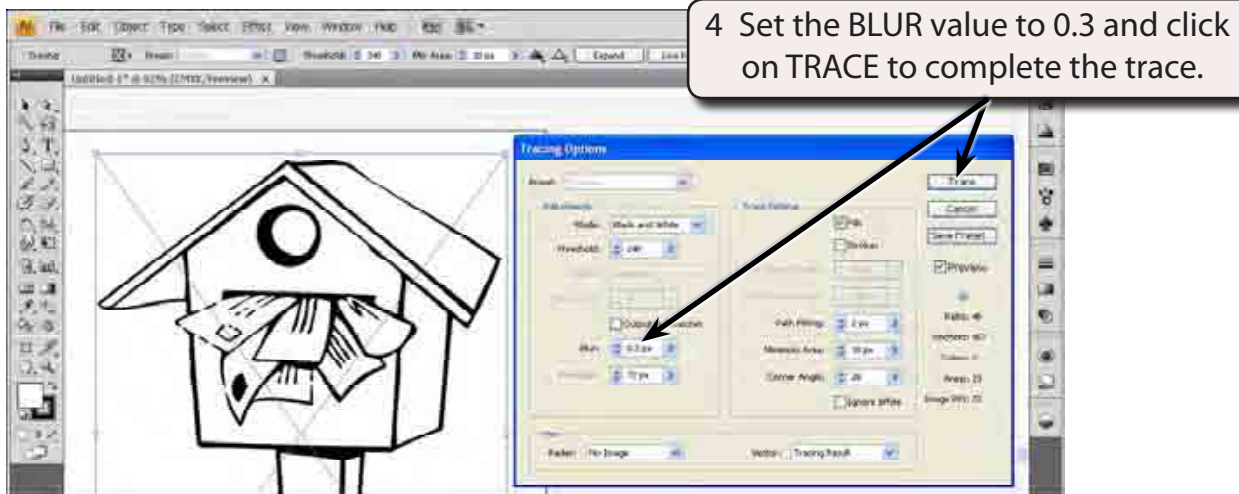
C Adjusting the Threshold and Blur

There are numerous options that can be adjusted in the TRACING OPTIONS dialogue box, but the two main ones for a scanned sketch are THRESHOLD and BLUR.



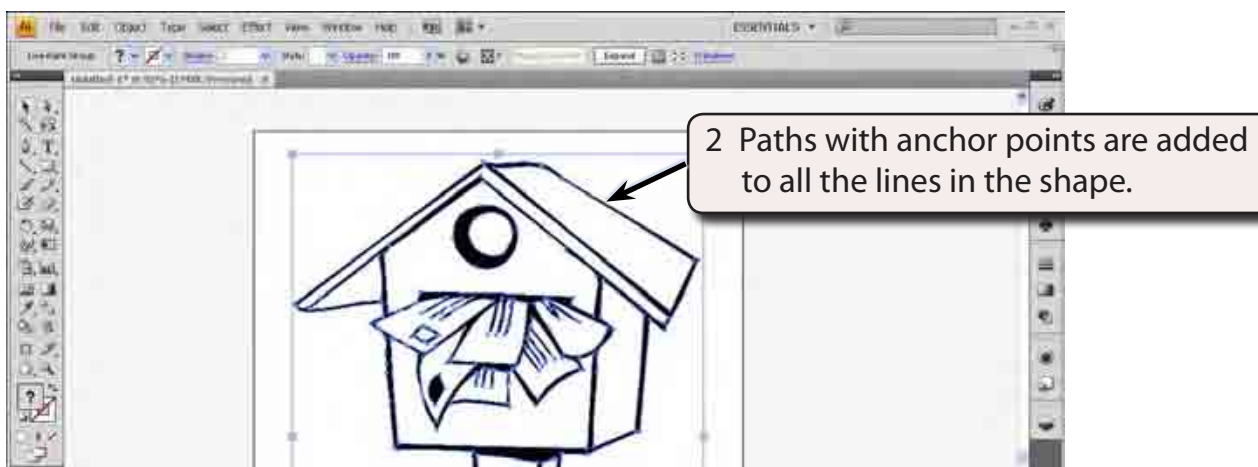
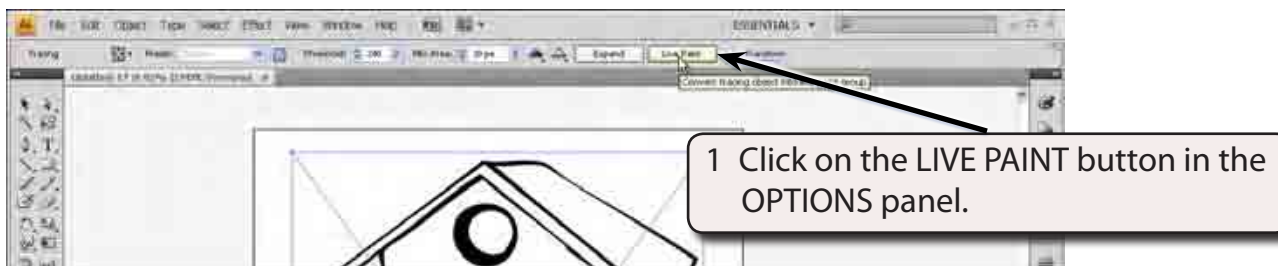
NOTE: The THRESHOLD controls how much black and white is displayed in the image.

- 3 Blurring the lines a little helps to improve the line definition.



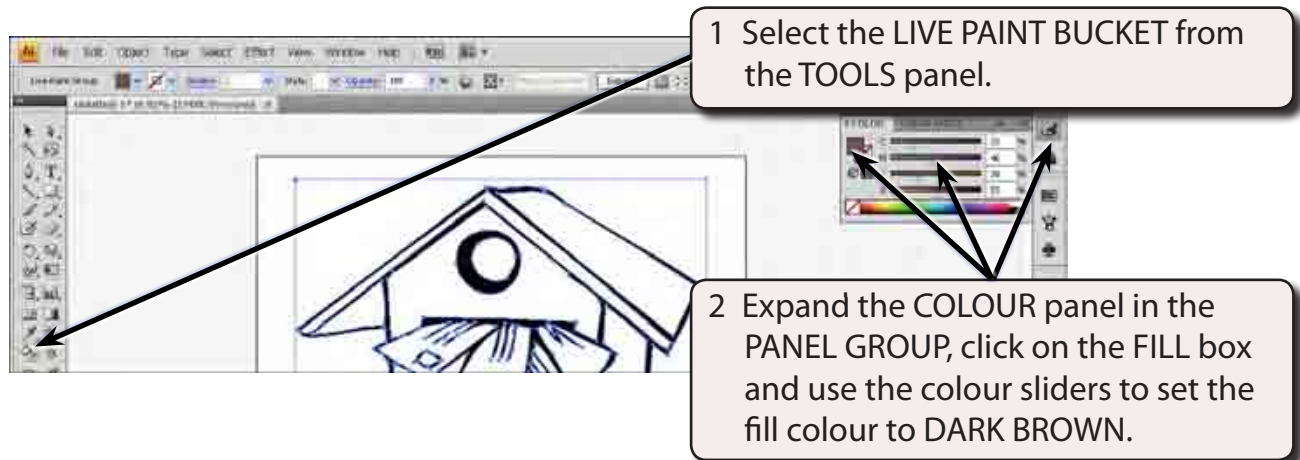
D Expanding the Scan

The TRACED OBJECT can now be converted to a normal Illustrator object so that all the Illustrator tools can be used to improve the image. The EXPAND button in the OPTIONS panel can be used if you are going to adjust the shape or the LIVE PAINT button can be used if you are just going to fill the shape.



E Applying Live Paint

The shape can now be filled with colour just like any normal Illustrator object.



NOTE: If you fill an area by mistake, press CTRL+Z or COMMAND+Z to undo the fill and try again.