# Intermediate InDesign: Layers

What are Layers?

Think of layers as transparent sheets stacked on top of each other. If a layer doesn't have objects on it, you can see through it to any objects on layers behind it.

Why use layers?

Each document includes at least one named layer. By using multiple layers, you can create and edit specific areas or kinds of content in your document without affecting other areas or kinds of content. For example, if your document prints slowly because it contains many large graphics, you can use one layer for just the text in your document; then, when it's time to proofread the text, you can hide all other layers and quickly print the text layer only. You can also use layers to display alternate design ideas for the same layout, or versions of advertisements for different regions.
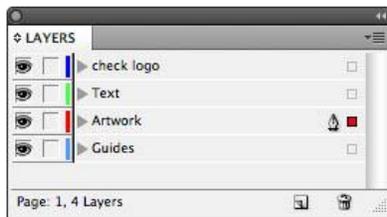
When you create an InDesign document, you can not only create top-level layers which appear on all the pages of your document. But also, if you click the disclosure triangle beside each document layer, you can also view all objects and their stacking order on the currently active spread. Groups, buttons and the new object states have their own disclosure triangles that can be expanded to see their contained objects.
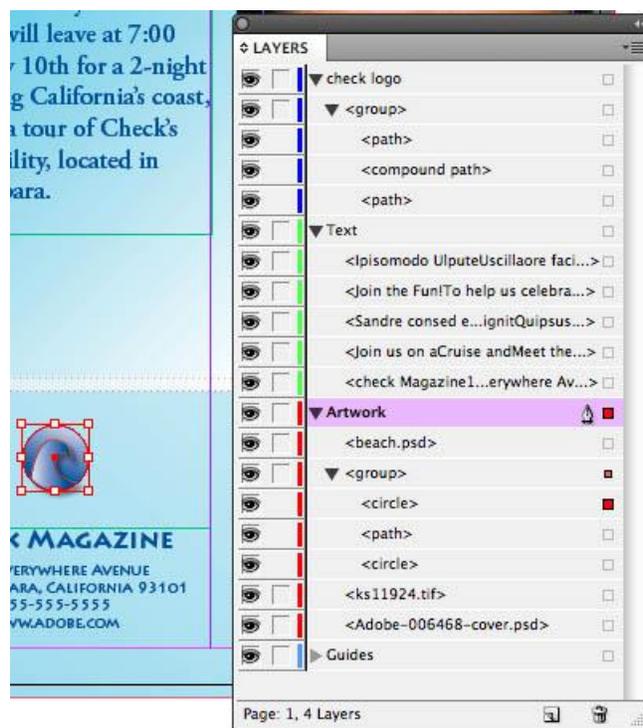
Select an Objects in the Layout

Option (or Alt) click objects in the **Layers** panel, and they will then be selected in the layout as well. **OR**

Click on the **square** beside <beach.psd> in the **Layers** panel selects the indicated image in the layout.

This can be a great way to select artwork in a complex layout, especially when you have objects stacked on top of other objects. *Note:* The colored squares on the **Layers** panel indicate which objects (and the enclosing layer) are selected.

Show or Hide Individual Objects
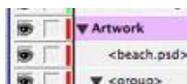
Click the "**eyeball**" icon to the left of the object name.

Lock an Object or a Group

Click in the **second column** to the left of the object or group name. The padlock icon indicates locked, and when you click again to clear it, the object is unlocked.

Note: A locked object cannot be edited. If you have Frame Edges showing in Normal mode, you'll see a padlock icon on the edge of the frame (see above). You can also unlock by clicking on the frame padlock.

Rename an Object

Click *once* on its name in the **Layers** panel, then *pause*, then **click** *a second time*. This is especially handy when you have several objects of the same kind, and you don't want them all named <rectangle>.
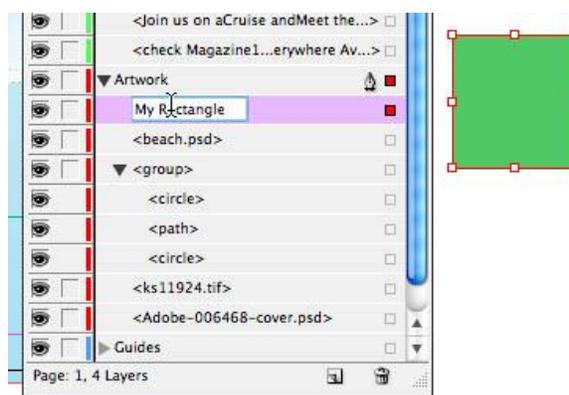
Change the Stacking Order

Select the name or the colored square representing a particular object, and drag it up and down in the stacking order. (In the illustration below, I'm dragging the rectangle to the bottom of the stack in the Artwork layer.) You can even drag and drop items in and out of groups, buttons and object states!

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