

The many superpowers of Apple's Preview app - Macworld

Sources:

<http://www.macworld.com.au/help/the-many-superpowers-of-apples-preview-app-part-1-134715>

<http://www.macworld.com.au/help/the-many-superpowers-of-apples-preview-app-part-2-134722>

Topics:

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Additional tips for creating PDFs - Macworld

Source:

<http://www.macworld.co.uk/feature/mac-software/11-tips-for-creating-saving-editing-sharing-pdfs-on-mac-3527264/>

Topics:

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The many superpowers of Apple's Preview app

Apple's Preview app, preinstalled on every Mac for years, is one of the most underused programs ever.

Far from being an image preview app, as its name implies, you can use it to convert file formats, grab a frame from a movie, learn the size of a web-based image, sort a folder of images, remove backgrounds and more.



Convert file formats

To get a handle on Preview's abilities, consider the file formats it can open and manipulate:

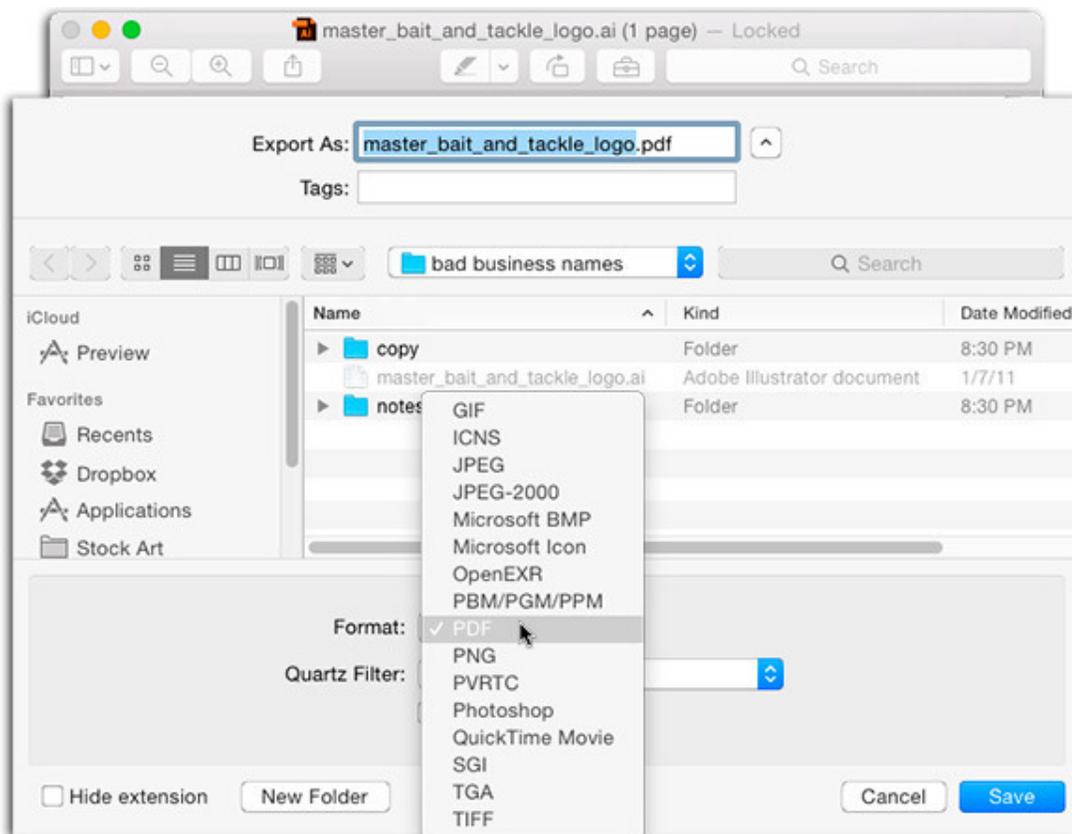
- AI – Adobe Illustrator Artwork files
- BMP – Windows Bitmap files
- DNG – Digital Negative files
- DAE – Collada 3D files
- EPS – Encapsulated PostScript files
- FAX – faxes
- FPX – FlashPix files
- GIF – Graphics Interchange Format files
- HDR – High Dynamic Range Image files
- ICNS – Apple Icon Image files
- ICO – Windows icon files
- JPEG 2000 – JPEG 2000 files
- JPEG – Joint Photographic Experts Group files
- OpenEXR – OpenEXR files
- PS – Adobe PostScript files
- PSD – Adobe Photoshop files
- PICT – QuickDraw image files
- PDF – Portable Document Format files
- PNG – Portable Network Graphics files
- PNTG – MacPaint Bitmap Graphic files
- QTIF – QuickTime image files
- RAD – Radiance Scene Description files
- RAW – Raw image files
- SGI – Silicon Graphics Image files
- TGA – TARGA image files
- TIF, TIFF – Tagged Image File Format files
- XBM – X BitMap files
- PPT – PowerPoint files

How is this exciting? Let us count the ways. You can convert a PDF file to a pixel-based format for printing (say, if you've got a PDF that refuses to print) or for posting on the web (say, a JPEG, GIF or PNG). You can convert image files to PDF (say, for emailing a receipt to someone), or perhaps most amazingly, convert Adobe Illustrator or legacy EPS files to PDF format – without the need for Illustrator.

To do it, open the file in Preview, choose File > Export and then select a new file format.

If the original is a vector-based logo or illustration, the resulting PDF will also be vector-based (meaning you can enlarge it without losing quality).

Remarkably, Preview's support of native Photoshop (PSD) and Illustrator (AI) files means that you can send either of these native file formats to anyone using a Mac and they can use Preview to open and print them.



Preview's Export dialogue box hides all but the most common file formats. To see the full list, hold down the Option key when clicking the Format menu in the Export dialogue box. (Who knew?)

Grab a frame from a movie

If QuickTime Player can play the movie, you can capture a frame from it. Here's how: just pause the movie at the point you want to capture the frame by pressing the spacebar and then press Command-C to copy it to your clipboard. In Preview, choose File > New from Clipboard, and it creates a new file containing the frame from your movie. You can then save the file in whatever format you need.

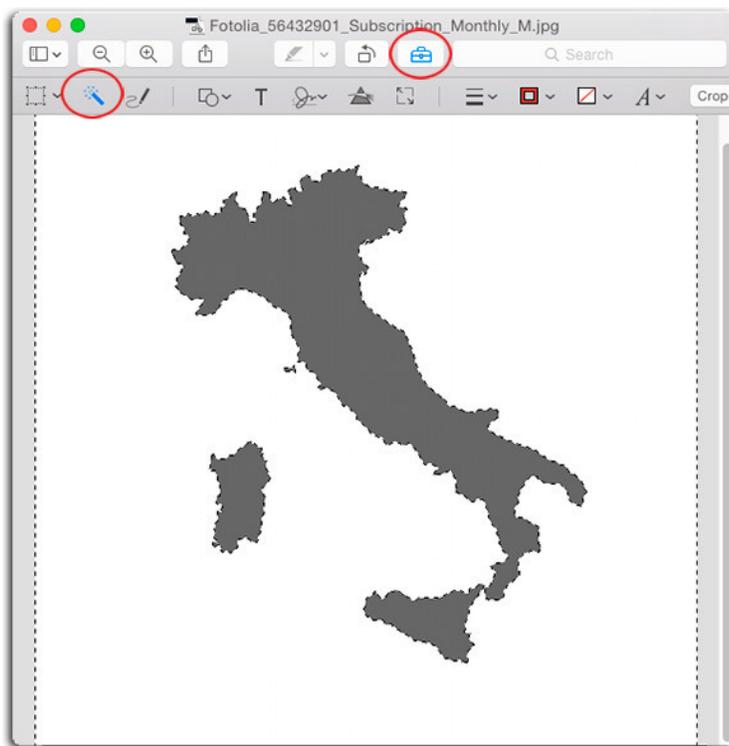
Remove a background

To quickly remove the background behind an object or logo (say, to place the object over a new background), activate Preview's Instant Alpha tool by clicking its icon in the toolbar (it looks like a magic wand).

Next, click and drag atop the background; if you don't see the Instant Alpha tool, click the Markup Toolbar icon to display all the markup tools (it looks like a toolbox).

As you click and drag atop the background, your selection appears as a pink overlay that indicates the areas that will be removed.

When you're finished, export as a PNG file to maintain transparency.



Copy a portion of an image

To copy a portion of an image, open it in Preview and simply click and drag to draw a selection rectangle atop the image.

Next, press Command+C to copy it to your clipboard, then press Command+N to create a new document containing the contents of the clipboard.

To make a selection from its centre *outward* (instead of corner to corner), hold down the Option key before or during the drag.

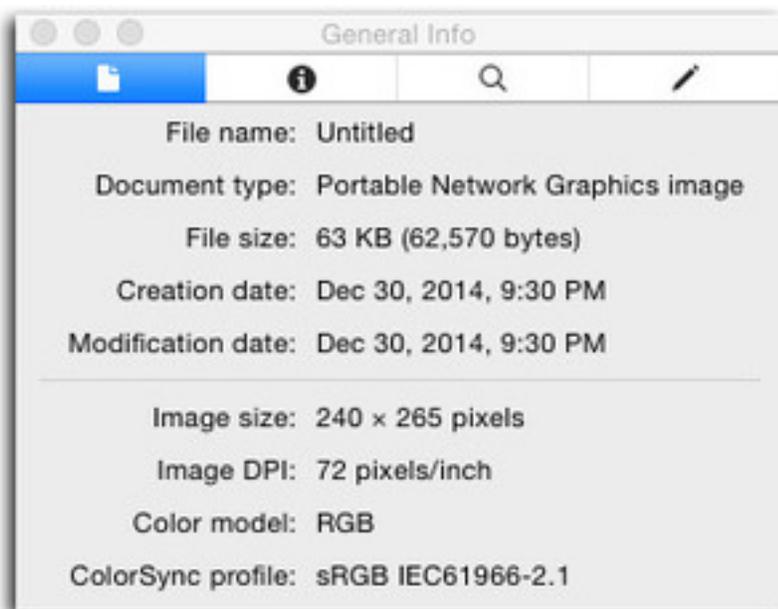
Add the Shift key to constrain the selection to a square.

Quickly see the size of a website image

Here's a quick way to save an image from a website, and determine its exact dimensions: just drag it directly from the webpage onto the Preview icon in your Mac's Dock.

Next, choose Tools > Show Inspector (or press Command-I) to summon a panel that shows its size, file format, etc.

Using Preview's Inspector is a super fast way to learn the dimensions of images on the web.



Quickly sort a folder of images

Preview's sidebar is a great tool for sorting images before you commit to importing them into your image editing app (say, iPhoto).

For example, if your friend hands you a memory stick of 100 images, make three folders on your desktop named "originals," "keep," and "toss."

Drag the files from the memory stick into the originals folder and open them in Preview.

Next, drag thumbnails from Preview's sidebar into the appropriate folder ("keep" or "toss").

The original files will be left intact, but *copies* will appear in your sorting folders. When you're done, delete the originals folder.

If your images don't appear in the sidebar in the order you prefer, you can either drag them up and down to reorder them, or Control-click the white space in the drawer and use the resulting menu to sort by name, path, date, size or kind.

You can also drag a thumbnail to the Trash icon to delete the original file, or drag it onto the Photoshop icon in your Dock to open it in that program.

Adjust colour and exposure

In Yosemite, Preview sports an Adjust Color panel, which is similar to the controls in iPhoto's Adjustments panel in Edit mode. To use it, open a photo and then click the Markup Toolbar icon to display all the markup tools (it looks like a toolbox).

In the toolbar that appears, click the Adjust Color icon (it looks like a pyramid or prism).

To quickly adjust an image, try using Preview's new Adjust Color panel.

The Auto Levels button improves most images by adjusting brightness levels; however, there are also individual sliders to adjust Exposure, Contrast, Highlights, Shadows, Saturation, Temperature, Tint, Sharpness or add a Sepia colour.

Add annotations

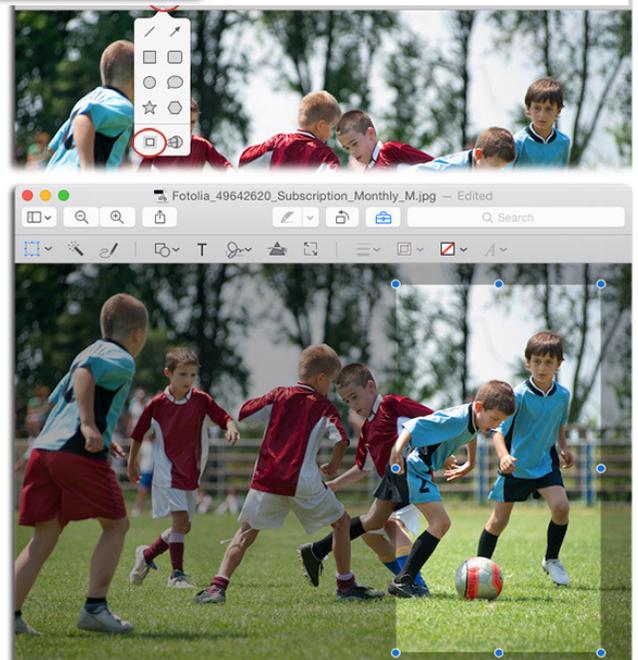
Peek inside the *Tools* > *Annotate* menu and you'll spot several ways to draw attention to areas in a document or image.

As with previous versions you can draw rectangles, ovals, lines, arrows, speech bubbles and add text.

You can additionally highlight, underline or strike through existing text.

Preview 8 introduces five new annotation tools: Star, Polygon, Sketch, Mask and Loupe. Both the Star and Polygon tools are self-explanatory.

Once you click on your document to add the shape, just drag the tiny, round green handle that appears in a circular motion to specify the



shape's number of sides (the Star tool sports a second green handle used to control side length).

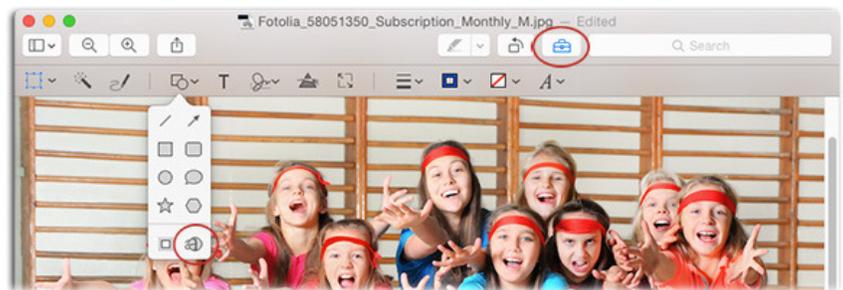
The Sketch tool lets you add freehand squiggles. If they resemble a shape, Preview auto-converts them (oval-shaped squiggles become ovals, for example).

If you'd prefer to leave your original squiggle as is, you can revert to it using the floating toolbar that appears.

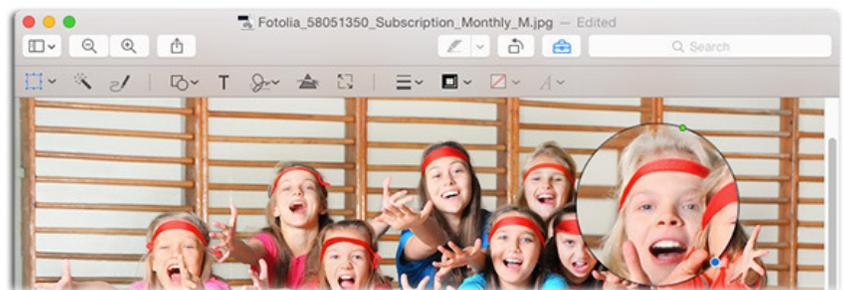
Most exciting in the new annotation tool line-up are the Mask and Loupe tools. Each is accessible in the *Tools > Annotate* menu and in the Markup toolbar's Shape menu.

The Mask tool lets you highlight area(s) by adding a mask that darkens everything outside of it, which also makes for a slick photo effect.

Once you activate the Mask tool (circled, top), it appears atop your document (bottom). Drag any corner handle to resize it or Option-drag to resize from the center outward. Click and drag outside the box to reposition the mask (your cursor turns into a tiny hand).



The Loupe tool lets you magnify a certain spot with a resizable, stackable loupe.



Once you add a loupe, you can increase or decrease its magnification level by dragging the round green handle that appears along its perimeter.

You can also stack multiple loupe effects to magnify an area that's already magnified.

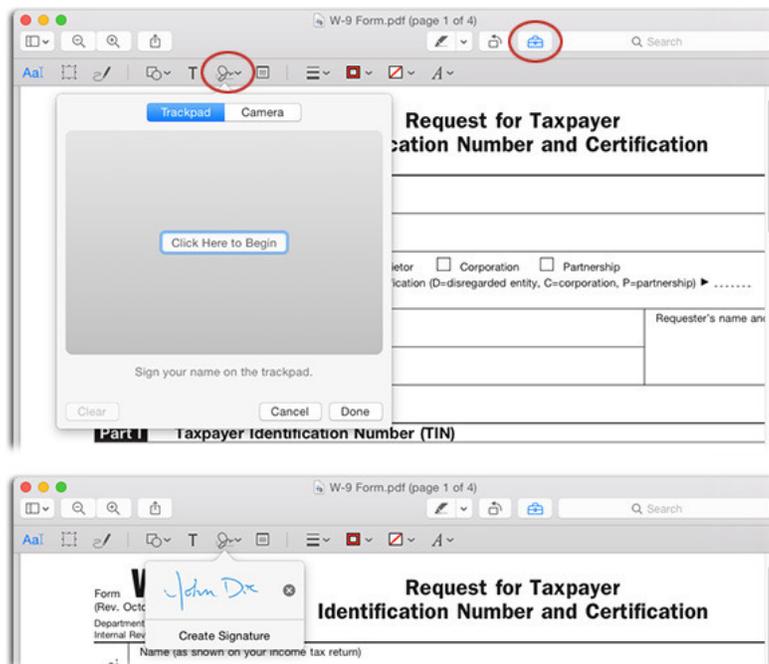
Activate the Loupe tool (circled, top) and a loupe appears over your document; just drag to reposition it.

Dragging the blue circle alters magnification level and the green circle changes loupe size (bottom).

Sign documents

Adding your signature to documents is far easier, too. Open the Markup toolbar by clicking the toolbox icon at the upper right, and then click the Signature tool (it looks like a tiny signature). Either draw your signature using your trackpad or mouse or use your Mac's iSight camera to photograph a signature you've scribed onto white paper. Either way, Preview captures your signature with transparency, so you can gracefully plop it atop any document or image (say, for a quick watermark).

You can capture a signature with your trackpad or iSight camera (top). Once your signature is captured, it appears as a menu item of the Sign tool for easy access (bottom).



Reduce PDF file size

To slim the file size of any PDF (by reducing image quality), choose *File > Export*. In the resulting dialogue box, choose *PDF* from the Format menu and then choose *Reduce File Size* from the Quartz Filter menu. Click Save and call it done.

Merge multiple files into one PDF

Preview can easily merge multiple files into a single PDF (say, to combine scanned documents or to combine a PDF with an image). To do it, open the first PDF or image, choose *View > Thumbnails* and then drag other files – single or multiple pages of any dimensions – from the desktop onto the thumbnail sidebar. Drag thumbnails to reorder pages within your newly combined PDF and then save the file.

Rotate pages in a PDF

To rotate a single page within a multi-page PDF (handy for scanned receipts), choose *View > Thumbnails* and then select the thumbnails of the pages you want to rotate. Next, click the Rotate button in the toolbar or choose *Tools > Rotate Left* or *Tools > Rotate Right*.

Crop a PDF (or image)

If a page in your PDF has extra stuff around it – say, registration or crop marks – you can use the Rectangular Selection tool to crop it. Open the Markup toolbar, click the Rectangular Selection tool, and draw a selection around the area you want to keep. Next, choose *Tools > Crop* (or press Command-K to commit the crop). To crop multiple pages, choose *View > Thumbnails* and Command or Shift-click to select multiple thumbnails before committing the crop. To crop all pages, press Command-A to select them before committing the crop. To draw a more accurate selection for cropping, choose *Tools > Show Inspector* to open the Inspector window, click the Crop icon (it looks like an angled comb), and enter the location and size of the desired crop.

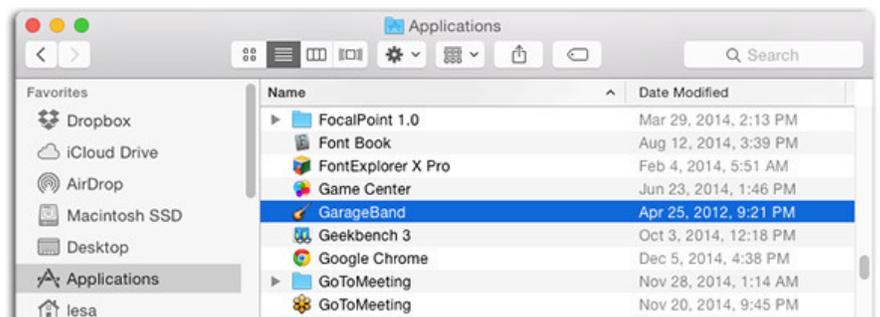
Password-protect a PDF or image

To prevent a PDF or image from being opened, copied from or printed, try password-protecting it. Open the file and choose *File > Export*, and in the resulting dialogue box choose *PDF* from the Format menu. Next, enable the Encrypt checkbox, enter a password into the resulting field and click Save. Be sure to rename or change the location of your newly protected PDF to keep from overwriting your original!

Extract an application icon

Preview can extract several sizes of an application's icon as images. First, select the application wherever it lives in the Finder (say, in your Applications or Downloads folder) and then press Command-C to copy it to your clipboard. Next, press Command-N to create a new document in Preview and all the sizes of the application's icon instantly appear as individual pages with transparency. To save a specific size as a new file, select the appropriate thumbnail and choose *File > Export*. To preserve the icon's transparent background, choose PNG or TIFF for the file format in the resulting dialogue box.

To extract an app's icon, just select the app and press Command-C (top). When



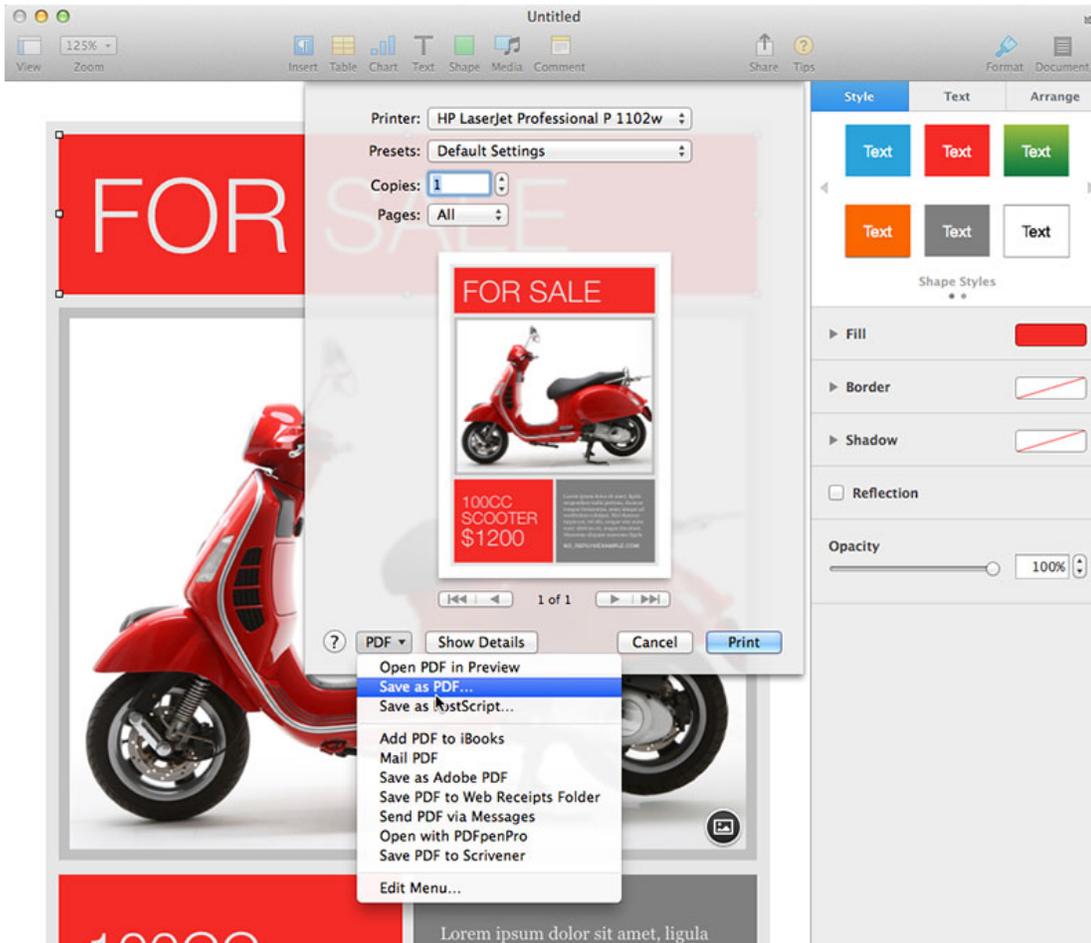
you create a new document in Preview, the icon instantly appears at multiple sizes with transparency (bottom).

Soft proof your print

Preview can also show you how a document will print on a certain printer, which is useful for seeing how a colour document will print on a black-and-white printer or how a vibrant image will look on a commercial press. Open the file and choose *View > Soft Proof with Profile* and in the dialogue box that appears choose a standard profile such as Generic Gray, Generic CMYK or a profile specific to your printer.

Additional tips for creating PDFs

Create a PDF in Mac OS X using the print document



It's easy to create PDF documents in Mac OS X, and you can do it from just about any app using the Print menu. Here is how to create a PDF document from any file:

1. Open the document that you wish to turn into a PDF.
2. Choose File > Print (or press Control + P).
3. Click on PDF in the bottom-left of the Print menu and choose Save as PDF.
4. Enter a name for the PDF in the Save As field.
5. Choose a location for the PDF document using the Where drop-down menu (tip: click the arrow to the right of the Save As field to choose any location using Finder columns).
6. Click Save.

Following these steps saves a PDF of the document in the location you specified. Double-click the PDF document to open it in Preview (or the app of your choosing).

Quickly view a PDF with Mac OS X Quick View

You can preview a PDF document in Finder by pressing the Spacebar. Tapping the Spacebar in Mac OS X brings up a Quick Look window, which will display the contents of the PDF. If the PDF has more than one page, you can scroll up and down to move through the pages. Notice that in the top-right of Quicklook is an Open in Preview button (which quickly switches to Preview) and a Share icon, so you can send the PDF via Mail or Messages to another person.

Choose to view PDFs in either Mac OS X Preview or Adobe Acrobat

PDF files open in the Mac OS X Preview app by default. We're huge fans of Preview, and it is a much more powerful app than most people realise. But sometimes PDFs work a little better in Adobe Acrobat (especially if you have web links and video in your PDF).

You can download Acrobat Reader from the Adobe website and use it to preview files. Simply drag the PDF to the Adobe Reader icon in the Dock to open it in Adobe Reader instead of Preview.

It is possible to make Adobe Acrobat Reader the default application for PDFs by following these steps:

- 1 Locate the PDF file in Finder and click it once to select it (but don't open it).
- 2 Choose File > Get Info (or press Command + I).
- 3 Click on the Open With drop down menu and choose Adobe Reader from the list of apps on your Mac that can open PDFs.
- 4 Click Change all

From now on whenever you double-click a PDF file it will open in Adobe Reader instead of Mac OS X Preview. We prefer Preview, but some purists and power users feel more comfortable using Adobe's PDF viewing tool.