

The *Dreaded* and *Coveted* **Pen Tool**

Key Information To Master the Pen Tool and Become a Pen Tool Adept

Why use the pen tool?

- Precision
- Efficiency
- Closed shapes
- Control
- Cross-software applications (Photoshop, Illustrator, Laser cutting, engraving, CAD, 3D programs)

Working with the Pen tool: *Essential Keys*

- **P** pen tool (*additional keys modify what the pen tool does*)
 - + add anchor points (click on a path, appears when hovering over path with pen tool)
 - - delete anchor points (appears when hovering over existing anchor point with pen tool)
 - **ALT** anchor point tool (add Bezier handles or break connection between handles)
 - **SHIFT** constrain Bezier handles to right angles

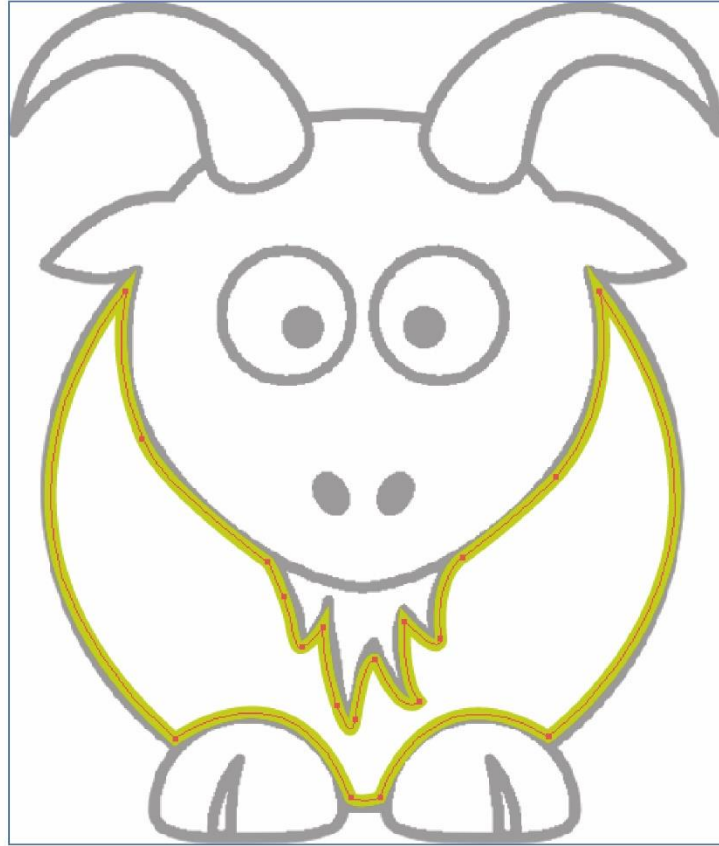
Anchor Points & Bezier Handles

- Bezier handles control anchor points
- 2 main types of anchor points: smooth and corner points
 - **Corner Points**- path abruptly changes direction
 - Click, let go, move mouse, click again **or** click and drag, hold ALT to change direction)
 - 3 kinds (straight line to straight line, straight to curve, curve to curve)
 - **Smooth Points**- path follows continuous smooth curve
 - Click and drag out Bezier handles in the direction you want the curve to follow

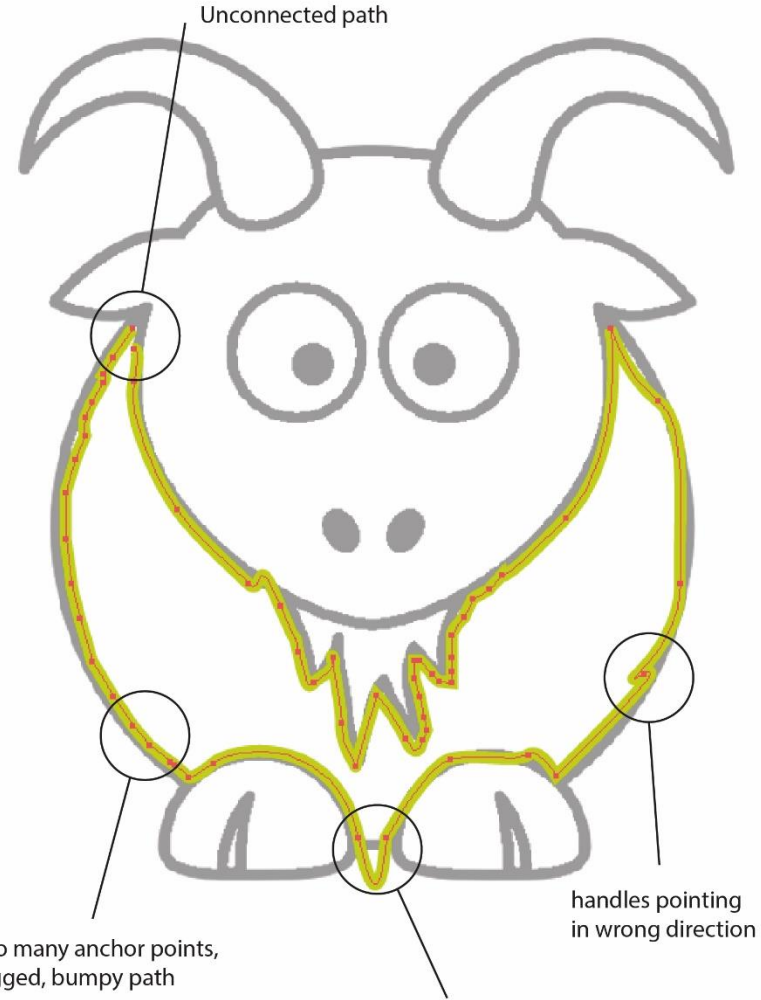
RULES FOR USING THE PEN TOOL

- **Few anchor points** = smoother cleaner line.
- **Bezier handles are not points** = Do not confuse them, they only control the curve.
- **Drag Bezier handles on the line as much as possible** = smoother cleaner line.
- **Make complete shapes and overlap** = Good fill and no gaps. End your path on the point that you started with. Sometimes you should trace through an object.
- **Think in layers:** build up from the bottom

Good



Bad



Too many anchor points,
jagged, bumpy path

Excess path when changing
direction, caused by not clicking
on last point to change direction
of curve

handles pointing
in wrong direction

Practice: Must complete **1** of 2 options before moving on to **A6: Value**

1. <https://helpx.adobe.com/illustrator/how-to/pen-tool-exercises.html>
2. Exercises (1-4) in class folder (download and place/drag into Illustrator to use as templates
 1. Work on each in order and follow instructions exactly
 2. Place the individual elements together to create each Superhero emblem
 3. Add color once each design is completed
 4. Optimize points and Bezier handles so each shape is precise and clean
 5. Arrange elements on page, export, and place in folder

Learning Goals for Pen Tool Exercises

- I understand how to use the pen tool and all of its functions
- I am able to optimize lines and shapes created with the pen tool
- I am able to alter shapes and paths using the pen tool options
- I can follow a template and reproduce art work using guides with the pen tool
- I can create all the different anchor points possible with the pen tool
- I can use Bezier handles to alter the direction of curves