



Making Pattern Paper

Halloween Argyle · Illustrator + Photoshop

You build one small tile in Illustrator, then turn it into a full 12 x 12 sheet in Photoshop and age it so it prints like real patterned paper. Fifteen steps, start to finish.

Timestamps beside each step match the lesson video, so if a step will not behave you can jump straight to that moment and watch it happen.

WHAT YOU NEED

Adobe Illustrator · Adobe Photoshop · a scratch or grunge texture (Adobe Stock has plenty) · a printer and the paper you like printing on

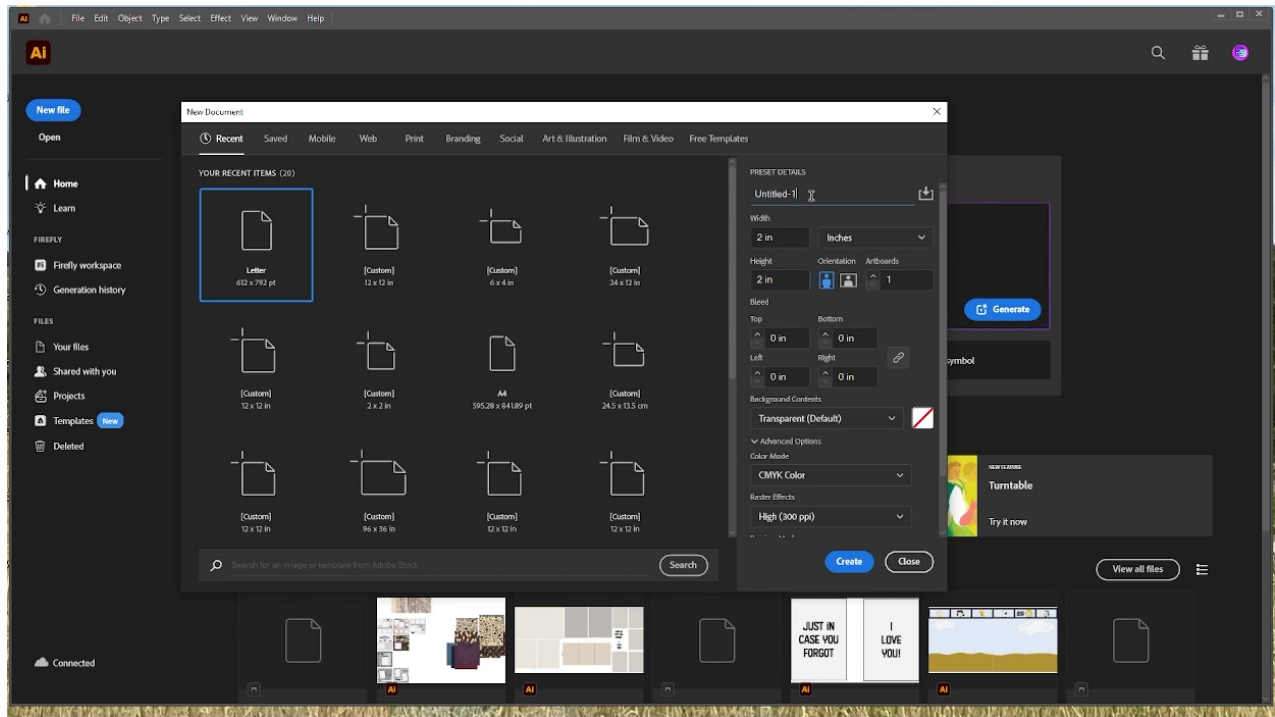
PART 1 — Illustrator: build the tile

STEP 1

video 00:04

Set up the file

- Open Illustrator.
- File - New. Set the size to **2 in x 2 in** and the resolution to **300 dpi**.
- This little square is your tile. Everything else is built from it, so it is worth getting right.



The New Document dialog - 2 in x 2 in, 300 dpi, CMYK if you are printing

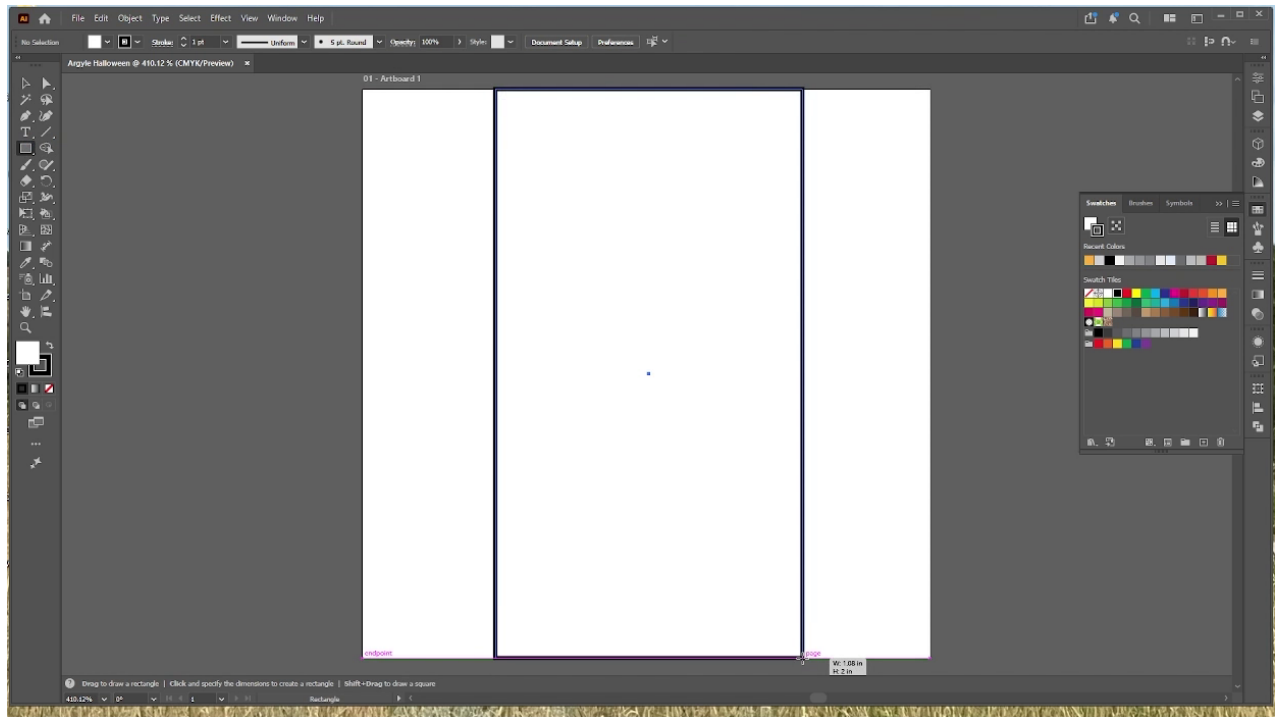
Tip. A 2 inch tile is a good size for argyle. Bigger tile, bigger diamonds when you fill the 12x12.

STEP 2

video 00:23

Draw the base rectangle

- Take the **Rectangle tool** and draw a rectangle **1 in wide by 2 in tall**.
- Fill it black. Set the stroke to none.
- Center it vertically and horizontally on the artboard.



A tall black rectangle, centred on the square artboard

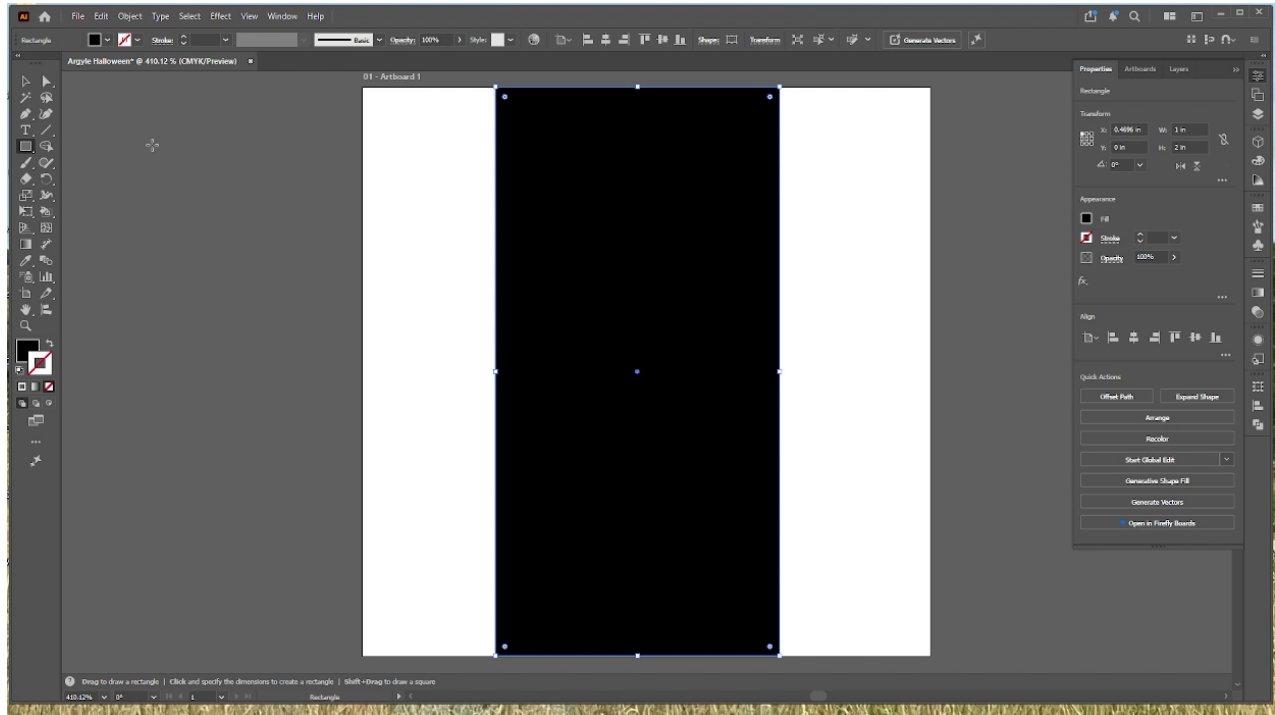
Tip. Centring matters. If the rectangle sits off-centre the finished pattern will not tile evenly.

STEP 3

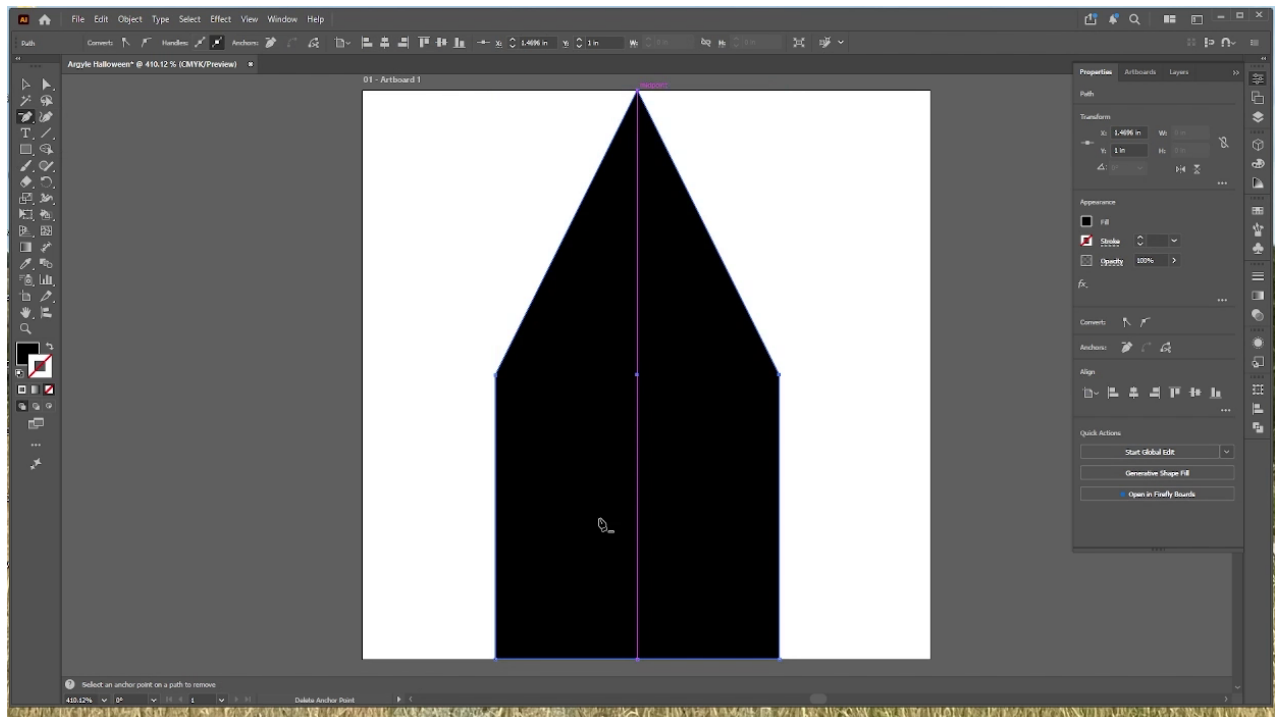
video 00:38

Turn the rectangle into a diamond

- With the rectangle selected, go to **Object - Path - Add Anchor Points**. This drops a new point at the middle of each side.
- Switch to the **Delete Anchor Point** tool.
- Click each of the **four corner anchors** to delete them.
- The four middle points close up and you are left with a diamond.



New anchor points added at the middle of each side



Deleting the corner anchors - the shape closes up into a diamond

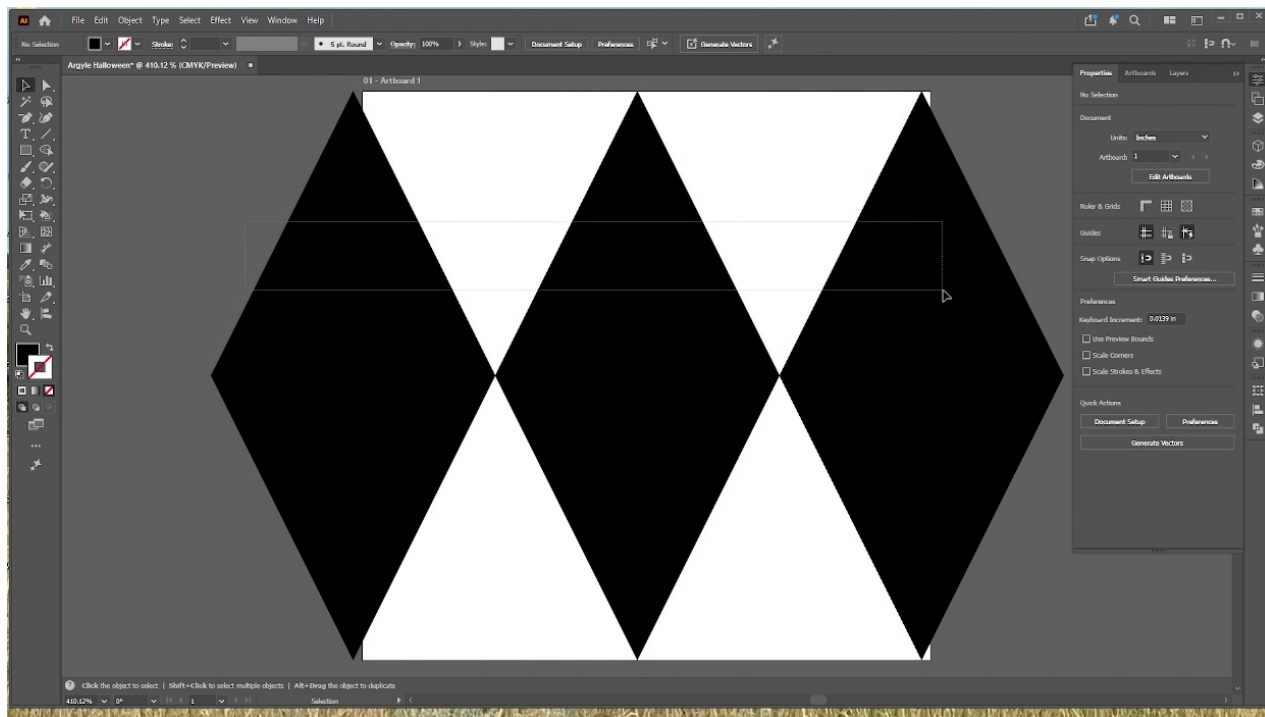
Tip. If it goes wrong, undo back to the rectangle and start again. Deleting the wrong point makes a triangle.

STEP 4

video 00:58

Copy the diamond across

- Hold **Alt** and drag the diamond sideways to make a copy. Do it twice.
- Line the three diamonds up so their points touch.



Three black diamonds, points touching

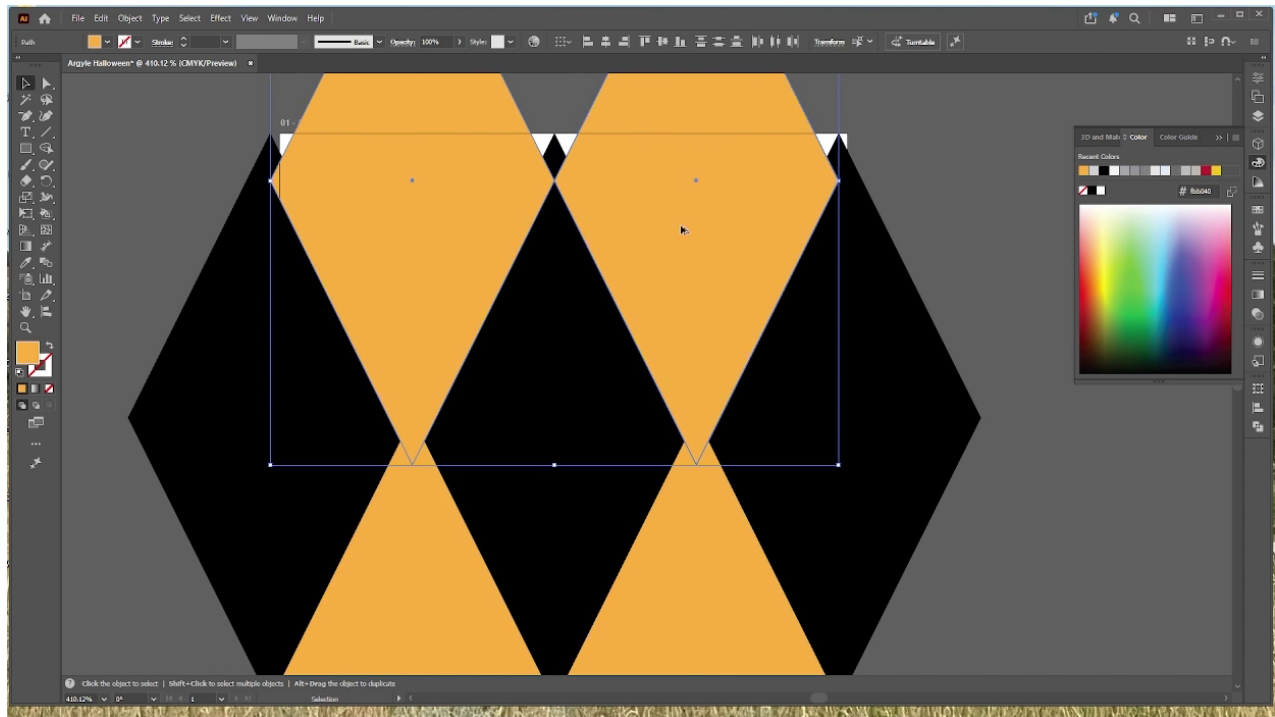
Tip. Hold Shift as well as Alt to keep the copy on the same horizontal line.

STEP 5

video 01:19

Add the orange diamonds

- Duplicate the row again and move the copy **lower into position** so it sits between the first row.
- Fill this new set orange.



The orange set dropped into position between the black diamonds

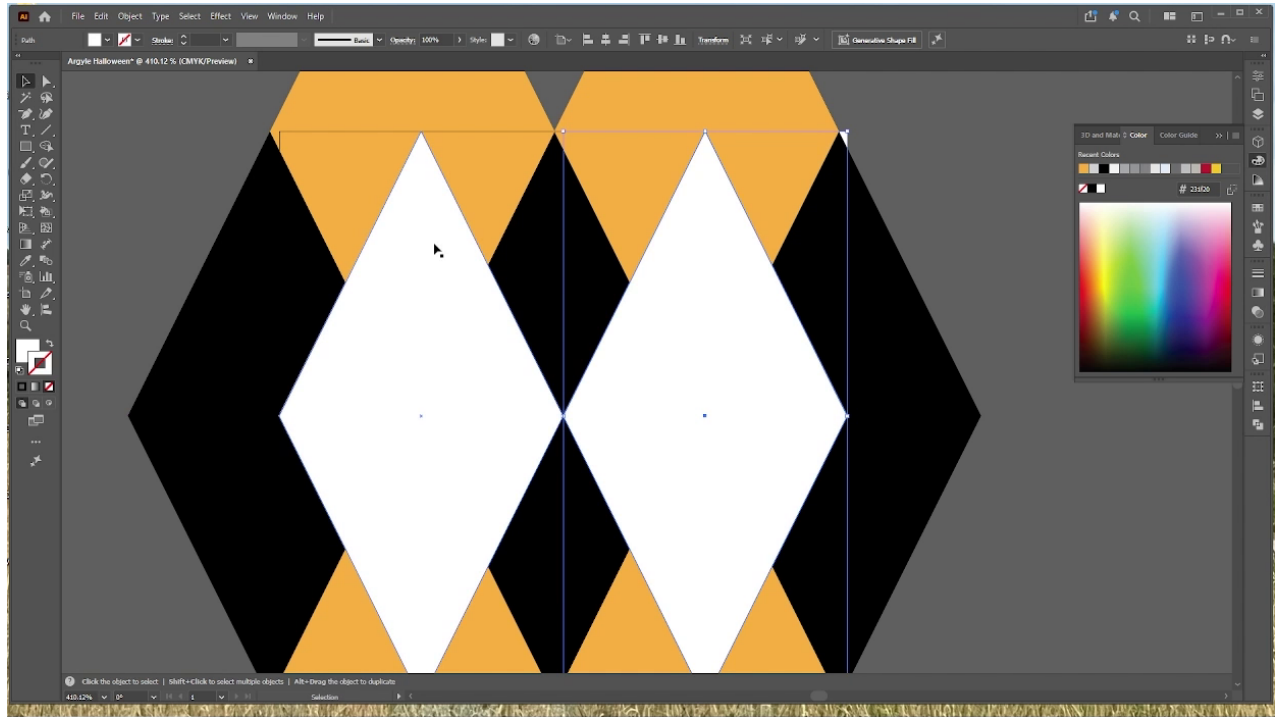
Tip. This is where the argyle look appears - it is just two offset rows in two colours.

STEP 6

video 01:35

Add the white diamonds

- Make another set for the **top part** of the image.
- Duplicate two more diamonds and make them **white**.



White diamonds added - three colours now in play

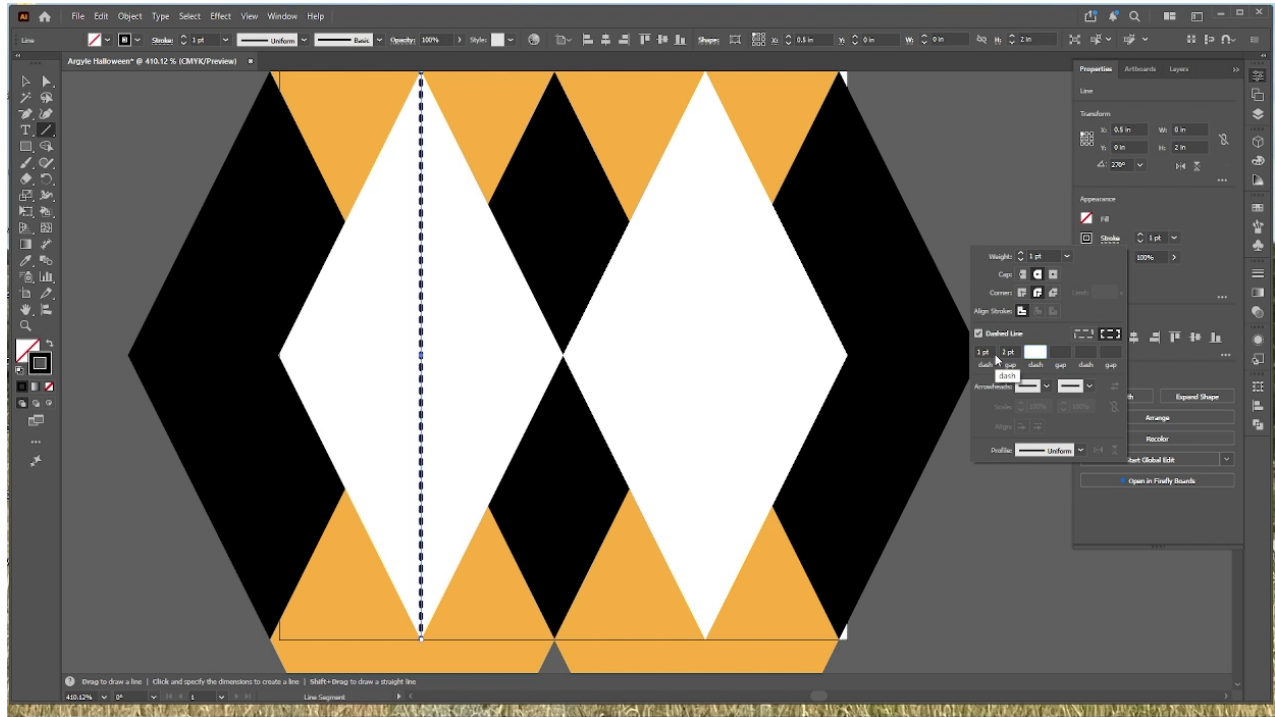
Tip. Keep to three colours. Argyle gets busy fast.

STEP 7

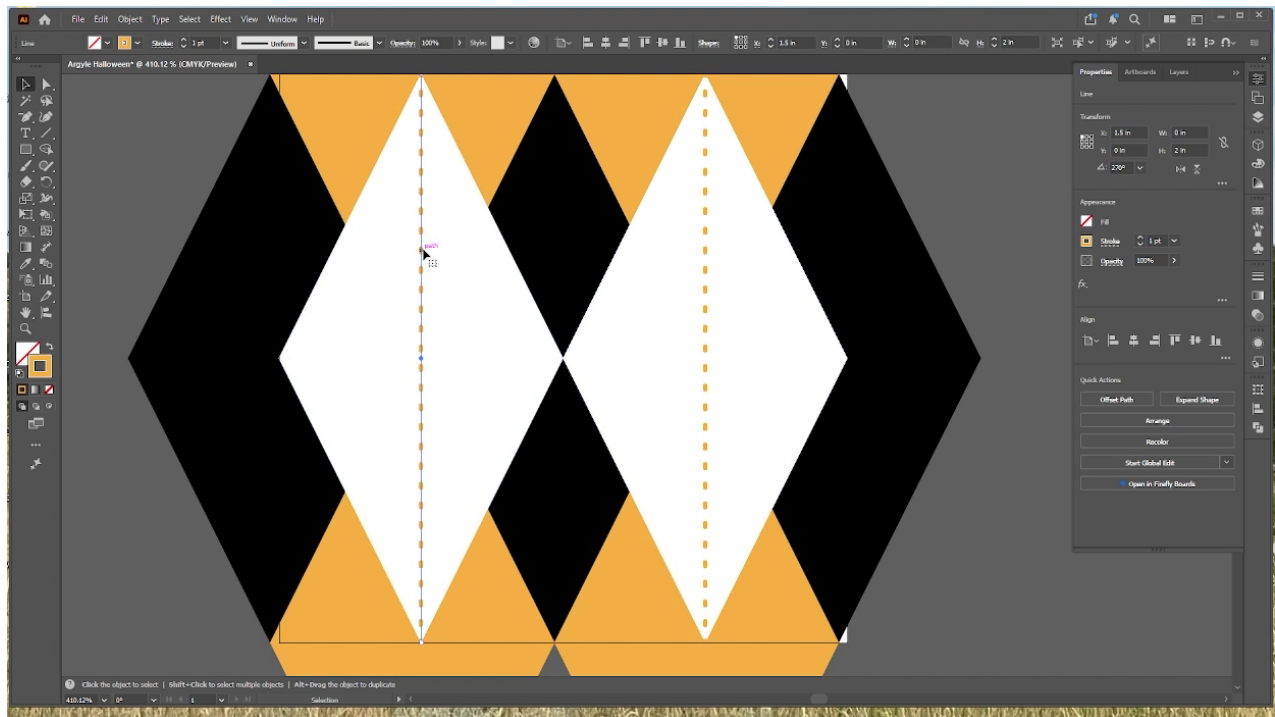
video 01:49

Add the dashed detail line

- Draw a straight line down the centre of a white diamond.
- Give it a **1 pt stroke** and tick **Dashed Line** in the Stroke panel.
- Set the dash to **1 pt** with a **4 pt gap**.
- Colour the dashes orange, then copy the line across the other white diamonds.



Stroke panel - dashed line, 1 pt dash, 4 pt gap



The orange dashes running through the white diamonds

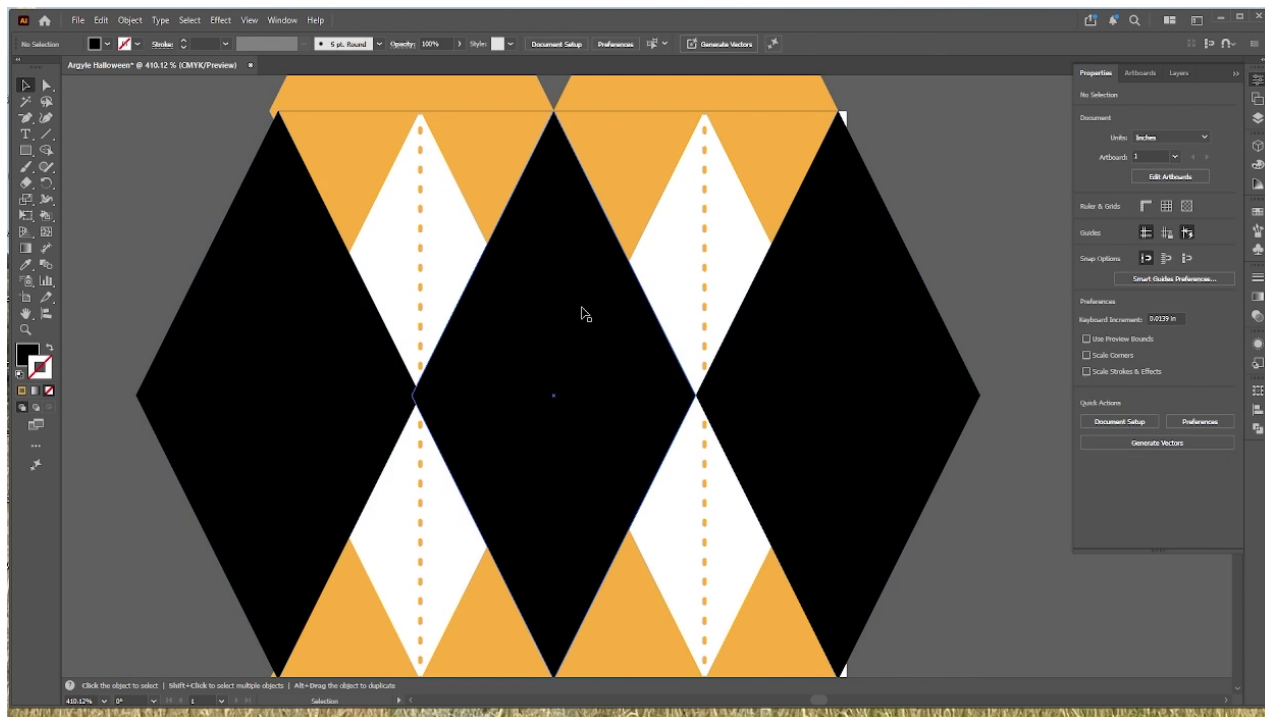
Tip. The dashes are what makes it read as argyle rather than just diamonds. Do not skip them.

STEP 8

video 02:18

Finish the tile layout

- Align and arrange the sets so the tile repeats cleanly.
- Anything running off one edge has to line up with what runs off the opposite edge.
- Zoom out and squint at it - seams show up straight away.



The finished tile, arranged so the edges match

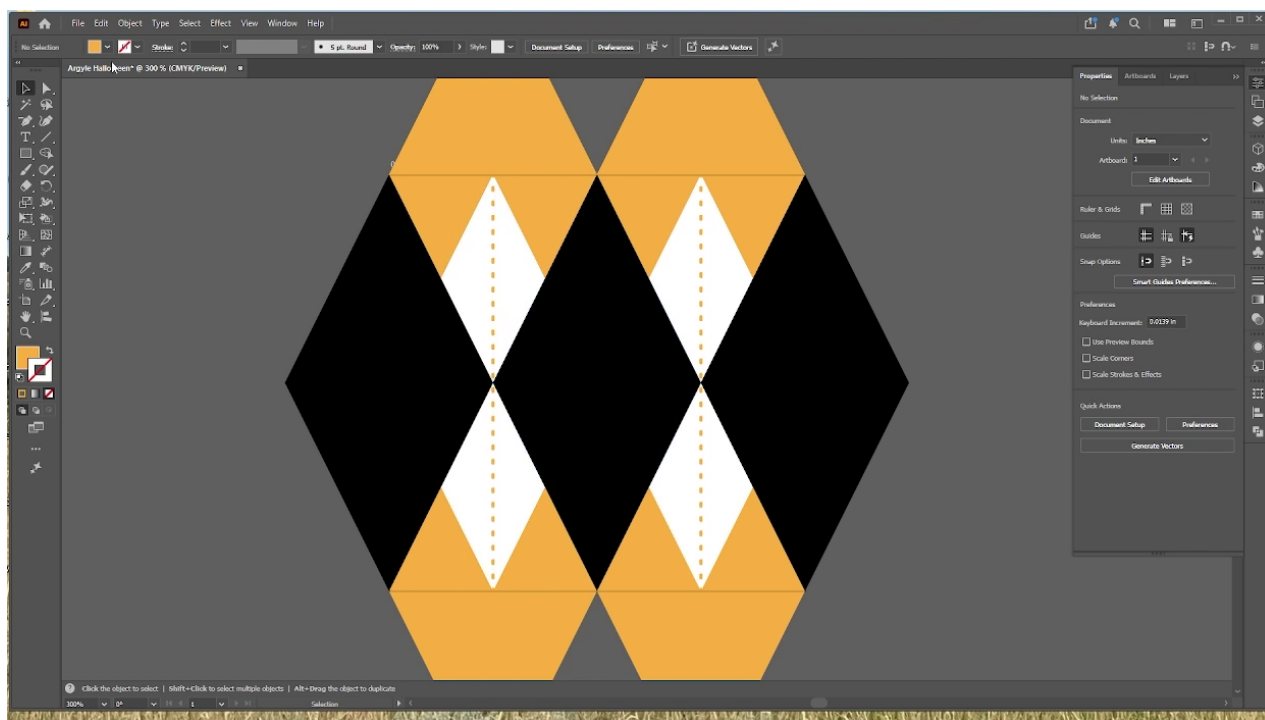
Tip. This is the fiddly bit and it is worth the time. A tile that does not match shows as a grid of lines across the whole 12x12 sheet.

STEP 9

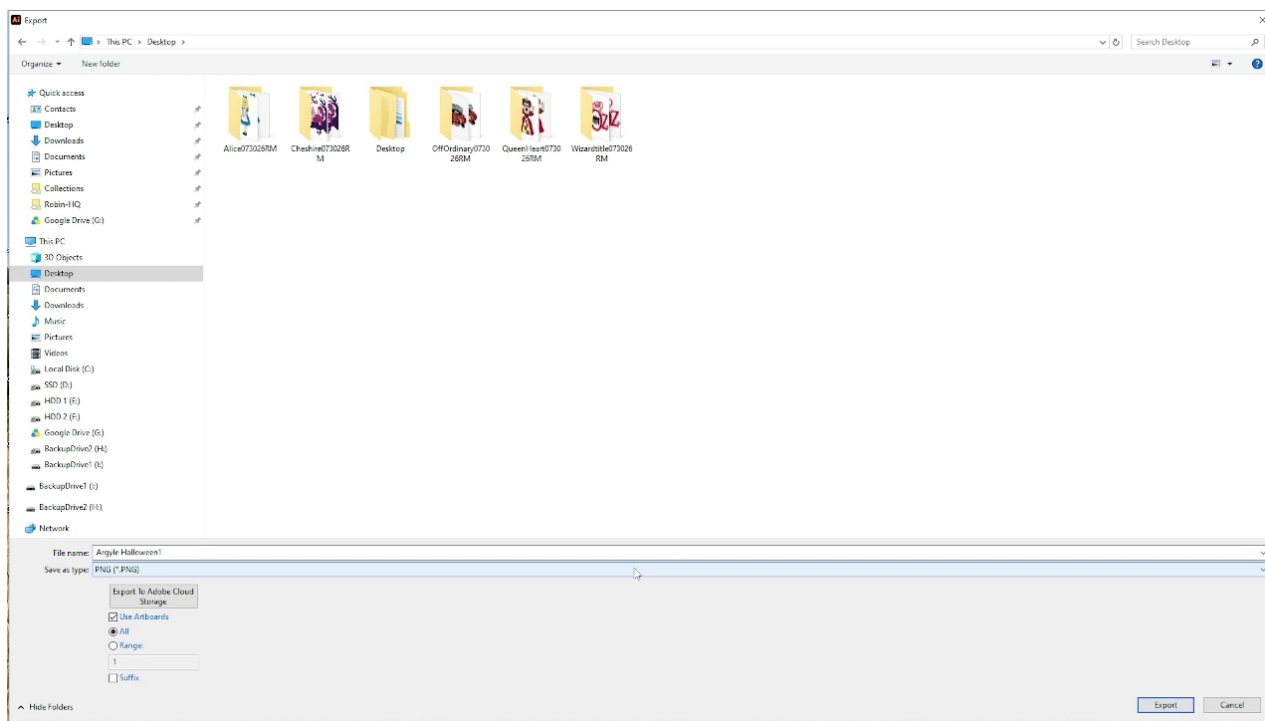
video 02:53

Save, then export the artboard

- **Save the .ai file.** This is the file you come back to when you want the same pattern in different colours.
- Then **File - Export - Export As** and choose PNG.
- Tick **Use Artboards** so it exports the tile exactly, with nothing hanging over the edge.



Saving the .ai file first



Export as PNG - remember Use Artboards

Tip. If you forget Use Artboards, Illustrator exports the bounding box of the artwork instead of the square, and the pattern will not tile.

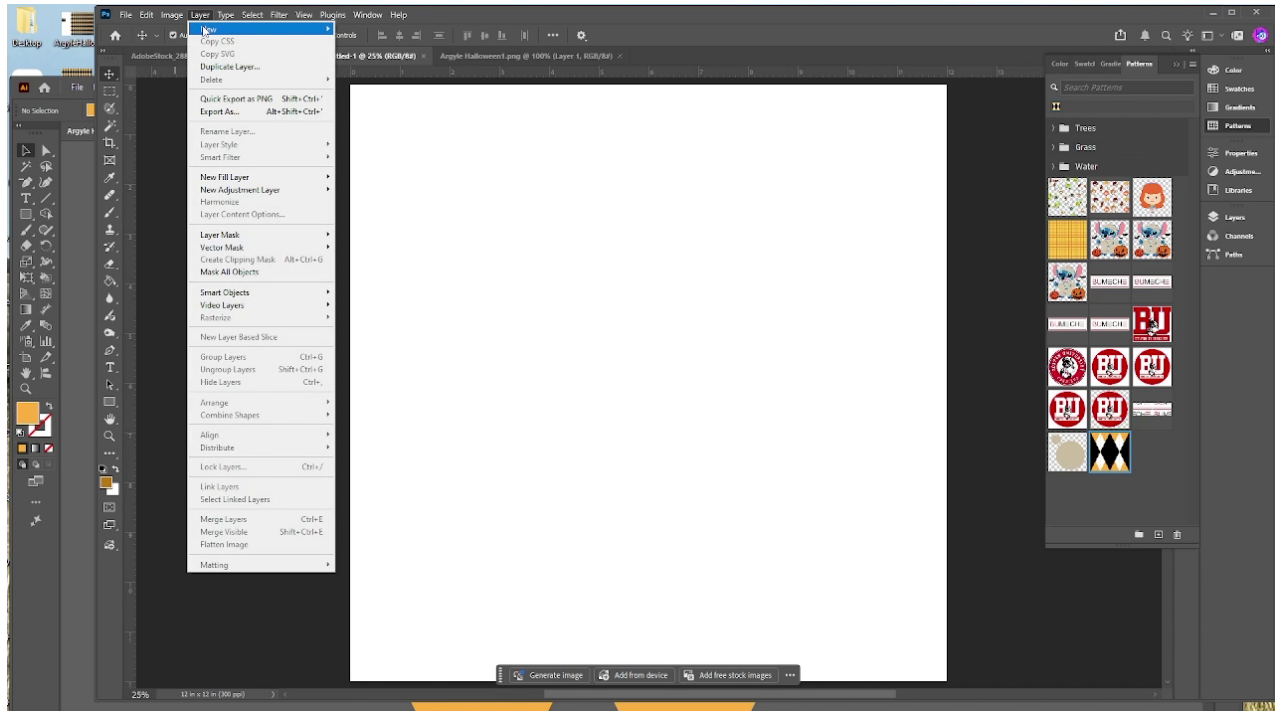
PART 2 — Photoshop: make the paper

STEP 10

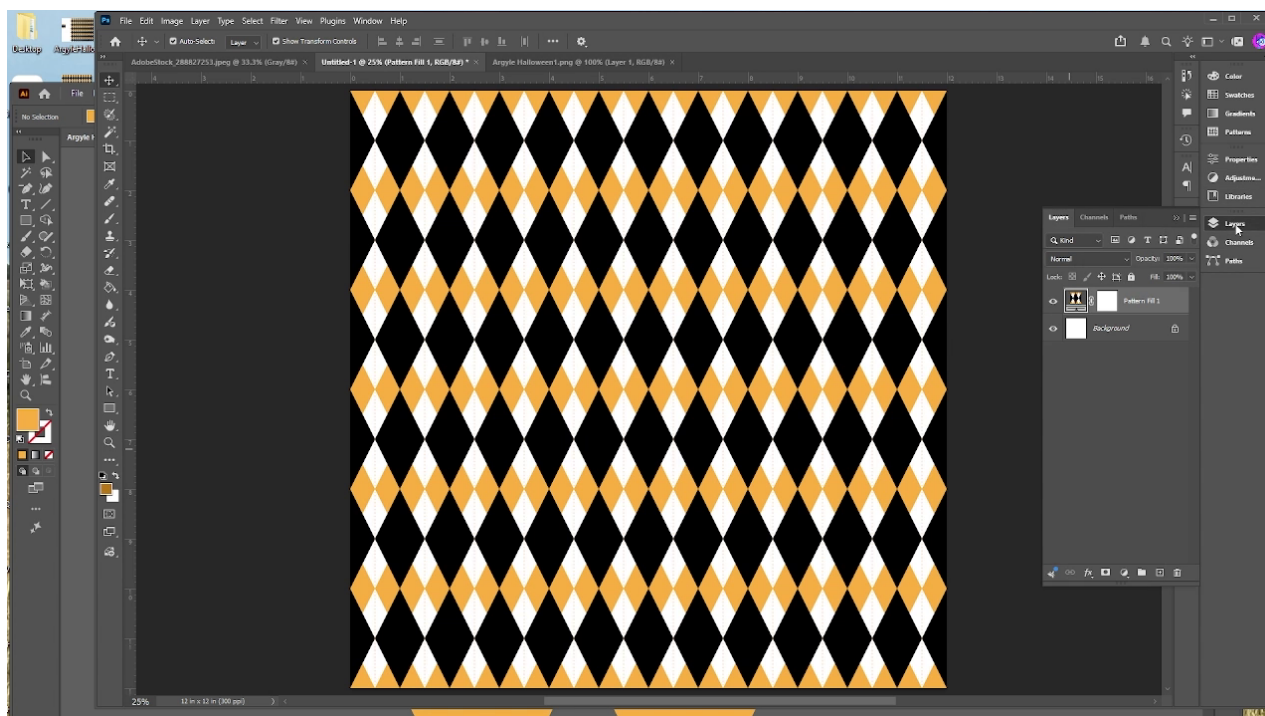
video 03:19

Photoshop - fill 12x12 with the pattern

- Open Photoshop. **File - New**, 12 in x 12 in at 300 dpi.
- **Layer - New Fill Layer - Pattern.**
- Select the argyle pattern and scale it until the diamonds are the size you want.



Layer - New Fill Layer - Pattern, with the argyle selected



The full 12x12 sheet filled with the pattern

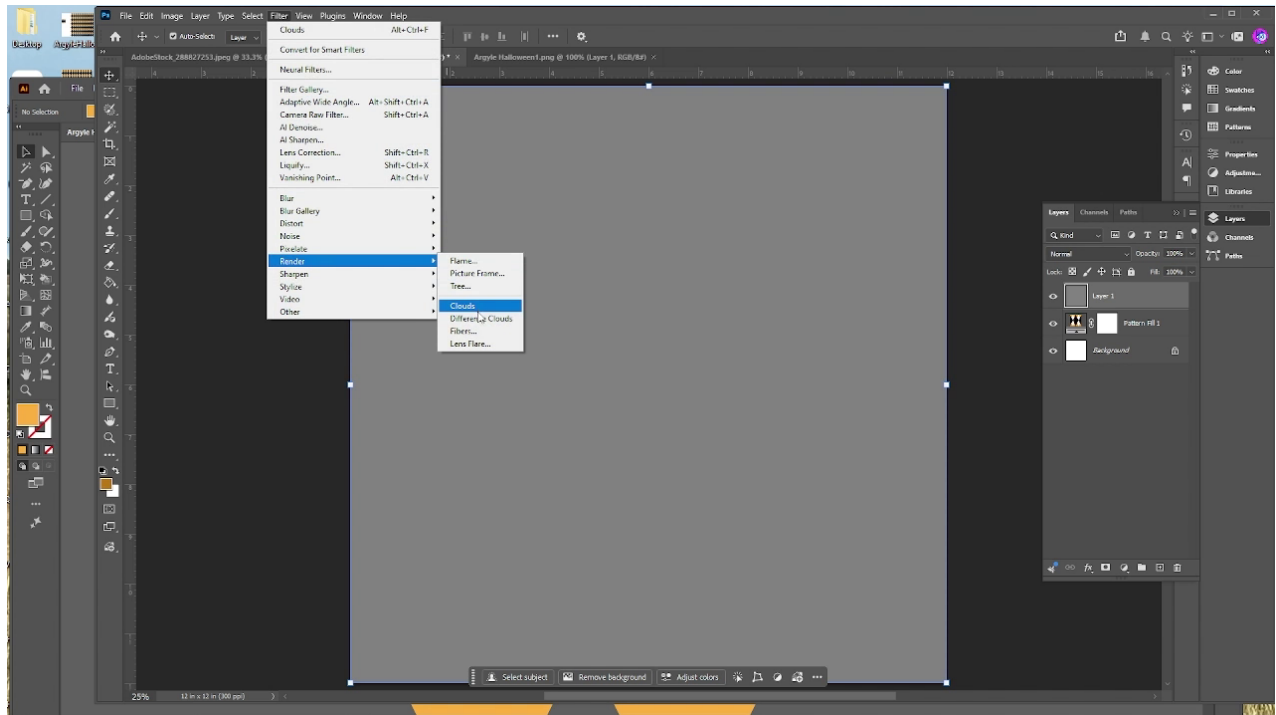
Tip. To load your own tile as a pattern: open the PNG, then Edit - Define Pattern.

STEP 11

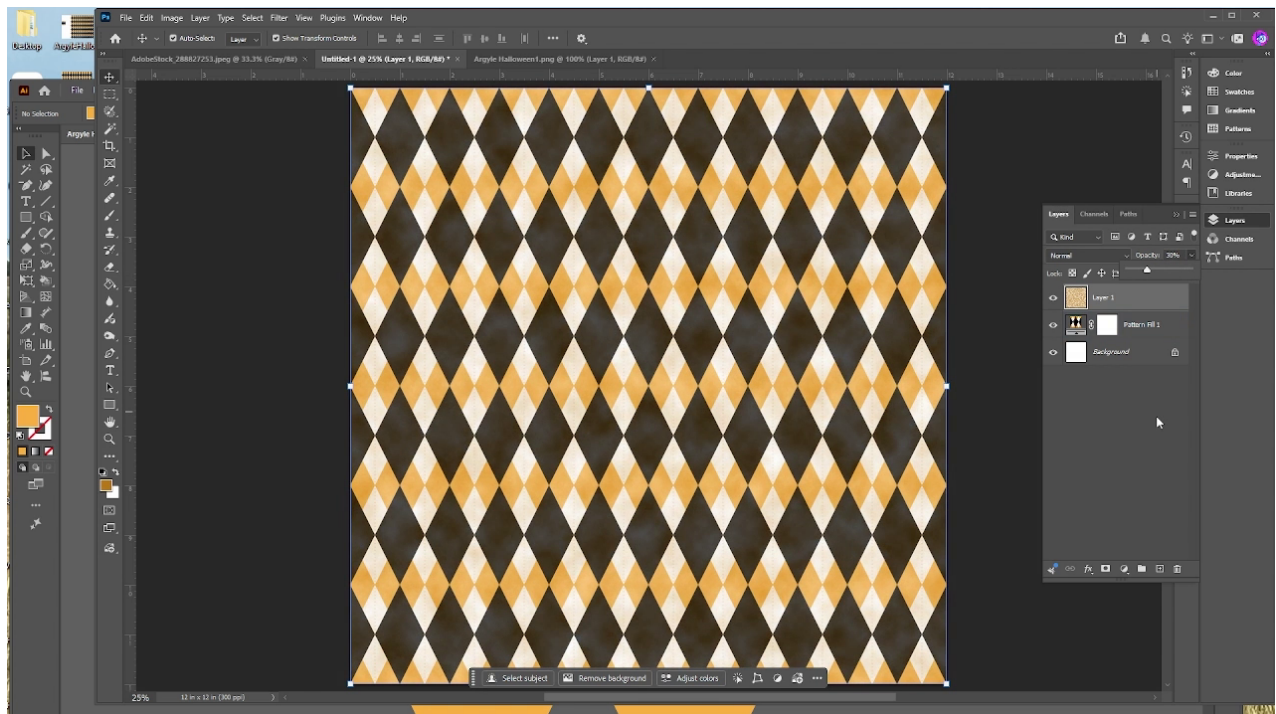
video 03:42

Add clouds for depth

- Add a new layer and go **Edit - Fill - 50% Grey**.
- **Filter - Render - Clouds**.
- Drop the layer opacity to about **30 percent**.



Filter - Render - Clouds on the grey layer



Opacity pulled back to about 30 percent

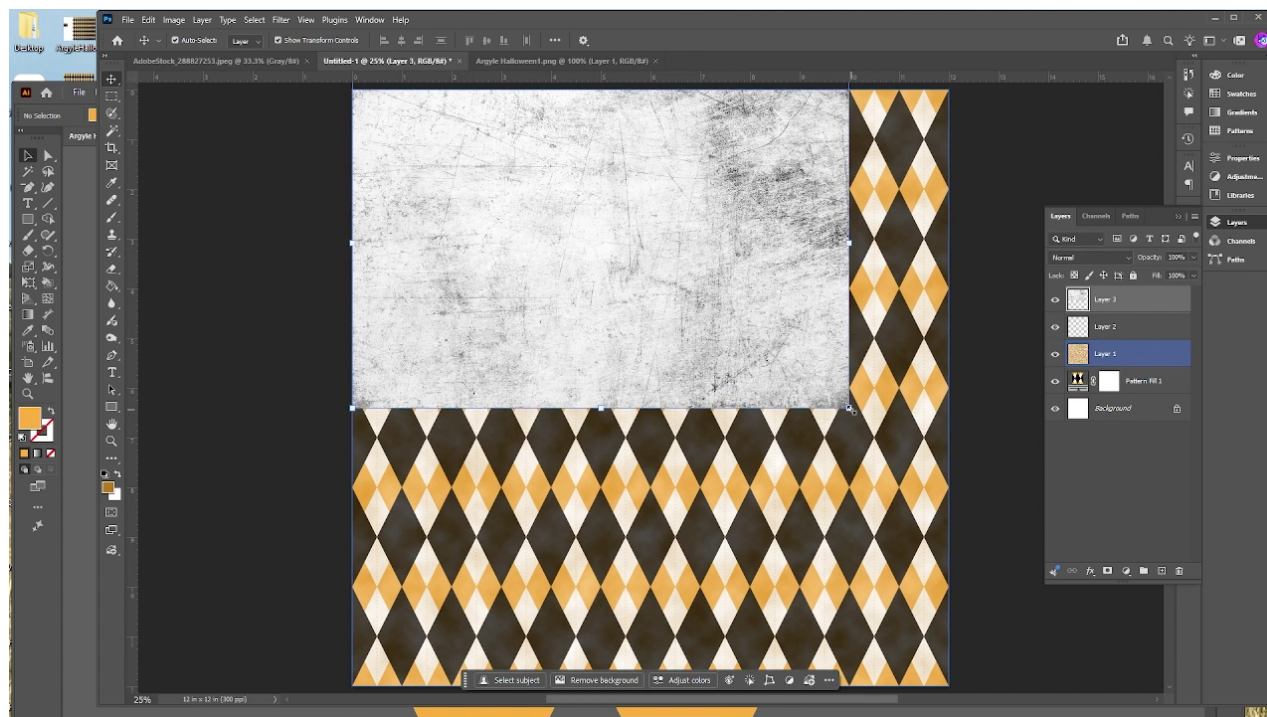
Tip. This is the step that stops the paper looking like flat computer output. Subtle is the goal.

STEP 12

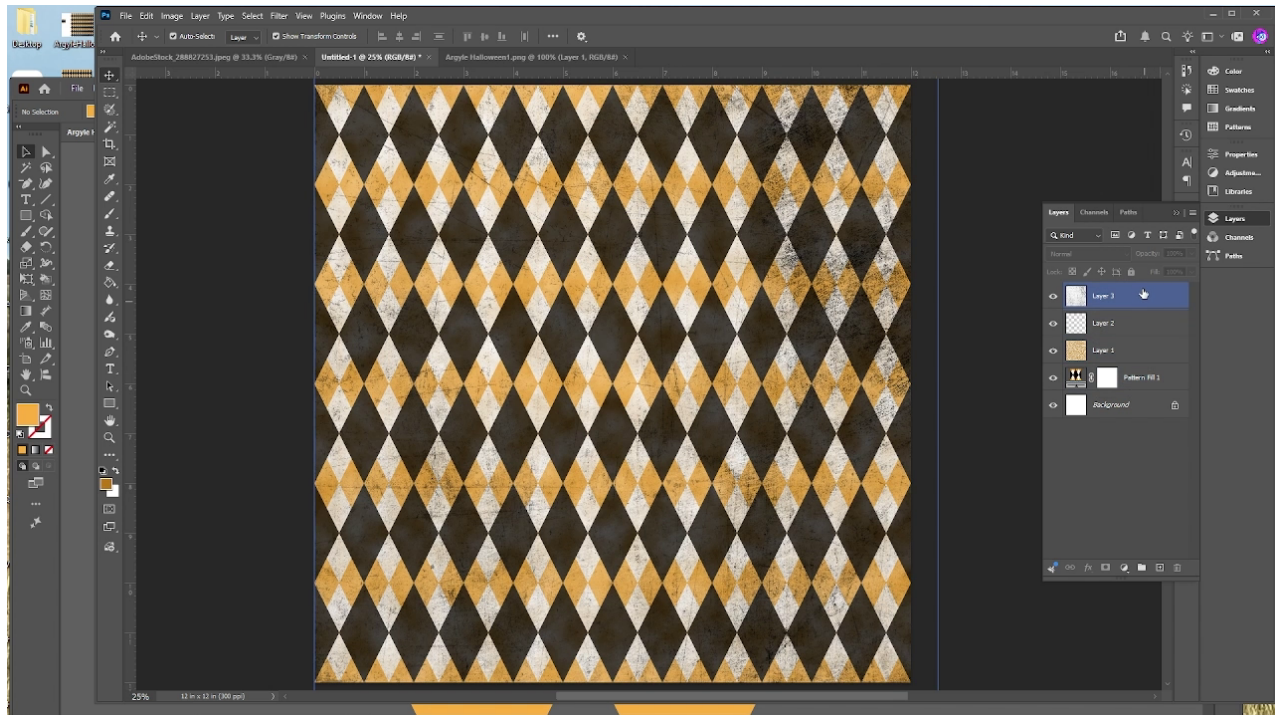
video 04:03

Add the scratch texture

- **Place** a scratch or grunge file over the top - Adobe Stock has plenty of them.
- Set its blend mode to **Multiply** so the marks sink into the pattern instead of sitting on top.
- **Flatten** the layers.



The scratch file placed over the pattern



Blend mode set to Multiply, marks now part of the paper

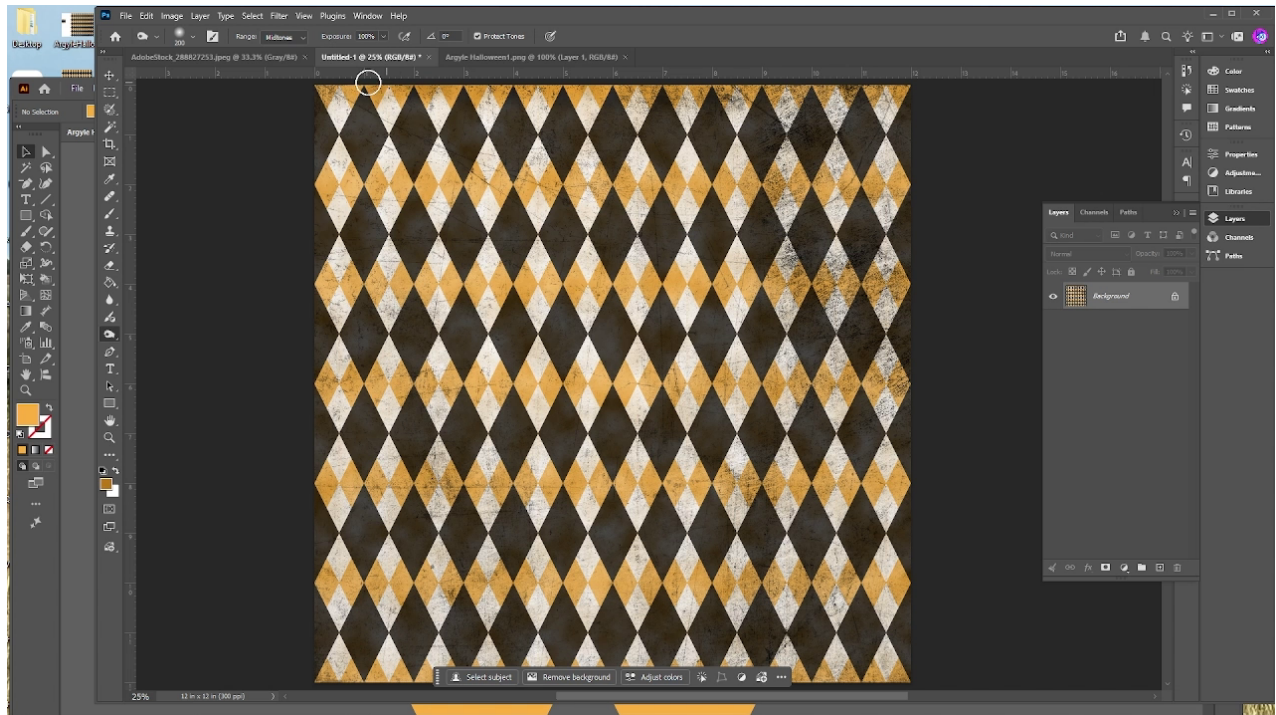
Tip. Scale the scratch file so the marks look right for a 12x12 sheet. Tiny scratches read as noise.

STEP 13

video 04:26

Burn the edges

- Take the **Burn tool** with a big soft brush.
- Work gently around the outside edges to darken them.



Burning the edges to give the sheet some age

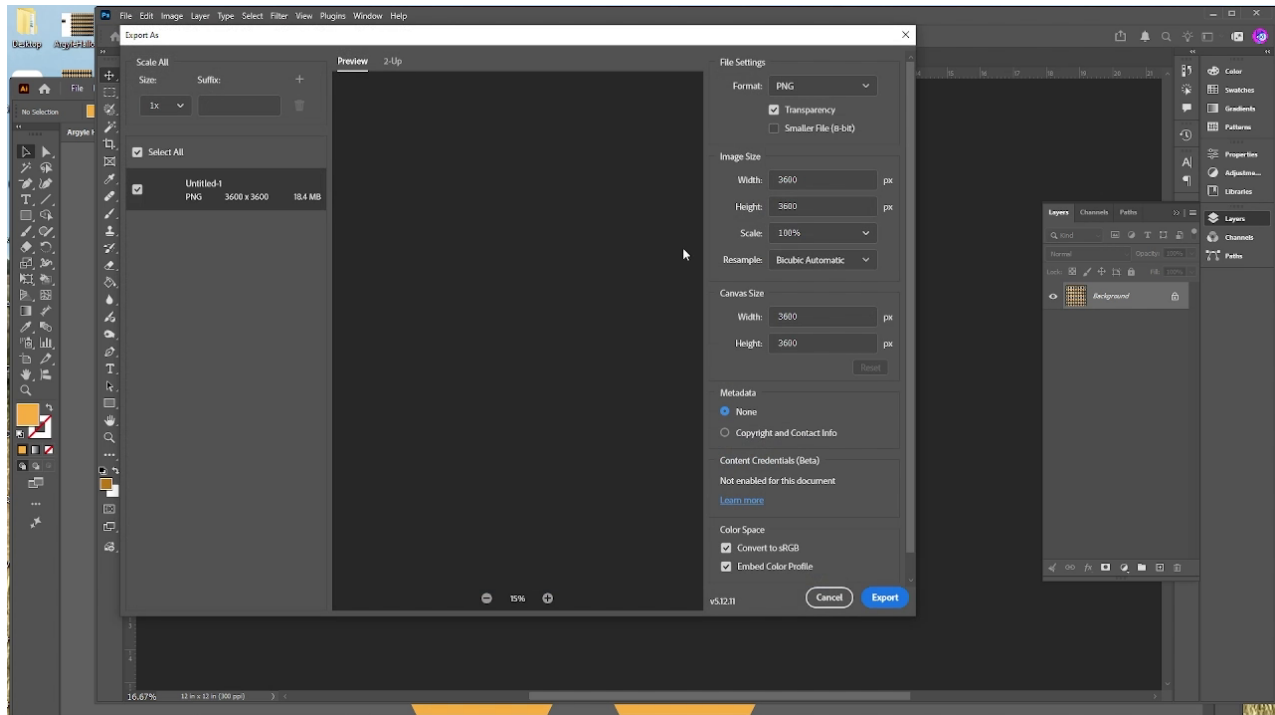
Tip. A few light passes beats one heavy one. You can always go darker; you cannot easily go back.

STEP 14

video 04:50

Export the finished paper

- **File - Export - Export As**, PNG, full size.
- Keep it at 12 x 12 at 300 dpi so it prints properly.



Exporting the finished 12x12 sheet as a PNG

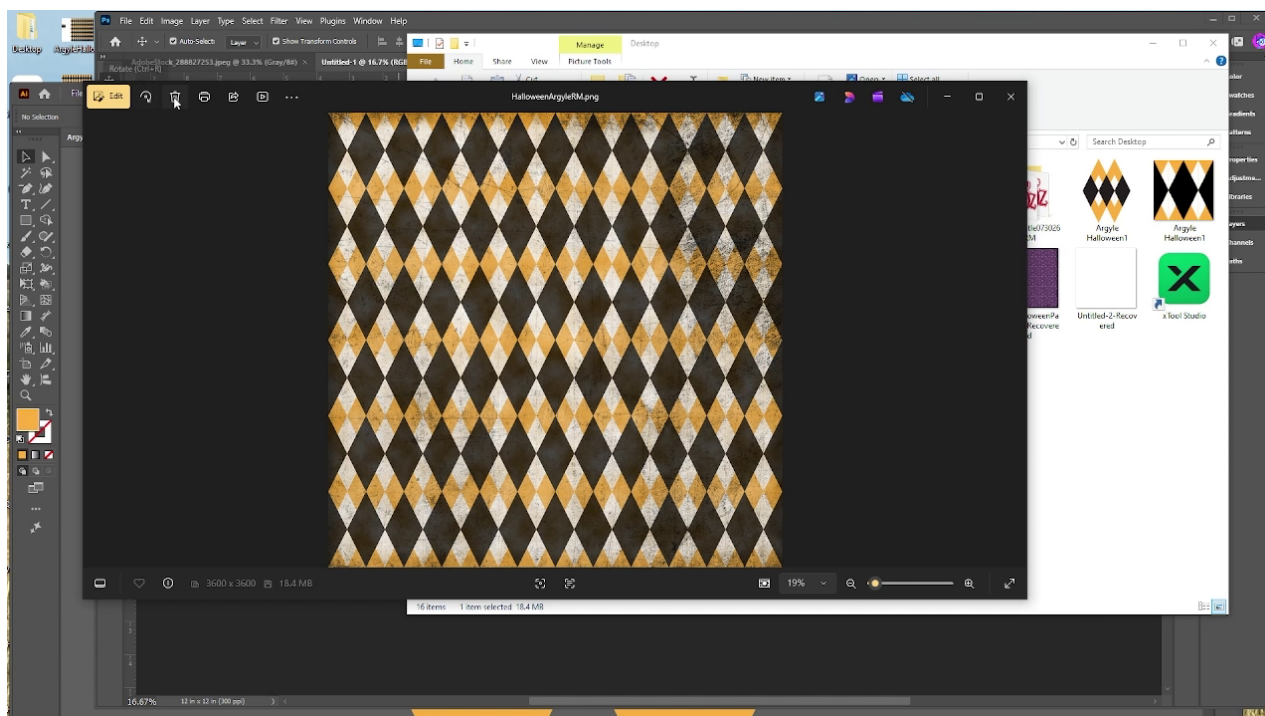
Tip. Name it so you can find it later. Collection name, then paper number.

STEP 15

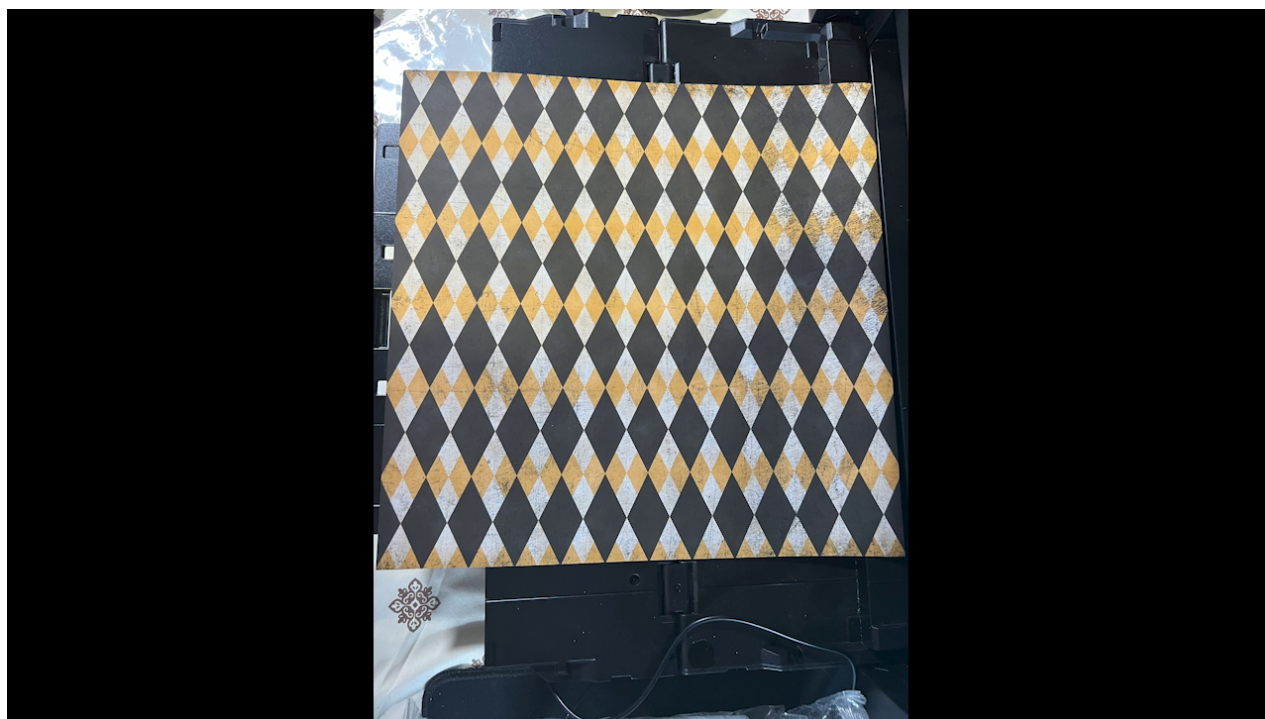
video 05:08

Print it

- Open the PNG and send it to the printer - here it is the **Canon PRO-310**.
- Set the orientation to **landscape**.
- Choose your paper size and paper type.
- Print one and check the colour against the screen before you run a batch.



Printer settings - paper size and type



The finished sheet, printed

Tip. Screen colour and printed colour never match exactly. One test sheet saves a lot of ink.

Now do it again in your own colours

Open the .ai tile you saved in Step 9, recolour the three sets of diamonds and the dashes, and run Steps 9 through 14 again. That is a whole coordinating collection of papers out of one afternoon of work - which is exactly how the monthly paper packs get made.