

Job of The Week

Illustrator

Key Skills

- design skills and knowledge
- knowledge of the fine arts
- the ability to use your initiative
- thinking and reasoning skills
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- knowledge of computer operating systems, hardware and software
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently

Salary

£18,000 - £40,000

Working hours

39 - 44

Freelance/ Self-employed

Aspire | Challenge | Achieve

Illustrator

University

You could do a higher national diploma or degree in illustration or a related subject like fine art or graphic design

Entry requirements

You'll usually need between 1 and 3 A levels, or equivalent, for a higher national diploma or degree

Direct Application

If you do not have art and design qualifications, but can show that you have the talent to illustrate, you could contact companies directly with examples of your work.

The Writers' & Artists' Yearbook gives advice on how to:

- get started as a freelance illustrator
- prepare a portfolio
- find a publisher

Top Tips

As a freelance illustrator you'll need to think of creative ways to get your work noticed. You'll also need a portfolio of your work to show prospective clients or for entry onto courses. Building a website or starting a blog where you can showcase your work is one way to get noticed

College

College courses that may help you get into this role include:

- Level 2 Diploma in Art and Design
- A level in Art and Design
- Level 3 Extended Diploma in Art and Design

Entry requirements

You may need:

- 2 or more GCSEs at grades 9 to 3, or equivalent, for a level 2 course
- 4 or 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4, or equivalent, for a level 3 course

Apprenticeship

You may be able to gain some of the skills to work as an illustrator in specific industries, through an apprenticeship. Relevant higher apprenticeships include:

- Junior VFX artist
- Junior animator
- Junior 2D artist

Entry requirements

You'll usually need:

- 4 or 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to and A levels, or equivalent, for a higher or degree apprenticeship

Career path and progression

You work freelance, you may need to spend time building up your clients and getting established. Some illustrators combine their work with other jobs until they can earn enough to make their illustration work profitable.

You can use your illustration skills in a variety of sectors including:

- advertising
- fashion
- merchandising
- publishing
- websites and computer games

With the right skills you could move into specialist medical, scientific or technical illustration or go into teaching

Day to Day tasks:

You may specialise in a particular field of illustration, like publishing, merchandising or fashion.

Day-to-day you may:

- research your creative ideas
- create rough, hand drawn sketches
- negotiate prices and timescales
- decide on the right style for illustrations
- discuss requirements, or a 'brief', with authors, editors or designers
- if you're self-employed, promote your business and manage your finances
- create final illustrations using hand drawing, painting or computer design packages

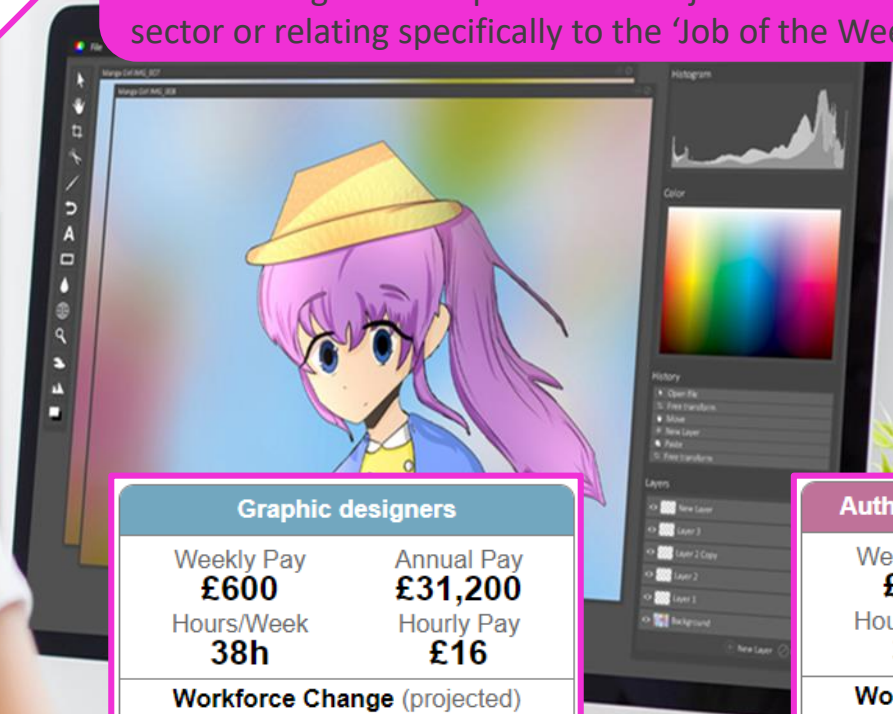
Working conditions

You could work in a creative studio, from home or at a client's business

Labour Market Information

In the Careers section of the school website you can find the useful comparison tool the 'Labour Market Information widget'.

Use the widget to compare different job roles in any employment sector or relating specifically to the 'Job of the Week'.



Artists

Weekly Pay
£690

Annual Pay
£35,880

Hours/Week
35h

Hourly Pay
£20

Workforce Change (projected)

Growth
0.7%

Replacement
57.8%

The workforce is projected to grow by 0.7% over the period to 2027, creating 500 jobs. In the same period, 57.8% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 36,400 job openings.

You might find this job in
Libraries, etc
Arts & entertainment
Computer programming, etc
Membership organisations
Office admin.

[More info](#)

[Clear card](#)

Graphic designers

Weekly Pay
£600

Annual Pay
£31,200

Hours/Week
38h

Hourly Pay
£16

Workforce Change (projected)

Growth
0.7%

Replacement
57.8%

The workforce is projected to grow by 0.7% over the period to 2027, creating 800 jobs. In the same period, 57.8% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 59,100 job openings.

You might find this job in
Employment activities
Libraries, etc
Computer programming, etc
Printing & recording
Office admin.

[More info](#)

[Clear card](#)

Authors, writers and translators

Weekly Pay
£680

Annual Pay
£35,360

Hours/Week
33h

Hourly Pay
£21

Workforce Change (projected)

Growth
0.7%

Replacement
57.8%

The workforce is projected to grow by 0.7% over the period to 2027, creating 700 jobs. In the same period, 57.8% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 55,900 job openings.

You might find this job in
Legal & accounting
Publishing activities
Arts & entertainment
Head offices, etc
Computer programming, etc

[More info](#)

[Clear card](#)

Labour Market Information

Artists

Artists create artistic works using appropriate techniques, materials and media; design artwork and illustrations; and restore damaged pieces of art.

Common tasks in this job:

- conceives and develops ideas and ways of working for artistic composition;
- selects appropriate materials, medium and method;
- prepares sketches, scale drawings or colour schemes;
- builds up composition into finished work by carving, sculpting, etching, painting, engraving, drawing, etc.;

Back Clear card

Authors, writers and translators

Job holders in this unit group write, edit and evaluate literary material for publication excluding material for newspapers, magazines and other periodicals but including scripts and narrative for film, TV, radio and computer games and animations; and translate spoken and written statements into different languages.

Common tasks in this job:

- determines subject matter and researches as necessary by interviewing, attending public events, seeking out records, observing etc.;
- generates and develops creative ideas for literary material;
- selects material for publication, checks style, grammar and accuracy of content, arranges for any necessary revisions and checks proof copies before printing;
- negotiates contracts with freelance agents and with buyer on behalf of writer;

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Graphic designers

Graphic designers use illustrative, sound, visual and multimedia techniques to convey a message for information, entertainment, advertising, promotion or publicity purposes, and create special visual effects and animations for computer games, film, interactive and other media.

Common tasks in this job:

- liaises with client to clarify aims of project brief, discusses media, software and technology to be used, establishes timetable for project and defines budgetary constraints;
- undertakes research into project, considers previous related projects and compares costs of using different processes;
- prepares sketches, scale drawings, models, colour schemes and other mock-ups to show clients and discusses any required alterations;
- prepares specification and instructions for realisation of the project;

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Keep looking...

Use these links to learn more about our Job of The Week, consider the various pathways leading to the career, what you can be doing now to help yourself and other roles in the industry...

Useful Websites

[Illustrator](#) | [Explore careers](#) | [National Careers Service](#)

[Homepage](#) | [Writers & Artists \(writersandartists.co.uk\)](#)

[Search – UCAS](#)

[The AOI – The AOI provides contract and business support to illustrators. We champion the rights of illustrators, and run competitions and events.](#)

[Find your perfect role in the creative industries - Creative Careers \(discovercreative.careers\)](#)

<https://saahub.com>

Take a look at these short videos for inspiration...

What I can you do with an Illustration Degree?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQNSSh0qRGw>

Life as a Children's book Illustrator



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEM41nwDiyY>

My first picture book published



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oE8X3avJ0Bo>

Illustration at Leeds Uni



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXBfHLXPToQ>

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