Illustrator Selection Tools

As in most applications, in Illustrator you need to select something in order to do something to that something. Get it? In Illustrator, there are various and sundry was of making selections, and altering those selections.

The keyboard commands are for the specific tool—Illustrator does not cycle through 'hidden' tools as does Photoshop. Instead, tool buttons with 'hidden' tools can be 'torn off', by selecting a small tab at the right of the selection (when the tools are pulled out), forming a small mini-palette:

Notes

1.   Selections can be added to/subtracted from by using the Shift key modifier.

2.   Selections can be copied with the Selection and Direct Selection tool by selecting, dragging, and while dragging, holding the Option key. Release the mouse first, then the Option key.

3.   The Cmd key will always access the last selection tool. When drawing, it is a good idea to choose the Direct Selection tool, then your drawing tool. This loads the Direct Selection, allowing you to access it by holding down the command key, which will let you make quick edits while drawing.
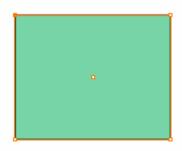
Here are the selection tools:

Selection (V)
The Selection tool selects entire objects, and entire groups. Simply clicking or dragging through any part of an object will select it.

Direct Selection (A)
The Direct Selection tool allows you to select parts of an object: a segment or an individual anchor point or points. Below, the rectangle has only the top left anchor point selected. That anchor point is filled, the others are open.

Group Selection

Selects objects and/or groups within groups. That is, it acts like the Selection tool for grouped objects, selecting entire objects.

Magic Wand (Y)

Selects objects with similar attributes. The tolerance settings are set in the Magic Wand palette, accessed by double-clicking the tool, or from the Window menu. The lower a tolerance setting, the closer the objects need to be to be selected. In general, an alternative to the Select > Same menu commands.

Lasso (Q)

A sort of freeform Direct Selection tool. Like the Wand, a carryover from Photoshop.