

Adobe After Effects Workshop
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Class Objectives

- Learn the interface of Adobe After Effects
- Learn how to create compositions and import assets
- Learn basic animation and motion graphics

Creating a New Composition

1. From the welcome screen, click on New Composition
2. Give the new composition a name, use the Preset for HDTV 1080 29.97, set the Duration for 10 seconds, and click OK
3. Select File-Save As-Save As to save your project

Resetting the Workspace

You can restore the workspace to its default settings by selecting Window-Workspace-Reset "Standard".

Projects and Compositions

Projects can have numerous compositions. Compositions can also be made of sub-compositions. A composition typically consists of layers with elements that have been given motion over a period of time.

A Tour of Interface

Layers Panel

This panel is in the bottom left of the screen and contains the layers for your composition. Layers can be text, shapes, assets (videos and images), even cameras.

Layers can be renamed by clicking on them. You can also turn on/off layers by clicking on the eyeball icon on that layer's row. The layers can also be rearranged in their hierarchy. Like in Photoshop or other Adobe applications, this determines what is on top when you are viewing more than one layer.

Render Queue

Located in the tab next to the composition's tab, this is where you can schedule your compositions to export into their final form.

Project Panel

This panel is located on the top left of your screen and will have all of your compositions and assets for your project.

Tool Bar

These are the tools along the top of the screen that can be used for a variety of tasks. Hovering your mouse over the icon will display the name of each tool.

Composition Panel

This panel is the visual representation of the composition you are working on and is located in the top center of the screen.

In the bottom of the composition panel are some settings that you can change, including magnification, grid and guide options, resolution, and active camera views when working in 3D.

Preview Panel

Below the Info and Audio panels on the top right of the screen is the Preview panel, which can be used to preview your work.

Effects & Presets Panel

This panel contains effects that can be applied to your layers.

Timeline

A visual representation of your layers over a period of time, 10 seconds in this case since that is the duration we set when creating this composition. On the timeline is the playhead, which can be skimmed back and forth along the timeline. Below the timeline are controls to zoom in and out of parts of the timeline.

Creating and Animating Text

1. Click on the Horizontal Type Tool
2. Click on the canvas and type something; notice that a new layer has been created and a colored bar of it is represented in the timeline
3. Click on the Selection Tool (V)
4. Select the text in the canvas and drag to reposition the text
5. Make changes in the Character panel (size, font, etc.)
6. Click on the arrow next to the layer name in the layers panel
7. Click on the arrow next to Transform
8. By clicking and dragging on the yellow numbers, you can change properties (location, size, rotation, etc.) of the text
9. Make sure the playhead is parked at the beginning of the timeline
10. Click on the stopwatch icon next to Position; this sets your beginning keyframe (represented by a diamond in the timeline)
11. Move the playhead forward in the timeline (say three seconds)
12. Drag over the numbers in Position to change the X and Y coordinates of the text; notice that an ending keyframe is automatically set in the timeline
13. Drag the playhead through the timeline to examine your animation
14. Click on the RAM Preview button in the Preview panel to watch your animation
15. To move between the keyframes, click on the arrows to the left of Position
16. You can apply the similar changes to size, rotation, opacity, etc.

Working in 3D Space

Click the checkbox below the cube icon to the right of the layer's name. Notice that you now also make changes to the text along the Z axis.

Animating Shapes

For this exercise, we will be importing shapes creating in Photoshop and animating them in After Effects.

1. Select Composition-New Composition
2. In the Composition Settings box, change the preset to HDTV 1080 29.97, make sure the duration is set to 10 seconds, and click OK.
3. Select File-Import-File, select the circles.psd Photoshop file, and click Open.
4. Make sure Import Kind is on Composition and Layers Options is set to Editable Layer Styles and click OK.
5. Click on the drop-down arrow next to circles Layers in the project window to see the different elements that were created in Photoshop

6. Drag one of the elements into the composition; notice that it is now represented by a colored bar in the timeline
7. Change the shape and size of the object in the canvas
8. As before, set keyframes for animations to change the object's position, scale, rotation, etc. over time
 - a. Make sure the playhead is set to the point in the timeline where you want the animation to start
 - b. Click on the stopwatch icon (next to Position, Scale, Rotation or whatever you want to animate) to set your beginning keyframe
 - c. Move the playhead forward in the timeline for the duration of how long you want the animation to be
 - d. Change the position, scale, or rotation numbers in the composition windows; notice your ending keyframe is set
9. Continue to add other shapes and animate them
10. Click on the RAM Preview to watch your animation

Adjusting Keyframes

Keyframes can be moved in the timeline to change the start and end points of animations. Keyframes can also be copied and pasted (Cmd-C and Cmd-V) to repeat the same animation later in the timeline.

Easy Ease

To make gradual starts and stops to your animation, right-click or control-click on a keyframe and select Keyframe Assistant-Easy Ease.

Pan Behind Tool

You can change the anchor point of an object, thus affecting around which point the object will rotate.

1. Select the object in the canvas
2. Select the Pan Behind Tool in the tool bar on the top of the screen
3. Find the anchor point (the larger square in or near the shape) and move it to the desired location
4. Click on the Selection Tool (V)
5. Change the rotation of the object to see how the center point for the rotation has changed

Parenting and Linking Objects

You can have objects move together by linking them. In the composition window, click on the pick whip icon (the curly icon on the same row as the object's name) and link it to the pick whip icon of another object. Notice that when you move the parent object, the other object follows.

Exporting

1. Click on the composition in the project window
2. Select Composition-Add to Render Queue
3. In the Render Queue window, click on the yellow field next to Output To; this is where you can set where the file will save to and what the filename will be
4. Click on the yellow field next to Output Module
5. In the Output Module Settings window, set the Format to QuickTime; click on Format Options to change the Video Codec to H.264, and click OK on both boxes
6. Click on the Render button in the top right of the Render Queue window