


Intro to Flash CS3 – Basic Animation & Slideshows


HOW TO CREATE BASIC ANIMATION

Before getting started, it's important to know the difference between a **Flash authoring file (.fla)** and a **Shockwave Flash file (.swf)**. When you start working in Flash, you'll be working in a .fla document. However, in order to view your final work in the Flash Player, you'll need to "publish" your file as a .swf. (To do this, see step VI of this document.) If you don't have Flash Player installed on your computer, you can get the free download here: <http://www.adobe.com/> (select "Get Adobe Flash Player").

I. Getting started:

- To start a new Flash file, go to File > New ( + N).
- Select the default option "FlashFile (ActionScript 3.0)" and click OK.
- You should now see the stage, timeline, and tools panel.

II. Modifying your document:

- To create settings for your new Flash document, go to Modify > Document ( + J).
- Enter a title and a description (i.e., "My Flash Movie").
- Choose a background color from the dropdown box.
- Next decide if you want to change the "Frame rate" from the default (12 fps). **Note that "fps" stands for "frames per second."*

III. Tools & features:

- **The Rectangle Tool** – Click on the rectangle tool in the tool bar (usually positioned to the left side of your stage). Next, look for the "Properties" box at the bottom of your screen. *If you don't see Properties, go to Window > Properties > Properties.*
 - This Properties box allows you to change the shape of the rectangle. Try adjusting the "o" in the "Rectangle corner radius" box under Properties. If you scale this number up to **50** and then drag the rectangle tool over your stage, you will get a circle shape. Conversely, if you scale it down to **-50**, you will get a completely different shape.
- **The Selection Tool** – Once you've drawn shapes or created text boxes on your stage, use the selection tool to move them around in any order you like.
- **The Line Tool** – The line tool is another great way to make curves. Select the line tool from the tool bar and drag it across the stage. Next, select the selection tool and hover it over your line until you see a "floating curve". Once you do, hold down the Shift key while dragging the line to make it curve.
- **The Timeline** – The timeline can get somewhat confusing unless you know the essentials. Make sure you first know what key frames are and how they function:
 - **Blank Key Frame:** creates a blank space or makes the image disappear. To create empty space on your stage, drag your cursor across the timeline, then go to Insert > Timeline > Blank Keyframe. Whenever there is a blank key frame on your timeline, nothing will appear on your stage.
 - **Key Frame:** makes an image appear. To make your animation appear on the stage, drag your cursor along the timeline and go to Insert > Timeline > Keyframe.

IV. Creating a Motion Tween (a.k.a.: animation):

First, don't let the term "motion tween" scare you away. It's the easiest way to create a quick animation and will hopefully give you a better understanding of how Flash works.

Below are instructions on how to create a simple "setting sun" animation:

- Once you've set your background color (Modify > Document, or shortcut: **⌘ + J**), click the rectangular tool and scale the "Rectangle corner radius" (under the Properties menu) to 50.
- Adjust the fill color on the tool bar (or in the Shape Properties menu) to yellow and draw a circle at the top of your stage.
- Next, click on the first frame in your timeline while holding down the Control key and select "Create Motion Tween". You should now see a blue box appear around your sun.
- Now click on the 2nd frame in your timeline and drag it to 50. The timeline should be shaded blue, not white (if it's white, you've just created a blank keyframe).
- Go back to Frame 1 and click on it while holding down the Control key again. This time, select Copy Frames.
- Go to Frame 50, hold down Control and choose "Paste Frames".
- Use the selection tool to drag the sun in Frame 50 off the bottom of the stage into the gray area.
- Go to Control > Test Movie to see your setting sun!
- To make the setting sun look a *little* more realistic, here's another trick:
 - Click on the sun in your stage while holding down the Control key.
 - Go to Timeline Effects > Transform/Transition > Transform
 - In the Transform box, change the scale from 100% to 20% and click OK.
 - Now go to Control > Test Movie to see your sun shrink as it sets!

V. Converting an image to a symbol:

- To save your "sun" (or any other image that you draw) for later, highlight it with the Free Transform Tool and go to: Modify > Convert to Symbol and store it as a graphic. You should now see it appear in your Library to the right of your stage.
- To make an image into a pattern, click on the image while holding down the Control key and go to: Timeline Effects > Assistants > Copy to Grid. Adjust the grid size and grid spacing and click OK. You should now see the pattern appear on your stage.

VI. Exporting an image or movie:

- To "publish" your image or movie (so that it can be viewed in a Flash Player) go to File > Export. Make sure you save it with the extension ".swf".

***IMPORTANT:** When importing your Flash files to the web, make sure to import *both* the .swf and .fla files.

HOW TO CREATE A FLASH SLIDESHOW

I. Accessing the Slideshow template:

- After launching Flash, look under the “Create from Template” column and click on the folder that says “More...”
- On the “New from Template” pop-up, select “Photo Slideshows”
- Make sure “Modern Photo Slideshow” is highlighted under “Templates” and click OK.

II. Importing your photos:

- First, familiarize yourself with the timeline at the top of the page by clicking on each of the layers. Look at the workspace to see what gets highlighted & what function you think it has.
- Now go back to the “picture layer” and hit the Delete button. The picture that you just saw should disappear.
- Next go to File > Import > Import to Stage and select the image you want to import from your desktop. Click Import.
- If the image expands outside of the frame, look at the Properties box toward the bottom of your screen. (If you don’t see it, go to Window > Properties > Properties).
- Now adjust the X, Y coordinates under the Bitmap section to 0 and change the dimensions of width and height so that W = 640 and H = 480. (*Note: it’s always better to format your photos to this size in Photoshop ahead of time.*)
- Continue importing new photos by clicking on the rest of the keyframes (in the “picture layer”) and replacing the stock photos with your own photos.
- Note that the template only gives you room for **four** photos. You can continue adding photos to your timeline by copying & pasting the existing frames (but make sure the rest of the template’s features – captions, `_controller`, etc.– are also copied). A quick way to do this is to highlight frame 4 in that layer, click your mouse and drag it out to where you want it (ex: frame 40, if you have 40 photos).

III. Formatting the slideshow:

- To change the current captions, click on the “Captions” layer and, using the Text tool in the tool bar, rewrite the captions so that they pertain to your photos.
- To change what’s written in the top banner, click on the “Title, Date” layer and edit “My Photo Album.”
- You can also position the slideshow controller anywhere you want on the stage by clicking on the “`_controller`” layer and using the Selection tool.
- If you decide you want to change the look of the slideshow, you can also delete the “`_overlay`” and “transparent frame”.
- Preview your slideshow by going to Control > Test Movie (shortcut: Apple + Enter key)
- To add your own border to the slideshow, change the background color (Modify > Document) and decrease the size of your photos so that you see the “border”.

IV. Adding sound to your slideshow:

- First you’ll need to create a new layer in your timeline by going to Insert > Timeline > Layer. Call this layer “sound”.
- Now import your .mp3 file by going to File > Import > Import to Library and selecting the .mp3 from your desktop.

- Once you see the .mp3 is in the Library (to the right of your stage), highlight the “sound” layer and go to the Properties box toward the bottom of the stage (or Window > Properties > Properties).
- Select the .mp3 file from the Sound dropdown menu. Go to Control > Test Movie to hear it.
- If you want to add multiple sounds to your slideshow, it’s recommended that you place each sound on its own layer.

V. Exporting the slideshow:

- To export your slideshow go to File > Export > Export Movie (this may prompt you to save first). Save the slideshow to your desktop.
- At next pop-up window, click OK.
- You should now see the .swf on your desktop.

VI. How to import your Flash slideshow in Dreamweaver:

- First launch Dreamweaver and create a new HTML page.
- Next go to Insert > Media > Flash and find the .swf file you just saved to your desktop.
- Note that Dreamweaver will prompt you to save your page first. Name your page (ex: slideshow.html)
- When you see the “Object Tag Accessibility Attributes” pop-up, give your slideshow a title and click OK.