

Some Basic Flash Concepts

Vector Object Types

Shapes:

Shapes can be edited or morphed. Every copy of a Shape is considered a separate element by Flash. Therefore, using lots of Shapes may be an inefficient way to work due to the increased file size. However, using Shapes is the only way to morph objects. Shapes, when layed on top of one another, segment each other. Morphing can be done with regard to color, shape, form, etc.

When laying shapes on top of each other within the same layer, they segment each other, which means that they combine with or replace the part of the elements that they overlap. Laying a line Shape on top of another Shape is a great way to "cut" the Shape in a specific way.

Groups:

Groups cannot be edited. They can be moved as unit. Shapes placed on the same layer will segment each other. To avoid this, group your objects and place them on top of each other. To edit a Group, first ungroup it, change it, then regroup it. (Note: Double-clicking will highlight the entire group of contiguous pixels.) Use Grouped shapes for Motion Animation: location, scale, rotation, skewing, size, etc.

Symbols:

Anything that can be selected, can be combined and made into a Symbol. When a Shape or Group becomes a Symbol, it becomes reusable and is a very efficient way to work, from the standpoint of file size and computation time. A Symbol itself cannot be edited, but the individual Shapes that make up a Symbol can be edited. Symbols follow the same properties of groups, but offer additional animation properties that you can animate. When a Symbol is placed on the Stage, this is called creating an *Instance* of the Symbol. Each Instance of the Symbol is largely independent, and its properties (color, scale, etc.) can be changed without affecting other Instances or the Symbol itself.

The main benefit of Symbols is the fact that you can use them multiple times (multiple Instances), and they are only downloaded once.

Selection Hints:

Click and drag allows you to edit the shape of a line (curve or length) Click, then click and drag moves the entire object Double click buttons/objects to make the Movie Properties box appear.

Useful Keyboard Short Cuts:

F5 – insert frame

Shift-F5 – delete frame

F6 – insert keyframe

Shift-F6 – delete keyframe

F8 – convert to Symbol

Option-click, drag – makes another anchor point on your line or shape

Note: Flash 4.0 movies played using the Flash 3.0 plug-in will work, but all Flash 4.0 effects will be dropped. (With Flash 5.0 just released, it probably works similarly.)