

## Flash Basics: How To Make an Animation

There are many ways to create animations with Macromedia Flash. This is one method. Read the books, experiment, ask other people what their Flash process is, etc. to learn more.

1. Create an object (say, a circle) on your Stage area. Now, select it with the arrow tool, and choose **Convert to Symbol** from the **Insert** menu. Give your new Symbol an appropriate name. Define it as a Graphic symbol (select the "Graphic" button in the dialog box).
2. Delete the object from the Stage. It has been stored in your symbol Library. Select **Library** from the **Window** menu (or press command-L) so you can see all your stored Library elements. The symbol you just made should be listed in this Library. (Note: there are two entities referred to in Flash as "libraries" – one is a library of pre-created elements, the other is the Library of symbols for a particular Flash file. Make sure you choose the right one, accessed through the **Window** menu, not the **Libraries** menu.)
3. Select a Layer on the Timeline and name it appropriately (double-click on the Layer name).
4. Select the frame within the Timeline in which you would like your Symbol to start animating.
5. Drag your Symbol from the Library window to the Stage. A "sprite" (keyframe with solid black dot) will appear on the Timeline in the frame you chose. Once on the Stage area, the graphic is referred to as an *Instance* of the Symbol. Each Instance is independent and can be altered separately from other Instances or the original Symbol itself. If you alter the Symbol, then all Instances will reflect the change.
6. There are many ways to do the tweening step – beware that changing the order of steps may prevent the animation tweening from occurring. First, decide on the number of frames that you want your animation to occur within. I suggest animating in multiples of 5 since this is an easy number to count by. Using increments of 5 allows you to "sync-up" your animations easily. For example, if a red ball animates from frame 1 to frame 30, and a blue ball animates from frame 15 to frame 30, both animations will end at the same time on the Stage – and it is easy to control. If this doesn't make sense right now, it should when you do more complex animations using Flash.
7. Click on the frame in which you want your animation to end (for example, frame 10). Make a keyframe in one of the following ways:
  - Select **Keyframe** from the **Insert** menu, or
  - Press the **F6** key on your keyboard, or
  - Hold down the Command key and double-click-and-hold on the ending frame in the Timeline (frame 10 in this case). Select **Insert Keyframe** from the pop-up menu.
8. With the ending frame still selected in the Timeline, drag your Instance on the Stage to the location you want it to end up. You can also scale, rotate, or change the color (see below) of the Instance at this point.
9. Double-click on the first keyframe with your Symbol Instance in it. A dialog box will appear. Choose the **Tweening** Tab, and select **Motion Tween**. (You can play with the settings if you like, but wait til you understand basic tweening). Select **OK**.

10. A line with an arrow should appear on the Timeline between the two keyframes. This means that an animation has been defined. Preview your animation by pressing the **Return** key, or clicking the Play arrow (→) in the Controller window (select **Window → Controller**). You can also press the **F12** key to see your animation in your (defined or default) browser.

## How to Change the Color of a Symbol in an Animation

1. You change the color of a Symbol in an animation by changing the color of the Instance of the Symbol on the Stage.
2. Select the Instance of a Symbol by clicking on the appropriate keyframe on the Timeline, and choosing **Instance** from the **Modify** menu (or pressing command-I).
3. A dialog box will appear. Choose the **Color Effect** tab, and then **Tint** from the drop-down menu. Select a color by clicking-and-holding on the color chip, or adjust the RGB levels. Adjust the Tint % level as you want (it defaults to 0%). You will see a preview of your selected color in the dialog box. Select **OK** when you're happy with the color.
4. If the color changes during a tweened animation, you will be able to see this during the animation preview.