

Basic Animation

Learn a typical After Effects workflow while building your first animation.

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▼ Getting Started

Make sure you have copied the **Lesson 01-Basic Animation** folder from this book's disc onto your hard drive, and make note of where it is; it contains the sources you need to execute this lesson. Our versions of these exercises are in the project file **Lesson_01_Finished.aep**.

In this lesson, you will build a typical After Effects project. You will see how to import sources while keeping your project file organized. As you add layers to a composition, you will learn how to manipulate their transform properties, as well as how to keyframe them to create animations. Along the way, you'll learn several important tricks and handy keyboard shortcuts, plus how to handle alpha channels as well as layered Photoshop and Illustrator files. Although the design itself is simple, you will learn principles you can use over and over again in the future.

Composition Basics

In the Pre-Roll section, we discussed the basic hierarchy of an After Effects project: Sources are called *footage* items; when you add a footage item to a *composition* ("comp" for short), it is then known as a *layer*. Potential sources can include captured video, Flash or 3D animations, photographs or scans, images created in programs such as Photoshop or Illustrator, music, or dialog...even film footage that has been scanned into the computer.

Layers are individual objects that can be arranged in a comp's space and animated around that space, similar to symbols in a Flash project or models in a 3D animation program. The order they are stacked in the comp's timeline determine the order in which they are drawn (unless they are in 3D space – we'll get to that in Lesson 8). Layers can start and end at different points in time.

All properties in After Effects start out static: You set them, and this is the value they have for the entire composition.



However, it is very easy to enable *keyframing* for virtually any property (including all of the *transform* properties), which means you can set what their value will be at different points in time. After Effects will then automatically interpolate or “tween” between these values over time.

You have considerable control over how After Effects moves between keyframes. In this lesson, we’ll demonstrate editing the *motion path* for position keyframes, and in the next lesson we’ll dive into further refining the speed at which After Effects interpolates between values.

Layers do not need to fill up the entire screen. It is quite common for a layer to be smaller than the composition, or to scale down a large layer to better frame it inside a comp. In addition to fading a layer in and out using its opacity, a footage item may also have an *alpha channel* that determines where the image is transparent and where it is opaque.

But before you start arranging and animating, you need to know how to make a new project and comp, as well as how to import sources – so let’s get started!

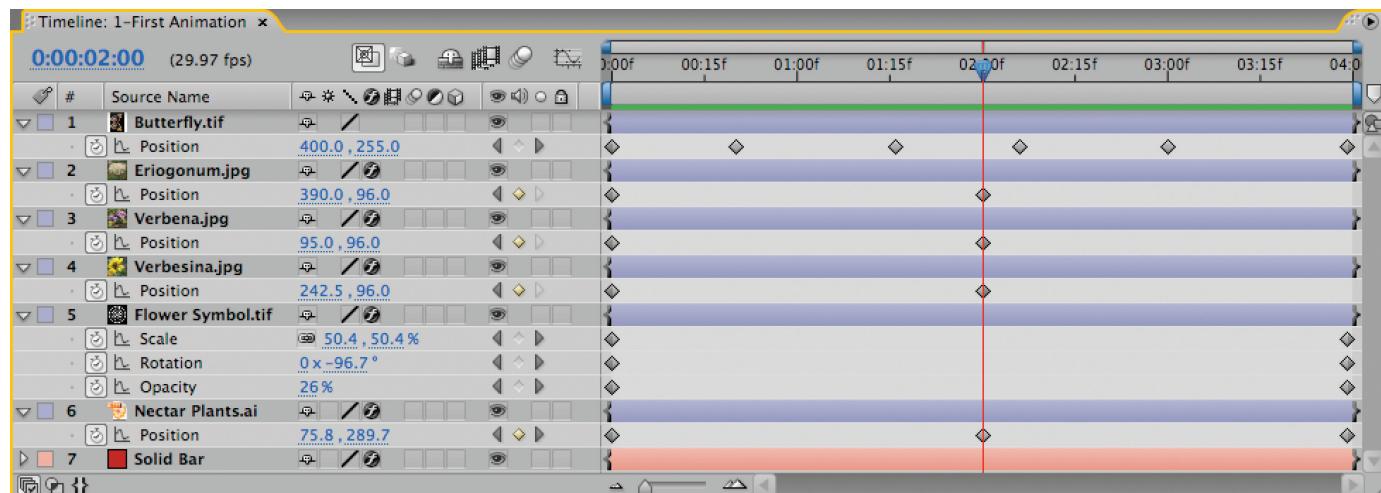
After Effects compositions combine multiple layers together. Butterfly and flower shape courtesy Dover; flower photos courtesy Wildscaping.com.

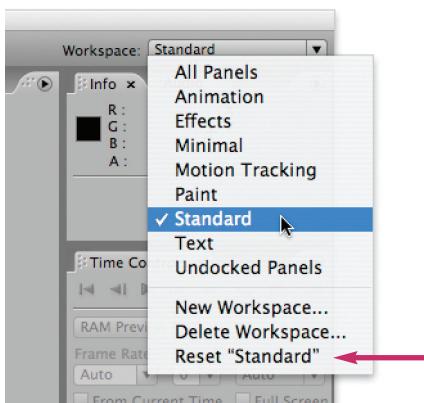
▼ factoid

File Format Support

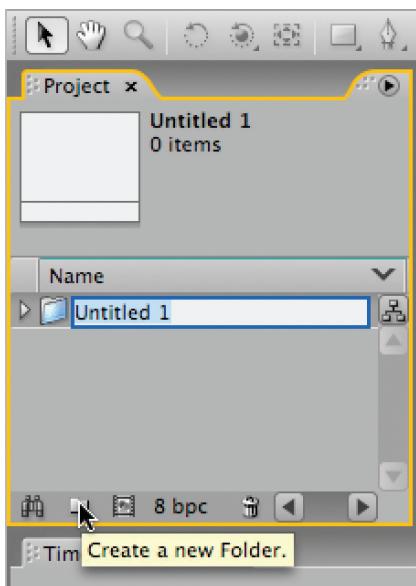
For a full list of file formats that may be imported in After Effects, open the program, press **F1** to open the Adobe Help Center, type “file formats” into the Search For box, and click on Search.

Individual layer properties may be keyframed in the Timeline panel to create an animation.





1 Set the Workspace to Standard and then reset it to make sure you are starting with the same arrangement of frames and panels as we are. That way, our instructions will make a lot more sense.



2 To create a new folder, click on the folder icon along the bottom of the Project panel. To rename it, type your new name while “Untitled 1” is highlighted, then press **Return**.

Starting a Project

In this first lesson, you’ll create a colorful animation with a butterfly flying around some flowers. To see where you’ll end up, locate the movie **1-First Animation_final.mov** in this lesson’s folder, and play it a few times in QuickTime Player. Bring After Effects forward when you’re done, and we’ll guide you through building this animation from scratch.

1 When After Effects is launched, it creates a new, blank project for you. In the upper right corner of the application window, locate the Workspace popup, and select Standard. To make sure you are using the original arrangement of this workspace, from the same popup select Reset “Standard” (it’s at the bottom). A Reset Workspace dialog will appear; click Discard Changes.

2 The Project panel can quickly become a confusing mess of sources and comps. To avoid this, let’s create a couple of folders to help keep it organized. Click on the New Folder icon along the bottom of the Project panel. A folder called **Untitled 1** will be created. It defaults to its name being highlighted; to rename it, type “Sources” and hit **Return** (on a Windows keyboard, this is the main **Enter** key – not the one on the extended keypad). You can rename it at any time; just select the folder and hit **Return** to highlight the name.

3 Click in a blank area of the Project panel to deselect your **Sources** folder; the shortcut to Deselect All is **F2**. Now create a second folder, using the keyboard shortcut: **⌘ ⌘ Shift N** on Mac (**Ctrl Alt Shift N** on Windows). Rename it “**Comps**” and press **Return**.

(If the **Sources** folder was selected when you created the **Comps** folder, **Comps** will be nested inside of **Sources**. Place it on the same level by dragging the **Comps** folder outside of the **Sources** folder.)

Saving a Project

4 Save your project by typing **⌘ S** (**Ctrl S**). A file browser window will open; save your project file in this lesson’s folder (**Lesson 01-Basic Animation**), and give it a name that makes sense, such as “**Basic Animation v1**”.

It is a good idea to give projects version numbers so you can keep track of revisions; it also allows you to take advantage of the nifty File > Increment and Save function. Instead of just saving your project, Increment and Save will save your project under a new version number, leaving a trail of previous versions in case you ever need to go back. The shortcut is **⌘ ⌘ Shift S** (**Ctrl Alt Shift S**). After Effects also has an Auto Save function; it’s under Preferences > Auto-Save.

Creating a New Composition

5 Select the **Comps** folder you created in step 3. That way, the new comp you are about to create will automatically be sorted into it. Then either select the menu item **Composition > New Composition**, or use the keyboard shortcut **⌘ N** (**Ctrl N**).

A Composition Settings dialog will open in which you can determine the size, duration, and frame rate of your new comp. At the top will be a popup menu for Preset, which includes a number of common comp sizes and frame rates. You can also enter your own settings. For this starting composition, uncheck the Lock Aspect Ratio box, then type in a Width of 480 and Height of 360. Click on the popup menu next to Pixel Aspect Ratio and select Square Pixels (we'll discuss pixels that are not square in the *Tech Corner* at the end of Lesson 3).

The last parameter in this dialog is Duration. Highlight the value currently there, and enter “**4.00**” for four seconds. Then make sure the remaining settings are at their defaults: Frame Rate of 29.97, Resolution of Full, and Start Timecode of 0:00:00:00. Don’t worry too much if you miss something; you can always open the Composition Settings again later using **⌘ K** (**Ctrl K**).

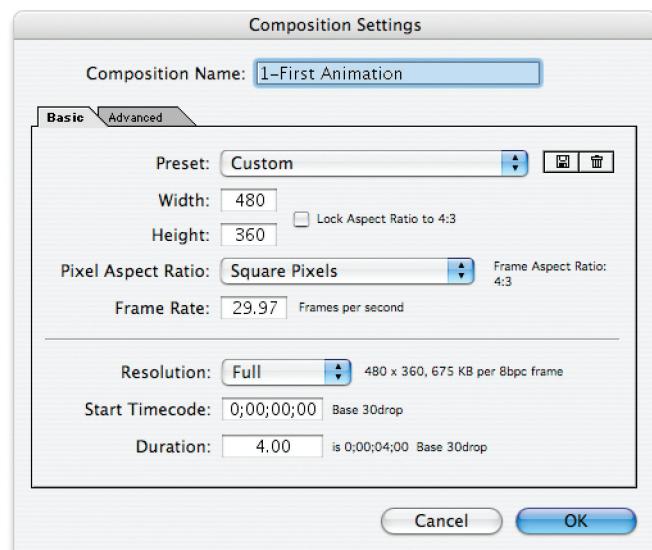
A good habit to get into with After Effects is naming your compositions as you create them. Enter “**1-First Animation**” in the Composition Name dialog, then click OK. Your new comp will open into the Comp and Timeline panels.

6 Your comp will also appear in the Project panel, inside your **Comps** folder (if it’s not in there, drag it in). If you cannot read the entire name in the Project panel, just place your cursor along the right edge of the Name column and drag it wider. Finally, save your project.

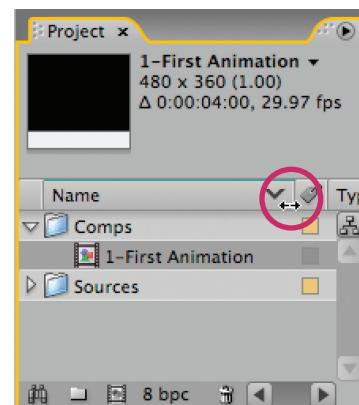
Importing Footage

There are two main ways to import footage into After Effects: using the normal Import dialog, and using Adobe Bridge. We’ll use the Import dialog here, and dive into Bridge in the next lesson. (You can also drag and drop from the Finder or Explorer, but that’s awkward as the After Effects application window tends to take up the entire screen.)

7 It’s time to import some sources into your project. First, select the **Sources** folder you created in step 2. Then use the menu item **File > Import > File**. Navigate to the **Lesson 01-Basic Animation** folder you copied from this book’s disc, and open the folder **01_Sources**. Select the item **Butterfly.tif** and click Open.



5 These are the settings we will use for our first composition. Remember to uncheck the Lock Aspect Ratio box before typing in your new dimensions. You can always open the Composition Settings later by selecting your comp and typing **⌘ K** (**Ctrl K**).

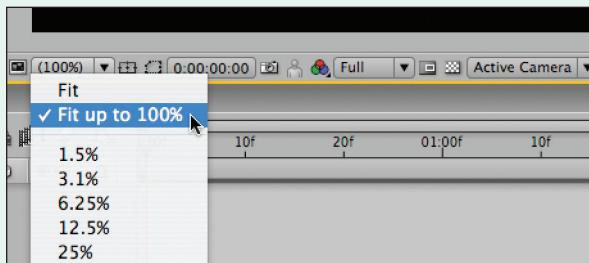


6 At this point, you should have a project with two folders and one composition. Notice the cursor to the right of the Name column in the Project panel; we just finished dragging this column wider to view our comp’s entire name.

▼ Managing the Comp View

You learned in the Pre-Roll how to resize the user interface's frames. You can resize the frame that holds the Comp panel to decide how much screen real estate you can devote to it. There are several ways to control how this space is used to display the comp's image area:

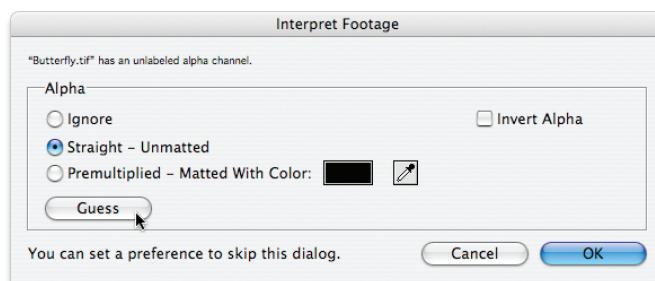
- In the lower left corner of the Comp panel is a Magnification popup. A popular setting for this is Fit up to 100%, which uses as much of the Comp panel's frame as it can up to full size; that's the setting we used when creating most of these lessons and comps. A downside of the Fit option is that your image can look a bit crunchy if the result is an odd size, such as 78%. Therefore, some users prefer picking a set size such as 100% or 50% that gets close to using the space available, then resizing the frame again as needed.



- You can hold down **⌘ (Ctrl)** and press the **=** key to zoom in larger, or the **-** key to zoom out smaller.
- If you have a mouse with a scroll wheel, hover its cursor over the Comp panel, and use the wheel to zoom in and out.
- For more targeted zooming, select the Zoom tool (shortcut = **Z**), and click to zoom in and center around where you click, or **⌥ +click (Alt+click)** to zoom out. Don't forget to press **V** when done to return to the Selection tool!
- Even better, press and hold down the **Z** key to temporarily switch to the Zoom tool; add **⌥ (Alt)** to Zoom out. When you release the **Z** key, the Selection tool will still be active.
- To pan around your composition, hold down the space bar to temporarily bring up the Hand tool, then click and drag in the Comp panel to reposition it. (Tapping the spacebar previews the timeline.)

- 8** The Import dialog will be replaced with an Interpret Footage dialog. This file has an *alpha channel*: a grayscale channel that sets the transparency of the RGB color channels. There are two main types of alpha channels: *Straight*, which means the color has been "painted beyond" the edges of the alpha channel, and *Premultiplied*, which means the color is mixed ("matted") with the background color around the edges.

If you knew what type of alpha your file has, you could select it here. Since you don't, click Guess. In this file's case, After Effects will choose the Straight option, which is correct. Click OK, and it will appear in your **Sources** folder.



- 8** To get the best results out of sources with alpha channels, you want to select the correct alpha channel type. You can do this while importing a file, or any time later. After Effects has a Guess function to help.

- 9** Now it's time to import some more sources. Make sure the **Sources** folder (or a file inside of it) is still selected, and use the shortcut **⌘ I (Ctrl I)** to open the Import dialog. Select **Flower Symbol.tif**, then **Shift+click** to also select **Nectar Plants.ai**, and click Open. The Interpret Footage dialog will re-appear for the former; use Guess as you did before (After Effects will correctly guess Straight), and click OK.

- 10** Finally, double-click on an empty area of the Project panel – this will also open the Import dialog! Select the folder named **Flower Photos**, and click the Import Folder button. This will import all the contents of the folder for you with a single click; it will also create a folder with the same name in the Project panel. Drag the **Flower Photos** folder inside your **Sources** folder, and save your project.

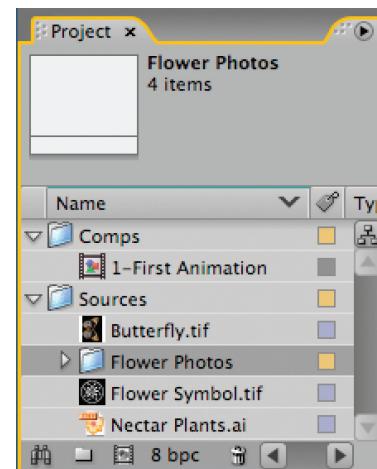
Building a Comp

Now that you have your sources, you can add them to your comp, arrange them, and have some fun animating them. First, make sure the Timeline and Composition panels have the name of your comp (**1-First Animation**) in a tab along their tops. If not, double-click this comp in the Project panel to open it.

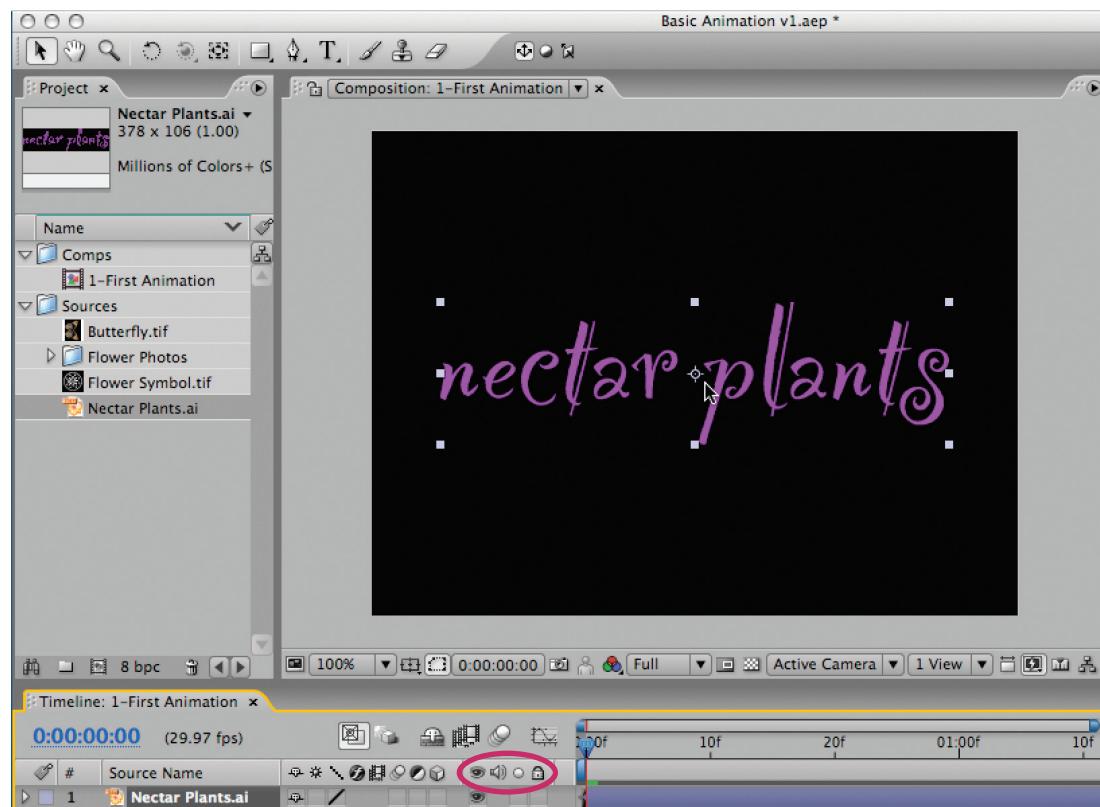
Transform Fun

11 Select the footage item **Nectar Plants.ai** in your **Sources** folder in the Project panel, and drag it over to the image area of the Composition panel. While keeping the mouse button down, drag it near the center of the comp: You will notice After Effects tries to snap it into the center for you. With the mouse button still down, drag near the four corners of the comp: After Effects will try to snap the outline of the source against these corners.

Place it in the center, and release the mouse. It will be drawn in the comp's image area, and appear as a layer in the Timeline panel as well.

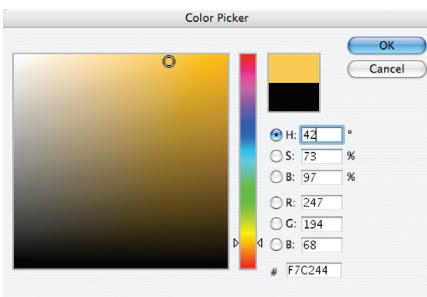


After importing your sources, your Project panel should look like this.

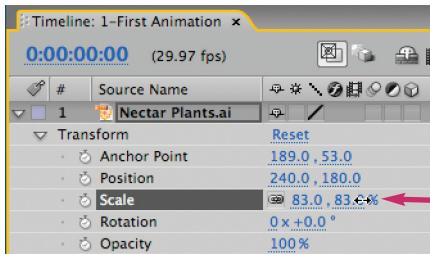


11 When you first drag a footage source into the Comp panel, it will helpfully try to snap to the center or corner of the comp's image area. (From then on, the layer will behave normally, with no snapping behavior.) The layer will appear in the Comp and Timeline panels.

By the way, we have dragged the Timeline's A/V Features column (circled in red) from its default position over to the right, to be near the timeline. You can do the same by dragging the column header to the right until it drops into place.



12 Pick a golden orange for this comp's background color.



13 To "scrub" a value in the Timeline, place the cursor over the value until a two-headed arrow appears, click, and drag. Scale has its X and Y dimensions locked together, so scrubbing one value also changes the other.



14 Highlight a layer, then use the Selection tool (shortcut **V**) to interactively scale a layer by dragging its corners in the Comp panel. The values in the Timeline will update while you drag. It is easy to distort the "aspect ratio" of a layer while doing so (as we are here); add **Shift** while dragging to constrain a layer's proportions.

12 The Comp's background color defaults to black, and the purple text is not easily readable. Let's change that:

Select the menu item Composition > Background Color. A color swatch and eyedropper will appear. Click on the color swatch; the standard Adobe Color Picker will appear. Select a golden orange to complement the purple title. Click OK, and OK again in the Background Color dialog to accept your changes.

Check to make sure the text is easily readable against your new background color; if not, change it!

13 In the Timeline panel, click on the arrow to the left of **Nectar Plants.ai**: This will reveal the word **Transform**. Click on the arrow to the left of **Transform**; this will reveal all of the **Transform** properties for this layer. In the future, we will refer to clicking these arrows as "twirl down" (and "twirl up" when closing a section).

Notice the numeric values next to each property: Place your cursor over one, then click and drag while watching the Comp panel to see the effect of editing these properties. This technique is referred to as *scrubbing* a value, and is a skill you'll use over and over in After Effects.

You can also type an exact value by clicking a value, which makes that field active. Press **Tab** to advance to the next value, and press **Return** when done.

Some properties – such as **Scale** and **Position** – have separate X (horizontal, or left-right) and Y (vertical, or up-down) dimensions to their values. By default, **Scale**'s X and Y dimensions are locked together to prevent distorting the layer; you can unlock them by clicking on the chain link icon next to their value.

14 After you've experimented with scrubbing, click on the word **Reset** next to **Transform** to return these values to their defaults. Next you're going to play with directly manipulating the layer in the Comp panel to edit its **Transform** properties. While doing so, keep an eye on the values in the Timeline panel to get a better feel for what's going on.

- To edit **Position**, directly click on and drag a layer in the Comp panel. To constrain movement to one dimension, start to drag the layer, *then* hold down the **Shift** key and drag some more.
- To edit **Scale**, click and drag one of the eight square dots ("handles") around the outline of the layer in the Comp panel. To avoid distorting the layer and keep its original aspect ratio, start to drag the layer, *then* hold down the **Shift** key and drag some more.
- To edit **Rotation**, press **W** to select the Rotate tool (also known as Wotate), click on the layer, and drag around in circles. When you're done, press **V** to return to the Selection tool (**↑**).

As before, click on the word **Reset** next to **Transform** to return these values to their defaults.

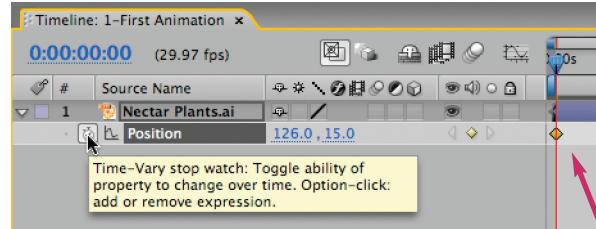
Animating Position

Now you know how to transform a layer manually; next comes making After Effects transform a layer for you over time. This involves a process known as keyframing.

15 There are keyboard shortcuts to reveal select Transform properties. Click on the arrow to the left of **Nectar Plants.ai** to twirl up all the properties, then with the layer selected, type **P** to reveal just Position.

You're going to make this layer move onto the screen and settle into place. Decide where you want the layer to start (you can even drag it totally onto the pasteboard). Then make sure the current time marker is at the start of the timeline (the numeric time display in the Timeline panel should read 0:00:00:00). If it isn't, grab the blue head of the current time marker and drag it there, or press **Home** to quickly make it jump to the start.

To the left of the word Position is a small stopwatch icon. Click on it, and it will now be outlined and highlighted. You have now enabled Position for keyframing and animation. [The shortcut to toggle on and off the Position stopwatch for a selected layer(s) is **Shift P** (**Alt Shift P**).] Enabling keyframing also places a keyframe (indicated by a yellow diamond to the right in the timeline portion of the display) at the current time, using Position's current value.



16 Press **End** to make the current time marker jump to the end of your timeline. Pick up and drag the **Nectar Plants.ai** layer where you want it to end up. A new keyframe will automatically be created for you with this value, at the current time.

You may have noticed that a line appeared in the Comp panel, tracing the path from where your layer started to where it is ending up. This is known as the *motion path*. It is made up of a series of dots. Each dot indicates where that layer will be at each frame in your timeline. The motion path is visible only when the layer is selected.

Drag the current time marker back and forth along the top of the timeline, and notice how your layer moves along its motion path. To see what it would look like playing back in real time, press **O** on the numeric keypad to initiate a RAM Preview. After Effects will work its way through the frames once at its own speed, then make its best attempt to play back the animation in real time. Press any key to stop the preview.

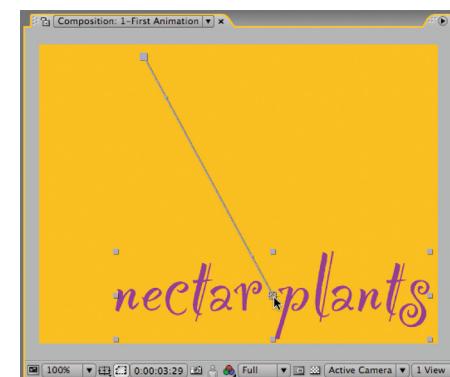
▼ Transform Shortcuts

The following shortcut keys reveal specific Transform properties for the selected layer(s):

- A** Anchor Point
- P** Position
- S** Scale
- R** Rotation
- T** OpaciTy

To add a property to those already being displayed, hold down **Shift** when you press these shortcuts.

15 In the Timeline panel, click on the stopwatch icon next to the word Position to enable keyframing for it; this also creates the first keyframe (the yellow diamond).

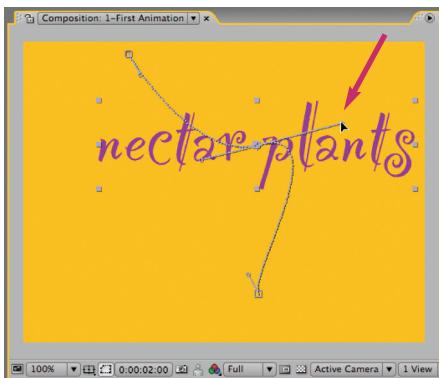


16 Move to a different time, and drag the layer to a new position; a motion path will appear in the Comp panel illustrating its travels.

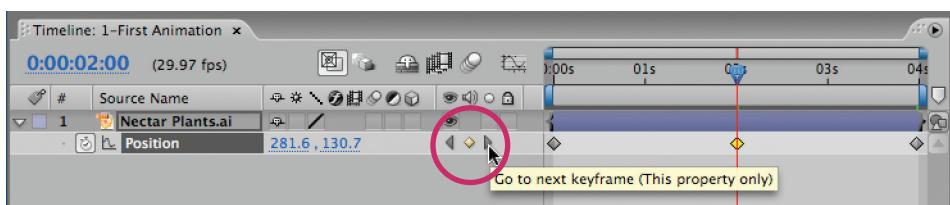
▽ factoid

Space = Speed

The spacing between dots along the motion path gives a quick visual indication of how fast it is moving. The farther apart the dots, the farther that layer will travel between frames, and therefore the faster it is going.



18 In the Comp panel, you can drag the handles sticking out of a keyframe to easily manipulate the motion path into and away from that keyframe.



20 Under the A/V Features column are a pair of keyframe navigation arrows, which make it easy to jump to the previous or next keyframe for a given property. If the diamond between them is yellow, the current time marker is parked on top of a keyframe.

Editing Your Moves

17 Drag the current time marker to somewhere around the middle of the timeline (about 02:00). Now pick up and drag **Nectar Plants.ai** to a new location. After Effects will automatically create a new keyframe between the existing two keyframes, and alter the motion path to travel between all three of your keyframes. Confirm this by dragging the current time marker back and forth, or do a RAM Preview by pressing **0** on the numeric keypad.

To change the position of a keyframe in the Comp panel, simply select one of the square keyframe icons (it will change from being hollow to being solid), and drag it to a new position. You don't have to move to that point in time to reposition a keyframe in space.

18 You will notice some handles have appeared in the Comp panel, sticking out of your keyframes. These are known as *Bézier* handles (named after the type of curve they create), and allow you to tweak the curve of the motion path. Go ahead and experiment with dragging these around, previewing the effects of your edits. You can create complex paths with few keyframes just by manipulating these handles.

19 It is easy to change the timing of keyframes: In the Timeline panel, drag the diamond keyframes to the right or left to make them occur earlier or later in time. RAM Preview to see the new timing.

20 You can also easily edit the value of a keyframe after you've created it. In the A/V Features column of the Timeline panel are a pair of gray arrows surrounding a small diamond. These are known as the *keyframe navigation* arrows. Clicking on them will jump to the next keyframe in line for that property, confirmed by the diamond changing from hollow to yellow. Once you're "parked" on a keyframe, to edit that keyframe either scrub the layer's Position values, or drag the layer around in the Comp panel.

If you don't jump to the exact time of a previously existing keyframe, you will instead create a new keyframe. If you create one by accident, you can delete it by selecting it in the timeline and

pressing Delete. Or, use the keyframe navigation arrows to jump to it, then click on the yellow diamond between the arrows to remove it.

Save your project. Indeed, now would be a good time to use the File > Increment and Save option, so your work to date will be saved under a new version number.

Adding a Second Layer

Now that you know how to animate Position, you pretty much have all the skills you need to animate virtually any other property in After Effects. But first, let's learn a few more tricks for adding footage to a comp:

21 In your Sources folder in the Project panel, select the footage item **Flower Symbol.tif**:

- Drag **Flower Symbol.tif** down to the *left side* of the Timeline panel, near the name of your other layer (**Nectar Plants.ai**). Hover your cursor above your existing layer, and you will see a thick black horizontal line, which indicates you're about to place it above this layer. Drag it downward until this line disappears and release the mouse. The new layer is placed below the existing layer. Note that no matter where the current time marker was parked, the new layer starts at the beginning of the comp (00:00).

- Press **⌘ Z** (**Ctrl Z**) to Undo this addition, and try another method. This time, drag **Flower Symbol.tif** to the *right side* of the Timeline panel until your cursor is hovering over the timeline area.

You should see a second blue time marker head appear. This indicates where it would start in time if you were to release your mouse now, and provides an interactive way to decide your initial starting time.

You can also move it up and down in the layer stack. Pick some location in the middle of the timeline, and release the mouse. The new layer will be added at the time you've picked. Note that with both methods, the layer is added to the center of the comp.

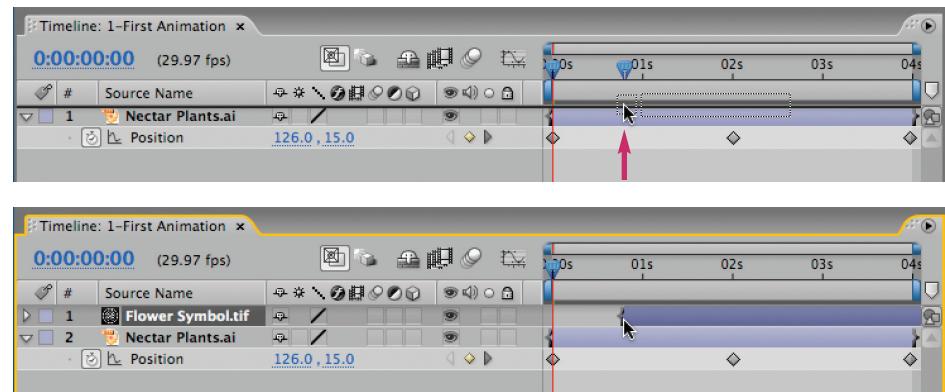
22 Drag the current time marker back and forth, and notice how the flower symbol does not appear in the Comp viewer until after the time marker crosses the start of the layer in the timeline. You can click and drag the center of the layer bar for **Flower Symbol.tif** to make it start sooner or later in time. Finally, with **Flower Symbol.tif** selected, press **↖ Home** (**Alt Home**) to make it start at the beginning of the comp.

While you're having fun, practice dragging each layer above and below the other in the timeline stack, noticing the impact this has on how they are drawn in the comp's image area. For now, place **Flower Symbol.tif** on top of **Nectar Plants.ai**.



Quick Location

To make a layer start where the current time marker is, select it and press **↖** (left square bracket). To have it start at the beginning of the comp, select it and press **↖ Home** (**Alt Home**).



21 When you drag a new source from the Project panel to the Timeline panel, you can decide when and where to drop it in the layer stack. Notice the ghosted outline and second current time marker before we let go of the mouse (top), and how it corresponds to the layer's placement after we let go (above).



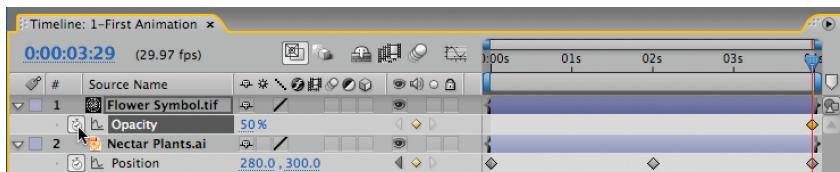
Multiple Undos

You have 32 levels of Undo in After Effects. If that's not enough, you can set it as high as 99 in Preferences > General.

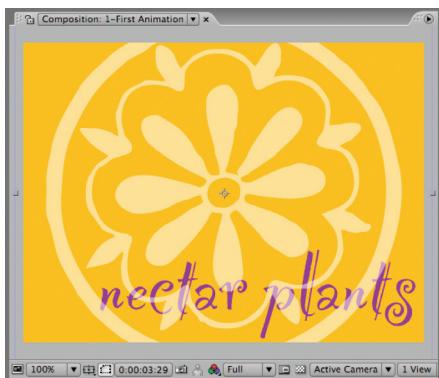
▽ key concept

Anchor Point

Notice how the flower symbol scaled and rotated around its center? That's because we centered it when we made it. You won't be so lucky with other sources; they may appear to wobble when they rotate. The cure for this is setting the Anchor Point, which you'll learn in Lesson 2.



24 At the end of the comp, set **Flower Symbol**'s Opacity value to 50% and then turn on the stopwatch for Opacity.



▽ tip

Slow Scrubbing

To scrub a value by smaller increments for precise control, hold down the **#** (**Ctrl**) key while scrubbing. To jump by larger increments, hold down **Shift** while scrubbing.

Animating Opacity, Scale, and Rotation

When animating your first layer, you picked its starting location, then its end location. It's also fine to work in reverse: Arrange your layer where you want it to end up, then keyframe where it came from.

23 Press **End** to jump to the last frame in your comp (03:29). In the Comp panel, drag **Flower Symbol.tif** to a nice place in relation to your title layer. Don't worry about covering up some of the letters; we're about to fix that...

24 With **Flower Symbol.tif** selected, press **T** to reveal its Opacity. Scrub this value, and notice how the purple title starts to become visible through the white flower graphic. Pick a nice intermediate value, like 50%.

Click on the stopwatch icon to the left of the word Opacity. This will set a keyframe for this value at this point in time.

25 With the flower layer still selected, hold down the **Shift** key and press **S**. This will add Scale to the Opacity value you are already displaying. You can scrub the Scale value to pick a new ending size for this layer, or leave it at 100%.

Click on Scale's stopwatch to enable keyframing for this property as well.

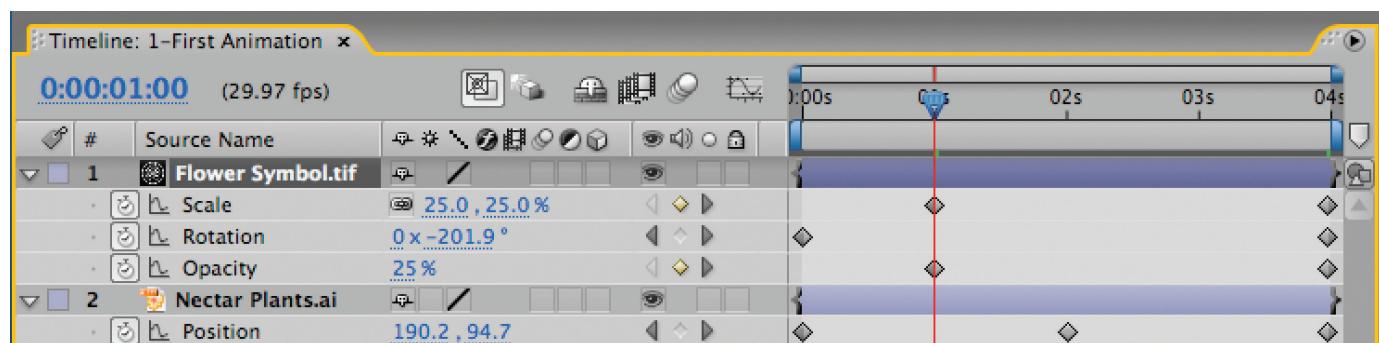
26 Now type **Shift R** to also reveal Rotation.

With Rotation at 0 degrees, click on Rotation's stopwatch to enable keyframing for it, too.

27 Press **Home** to jump to the start of the comp. Scrub the second Rotation value (degrees) to pick a starting pose for the flower; notice that if you scrub the degrees past 359, the first value (revolutions) will change to a 1. Because your second keyframe has a value of 0, a negative value for the first keyframe will cause the flower to rotate clockwise to 0, while a positive value will cause it to rotate counterclockwise to 0. The larger the value, the more it will rotate over time. Set a value to taste, and a new keyframe will automatically be added for you.

Go ahead and preview your animation; if you aren't happy with the rotation, return to the first keyframe (use the navigation arrows, or press **Home**) and try a different value.

28 At 00:00, play with the Scale and Opacity values to create starting keyframes for them also. This is the type of animation where it may be interesting to have both start out with a value of 0. To do this, click on their current value to select it, enter 0, and hit **Return**.



Preview your results, and tweak to taste. This is the point where you might want to start trying out some different ideas for the timing of your animation. For example, try moving the second and last Position keyframes for **Nectar Plants.ai** earlier in time, so the title finishes its move before the flower does.

Another idea is to set the first Scale and Opacity keyframes for **Flower Symbol.tif** to something larger than 0 (such as 25), and drag them to start later than the first Rotation keyframe: This will cause a small, transparent version of the flower to spin in place before it zooms up. Oh – and save your project!

▼ Nudging Position, Rotation, and Scale

Sometimes it's easier to use the keyboard to nudge the transform values for a layer. Here are the magic keys:

Position: cursor keys

Rotation: numeric keypad's and

Scale: (**Ctrl**) plus numeric keypad's and

If you hold down the **Shift** key while doing any of these, the transform values will jump in increments of 10 rather than 1.

28 After animating Scale, Rotation, and Opacity for **Flower Symbol.tif** (top), it zooms, spins, and fades up into position (above).

▼ try it

Smooth Moves

By default, After Effects creates linear keyframes in the timeline. These result in sudden starts and stops. Keyframe interpolation and velocity are covered in the next lesson. But until then, to add a more elegant touch, select a keyframe and hit **F9** to apply the Easy Ease keyframe assistant to give it smooth starts and stops.

(Mac users will have to change Exposé in System Preferences to free up the shortcuts **F9** – **F12**.)