1

GETTING ACQUAINTED

Lesson overview

In this lesson, you'll learn how to do the following:

- Create a new file in Adobe Animate.
- Understand the different Animate document types.
- Adjust Stage settings and document properties and customize your workspace.
- Add layers using the Timeline panel.
- Understand and manage keyframes in the timeline.
- Work with imported images in the Library panel.
- Move and reposition objects on the Stage.
- Add filters and color effects to keyframes.
- Open and work with panels.
- Select and use tools in the Tools panel.
- Preview and publish your animation.
- Save your file.

This lesson will take less than 1 hour to complete.

To get the lesson files used in this chapter, download them from the web page for this book at www.adobepress.com/AnimateCIB2023. For more information, see "Accessing the lesson files and Web Edition" in the Getting Started section at the beginning of this book.
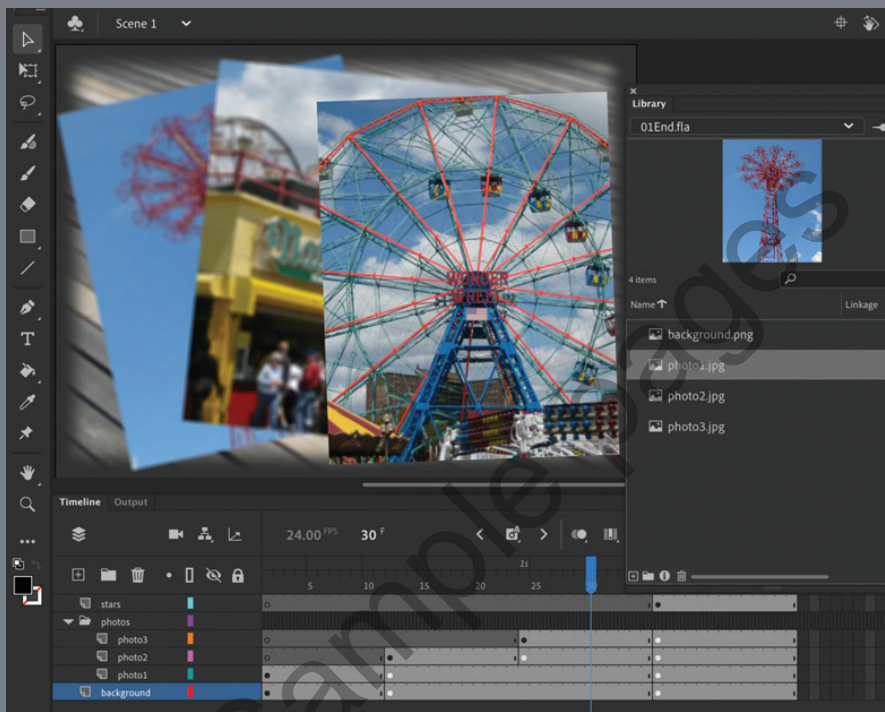
In Animate, the Stage is where you lay out all your visual elements, the Timeline panel is where you organize frames and layers, and other panels let you edit and control your creation.

Starting Adobe Animate and opening a file

The first time you start Adobe Animate you'll see the Home screen, which also serves as a place to create a new document or open a saved document. It displays the kinds of projects you can build along with any recently opened files.
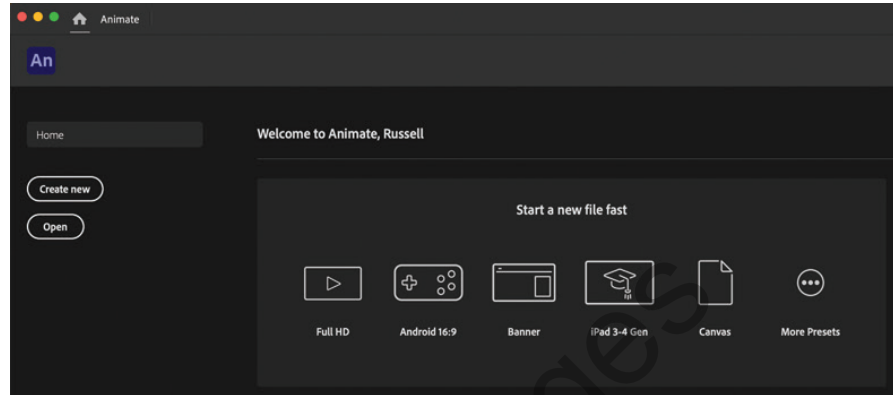
In this lesson, you'll create a simple slideshow-type animation to showcase a few vacation snapshots. You'll add a background, photos, and some decorative elements, and in the process you'll learn about positioning elements on the Stage and placing them along the timeline of the animation so that they appear one at a time, in sequence. You'll begin learning how to use the Stage to organize your visual elements spatially and how to use the Timeline panel to organize your elements temporally.

1 Start Animate. In macOS, double-click Adobe Animate 2023 in the Adobe Animate 2023 folder in the Applications folder. In Windows, choose Start > Programs > Adobe Animate.

2 Choose the Open button or choose File > Open (Command+O/Ctrl+O). In the Open dialog box, select the 01End.fla file in the Lesson01/01End folder and click Open to see the final project.

3 Choose the Test Movie button in the upper-right corner of the application interface, or choose Control > Test.
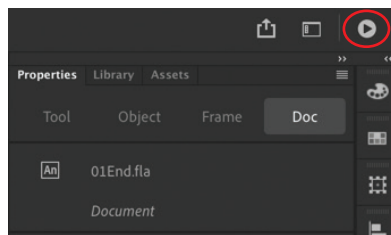
Animate exports the project and opens it in a new window.
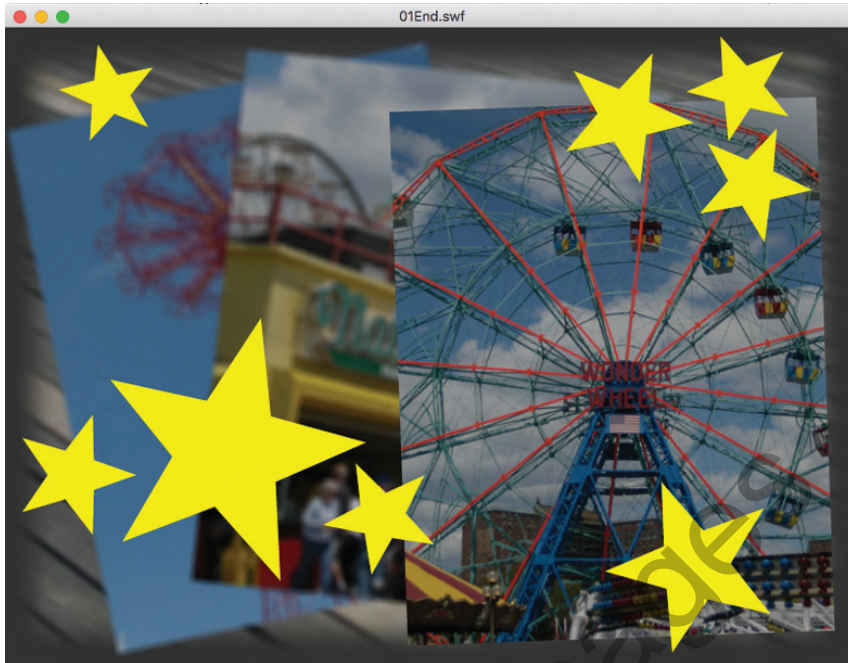
An animation plays. During the animation, several overlapping photos appear one by one, with stars appearing at the end. As the new photos appear, the previous photos become blurry, receding into the background.

4 Close the preview window and the FLA file.

Understanding document types and creating a new document

Animate is an animation and multimedia authoring tool that creates media for multiple platforms and playback technologies. Knowing where your final animation will play determines what type of document you'll choose when you create a new file.

Playback environment

The playback, or runtime, environment is the technology that your final published files use to play. Your animation could play in a browser with HTML5 and JavaScript. Perhaps your animation will be exported as a video to be uploaded to YouTube or an animated GIF on Twitter. Or your project could play as an app on a mobile device or even as a virtual reality immersive experience. You should make that decision first so that you can choose the appropriate document type.

● **Note** Not all features are supported across all document types. For example, HTML5 Canvas documents don't support the 3D Rotation or 3D Translation tools. Tools that are not supported by the current document type are dimmed in the Animate interface.

Document types

There are nine types of documents, but you'll likely work with only two or three of them, as they are the most common. The nine documents target different playback environments that determine some of the animation and interactivity features. Your choices for Animate documents are the following:
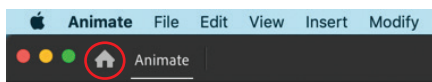
- Choose ActionScript 3.0 to create animation to export to video or to export graphics and animation assets, such as spritesheets or PNG sequences. ActionScript refers to the native scripting language in Animate, which is similar to JavaScript, but choosing an ActionScript 3.0 document doesn't mean you have to include ActionScript code.

- Choose HTML5 Canvas to create projects that play back in a modern browser using HTML5 and JavaScript. You can add interactivity by inserting JavaScript within Animate or adding it to the final published files.

- Choose WebGL glTF Extended or WebGL glTF Standard for interactive animated assets to take advantage of hardware-accelerated support of graphics, or for supported 3D graphics.

- Choose AIR for Desktop to create animation and interactivity that plays as an application on Windows or macOS desktops, without needing a browser. You can add interactivity in an AIR document using ActionScript 3.0.

- Choose AIR for Android or AIR for iOS to publish an app for an Android or Apple mobile device. You can add interactivity to your mobile app using ActionScript 3.0.

- Choose VR Panorama or VR 360 to publish a virtual reality project for a web browser that lets your audience look in all directions. You can add animation or interactivity to your immersive environments.

Regardless of the playback environment and document type, all documents are saved as FLA or XFL (Animate) files. The difference is that each document type is configured to export different final published files.

Creating a new document

You'll create the simple animation that you previewed earlier by starting a new document.

1 Start at the Home screen in Animate, which is the default workspace when you launch the application. You can also get to the Home screen by pressing the Home button at the top left of the interface.

The Home screen displays preset options for different playback environments and layout sizes.
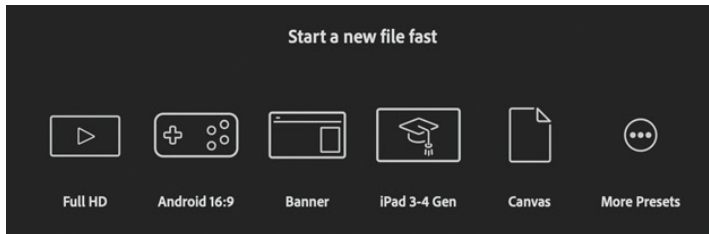

For example, when you select More Presets and choose the Full HD option under Character Animation, Animate creates a new ActionScript 3.0 document meant to export video at 1920 pixels by 1080 pixels. The Square option under Ads creates a new HTML Canvas document at 250 pixels by 250 pixels meant for playback in a browser.

2 Choose More Presets or choose Create New (File > New).
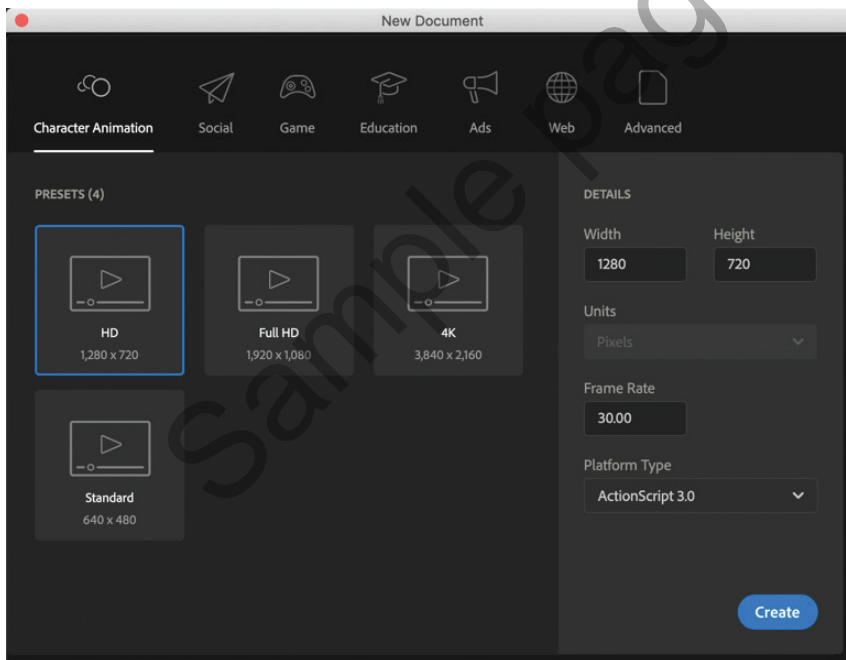
The New Document dialog box appears. The row at the top contains six categories of intended uses; click a category to display the preset size layouts it contains in the center of the dialog box. You can either use the presets as given or fine-tune their settings using the Details section on the right side of the dialog box.

3 Select the Advanced category at the far right.
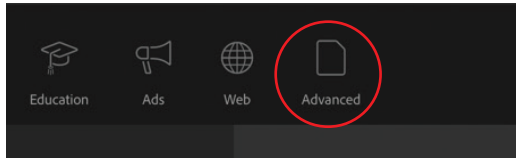
The center of the dialog box now displays all the available platforms. You can select a document type and type your document's dimensions into the Width and Height boxes.

4 In the Platforms area in the center of the dialog box, select ActionScript 3.0. In the Details area on the right side of the dialog box, choose the dimensions of the Stage by entering new pixel values for the Width and Height. Enter **800** for Width and **600** for Height.

5 Click Create.

Animate creates a new ActionScript 3.0 document with the specified Stage dimensions.

6 Choose File > Save. Name the file **01_workingcopy.fla**, and from the File Format/Save As Type menu, choose Animate Document (*.fla). Although the software application is called Animate, be aware that the file extension is .fla or .xfl, both of which preserve echoes of the name of the ancestor of Animate: Flash. Navigate to the 01Start folder and click Save.

Saving your file right away is a good working habit that ensures your work won't be lost if the application or your computer crashes. You should always save your Animate file with the extension .fla (or .xfl if you save it as an Animate Uncompressed Document) to identify it as the Animate source file.

● **Note** If you save your Animate document as an Animate Uncompressed Document (.xfl), your document is saved as a collection of files in folders and not as a single document. This exposes the contents of your document to you and to other developers to swap assets easily. The XFL format is a more advanced saved document that you won't be using in this book.

Getting to know the workspace

The first time you run Animate, you'll be asked what kind of user you are—beginner or expert, for example. Your answer will determine how the interface is configured. Don't worry about your choice, as you can customize your workspace to whatever makes you comfortable. You will also learn to configure the workspace to match how it appears in this book.

The Animate work area includes the command menus at the top of the screen and a variety of tools and panels for editing and adding elements to your movie. You can create all the objects for your animation in Animate, or you can import elements you've created in Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe After Effects, or other compatible applications.

There are many different interface configurations, but in the Essentials workspace, Animate displays the menu bar, Timeline panel, Stage, Tools panel, Properties panel, and Edit bar, along with a few other panels. As you work in Animate, you can open, close, group, ungroup, dock, undock, and move panels around the screen to fit your work style or your screen resolution.
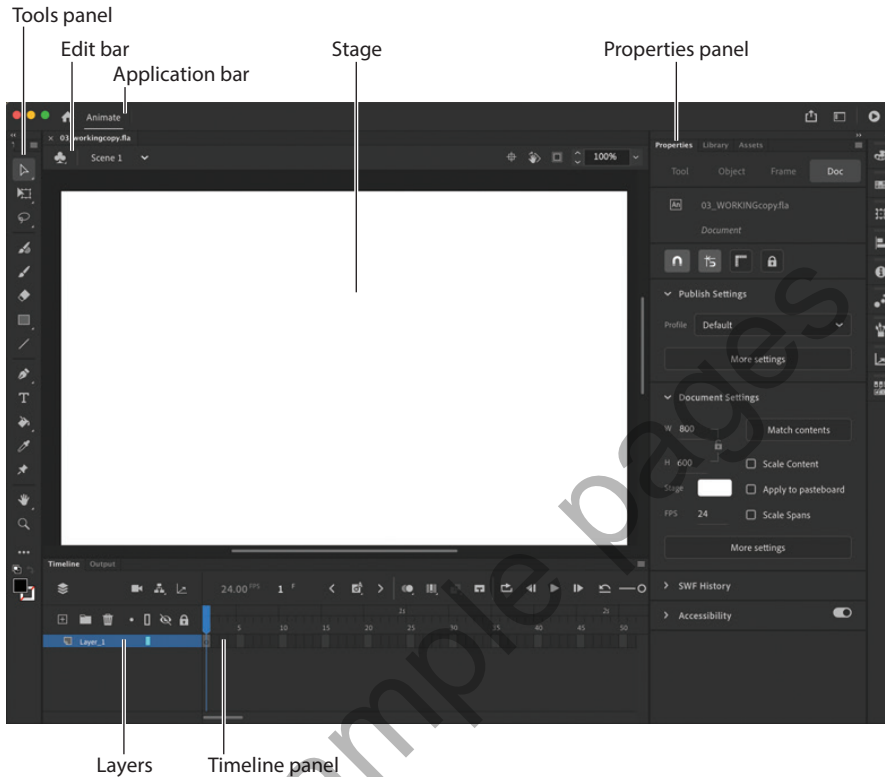
Choosing a new workspace

Animate also provides a few preset panel arrangements ("workspaces") that may better suit the needs of particular users. Use the Window > Workspaces submenu or the workspace switcher at the top right of the interface to choose a different workspace or to save a new one.

1 Click the workspace switcher and choose a new workspace.
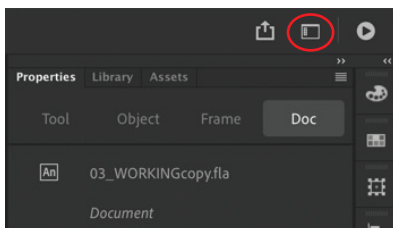
The various panels are rearranged and resized according to their importance in the chosen workspace. For example, the Animator and Designer workspaces put the Timeline panel at the top of the work area for easy and frequent access.

2 Select the Essentials workspace.

This book shows the step-by-step lessons in the Essentials workspace. It provides a good balance of access to the Stage and the most commonly used panels.

3 If you have moved some of the panels around and want to return to one of the prearranged workspaces, choose Window > Workspaces > Reset [*preset name*] and click Yes in the confirmation dialog box. Or, from the workspace switcher, choose the reset icon in front of the workspace name.
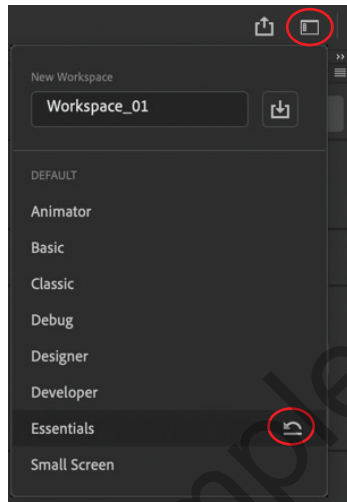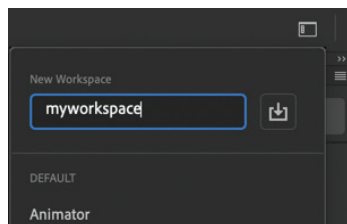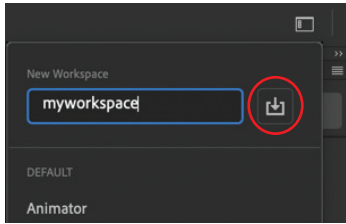
Saving your workspace

If you find an arrangement of panels that suits your style of work, you can save it as a custom workspace and return to it at a later date.
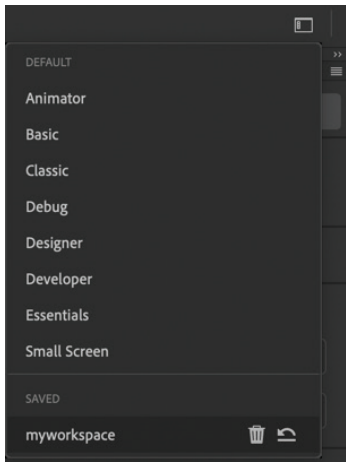
1 Open the workspace switcher and enter a name for your new workspace in the field below New Workspace.

2 Click the Save Workspace icon next to the new name.

Animate saves the current arrangement of panels and adds it to the options in the Workspace menu, which you can access at any time.

3 By default, the Animate interface is dark gray. However, you can change the interface to a lighter gray if you prefer. Choose Animate > Preferences > Edit Preferences (macOS) or Edit > Preferences (Windows), and in the General preferences category, choose a different level of gray.
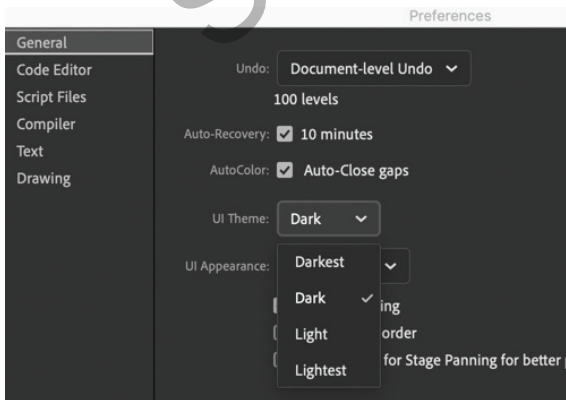
▶ **Tip** If you want to save and share your workspace preferences (in addition to other customizations), you can export them into an ANP file. Choose Animate > Preferences > Export Preferences to save a file that others can import.

In this book, the screenshots are shown in the Dark mode.

About the Stage

The big white rectangle in the middle of your screen is called the Stage. As with a theater stage, the Stage in Animate is the area that viewers see when a movie is playing. It contains the text, images, and video that appear on the screen. Move elements on and off the Stage to place them in and out of view. You can use the rulers (View > Rulers) or grids (View > Grid > Show Grid) to help you position items on the Stage.

Additional positioning aids include guides (pulled from the top or side rulers; View > Guides) and the Align panel, among others. You'll learn about these tools in later lessons in this book.

By default, you'll see the gray area off the Stage where you can place elements that won't be visible to your audience. The gray area is called the *pasteboard.* To see only the Stage, choose View > Magnification > Clip To Stage to select the option. For now, leave Clip To Stage deselected, allowing the pasteboard to remain in view.

You can also click the Clip Content Outside The Stage button to crop the graphic elements that fall beyond the Stage area so that you can see how your audience will view your final project.
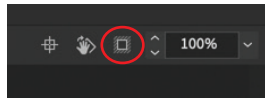
To scale the Stage so that it fits completely in the application window, choose View > Magnification > Fit In Window. You can also choose different magnification view options from the menu just above the Stage.
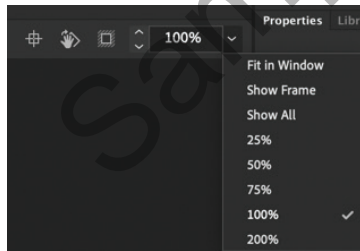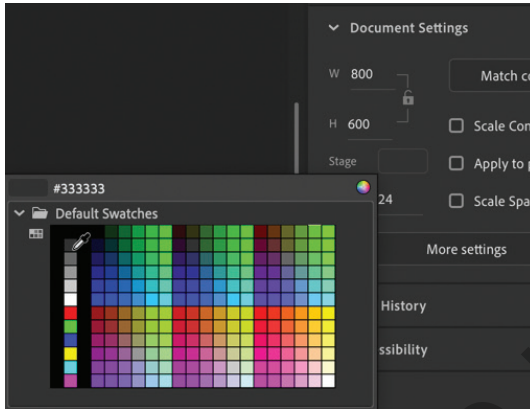

Changing the Stage properties

Now you'll change the color of the Stage. The Stage color, along with document properties such as the Stage dimensions and frame rate, is available in the Properties panel, which is the vertical panel just to the right of the Stage.

1 In the Document Settings section of the Properties panel, note that the dimensions of the current Stage (the Size parameters) are set at 800x600 pixels, which you chose when you created the new document.
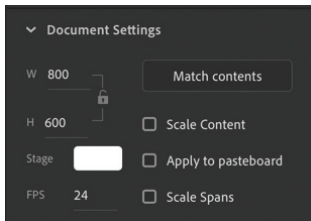
2 Also in the Properties panel, click the Background Color box next to the Stage and choose a new color from the color palette. Choose dark gray (#333333).

Your Stage is now a different color. You can change the Stage properties at any time.

Working with the Library panel

The Library panel is accessible from a tab just to the right of the Properties panel. The Library panel displays the contents of your document's library, which is where you store and organize symbols created in Animate, as well as warped assets and imported files, including bitmaps, graphics, sound files, and certain video clips. Symbols and warped assets are graphics used for animation.

● **Note** You'll learn much more about symbols in Lesson 2, "Creating Graphics and Text."

About the Library panel

The Library panel lets you organize library items in folders, see how often an item is used in a document, and sort items by type. You can also create folders in your Library panel to help group items. When you import items into Animate, you can import them directly onto the Stage or into the library. However, any item you import onto the Stage is also added to the library, as are any symbols you create. You can then easily access the items to add them to the Stage again, edit them, or see their properties.

To display the Library panel, choose Window > Library, or press Command+L/Ctrl+L.

▶ **Tip** You can also save assets in the Assets panel (Window > Assets), or save them to share across Adobe products by storing them in your Creative Cloud account by clicking the CC Libraries icon (Window > CC Libraries).

Importing an item to the Library panel

Often, you'll create graphics directly with the drawing tools in Animate and save them as symbols, which are stored in the library. At other times you'll use the Asset Warp tool to create a rig inside graphics, which are also stored in the library. You can also import media such as JPEG images or MP3 sound files, and they, too, are stored in the library. In this lesson, you'll import several images into the library to be used in the animation.
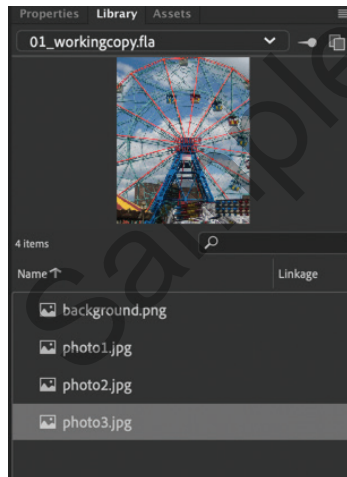
1 Choose File > Import > Import To Library. In the Import To Library dialog box, select the background.png file in the Lesson01/01Start folder and click Open. Choose All Files (*.*) from the Enable menu if the image files are dimmed.

Animate imports the selected PNG image and places it in the Library panel.

2 Continue importing photo1.jpg, photo2.jpg, and photo3.jpg from the 01Start folder.

You can also hold down the Shift key to select multiple files and import all the images at once.

The Library panel lists the filenames of all the imported images and provides a thumbnail preview of any selected file. These images are now available to be used in your Animate document.
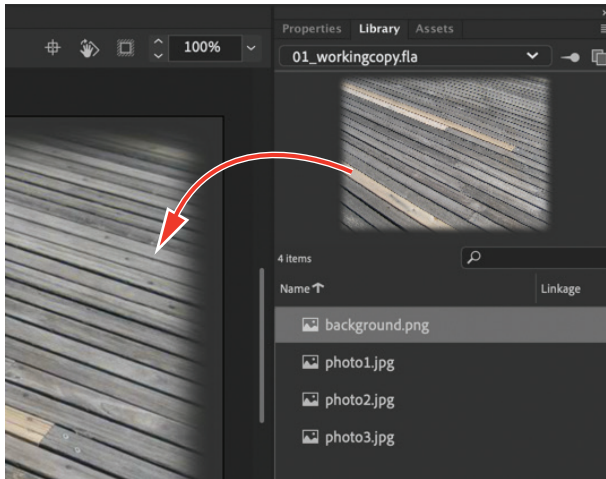
Adding an item from the Library panel to the Stage

To use an imported image, simply drag it from the Library panel onto the Stage.

1 Choose Window > Library to open the Library panel if it isn't already open.

2 Drag the background.png item onto the Stage and place it approximately in the center of the Stage.

Understanding the Timeline panel

In the Essentials workspace, the Timeline panel is located below the Stage. The Timeline panel contains playback controls for your animation as well as the timeline itself, which displays the sequence of events in the animation from left to right. An Animate movie measures time in frames, just as in a filmstrip. As the movie plays, the playhead, shown as a blue vertical line, advances through the frames shown in the timeline. You can change the content on the Stage for different frames. To display a frame's content on the Stage for any particular time, move the playhead to that frame in the timeline.

At the top of the Timeline panel, Animate indicates the selected frame number and the current frame rate (how many frames play per second).
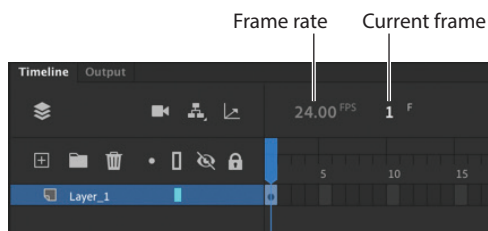
The timeline portion of the Timeline panel also displays layers, which help you organize the artwork in your document. At the moment, your project has only one layer, which is called Layer_1. Think of layers as multiple filmstrips stacked on top of one another. Each layer can contain a different image that appears on the Stage, and you can draw and edit objects on one layer without affecting objects on another layer. The layers are stacked in the order in which they overlap each other so that objects on the bottom layer in the timeline are on the bottom of the stack on the Stage. You can hide, lock, or show the contents of layers as outlines by clicking the dots or the square in the layer under the layer option icons.

If you have multiple layers, you can use the View Only Active Layer option above the timeline to show only the currently selected layer.

Changing the appearance of the timeline

You can adjust the timeline's appearance to accommodate your workflow. When you want to see more layers, choose Short from the Frame View menu in the upper-right corner of the Timeline panel. The Short option decreases the height of frame cell rows. The Preview and Preview In Context options display thumbnail versions of the contents of your keyframes in the timeline.

Reset Timeline Zoom To The Default Level
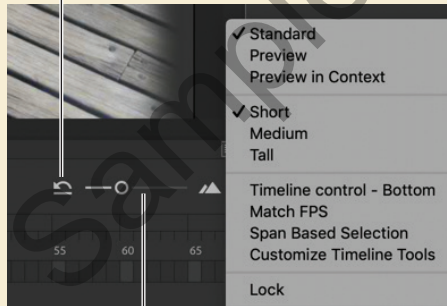
Resize Timeline Zoom

For finer control over the timeline frame sizes, drag the Resize Timeline View slider. The slider adjusts the size of the frames so that you can see more or less of the timeline. Click the Reset Timeline Zoom To The Default Level button to revert the timeline view to its normal size.

To position different animation options on your timeline for quick access, click the options menu at the corner of the timeline and choose Customize Timeline Tools. The Customize Timeline menu appears, which contains all the available tools you can choose to display or hide. The highlighted icons are those that are, by default, on the top of the timeline.
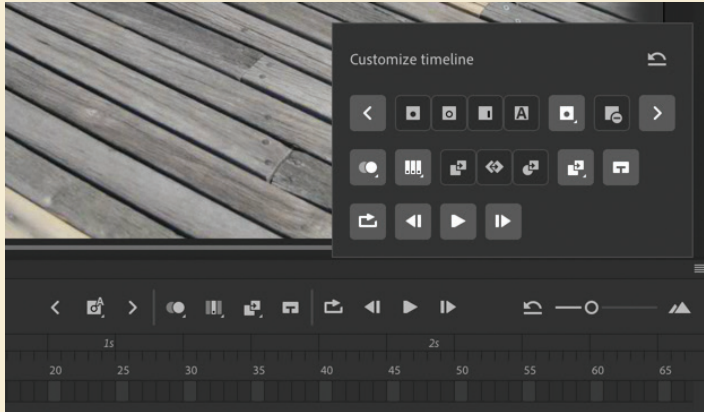
Click to add or remove a tool. Click the Reset Timeline Controls button to reset the timeline to its original appearance.

Renaming a layer

It's a good idea to separate your content on different layers and name each layer to indicate its contents so that you can easily find the layer you need later.

1 Double-click the name of the existing layer, Layer_1, to rename it, and type **background**.

2 Click outside the name box to apply the new name.
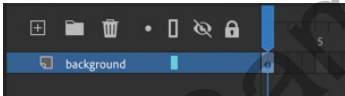
3 Click below the lock icon to lock the layer. Locking a layer prevents you from accidentally moving or making changes to whatever is inside that layer.
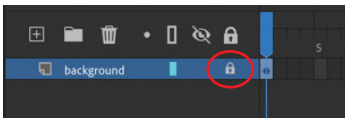

A lock icon appears in the layer. The lock icon indicates that you can't make edits to the layer because it is locked.

Adding a layer

A new Animate document contains only one layer, but you can add as many layers as you need. Objects in the top layers will overlap objects in the bottom layers, unless you change the layer depth with the Layer Depth panel. You'll learn more about this option in Lesson 7, "Animating the Camera."

1 Select the background layer in the timeline.

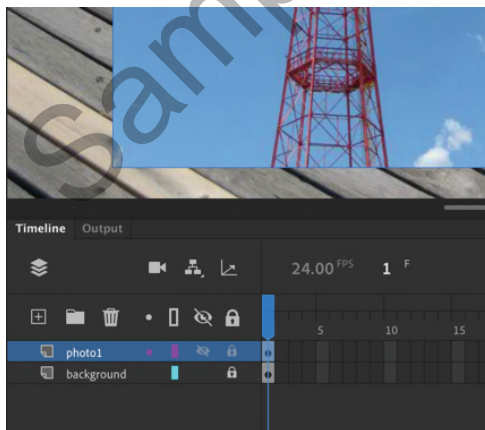**2** Choose Insert > Timeline > Layer. You can also click the New Layer button above the timeline.
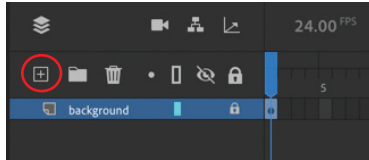
A new layer appears above the background layer.

3 Double-click the new layer to rename it, and type **photo1**. Click outside the name box to apply the new name.

Your timeline now has two layers. The background layer contains the background photo, and the newly created photo1 layer above it is empty.

4 Select the top layer, called photo1.

5 Choose Window > Library to open the Library panel if it isn't already open.

6 Drag the library item called photo1.jpg from the library onto the Stage.
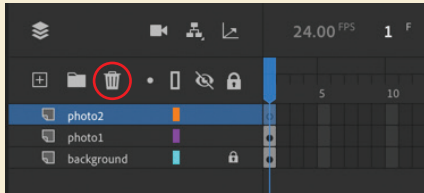

The photo1 image appears on the Stage and overlaps the background image.

7 Choose Insert > Timeline > Layer, or click the New Layer button above the timeline, to add a third layer.

**8** Rename the third layer **photo2**.

Inserting frames

So far, you have a background photo and another overlapping photo on the Stage, but your entire animation exists for only a single frame, which is only a fraction of a second. To create more time on the timeline and make this animation run for a longer duration, you must add additional frames.

1 Select frame 48 in the background layer. Use the Resize Timeline View slider at the upper-right corner of the Timeline panel to expand the timeline frames to make it easier to identify frame 48.
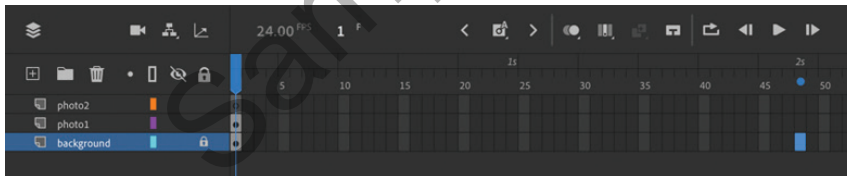
2 Choose Insert > Timeline > Frame (F5). You can also choose Frame from the menu above the timeline or right-click frame 48 and choose Insert Frame from the context menu that appears.
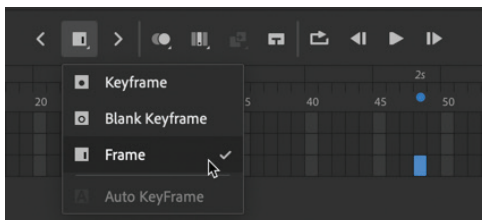
Animate adds frames in the background layer up to the selected frame, frame 48.
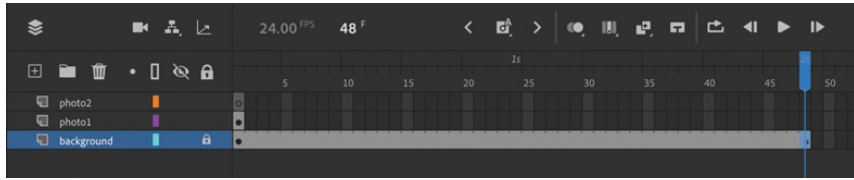
3 Select frame 48 in the photo1 layer.

4 Choose Insert > Timeline > Frame (F5), choose Insert Frame above the timeline, or right-click and choose Insert Frame to add frames in the photo1 layer up to frame 48.

5 Select frame 48 in the photo2 layer and insert frames on this layer.

You now have three layers, all with 48 frames on the timeline. Since the frame rate of your Animate document is 24 frames per second, your current animation lasts 2 seconds.

Selecting multiple frames

Just as you can hold down the Shift key to select multiple files on your desktop, you can hold down Shift to select multiple frames on the Animate timeline. If you have several layers and want to insert frames into all of them, select a frame in the first layer and then Shift-click the same frame in the last layer to select all the frames in the layers in between, or drag to select multiple layers. Then choose Insert > Timeline > Frame.

Creating a keyframe

A keyframe indicates a change in content on the Stage. Keyframes are indicated on the timeline as a circle. An empty circle means there is nothing in that particular layer at that particular time. A filled-in black circle means there is something in that layer at that time. The background layer, for example, contains a filled keyframe (black circle) in the first frame. The photo1 layer also contains a filled keyframe in its first frame. Both layers contain photos. The photo2 layer, however, contains an empty keyframe in the first frame, indicating that it is currently empty.

Empty keyframe   Filled keyframe
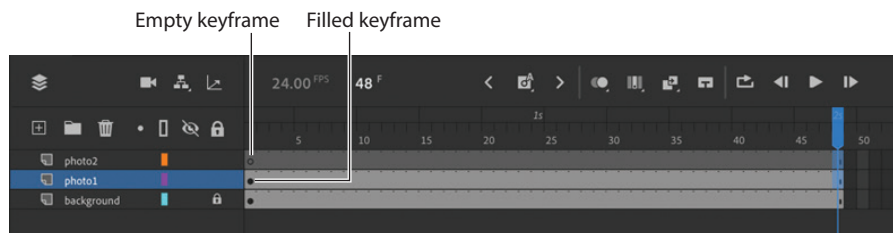
Understanding Auto Keyframe mode

There are two modes for creating keyframes. The Auto Keyframe option above your timeline can be either enabled or disabled.
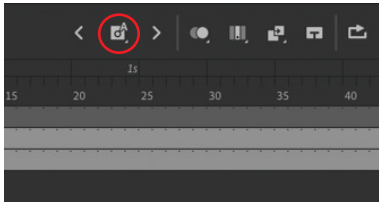
If it is enabled (the keyframe icon displays a letter "A"), adding or editing content on the Stage automatically creates a new keyframe at that point in time. If it is disabled, you create keyframes manually, as described in this task. Generally, for the projects in this book, you'll want to keep the Auto Keyframe option disabled. This way, you will learn to create a keyframe only when you specifically want one, and you will avoid accidentally creating keyframes.

In the next task, you'll insert a keyframe in the photo2 layer at the point in time when you want the next photo to appear.

1   Make sure the Auto Keyframe option is off. Select frame 24 on the photo2 layer. The frame number of a selected frame is displayed above the left end of the timeline.
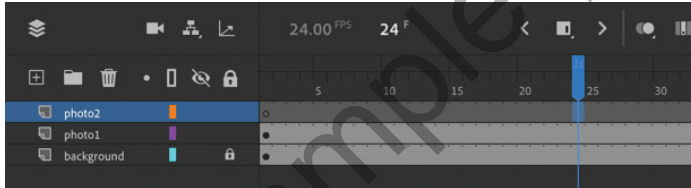
2   Choose Insert Keyframe from the menu above the timeline, or choose Insert > Timeline > Keyframe (F6).

A new keyframe, indicated by an empty circle, appears in the photo2 layer in frame 24.
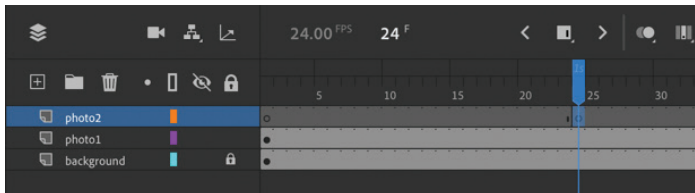
3   Drag photo2.jpg from your library onto the Stage.

The empty circle at frame 24 becomes filled, indicating that there is now content in the photo2 layer. When your animation plays, your photo appears on the