Flash 8 Basics

1. Toolbar

Select Tool – selects an object to move it around the stage

SubSelect Tool – adjusts line segment lengths and slopes

Free Transform – resize, rotate, scale selected object

Line Tool – draws a straight line

Pen Tool – draws straight or smooth, curved lines

Oval Tool – draws a circle (if shift is held down) or an oval

Pencil Tool – draws freehand lines and shapes

Ink Bottle tool – changes the stroke colour, width, style – just solid colours, not gradients or bitmaps

Eyedropper tool – copies fill and stroke attributes from one object to another

Hand Tool – shifts the view of the stage

Default – set the stroke and fill to black and white defaults

None – set the fill and stroke colours to none when drawing a circle or square

Gradient Transform – adjust the gradient fill on selected object

Lasso Tool – lets you select objects in freehand (trace around them)

Text Tool – write text

Rectangle Tool – draws a square (if shift is held down) or a rectangle

Brush Tool – paint strokes as if you are painting

Fill Tool – Colour inside an object

Eraser Tool – remove strokes, fills, objects on the stage

Zoom Tool – zoom in or out on the stage

Stroke – select the colour for the object about to be created

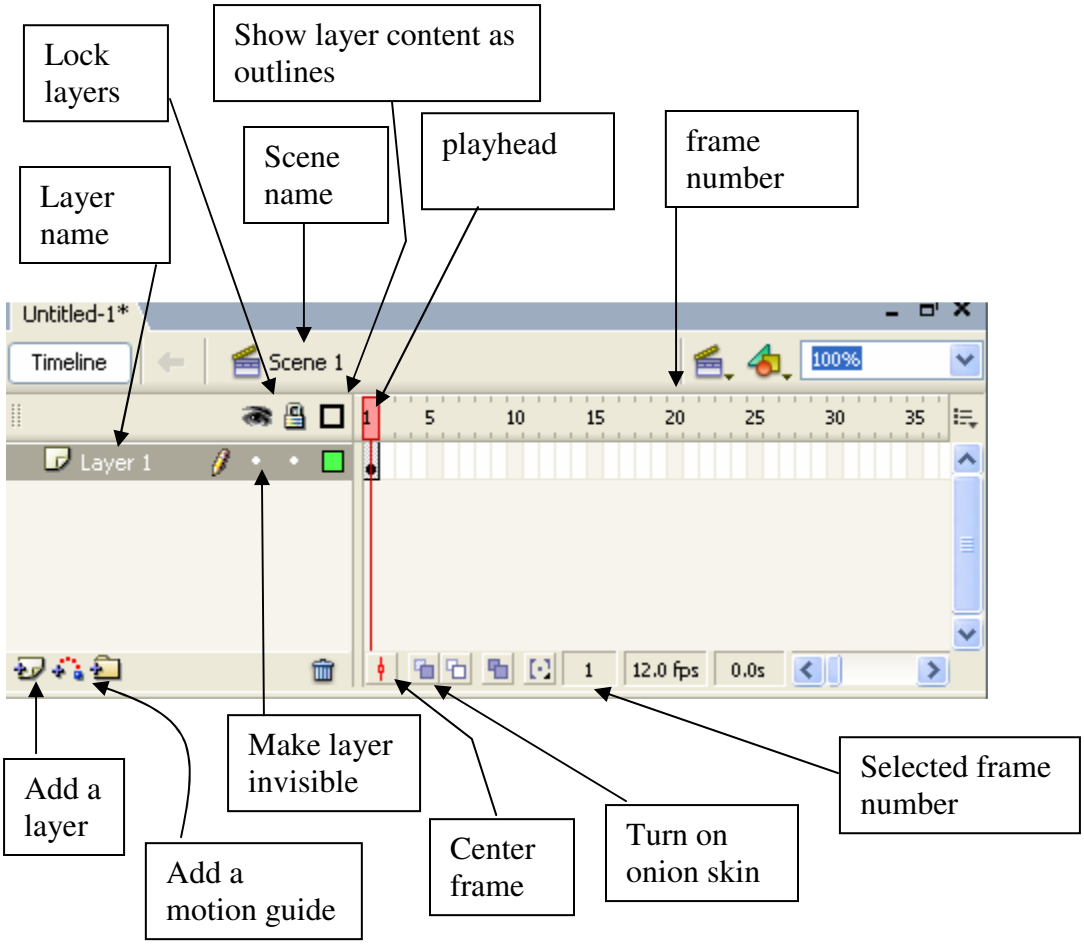
Fill – select the fill colour for the object about to be created

Swap the fill and stroke colours

Smooth	Straighten
Rotate	Scale

Snap Tool – automatically align an object with another

2. Timeline



3. Adding a new symbol to the library

a. On the toolbar at the top select Insert, New Symbol

b. On the Symbol Properties dialog, change the Symbol name from Symbol1 to a description of the symbol you are about to create; select a behaviour of Graphic; click OK

c. The stage should now have a crosshair at the center, indicating that you are editing a symbol. Everything added to the stage at this point will be part of the symbol you create. Center the object on the crosshairs.

d. When you have finished the graphic, click on the Scene at the top of the toolbar.

e. To add the symbol to the stage, open the library (on the toolbar at the top select Window, Library) and drag the symbol onto the stage. A light blue rectangular border will appear around the symbol.

4. Animation using multiple keyframes

a. For the current layer select the start frame on the timeline window.

b. Draw a shape on the stage or drag out a symbol from the library.

c. Press F5 as many times as you want to insert blank frames to the timeline after the keyframe.

d. In a blank frame nothing on the stage changes. Whatever image is defined on the stage for the previous keyframe is shown for all blank frames thereafter.

e. Select the end frame on the layer's timeline. Press F6 to insert a new keyframe.

f. Move the shape on the stage to a new location.

g. Press F5 as many times as you want to insert blank frames to the timeline after this new keyframe.

h. Press Enter to show the movie.

5. Animation using Motion Tween

i. Flash uses motion tweening to calculate the necessary changes of an object from a start keyframe to an end keyframe. This saves a lot of space as Flash does not have to store information for each frame in the motion.

j. Start by adding a keyframe to a layer (press F6). A keyframe will appear in the timeline as a frame with a single black dot.

k. Insert a symbol to the stage or draw a new shape

l. Select the keyframe and press F5 to add some blank frames. The end frame will appear as a frame with a white rectangle.

m. Select the end frame and press F6 to add an end keyframe.

n. With the end keyframe selected, move the object to a new location on the stage.

o. Select all the frames from the start frame to the second keyframe. Press and hold the shift key while clicking the first keyframe and the second keyframe.

p. Click on Insert, Create Motion Tween. The frames selected will change to a directed arrow with the frames having a light blue background. If the line is

dashed, then the final keyframe had not been selected. In that case, click F6 on the last frame.

5. Creating a Motion Tween along a Path

   a. Once you have defined the motion tween, right click on the layer and select Add Motion Guide.

   b. A new layer will appear above the selected layer. This motion guide layer is the one that you use to define a path for layers underneath it (those layers are shown on the timeline indented).

   c. Click on the first frame of the motion guide layer to select it.

   d. Select the pencil tool and trace out a freehand path for the object to follow on the stage.

   e. Click on the motion tween layer and make sure the moving object's crosshair is on the pencil line you just traced out for the start and end keyframe.

   f. The motion tween should now follow the new freehand line.

   g. If you want the object's motion to be oriented along the path, click on Windows, Panels, Frame. Make sure the motion tween layer is selected. On the Frame Panel, click on the Frame tab and click the "Orient to path" checkbox.

   h. Make the motion guide layer invisible.

6. Creating a Shape Tween

   a. A shape tween cannot be done with a symbol. You must break apart a symbol if you want to make it into a shape tween. (Click on Modify, Break Apart). Or just create a shape on the stage.

   b. Insert a keyframe and add a graphic to the stage. Press F5 to add some blank frames.

   c. Add a second keyframe and modify the graphic on the stage (change its colour, size, shape)

   d. Select all the frames from the first keyframe to the second keyframe.

   e. On the Frame Panel, click the Frame tab and select the Shape tweening option. The shape tween is shown in the timeline as a directed arrow with the frames having a light green background.

7. Pointers

a. You can cut and paste one or more consecutive frames on the timeline. Select the desired set of frames and right click on them. Select "Copy Frames" or "Cut Frames", select a new frame location on the layer and right click to paste the frames.

b. Often shape tweens can be optimized to better effect by using "shape hints". A shape hint helps Flash more effectively determine how to transform an area. A shape hint is added by selecting the shape tween's first keyframe, then select Modify, Transform and Add Shape Hint. The first shape hint is shown as a yellow dot with a lowercase "a". Click on the dot and move it to a location on the shape that needs to be tweaked. Select the next keyframe in the shape tween and move the corresponding "a" shape hint dot (it should be green here) to where it can help Flash optimize the morph process. The shape hint dot stays red, then it needs to be moved onto the shape. You can add up to 26 shape hints to a shape tween.

c. An empty frame on the timeline will show nothing on the stage. The difference between a blank frame and an empty frame is that the blank frame is part of a tween or a keyframe and will cause something to appear on stage for that time. An empty frame appears on the timeline as if there is a missing frame.