

# An Introduction to



Flash is an increasingly popular format for making animations for the Web. Because it is Vector-based it creates fast, tiny files making it suitable for the Internet. It can be used for making entire websites, Hyperstudio style multimedia presentations, interactive movies and cartoons. In the latter category, Flash has even been used by studios to make traditional animated cartoons for television and short films.

It has a steep learning curve if you want to take it beyond the basic. For that reason I'd recommend it for older students although I have seen it used successfully with Primary aged kids.

My own Flash experience has been in making simple animated web challenges for students. Have a look at The Hippo Helper website ([www.connect.to/hippohelper](http://www.connect.to/hippohelper)) for examples.

There are hundreds of Flash tutorials available on the Web, aimed at different levels of experience, from beginner to advanced. A couple of examples to check out are:

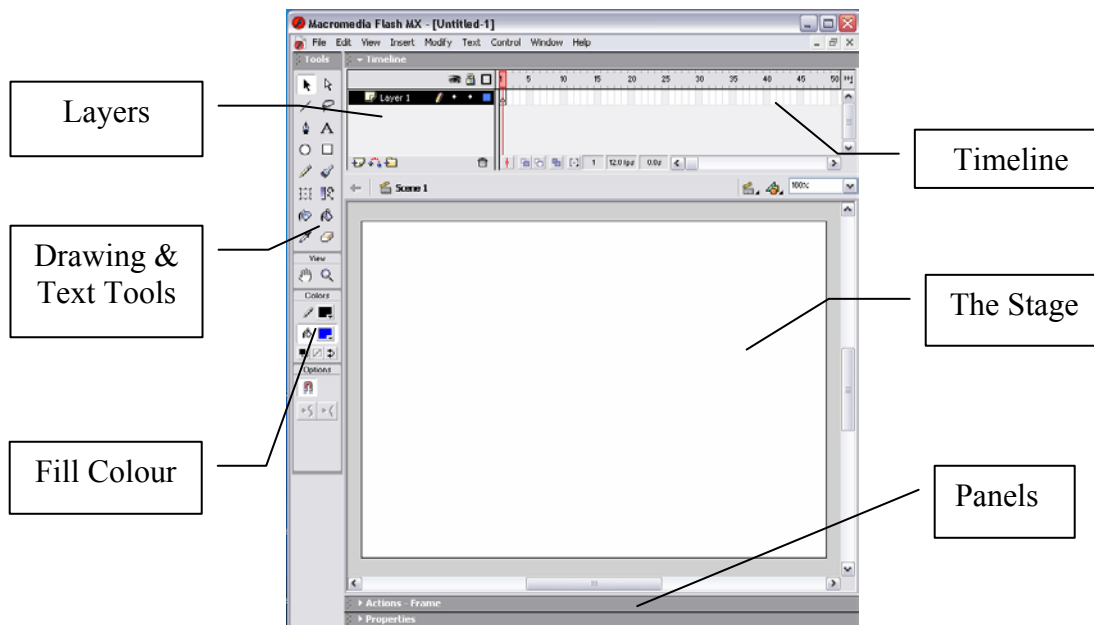
- [www.flashkit.com](http://www.flashkit.com)
- [www.echoecho.com/flash.htm](http://www.echoecho.com/flash.htm)
- [www.macromedia.com/support/flash/productinfo/tutorials](http://www.macromedia.com/support/flash/productinfo/tutorials)

This tutorial was aimed at users of Flash 5 but has been updated for the latest version, Flash MX 2004.





## PART 1: MAKING AN ANIMATED BUMBLE-BEE!

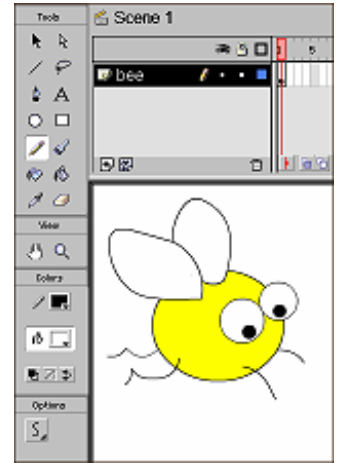
### Step 1: Getting Acquainted

- Open Flash. You should see a blank page called Scene 1. This is the 'Stage'.
- Above the Stage is the 'Timeline'. At the moment the Timeline has only 1 layer.
- On the left of screen you should see some mostly familiar icons such as Text, Paint Bucket, Line and Shape tools.




## Step 2: *Creating our Bee*

- In the Timeline, double-click where it says 'Layer 1'. Rename the layer as 'Bee'.
-  • Select the Oval Tool. Make an oval shape on the Stage. This is the bee's body – change its colour with the Paint Bucket.
-  • Use the Oval Tool to make some cartoony eyes. Again, change colours with the Paint Bucket.
-  • Use the Pencil Tool draw some wings and limbs (HINT: When you click on the Pencil Tool you'll see a box named 'Options'. Change the line style to 'Smooth').
-  • You can use the Arrow Tool to remove any unwanted lines.

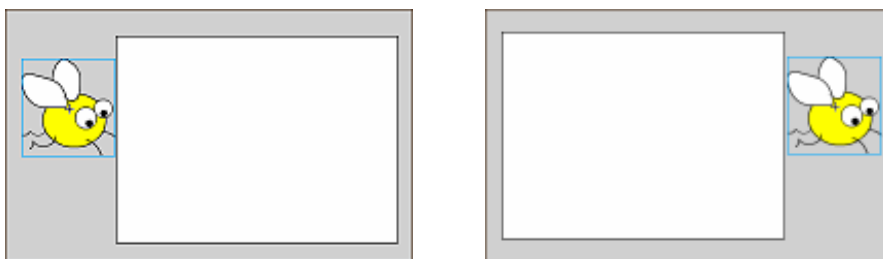
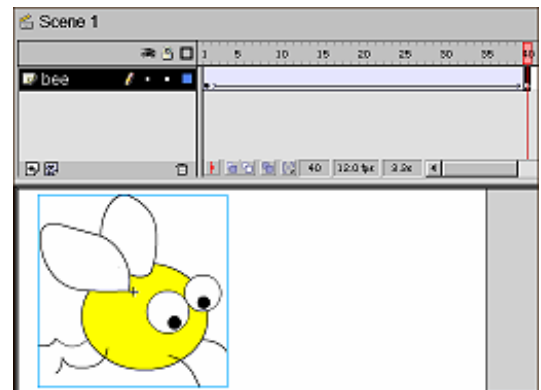


## Step 3: *Getting it Together*


- We need to combine all the bee's elements into one flat image.
-  • Use the Arrow Tool to draw an imaginary box around the bee.
- While it is selected go to **MODIFY > GROUP**.

## Step 4: *Preparing the Animation*

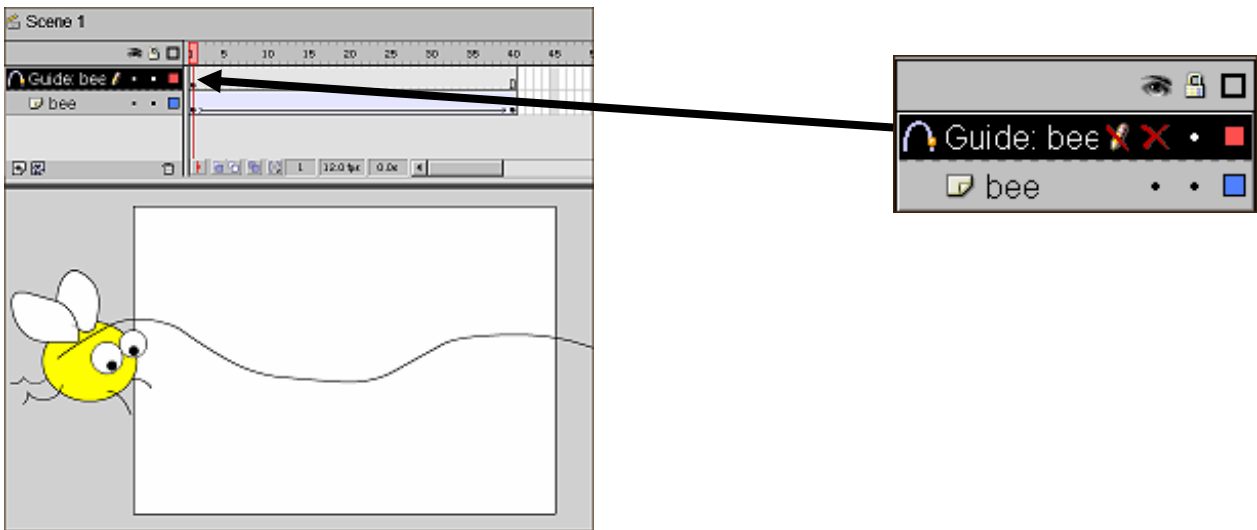
- Our bee is going to do his thing over 40 frames.
- In the Timeline, right-click on Frame 1.
- Choose 'Create Motion Tween'.
- In the Timeline, right-click on Frame 40.
- Choose 'Insert Keyframe'.
- You should now see an arrow joining Frames 1 to 40 in the Timeline.
- In the Timeline, click on the Keyframe in Frame 1. This is the bee's starting position so move him off the left of Stage.
- Click on Frame 40. This is the bee's end position so move him off the right of Stage.
- Test your movie. Go to **CONTROL > TEST MOVIE**.



## Step 5: *Flying Higher*

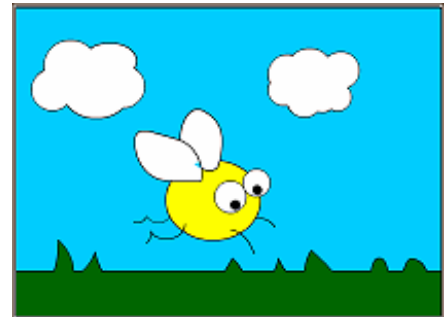
- Let's make things a bit more interesting. Click on Frame 1 in the Timeline.
- Go to **INSERT > MOTION GUIDE**. [Flash MX 2004 users: Go to **INSERT > TIMELINE > MOTION GUIDE**]. You should now see a new layer in the Timeline.
- Click on the first frame of the new layer. We'll now make a path for our bee to travel on.
- Use the Pencil Tool to draw a wavy line from off the left of Stage to beyond the right of Stage. 
- Drag the bee to the start of the line. It *should* connect itself.
- Click on Frame 40 of the 'bee' layer in the Timeline. Make sure the bee is attached to the last point in the line.

- Finally, make the Motion Guide invisible. Click under the 'Hide All Layers' icon in the Motion Guide layer.
- Test your movie. CONTROL > TEST MOVIE.



### Step 6: Add a Background

- Add a new layer. INSERT > LAYER.
- In the Timeline, drag that new layer to the bottom and rename it 'Background'.
- Use the drawing and paint tools to make a suitable background.
- Test your movie again. CONTROL > TEST MOVIE.




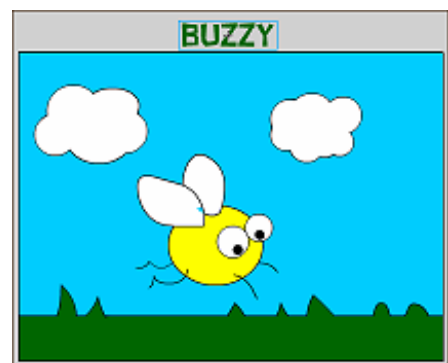
## PART 2: ADDING TEXT

### Step 1: Setting Text Properties

- Go to WINDOW > PANELS > CHARACTER to open up the text properties [Flash MX & MX 2004 users go to the Properties Inspector: WINDOW > PROPERTIES].
- Choose an appropriate font, colour and size (30?).

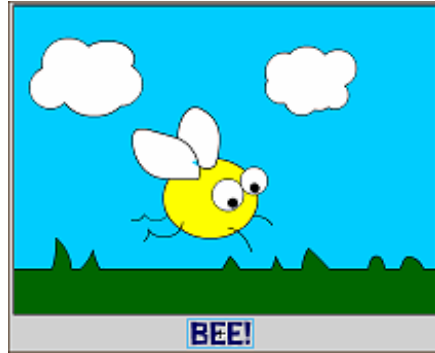
### Step 2: Getting a Buzz

- Create a new layer (INSERT > LAYER). Drag this layer to the top of the Timeline and rename it 'Buzzytext'.
- We want the text to appear half way through the movie, so right-click on Frame 20 and insert a Keyframe.
- Select the Text Tool, click on the Stage and type 'Buzzy'. 
- Right-click on the Frame 20 Keyframe and create a Motion Tween. Right-click on Frame 40 and insert a Keyframe.
- Go back to Frame 20 and click. This is the text's starting point. Move it above the centre of Stage.
- Click on Frame 40. This is the text's end point. Move it down near the centre of Stage.
- Test your movie if you like.



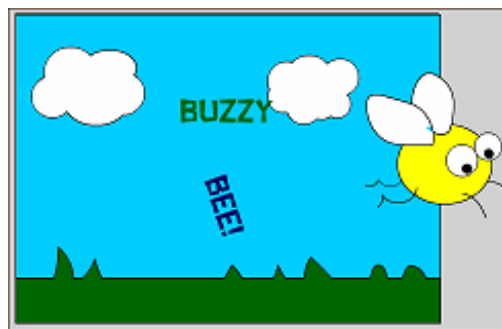
### Step 3: Bottoms Up

- Create a new layer (INSERT > LAYER) and rename it 'Beetext'.
- We'll make some text come up from the bottom this time. Right-click on Frame 20 of the 'Beetext' layer and insert a Keyframe.
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  - Use the Text Tool and type 'Bee!' on the Stage.
  - Right-click the Frame 20 Keyframe and create a Motion Tween.
- Click on Frame 20. This is the text's starting point. Move it below the centre of stage.
- Right-click on Frame 40 and insert a Keyframe. This is the text's end point. Position it where you want it to finish on the stage.



### Step 4: One Final Twist

- Right-click on Frame 20 of the 'Beetext' layer.
- Choose PANELS > FRAME [In Flash MX open the Properties Inspector].
- In 'Rotate' change the setting to Clockwise. Make it rotate 3 times.
- Test your movie (CONTROL > TEST MOVIE).



### Step 5: Make it Stop!

- Right-click on one of the Frame 40 Keyframes in your timeline. It doesn't matter too much which one.
- Choose ACTIONS > BASIC ACTIONS > STOP [In Flash MX 2004, click on Frame 40 and open the Actions Panel: GLOBAL FUNCTIONS > TIMELINE CONTROL > STOP. In Flash MX go to ACTIONS > MOVIE CONTROL > STOP].
- After you set an action in Flash you will see a little 'a' above the Keyframe where you set the action to happen, in this case Frame 40.
- Now when you test your movie it should stop after playing through once.
- Your Flash movie is now ready to be exported as a .swf file (FILE > EXPORT) which can be easily inserted into a Web Editor such as Dreamweaver.