

Adobe After Effects 6.5

Animate text in a flash

The fastest and easiest way to create a sophisticated text animation is to start with one that someone else has already designed for you. With nearly 300 prebuilt text animations in Adobe® After Effects® 6.5, the hardest step is choosing which animation to use! After applying animation presets to your text in After Effects, you can work with the resulting text animator groups, animator properties, and selectors to modify the animation and make it your own.



1. Set up the composition and add a text layer.

Create a new project, and click the Create A New Composition button. Choose Medium, 320 x 240 from the Preset menu; enter 20 for Frame Rate, and enter 0:00:07:00 for Duration. Choose Composition > Background Color, and click the color swatch to display the Adobe Color Picker. Select a color (#000000 in our example) for the background, and click OK; then click OK again in the Background Color dialog box. In the Character palette, click the fill color swatch to display the Adobe Color Picker, select a text color (#FFCC66 in our example), and click OK. You can set any other text properties you want in the Character and Paragraph palettes. (The text properties in our example include the following: Font is Myriad Pro Bold; size is 60;

tracking is -50; and alignment is Centered.) Select the horizontal type tool in the Tools palette, and drag in the composition window to create a bounding box that's approximately the same size as the composition window; then enter some text.

By dragging with the type tool, you've created a bounding box for entering *paragraph* text. If you subsequently change your mind and want the layer to be *point* text, just select the text layer in the Timeline window, then right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Mac OS) with the type tool in the Composition window, and choose Convert To Point Text command to convert the layer; you can also use this method to convert horizontal text to vertical or vice-versa.



2. Apply a preset text animation.

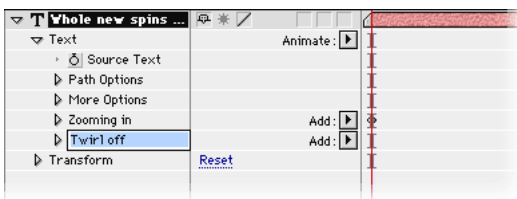
In the Effects & Presets palette, expand the categories *Animation Presets, Text, and Animate In. Select your text layer with the selection tool, and then double-click Spin In By Character to apply the preset to your layer. Choose Animation > Reveal Modified Properties to expand, in the Timeline window, every property that was just modified by the preset. Press Enter on your keyboard to rename Animator 1 in the Timeline window, and type a new name (we typed Zooming In). Press the space bar on your keyboard to preview the animation you just created.

The Animation Presets category in the Effects & Presets palette contains nearly three hundred prebuilt text animations. To preview all of the animation presets, choose Help > Text Preset Gallery, or visit the Adobe website at www.adobe.com/products/aftereffects/indepth.html to view the gallery.



3. Add another preset text animation.

Drag the current-time indicator to 04:00f, and then select the text layer with the selection tool. In the Effects & Presets palette, expand the categories *Animation Presets, Text, and Animate Out, and double-click Twirl Off Each Word. Press Enter (Windows) or Return (Mac OS) to rename the animator in the Timeline window. Type a new name (we typed Twirl Off), and press Enter again to accept the name change. Press Home on your keyboard to return the time to the start of the animation. To perform a RAM preview, click the Ram Preview button in the Time Controls palette, or press zero on your numeric keypad.

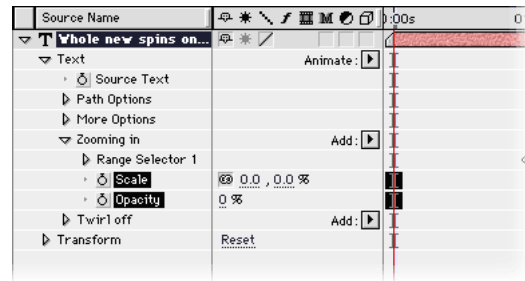


4. Modify the animation.

Expand the first animator (Zooming In in our example) in the Timeline window, select Position, Shift-click Rotation to add it to the Position selection, and press Delete on your keyboard to remove both properties.

Choose Scale from the Add pop-up menu adjacent to the animator, and then choose Opacity. Select the first Scale value, and enter 0; then scrub the Opacity value to the left to 0.

Simply adding the Scale and Opacity properties to the animator animates each character's scale and opacity upward from 0 to 100%. Note that we didn't even have to bother adding new keyframes to accomplish this, thanks to the Range Selector's two Start keyframes.

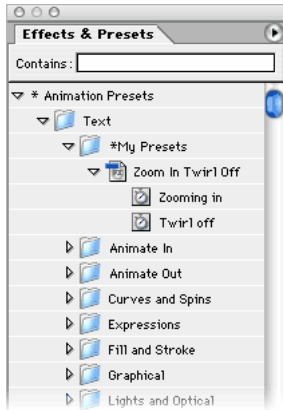


5. Save the animation preset.

To save the entire animation as a preset, select the first animator in the Timeline window (Zooming In in our example) and Shift-click the second animator (Twirl Off in our example), and click the Save Animation Preset button in the Effects & Presets palette. In the Save Animation Preset As dialog box, navigate to the Text folder in the Save In menu, click Create New Folder, type a name (we typed *My Presets), enter a name for the preset (we typed Zoom In Twirl Off), and click Save. In the Effects & Presets palette, expand the categories Animation Presets and Text, expand the folder created (*My Presets in our example), and also expand your new preset (Zoom In Twirl Off in our example.)

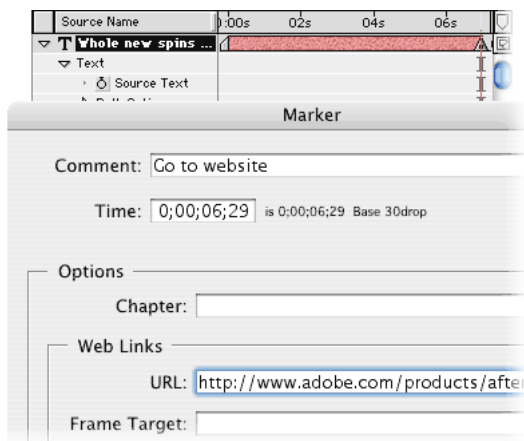
Animation presets can contain effects, properties, property groups, settings, keyframes, and expressions. Just select the items in the Timeline window that you want to save, and click the Save Animation Preset button in the Effects & Presets palette. You can apply an entire animation preset to a layer, or you can expand the preset in the Effects & Presets palette and apply just a

single effect or property listed in the preset. And remember, despite their name, animation presets don't have to contain animation; you can use animation presets to simply save an effect that's set up just the way you like it or to save a mask you often use.



6. Add a link to a Web page.

Press End on your keyboard to move the current-time indicator to the end of the composition. Select the text layer, and choose Layer > Add Marker. Double-click the marker (gray triangle on the layer's duration bar) in the Timeline window. Type a Web page address in the URL box (we typed <http://www.adobe.com/products/after-effects/main.html>), and click OK.

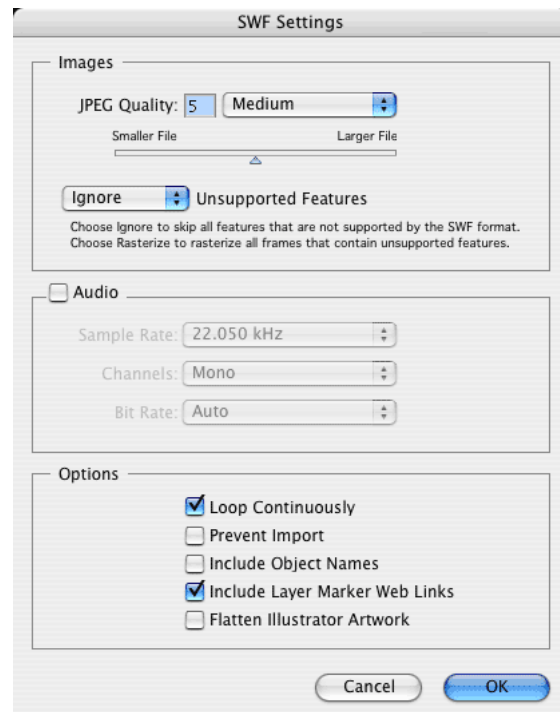


7. Export the animation to a SWF file.

Choose File > Export > Macromedia Flash, choose a location in the Save In menu, enter a file name, and click Save. In the SWF Settings dialog box, choose Ignore from the Unsupported Features menu, select Loop Continuously and Include Layer Marker Web Links, deselect all other options, and then click OK.

Our resulting animation is completely vector-based, which ensures that the text retains its crisp edges and detail even if the animation is scaled larger than the original composition.

Note: The only effects that are supported by the SWF format include Audio Wave From, Audio Spectrum, and Path Text. Also, the Motion Blur switch isn't supported.



8. Preview the SWF animation in a browser.

In a Web browser, open the HTML file located where you saved the SWF file, and click Open.

When you export a file to the SWF format, After Effects generates an HTML page with an embedded SWF file. The HTML page notes the SWF settings you chose and displays the animation. You can click the SWF file name in the Web page to make the animation fill an entire browser window.

