Tween Animations

Macromedia Flash provides two main ways of animating, Tweening and Keyframe Animation. The most common form is Tweenng where you set a starting point and an end point and let the program animate the objects BETWEEN them. This is where the term TWEEN comes from.
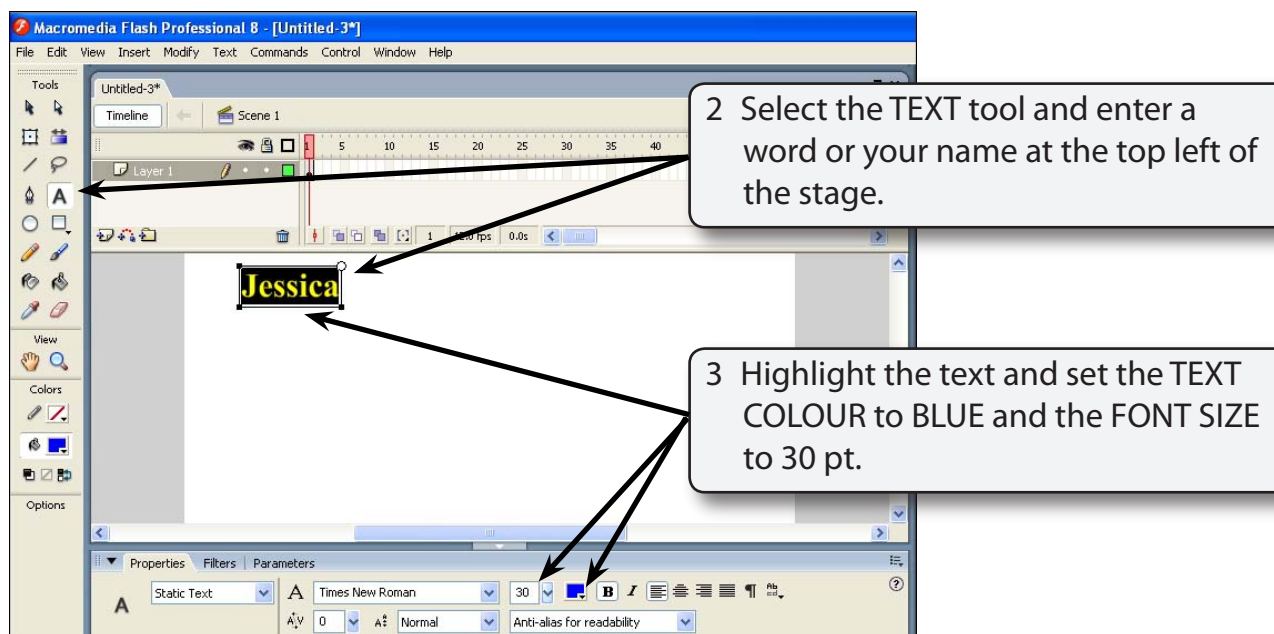
In this chapter you will be shown how to create Tween Animations for a text symbol. The next few chapters will demonstrate animating graphics.
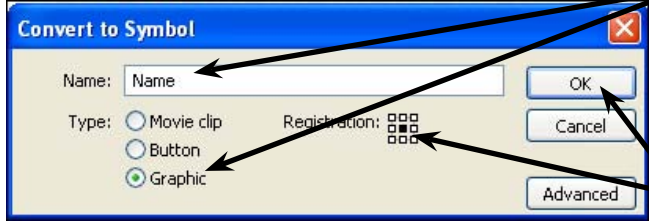
Creating a Motion Tween

Motion Tweening involves moving objects from a starting point to an end point. You can motion tween objects, text, drawings, etc. They must be grouped or converted to a symbol. To illustrate motion tweening a simple text symbol will be moved around the stage.

A   Setting the Symbol

1   Load Flash and create a new Flash Document, or close the current file and start a new Flash Document.

2 Select the TEXT tool and enter a word or your name at the top left of the stage.

3 Highlight the text and set the TEXT COLOUR to BLUE and the FONT SIZE to 30 pt.

3 Select the SELECTION TOOL, click on the text and use the MODIFY menu to select CONVERT TO SYMBOL.
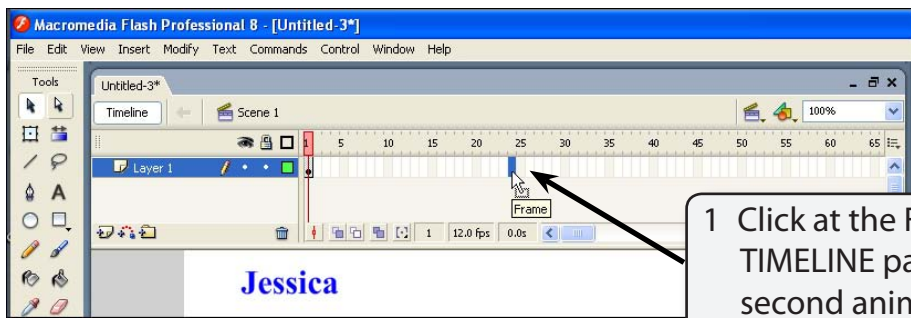

4 Name the symbol NAME and set the TYPE (or BEHAVIOUR) to GRAPHIC.

5 Set the REGISTRATION to CENTRE and select OK

NOTE: **Motion Tweening only works on objects that are grouped or set to a symbol.**

B   Setting the End Keyframe

To animate an object frames need to be inserted in the TIMELINE panel. The easiest way to do this is to set an END KEYFRAME at the frame that you want the animation to finish at. Web pages can usually run an animation smoothly if it is set to a speed of 12 frames per second which is the default speed for Flash animations. So if you set 12 frames in the TIMELINE panel the animation will run for about 1 second. The speed of an animation can be adjusted, but the animation may not run at that speed on the internet.
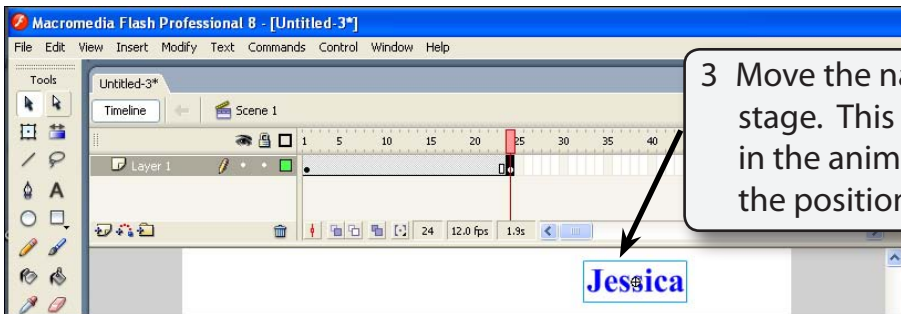

1 Click at the FRAME 24 marker in the TIMELINE panel. This will create a 2 second animation.
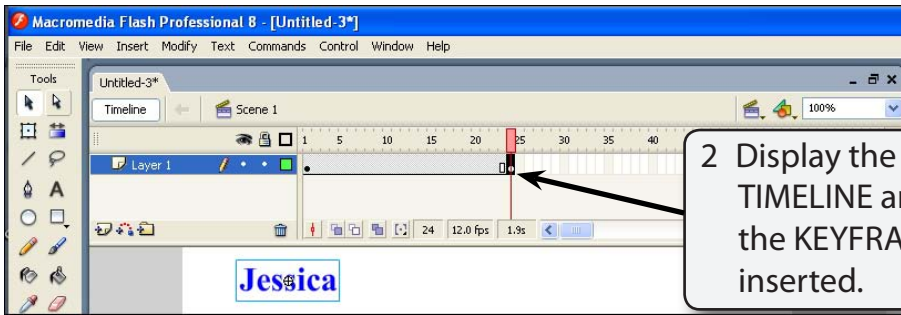
2 Display the INSERT menu, Highlight TIMELINE and select KEYFRAME and the KEYFRAME MARKER (•) should be inserted.

NOTE: **i** **The F6 key can be pressed to insert a keyframe as a shortcut.**

ii **When you set the Keyframe at frame 24 the program inserted 23 frames from frame 1.**

3 Move the name to the right of the stage. This will set its end position in the animation. It has not affected the position of the name at frame 1.
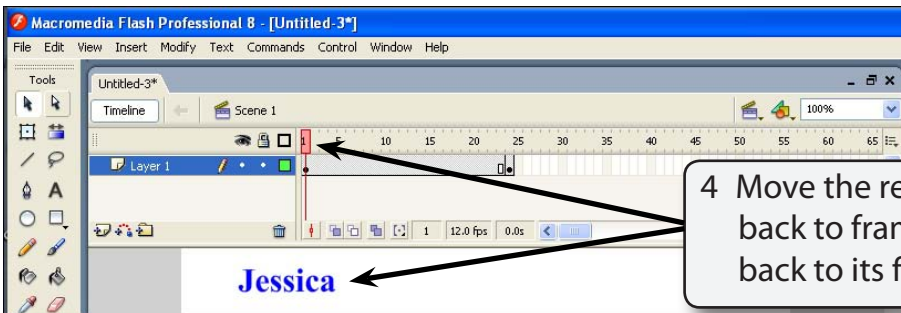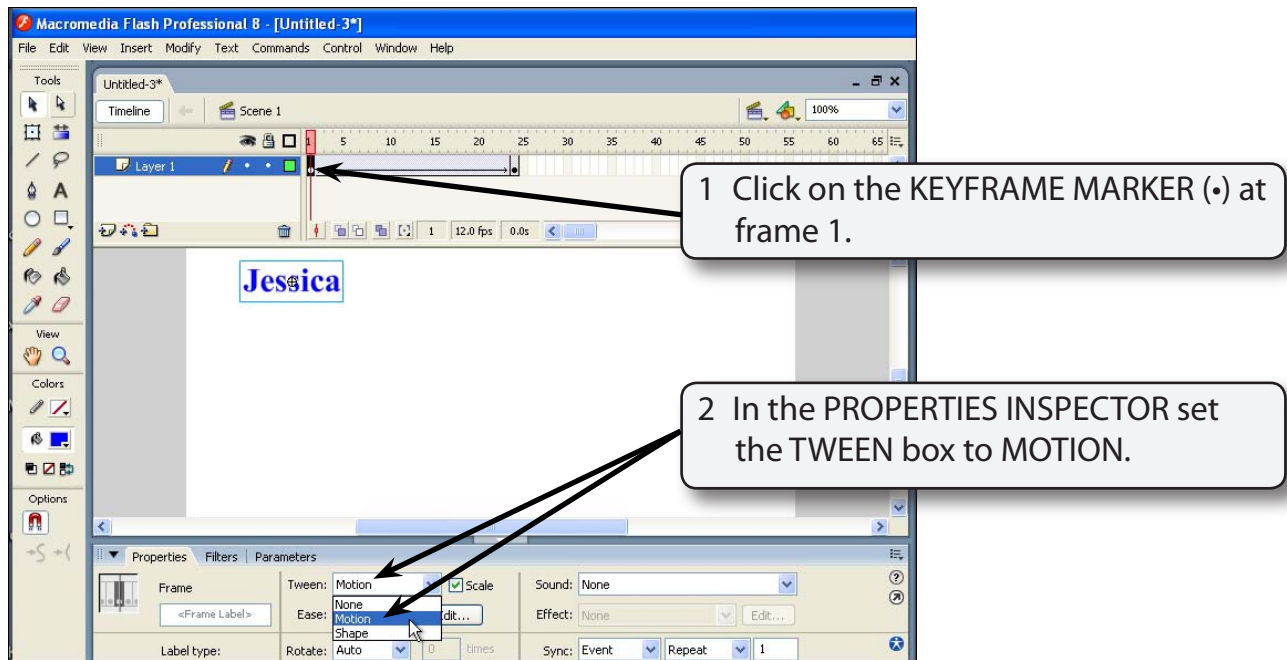

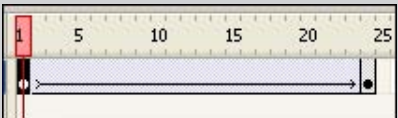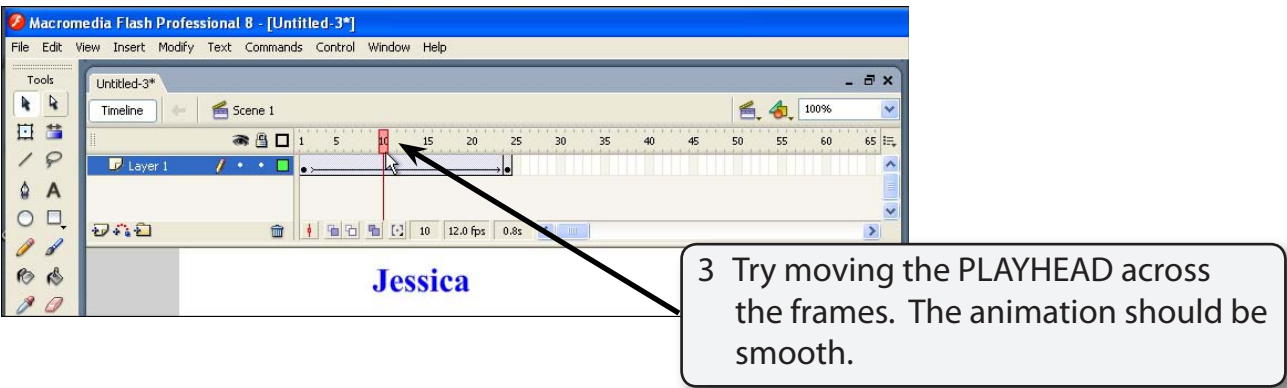4 Move the red PLAYHEAD marker back to frame 1. The name jumps back to its first position.

NOTE: **No animation is occurring as the program has not been told the type of animation required. We have simply set the start and end positions of the animation.**

C   Setting the Motion Tween

To complete the animation the type of animation required has to be set.

1 Click on the KEYFRAME MARKER (•) at frame 1.

2 In the PROPERTIES INSPECTOR set the TWEEN box to MOTION.

NOTE: **Notice that the shading in the TIMELINE panel has changed to purple with an arrow across it. This indicates that a MOTION TWEEN has been created correctly.**


3 Try moving the PLAYHEAD across the frames. The animation should be smooth.

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4   Test the movie then close the TEST MOVIE screen.

5   You can do a live preview of the animation without opening the TEST MOVIE screen. Press the <enter> or <return> key and the animation should play once. It is a useful way of quickly testing that an animation is working correctly.

NOTE: If nothing happens when you press the <enter> or <return> keys check that ENABLE LIVE PREVIEW is selected in the CONTROL menu.

Understanding the Timeline Panel

Now that you have created your first animation it is important that you understand the symbols used in the TIMELINE panel. The following diagram labels its sections.
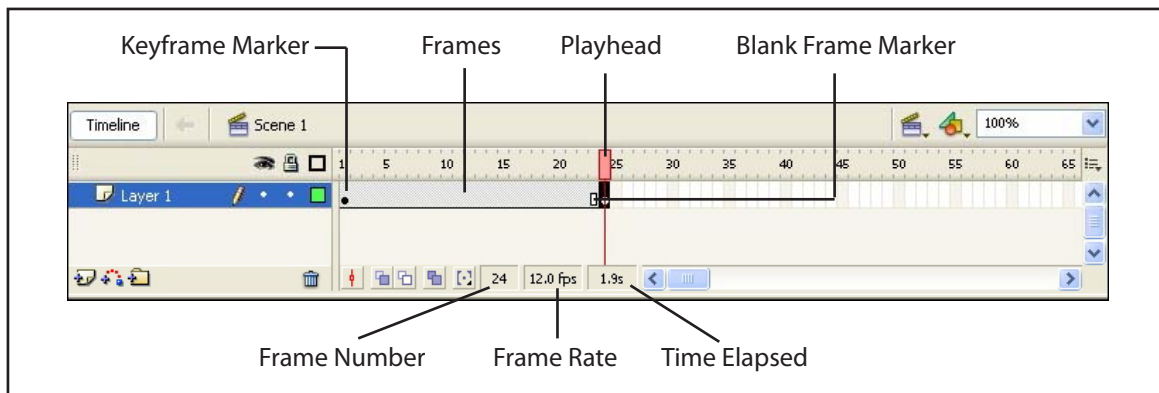
The important sections of the TIMELINE panel are:

*   The KEYFRAME MARKER which is a solid •. You need at least two KEYFRAMES to create an animation.

*   The PLAYHEAD which is the red rectangle and line. It allows you to move through the frames. The frame that the PLAYHEAD is over is the FRAME NUMBER at the base of the TIMELINE panel.

*   The FRAMES which are contained in a shaded bar in the TIMELINE panel. They control the duration of the animation.