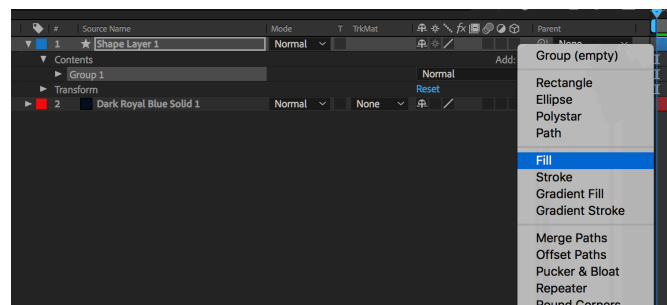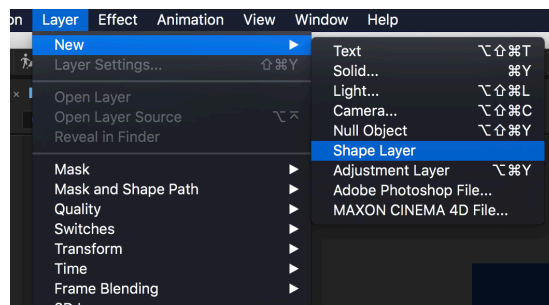## The Shape of Things to Come

Shape Layers are super useful and versatile tools within After Effects. In Lesson 6 we touched on the basics, but now you know enough about AE to take your shape knowledge to the next level. Within that tiny Add Menu are a lot of really cool animation properties that you need to know about, including the Repeater.
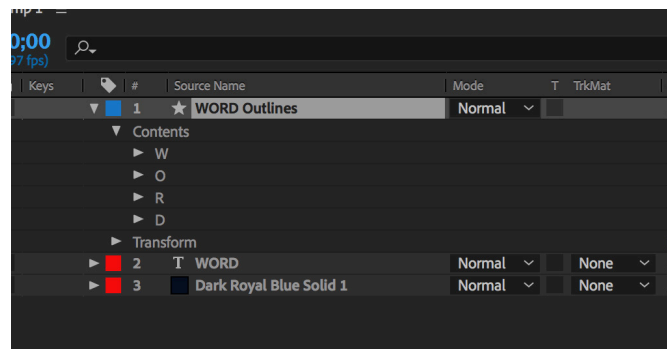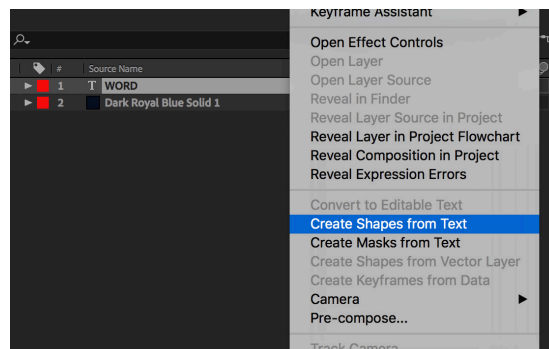
Building Shapes from Scratch

The Shape Tool is not the only way to make shapes in AE. You can build them up from scratch or amend pre-existing shape layers with various properties that you will find in the Add Menu. For example, you can manually add a Fill or Stroke to Shape Layers this way, or make a Group for organizing the pieces within the Layer. It's a good idea to play around with the folder structure until you get used to how it works, as it can be a tad confusing.

Converting Type to Shapes

Converting your type to shapes is easy. You just right-click on the layer name and then select Convert Shapes from Text. Once you do that, AE makes a new Shape Layer with all of the letter shapes neatly put into folders for you, as well as turning off your original type layer. This is a great way to animate the Path of your letters.
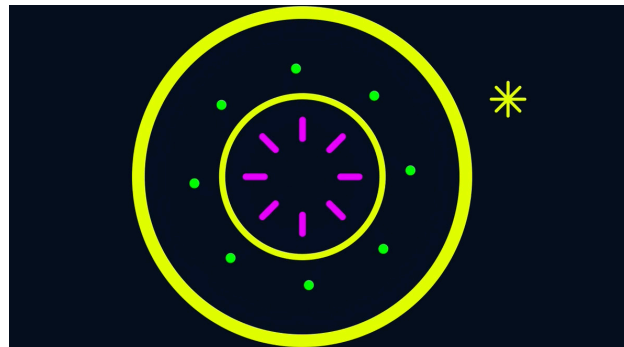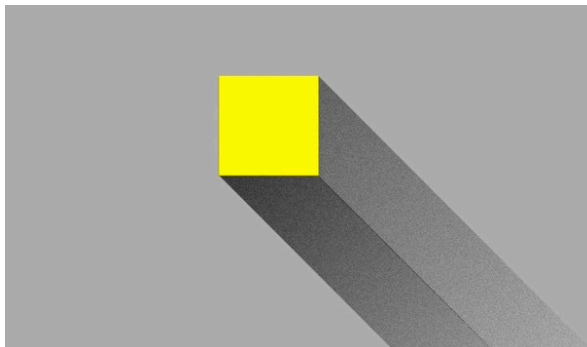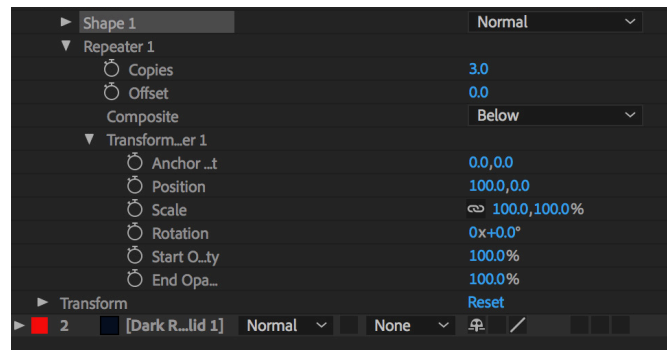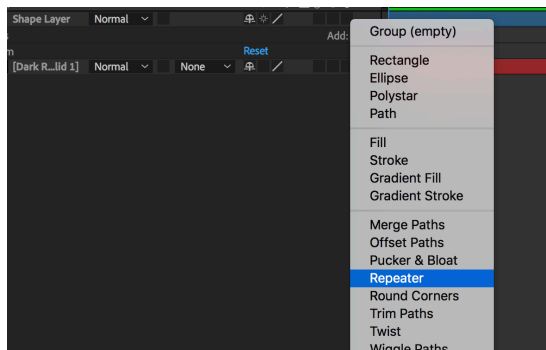
You can also Create Masks from Text the same way. In that case, AE makes a Solid and creates the letters using different masks. Although you can animate these masks, you do not have the other animation options from Shape Layers, for example the ability to change the color of each letter individually.

Repeat After Me

The Repeater is one of those cool things in After Effects that people always enjoy. It has so many uses, it was hard to think of just a few to talk about. Just remember that it initially defaults to making three copies set at 100 pixels on the X Axis, but if you carefully change the other settings you can achieve a lot of different results.

Keyboard Shortcuts

Make a Position Keyframe .... **Option + P**

Make a Scale Keyframe .... **Option + S**

Make a Rotation Keyframe .... **Option + R**

Make an Opacity Keyframe .... **Option + T**

Create Empty Text Layer .... **Shift + Option + Command + T**

Type Tool .... **Command + T**

MAC	PC
Command	CTRL
Option	ALT