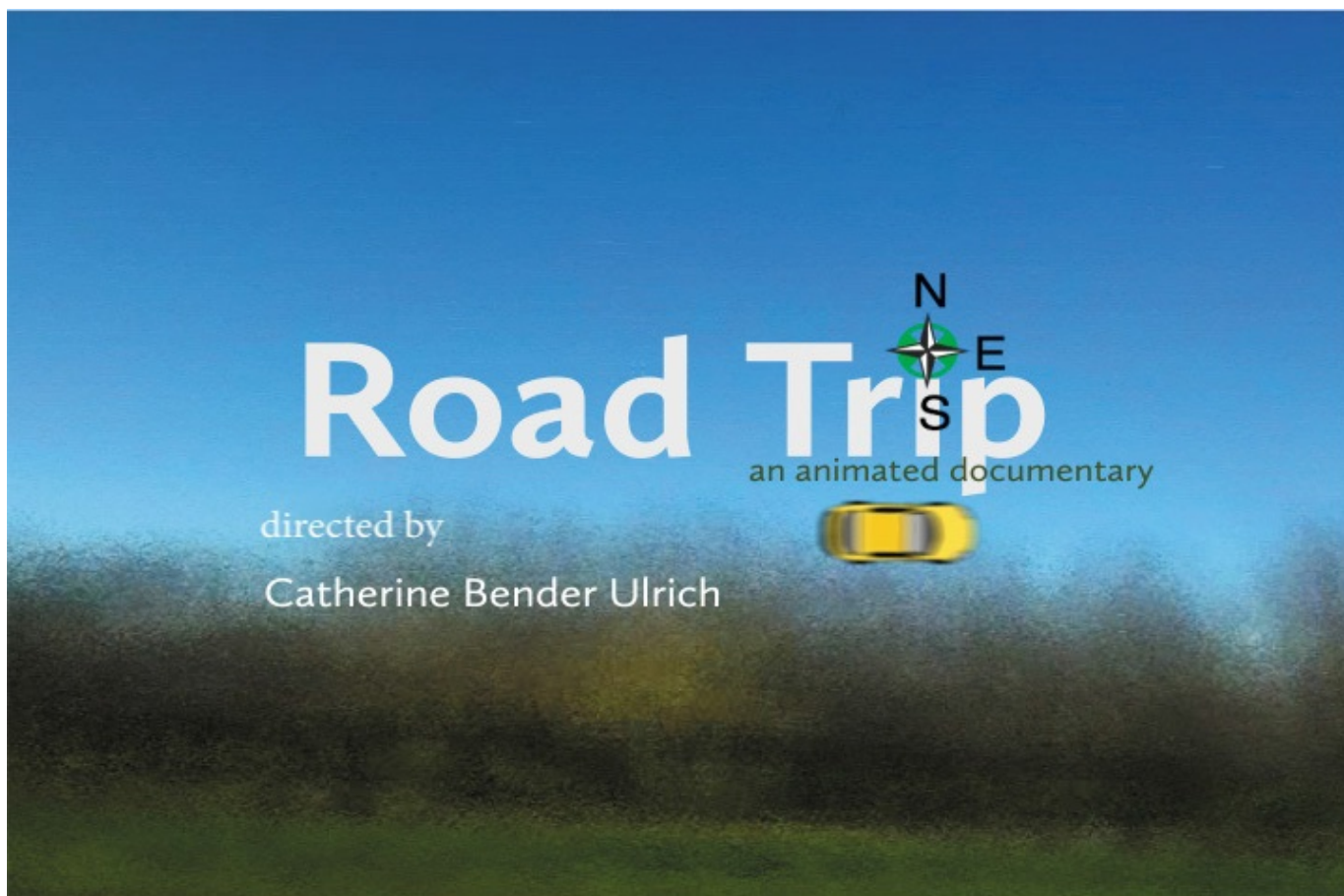# 3. Animating Text

Lesson overview

In this lesson, you'll learn how to do the following:

- Create and animate text layers.

- Stylize text using the Character and Paragraph panels.

- Apply and customize text animation presets.

- Preview animation presets in Adobe Bridge.

- Install fonts using Adobe Typekit.

- Animate text using keyframes.

- Animate layers using parenting.

- Edit and animate imported Adobe Photoshop text.

- Use a text animator group to animate selected characters on a layer.

This lesson will take approximately two hours to complete. Download the Lesson03 project files from the Lesson & Update Files tab on your Account page at www.peachpit.com, if you haven't already done so. As you work on this lesson, you'll preserve the start files. If you need to restore the start files, download them from your Account page.

PROJECT: MOVIE TITLE SEQUENCE

Your type doesn't need to sit still while your audience is reading it. In this lesson, you'll learn several ways to animate type in After Effects, including timesaving methods unique to text layers.

Getting started

Adobe After Effects offers many ways to animate text. You can animate text layers by manually creating keyframes in the Timeline panel, using animation presets, or using expressions. You can even animate individual characters or words in a text layer. In this lesson, you'll employ several different animation techniques, including some that are unique to text, while you design the opening title credits for an animated documentary called *Road Trip*. You'll also take advantage of Adobe Typekit to install a font for use in your project.

As in other projects, you'll begin by previewing the movie you're creating, and then you'll open After Effects.

1. Make sure the following files are in the Lessons/Lesson03 folder on your hard disk, or download them from your Account page at www.peachpit.com now:

   • In the Assets folder: background_movie.mov, car.ai, compass.swf, credits.psd

   • In the Sample_Movie folder: Lesson03.mov

2. Open and play the Lesson03.mov sample movie to see the title credits you will create in this lesson. When you're done, quit QuickTime Player. You may delete this sample movie from your hard disk if you have limited storage space.

As you start the application, restore the default settings for After Effects. See "[Restoring default preferences](#)" on page [2](#).

3. Start After Effects, and then immediately hold down Ctrl+Alt+Shift (Windows) or Command+Option+Shift (Mac OS) to restore default preferences settings. When prompted, click OK to delete your preferences.

4. Close the Start window.

After Effects opens to display a blank, untitled project.

5. Choose File > Save As > Save As, and navigate to the Lessons/Lesson03/Finished_Project folder.

6. Name the project **Lesson03_Finished.aep**, and then click Save.

Importing the footage
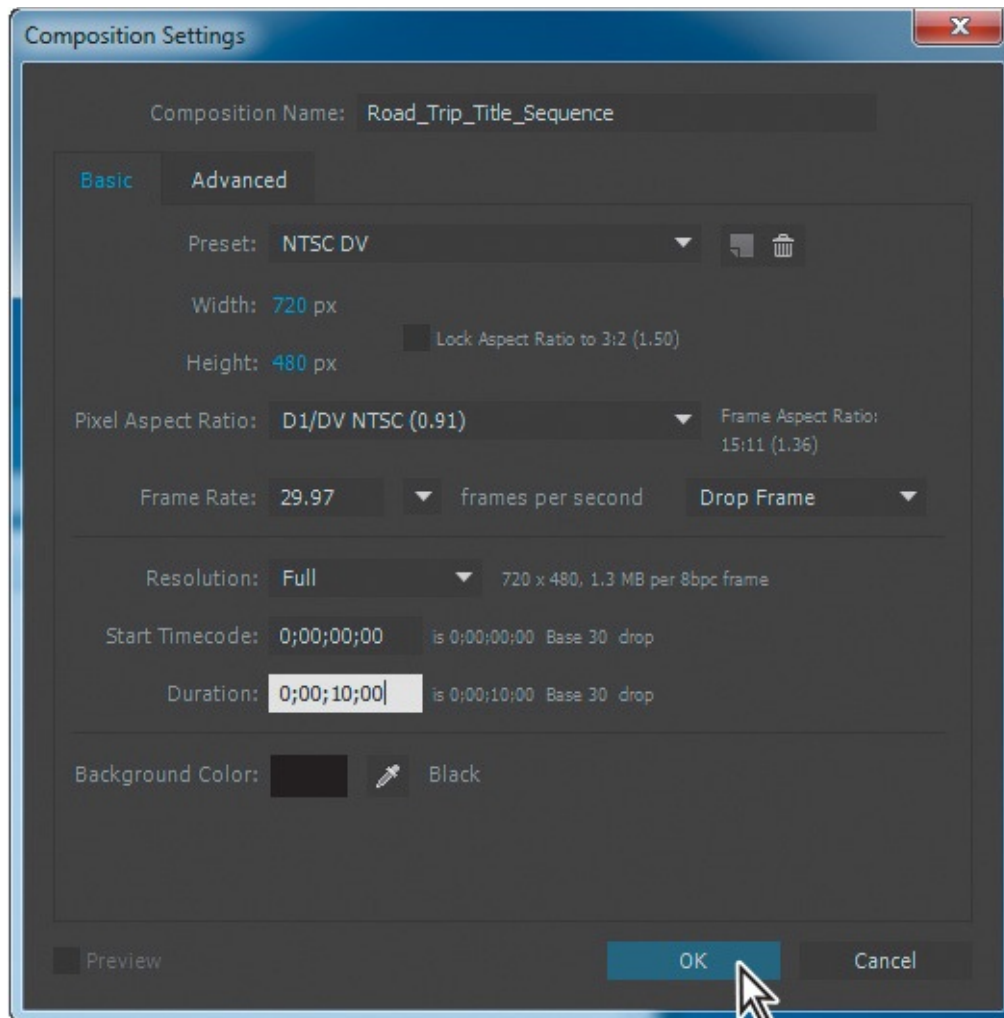
You need to import two footage items to begin this lesson.

1. Double-click an empty area of the Project panel to open the Import File dialog box.

2. Navigate to the Lessons/Lesson03/Assets folder on your hard disk, Ctrl-click (Windows) or Command-click (Mac OS) to select both the background_movie.mov and compass.swf files, and then click Import or Open.

After Effects can import several file formats including Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator files, as well as QuickTime and AVI movies. This makes After Effects an incredibly powerful application for compositing and motion graphics work.
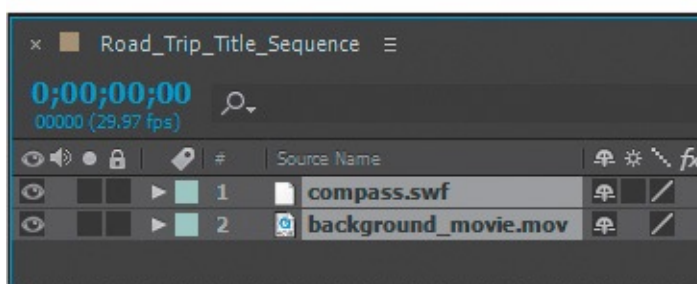
Creating the composition

Now, you'll create the composition.

1. Press Ctrl+N (Windows) or Command+N (Mac OS) to create a new composition.

2. In the Composition Settings dialog box, name the composition **Road_Trip_Title_Sequence**, choose NTSC DV from the Preset menu, and set the Duration to **10:00**, which is the length of the background movie. Then click OK.

3. Drag the background_movie.mov and compass.swf footage items from the Project panel to the Timeline panel. Arrange the layers so that compass.swf is above background_movie.mov in the layer stack.

4. Choose File > Save.

You're ready to add the title text to the composition.

About text layers

In After Effects, you can add text with flexibility and precision. The Tools, Character, and Paragraph panels contain a wide range of text controls. You can create and edit horizontal or vertical text directly on the screen in the Composition panel, and quickly change the font, style, size, and color of the text. You can apply changes to individual characters and set formatting options for entire paragraphs, including alignment, justification, and word-wrapping. In addition to all of these style features, After Effects provides tools for easily animating specific characters and properties, such as text opacity and hue.

After Effects uses two types of text: point text and paragraph text. Use *point text* to enter a single word or line of characters; use *paragraph text* to enter and format text as one or more paragraphs.

In many ways, text layers are just like any other layers in After Effects. You can apply effects and expressions to text layers, animate them, designate them as 3D layers, and edit the 3D text while viewing from multiple angles. As with layers imported from Illustrator, text layers are continuously rasterized, so when you scale the layer or resize the text, it retains crisp, resolution-independent edges. The two main differences between text layers and other layers are that you cannot open a text layer in its own Layer panel and you can animate the text in a text layer using special text-animator properties and selectors.

Installing a font using Typekit

Hundreds of fonts are available through Adobe Typekit, which is included with an Adobe Creative Cloud membership. You'll use Typekit to install a font that will work well for the title text. When you install a Typekit font on your system, it's available in any application.

1. Choose File > Add Fonts From Typekit.

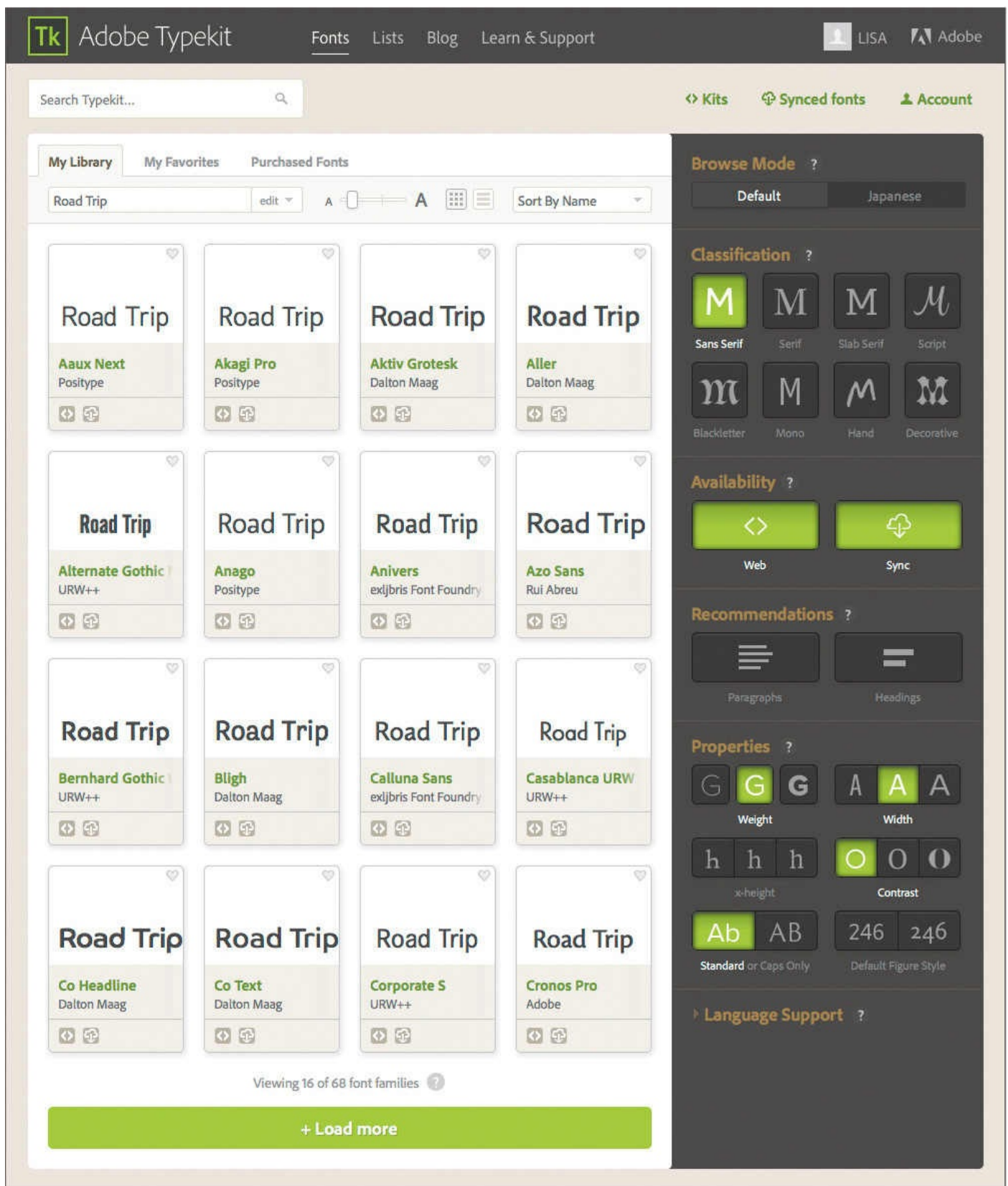After Effects opens the Adobe Typekit page in your default browser.

2. Make sure you're signed in to Creative Cloud. If not, click Sign In at the top of the screen, and then enter your Adobe ID.

You can browse fonts on the Adobe Typekit website, but because there are so many, it's often more efficient to filter them or to search for a specific font. You'll filter fonts to see those that meet your requirements.

3. Make sure the My Library tab is selected so you'll see all the fonts.

4. Choose Sort By Name from the pop-up menu in the upper right corner. Then, on the right side of the page, click the Sans Serif button in the Classification area and both the Web and Sync buttons in the Availability area. In the Properties area, select the buttons for medium weight, medium width, low contrast, and standard capitalization.

Typekit displays several fonts that meet the requirements you specified. You'll preview the fonts to see which one looks best.

5. Type **Road Trip** in the sample text field, and move the slider to decrease the sample text size so you can see the full title.
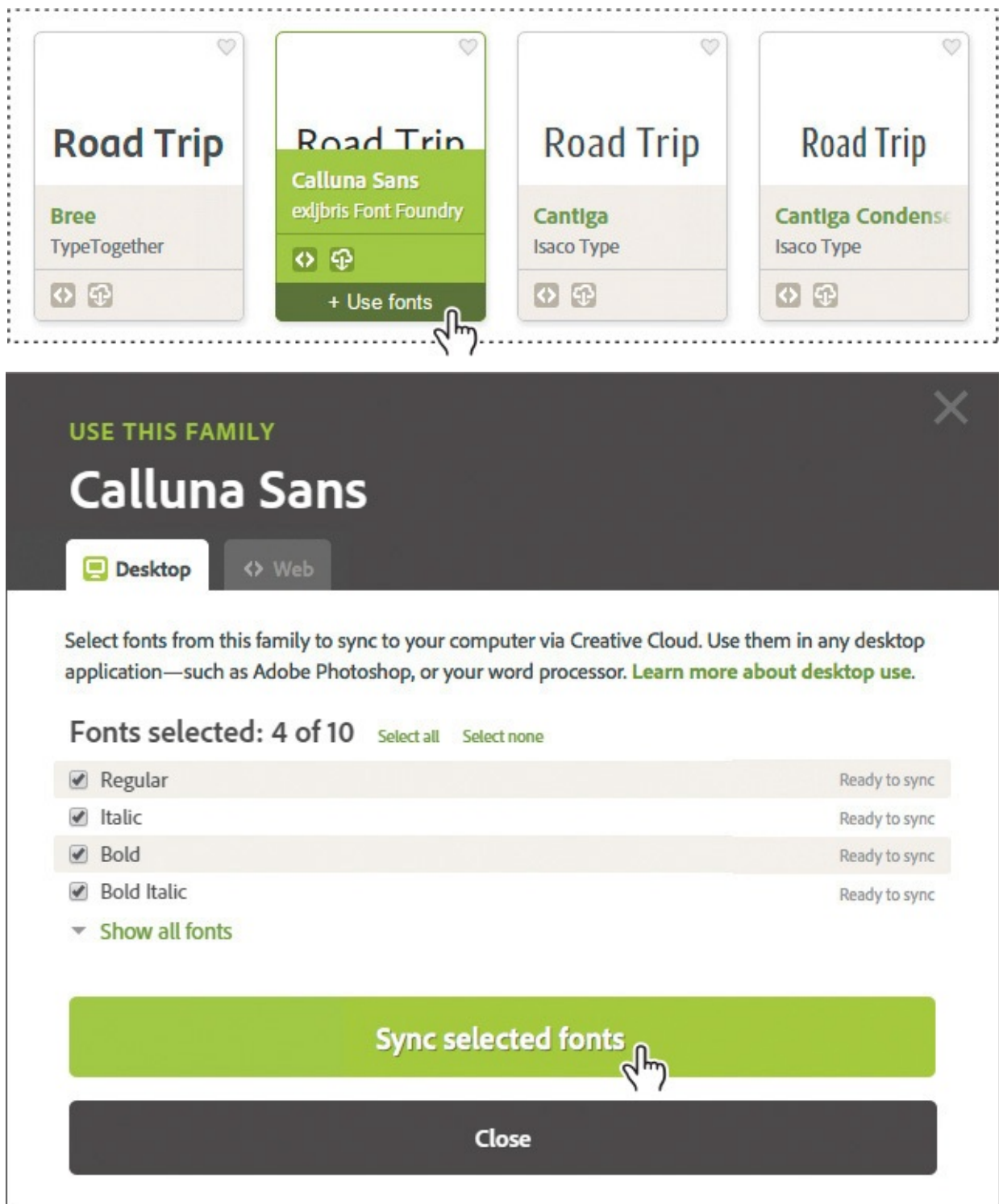
Using your own text as the sample text lets you get a feel for how a font will work in your project. Calluna Sans will work nicely.

   6. Hover your mouse over Calluna Sans until you see a green overlay. Then click +Use Fonts. (If you don't see Calluna Sans, click +Load More until you do, or choose a different font.)

7. Click Sync Selected Fonts. If the Creative Cloud application isn't running on your computer, click Launch The Creative Cloud Application to start it.

The selected fonts are automatically added to your system and are then available in any application, including After Effects.