

10. Hide the properties for all layers, and then choose File > Save to save your work so far.

Animating the composition

So far, you've started a project, created a composition, imported footage, and applied some effects. It all looks great, but how about some movement? You've applied only static effects.

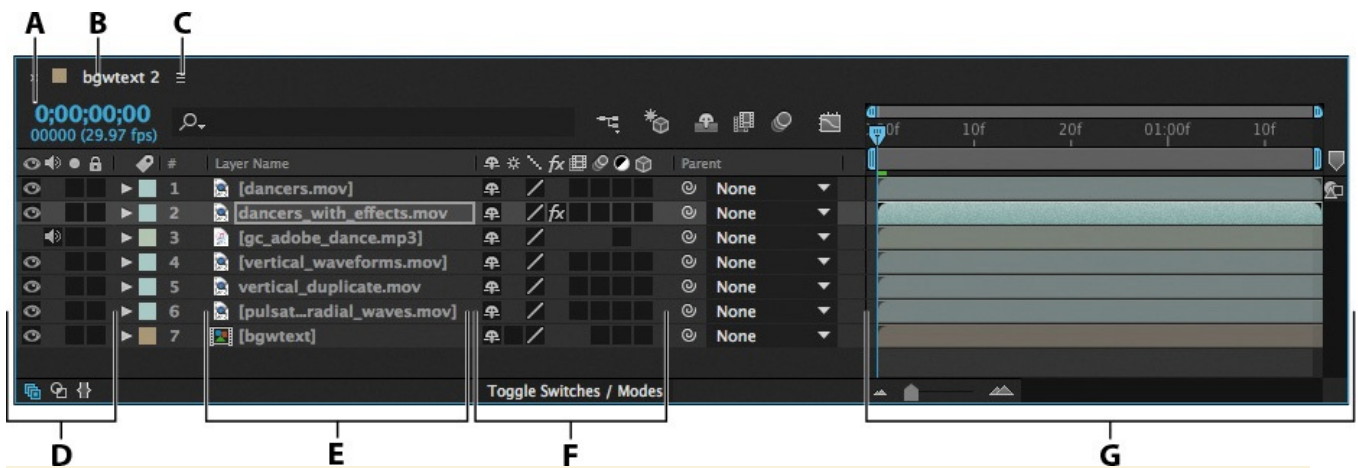
In After Effects, you can change any combination of a layer's properties over time using conventional keyframing, expressions, or keyframe assistants. You'll explore many of these methods throughout the lessons of this book. For this project, you'll animate the Position property of a text layer using keyframes, and then use an animation preset so that the letters appear to rain down on the screen.

Preparing the text composition

In this exercise, you'll work with a separate composition—the one you imported from a layered Photoshop file.

About the Timeline panel

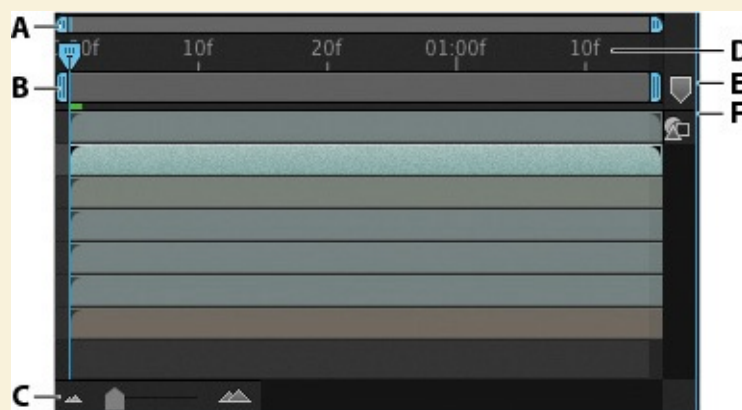
Use the Timeline panel to animate layer properties and set In and Out points for a layer. (In and Out points are the points at which a layer begins and ends in the composition.) Many of the Timeline panel controls are organized in columns of related functions. By default, the Timeline panel contains a number of columns and controls, as shown here:



A. Current time **B.** Composition name **C.** Timeline panel menu **D.** Audio/Video Switches column **E.** Source Name/Layer Name column **F.** Layer switches **G.** Time graph/Graph Editor area

Understanding the time graph

The time graph portion of the Timeline panel (the right side) contains a time ruler, markers to indicate specific times, and duration bars for the layers in your composition.



A. Time navigator start and end brackets **B.** Work area start and end brackets **C.** Time zoom slider **D.** Time ruler **E.** Composition marker bin **F.** Composition button

Before delving too deeply into animation, it will help to understand at least some of these controls. The duration of a composition, a layer, or a footage item is represented visually in the time graph. On the time ruler, the current-time indicator marks the frame you are viewing or editing, and the frame appears in the Composition panel.

The work area start and end brackets indicate the part of the composition that will be rendered for previews or final output. When you work on a composition, you may want to render only a portion of it by specifying a segment of the composition time ruler as a work area.

A composition's current time appears in the upper left corner of the Timeline panel. To move to a different time, drag the current-time indicator in the time ruler—or click the current-time field in the Timeline panel or Composition panel, type a new time, and click OK.

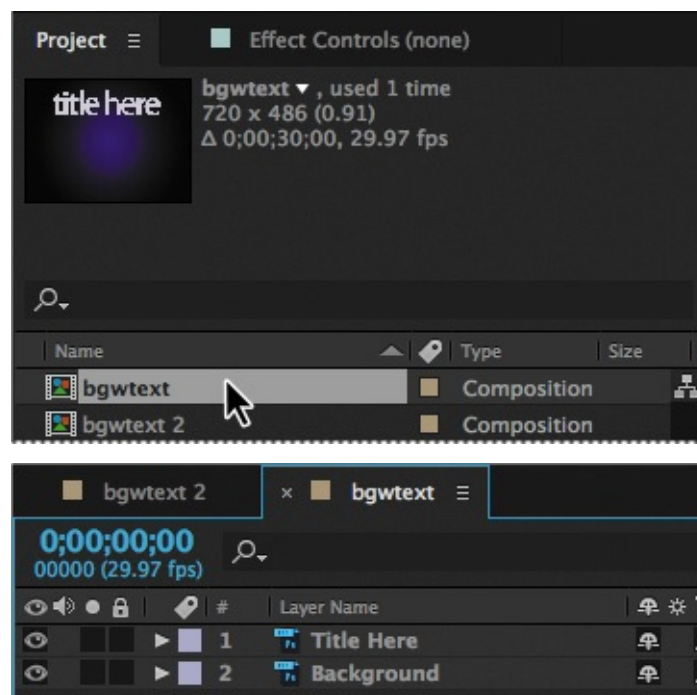
For more information about the Timeline panel, see After Effects Help.

1. Select the Project tab to display the Project panel, and then double-click the bgwtext composition to open it as a composition in its own Timeline panel.

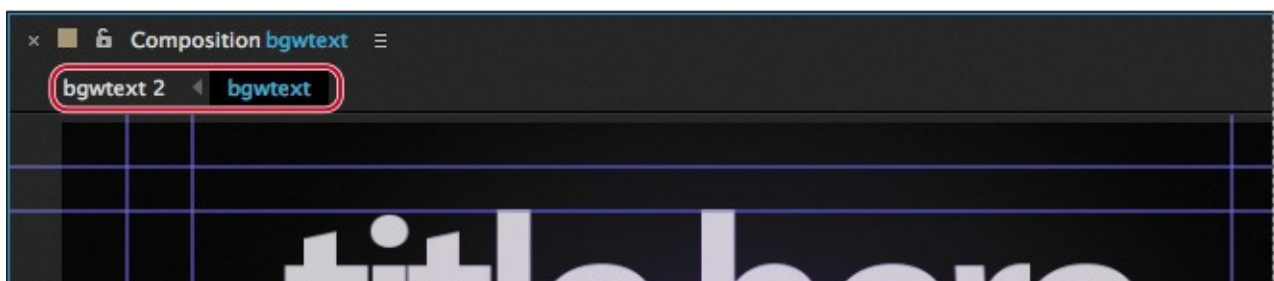
Note

If the Project tab isn't visible, choose Window > Project to open the Project panel.

This composition is the layered Photoshop file you imported. Two layers—Title Here and Background—appear in the Timeline panel. The Title Here layer contains placeholder text that was created in Photoshop.



At the top of the Composition panel is the Composition Navigator bar, which displays the relationship between the main composition (bgwtext 2) and the current composition (bgwtext), which is nested within the main composition.



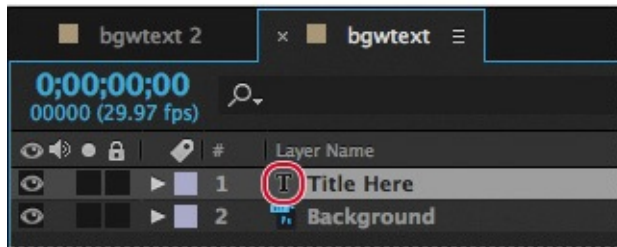
You can nest multiple compositions within each other; the Composition Navigator bar displays the entire composition path. Arrows between the composition names indicate the direction in which information flows.

Before you can replace the text, you need to make the layer editable.

● Note

If you see a warning about missing fonts or layer dependencies, click OK.

2. Select the Title Here layer (layer 1) in the Timeline panel, and then choose Layer > Convert To Editable Text.



A T icon appears next to the layer name in the Timeline panel, indicating that it is now an editable text layer. The layer is also selected in the Composition panel, ready for you to edit.

The blue lines at the top, bottom, and sides of the Composition panel indicate title-safe and action-safe zones. Television sets enlarge a video image and allow some portion of its outer edges to be cut off by the edge of the screen. This is known as *overscan*. The amount of overscan is not consistent between television sets, so you should keep important parts of a video image, such as action or titles, within margins called *safe zones*. Keep your text inside the inner blue guides to ensure that it is in the title-safe zone, and keep important scene elements inside the outer blue guides to ensure that they are in the action-safe zone.

Animating text with animation presets

You'll start by replacing the placeholder text with real text. Then you'll animate it.

1. Select the Horizontal Type tool (T) in the Tools panel, and drag over the placeholder text in the Composition panel to select it. Then type **in motion**.
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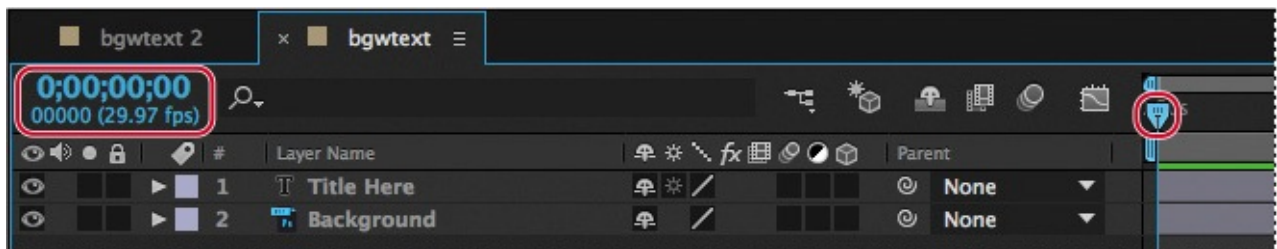
● Note

After Effects offers robust character and paragraph formatting controls, but the default settings—whatever typeface appears when you type—should be fine for this project. You'll learn more about type in [Lesson 3](#), "[Animating Text](#)."



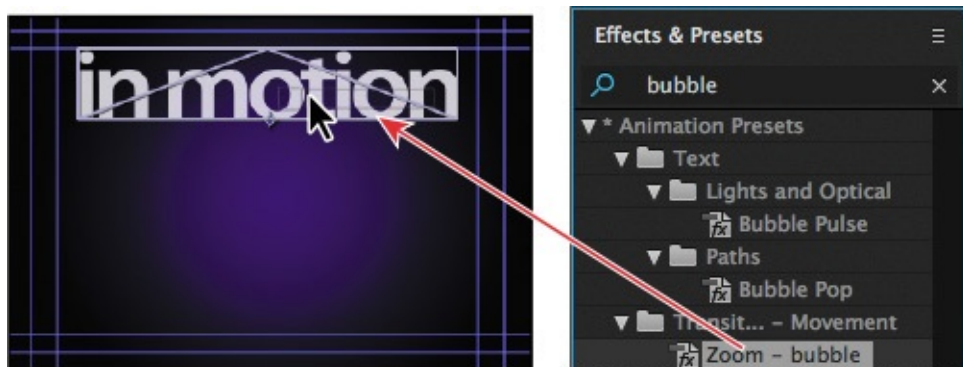
2. Select the Title Here layer in the Timeline panel again, and make sure you're at the first frame of the animation by doing one of the following:

- Drag the current-time indicator all the way to the left of the time ruler, to 0:00.
- Press the Home key on your keyboard.



3. Select the Effects & Presets tab to display the Effects & Presets panel. Then type **bubble** in the search box.

4. Select the Zoom-Bubble effect in the Transitions-Movement category, and drag it onto the **in motion** text in the Composition panel.



After Effects adds the effect and displays its settings in the Effect Controls panel. You can change effect settings in this panel or in the Timeline panel. You'll add keyframes in the Timeline panel.

About timecode and duration

The primary concept related to time is *duration*, or length. Each footage item, layer, and composition in a project has its own duration, which is reflected in the beginning and ending times displayed in the time rulers in the Composition, Layer, and Timeline panels.

The way you view and specify time in After Effects depends on the display style, or unit of measure, that you use to describe time. By default, After Effects displays time in Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) timecode: hours, minutes, seconds, and frames. Note that the figures are separated by semicolons in the After Effects interface, representing drop-frame timecode (which adjusts for the real-time frame rate), but this book uses a colon to represent non-drop-frame timecode.

To learn when and how to change to another system of time display, such as frames, or feet and frames of film, see After Effects Help.

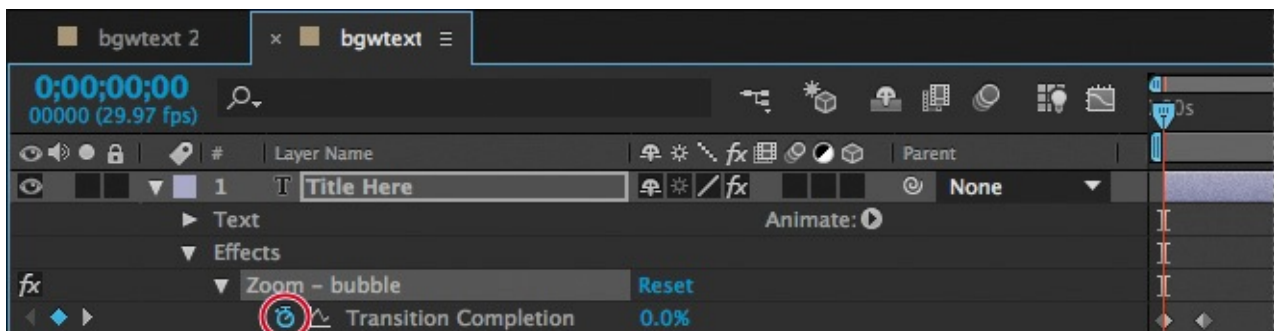
5. In the Timeline panel, expand the Title Here layer, and then expand Effects > Zoom-bubble to reveal the Transition Completion setting.

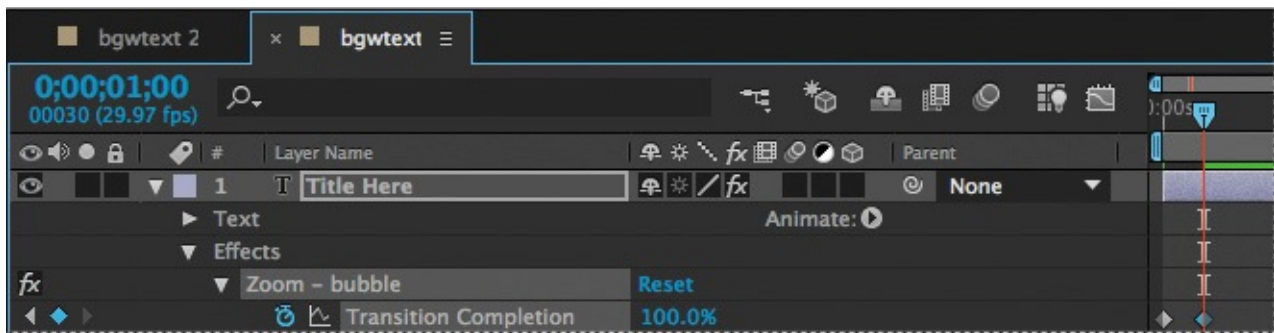
The stopwatch icon (🕒) next to Transition Completion is selected, and the value is 0%. A diamond appears in the Transition Completion bar for the layer in the time graph, indicating the keyframe that After Effects created when you added the effect.

Note

Don't select the Transition Completion property, as that will select both keyframes, and you want to change only the value of the second one.

6. Go to 1:00 in the timeline by clicking the Current Time field in the Timeline panel and typing **100**, and then pressing Enter or Return, or by dragging the current-time indicator to 1:00.
7. Change the Transition Completion value to **100%**.



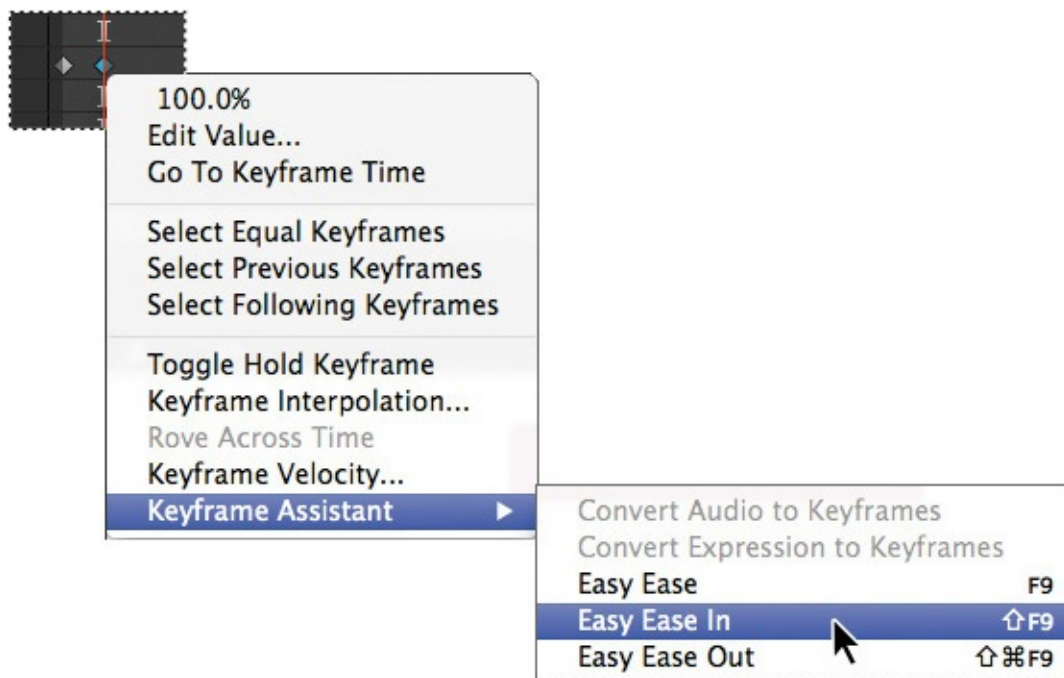


Even though this is a simple animation, you'll learn good animation practices right away by adding ease-in controls using the Easy Ease feature. Easing into (and out of) animations keeps the motion from appearing to be too sudden or robotic.

Tip

To see greater detail in the Timeline panel, move the time zoom slider at the bottom of the panel.

8. Right-click or Control-click the keyframe at 1:00, and choose Keyframe Assistant > Easy Ease In.



Keyframes are used to create and control animation, effects, audio properties, and many other kinds of changes that occur over time. A keyframe marks the point in time where you specify a value, such as spatial position, opacity, or audio volume. Values between keyframes are *interpolated*. When you use keyframes to create a change over time, you must use at least two keyframes—one for the state at the beginning of the change, and one for the state at the end of the change.

9. Manually preview the effect by moving the current-time indicator from 0 to 1:00.

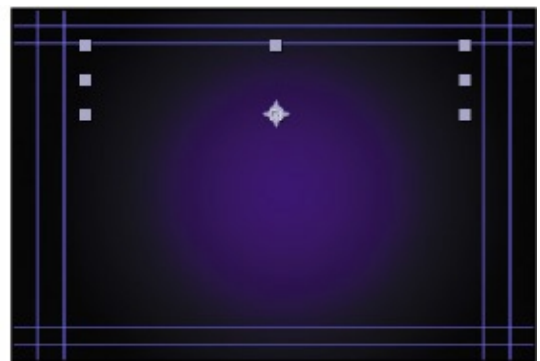
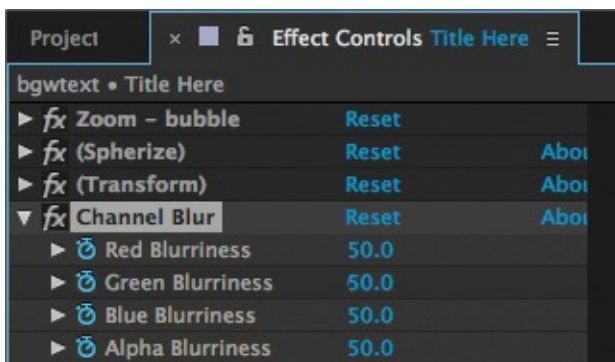
Changing preset settings in the Effect Controls panel

You'll add another animation preset to the type layer, but this time, you'll adjust its settings in the Effect Controls panel.

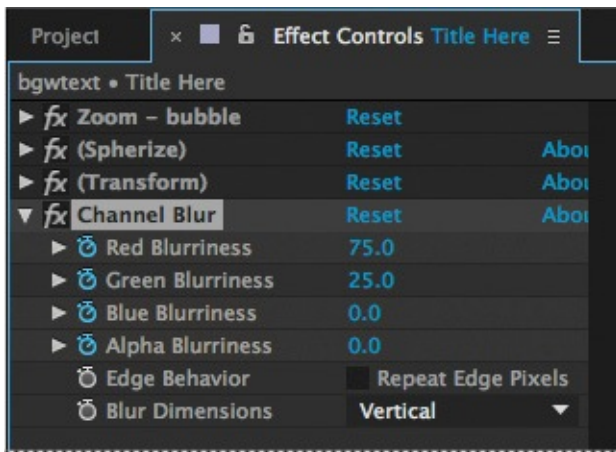
1. Go to the beginning of the time ruler by doing one of the following:
 - Drag the current-time indicator to the left in the time ruler so that it's positioned at 0:00.
 - Click the Current Time field in the Timeline panel or Composition panel, and type **00**. If you clicked in the Current Time field in the Composition panel, click OK to close the Go To Time dialog box.
2. Type **channel blur** in the search box in the Effects & Presets panel.
3. Drag the Channel Blur effect onto the type in the Composition panel.

After Effects adds the Channel Blur effect to the Timeline panel and displays its settings in the Effect Controls panel.

4. In the Effect Controls panel, click the triangles next to Zoom-bubble, Spherize, and Transform to hide their settings so you can focus on the Channel Blur settings.
5. Set the Red Blurriness, Green Blurriness, Blue Blurriness, and Alpha Blurriness values to **50**.
6. Click the stopwatch icon next to each of the settings you changed to create initial keyframes.



7. From the Blur Dimensions menu, choose Vertical.
8. Go to 1:00 in the timeline.
9. Change the values as follows:
 - Red Blurriness: **75**
 - Green Blurriness: **25**
 - Blue Blurriness: **0**
 - Alpha Blurriness: **0**



Previewing your work

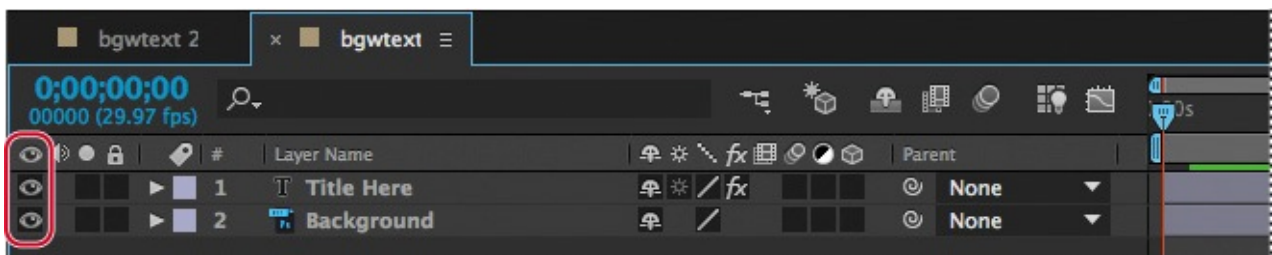
You're probably eager to see the results of your work. You can preview your composition using the Preview panel, which is in the stacked panels on the right side of the application window in the default workspace. To preview your composition, click the Play/Stop button in the Preview panel, or press the spacebar on your keyboard.

1. In the bgwtext Timeline panel, collapse the Title Here layer, and deselect both layers.

Tip

Click the pasteboard of the Composition panel if you want to hide the motion path for this preview.

2. Make sure that the Video switch (👁) is selected for the layers that you want to preview—in this case, the Title Here and Background layers.
3. Press the Home key to go to the beginning of the time ruler.



4. Do one of the following:

Tip

Verify that the work area brackets include all the frames you want to preview.

- Click the Play/Stop button (▶) in the Preview panel.



- Press the spacebar.

5. To stop the preview, do one of the following:

- Click the Play/Stop button in the Preview panel.
- Press the spacebar.



You've previewed a simple animation, so it probably played back in real time.

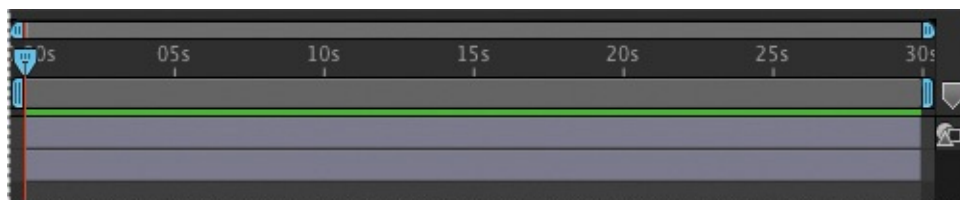
When you press the spacebar or click the Play/Stop button, After Effects caches the composition and allocates enough RAM to play the preview (with audio) as fast as the system allows, up to the frame rate of the composition. The number of frames played depends on the amount of RAM available to the application. Often, the preview will play in real time only after After Effects has cached all the included frames.

In the Timeline panel, the preview plays either the span of time you specify as the work area, or from the beginning of the time ruler. In the Layer and Footage panels, the preview plays only untrimmed footage. Before you preview, check which frames are designated as the work area.

Now you'll preview the entire composition—the animated text plus graphic effects.

- 6.** Click the bgwtext 2 tab in the Timeline panel to bring it forward.
- 7.** Make sure that the Video switch (👁) is turned on for all of the layers in the composition (except the audio layer), and press F2 to deselect all layers.
- 8.** Drag the current-time indicator to the beginning of the time ruler, or press the Home key.
- 9.** To start the preview, click the Play/Stop button (▶) in the Preview panel, or press the spacebar.

A green progress bar indicates which frames are cached to RAM. When all of the frames in the work area are cached, the preview plays back in real time.



The more detail and precision you want to preview, the more RAM is required. You can control the amount of detail shown by changing the resolution, magnification, and preview quality of your composition. You can also limit the number of layers previewed by turning off the Video switch for certain layers, or limit the number of frames previewed by adjusting the composition's work area.

- 10.** Press the spacebar to stop the preview.

11. Choose File > Save to save your project.

Optimizing performance in After Effects

How you configure After Effects and your computer determines how quickly After Effects renders projects. Complex compositions can require a large amount of memory to render, and the rendered movies can take a large amount of disk space to store. Search for “Improve Performance” in After Effects Help for tips that can help you configure your system, After Effects preferences, and your projects for better performance.

Rendering and exporting your composition

When you’re finished with your masterpiece—as you are now—you can render and export it at the quality settings you choose, and create movies in the formats that you specify. You will learn about exporting compositions in subsequent lessons, especially in [Lesson 14](#), “[Rendering and Outputting](#).”

Customizing workspaces

In the course of this project, you may have resized or repositioned some panels or opened new ones. As you modify a workspace, After Effects saves those modifications, so the next time you open the project, the most recent version of a workspace is used. However, you can choose to restore the original workspace at any time by choosing Window > Workspace > Reset “Essentials” To Saved Layout.

Alternatively, if you find yourself frequently using panels that aren’t part of the Essentials workspace, or if you like to resize or group panels for different types of projects, you can save time by customizing the workspace to suit your needs. You can save any workspace configuration, or use any of the preset workspaces that come with After Effects. These predefined workspaces are suitable for different types of workflows, such as animation or effects work.

Using predefined workspaces

Take a minute to explore the predefined workspaces in After Effects.

- 1.** If you closed the Lesson01_Finished.aep project, open it—or any other project—to explore the workspaces.
- 2.** Click Animation in the Workspace bar, which is next to the Tools panel. Click the double arrows to see workspaces that don’t fit in the Workspace bar.