the letters of the director's name fade in as they spread out.
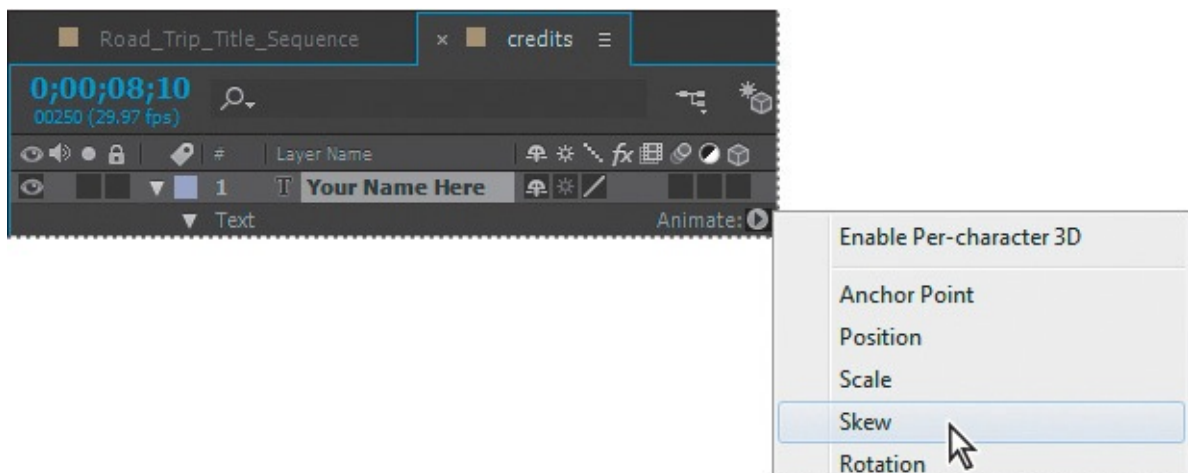

6. Right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Mac OS) the ending Opacity keyframe, and choose Keyframe Assistant > Easy Ease In.

7. Choose File > Save.

Using a text animator group

Text animator groups let you animate individual letters within a block of text in a layer. You'll use a text animator group to animate only the characters in your middle name without affecting the tracking and opacity animation of the other names in the layer.

1. In the Timeline panel, go to 8:10.

2. Hide the Opacity property for the Your Name Here layer. Then expand the layer to see its Text property group name.

3. Next to the Text property name, click the Animate pop-up menu, and choose Skew.

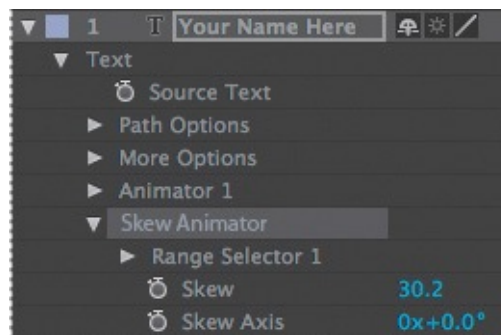A property group named Animator 2 appears in the layer's Text properties.

4. Select Animator 2, press Enter or Return, and rename it **Skew Animator**. Then press Enter or Return again to accept the new name.


Now you're ready to define the range of letters that you want to skew.

5. Expand the Skew Animator's Range Selector 1 properties.

Each animator group includes a default range selector. Range selectors constrain the animation to particular letters in the text layer. You can add additional selectors to an animator group, or apply multiple animator properties to the same range selector.

6. While watching the Composition panel, drag the Skew Animator's Range Selector 1 Start value up (to the right) until the left selector indicator (▮) is just before the first letter of your middle name (the *B* in *Bender,* in this example).

7. Drag the Skew Animator's Range Selector 1 End value down (to the left) until its indicator (▮) is just after the last letter of your middle name (the *r* in *Bender,* in this example) in the Composition panel.
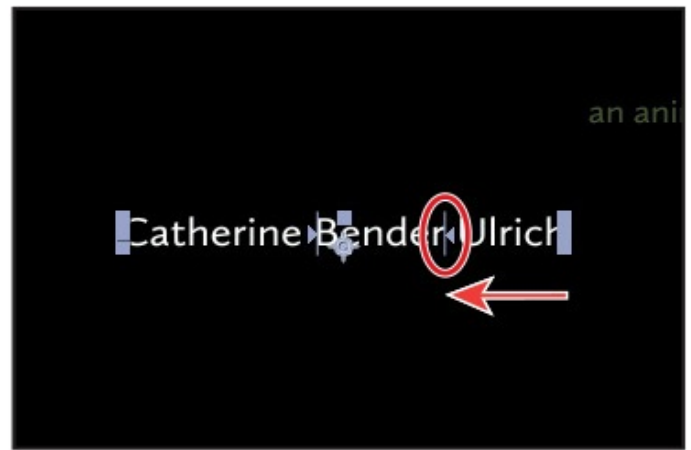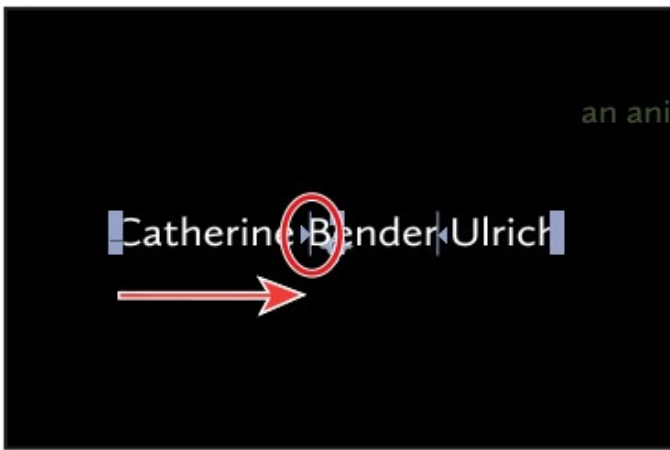
Now, any properties that you animate with the Skew Animator will affect only the middle name that you selected.

Skewing the range of text

Now, make that middle name shake and shimmy by setting Skew keyframes.

1. Drag the Skew Animator's Skew value left and right, and notice that only the middle name sways. The other names in the line of text remain steady.

2. Set the Skew Animator's Skew value to **0**.

3. Go to 8:05, and click the stopwatch icon (ö) for Skew to add a keyframe to the property.
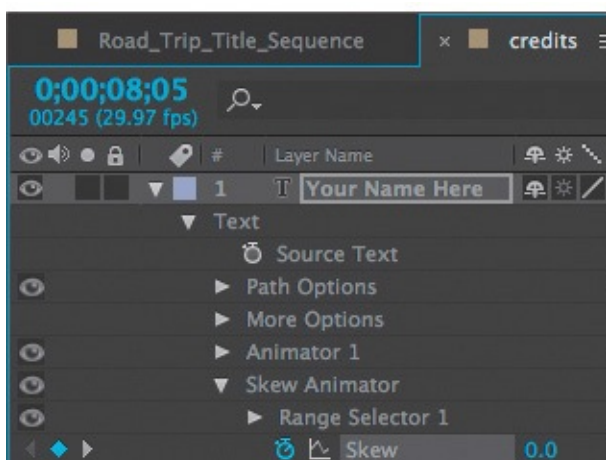
4. Go to 8:08, and set the Skew value to **50**. After Effects adds a keyframe.
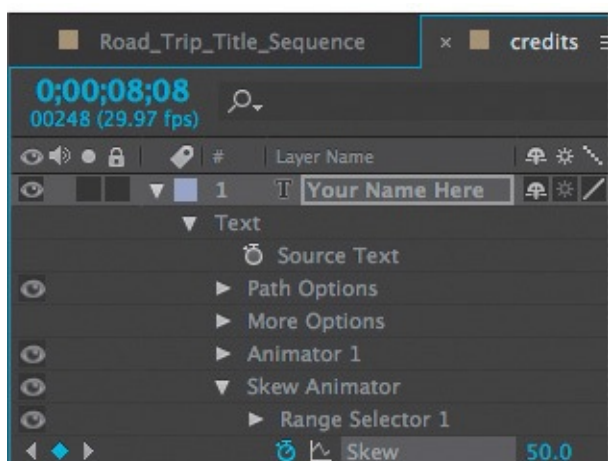
5. Go to 8:15, and change the Skew value to **−50**. After Effects adds another keyframe.

6. Go to 8:20, and change the Skew value to **0** to set the final keyframe.

7. Click the Skew property name to select all of the Skew keyframes. Then choose Animation > Keyframe Assistant > Easy Ease to add an Easy Ease to all keyframes.
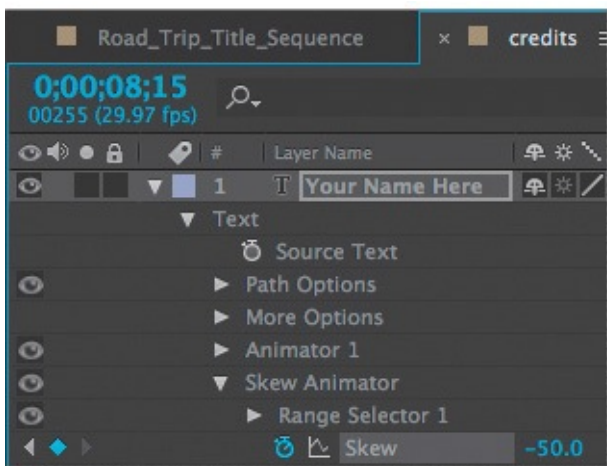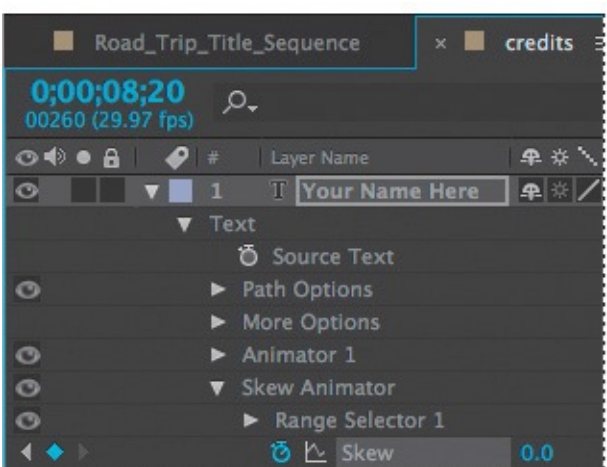
8. Drag the current-time indicator across the time ruler from 7:10 to 8:20 to see how the director's name fades in and expands onscreen, and the middle name rocks side to side while the other names are unaffected.

9. Hide the properties for the Your Name Here layer in the Timeline panel.

▶ **Tip**

To quickly remove all text animators from a text layer, select the layer in the Timeline panel, and choose Animation > Remove All Text Animators. To remove only one animator, select its name in the Timeline panel, and press Delete.

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10. Select the Road_Trip_Title_Sequence tab to open its timeline.

11. Press Home, or go to 0:00, and then preview the entire composition.

12. Press the spacebar to stop playback, and then choose File > Save to save your work.

Animating a layer's position

You've used several text animation presets to dazzle your audience. But for a simpler effect, you can animate the Transform properties for a text layer, just as you can any other layer.

Currently, your name appears onscreen, but there's no context for it. You'll add the words "directed by," animating them so that they move into position as your name is appearing onscreen.

    1. In the Road_Trip_Title_Sequence Timeline panel, go to 9:29, the end of the project.

At this point, all the other text is onscreen, so you can position the "directed by" line accurately.

    2. Select the Horizontal Type tool.

    3. Make sure no layers are selected, and then click in the Composition panel. Make sure you're clicking in an area that doesn't overlap an existing text layer.

    4. Type **directed by**.

    5. Select the directed by layer. Then, in the Character panel, choose Minion Pro from the Font Family menu.

    6. Choose Regular for the Font Style, and set the Font Size to 20 pixels.

    7. In the Character panel, click the Fill Color box. Then, in the Text Color dialog box, select white, and click OK. Leave all other options at their default settings.

    8. Select the Selection tool, and then drag the directed by layer so that the text is centered over your name.
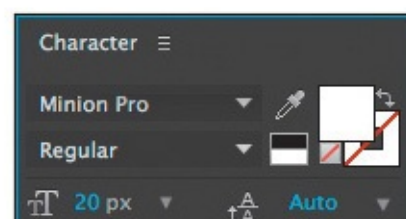
    9. Press P to display the layer's Position property. Click the stopwatch icon to create an initial keyframe for the layer.

   10. Go to 7:00, the point where "documentary" has just finished appearing and your name hasn't yet started to appear.
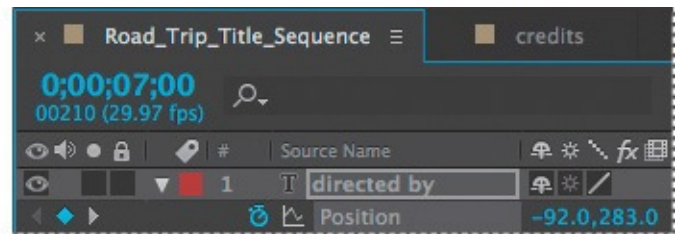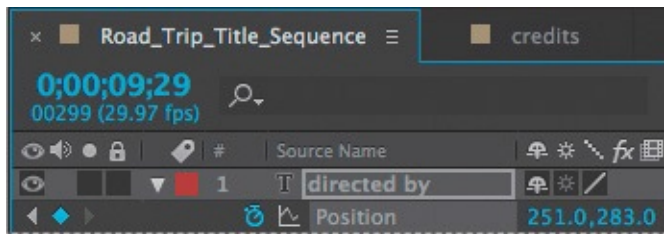
11. Drag the directed by layer off the left edge of the Composition window. Press the Shift key as you drag to create a straight path.

**12.** Preview the animation, and then hide the Position property.

It's simple, but effective. The text moves in from the left side and stops in its final position above your name. To make the text's entrance a little more interesting, you'll add a car graphic that will appear to be dragging the text onscreen.

Timing layer animations

You'll animate a simple car graphic so that the text appears to trail behind the car onscreen. The words should follow the car and come to rest above your name, while the car continues to fly off screen. The timing will require some adjustment, in order to keep the text and the car in sync.

First, you'll import the car graphic and add it to your composition.

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

2. In the Lessons/Lesson03/Assets folder, select the car.ai file, choose Composition – Retain Layer Sizes from the Import As menu, and then click Import or Open.

3. Drag the car composition from the Project panel to the top of the layer stack in the Road_Trip_Title_Sequence Timeline panel.

4. Go to 6:25, just before the directed by text begins moving.

5. Select the car layer, and press P to reveal its Position property.

6. Drag the car off the left of the Composition window, so that it overlaps the directed by text.

7. Click the stopwatch icon for the layer's Position property to create an initial keyframe.

8. Go to 9:29, the end of the composition.

9. Drag the car off the right side of the Composition window. The car shouldn't be visible on the screen. Hold down the Shift key as you drag to create a straight path.
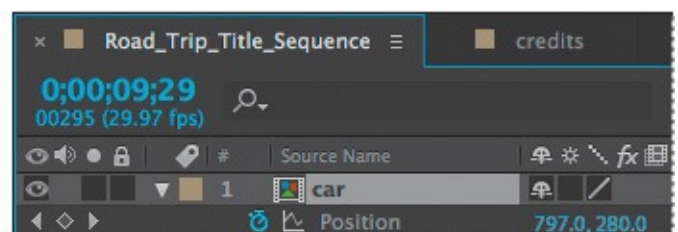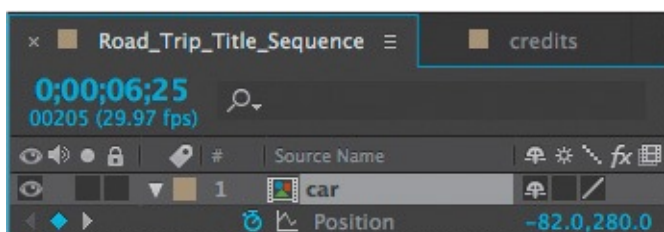

10. Manually preview the animation from 6:25 to 9:29.

The text trails the car, but the car picks up speed too quickly so it's not obvious that it's dragging the text. You'll need to make an adjustment to its timing to slow the car down until the text is in place.

11. Go to 8:29.

12. Move the car immediately to the right of the text.

13. Preview the animation again.

The timing is better, but now the car overlaps the text at the beginning. One more adjustment should do the trick.

14. Go to 7:19.

15. Pull the car forward, just ahead of the text.

16. Preview the animation again.
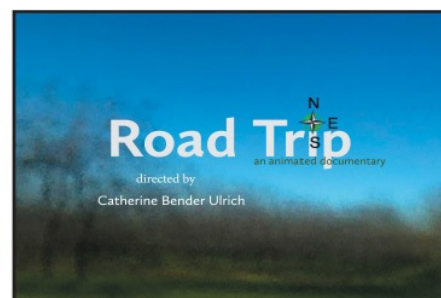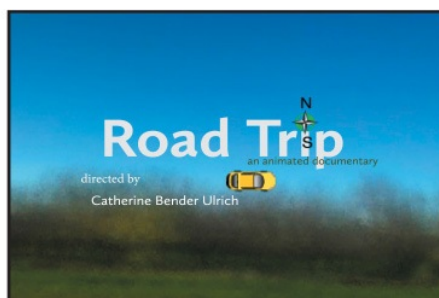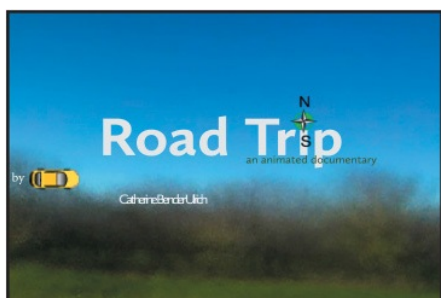
Now the car is clearly pulling the text, and it speeds up to roll off the screen before the composition finishes. If you'd like to more precisely control the animation, you can add more keyframes.

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

Adding motion blur

Motion blur is the blur that occurs as an object moves. You'll apply motion blur to finesse the composition and make the movement look more natural.

1. In the Timeline panel, click the Motion Blur switch (◎) for each layer *except* the background_movie and credits layers.

Now you'll apply motion blur to the layers in the credits composition.

2. Switch to the credits Timeline panel, and enable motion blur for both layers.

3. Switch back to the Road_Trip_Title_Sequence Timeline panel, and select the Motion Blur switch for the credits layer. Then click the Enable Motion Blur button (◎) at the top of the Timeline panel so that you can see the motion blur in the Composition panel.

4. Preview the entire, completed animation.

5. Choose File > Save.

Give yourself a pat on the back. You just completed some hard-core text animations. If you'd like to export the composition as a movie file, see Lesson 14, "Rendering and Outputting," for instructions.

Review questions

1. What are some similarities and differences between text layers and other types of layers in After Effects?

2. How can you preview a text animation preset?

3. How can you assign one layer's transformations to another layer?

4. What are text animator groups?

Review answers

1. In many ways, a text layer is just like any other layer 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 it in multiple views. However, text layers are like shape layers in that you can't open them in their own Layer panels, and in that they are synthetic layers that consist entirely of vector graphics. You can animate the text in a text layer using special text animator properties and selectors.

2. You can preview text animation presets in Adobe Bridge by choosing Animation > Browse Presets. Adobe Bridge opens and displays the contents of the After Effects Presets folder. Navigate to folders containing categories of text animation presets, such as Blurs or Paths, and watch samples in the Preview panel. Then double-click a preset to add it to the currently selected layer in the After Effects Timeline panel.

3. You can use parenting relationships in After Effects to assign one layer's transformations to another layer (except opacity transformations). When a layer is made a parent to another layer, the other layer is called the *child layer*. Creating a parenting relationship between layers synchronizes the changes in the parent layer with corresponding transformation values of the child layers.

4. Text animator groups enable you to animate the properties of individual characters in a text layer over time. Text animator groups contain one or more *selectors*, which are like masks: They let you specify which characters or section of a text layer you want an animator property to affect. Using a selector, you can define a percentage of the text, specific characters in the text, or a specific range of text.