

Software
Videos

Learn Flash 8

To Produce Graphics



Introduction

Many people think that Flash is for animation only. That isn't correct as Flash was initially produced as a graphics program that developed into an animation program.

In this booklet and the accompanying videos you will learn how to use Flash to produce different graphic images.

1. **Open flash** and you will see the welcome screen.
2. You have three options – open a recent file, use a template or start a new document. Click on **create new flash document**.



You are then presented with a blank document.

Tools panel – is where you find all of the different tools you will use in your presentations.

You can add **new layers** and make folders for lots of layers using these buttons.

Frames – here you can see which frame you are working in and what frame speed the animation will run at. It is currently set at 12 frames per second.

Timeline – you can see that we have just one layer called layer 1. You produce many layers and have different content on each layer.

Panels group – are sets of different panels that do different jobs. They can sat here – docked – or can be moved onto the stage.

Set the **view options** using this drop down

The work area – is the area outside the stage. Objects can start to move from this work area onto the stage. They are not seen in the animation until they are on the stage.

The stage – is the part that is seen in your animation or picture.

Properties inspector – is where you set or change the properties of objects before or after they are drawn on the stage.

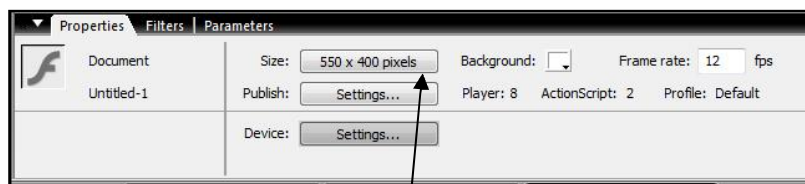


Instead of using the view options list to set the stage so you can see it, try holding in the **Ctrl key** and pressing the **number 2 key** at the same time. This sets the stage so it fits nicely in the middle. Try this while pressing the number 1, 3 and number 4 keys while holding the **ctrl** key for different views.

Properties inspector

This is a very important part of the screen and you must get used to looking at it before and during everything you do.

- Every object you draw or animate has properties.
- This is where you see those properties and set them so things work how you want them to work.



Section 1

Setting the stage

In the properties inspector you will see that the stage is initially set at 550 x 400 pixels.



Pixels stand for picture elements – those little dots you see when you look really closely at the screen.

This is the standard way of measuring things on computer screen – especially when working with graphics and website design. A standard screen is about 1024 pixels wide but changes as the screen size changes.

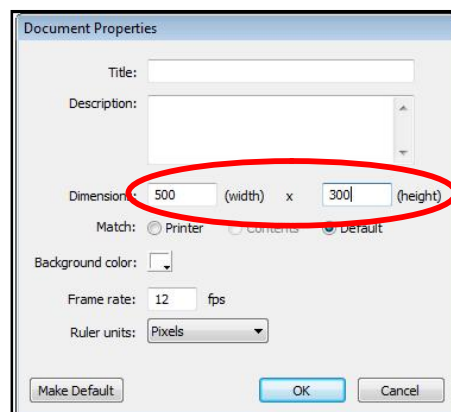
Resolution – is the word that states how many pixels there are per inch. An inch is 2.5 cm. The standard resolution for a web page is 72 pixels per square inch – 72 pixels per 2.5 cm square.

- We will be using pixels from now on as our term of measurement.

3. In the properties inspector, click on the **size** button.

4. The document properties box appears. Set the width to 500 and the height to 300.

- Leave the background colour as white as we will draw a rectangle on it and set the colour of that.
- Leave the frame rate as 12 as this is a picture we are doing and not an animation.
- You could give the document a title and a description such as Apple – used on future work.



5. **Click OK.**

6. The properties inspector will show the new size.

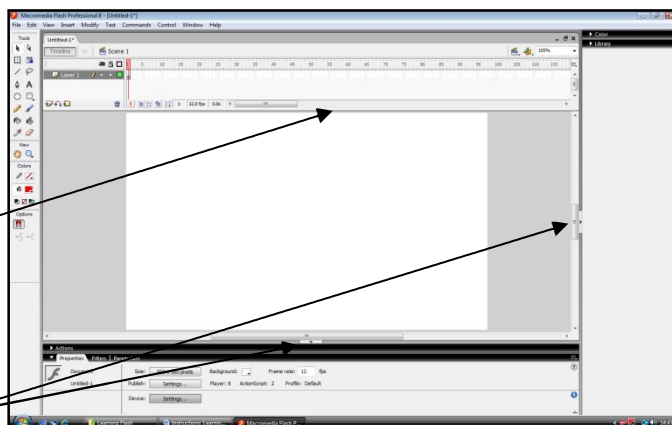
7. Press **Ctrl + 2** to set the stage to fill the screen.



If the timeline is too big you can make it smaller by dragging the bottom edge up so it leaves more room for the stage.



To hide the properties and the panels click on the open / close buttons.



Section 2

In this task we are going to produce a picture of an apple so that you can learn one of the ways of drawing and working with objects.

Two ways to draw an object

When you draw a shape such as a rectangle or an oval it can be a solid object or made up from lots of little dots.

- If it is made of lots of solid dots you can select and delete some of them to make strange shapes.
- If it is a solid object, you can't delete part of it – as it is solid.

Object drawing off

To make it so you can delete part of the object the object drawing button needs to be switched off when you select and draw it.

8. Select the **rectangle** tool.

- If you see a small triangle on a button it means there are more choices. If you click and leave the mouse button in, a list of options appear.

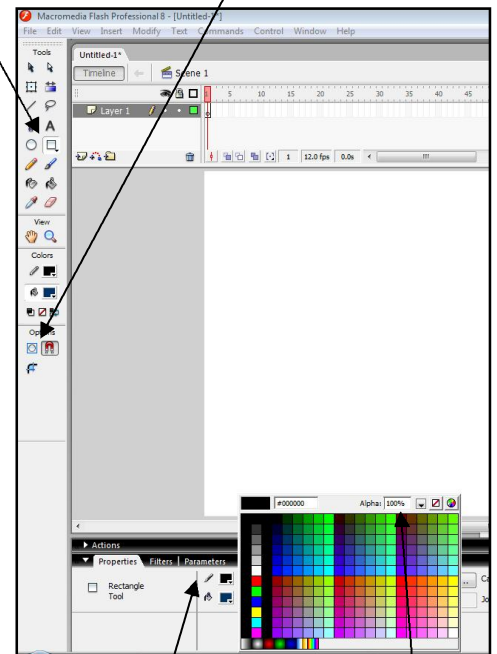
Stroke versus Fill

- The stroke is the line around the edge of a shape – or simply a line on its own.
- The fill is the colour inside the shape.
- They are both separate from each other.
- If you click once on the fill – you only select the fill. You have to double click to get the fill and the stroke.
- If you click once on the stroke, you only get that side and not all of the way round. You need to double click the stroke to get it all.

9. With the rectangle tool selected, set the stroke colour to black by clicking on the colour box in the properties inspector or the colour box next to the pencil in the toolbox.

10. Use the dropper to set the stroke colour to black.

11. Click on the fill colour box and choose a reasonably dark green colour as the fill.

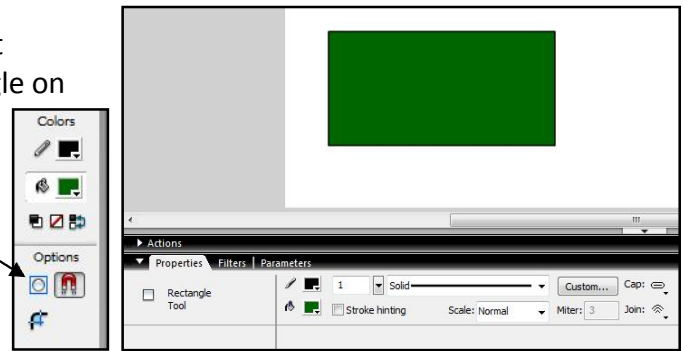


Notice that when you choose a colour it shows a number for that colour in the colour selector box. If you make a note of these, it helps you when you produce complicated graphics so you can type in the number.



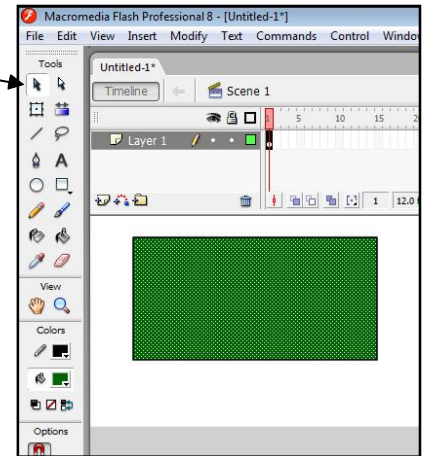
When the eye dropper appeared, you didn't have to choose a colour from the colour selector box. You could have selected any colour on the screen. So if you want to copy a colour already used – simply use the dropper and click on it.

12. Leave the stroke style to solid. Make sure the object drawing button isn't highlighted and draw a rectangle on the stage – any size.



13. Click on the **selection** tool.

- Instead of clicking on it you can press the V key.
- To find the shortcut keys for each button put the mouse over the button and see the message that pops up.



14. Click **once** on the green fill and see how it shows up as lots of dots.

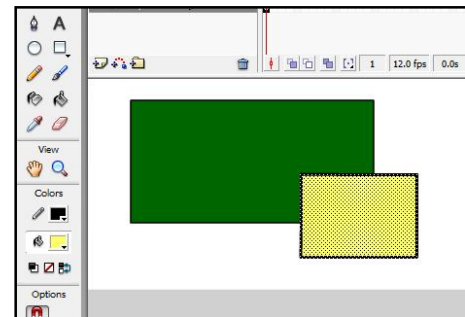
15. Click on the **rectangle** tool again and this time set the fill to any other colour – but not the same green.

- It must be a different colour to cut out the shape below it.

16. Draw another rectangle on top of the green rectangle.

17. Double click the new rectangle so you get the fill and the stroke. It will turn into lots of dots.

18. Press the delete key or move it with the mouse and see if it has cut out that shape from beneath it.



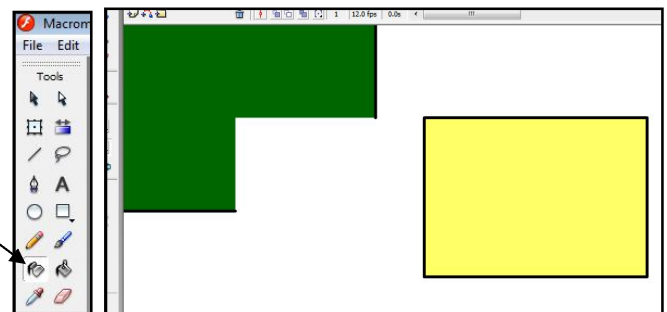
The shape has cut a piece out of the original shape.

- ☹ It has left the original shape without a stroke on those two new edges.
- ☺ We can add a stroke by using another tool.

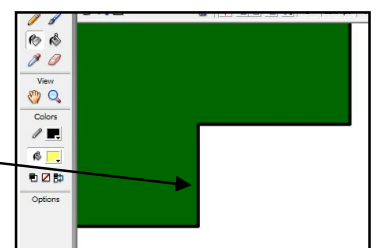
The Ink bottle tool

19. Select the ink bottle tool and press the escape key so that the properties for the ink bottle are showing.

20. In the properties inspector, make sure that the stroke is the same size and colour as the stroke on the rest of the shape.



21. Click on the green shape and it puts a new stroke on the two edges that didn't have one.



22. Click on the stroke at the top of the shape. This line only will be selected. In the properties inspector, set this line to red.

23. Now click on each of the other strokes one at a time and set each of them a different colour.

I have decided that I need another square out of the bottom left corner.

24. With the selection tool selected, use your mouse to draw a square over the bottom left corner to select those particular dots.

25. When you release the mouse button, you can see which part of the shape has been selected. Press the delete key to delete this section of the shape.

26. Use the Ink bottle to add the stroke.

- If you click with the ink bottle in the middle of the shape – all strokes will change.
- You must click on the edge that requires the new stroke for that to change on its own.

This shape is now finished but I want to group it all together to be one solid shape.

27. Select the whole shape by double clicking on it or use the mouse and the selection tool to draw a box over the whole of the shape.

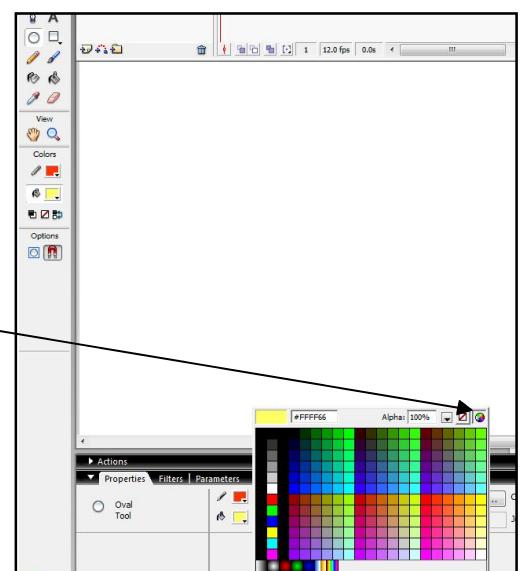
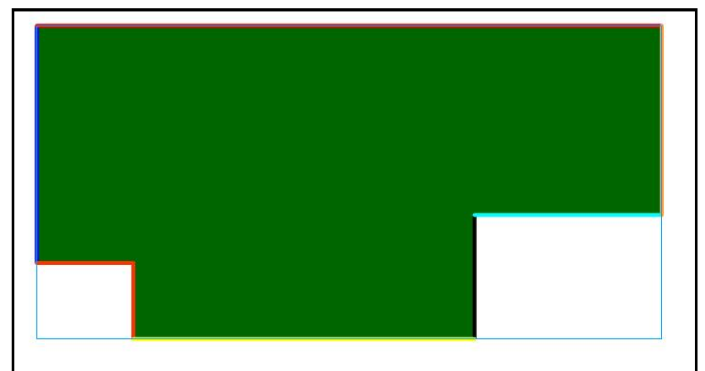
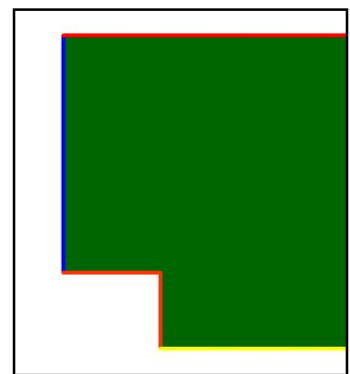
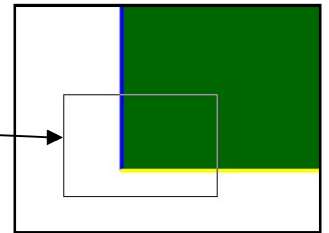
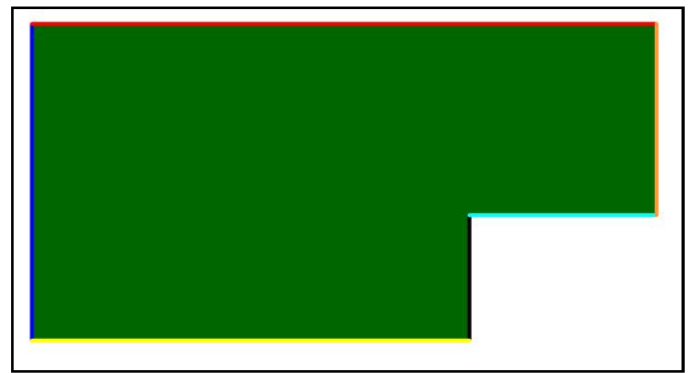
28. With it all selected, press the **Ctrl** key and the **G** key at the same time to group it.

- Look in the properties and it will say Group.
- Press **Ctrl + B** to break it apart and it will say shape in the properties.

29. Delete this shape.

30. Click on the oval tool and then on the fill button.

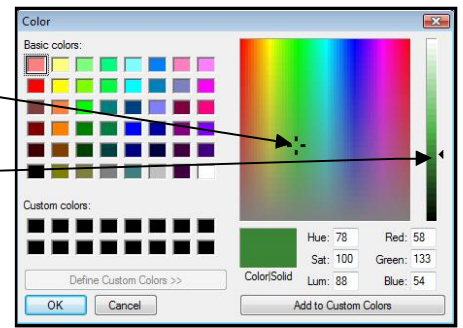
31. This time, there aren't enough colours available, so click on the more colours button.



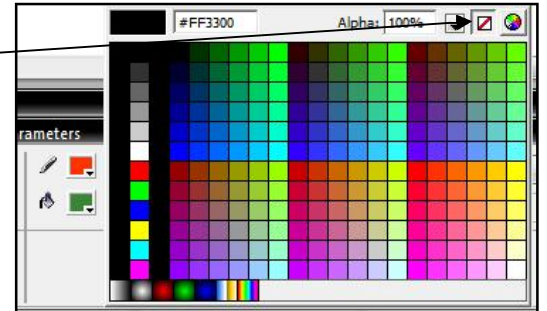
32. Choose (click) an apple green from the main section.

33. Then select the exact green you want from the narrow section to the right by clicking on the green you want.

34. Click OK.

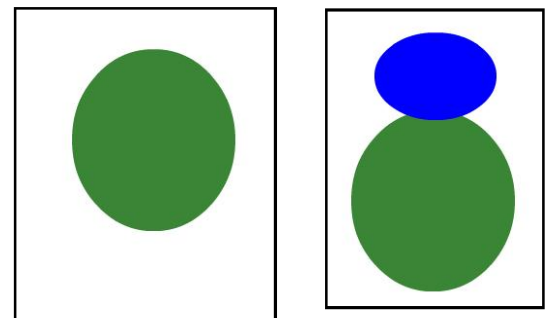


35. Set the stroke to none by clicking on the stroke colour button and selecting the "none" button from the colour box.



36. With the object drawing turned off, draw an apple shape.

37. Now use a different colour and draw a shape on top of the apple to remove the piece at the top where the apple stalk will go.



38. Delete the blue shape to leave the apple shape.

Using Layers

When you started a new flash document it had one layer called Layer 1.

You can add new layers and place different objects on different layers.

A layer can then be locked so you don't accidentally touch it while working with something else on a different layer.

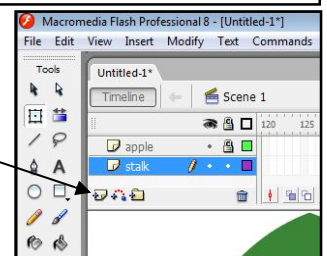
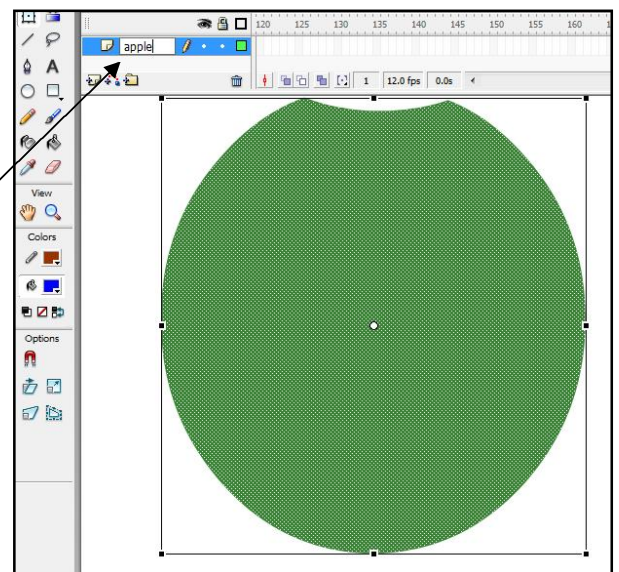
39. Double click where it says layer 1 and rename it apple

40. Click on the new layer button. It places a new layer above the apple layer.

41. Rename this new layer Stalk.

42. Drag this layer below the apple layer.

- The order of the layers is the stacking order of the layers on screen.



43. The layer with the apple on it is finished for now. On the apple layer, click the dot so that it changes to a lock.

- The new stalk layer still has a dot – which means this layer isn't locked and can be drawn on.



44. Now that the apple layer is locked try selecting the apple. You shouldn't be able to.



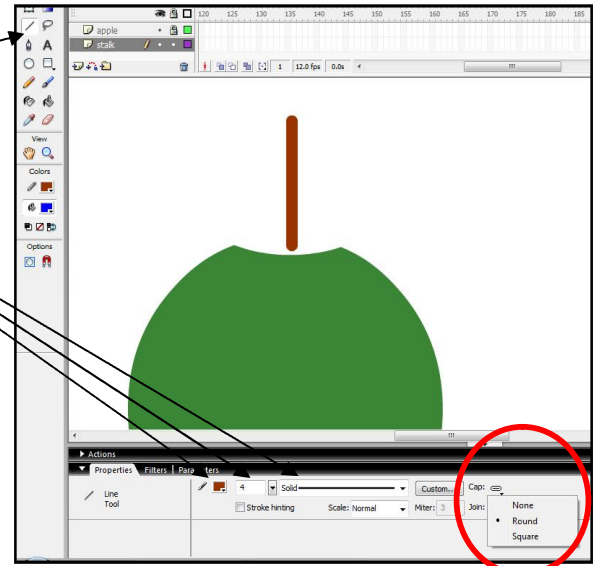
Get into the habit of working on different layers and locking them when it is complete and unlocking them when you want to work with them again.

45. With the apple layer locked, select the line tool.

46. Set the line to solid, size 4 and brown.

47. Set the cap to round so it has a round end.

48. Draw a line above the apple.



Free Transform tool

Now that we have a straight stalk, we want to bend it a little. This is done with the free transform tool. This can be used with most shapes.

49. Select the free transform tool and click on the line.

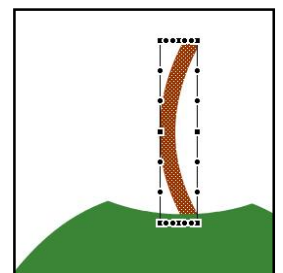
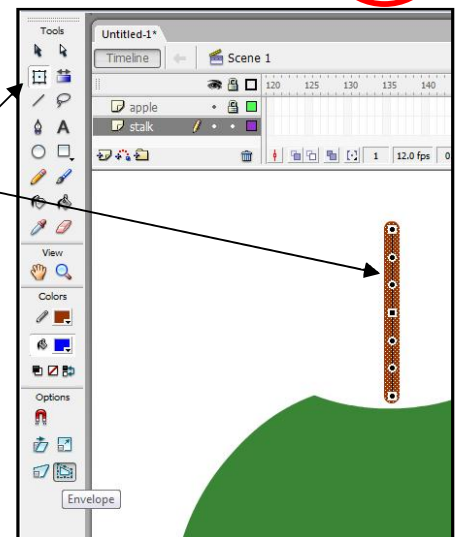
When you select a tool you can then be given different options of how to use it.

When you click on the free transform tool it gives you 5 options. We are going to use the envelope option as this allows us to shape the line.

50. With the stalk selected, click on the envelope button.

51. Click and drag the middle handle to the left so that it makes the stalk curved.

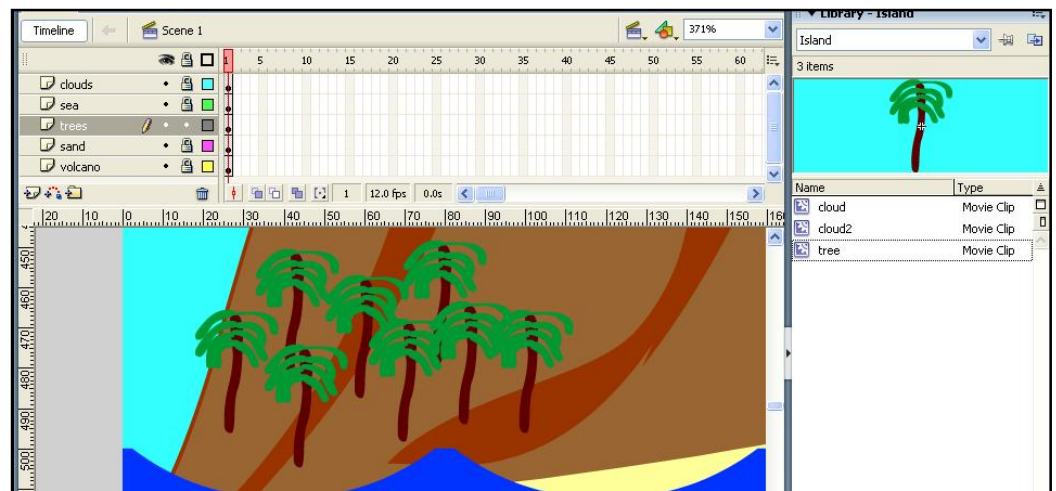
52. Move the stalk down a little so the bottom of it is behind the apple. This happens because the stalk layer is below the apple layer in the timeline.



The final section of the book and videos cover the production of an island that will then be animated in the next booklet.

Your task

- ✓ Insert a new layer called trees above the sand and below the sea. Lock all other layers.
- ✓ Draw one palm tree using whichever tool you think best – zoom in to do this.
- ✓ Convert this tree to a movie clip symbol so that it is added to the library.
- ✓ Place some trees onto the island by dragging instances from the library.



Lock all of the layers and save.



We will be using this picture in the animation booklet.

