LEARN
Adobe After Effects CC
for **Visual Effects** and **Motion Graphics**

Adobe Certified Associate Exam Preparation

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To edit the characters on a text layer:

1 Do one of the following in the Composition panel:

- With the Horizontal Type tool, highlight the text or click a text insertion point in the text.

- With the Selection tool, double-click a text layer. All of the layer text is selected.
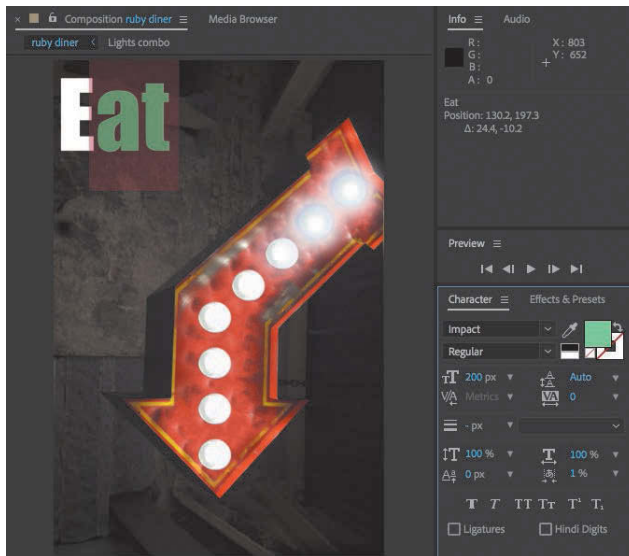
2 Edit the text as needed.

Figure 2.31 You can format individual characters by highlighting them first.
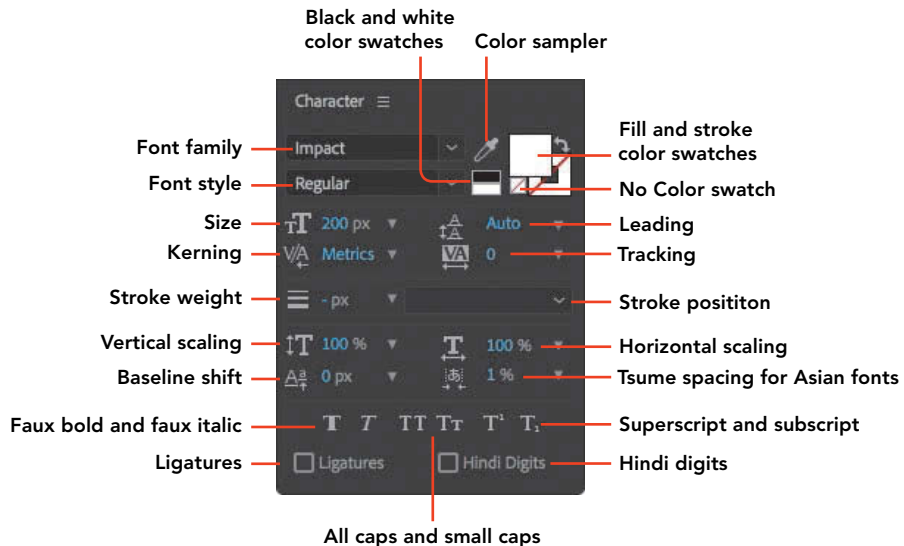
Exploring the Character Panel

In the Character panel you can edit text formatting down to the letter. For example, you can apply a different font or color to individual characters.

Character formatting is applied using options that include the following (**Figure 2.32**):

- **Font.** This includes the font family, such as Arial, and style, such as Bold.

- **Color.** You can apply color to the fill and the stroke (outline) of selected characters.

- **Stroke.** When you add a stroke outline to characters, you can control its width and how it's combined with the fill.

- **Size.** You can specify how large characters are, in pixels.

- **Spacing.** Leading controls space between lines. Tracking controls space between a range of characters. Kerning controls space between a pair of characters. Tsume controls spacing around a character (used for Asian fonts).

- **Scaling.** You can stretch selected characters vertically or horizontally. This is different from stretching the entire text layer.

- **Position.** You can use Baseline Shift to offset selected characters higher or lower than other characters on the same line.

- **Capitals.** Apply All Caps to make characters all capital letters, or Small Caps to use capital letters for lowercase characters.

- **Faux styling.** When you need a bold or italic variant of a font but the font doesn't provide one, you can apply Faux Bold or Faux Italic. These alter characters digitally, even though that doesn't look as good as a true bold or italic font variant.

- **Ligatures.** Some character pairs, such as th or fl, can be substituted with a single character that represents both, a long tradition in typography. Enabling the Ligatures option lets After Effects automatically substitute ligatures where available in the font in use.

- **Hindi digits.** If you enter text in a Hindi font, you can represent numbers using Hindi digits rather than Arabic numerals.

Figure 2.32 The Character panel

All caps and small caps

Many of the other options are included for more precise typographical adjustments.

For more detailed descriptions of Character panel options, see "Formatting characters and the Character panel" in After Effects online help:

helpx.adobe.com/after-effects/using/formatting-characters-character-panel.html

Exploring the Paragraph Panel

The Paragraph panel contains options that apply only at the paragraph level, no matter which characters you select. A paragraph is defined when you press the Enter or Return key while typing text.

You can apply paragraph formatting using options that include the following (**Figure 2.33**):

- **Alignment.** This controls whether the lines of a paragraph are all aligned to the left, center, or right edge of a text layer.

- **Justification.** Justified lines of text fill the full width of a text frame by automatically spacing the characters on each line. Because the last line of a paragraph is typically shorter than the rest, the difference between the justification options comes down to how the last line is aligned.

- **Spacing.** You can add space before or space after paragraphs. Like leading, this can make text easier to read.

- **Indents.** Indenting text moves it in from the left or right edges of the text layer. There's also an Indent First Line option because some style standards indent the first line of a paragraph.

- **Reading direction.** You can make characters read left to right, or right to left, depending on the language used in a paragraph.
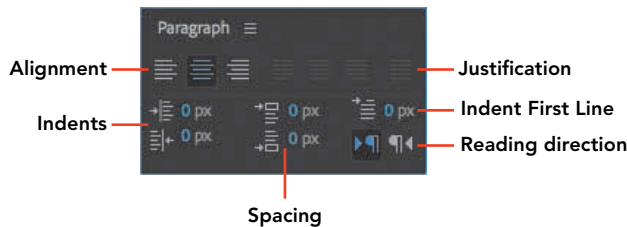
Figure 2.33 The Paragraph panel

For more detailed descriptions of Paragraph panel options, see "Formatting characters and the Paragraph panel" in After Effects online help:

helpx.adobe.com/after-effects/using/formatting-paragraphs-paragraph-panel.html

Aligning Layers

Normally, you'd type a single sentence such as "Eat at Ruby's" into a single text layer. In this lesson, the only reason the words were entered as separate layers is so that each word can be animated independently. But the three words still need to appear to be one sentence, so it's important that they align precisely. After Effects offers several ways to align not just text layers, but layers of any kind.

How you choose to align layers depends on what you want to use as a reference for alignment. It's easy to align layers precisely (**Figure 2.34**) using any of the following methods:

- **Align to the composition frame.** The Align panel lets you align selected layers horizontally and vertically to the center of the composition, or any of its edges. Just make sure the Align Layers To menu is set to Composition before you click any Align panel buttons.

- **Align to other layers.** If one of the layers is already in the correct position, you can align other layers to it using the Align panel. Select both layers and make sure the Align Layers To menu is set to Selection before you click any Align panel buttons.

- **Align to the grid.** In Chapter 1 you learned about the grid display options and preferences. If you enable View > Snap To Grid, layers you drag will snap to grid increments.

- **Align to any position.** If you know you want a layer at specific numerical coordinates, you can use the Timeline Panel to set its Position property to those values. If you want several layers lined up at that position, you can create a ruler guide as you learned earlier so that when you drag a layer close to a guide it snaps to the guide.

- **Nudge layers.** You might prefer to precisely position layers visually. When a layer is selected, nudge it by pressing the arrow keys. Or you can click one of its Position values in the Timeline, and then press the Up Arrow or Down Arrow key to change the value by a small amount.

Figure 2.34 The Align panel

Align Layers To option
Align Layers options
Distribute Layers options

For example, say you wanted to line up two of the text layers you created for this lesson:

1 Select the layers in the Timeline panel.

2 In the Align panel, choose Selection from the Align Layers To menu.

3 Click the Align Left button (**Figure 2.35**).

Figure 2.35 Aligning the left sides of two layers.

The Align panel also includes Distribute Layers options. These create an equal space between the centers or specified edges of selected layers. For example, you might be creating movie credits involving five text layers that you'd like to space equally across the frame. You could select them, align them first, and then click a Distribute Layers option to horizontally space them evenly by their centers.

Rotating a Layer

In Video 2.11, the Ruby's text layer is rotated 90 degrees. When you want to rotate a layer, you can do it visually or numerically.

To rotate a layer visually:

1 Select the Rotation tool ( ) in the Tools panel.

2 In the Composition panel, use the Rotation tool to drag the layer you want to rotate (**Figure 2.36**).
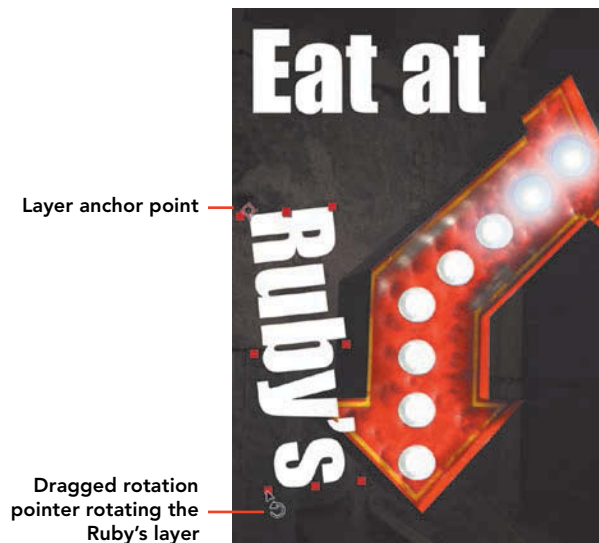
   NOTE

   If you try to click a layer with the Rotate layer but a different layer becomes selected, try first selecting the layer you want to rotate in the Timeline panel.

Layer anchor point —

Dragged rotation pointer rotating the Ruby's layer —

The layer rotates around its anchor point. If you want the layer to rotate around a different location, you can move the anchor point. See "Customizing the Anchor Point for a Transformation" later in this chapter.

To rotate a layer numerically:

1 In the Timeline panel, select the layer you want to rotate, and reveal its Rotation property. (Remember that the single-key shortcut to reveal a selected layer's Rotation property is P.)

2 Edit the Rotation value using any of the methods you have learned, such as entering a value, nudging the value with the Up Arrow or Down Arrow keys, or scrubbing the value.

★ *ACA Objective 4.6*

★ *ACA Objective 4.7*

▶ *Video 2.12 Simple Text Animation*

Using Motion Blur

Our eyes tend to believe that an animation is realistic if it has some amount of motion blur. One reason is that the traditional film frame rate of 24 frames per second and video frame rate of 30 frames per second result in frame durations that are rather long. A moving object can cover a fair distance in 1/30th of a second, so it blurs within that frame.

A synthetic animation is completely sharp in each frame. That represents perfect image quality, but unfortunately it doesn't line up with the blurred motion our