

Adobe After Effects

2024 Release



Classroom in a Book®

The official training workbook from Adobe

Brie Gyncild & Lisa Fridsma

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Getting started

In this project, you will animate a hot air balloon floating through the sky. All seems peaceful until a gust of wind blows the balloon's colorful canvas off to cover the clouds.

- 1 Make sure the following files are in the Lessons/Lesson05 folder on your hard disk, or download them from peachpit.com now:
 - In the Assets folder: Balloon.ai, Fire.mov, Sky.ai, Soundtrack.wav
 - In the Sample_Movie folder: Lesson05.mp4
- 2 Open and play the Lesson05.mp4 sample movie in Windows Movies & TV or QuickTime Player to see what you'll create in this lesson. When you are done, close Windows Movies & TV or QuickTime Player. You may delete the sample movie from your hard disk if you have limited storage space.

As you start After Effects, restore the default application settings. See “Restoring default preferences” on page 3.

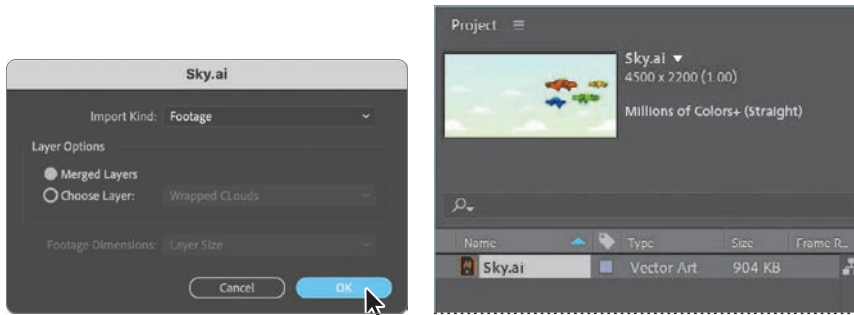
- 3 Start After Effects, and then immediately hold down Ctrl+Alt+Shift (Windows) or Command+Option+Shift (macOS) to restore default preferences settings. In the Startup Repair Options dialog box, click Reset Preferences.
- 4 Click New Project in the Home window.
- 5 Choose File > Save As > Save As.
- 6 In the Save As dialog box, navigate to the Lessons/Lesson05/Finished_Project folder. Name the project **Lesson05_Finished.aep**, and then click Save.

Importing the footage

Next, you'll import the footage you need for the project, including the balloon.ai composition.

- 1 Double-click an empty area of the Project panel to open the Import File dialog box.
- 2 Navigate to the Lessons/Lesson05/Assets folder on your hard disk, and select the Sky.ai file.
- 3 Choose Footage from the Import As menu, and then click Import or Open.

- 4 In the Sky.ai dialog box, make sure Merged Layers is selected, and then click OK.



- 5 Double-click an empty area of the Project panel, navigate to the Lessons/ Lesson05 /Assets folder, and select the Balloon.ai file.
- 6 Choose Composition – Retain Layer Sizes from the Import As menu, and click Import or Open.
- 7 Press Ctrl+I (Windows) or Command+I (macOS) to open the Import File dialog box again.

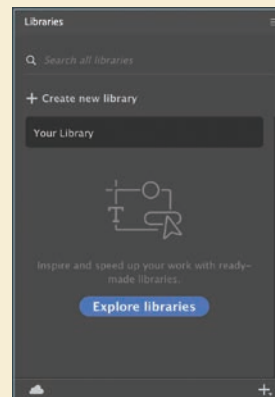
Using Creative Cloud Libraries in After Effects

Easily access images, videos, colors, and other assets you've created in After Effects and other Adobe applications. Through Creative Cloud Libraries, you can also use Looks, shapes, and other assets you create with Adobe Capture and other mobile apps. Creative Cloud Libraries also make it easy to access After Effects motion graphic templates in Adobe Premiere Pro.

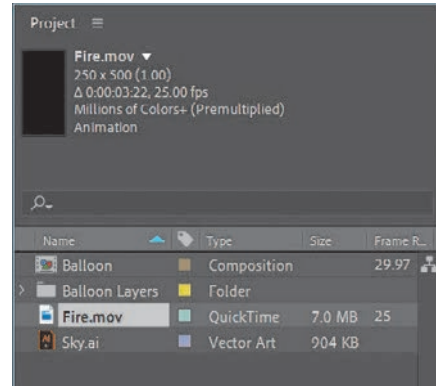
Even Adobe Stock images and videos are available in the Libraries panel: Search and browse assets within the panel, download watermarked versions to see how they work with your projects, and license the ones you want to keep—all without leaving After Effects.

The same search bar you use to search Adobe Stock makes it easier to find specific items in your Creative Cloud Libraries, too.

To learn more about all the ways you can use Creative Cloud Libraries, see After Effects Help.



- 8 Navigate to the Lessons/Lesson05/ Assets folder, and select the Fire.mov file.
- 9 Make sure Footage is chosen in the Import As menu, and click Import or Open.

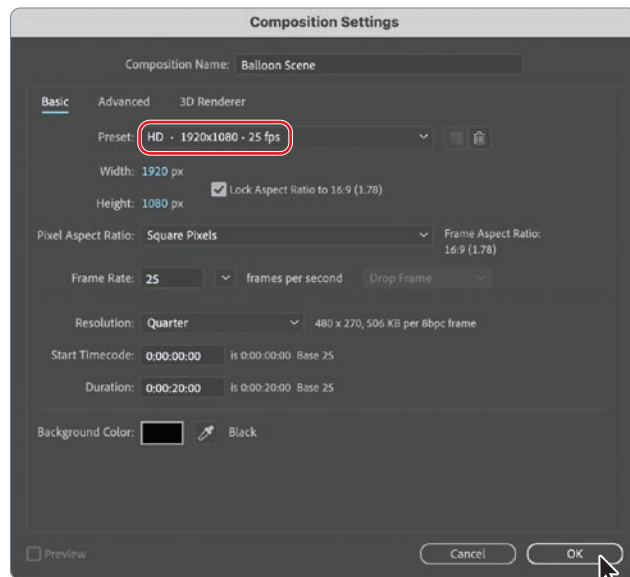


Creating the composition

You'll create the composition and add the sky.

- 1 Click New Composition in the Composition panel.
- 2 In the Composition Settings dialog box, do the following:
 - Name the composition **Balloon Scene**.
 - Choose HD • 1920x1080 • 25fps from the Preset menu.
 - Make sure Square Pixels is chosen from the Pixel Aspect Ratio menu.
 - Make sure the Width is 1920 px and Height is 1080 px.
 - Choose Quarter for the Resolution.
 - Set Duration to **20** seconds (20:00).
 - Click OK.

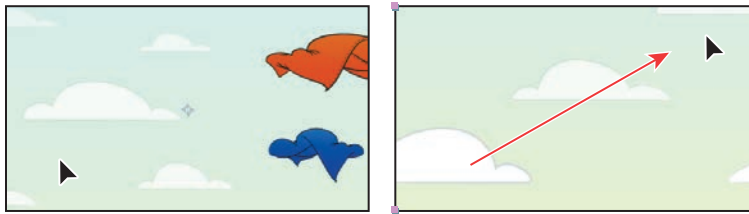
● **Note:** If you change Pixel Aspect Ratio or Width settings, the Preset name may change to Custom in the Composition Settings panel.



- 3 Drag the Sky.ai footage item from the Project panel into the Timeline panel.

The balloon will float across the Sky.ai image. The far right of the image contains the canvas-wrapped clouds that appear at the end of the scene. The wrapped clouds shouldn't be visible earlier in the movie.

- 4 In the Composition panel, drag the Sky layer so that its lower left corner is even with the lower left corner of the composition.

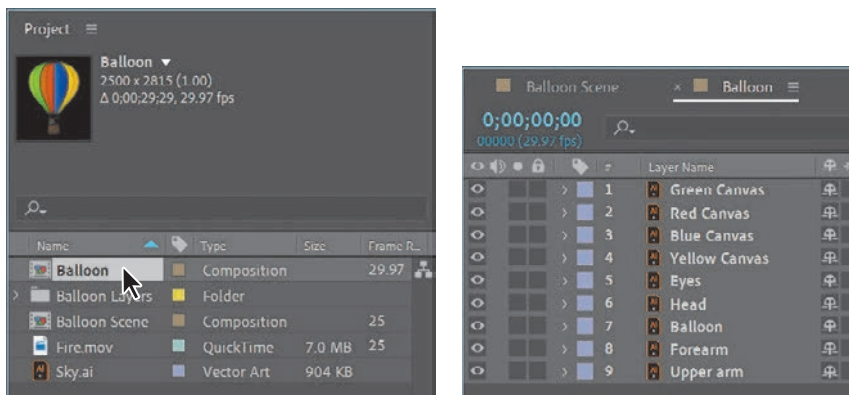


Adjusting anchor points

The anchor point is the point around which transformations, such as scaling or rotation, are performed. By default, a layer's anchor point is at the center of the layer.

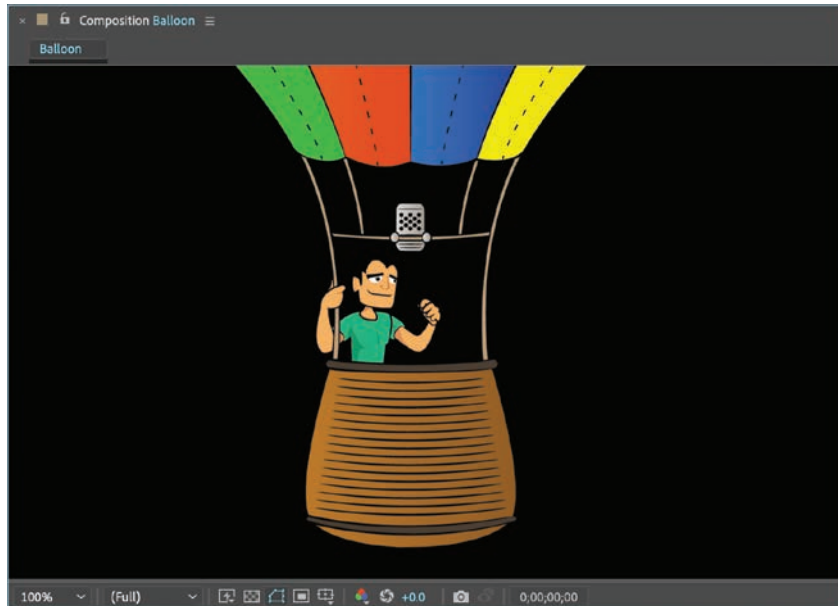
You'll change the anchor points for the character's arm and head so that you can better control the character's movements as he tugs on the cord to ignite the fire and as he looks up and down.

- 1 Double-click the Balloon composition in the Project panel to open it in the Composition panel and the Timeline panel.



The Balloon composition includes layers for the canvas colors, the balloon itself, and the character's eyes, head, forearm, and upper arm.

- 2 Zoom in using the Magnification Ratio pop-up menu at the bottom of the Composition panel so you can see the balloon's detail more clearly.
- 3 Select the Hand tool (🖐️) in the Tools panel, and then pan so that the character is centered in the Composition panel.



- 4 Select the Selection tool (🖱️) in the Tools panel.
- 5 Select the Upper arm layer in the Timeline panel.
- 6 Select the Pan Behind tool (🖱️) in the Tools panel (or press Y to activate it).



With the Pan Behind tool, you can move the anchor point without moving the entire layer in the Composition window.

- 7 Move the anchor point to the character's shoulder.
- 8 Select the Forearm layer in the Timeline panel, and then move its anchor point to the elbow.
- 9 Select the Head layer in the Timeline panel, and move its anchor point to the character's neck.

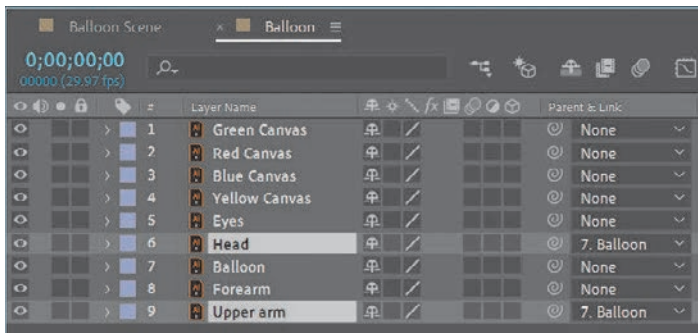


- 10 Select the Selection tool in the Tools panel.
- 11 Choose File > Save to save your work so far.

Parenting layers

This composition includes several layers that need to move together. For example, as the balloon floats, the character's arm and head should move along with it. As you've seen in previous lessons, a parenting relationship synchronizes changes in the parent layer with corresponding changes in the child layer. You'll establish parenting relationships among the layers in this composition, and you'll add the fire video as well.

- 1 Deselect all layers in the Timeline panel, and then press Ctrl (Windows) or Command (macOS) as you select the Head and Upper arm layers.
- 2 In the Parent column for either of the selected layers, choose 7. Balloon from the pop-up menu.



This establishes both the Head and Upper arm layers as child layers of the Balloon layer. When the Balloon layer moves, the other two layers will move with it.

The eyes not only need to move with the balloon, they need to move with the head, so you'll create that parenting relationship next.