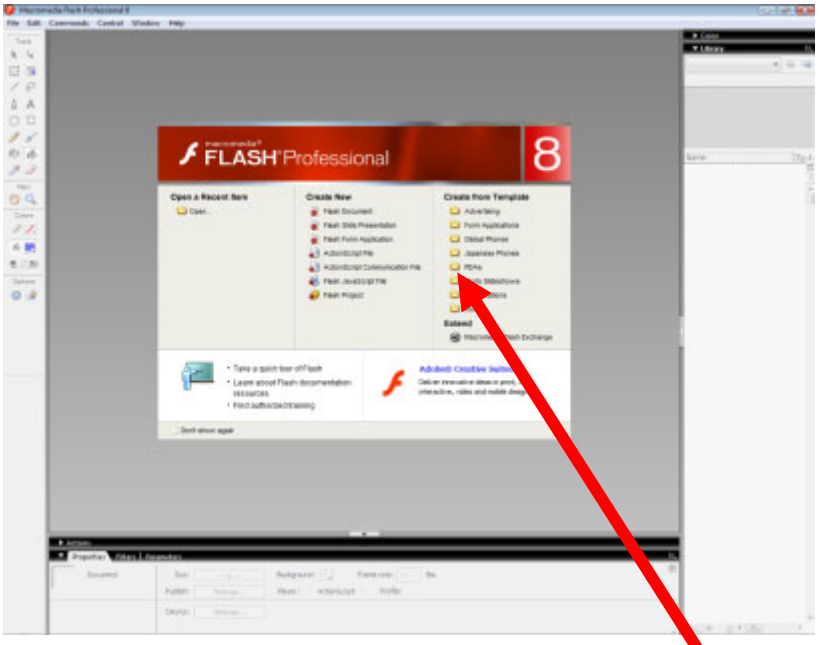
Creating a poem using Flash

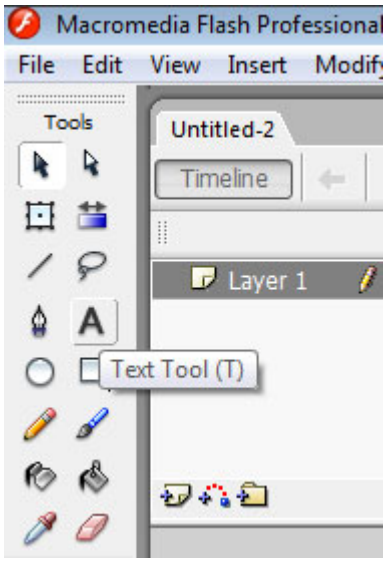
These instructions show you how to turn a poem into an animated presentation. Use this to get started but then try to be confident to adapt your own work in your own special style – poetry in motion!

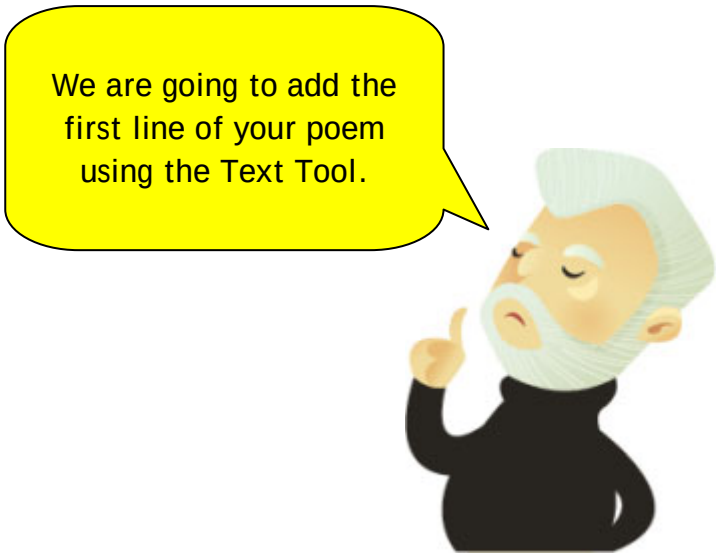
1. Load the Flash program:
   START > All Programs > Macromedia > Flash

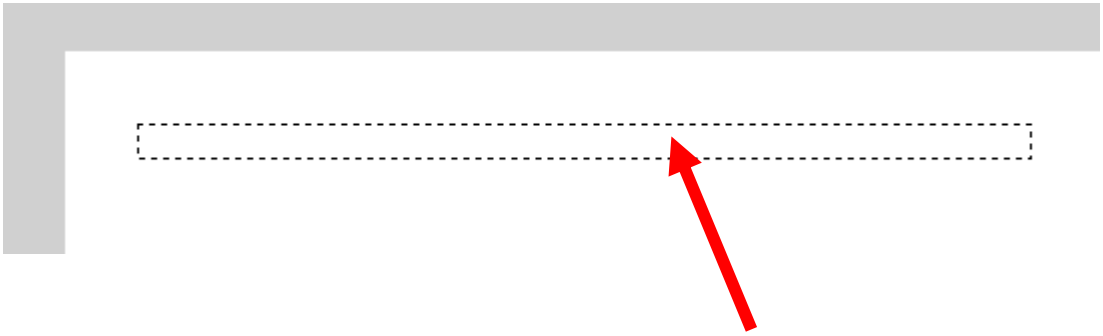


2. Click on 'Create New' > 'Flash document'. You should see a blank document, like a white piece of paper. This is called the 'stage'.

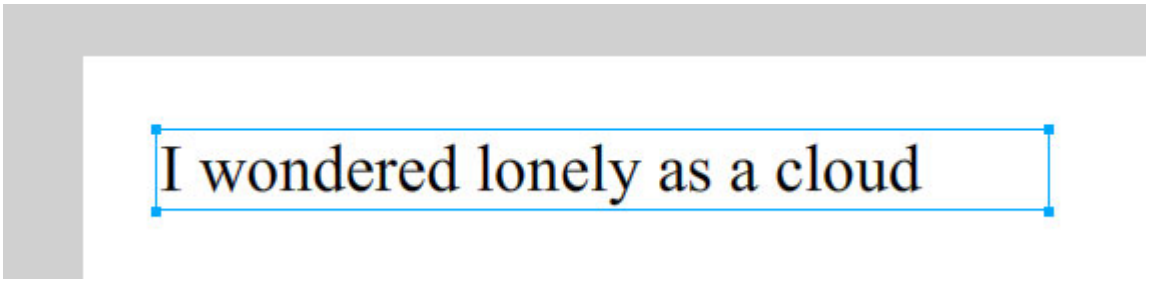
3. Click on the text tool and draw a large box on the Stage



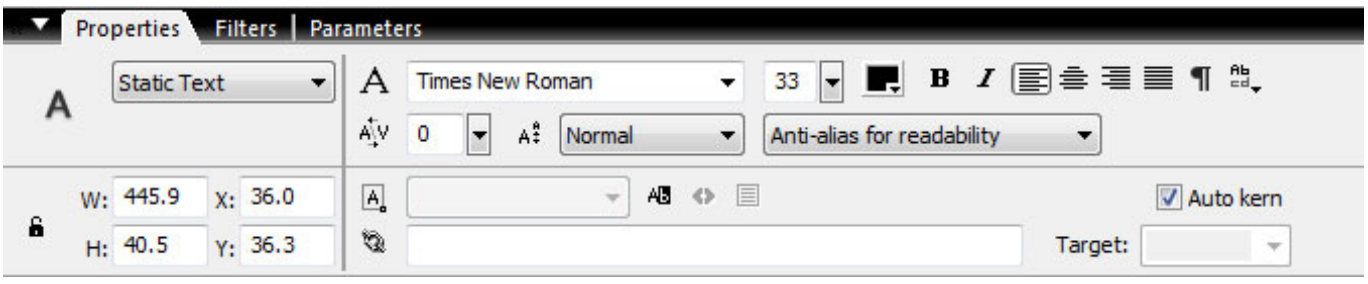




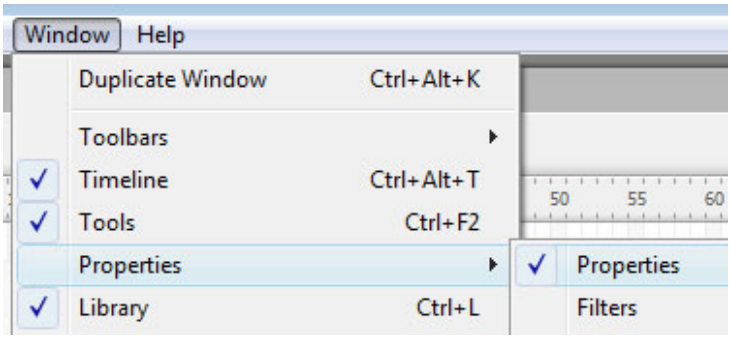
4. Type the first line of your poem into the box



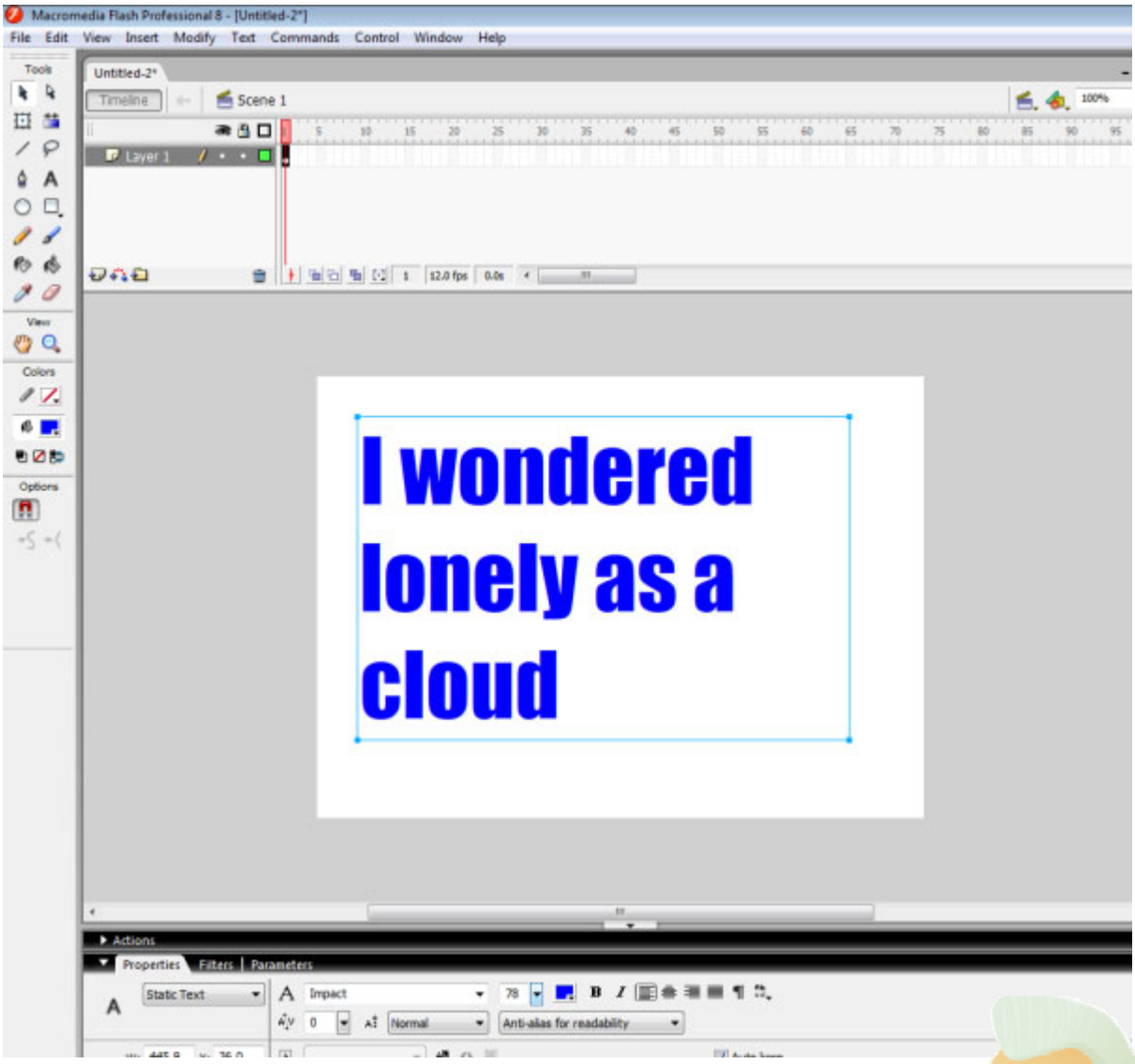
5. Near the bottom of the screen you should see the 'Properties' panel. Change the font, size and colour of your first line.



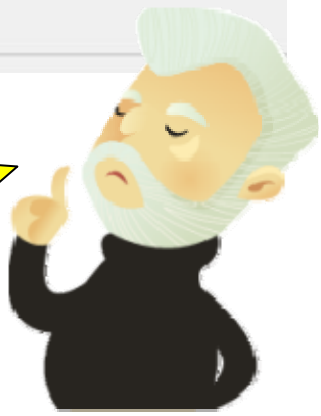
If you cannot see the Properties panel, press 'Window', 'Properties' and click 'Properties'.



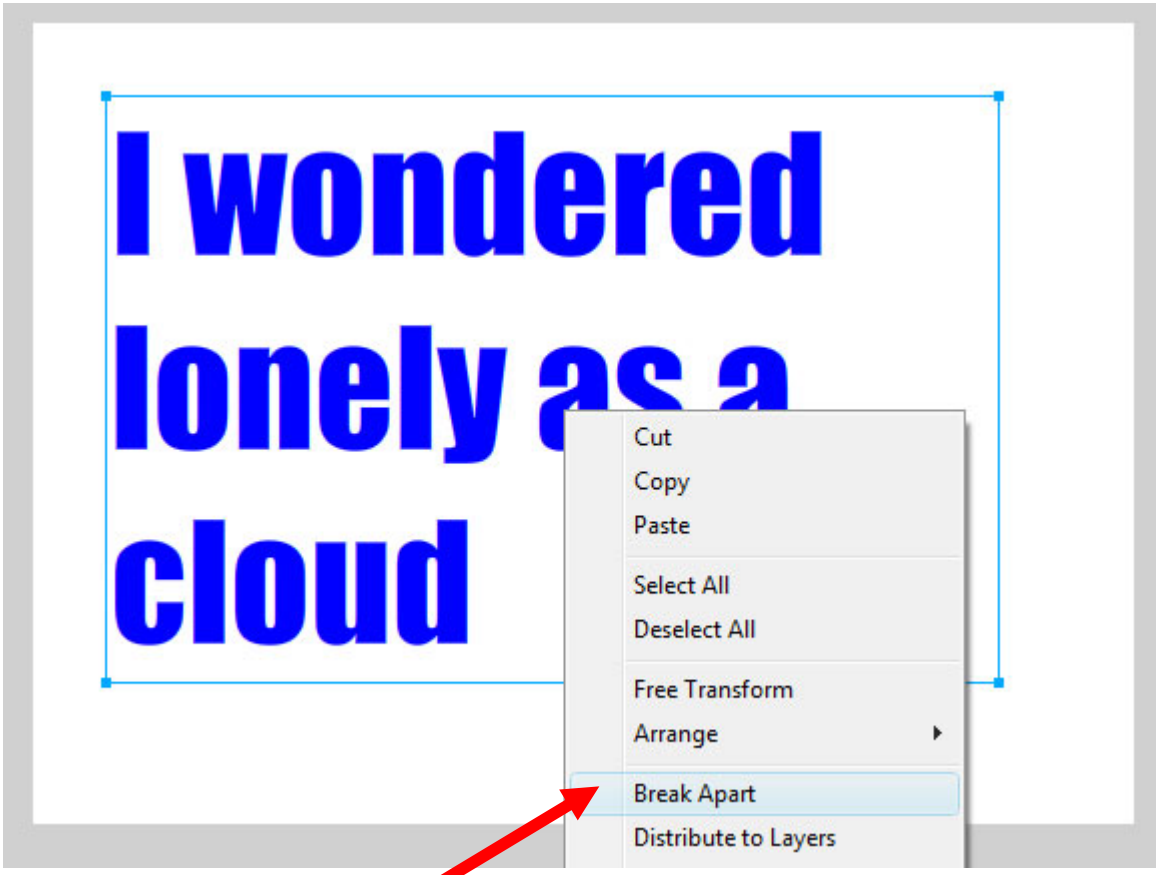
6. Take a while to select the very best font. You can make the text size as large as you like (as long as it stays on the stage!)



Make sure you are happy with your text – we are about to animate it!

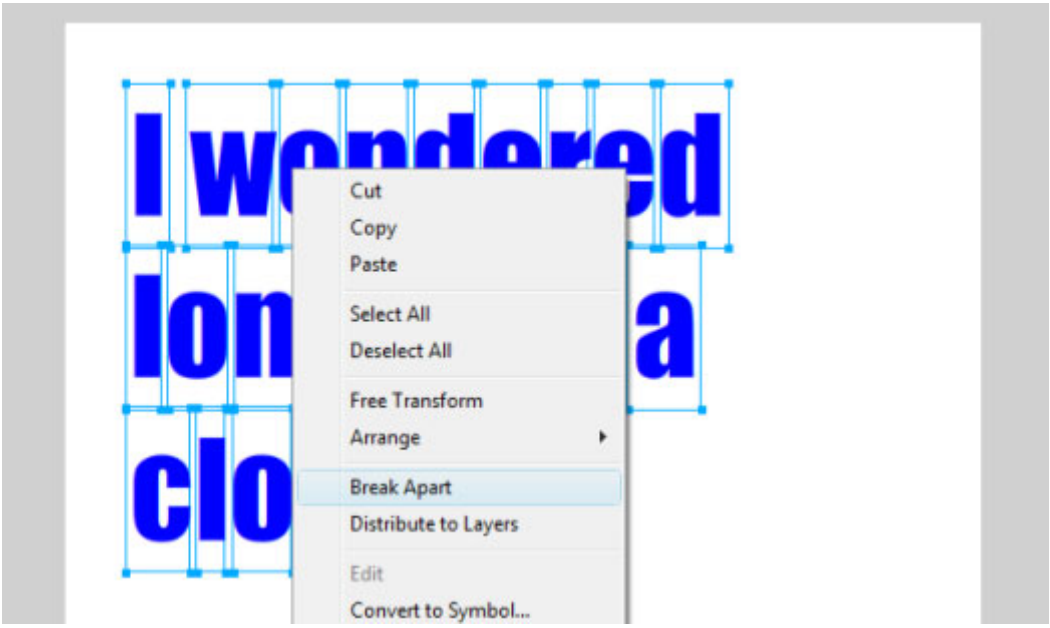


7. Hover over your text and press the right-mouse button.



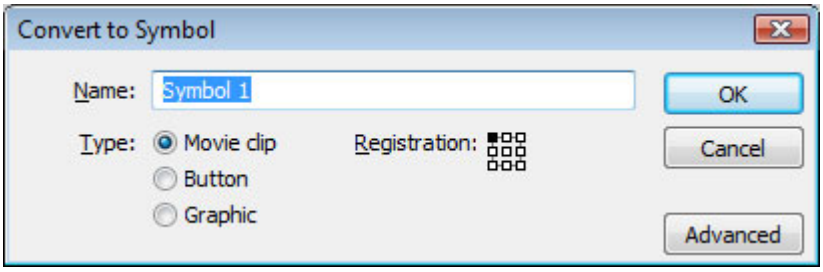
8. Select 'Break Apart' from the menu that appears. This will change your text to single letters.

9. Right-click and select 'Break Apart' again – this changes the text from single letters to a graphic.



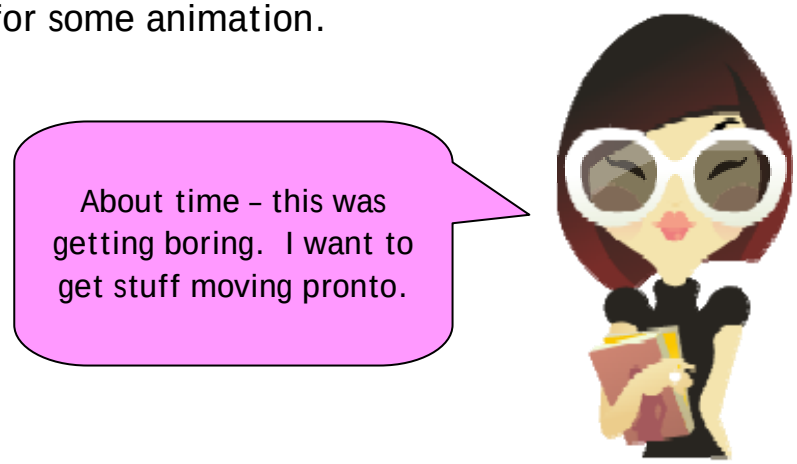
10. You should be left with your words on the Stage with small dots all over them – as shown below:

11. Press the F8 button on your keyboard. The 'Convert to Symbol' box should appear

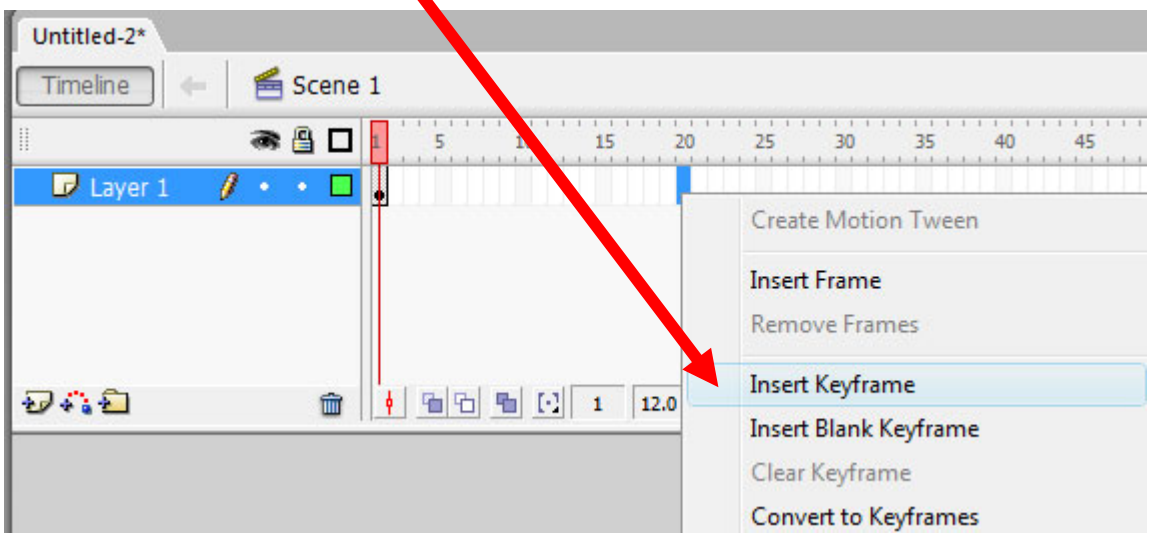


12. Add 'Line 1' as the name and make sure that 'Movie Clip' is selected. Press the OK button.

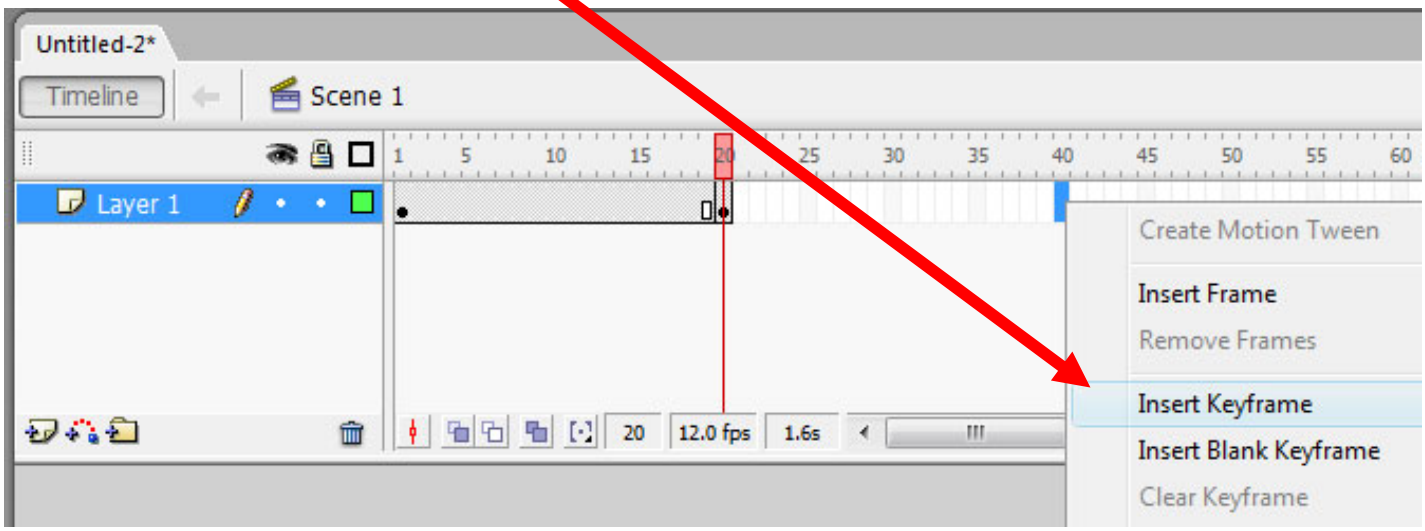
13. The text for line 1 should appear as a MovieClip (should be a box) – this is now ready for some animation.



14. Move your mouse near the top of the screen to the ‘Timeline’. Hover over Frame 20 and press the right-mouse button. Select ‘Insert Keyframe’

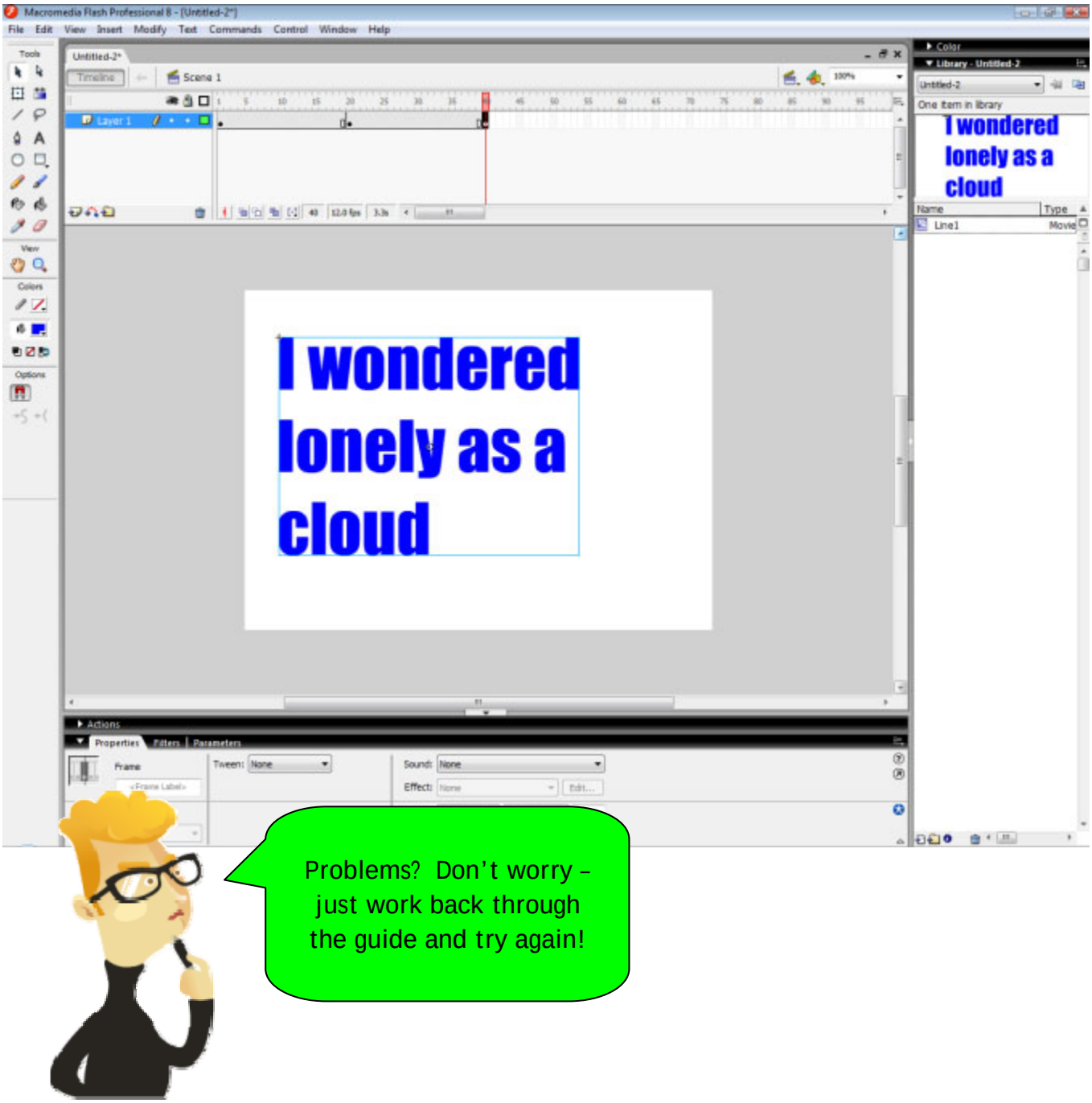


15. Next, hover over Frame 40 – right-click again and select ‘Insert Keyframe’ again



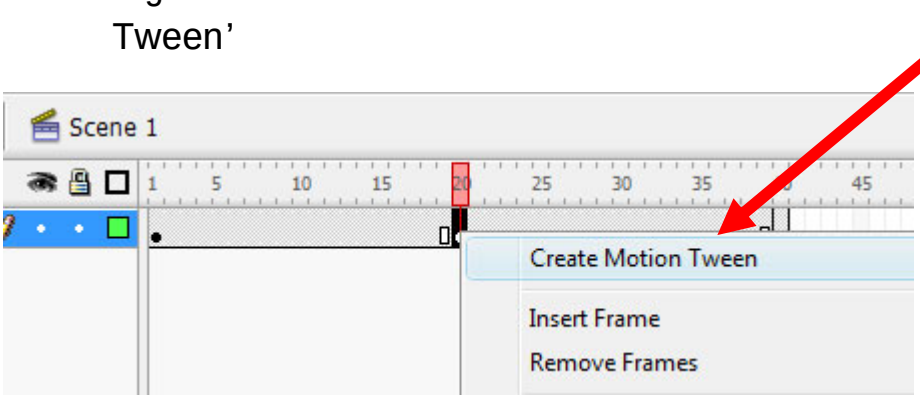
This all seems a bit mad, but what we’ve done here is setup our animation timeline. The first part – frames 1 – 19 - are so there is enough time for the words to be read, the second part – frames 20 – 40 is where we will add an animation effect.

16. Your screen should now look similar to the image below.

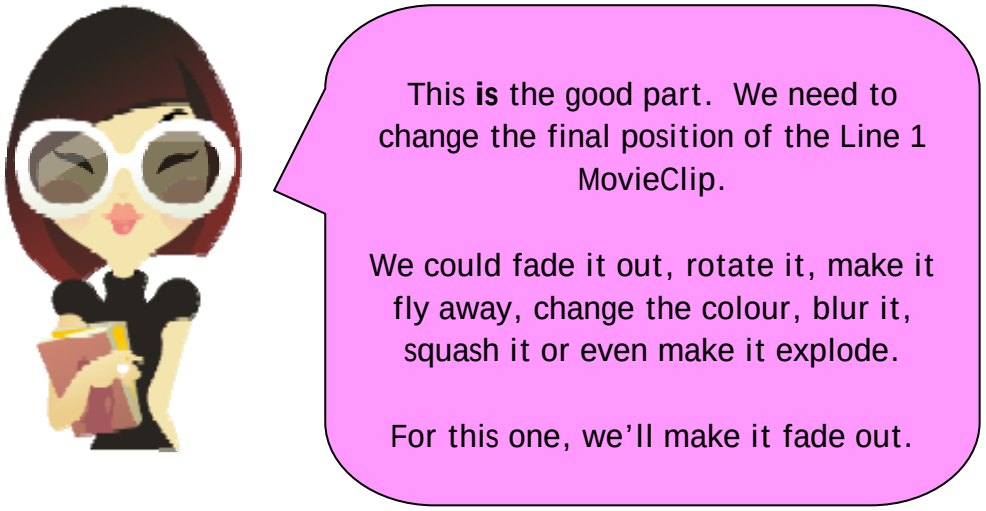


17. Save your work – press 'File' > 'Save As'.

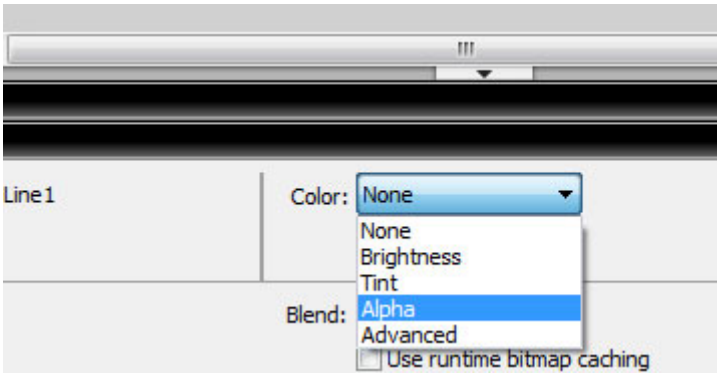
18. Right-click on the black dot in Frame 20 – select ‘Create Motion Tween’



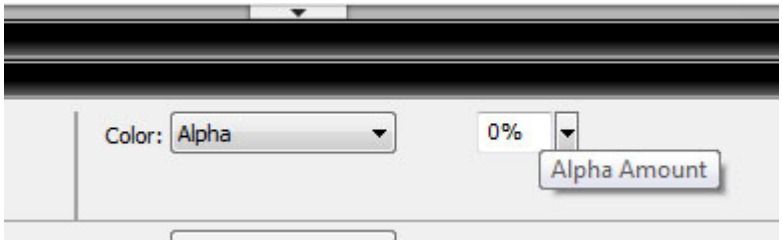
19. You have now setup your animation – we now need to change the way your first line looks in Frame 40. Flash will automatically animate your line.



20. Select Frame 40 and left-click on your Line 1 MovieClip. At the bottom of the screen left-click on the Color drop-down menu.



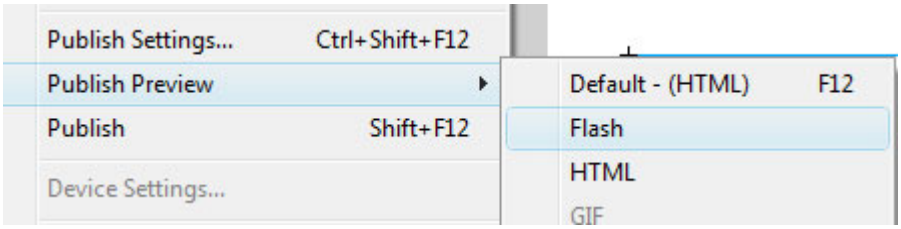
21. Select ‘Alpha’ and make sure the ‘Alpha amount’ shows 0%



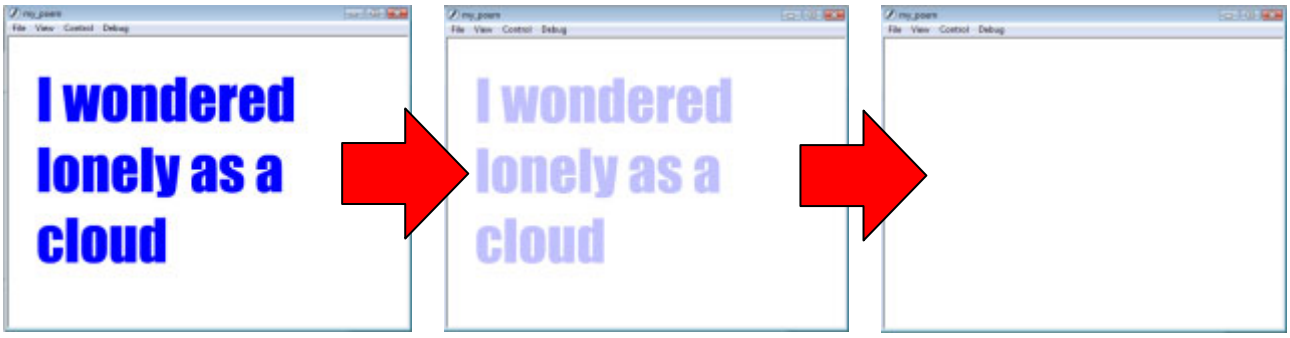
You have now animated your first line. It will show on screen for a few seconds and then fade out.

The rest of this task is to repeat the process for each line of your poem – each time adding a different animation effect

22. Preview your animation to check that it works. Press ‘File’ > ‘Publish Preview’ > ‘Flash’



23. As you view your animation you should see something like this:



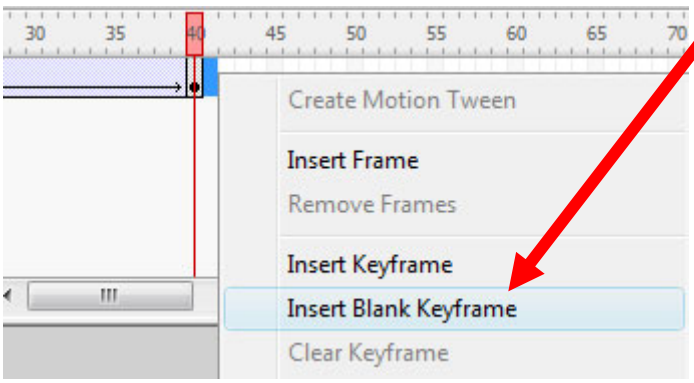
May we just recap what we've done?

- Added a line using the Text Tool
- Broken it apart (twice)
- Turned it into a MovieClip
- Added Keyframes
- Animated the line so it fades out

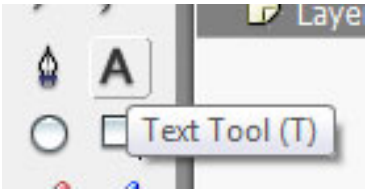
This sounds complex – but it really wasn't too bad was it?

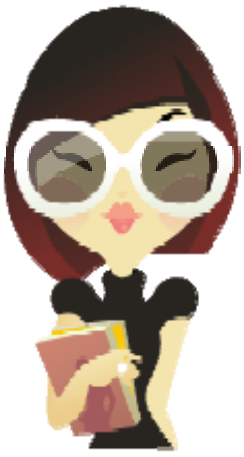
24. The next step is to repeat the process for your next line. As you've done it once, it should be much more straightforward.

    Left click frame 41 in the timeline and select 'Insert Blank Keyframe'



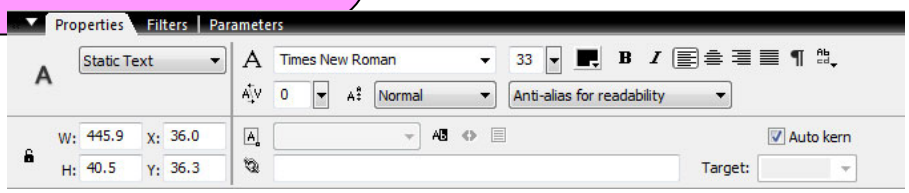
25. Use the 'Text Tool' to type in the second line of your poem.



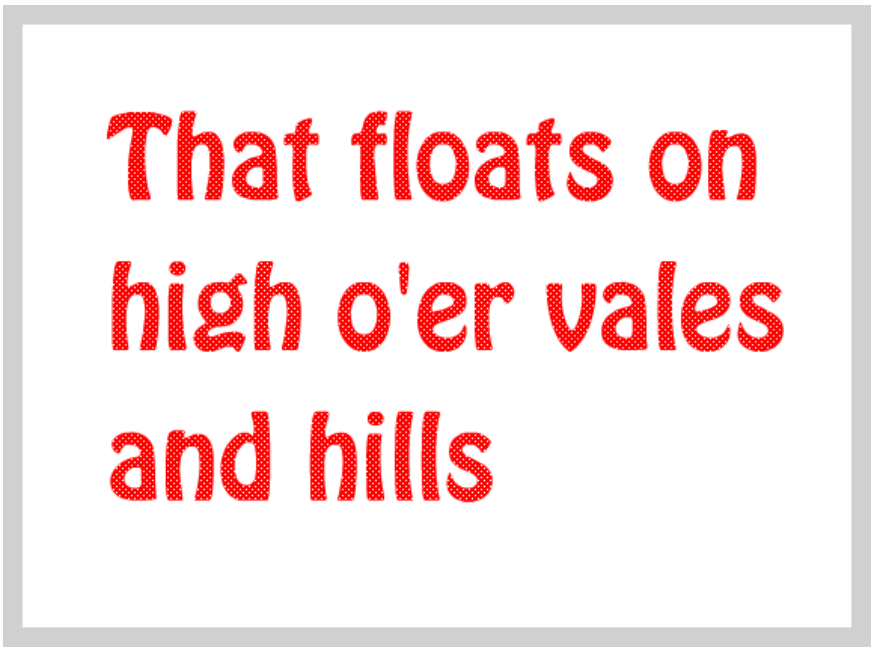


Remember this is **your** creation – so change the font, colour and size exactly as you wish.

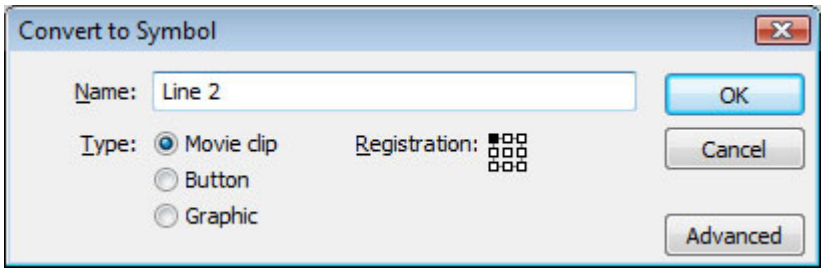
Use the 'Properties panel'



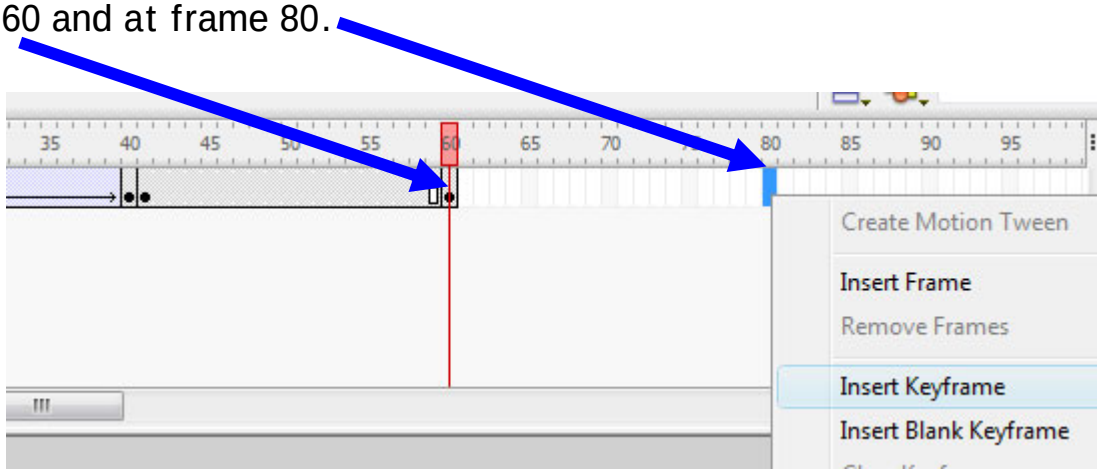
26. Next, break your text apart again. Remember you need to do this twice [see steps 7 to 10 for a reminder]



27. With your text broken apart, press ‘F8’ on your keyboard and turn it into a MovieClip. As this is your MovieClip for the second line, call this ‘Line 2’.

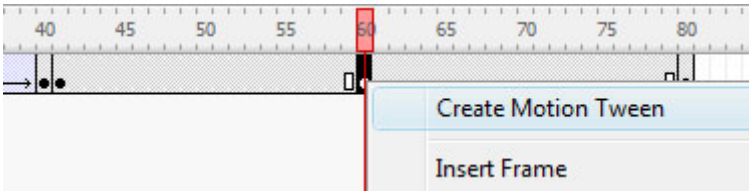


28. Next, again repeating earlier steps, you need to add in additional frames. Right-click and insert a Keyframe at frame 60 and at frame 80.

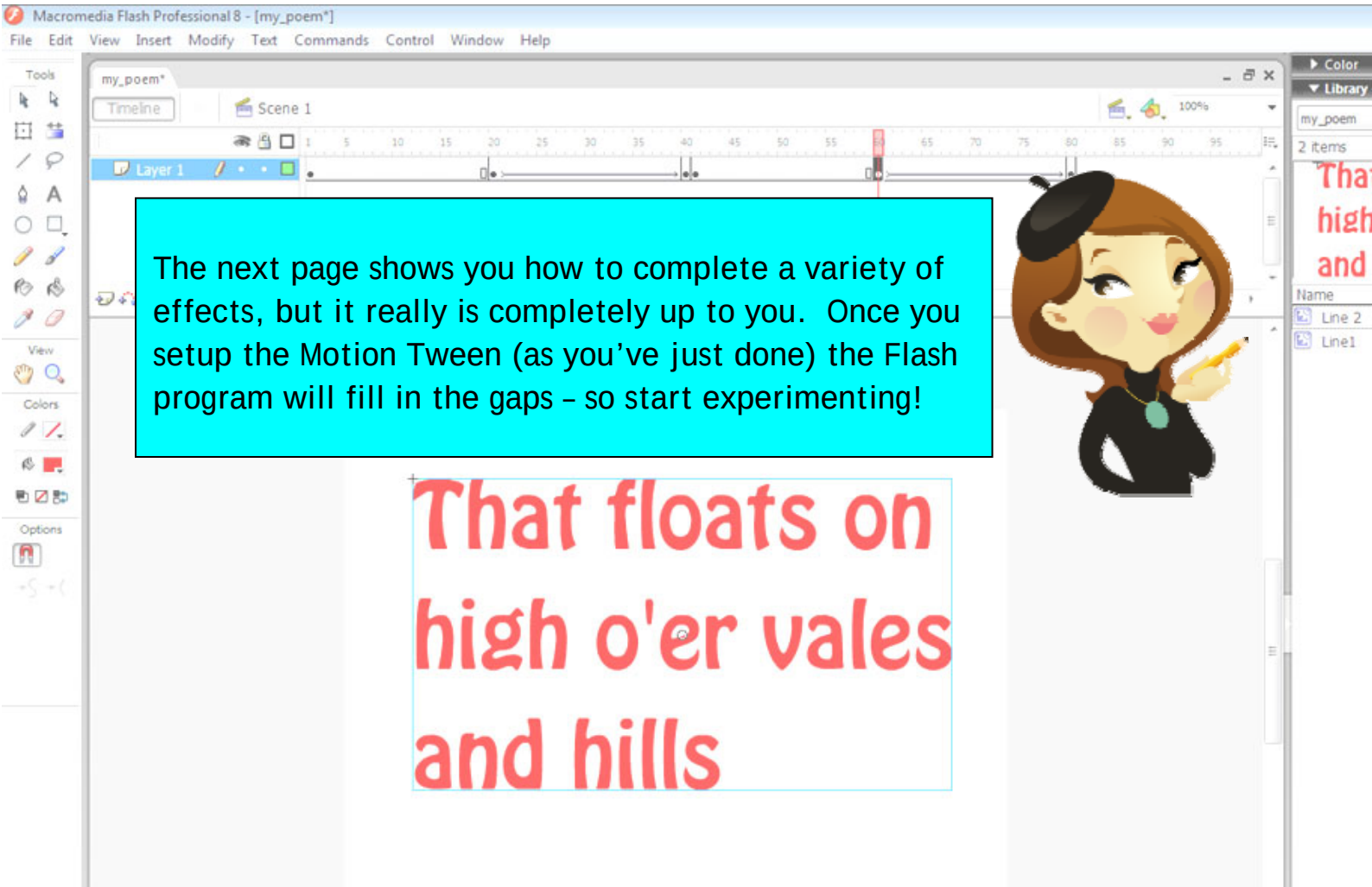


Why two Keyframes? Well, if you remember what we did before you must have frames where the line is actually visible (i.e. nothing happens on screen – it can just be read) and we need frames for the animation to take place.

29. As before, we will add our 'Motion Tween' to the second group of frames. Right-click on frame 60 and select 'Creation Motion Tween'

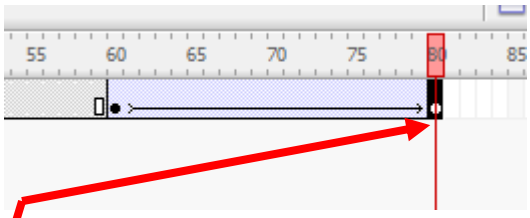


30. The next step it very much up to you. For line 1 we faded the movie clip out. As this is your creation you can now take full control – what will **you** do with your second line?



The next page shows you how to complete a variety of effects, but it really is completely up to you. Once you setup the Motion Tween (as you've just done) the Flash program will fill in the gaps – so start experimenting!

Animation suggestions

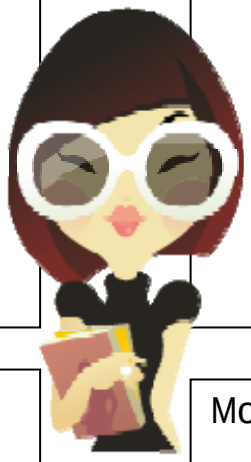


Remember these are merely suggestions – play around with the program to find your own!

Make sure your animation has the Motion Tween setup – the first Keyframe currently looks identical to the second Keyframe.

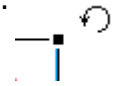
Scale / Resize

- Select your MovieClip (remembering to choose the final frame).
- Right-click and click on '**Free Transform**'.
- Resize the clip by dragging the corners.
- You could shrink it to make it disappear or enlarge it to make it look like you are zooming in.
- You can also use the 'Scale' option by clicking **Modify** > **Transform** > **Scale** from the main Flash menu.



Rotate / Skew

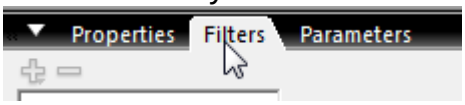
- Select your MovieClip.
- From the main Flash menu select **Modify** > **Transform** > **Rotate and Skew**.
- Hover near the edge of your MovieClip – on straight edges you can hold down your left mouse button to **skew**.



- Alternatively, hover near a corner and hold down the left mouse button to **rotate**.

Filter effects

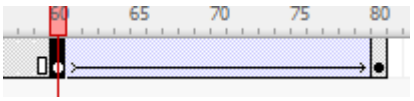
- As with the other suggestions, select your MovieClip.
- Click on the 'Filter' panel next to the 'Properties' panel near the bottom of your screen.



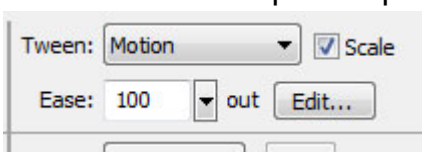
- Click the '+' option to add a filter and experiment with the effects.
- For example, select 'Blur' and make the Blur X and Y 100 – see what effect that creates.

Movement / Easing

- Select your MovieClip.
- Just move it off the main Stage – in any direction you like. Flash will automatically fill in the gaps and create the animation.
- Experiment with 'Easing' – click on the first frame of your tween:

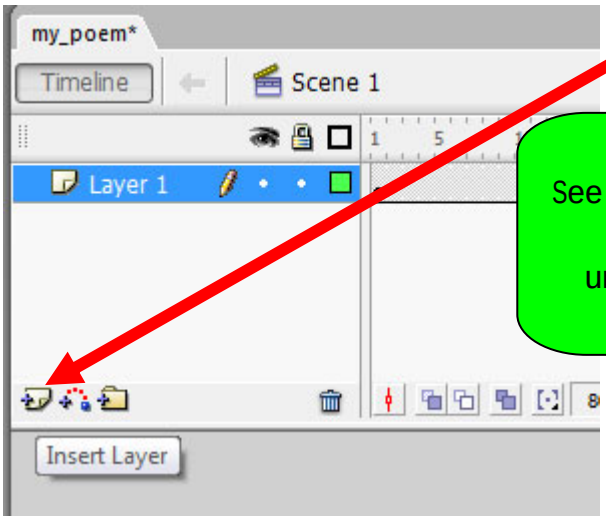


- Experiment with the 'Ease' number in the Properties panel:



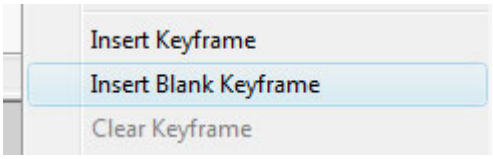
Developing your work further

- It is quite a task – but the aim is to try and complete your whole poem in the same way.
- Turn each line into a separate MovieClip, add additional frame, create the Motion Tween and animate the final frame.
- However, if you've done all that you could then add in images to complement your animated text.
- Go back to the start of your animation and insert a 'Layer'



See if you can move the layer so it is underneath Layer 1

- Use the new layer to add in your own images. You could draw them using the Flash tools or use images from other sources.
- Each time you reach a new line in your poem, just right-click and insert a Blank Keyframe to add new images.



Andrew Field, EffectiveICT.co.uk, 2009