

CHAPTER 1

InFocus

WPL_F202

GETTING TO KNOW FLASH CS5

Flash CS5 is part of a suite of design, graphics and web tools from Adobe.

Flash is a state of the art web design tool. With Flash you can create animated graphic presentations, or “movies” in Flash jargon. These animations don’t have to be like cartoons – they can also be sophisticated navigation elements like buttons or menus that behave in some way out of the ordinary.

Before you leap into creating anything, it is worth taking some time to become familiar with the Flash environment and its features.

In this session you will:

- ✓ learn how to start **Flash CS5**
- ✓ gain an understanding of the **Flash** screen
- ✓ learn how to switch window items on and off
- ✓ **Learn** how to dock and undock items
- ✓ learn how to use shortcut menus
- ✓ learn how to access the three toolbars in **Flash**
- ✓ gain an understanding of panels
- ✓ learn how to work with panels
- ✓ learn how to work with **Flash** workspaces
- ✓ learn how to run a movie on your default browser
- ✓ learn how to exit **Flash**.

STARTING FLASH

When Flash is installed it will be added to the standard Windows **Start** menu and will also appear as a **shortcut** on the desktop. It can be started from either of these options. When it is

started, the default version of Flash will display a welcome screen which allows you to open an existing Flash file or start a new one.

Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that your computer is switched on...

- 1 Click on the Windows **Start** button at the bottom left-hand corner of the screen to display the menu
It's a round button with the Windows logo...
- 2 Click on **All Programs**
- 3 Click on **Adobe Flash Professional CS5** and wait for the program to start
Unless it has been turned off the Welcome screen will appear...
- 4 Click on **Flash File (ActionScript 3.0)** under **Create New** to create a new **Flash** file and see the standard **Flash** screen



For Your Reference...

To start Flash from the Windows **Start menu**:

1. Click on the Windows **Start** button
2. Click on **All Programs**
3. Click on **Adobe Flash CS5 Professional** and either open an existing file or create a new one from the **Welcome** screen

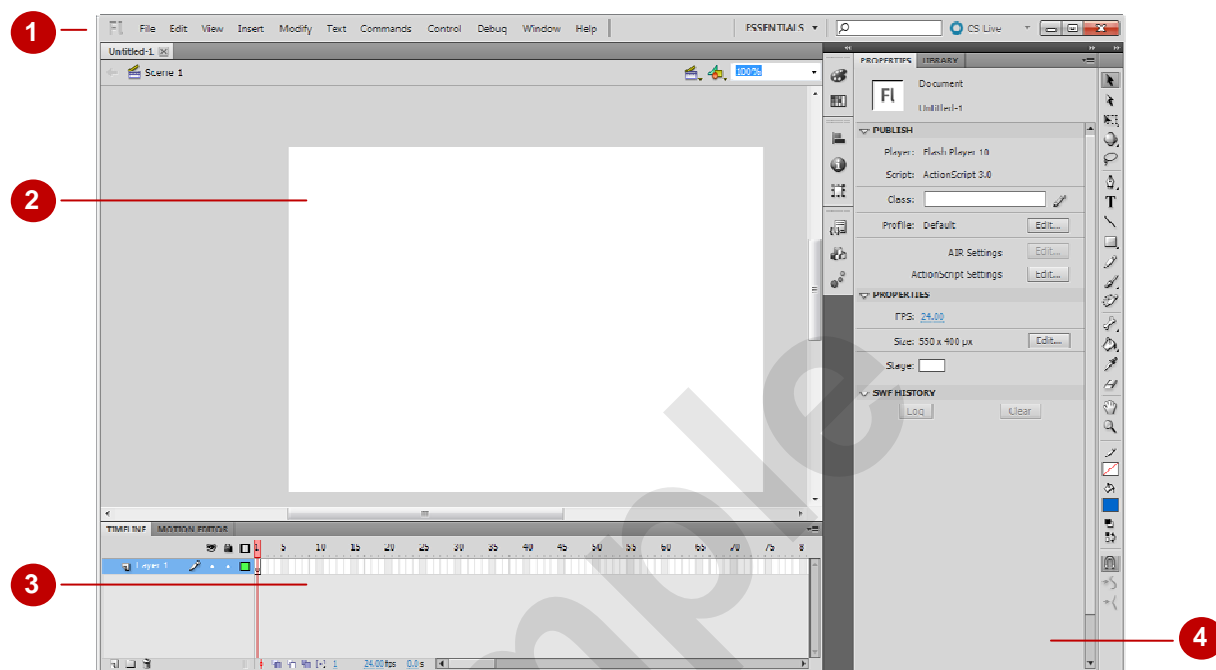
Handy to Know...

- There are quite a few choices for creating a new Flash file. For standard animations choose **Flash File (ActionScript 3.0)**. If you need compatibility with earlier versions of Flash choose **Flash File (ActionScript 2.0)**. The other options are for specialised operations.

UNDERSTANDING THE FLASH SCREEN

When you start Flash, one large window will open surrounded by a variety of panels. The large white part of the screen, known as the **Stage**, is where you will do most of your work. Below the

Stage you'll see the **Timeline** which provides access to the various frames of your movie. The Flash window always opens showing a blank, untitled movie.



1	Menu Bar	The menu bar runs across the top of the Flash screen. It provides commands and options that allow you to work with your Flash file. Each option on the menu bar displays a pull-down menu with further commands and options.
2	Stage	The large white area on the screen is known as the Stage , and it is here where you draw the pictures that will eventually become your movie animation. The grey area around the Stage is referred to as the work area. Here you can place items that you don't want seen when the movie is run – this area is sometimes referred to as the Backstage area.
3	Timeline	The Timeline is a complete record of your movie. It shows each scene , each frame and each layer of the movie. Frames appear in chronological order. If you click in any frame on the Timeline you will be taken to that frame and its contents will display on the Stage . The Timeline is actually two dimensional – frames run horizontally across the screen while the layers of a drawing run vertically down the screen.
4	Panels	Panels are special areas giving you access to options and settings for the objects and things you are working on. For example, if you have a rectangle on the stage there will be a panel of settings for changing the colour, size and shape of that rectangle. Panels can be docked to the right of the screen or appear to be floating so they can be dragged where you like. In addition, the subpanels can be collapsed and expanded – a subpanel is expanded when it appears with a downward arrow next to it.
5	Toolbars	Flash has three toolbars (not shown above) which provide easy access to commonly used menu items.

WORKING WITH THE FLASH WINDOW

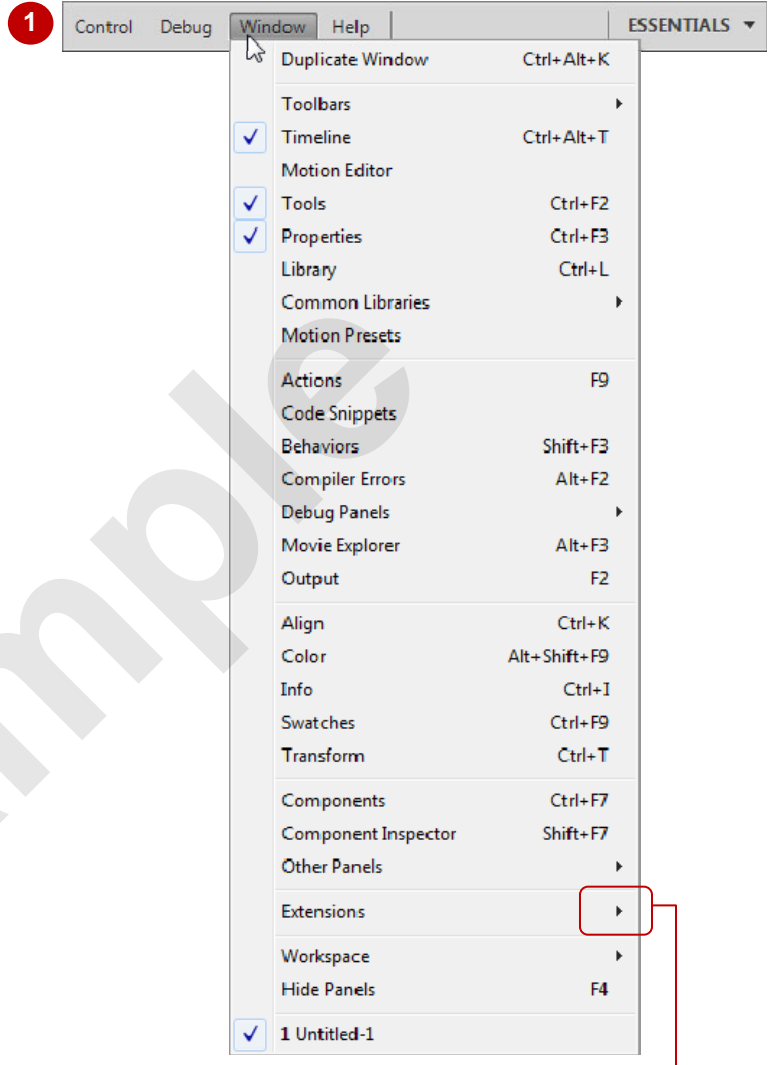
The Flash window can be changed and customised to suit the way you work and to match the things you are doing. You can add items to the screen and also remove the ones

you don't presently need. The easiest way to achieve this is through the commands in the **Windows** menu on the menu bar.

Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that Flash has started...

- 1 Select **Window** on the menu bar to see the **Window** pull-down menu
- Items with a tick ☒ on the menu will currently appear on the screen...*
- 2 Click on **Timeline** and notice how the **Timeline** vanishes from the bottom of the screen
- 3 Select **Window > Tools** to remove the **Tools** panel from the right of the screen
- 4 Select **Window > Properties** to remove the **Properties** panel from the screen
- At this point you'll have a much greater area for the Stage...*
- 5 Repeat steps 2, 3, and 4 to reinstate the items that you switched off



Items with an arrow to their right have another sub-menu associated with them. The sub-menu will appear when you hover over or click on the item

For Your Reference...

To **turn on** and **off main window items**:

1. Select **Window > Timeline** to switch the **Timeline** on and off
2. Select **Window > Tools** to switch the **Tools panel** on and off

Handy to Know...

- The characters to the right of menu commands represent **keyboard shortcuts**. For example, above you can see that the **Timeline** can be switched on and off by holding down **Ctrl** and **Alt** and pressing **T**.

FLOATERS AND DOCKERS

Toolbars, panels and other items can be attached to a part of the window and when this occurs they are referred to as **docked**. But most items can also be dragged around the screen and

positioned almost anywhere you like. When this occurs they are referred to as **floating**. You can change items from **floating** to **docked** and vice versa.

Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that Flash has started...

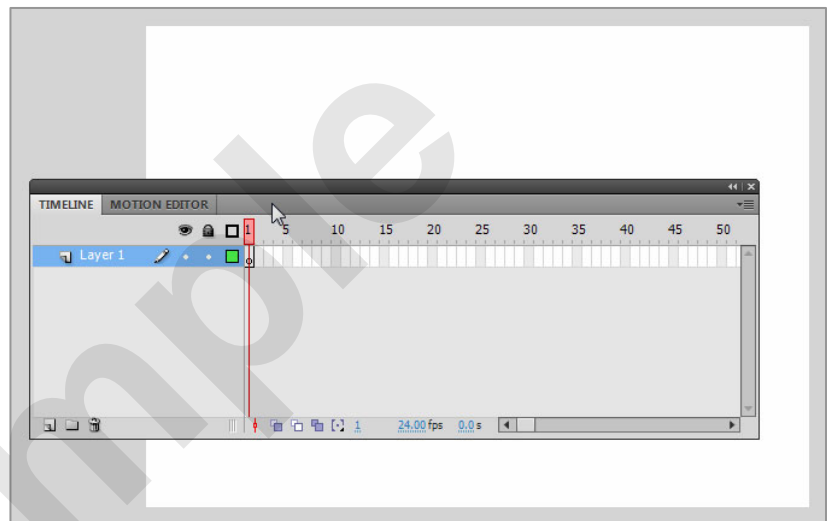
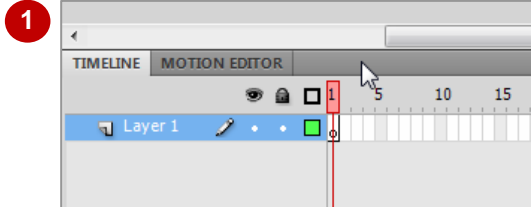
- 1 Move the mouse pointer to the dark grey bar to the right of the **Timeline**, as shown

- 2 Hold down the left mouse button and drag the **Timeline** up so that it floats above the **Stage**

The Timeline will change from docked to floating...

- 3 Drag the **Timeline's** grey bar to the left until it docks to the left of the **Stage**

- 4 Drag the **Timeline's** grey bar to the bottom of the **Stage**. When a horizontal line appears along the bottom of the stage, release to dock it at the bottom of the screen again



For Your Reference...

To **undock** a **screen item**:

1. Drag its top grey bar anywhere onto the screen

To **dock** a **screen item**:

1. Drag its top grey bar to the side of a screen

Handy to Know...

- Most of the elements on the screen can be dragged around. Floating items are great for panels and swatches that may be used on a casual basis. You can open them from the **Window** command, then position them close to your work, and then finally close them when you are done.

USING SHORTCUT MENUS

As you would expect with a sophisticated application like Flash that has been around for quite a while, there are many ways of accomplishing the same task. Almost everything

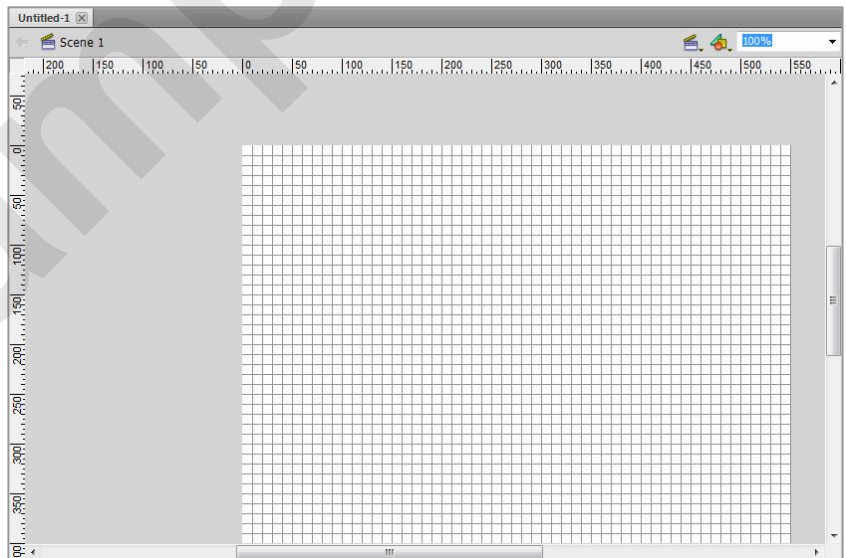
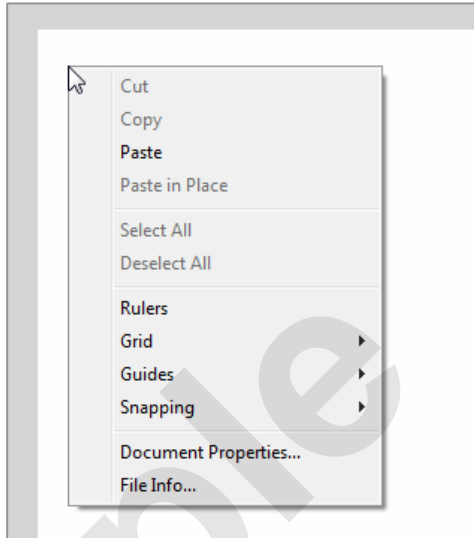
you can do can be found on the menu structure. To make commands easier to access there are also **short cut menus** which are displayed by right clicking on a screen item.

Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that Flash has started...

- 1 Right-click on the stage to display a short cut menu of commands relevant to the stage
- 2 Click on **Rulers** to display rulers at the top and left of the stage
- 3 Right-click on the stage, click on **Grid** and then on **Show Grid** to see a grid pattern on the stage
- 4 Right-click on the stage, click on **Grid** and then on **Show Grid** to turn off the grid pattern again
- 5 Select **View > Rulers** to turn off the rulers

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For Your Reference...

To **display** a **shortcut menu**:

1. Right-click on the item you are working on or with to display the relevant shortcut menu for that item

Handy to Know...

- Most items and operations in Flash have a shortcut menu associated with them. In this courseware we'll mostly use the standard menu at the top of the screen, but you should also right-click during the course to see if there is a shortcut menu available and to see the options that are there.

USING FLASH TOOLBARS

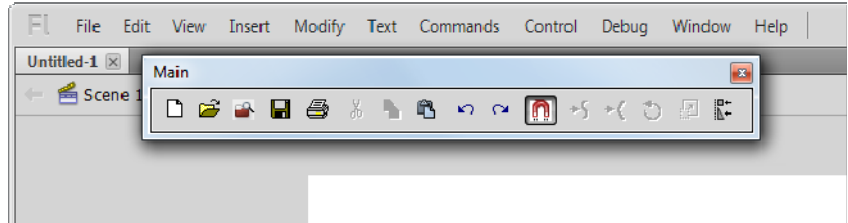
Unlike many other applications Flash has only three toolbars – **Main** for opening, closing and saving files; **Controller** for playing movies; and **Edit** for making changes to a movie timeline. The

Main and **Controller** toolbars can be docked or floating, while the **Edit** toolbar remains fixed (when it is visible) at the top of the screen. Toolbars are normally turned off.

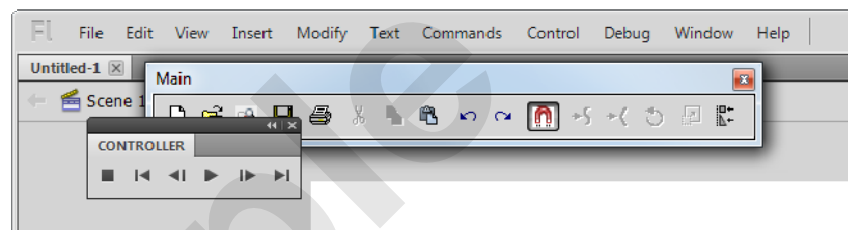
Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that Flash has started...

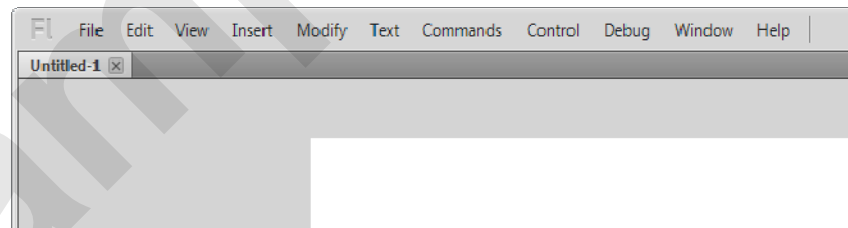
- 1 Select **Window > Toolbars > Main** to display the **Main** toolbar
- 2 Select **Window > Toolbars > Controller** to display the **Controller** toolbar
- 3 Spend a few moments dragging the two toolbars around the screen
- 4 Click on **close** [X] on the **Main** toolbar to close it
- 5 Click on **close** [X] on the **Controller** toolbar to close it
- 6 Select **Window > Toolbars > Edit Bar** to remove the **Edit** toolbar from the top of the stage
- 7 Select **Window > Toolbars > Edit Bar** to display the **Edit** toolbar again



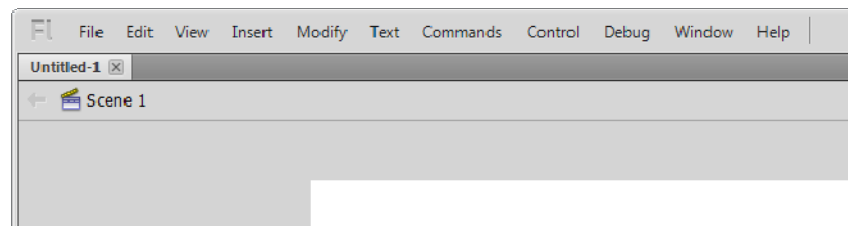
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For Your Reference...

To **display** or **hide** a **toolbar**:

1. Select **Window > Toolbars** and choose the relevant toolbar

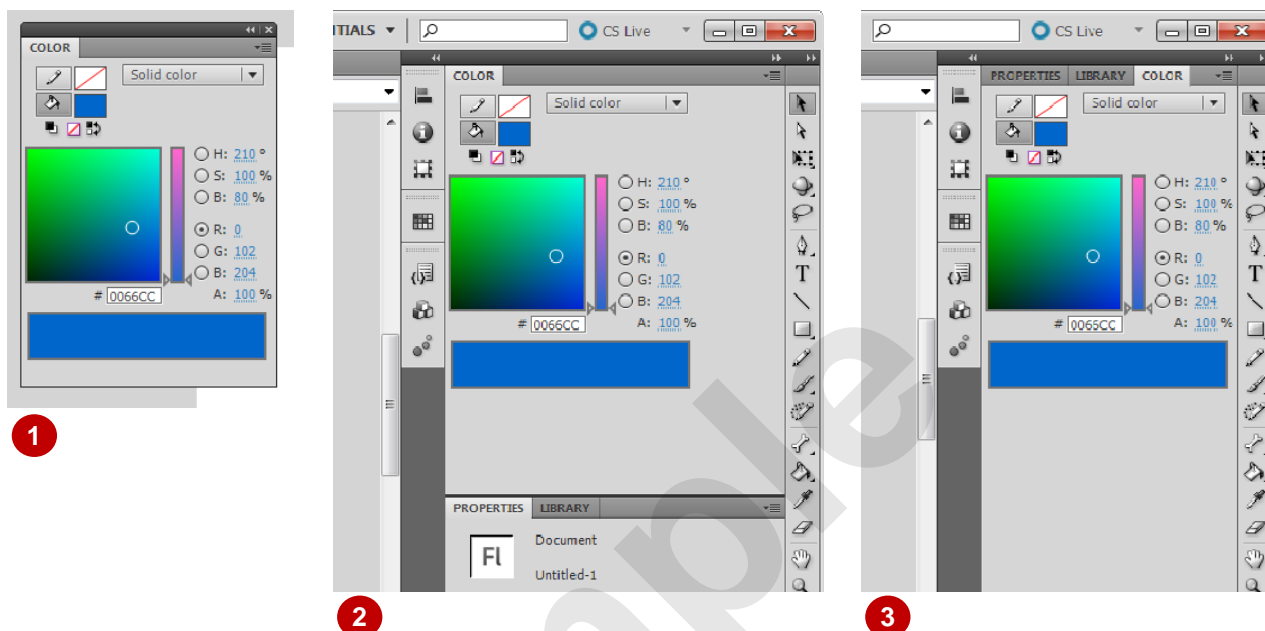
Handy to Know...

- Don't confuse the three toolbars (**Main**, **Controller** and **Edit**) with the **Tools** panel at the right of the screen. The **Tools** panel contains drawing tools that are used to create drawings on the stage.

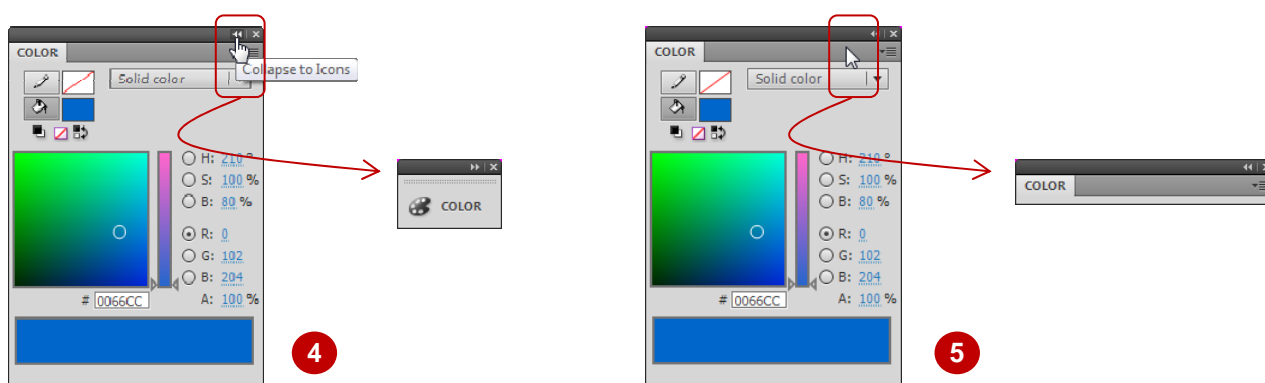
UNDERSTANDING PANELS

A **panel** is a cross between a toolbar and a dialog box. Flash has many panels which can be switched on and off, and docked or floated, to give you a myriad of options and possibilities for

the organisation of your Flash workspace. Panels usually also contain settings that can change items and objects on the stage.



1	A floating panel can be dragged around and placed almost anywhere on the screen
2	A docked panel is docked or tied to a specific part of the screen. Notice that there are also Properties and Library panels docked below the Colour panel
3	An embedded panel is placed alongside other panels. Here the Colour panel has been embedded with the Properties and Library panels. This is done by dragging the panel into another panel to embed it into the existing panel



4	Clicking on the Collapse to Icons button will collapse the panel to an icon – great for temporarily seeing more of the screen
5	Double-clicking on the grey bar next to panel tabs will collapse all of the panels. Clicking on it again will expand them again

WORKING WITH PANELS

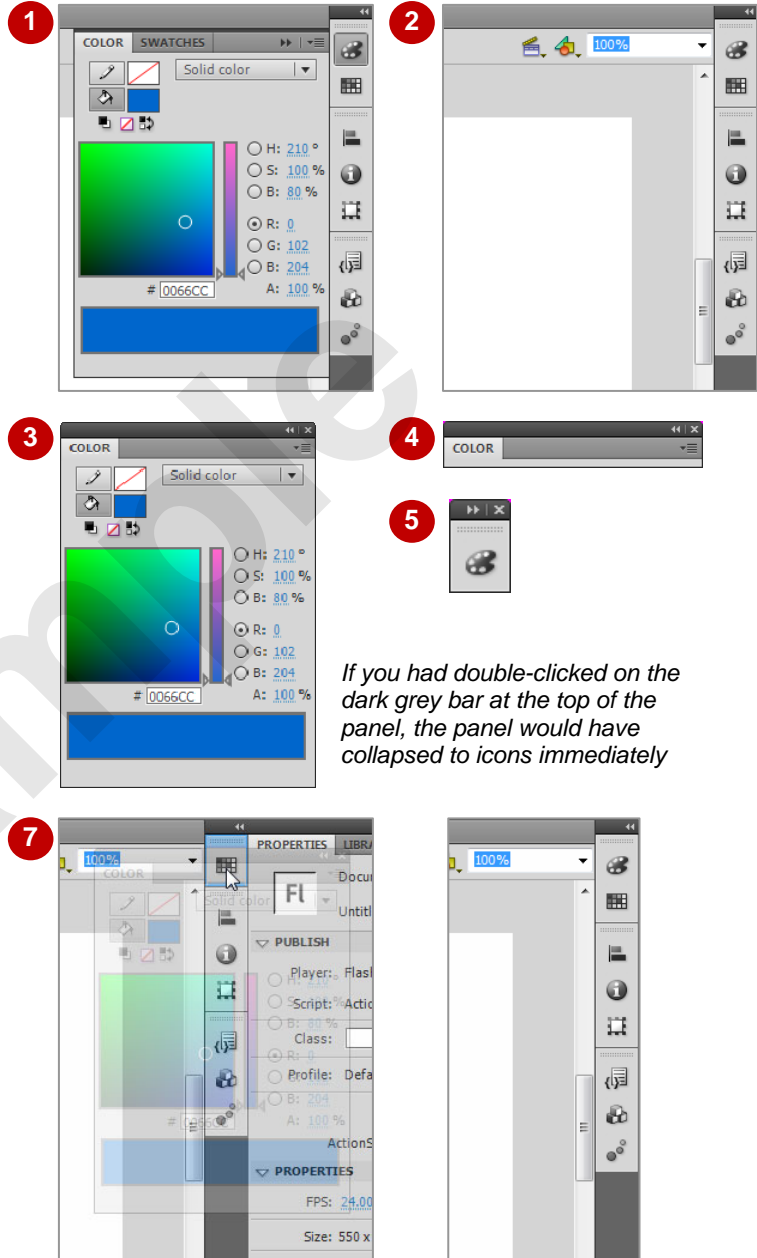
Panels provide access to the settings required to work with objects on the stage. All panels can be opened using the **Window** menu command, but the most common panels are even more readily

available by clicking on their icons in the vertical panel bar. The default setting for panels docked in this panel bar is that they automatically collapse to icons when you've finished working with them.

Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that Flash has started...

- 1 Select **Window > Colour** to display the **Colour** panel group docked to the vertical panel bar
Notice that the Swatches panel is docked with the colour panel...
- 2 Click on the stage – the **Colour** panel group will close automatically
- 3 Click on the **Colour** icon in the vertical panel bar to open the panel again, then drag the **Colour** tab onto the stage to float only the **Colour** panel
- 4 Double-click on the mid-grey bar to the right of **Colour** to collapse the settings of the panel
- 5 Click on the **Collapse to Icons** button to collapse the panel to an icon
- 6 Click on **Expand Panels** to expand the panel again
- 7 Drag the panel by its grey bar onto the **Swatches** icon in the vertical panel bar, releasing the mouse button when a blue line surrounds the **Swatches** icon
The Colour panel will again be docked and grouped with the Swatches panel



If you had double-clicked on the dark grey bar at the top of the panel, the panel would have collapsed to icons immediately

For Your Reference...

To **open** a **panel**:

1. Select **Window** and choose the panel that you wish to open

Handy to Know...

- Pressing **F4** will hide all panels on the screen (including the timeline which is deemed to be a panel). Pressing **F4** again will display all panels again.

WORKING WITH WORKSPACES

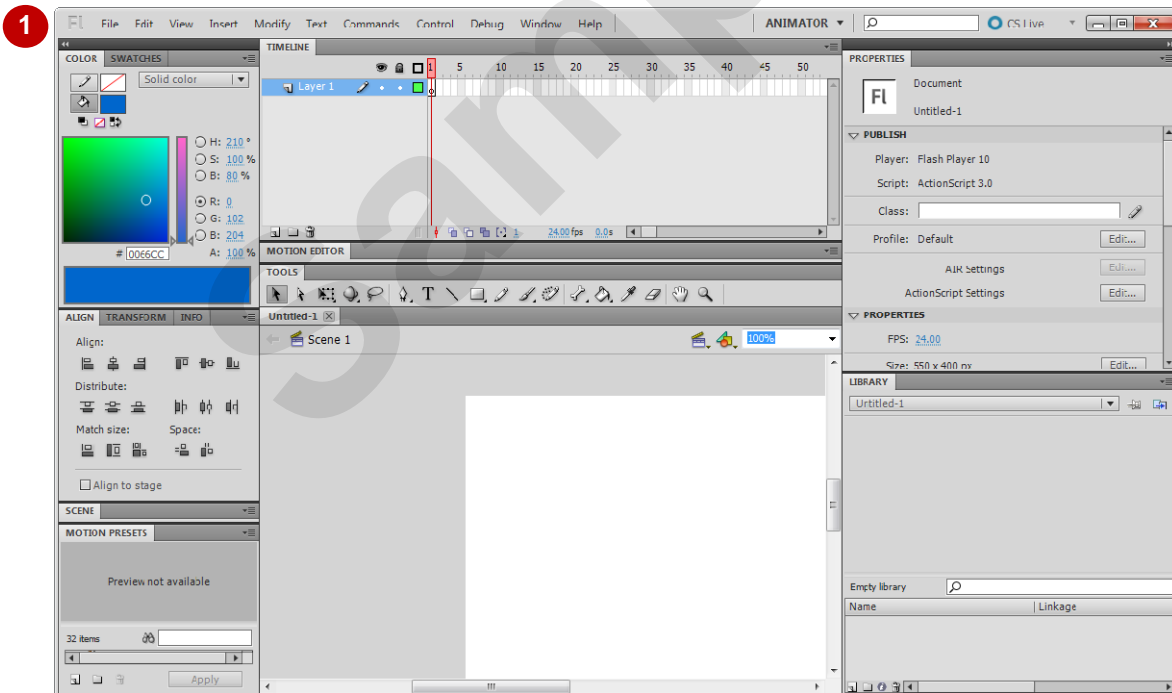
All of the items and their settings currently on the screen at any time are known as a **workspace**. Given there are so many panels and toolbars at your disposal there are a myriad of ways your

workspace could appear at anytime. Flash also has some built-in workspaces designed to show relevant panels when working on specific Flash operations.

Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that Flash has started...

- 1 Select **Window > Workspace > Animator** to see the screen (oops, *workspace*) set up for animations
- 2 Select **Window > Workspace > Classic** to see the classic workspace of Flash
- 3 Click on the **Classic** button at the top of the screen to see a menu of available built-in workspaces
- 4 Click on **Essentials** to return to the **Essentials** workspace
- 5 Select **Window > Workspace > Reset 'Essentials'** to reset the **Essentials** workspace to its Flash defaults



For Your Reference...

To **choose** a **preset workspace**:

1. Select **Window > Workspace** and click on the workspace you'd like to see, or, Click on the workspace button at the top of the screen and click on the desired workspace to switch to

Handy to Know...

- Flash remembers your current workspace when you save a file. When you open an existing Flash file all of the workspace settings are displayed as they were when the file was last saved.


RUNNING A FLASH MOVIE

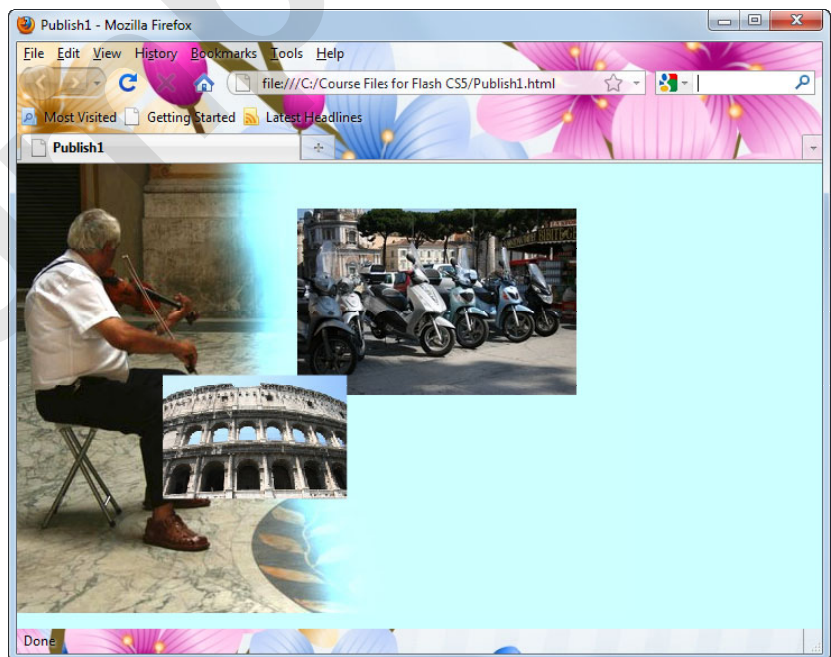
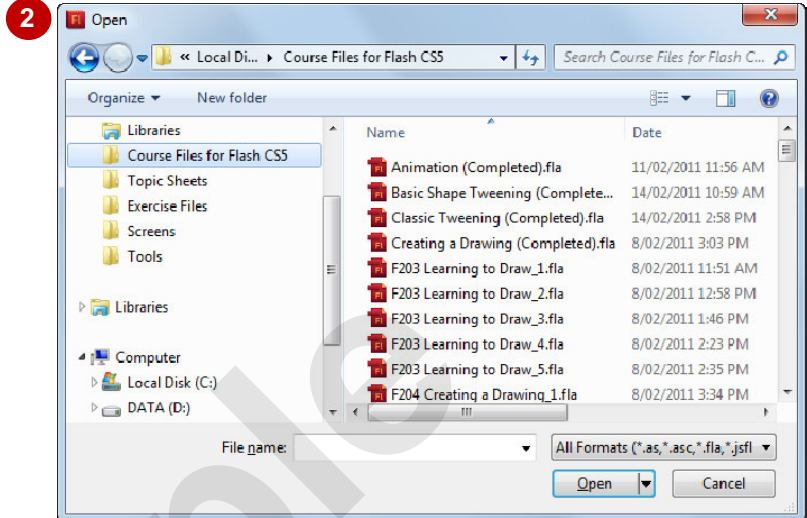
Flash is an animation tool and the animations are designed to be **played**. Animations can be played in a number of ways. To play your animation in a web browser, the animation needs

to be **published**. Flash working files can be identified by the three letters **fla** that appear at the end of the file name. Published movies instead have the three letter file extension **.swf**.

Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that Flash has started...

- 1 Select **File > Open** to display the **Open** dialog box
- 2 Navigate to the **C:\Course Files for Flash CS5** folder
- 3 Click on **Publish1.fla** and click on **[Open]**
- 4 Press **F12** to publish the file to your default web browser – this will take a few moments
- 5 Right-click on the movie as it is playing and select **Loop** to stop it looping
- 6 Right-click on the movie and select **Play** to start it playing again
- 7 Click on the browser's close button  to close the browser



For Your Reference...

To **publish** a **movie** to the **web browser**:

1. Open the Flash file
2. Press **F12** to publish the movie to your default web browser

Handy to Know...

- You can also play the movie from within Flash. Publishing it to the web browser lets you see how it will appear when running on the Web.

EXITING FLASH

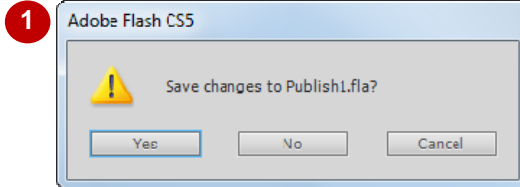
When you have finished watching your television you simply turn it off – do that with a computer and there is the potential to lose your work. In applications the safest way to exit is to use the

commands on the **File** menu. Using the **File** menu options, you can either **Close** a file and remain in Flash, or **Exit** which both closes any open files and takes you out of Flash.

Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that Flash has started...

- 1 Select **File > Exit**
If you currently have a movie file open that contains unsaved changes you will be asked if you wish to save the file before exiting...
- 2 We haven't really created or changed anything that we wish to keep at this stage so if the save prompt appears, click on **[No]**



For Your Reference...

To **exit Flash**:

1. Select **File > Exit**

Handy to Know...

- Flash movies are saved in a file that ends with **.fla**. When you save a file, you are saving the **fla** file and not any files that have been published while using the movie.