



LEARN HOW TO USE THE CUT-OUT ANIMATION TECHNIQUE

Overview of the Cut-Out Animation Technique

The cut-out animation technique is great to use when you want to create an animation that looks fluid without spending hours adjusting individual keyframes and producing artwork. This technique is used to produce a range of popular animated television shows including South Park, Blues Clues and Angela Anaconda. It is a popular technique to use because it saves production time and leads to smaller file sizes.

To create a cut-out animation the animator designs the character and divides the character into smaller segments. The segments are then placed on different layers. This enables them to be moved using both traditional techniques and motion tweens.

Introduction to this Tutorial

In this tutorial, you will learn how to create an animation sequence using the cut-out animation technique. The animation you create will be of a cartoon-style character that has multiple parts. The character I have chosen for this demo is a pelican, however you can select any character that has around four to five main parts. Ofcourse, once you have mastered the technique, you can create as many parts as you require.



I have worked on large animation projects that have had over 100 individual parts that are assigned to different layers. Flash can support hundreds of layers - more than you'd ever need.

Planning Your Character

If you have decided to animate a character using cut-out animation, it is really handy to plan how you will segment your character. This can be done quickly on paper. By doing this, you should end up with a diagram similar to the one of the stork shown above. Having a diagram or plan of this type is really helpful once you begin to work with your character.

Take a moment now to plan the character you wish to animate.





FLASH CLASSROOM TUTORIAL - CUT-OUT ANIMATIONS IN FLASH CS3

1. Use the draw tools to draw the different parts of your character.
2. Once you are happy with each part, convert each part of your character to a Movie Clip Symbol. To do this select the part and select **Modify > Convert to Symbol**. Select the **Movie Clip** behaviour option and enter the name for the part e.g. right leg, left arm etc.

Repeat this process for each of the parts of your character.

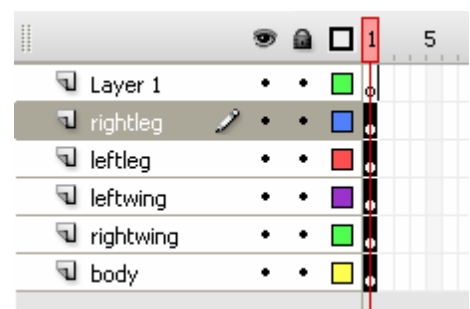
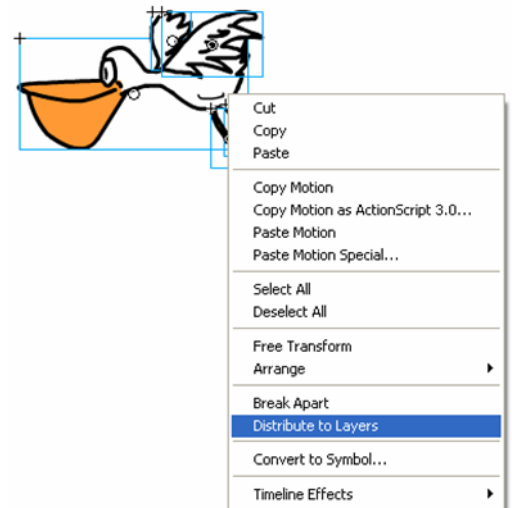
Congratulations—you have taken the first important step in your cut-out animation. If you were doing a very simple cut-out animation sequence where you were just going to use the traditional keyframing technique to animate your character, you could simple just add a keyframe, move each part, add another keyframe and move each part and so on to create your animation. This process however would still be fairly time consuming and would not use Flash to its full potential.

In the next step, you'll put all of the parts of your character onto different layers. This will set them up so you can use motion tweens and motion guides to animate them.

3. Whilst you could add each layer individually, rename each layer and then copy the parts onto the layers, there is an easier way. Flash can do this automatically for you and will even rename the layers providing you have converted each part to a symbol and given them a name.

To get Flash to do this for you, **select all of the parts of your character** and **right click** and select **Distribute to Layers**.

Your timeline should now look like the one shown here.



Animating Each Individual Part

Each part of your character is now on its own layer and is ready to animate using either traditional keyframing techniques, motion tweens or motion guides.

If you are new to Flash and don't know how to animate using these methods, take the Flash Classroom animation tutorials and then come back and continue this animation. For those who already have these skills, enjoy playing with your new cut-out animation character.

