



Corporate Flow



Illustration



Image Editing



Automation



Web



Text Effects

Canvas Tips and Techniques



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Using Canvas with Flash

Learn how to export Canvas-based illustrations into Flash.

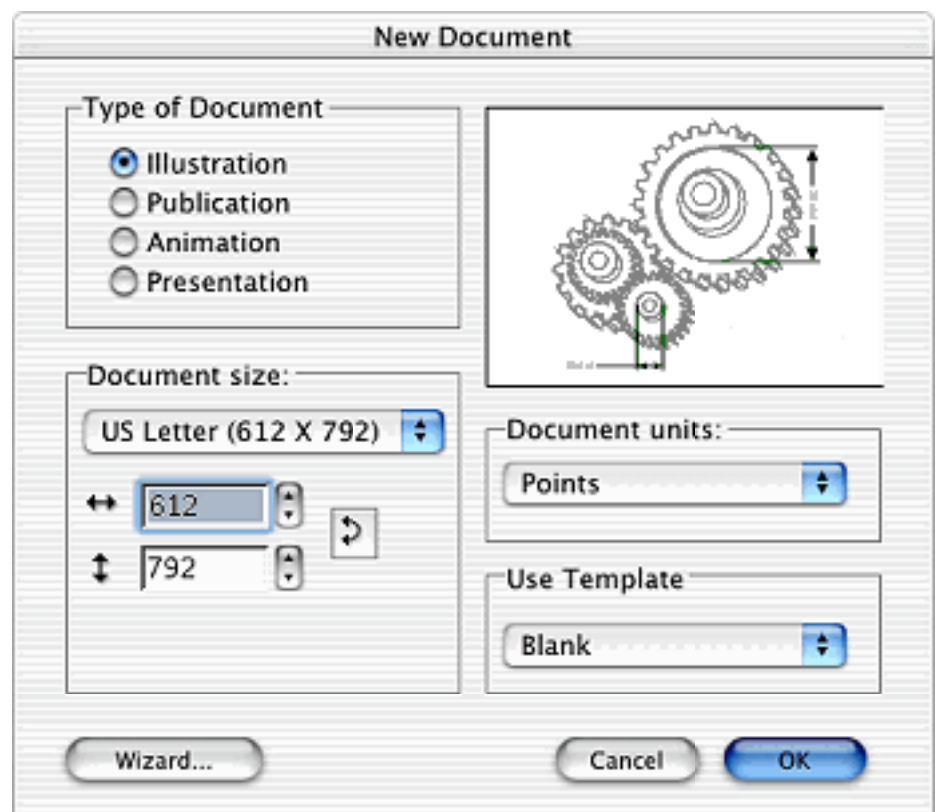
As you are probably aware, Flash™ technology has attained a high level of popularity among graphic designers for its ability to create Web graphics, animation, on-line advertising, high-energy presentations, and even completely interactive Web sites. However, even with all of Flash's power and versatility, many designers have turned to third-party illustration programs for their ease of use and advanced drawing tools. Using Canvas, designers could cut production time and attain a level of graphical sophistication not possible within Flash.

You may be aware that Canvas 8 has the ability to create a complete animated Flash file (.swf), which in turn can be deployed for viewing from within a visitor's Flash-enabled Web browser. But in the following tutorial, we will address the professional designer who is looking to push the graphical element beyond Flash's capabilities while saving hours of work.

Step 1

Creating the Document

Let's begin by opening a new Canvas document. Since we are going to be exporting the illustrations into Flash it is best to choose Illustration as the file type. From within the New Document dialog box (File > New), choose Illustration as Type of Document. Next, select US Letter as the Document size. When you are finished, click OK.



Step 2

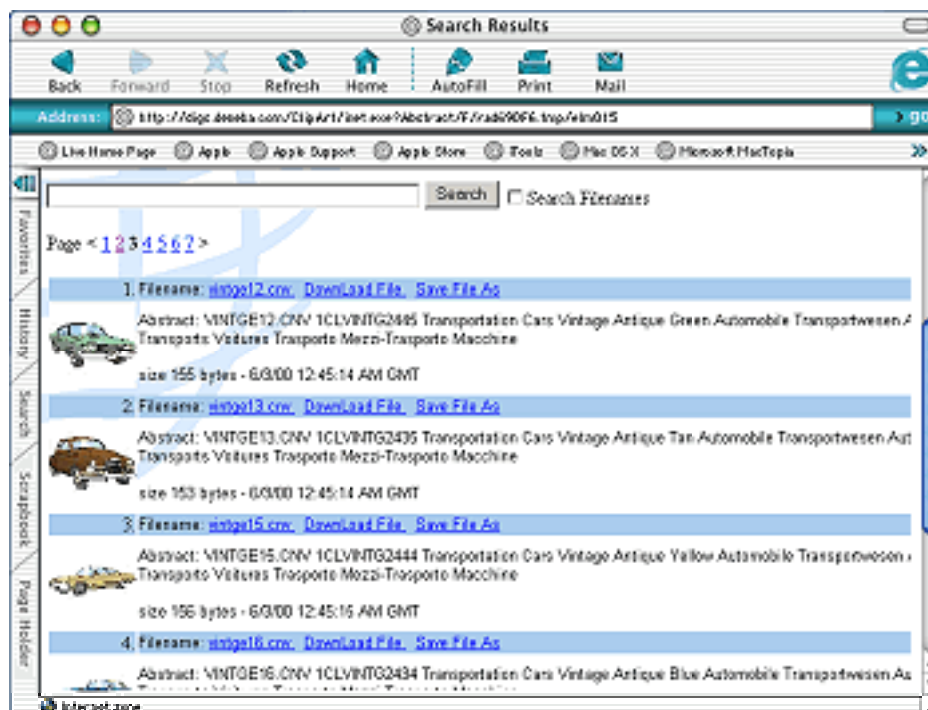
Acquiring Images

Our project calls for us to create a Flash sequence featuring a yellow vintage 1970s muscle car speeding through a desert road. So using the Canvas Clip Art Collection available on CD, [on-line](#), or through [DenebaShare](#) (Windows only), we find the image we are looking for. There is only one problem, the color is green.



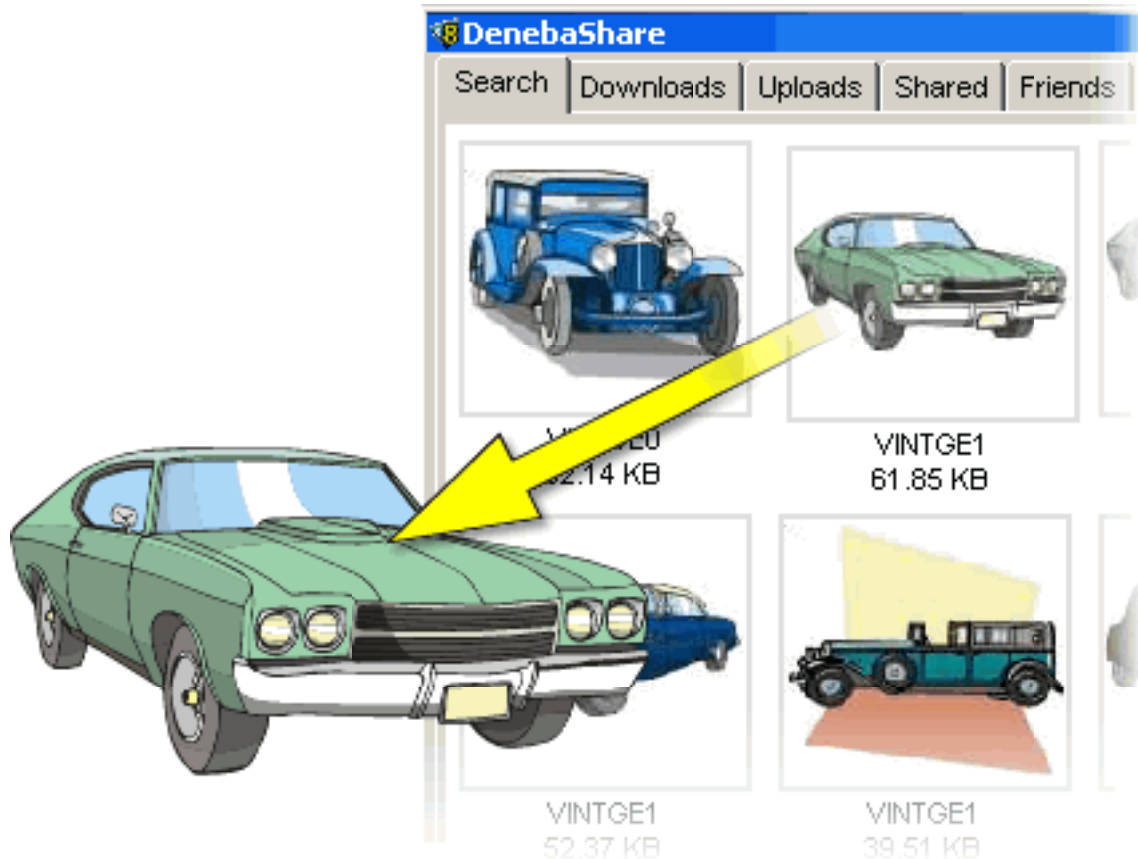
If you are using the Canvas Clip Art CD, choose File > Place and locate the Canvas image you wish to use and press OK.

Using the [on-line clip art](#), we enter a keyword, in this case "automobile", and press Search. When you find a suitable image, choose "Download File" and save it to your computer. Then, choose File > Place and locate the Canvas file you just downloaded and press OK.



(continued)

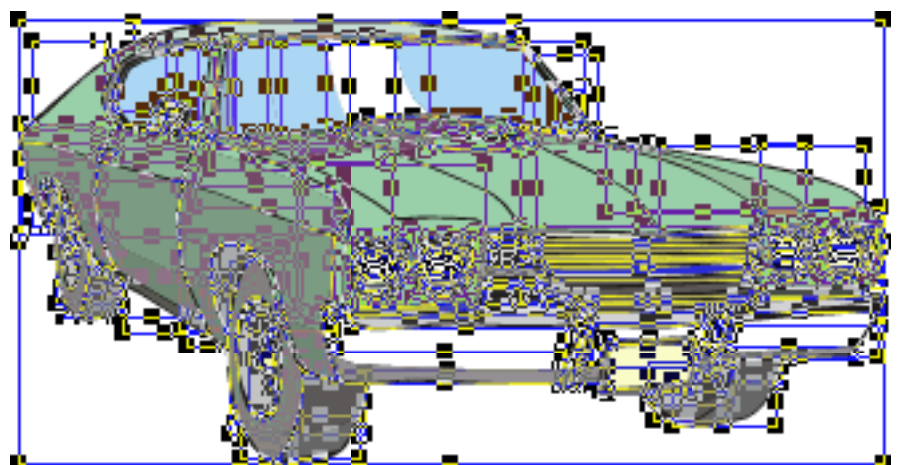
Using [DenebaShare](#) (Windows only) open the DenebaShare palette (Windows > Palette > DenebaShare). Enter a keyword (e.g., automobile) and press Search. When you see an image you want, click on it and drag it into your working area.



Step 3

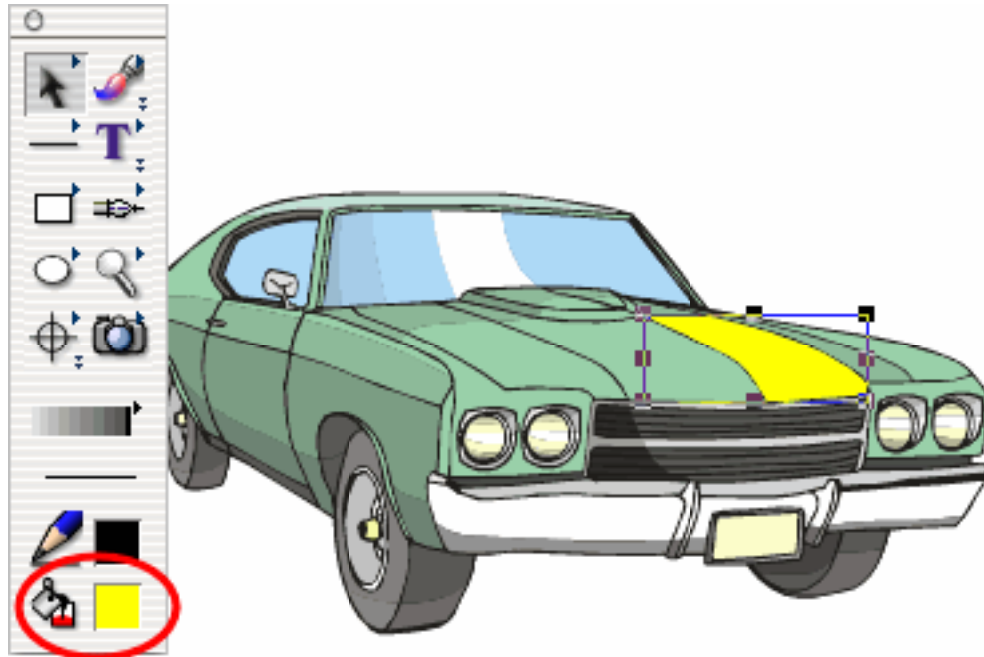
Modifying the Images

Since the project calls for yellow car, we are going to ungroup the object and change the green fill ink to yellow. To do this, first click on the car to select it using the Selection tool from the Toolbox. Then, press Ctrl+U (Windows) or Command+U (Mac) to ungroup the object. With the object ungrouped, we can now change the color.



(continued)

Next, let's select the part of car that we want to change to yellow. Click on the fill ink icon in the Toolbox to open the Inks palette. From this palette, we select the shade of yellow that suits our needs. We'll continue to repeat this until all of the green has been replaced with yellow.



Next, we'll regroup the clip art by selecting all of the objects that make up the car and then pressing Ctrl+G (Windows) or Command+G (Mac).

Note: If you want to maintain editable vector illustrations when exported to Flash, it is important that you **don't** use any Opacity, Directional Transparency, or SpriteEffects on any object or group of objects. The use of such effects will cause the objects to render in Flash.



(continued)

Step 4

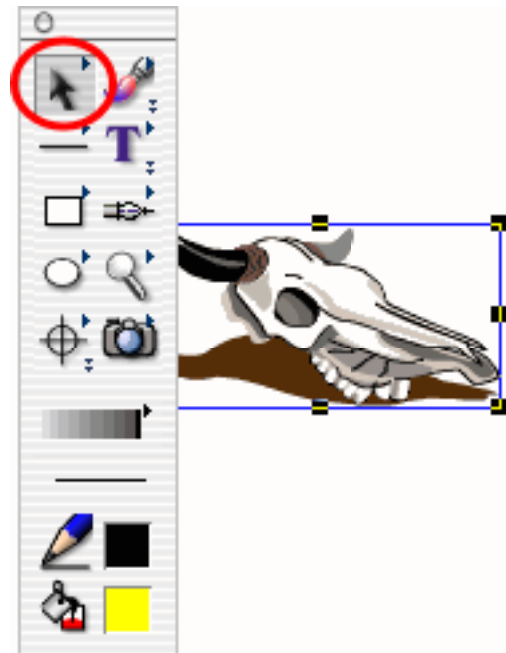
Adding Scenery

Using the techniques we learned in Step 2, we seek out images to be used in the background. Since this is going to be a desert scene, we'll add a cactus and cattle skull to our work area. Again, all of this clipart is available on the Canvas clipart CD, on-line, or through DenebaShare.



It may be a good idea at this point to place all the components of our desert scene together to get a feel for the project and adjust the scaling if any of the objects are out of proportion.

As you could see the cattle skull is a little large in relation to the rest.



To resize the cattle skull, select it with the Selection tool to get it into edit mode. When it is in edit mode, you will see the handles appear around the skull as shown in the example.

Now, hold down the Shift key while you drag one of the corner handles inward to the desired size. Holding the Shift key while resizing your vector objects maintains the object's height to width ratio.



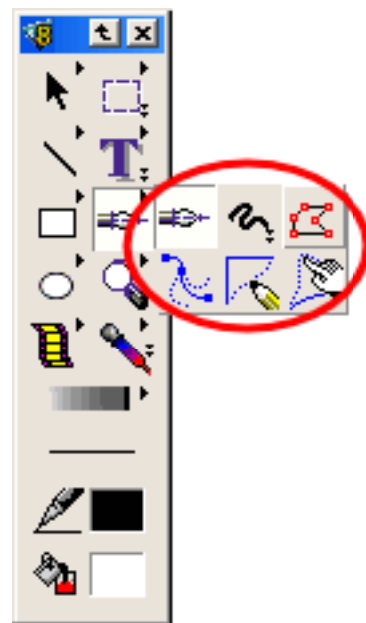
Step 5

Creating Objects

Sometimes a situation may arise when you have to create your own custom graphics. With the wide array of powerful vector drawing tools at your disposal, you'll have no problem.

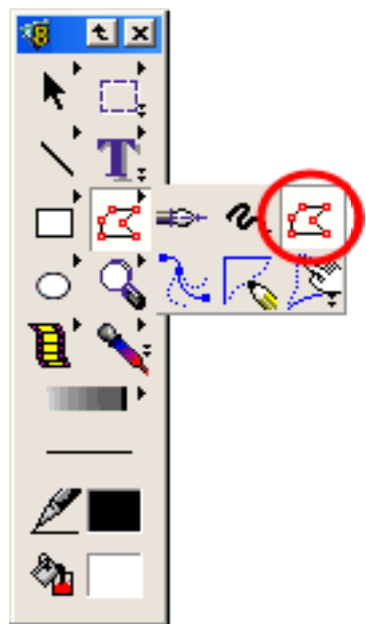
There are many ways to create new objects in Canvas, with the following examples being just a few:

One way is using Canvas' Path tools, located in the Path tools palette. You can draw and edit vector objects of any shape, size, and color.



Our project calls for the automobile to appear to be speeding down the road. To give our Flash scene the illusion of speed, we need to create some yellow road striping that will eventually whiz by our car.

To do this, we'll select the Polygon tool from the Toolbox.



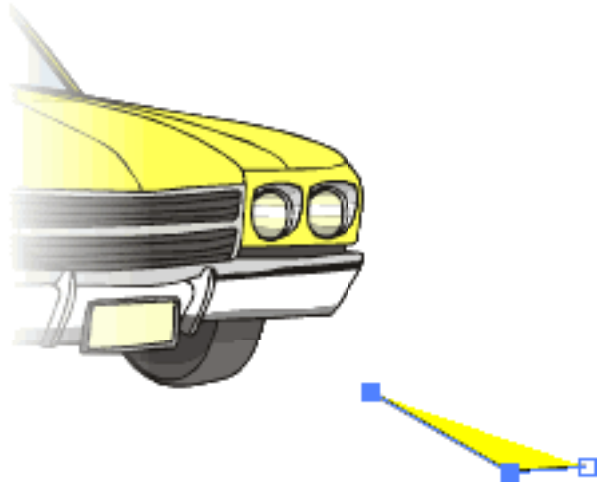
(continued)

We are going to create the road striping just to the right of our car. The reason for creating it next to the car is to get a good reference point as to the direction and angle of the striping.

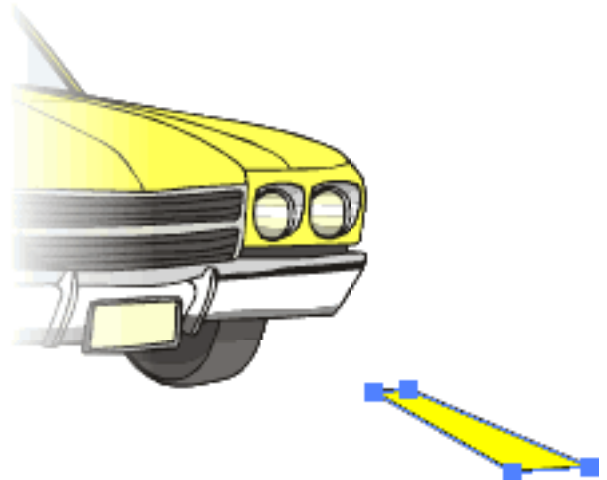
With the Polygon tool selected, we click just to the right of the car to set the first anchor point. The anchor point will appear as a small square.



Next, click where you want to place the second anchor point, then the third.

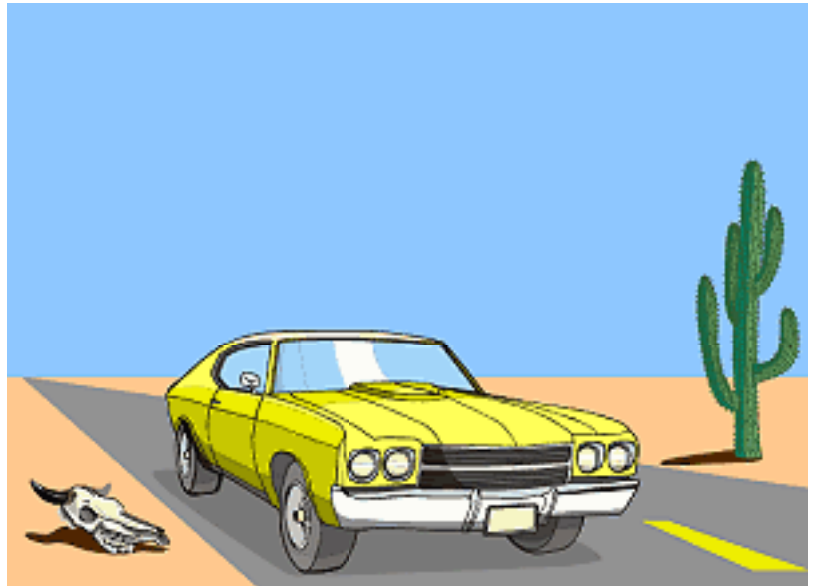


Continue to create anchor points to create a skewed rectangle like the one in our example. To complete the polygon, double-click on the starting point anchor. If you make a mistake while placing your anchor points, you could remove the last segment you created by pressing the Delete key.



(continued)

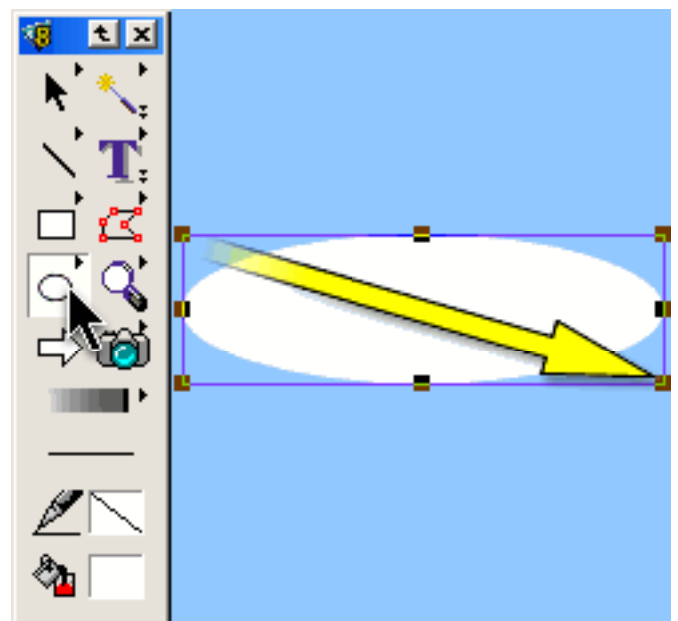
We'll use this same technique to create a road surface for the car to ride on as well as the sky and desert terrain. Putting this scene together may require you to rearrange the stacking order of your objects; e.g., to place the pavement behind the car, select the pavement with the Selection tool and choose Object > Arrange > Shuffle Down until it is behind the car.



Another way to create vector objects is to use Canvas' drawing tools. You can easily create basic shapes such as lines, rectangles, and ovals.

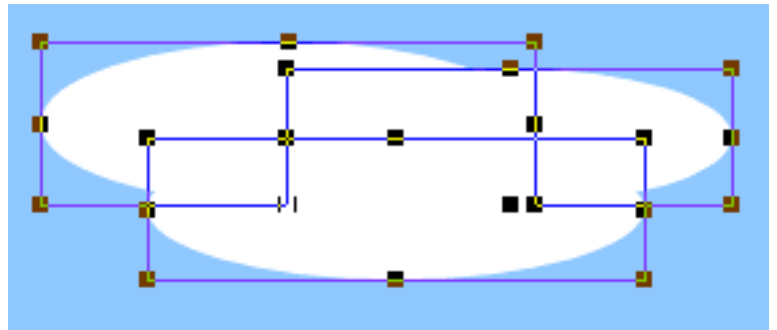


In this step, we are going to use the Oval tool in conjunction with the Combine palette to create a vector cloud for our desert scene. Select the Oval tool from the Toolbox. Then, click the cursor on the work area and drag across until the oval is the desired size.

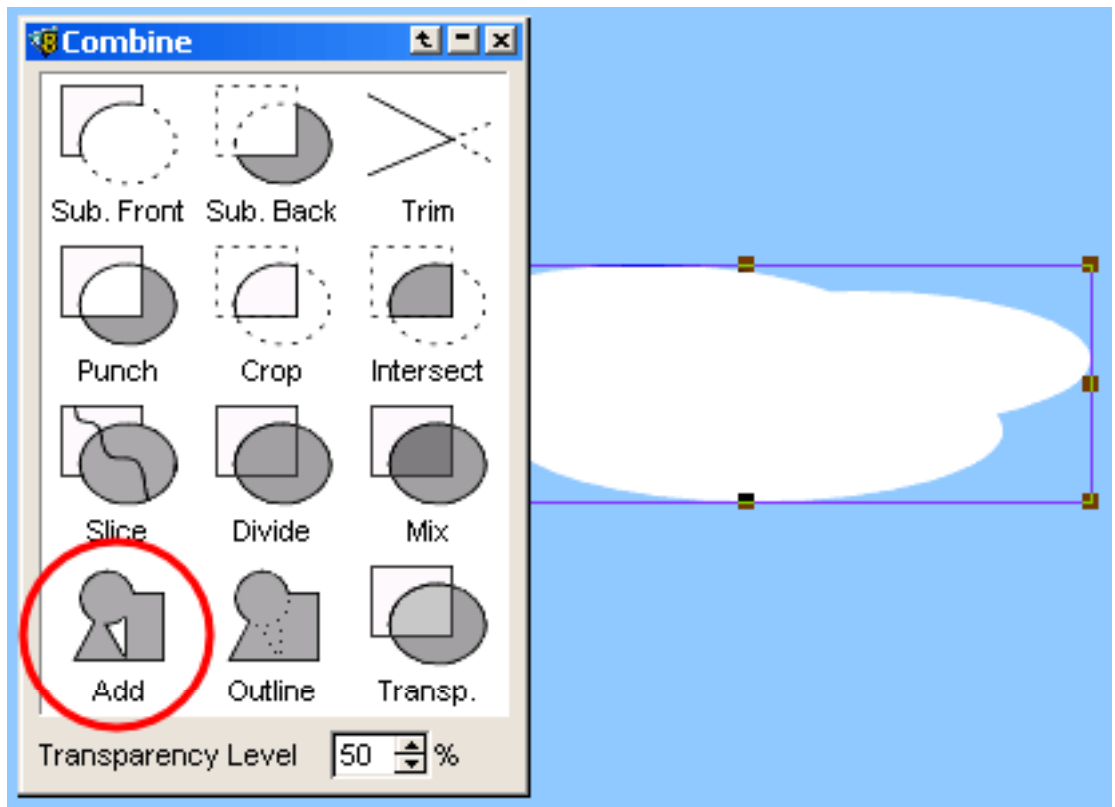


(continued)

Next, create two more ovals using this technique and place them over each other to create the cloud. When you are done, get the Selection tool and drag it around all three ovals to select them all.



Open the Combine palette (Effects > Combine) and choose Add. This effect will combine all three ovals to create a vector object cloud shape.



The completed desert scene.



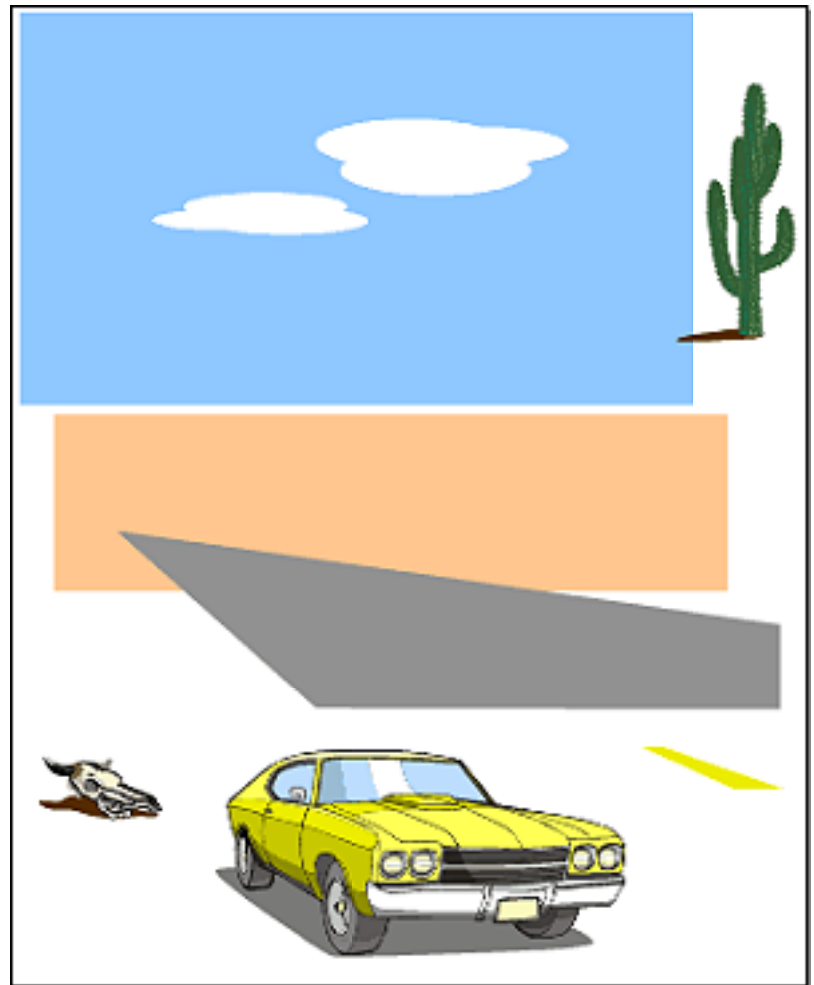
Step 6

Preparing for Export

With all the graphics now ready for export, we need to do one final thing. When objects are exported into Flash they will be ungrouped even though they are grouped in Canvas. This could become a problem if you have two groups of objects overlapping or very close to each other. To prevent this from happening it is a good idea to separate the vector objects or groups of objects before exporting to Flash.

You must also be sure that all of your objects are completely within the layout area. Objects outside the layout area will not export properly or may not export at all.

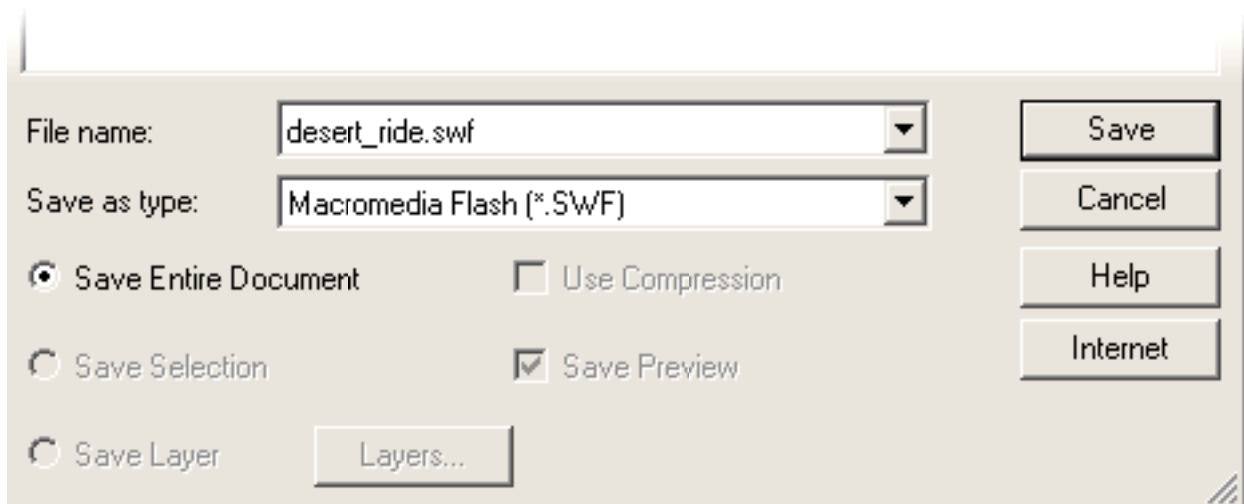
Remember, you must not use any Opacity, Directional Transparency, or SpriteEffects on any object or group of objects. Using such effects will cause the objects to render in Flash.



Step 7

Export to Flash

Now that all of our objects are placed within the layout area and separated from each other, we are ready to export. To export our work to Flash, choose File > Save As. Give the file a name; e.g., we chose desert_ride. Then select Macromedia Flash as the file type and press Save.



(continued)

Next, the Flash Options dialog box will appear. Within this dialog box, you have several options at your disposal.

General Options:

Export Mode lets you choose between SWF Player and Editor. SWF player creates an .SWF file for use in a Macromedia Flash player or compatible browser. The SWF Editor option generates the .SWF file so that it may be imported into Flash to be used in a number of ways. Since we are creating graphics for use inside of Flash, we choose SWF Editor.

Pages Export allows you to save a multipage document either as a single multiframe .SWF file or as a set of individual .SWF files.



Accurate Strokes enables exporting graphics that contain either calligraphic strokes or strokes that use texture, gradient, or hatch patterns. Choosing this option may make the export process more time consuming.

Image Options allows you to choose an image format that will be applied to all rendered images or sections. If you followed this exercise closely you should not have any rendered areas.

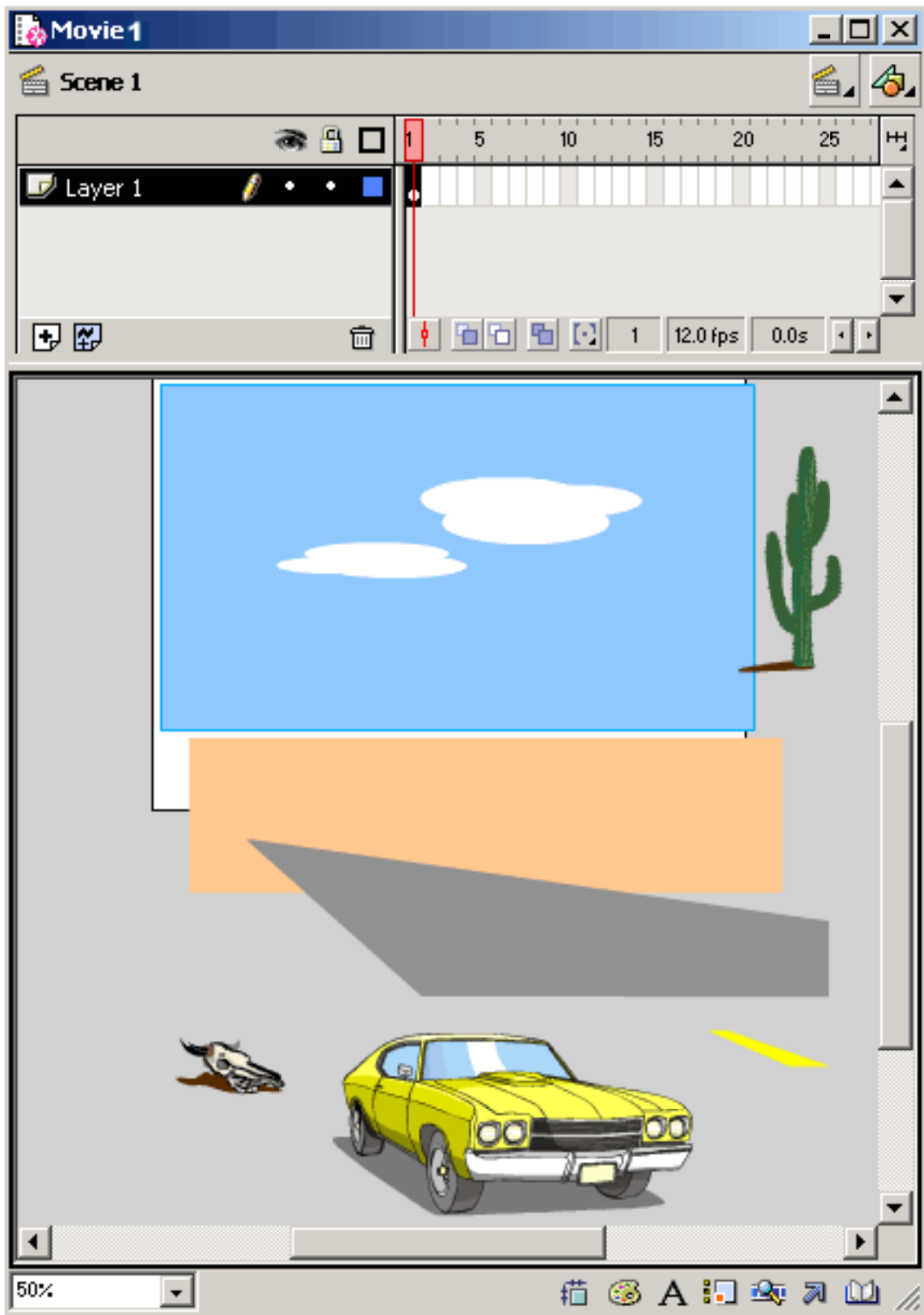
Checking Save these settings as default will use any changes you make in this dialog box as the default for all subsequental .SWF files.

After you have made all of your selections, press OK.

Step 8

Importing to Flash

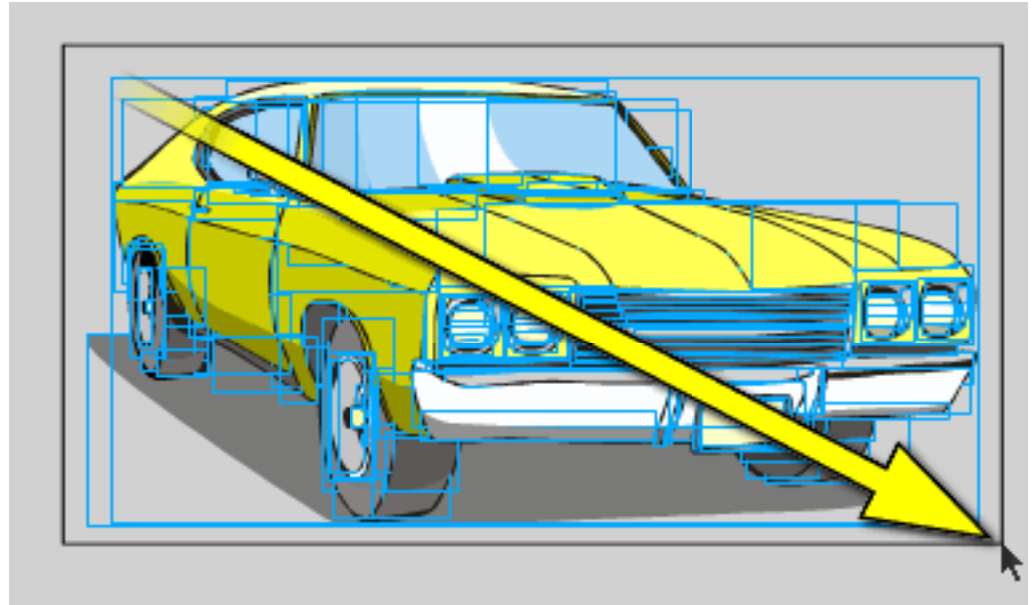
To import the objects you created in Canvas, you must first open a new or existing movie (Flash document). Then choose File > Import. Your objects will appear just as you left them in Canvas.



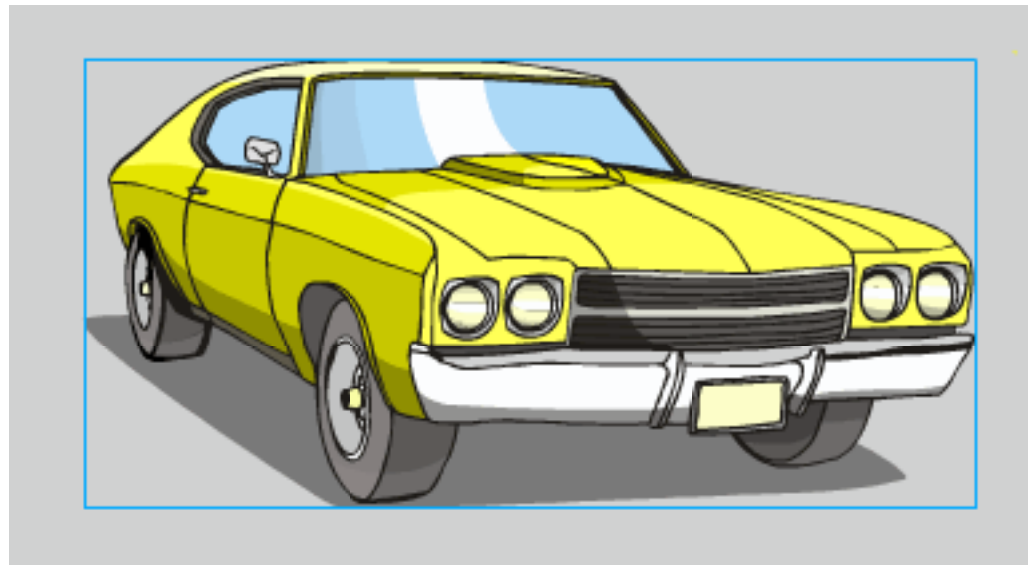
Step 9

Regrouping Objects in Flash

Before we get to work on creating our animation, we want to regroup all of the objects that make up our car illustration in Flash. To do this, simply drag your cursor across the image diagonally to select all of the objects. The selected objects will appear with blue rectangles around them.



Then choose Modify > Group and you are done. Now the car could be moved around and used as single object. Use this technique to group the rest of the graphics. Once you are done grouping all of the illustrations, you are ready to start working in Flash.



The actual process of animating the graphics is way beyond the scope of this tutorial, but the steps used to create the objects and import them is invaluable to all Flash users. Using these steps, designers can dramatically cut down on production time and create illustrations that would be impossible using only Flash's drawing tools.