

Flash: Drawing Tools

Lesson 11: Drawing Tools (Part 1)

Drawing Tools - Part 1

In this section we are going to talk about the drawing tools used in Flash. Drawing tools are used to create vector graphics. Vector graphics are objects (pictures, graphics, shapes) that are created using a mathematical equation. This equation contains information about the object's: shape, size, color, outline, and position. The reason that these objects are more advantageous than bitmap images is because of their drastically smaller file size. Because they are represented by an equation, its properties can be changed without truly affecting the object itself. Here, we will see most of the examples of drawing tools and some examples. We will look at the following tools: Arrow, Subselect, Line, Lasso, Pen, Text, Oval, Rectangle, Pencil, Brush, Ink Bottle, Paint Bucket, Dropper, Eraser, Hand, Zoom, and some of their options.

What is the best way to learn how to draw anything you want. Good Thinking! Practice is the correct answer. Even an average artist can create visually appealing graphics with the use of these tools but not on the first try. Also, many of these tools can be used with each other and these combinations also take practice as well. Good Luck, and here is a simple overview of what you can do with these tools.

1. Arrow: This is a not a tool you can actually draw shapes with but maybe the most used tool on the tools menu. This pointer will be how you configure, move, and reshape a lot of the objects that you have created in your movie. Just click on an object with the arrow to activate it and then it can be altered. The arrow has five main options:

Snap to Object: Objects you have created can be snapped into place.

Smooth: Allows a user to smooth lines.

Straighten: Allows a user to straighten lines.

Rotate: Allows a user to rotate elements on the stage.

Scale: Allows a user to resize elements on the stage.



2. Subselect: The subselect tool is related to arrow tool in many ways but the purpose of the subselect tool is to work with anchor points that are found along a shape's path.



3. Line: Some of these tools are all most identical to the same tools you can find in every drawing program. The line tool you can also find in the drawing tools in MSWord. It does exactly what I am sure you thought it does. Draws lines.



4. Lasso: The lasso tool is comparable to the arrow to in that it is used to for selecting certain objects. The arrow tool though defines specific geometric areas or pieces of an object. The lasso tool is used to select areas on the stage in any shape that you can draw with it. The end of the lasso is like a pen and is used to draw a shape(s) around a part of the stage that then will be the selected area. The lasso tool has three different options:

Magic Wand: default mode, allows you to select undefined areas in a shape

Magic Wand Properties: Adjusts Magic Wand tool settings.

Polygon Mode: Allows a user to select polygon type shaped areas in simple shapes.



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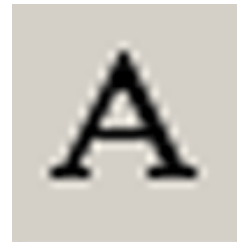
(Part 2)

Drawing Tools - Part 2

1. Pen: The pen tool can be used to create a series of points that will automatically be interconnected as the user creates new ones (So, click one point and then a second, some where else on the screen, and now they are connected. Two points makes a line.) A user can use this tool in conjunction with other tools in the panels to give you different effects when the object is closed. Remember, as soon as you create an object or element; you can reshape and move it with the arrow tool and subselect tool.



2. Text: The text tool is about as self-explanatory as a tool created on the personal computer today. This tool like any other word processing application or graphics application is exactly the same. See also: The panels page for more information.



3. The Main Drawing Tools:

Oval: As advertised: you use this to draw ovals. Sounds simple, but there is so much more you can do with them after you create them. Think panels!

Rectangle: Creates rectangles. Other options (see ovals)

Pencil: The pencil tool lets you basically draw a line as if you were using an actual pencil, so this means freehand. It does give you options though to help you out if your freehand judgment is not so good. These options include: straighten, smooth, and ink.

Brush: This is the average brush tool that is accompanied by many options. This option will let you paint, paint fills, paint behind, paint a selection, or paint inside. Of course, the other standard options like brush size and shape still apply to this tool.



4. Ink Bottle: The ink bottle deals with the stroke of an object. Color can be many different things though including the actual color, size, or style. Use this tool in conjunction with the Stroke panel (see panel page).



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(Part 3)

Drawing Tools - Part 3

1. Paint Bucket: This tool, which was also described on the panels page, is basically used to fill a selected piece with a full color, gradient, or bitmap style.



Dropper: The dropper tool allows a user to sample the fill or line of a shape that is currently located on the stage. Then you can apply it to another part on the stage. Meaning: if you import a graphic or like a certain color that is not easy to find on the stroke panel. Then use the dropper tool to click on the color you want and that color will then be located in the tool bar, under the active fill color.



Eraser: . The erase tool does exactly that, it erases, but it can erase certain sections of the stage (or object in stage) without touching anything else. This tools gives options erase exactly what they are called: erase normal (erases everything), erase fills, erase lines, erase selected (erases currently selected area), and erase inside.



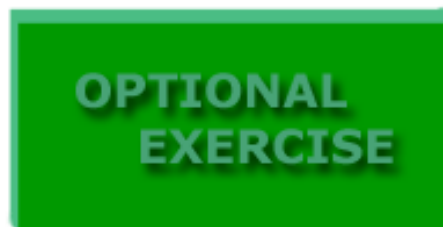
Hand: One purpose: moves the entire stage where ever you want it. This also can be done, of course, with the use the scroll bars but not as easily. Very useful for when you want to see a part of the stage that is not visible if you are zoomed in close. TALK TO THE HAND!!!!



Zoom: . Zooms in and out to get a closer or farther view of the stage. Can zoom in up to 2000% or can be shrunk to as low as 8%.



I hope that gave you a quick reference to the drawing tools used in Flash. Remember it is not a wise idea to import all of your graphics, so an intermediate knowledge of these tools will only make your movie that much better.



Exercise: Check out these graphics that were drawn with only using the tools in Flash (See website for example.). The purpose of this exercise is to use various tools to create a vector graphic, but try to create the exact ones that were created. Challenge!!

(See website for example.) if you want to try to duplicate these much more CHALLENGING graphics. YES, they were all created in Flash using the simple drawing tools.