# How to work with text

Adobe Flash Professional lets you add text to a Flash application in two formats:

- You can add Text Layout Framework (TLF) text.

- You can add Classic text.

## Using the Text Layout Framework

TLF text provides the following enhancements over Classic text:

- You can adjust a wider range of character aspects, such as leading and tracking.

- You can rotate text more easily.

- You can flow text across multiple containers, as it does in a magazine page layout.

- You can better control the attributes of Asian text.

- You can create right-to-left text.

The Text Layout Framework is available as an option in the Properties panel.

TLF text requires that ActionScript 3.0 and Flash Player 10 or later are specified in the publish settings of your FLA file. See the guide "How to publish a Flash document" for more information about publish settings.

*To create TLF text:*

1. Start Flash and open a new blank document (ActionScript 3.0).

2. Click the Text tool.

3. Make sure the Properties panel is open. If not, select Window > Properties.

4. Select TLF Text from the Text Engine menu (**Figure 1**).

5. Move the pointer to the Stage.

   The pointer changes to a cross hair with the letter *T* attached to it.

6. Drag to create a container (**Figure 2**).

7. Release the mouse button and click in the container.
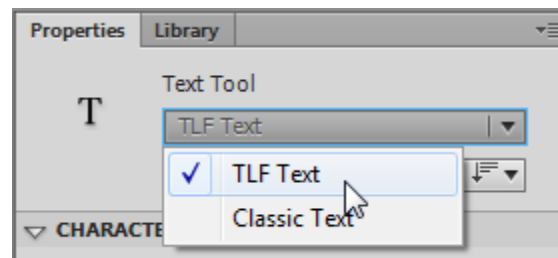
8. Type some text (**Figure 3**).



**Figure 1** Text Engine menu.
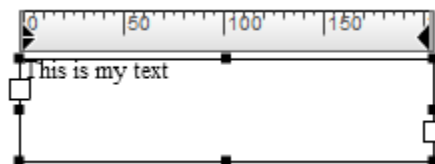


**Figure 2** Dragging to create a container



**Figure 3** Text container

This document requires Adobe Flash Professional CS6. Technical instructions may differ depending on your version.

**Managing text flow for TLF text**

If you fill a Flash TLF text container with more text than fits within the bounding box, a red plus symbol appears. This red plus indicates the text is *overset*. Overset text is text that does not fit in the container. You can solve the problem of overset text by making the container bigger, but often you will want to continue the text in another container, either on the same page or on another page. This is called *text flow*.

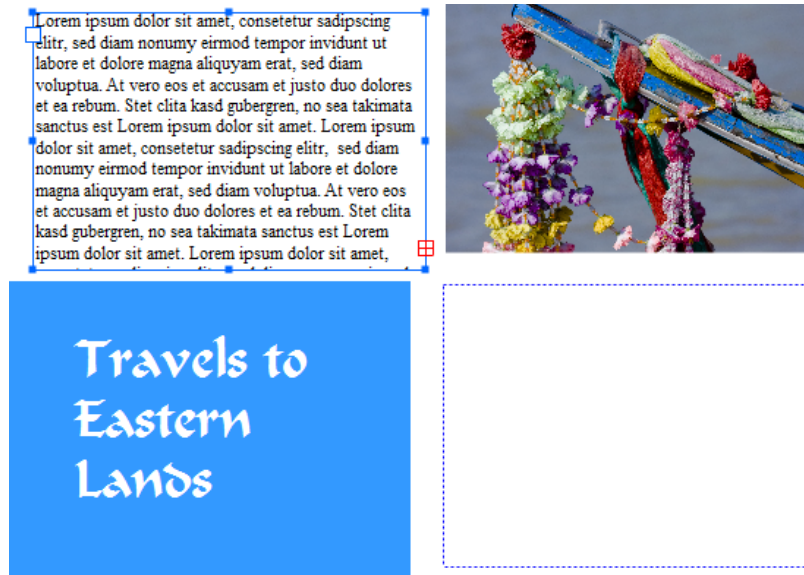For example, in **Figure 4** the upper container is overset and needs to flow to the lower text container.



**Figure 4** Overset text

In **Figure 5**, the two containers have been linked, as indicated by a line between the *Out port* of the top container and the *In port* of the bottom container.
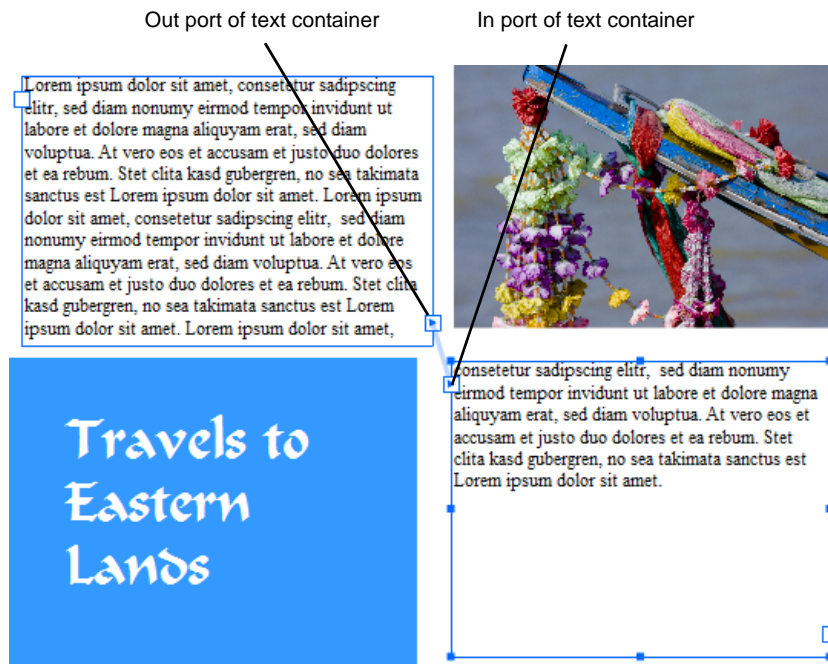


**Figure 5** Linked containers

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*To flow text:*

1. Use the Selection tool to select a container.

2. Click the Out port in the lower-right corner of the selected container.

   The pointer changes to the loaded text icon, an arrow with small lines of text (**Figure 6**).

3. Then do one of the following:

   • To link to an existing container, position the pointer over the target container. The pointer changes to the link text icon, an arrow with chain links (**Figure 7**). Click the container to link the two containers.

   • To link to a new container, click or drag on an empty part of the Stage. Clicking creates an object of the same size and shape as the original; dragging lets you determine the size of the container.

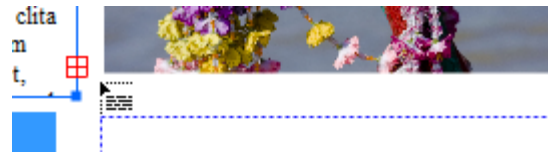   The containers are now linked and text will flow between them (**Figure 8**).
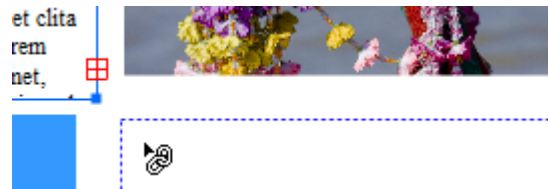


**Figure 6** Loaded text icon



**Figure 7** Link text icon



**Figure 8** Result of linking to a text container

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## Using Classic text

You can specify three types of Classic text in the Properties panel: Static, Dynamic, and Input. The default type is Static. Use Static text when the text will not change, such as button and form labels. Use Dynamic text for text that will change as the movie plays, such as text pulled from an external database in response to a viewer's request. Use Input text for requesting input from the viewer, such as a user name and password—input text is similar to a form field.

*To use Classic text:*

1.  Start Flash and open a new blank document (ActionScript 3.0).

2.  In the Tools panel, select the Text tool.

3.  Make sure the Properties panel is open. If not, select Window > Properties.

4.  Select Classic Text from the Text Engine menu (**Figure 9**).

5.  In the Properties panel, make sure that Static Text is selected in the Text Type menu (**Figure 9**).

6.  Move the pointer to the Stage.

    The pointer changes to a cross hair with the letter *T* attached to it.

7.  To create an expanding-width text field, click on the Stage.

    The text field contains a flashing insertion point. This is where text appears as you type. The round handle indicates the text field is an expanding-width one-line static text field (**Figure 11**).

8.  Type the text.

    The text field expands as you type.

9.  Click away from the text to deselect it.

10. To create a fixed-width text field, drag on the Stage to create a text box. Make the box about as wide as you think is necessary to fit your text.

    A text field is created. This text field has a square handle in the upper right corner (**Figure 12**). The square handle indicates that the text field is a fixed-width static text field.
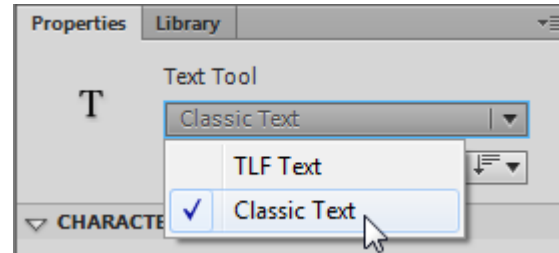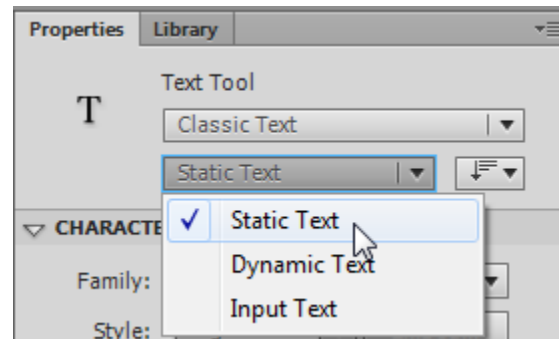


**Figure 9** Text Engine menu



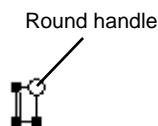**Figure 10** Text Type menu



**Figure 11** Expanding-width one-line static text field
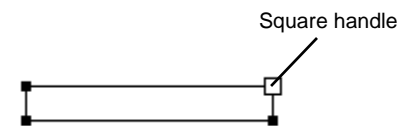


**Figure 12** Fixed-width static text field

11. Type the text.

    The text you type wraps to a new line when it reaches the right edge of the text field.

12. Drag the square handle to the right until the text is on a single line.

    **Note:** Double-clicking a square handle changes it to a round handle and changes the text field to an expanding-width one-line static text box.

13. Click away from the text to deselect it.

## Formatting both TLF and Classic text

You can apply basic character formatting to TLF or Classic text, such as font family, font type, font style, and font color. You can also adjust tracking, adjust leading, and apply anti-aliasing to both formats.

*To apply basic formatting to text:*

1. Select the Text tool and drag to select some text. Or use the Selection tool to select a text container (TLF) or text field (Classic).

2. In the Character section of the Properties panel, choose a different font family in the Font Family menu, such as Verdana (**Figure 13**).

3. Choose a different font style, such as italic or bold.

4. Set a different font size, such as 14, by using the Size scrubber. (You can also click the scrubber and type a value for Size.).

5. Choose a different font color by clicking the Color box and doing one of the following:

    • Select a color from the Color palette (**Figure 14**).

    • Enter a hexadecimal color value in the upper-left corner (**Figure 14**).

    • Click the Color Picker icon and select a color from the system color picker. (When setting the text color, use only solid colors, not gradients. To apply a gradient to text, break the text apart and convert the text to its component lines and fills.)

6. In the Paragraph section of the Properties panel, choose an alignment for the text, such as left, centered, right, or justify.

    **Note:** For TLF text, Flash provides additional Justify alignment options for the last line of text, such as Justify With Last Line Aligned To Start or Justify With Last Line Aligned To Center.
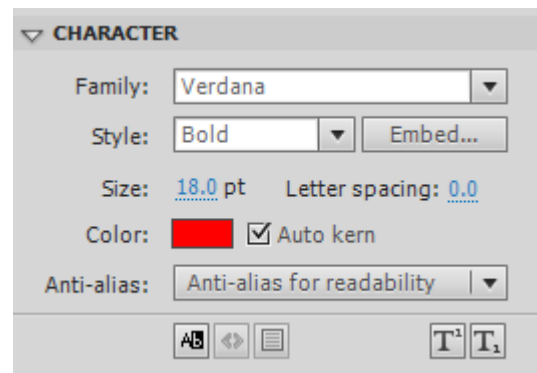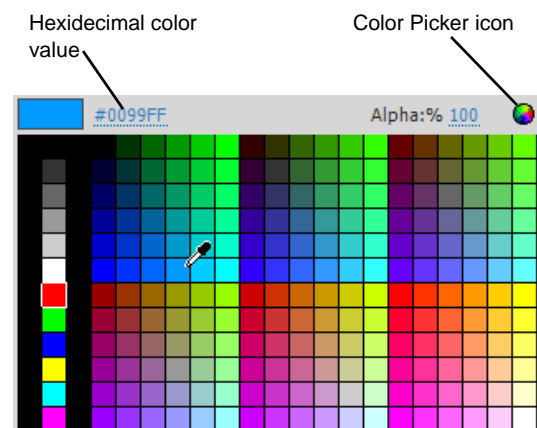


**Figure 13** Properties panel, Character section



**Figure 14** Color palette

This document requires Adobe Flash Professional CS6. Technical instructions may differ depending on your version.

**Adjusting leading and tracking**

To improve readability and meet design goals, you can adjust the spacing between lines and characters—leading and tracking—for both TLF and Classic text.

*Adjusting leading*

*Leading* refers to the space between lines. In Classic text, leading is referred to as *line spacing.* You are probably used to differentiating between single-spaced and double-spaced text. By adjusting leading, you can fine-tune the space between lines. By default, leading is set to 120% of the text's height for TLF text and 0 for Classic text.

*To adjust leading:*

1. Select the Text tool and drag to select some text. Or use the Selection tool to select a text container (TLF) or text field (Classic).

2. Do one of the following:

   • For TLF text, drag the Leading scrubber in the Character section of the Properties panel (**Figure 15**). You can also click the current Leading value and enter a new value.

   • For Classic text, drag the Line Spacing scrubber in the Paragraph section of the Properties panel (**Figure 16**). You can also click the current Spacing value and enter a new value.

The result of decreased leading is less space between lines of text. Increasing leading adds more space between lines of text (**Figure 17**).
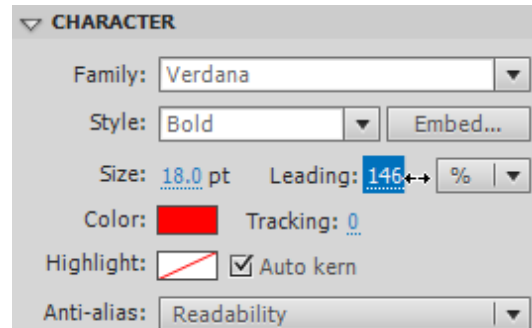


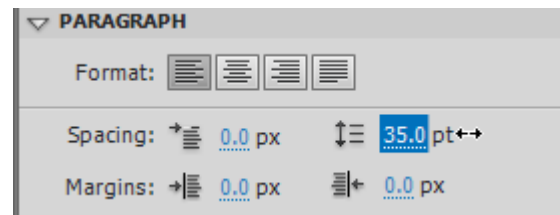**Figure 15** Properties panel, Character section
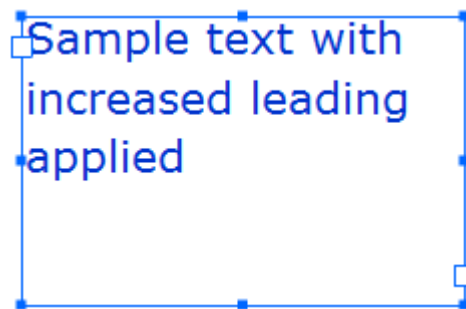


**Figure 16** Properties panel, Paragraph section



**Figure 17** Increased leading

This document requires Adobe Flash Professional CS6. Technical instructions may differ depending on your version.

*Adjusting tracking*

*Tracking* refers to the space between characters across a line of text. In Classic text, tracking is referred to as *letter spacing*. You adjust tracking to space the letters further apart or closer together.

*To adjust tracking:*

1. Select the Text tool and drag to select some text. Or use the Selection tool to select a text container (TLF) or text field (Classic).

2. Do one of the following:

   • For TLF text, drag the Tracking scrubber in the Character section of the Properties panel (**Figure 18**). You can also click the current Tracking value and enter a new value.

   • For Classic text, drag the Letter Spacing scrubber in the Character section of the Properties panel (**Figure 19**). You can also click the current Letter Spacing value and enter a new value.

The result of decreased tracking is less space between characters. Increasing tracking adds more space between characters (**Figure 20**).
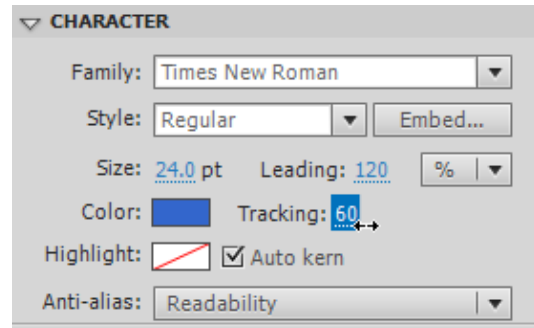


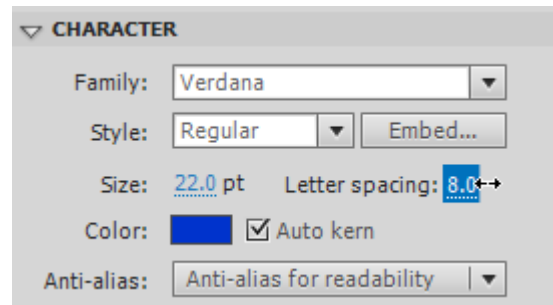**Figure 18** Properties panel, Character section
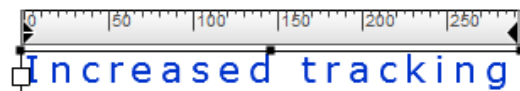


**Figure 19** Properties panel, Character section



**Figure 20** Increased tracking

This document requires Adobe Flash Professional CS6. Technical instructions may differ depending on your version.

**Applying anti-aliasing**

*Anti-aliasing* lets you smooth the edges of on-screen text. Anti-aliasing is especially useful for small font sizes. When anti-aliasing is enabled, all text in the current selection is affected. Anti-aliasing operates with text of all point sizes in the same way. You can apply anti-aliasing to TLF text or Classic text.

You can select from the following anti-aliasing options:

*Use Device Fonts*: The SWF file will use fonts installed on the viewer's computer to display the fonts. This option doesn't increase the size of the SWF file.You should use this option only with commonly installed fonts, such as Verdana or Arial.

*Readability*: Allows for improved legibility of embedded fonts, particularly at small sizes. To use this option, you must embed the font. When you *embed* fonts, Flash copies the font into the SWF file so that the font does not need to be present on the viewer's computer. This increases the size of the SWF file slightly.

*Animation*: Creates a smoother animation of text by ignoring alignment and kerning information. To use this option, you must embed the font. When you *embed* fonts, Flash copies the font into the SWF file, so that the font does not need to be present on the viewer's computer. This increases the size of the SWF file slightly. Animation anti-aliasing will be hard to read if font size is smaller than 10 points.

For Classic text, you can select two additional anti-aliasing options:

*Bitmap Text (No Anti-alias)*: Useful for displaying small font sizes. Bitmap fonts do not contain outlines, which helps keep the file size of a published Flash document to a minimum.

*Custom Anti-alias*: Modify thickness and sharpness to control the effect anti-alias has on your text.

*To set anti-aliasing:*

1. Select the Text tool and drag to select some text. Or use the Selection tool to select a text container (TLF) or text field (Classic).

2. Choose an anti-aliasing option, such as Readability, from the Anti-Alias menu in the Character section of the Properties panel (**Figure 21**).
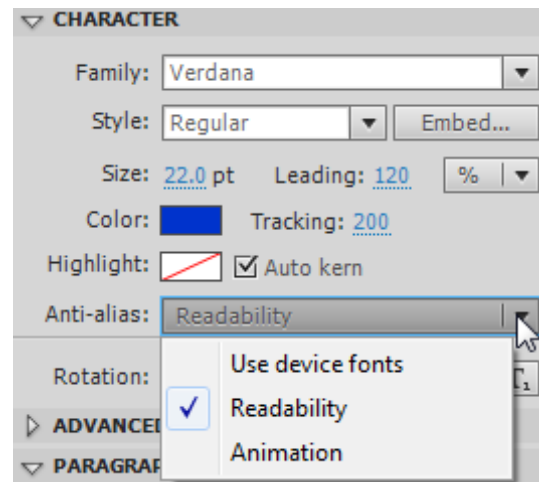


**Figure 21** Anti-alias menu for TLF text

**Note:** The Font Embedding Warning dialog box opens if you select Readability or Animation after selecting Use Device Fonts (**Figure 22**). You can click Embed to open the Font Embedding dialog box (**Figure 23**) and select which fonts to embed. You can click Not Now to continue without embedding fonts.

You can also open the Font Embedding dialog box by clicking Embed in the Character section of the Properties panel.
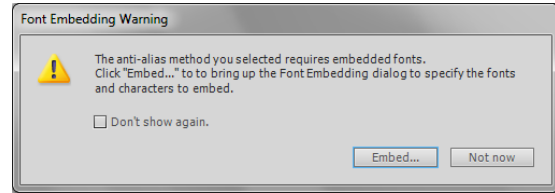


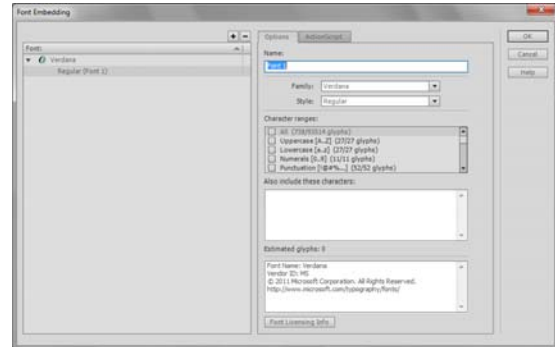**Figure 22** Font Embedding Warning dialog box



**Figure 23** Font Embedding dialog box

## Applying filters to text

To add interest or fulfill other design goals, you can apply *graphics filters* to both TLF and Classic text in Flash. These filters can make text appear to be raised, give text a shadow, or give text a glow. Graphics filters are available in the Filters section of the Properties panel.

### Applying the Drop Shadow filter to text

The Drop Shadow filter makes it appear that text or an object is casting a shadow.
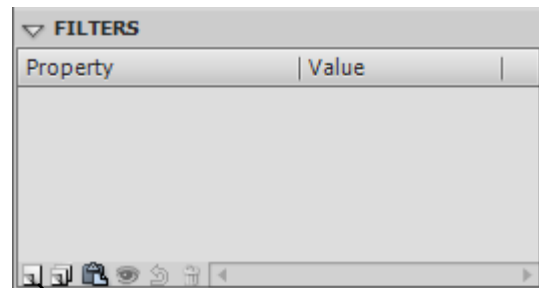
*To add the Drop Shadow filter to text:*

1.  Use the Selection tool to select a text container (TLF) or field (Classic) with text.

    **Note:** You cannot select the text itself to apply the filter.

2.  In the Properties panel, display the Filters section (**Figure 24**).

    **Note:** You may need to scroll down in the Properties panel to see the Filters section because it's at the bottom of the panel.

3.  Click the Add Filter button in the lower-left corner of the panel.



Add Filter button

**Figure 24** Properties panel, Filter section

This document requires Adobe Flash Professional CS6. Technical instructions may differ depending on your version.

**4.** Select Drop Shadow in the Filters menu (**Figure 25**).

The text includes a drop shadow (**Figure 26**).

You can adjust the characteristics of the Drop Shadow, such as its color, in the Filters section of the Properties panel (**Figure 27**).
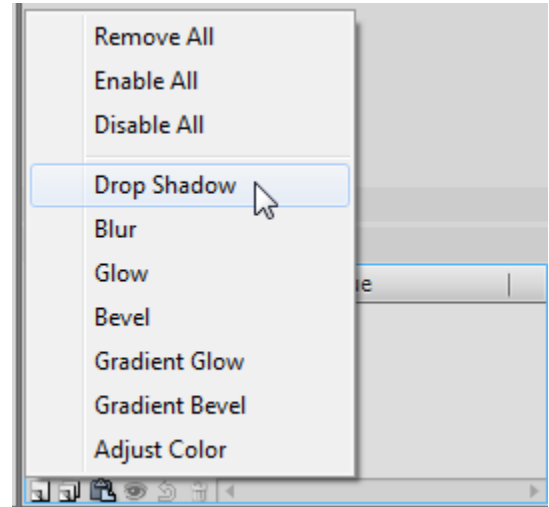


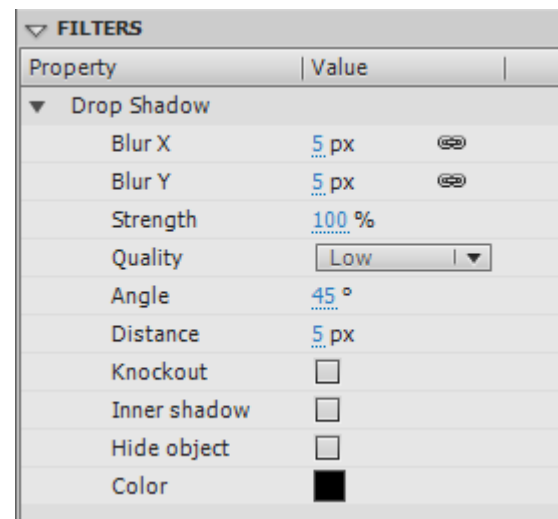**Figure 25** Filters menu



**Figure 26** Drop shadow



**Figure 27** Drop shadow properties

**Other filters**

You can apply several other filters to text to create interesting visual effects.

*Blur*

The Blur filter softens the edges and details of objects. Applying a blur to an object can make it appear to be behind other objects, or make an object appear to be in motion. Adjust the amount and direction of blur by using the X and Y text boxes.

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*Glow*

The Glow filter lets you apply a color around the edges of an object.

- *Glow*: Make the object appear to shine.

- *Inner Glow*: Apply the glow only within the boundaries of the object.

- *Knockout*: Remove the object and leave the glow. The object appears outlined in glow.

*Bevel*

Applying a bevel applies a highlight to the object that makes it appear to be raised above the background surface.

- *Inner Bevel*: Give the object a three-dimensional look by applying highlights and a shadow to the inside of the object.

- *Outer Bevel*: Give the object a three-dimensional look by applying highlights and a shadow to the outside of the object.

- *Full Bevel*: Apply both inner bevel and outer bevel effects to the object.

You can alter the bevel's shadow and highlight colors, the type of bevel (inner, outer, or full), its strength, and the angle of light that falls on it.

*Gradient Glow*

Applying a gradient glow produces a glow look with a gradient color across the surface of the glow. The gradient glow requires one color at the beginning of the gradient with an Alpha value of 0. You cannot move the position of this color, but you can change the color.

*Gradient Bevel*

Applying a gradient bevel produces a raised look that makes an object appear to be raised above the background, with a gradient color across the surface of the bevel. The gradient bevel requires one color in the middle of the gradient with an Alpha value of 0.

*Adjust color*

You can use the Adjust Color filter to finely control the color attributes of the selected object, including contrast, brightness, saturation, and hue.

- *Brightness*: Make the object brighter or darker.

- *Contrast*: Increase or decrease the distinction between light and dark.

- *Saturation*: Increase the intensity of color. For example, raising saturation on blue text makes the text a more vibrant blue.

- *Hue*: Increase or decrease the shade of the color.