How to apply colors and gradients

Each Flash document holds its own color palette. You can use the Color panel to apply colors that aren't in the default web-safe palette of 216 colors. You can create new colors and add them to the palette, which you can save for later use. You can also incorporate new colors into gradient fills and store your gradients for repeated use. A *gradient* is a multi-color fill in which one color gradually changes into another.

Gradients can be helpful when creating effects, such as glows, photo-realistic spheres, solar flares, and glowing buttons. With Adobe Flash Professional you can create two types of gradient fills—linear and radial.

Applying colors

You apply and manage colors by using the Color panel.

To apply colors:

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

2. Use the Oval tool to create a simple shape on the Stage.

3. You can adjust the fill and stroke colors by using the Properties panel. To apply a color that is not in the current palette, use the Color panel (**Figure 1**).

   If the Color panel is not open, select Window > Color.

4. Make sure you have selected both the stroke and fill of your shape.

   Note: To select the stroke and fill of your shape, double-click the shape with the Selection tool.

5. In the Color panel, click the paint bucket icon (not the color box next to it) to select the Fill Color section. Choose a color in one of the following ways:

   • You can select a new fill color in the palette by clicking Saturation and choosing a color in the Fill Color control (**Figure 1**). Drag the Brightness control to adjust the tint.

   • You can select a new fill color by clicking Hue, dragging the Color control, and choosing a tint in the Fill Color control (**Figure 2**).

   • You can also enter a hexadecimal number for the color. This is helpful if a client provides hexadecimal values.

   • You can also adjust red, green, and blue values by dragging their scrubbers. Use the Alpha slider to adjust the level of transparency.

6. To browse for a color, click and drag in the color picker. To adjust the tint, drag the Brightness control.
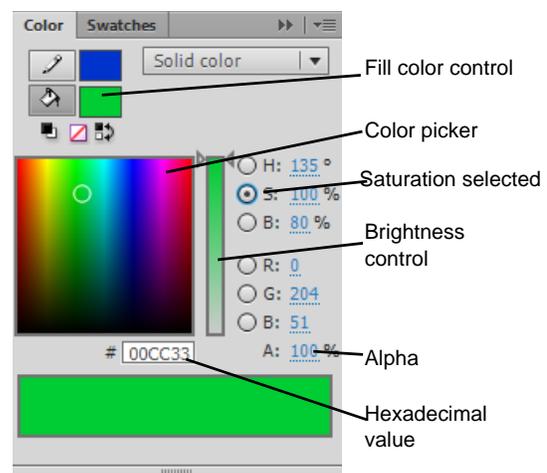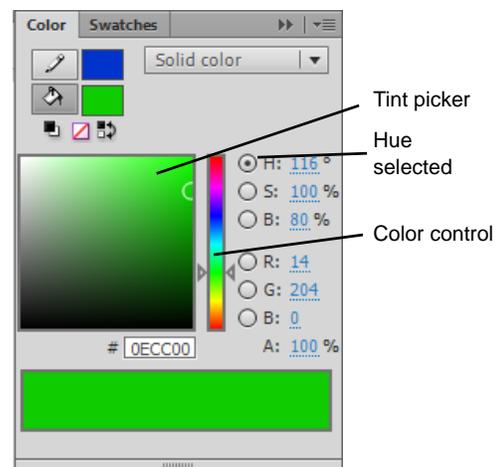

Figure 1 Color panel with Saturation selected

Figure 2 Color panel with Hue selected

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As you drag, the colors you point to are shown in the Current Color Swatch area and in the Fill Color control (**Figure 3**). (Once you release the mouse, the new color displays.)
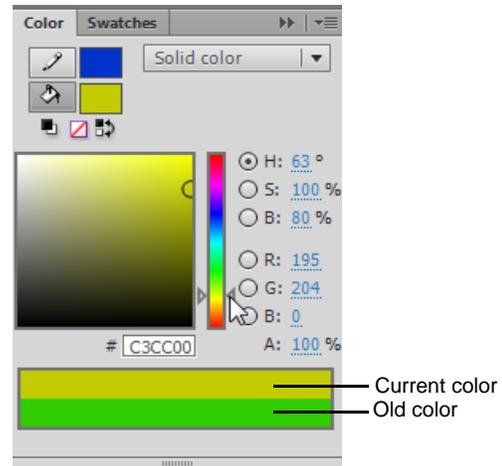

Figure 3 Picking a new color

Add colors to the palette

Once you have mixed your own colors, you can use them to create a custom palette. You do this with the Color panel and the Swatches panel.

To add colors to the palette:

1. Make sure the Color panel is open.

    If the Color panel is not open, select Window > Color.

    Note: The Color panel and the Swatches panel exist in the same panel group (**Figure 4**).

2. In the Color panel, use the color picker or the RGB boxes to create a new color.

3. In the Color panel menu, select Add Swatch (**Figure 4**).

4. Click the Swatches tab to view the Swatches panel.

    The new color swatch appears at the bottom of the palette in the Swatches panel (**Figure 5**).
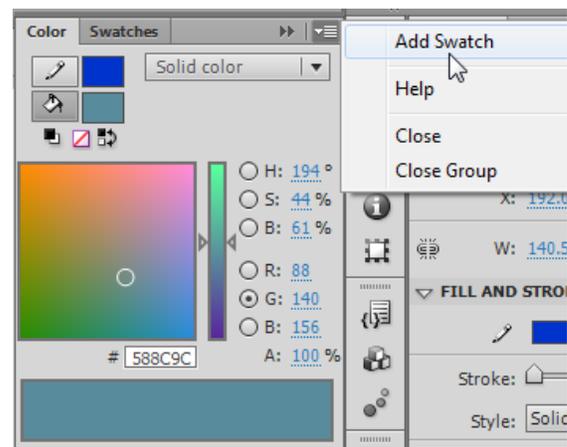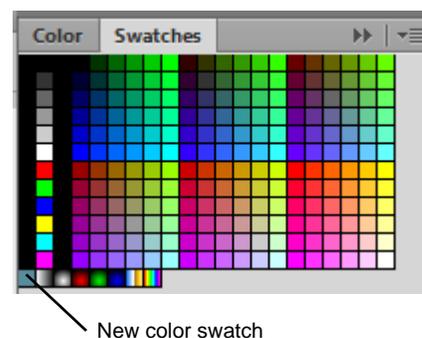

Figure 4 Color and Swatches panels

New color swatch

Figure 5 Swatches panel

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

Web-safe colors palette

By default, the Swatches panel displays the web-safe colors palette. This palette is designed to work for all visitors' monitors, including those with older monitors that display only 256 colors. Although all newer monitors work with more than 256 colors, some web designers recommend continuing to use this palette so your pages appear consistent to all visitors. (An additional benefit is that it gives you a limited range of colors from which to choose; sometimes it's easier to make good choices when these choices are limited.) If you're sure all your viewers have newer monitors, you can deviate from this palette by using the Color panel.

Creating gradients

You create gradients by selecting a gradient type and adding colors to the gradient.

To create gradients:

1. Use the Selection tool to double-click the oval shape on the Stage.

    The fill and stroke are both selected.

2. Make sure the Color panel and the Swatches panel are both visible.

    If they are not, select Window > Color or Window > Swatches.

3. In the Color panel, select Radial Gradient in the Color Type menu (**Figure 6**). Selections in the Color Type menu determine the fill style of a shape.

    This color type fills the selected shape with a radial gradient, composed of the two colors indicated by the color pointers under the gradient definition bar (**Figure 7**).

    Note: By default, these colors may be set to black and white.

    You can have up to sixteen different colors in a gradient. To add more, click in the gradient definition bar (**Figure 7**).

    Note: Radial gradients work best on elliptical shapes.

4. Make sure Extend Color is selected as the Flow option (**Figure 7**).

    Flow lets you control colors applied past the limits of a gradient. The Flow options are Extend Color (the default mode), Reflect Color, and Repeat Color.

    The gradient starts out black in the center (determined by the left-most color stop) and transitions to white (determined by the right-most color stop).

5. Double-click the left color stop under the gradient definition bar. Use the color picker to select a new color for the inner color of the gradient. The gradient definition bar changes color.
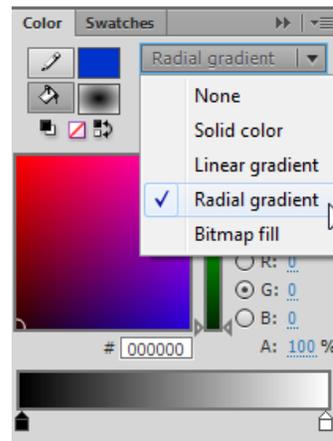

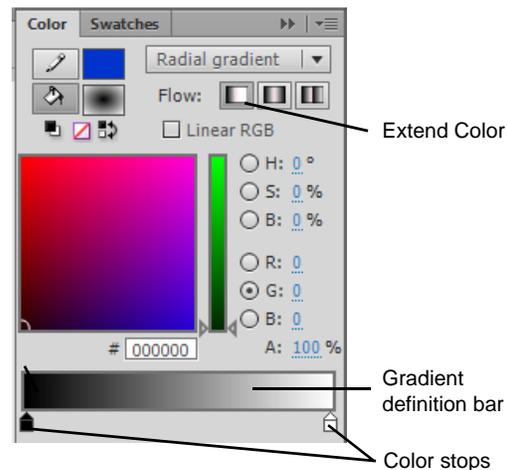**Figure 6** Gradient options in the Color panel

Figure 7 Gradient definition bar

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6. Click in the gradient definition bar to add a new color to the gradient.

   A new color stop appears below the gradient definition bar in the Color panel (**Figure 8**).

7. With the new color stop still selected, click or drag in the color picker to select a new color for the gradient. You can also select colors by dragging the RGB scrubbers or entering a hexidecimal number (or by double-clicking the new color stop).

8. Change the color of the right color stop to change the outer color of the gradient.

   Note: Selecting a lighter inner (left) color and a darker outer (right) color creates the illusion of a three dimensional sphere (**Figure 9**).

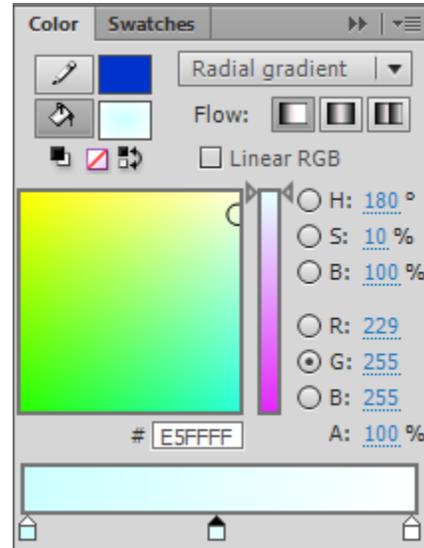9. Deselect the shape on the Stage to see the new gradient applied to your shape (**Figure 10**).

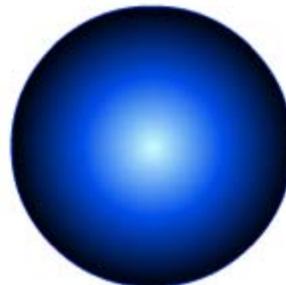**Figure 8** Color panel

Figure 9 Gradient definition bar

Figure 10 Applied gradient

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