

ADOBE AFTER EFFECTS



CERTIFICATION COURSE

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Module
1

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON PLAN

This lesson plan provides an overview of the module's objectives, activities, and teaching strategies to help you guide students through the course content. Use this plan to organize your classes, facilitate discussions, and monitor student progress toward learning goals.

Encourage students to actively participate and apply what they learn through the hands-on projects included in the course!

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MODULE GOAL

Welcome to the first module of the course! We're excited to be a part of your students' learning journey and appreciate your partnership.

In this module, your students will be introduced to the vibrant world of Adobe After Effects. For many, it's their first experience with a program that lets them animate, and it's normal for it to feel overwhelming initially. After Effects is essential for animators, motion designers, and video creators. Mastering it can open up endless creative possibilities.

Our goal is to simplify the interface and introduce key components through a fun mini-project that offers immediate success. This session focuses on hands-on exploration, encouraging students to click around and experiment without fear of mistakes. Creativity and enjoyment are the priorities here. While we will delve deeper into various features and techniques in future modules, this introductory session is all about getting students hands-on with the program. Let's dive in!

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Your student has been tasked with creating an animated Crew Pass ID for the fictional music festival, Brainwaves. This project will be a fantastic opportunity for them to showcase their creativity while grasping the fundamentals of After Effects. They will receive a range of assets to personalize their animation, treating them as fun props. To enhance their project, it's highly encouraged for them to bring pictures of themselves or their friends to include in their video. If they come unprepared, we can allocate 10-15 minutes at the beginning to take some photos.

By the end of this module, students will confidently grasp the essential tools and techniques needed to animate pictures and text, as well as apply various effects.

FINAL STUDENT DELIVERABLE

A Crew Pass ID animation lasting between 5 and 10 seconds.





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CERTIFICATION ALIGNMENT

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| <p>1.1 Identify terminology and interpret communication relating to purpose, clients, and audience needs for preparing visual effects and motion graphics projects.</p> <p>1.1.a Determine whether content is relevant to the purpose, audience, and audience needs.
1.1.e Demonstrate basic project management concepts.</p> <p>1.3 Demonstrate an understanding of terminology and knowledge of motion design and graphics principles</p> <p>1.3.a Demonstrate knowledge of motion design, visual effects, and graphics terminology.</p> <p>2.1 Create and modify projects and compositions.</p> <p>2.1.a Modify project settings for performance and playback.
2.1.b Create and modify compositions to match the delivery requirements.</p> <p>2.2 Navigate, organize, and customize the application using design tools.</p> <p>2.2.a Identify, navigate, and manipulate elements of the After Effects interface.
2.2.b Customize and manage workspaces.
2.2.c Controlling and working with the timeline and media.</p> <p>3.1 Import assets into a project.</p> <p>3.1.a Import media from various sources.
3.1.b Manage assets in an After Effects project.</p> | <p>4.1 Use core tools and features to create content.</p> <p>4.1.a Place and create visual elements.</p> <p>4.2 Create and manipulate text.</p> <p>4.2.a Create text in a composition.</p> <p>4.3 Prepare footage for compositing and animation.</p> <p>4.3.a Adjust layers in the Timeline.
4.3.b Transform visual elements in the composition.</p> <p>4.5 Add and modify effects and presets.</p> <p>4.5.a Apply and adjust an effect or preset to one or multiple layers.</p> <p>5.1 Apply keyframes for animation.</p> <p>5.1.a Apply and modify keyframes.</p> <p>5.2 Animate using effects and visual techniques.</p> <p>5.2.a Apply and animate effects using keyframes.</p> <p>6.2 Export media to various file formats.</p> <p>6.2.b Export a composition.</p> |
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RESOURCES AND MATERIALS NEEDED

Core Video Lessons	Ensure students have access to all videos in this module.
Workbook	Exercises to help students strengthen understanding of key concepts and practice.
Module Assessment	Quiz questions that reinforce module knowledge and support certification exam preparation.
Start Files	Students are provided all assets used in this module, but they are encouraged to use assets of their own.
Final Files	A completed example of the final project, provided as a reference for teachers to understand the expected outcome, quality level, and overall project goal.
Extra Resources	Students will need pictures of either themselves, friends, pet(s) to use as crew pass ID. Additional assets will be provided for them to use.





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LESSON BREAKDOWN

Video Titles	Duration (minutes)	What Students Do	Certification Objectives
1.01 - Intro to After Effects	1:43	Getting Started with After Effects	-
1.02 - Opening After Effects & Project Setup	7:43	- Set up folder structure - Set up project settings - Frames Per Second - Importing Assets	1.1a, 1.1e, 2.1a, 2.1b, 3.1a, 3.1b
1.03 - Docking Panels	8:33	- Creating compositions - Customize After Effects - Make basic shapes	2.1a, 2.1b
1.04 - The Timeline Panel - Part 1	8:57	- Understand Current Time Indicator (CTI) - Aligning Shapes - Layers and Stacking - Animating Position, Scale, Rotation, and Opacity - Shapes animating in time - Keyboard shortcuts - Timeline Introduction	2.1c, 4.1a, 4.3a, 4.3b
1.05 - The Timeline Panel - Part 2	5:23	- Animating multiple layers and different properties simultaneously - Editing Keyframes - Additional Keyboard Shortcuts	2.1c, 4.1a, 4.3a, 4.3b
1.06 - Designing a Custom Crew Badge	5:59	- Character and Paragraph Panel - Animating Text - Point Type vs Area Type - Track Mattes - Parent and Linking	4.2a, 5.1a, 5.2a
1.07 - Animating the Crew Badge ID	8:07	- Creating and formatting text layers (fonts, colors, and sizing) - Point Type vs Area Type text - Animating text with position, opacity, and Easy Ease keyframes - Parenting layers and sequencing animations for a lower-third design	4.3a, 4.3b, 4.5a
1.08 - Enhancing Motion with Effects	9:08	- Applying and animating effects using Turbulent Displace - Optimizing playback performance with resolution settings - Importing and animating Illustrator assets - Adjusting anchor points and creating secondary motion with rotation keyframes	4.5.a, 5.2.a, 2.2.c
1.09 - Keyboard Shortcuts & Exporting	6:04	- Additional keyboard shortcuts - Shy layers - Exporting Video	6.2b

TOTAL: 1h 02m





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TEACHING TIPS

COMMON PITFALLS

The skills and techniques covered in this module may appear repetitive at first, but they are essential foundations for entry-level animators and motion designers. This module is technical, showcasing a variety of animation methods and keyboard shortcuts that require mastery. A common pitfall for students is rushing into animation without adequately preparing their assets. Failing to label layers and organize files can lead to confusion, with unnamed layers creating an overwhelming workflow.

Additionally, students often grapple with the temptation to animate too many properties at once. In reality, effective animation primarily relies on a few key properties: position, scale, rotation, and opacity. By focusing on organizing layers in the timeline before diving into animation, students can create a more coherent, manageable workflow.

ENHANCING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

To enhance the learning experience, teachers should encourage students to share their thought processes. Ask them to explain why they chose a particular animation technique or how they decided to use a specific asset. This transforms the process from a purely technical exercise into an artistic conversation.

Consider these questions for your reflection:

- What was the most common mistake students made today, and how can I address it more effectively in the next class?
- Did I provide enough opportunities for students to make their own creative choices, or was the project too prescriptive?
- Did I encourage them to experiment and explore different ways of animating their elements? For example, some elements could animate from the left side of the screen, or the text could be gargantuan, almost covering their picture.

Through trial and error, students will gain the confidence to express their creativity in their own unique voice.





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TEACHING TIPS

TEACHER REFLECTION

Teachers should highlight how motion graphics techniques shape visual style and mood in animations. Encourage students to play around with After Effects introduces tools like keyframing, effects, and animation layers without worrying about mistakes—it's all about building confidence and creativity. Emphasize the importance of storytelling over perfection, and get them to explore movement, color, and interactivity to see how these elements affect tone and viewer engagement. Remind them that mastering these skills takes time, and this project is just the starting point for their animation journey.

One effective way to encourage them to practice is by creating multiple versions of the same video. After they have made one version, they can easily duplicate the composition and use their original video as a springboard to experiment with new ideas.

Feel free to modify this project however you like. The goal of this opening module is to spark interest and creativity, as the main challenge is getting used to the After Effects interface, which can be intimidating for first-time users. Encourage students to explore the tools on their own and to watch After Effects tutorials on YouTube, such as those by Jake Bartlett.

It's more important to support their creativity than to stick strictly to technical requirements. For example, if a student wants to animate five smaller versions of their ID badge, they should be encouraged to do so. They can also use creative assets beyond what's shown in the tutorials and make their own for animation. If time allows, students can share their images and assets to customize their videos further.

SUPPORTING LEARNERS

- Focus on sparking creativity and confidence rather than technical perfection, letting students explore tools like the type tool.
- Common challenges include losing track of layers and trying to animate one perfect video instead of experimenting and trying out different techniques.
- Encourage creativity by celebrating original ideas and creating chances for students to share what they've learned.
- If you see one student try something that others haven't. Showcase that technique and have them show others how and why they created it.





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ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY

KEY VOCABULARY	DEFINITION
Timeline Panel	The area used to organize layers, keyframes, and animation timing.
Composition (Comp)	A workspace where animations, layers, and media are combined.
Keyframe	A marker that records changes to properties over time.
Scale	Changes the size of a layer or object.
Rotation	Spins or turns a layer around its anchor point.
Opacity	Controls the transparency or visibility of a layer.
Anchor Point	The center point used for scaling and rotation transformations.
Track Matte	Uses one layer's shape to reveal or hide another layer.
Parent Pick Whip	Connects layers so one layer follows another's movement.
Frame Rate	The number of images displayed every second in a video.
Stroke	The outline surrounding a shape layer.
Resolution	The quality and detail level of a composition or video.
Asset	Imported media such as images, audio, or video used in projects.
Shy Layer	A hidden layer option used to organize crowded timelines.
Bounding Box	The visible outline used to resize or transform objects.

BUILT WITH EDUCATORS LIKE YOU

We're always looking for ways to improve the student and teacher experience. If you have a suggestion, recommendation, or even praise about this course and its accompanying resources, we'd love to hear from you.

Just click the QR code
(or scan it with your smartphone)
to share your feedback.





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LEARNING GOALS

- Create a custom crew pass ID that reflects your style. Maintain organized layers and folder structures to support efficient workflow management — After Effects can get complicated without it.
- Experiment with animating elements from different directions, like having items slide in from the left.
- Don't hesitate to create multiple versions of your video. You can also animate several compositions within your main crew pass ID to showcase multiple pictures over time.
- Additionally, experiment with animating text by having titles appear and disappear at different moments in time.

TEACHING GUIDANCE

Project Requirements for Crew Pass ID:

1. Create a Crew Pass ID that lasts between 5 to 10 seconds. It may be longer than 10 seconds but must not be shorter than 5 seconds.
2. Each project must include the following elements:
 - Two text layers: One must be created using the Area Type Tool technique.
 - One image, in either JPEG or PNG format.
 - One animated background.

GRADING RUBRICS

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT 20 points	PROFICIENT 10 points	DEVELOPING 5 points	STUDENT SCORE
Project Requirements	All project requirements are met. The Crew Pass ID has 1 image (JPG or PNG), 2 text layers, 2 keyframes on the foreground layers, and 1 animated background.	Most project requirements are met. One required element may be missing or incomplete.	Several required elements are missing or the project does not follow the guidelines.	____ / 20
Layer Organization	All the layers in each comp are properly named, color-coded, trimmed, and organized according to when they animate.	Most layers are named, trimmed, and organized. Two layers may be missing the correct naming and not color coded	Layers aren't named, color-coded or organized.	____ / 20
Project Organization	Project Settings, duration, and folder structure organization. They should have a matching folder structure on the desktop so the student stays organized	30 Frames per second and folder structure inside After Effects fits the criteria. The matching folder structure needs work and the project dimension settings don't match the sample.	Project settings like Frames per second, duration, and folder structure is missing.	____ / 20
Use of Tools	Text, Image Assets, Track Mattes, Parenting Layers, and Shape Layers are used effectively	Tools are used correctly, but in a basic limited way.	Only 1 or 2 of the tools/ techniques are used.	____ / 20
Creativity & Effort	Project shows strong creativity and personal choices. Student goes beyond the basic example and experiments with ideas.	Project shows some creative choices but closely follows the example.	Project shows minimal creativity or appears rushed or incomplete.	____ / 20
			Total Score:	____ / 100

