Type in Motion
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Handout 02
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Symbols

Graphic objects, text blocks, sounds, and animations can be converted into symbols within Flash by selecting them and going under the "Insert" menu, and choosing "Convert to Symbol." Symbols will keep your file size small. By converting an object to a symbol, you can save on download times when people view your movie over the web. The program will only have to store the instructions for creating the symbol once, plus any modifications you make to it in a particular keyframe. You can only add symbols to key frames. When an object is converted to a symbol, it will get a cross hair registration mark in the middle of its bounding box. This will make it easier to align and snap to guides when you edit your movie.

The Library

The Library within each movie is a container that holds all of the elements in your movie that you have converted to symbols, such as vector graphics, bitmap images, text, sounds, and movie clips. The Library can be opened by going under the "Window" menu and choosing "Library."

Elements in any Library can be shared between movies. To copy an element in another movie's Library, simply open that other movie's Library within your current movie by going under the "File" menu, and selecting "Open as Library." Select the name of the movie with the Library you'd like to import into your current movie. The library will open as an additional library window within the current movie (i.e. you'll have two library windows). Then, you can simply click on the name of the symbol you want, and drag it into your current movie's library to ad it.

You can also organize the content inside of the Library by creating folders, with the "New Folder" icon located at the bottom of the Library window (it is the second icon from the left and is an orange folder). Name your new folder and drag any symbols you want into it.

You can add any symbol in the Library to your movie by simply clicking on its name or preview within the Library window, and dragging it out onto the stage. This will create an "instance" of that symbol on the stage. Any modifications (such as scaling) you do to the symbol within that particular keyframe, will not affect the symbol in the library, only the instance within the frame on the stage area.

If you've created a graphic symbol whose shape you need to modify in a particular instance of it on the stage, you will need to first break that Instance's link to the symbol in the Library. Select the instance on the stage. Go to the "Modify" menu, and choose "Break Apart." You can now edit the selected shape or shapes. Any grouping you did to the shapes before converting them into a symbol will be retained.

Once you've created a symbol and it is in the Library, if you delete the symbol in a particular frame of the movie on the stage area, you are only deleting that particular "instance" of the symbol. The Library will still contain the symbol, even if you eliminate it from every frame of the movie. The only way to permanently get rid of a symbol is to delete it within the Library window.

Type that follows a Motion Guide

To create type that follows a simple path you'll first need to create a motion tween, and then create a guide layer above the layer with your text. Open a new document window in Flash. We'll create a word "roll" that follows a wave like path. Select the type tool from the tool palette. Click in the upper left corner of the stage and type out "roll." With the word "roll" selected, go to "Insert", "Convert to symbol." A dialogue box will open asking you to name your new symbol and to select a behavior for it (movie clip, button, or graphic). Click the radio button next to "graphic." Click "OK." The new symbol will show up in your Library if you have this window open. The new symbol will have a cross hair in the middle of its box, called a registration mark. By converting the text box to a symbol, it will be easier to snap onto a motion guide. Go to frame 36 and "Insert" "keyframe." In frame 36, select the word with your selection tool (solid black arrow) and reposition it to the right and a little lower than its position in frame one. Create your motion tween between frame 1 and 36 by selecting frame one and going to your "frame" palette. Next to the word "tweening" click on the down arrow and select the "motion" tween. If you turn on "onion skinning" in the timeline, it will show you dimmed versions of all the in-between frames. You can turn on "onion skinning" by going to the second small icon next to the red one at the bottom of the timeline under the frames. The words "onion skinning" should show up when you roll over the icon and stay on it for a while. It has a solid blue square placed over a hollow square. You can onion skin all the frames by going over three icons, to the one with the blue dot inside of a blue square. Click and hold for a drop down menu, and select "onion all." You can only select and edit the solid form on the current frame, not the dimmed out versions of the symbol.
Select frame one and then click on the icon for adding a motion guide layer in the timeline. It is the rectangle with the wavy line and plus symbol found below the layers. A motion guide layer will be added above the layer 1. Make sure the motion guide layer is active and you're in frame 1. With the pencil tool, or pen tool, draw a path for the word to follow, somewhat wave-like. Now, you will need to click on "snap" in the "frame" palette that defines your motion tween. It is also a good idea to lock the motion guide layer at this point, so you don't accidentally select your path and relocate part of it. The lock icon is next to the name "guide layer" in the layers part of the timeline. Just click the white dot under the locking part, and it will change to the icon of a lock. Go to frame one layer 1 and select your text box. You should have a registration mark, or cross hair in the

center of the word. Drag it onto the very end of the motion path. The center of the word, or registration point should snap onto the end of the path. You'll see an open circle when this happens. Go to frame 36, and drag the text box onto the end of the path until it snaps into place. Use the magnification tool to help you see the open circle and to make sure the word snaps into place. Click and drag the area you want to enlarge with the magnification tool. You can now double click the hand tool, and the movie will return back to 100% view. Go under the "Control" menu, and to "Play" to see your animation. You can also rotate the word, and affect the easing in and easing out motion from within the "Frames" palette.

Changing the "roll" symbol to the word "wave" instead: (Editing a Symbol)

Make sure your Library is open by going to the "Windows" menu and selecting "Library." You will see the graphic symbol "roll" that we created. If you click on the name of the symbol in the Library, it will show a preview of what that symbol looks like, at the top of the Library window.
Double click on the graphic symbol icon next to the symbol's name in the Library. The icon has a red circle, green square, and blue triangle. You will enter what is called "symbol editing mode." The stage area where you normally edit your movie will now be the area in which you edit your symbol. You will know you are in "symbol editing mode" because you will see a cross hair in the middle of the symbol on the stage and the name of the symbol will appear at the top of the document next to "scene #." Select your text tool (the big A in the tool palette), and click inside the text box. Retype the word or change it to the word "wave" instead of "roll." To return to movie editing mode, when you are finished editing your symbol, go under the "Edit" menu and select "Edit movie." You will want to change the name of your symbol within your library so that it reflects the new content of the symbol. Change the name "roll" in the Library to "wave" by either double clicking on the word and retyping it, or going to the "options" triangle at the upper right corner of the Library, click and drag down to "rename." Every instance of the symbol that you previously placed in the movie, will now be converted to the new word "wave."

Change the value, tint, and transparency of the "wave" symbol using the Effects palette

Try changing each characteristic (value, tint, transparency) separately in frame one of the movie we created above. You will find controls to do this in the Effects palette (the default position is the bottom of the screen).
If you want to make the word "wave" change from red in frame one to blue at the ending frame of the movie, select the word in frame one. Go to the drop down menu within the Effects palette and choose "tint." Either click on the color box and select a red color, or choose a red color from the swatch at the bottom. Go to "Control" and "Play." You'll see the word change from red to purple to blue as it follows the motion guide.
The advanced setting within the Effects palette will allow you to change both the tint (color) of the symbol and the alpha (transparency) at the same time.