

Topic Support Guide

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For examination from 2017

Topic 17 Animation

Task 1 – Working with layers, images, objects, text and frames

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Animation task – A space animation

This guide shows generic techniques but all the work is completed using **Adobe Animate CC 2016®**. This application was chosen because it is one of the most widely used pieces of animation software. It is also supported extensively by the online community and also with video tutorials. Adobe Animate CC has all the tools and features for all practical work necessary for the exam specification.

The techniques and skills learned using Animate CC will be transferrable to other animation applications. The only likely difficulty with using other applications, will be finding the tools and menu items in other workspaces, but they will produce the same result.

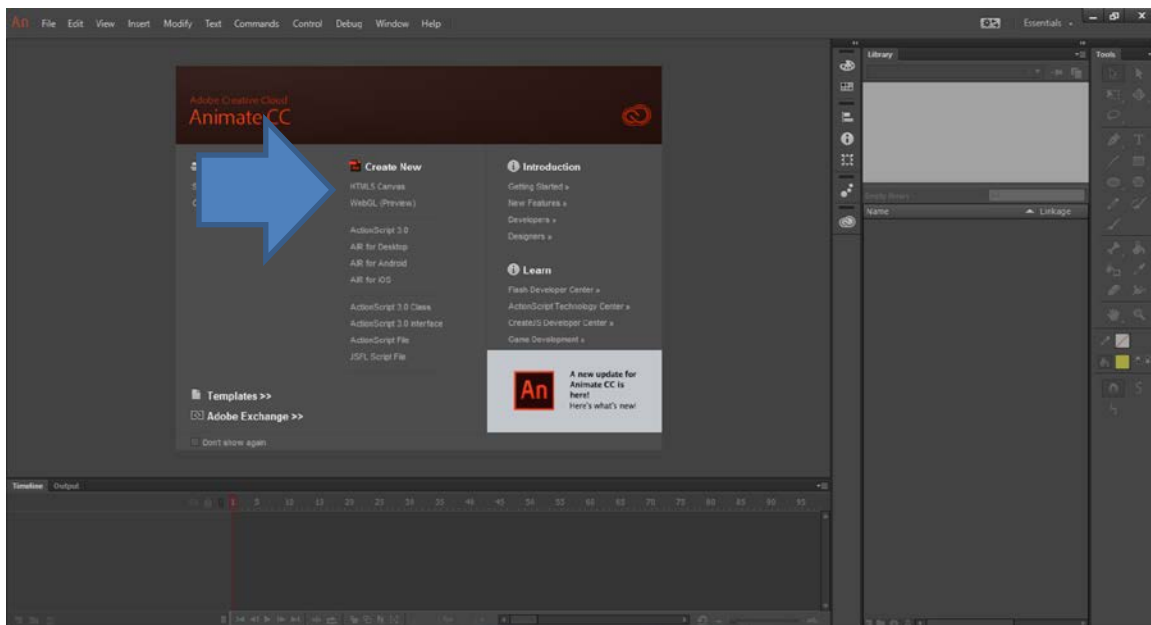
Animation applications are designed to allow production of animation's, banners, animated gifs and also flash multimedia products. This task is intended to give learners some experience of the most important elements in producing an animation. The task is intended as learning exercise to provide the basic skills and techniques required, and it is not the intention to produce a fully polished product. Learners should concentrate on the methods and tools used and not on achieving a perfect result.

When working on this task it is advisable to save the work as a project and then exported it in the final stage to either a video or SWF file. The project file keeps the raw editable version in tact which makes it easier to amend and add additional features in the future. It can then be exported again incorporating the new additions. Animators should adopt this as their daily practice.

Task 1 (Working with layers, images, objects, text and frames)

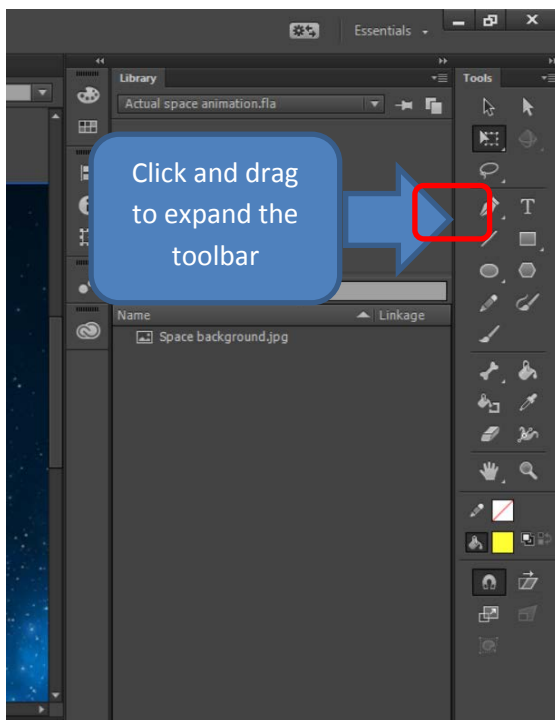
Open your software (in the case of this guide Adobe Animate CC).

We are going to create a new key frame animation. In Animate select new HTML 5 canvas.



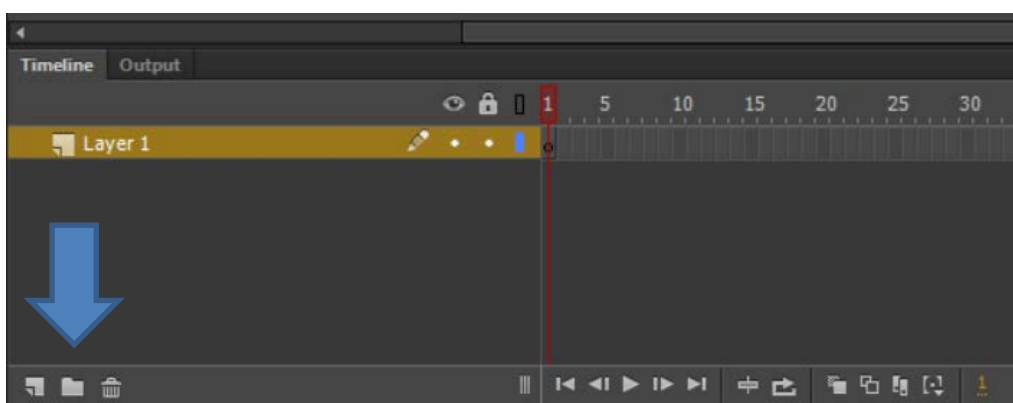
Save your work immediately in a suitable location.

Tip: Before we start it useful to adjust your toolbars so that the toolbar on the right is fully visible. By default, the toolbar on the right hand side of the screen cannot be fully seen. Use the slider to make the tool bar fully visible as in the picture below. You will need to click and drag the menu to the left.



When producing animations and graphics it is very helpful to be able to place different objects in different **layers**. Layers allow you to edit or delete one element of the animation without having to worry about its effect on the rest of the animation. It is similar to music which is recorded using a multi-track. For example, in a band the drums would have one track, the vocalist another and the guitar another. If the producer would like to add an effect to the vocalist's voice this can be done independently of the other instruments.

The tools for working with layers are located in the bottom left hand side of the screen. As can be seen in the screenshot below.

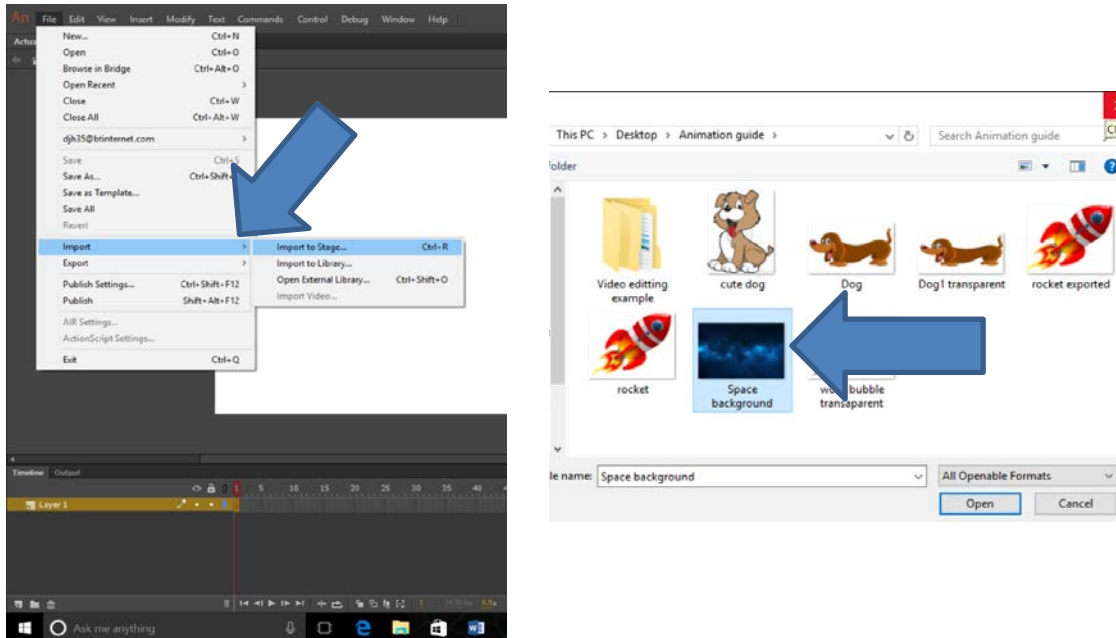


There are three buttons located in the bottom left corner which are very helpful when working with layers. The first is “**new layer**” and the second allows you to put “**layers into folders**” (for this project we will not be using this function, however, it is very useful when working with extremely complex projects). The third button (shaped like a dustbin) is used to “**delete a layer**”.

By right mouse clicking on each layer a number of additional commands are available. By right clicking and accessing **properties** a layer can be renamed. This can also be done with ease by

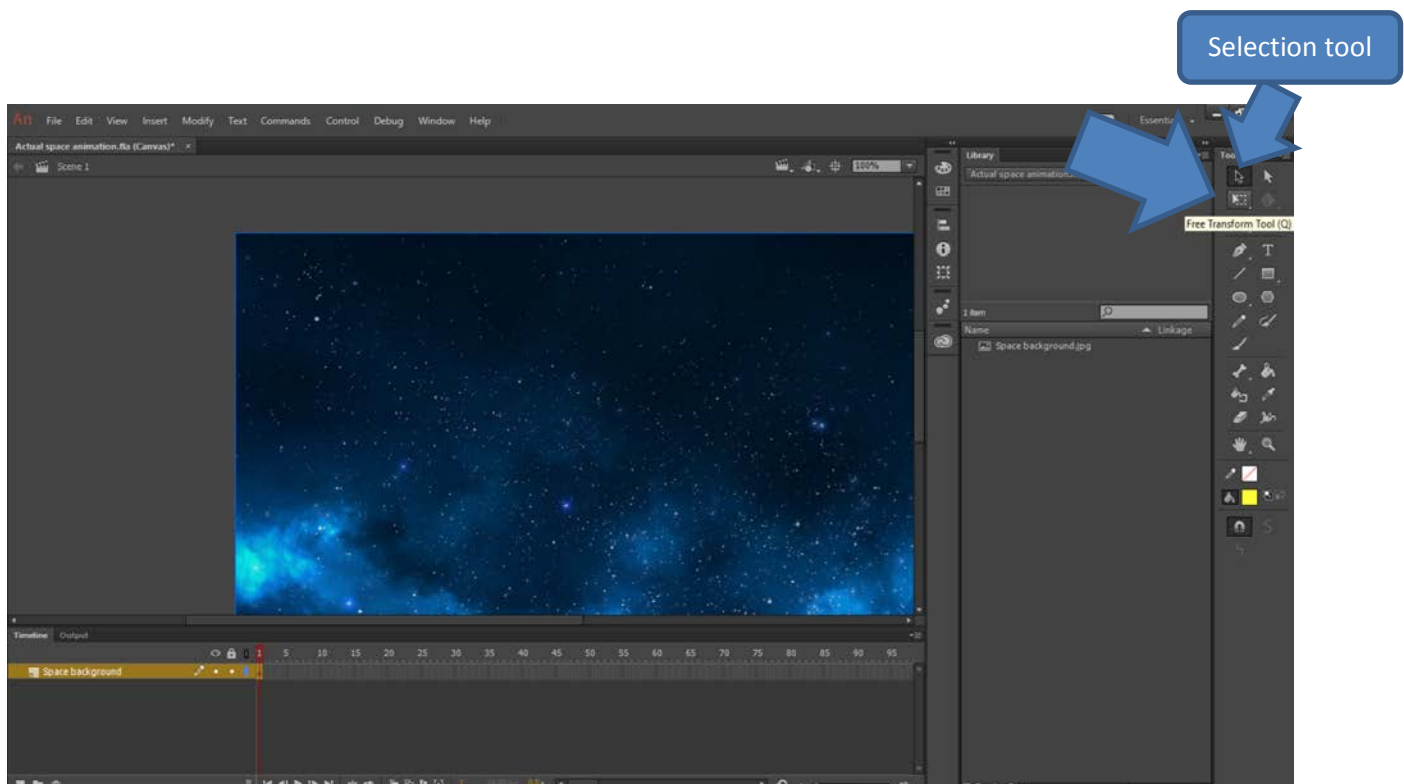
double clicking on the name of the layer and renaming it. Rename the existing layer to *background*.

In the background layer insert the image **space background.png**. This can be done by selecting **file** then **import to stage**. Once this is selected the new window will ask what you would like to import. In this case it is space background.



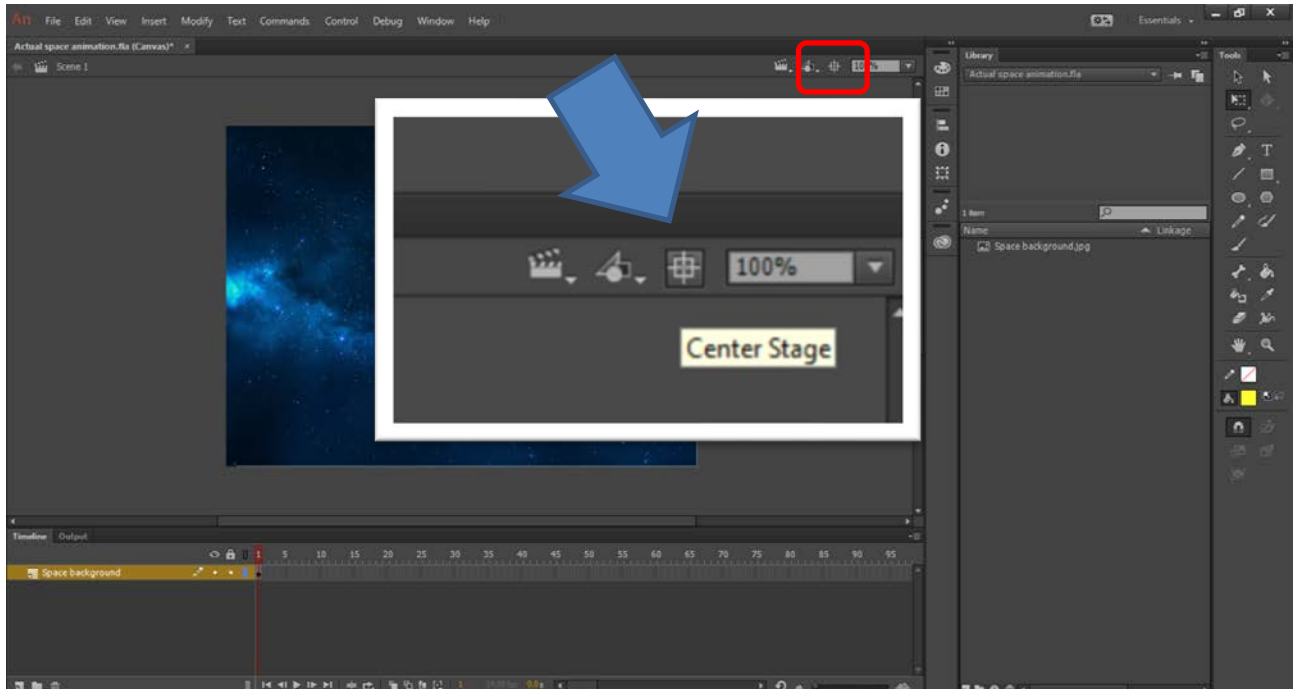
Note: It is a good idea to set up a folder before you start with all the assets you will need to make the animation. Your tutor will provide these for you.

Once the space background has been added we need to centre it on the stage and **resize** it accordingly. Select the image by clicking on it with the **selection tool**. Then use the **free transform tool** to adjust the size of the image to fit the stage.



It should now look something like the screenshot below.

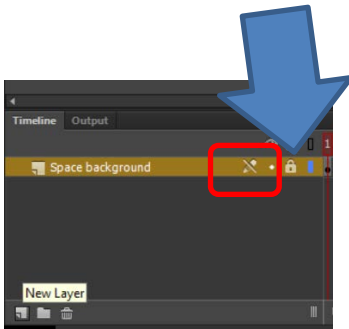
Tip: By holding down **control** on the keyboard and using the wheel on the mouse you can **zoom in and out**. This can be useful when resizing large images or objects as it can allow you to see the entire stage. There is also a button at the top of the stage called “**centre stage**” this is useful in getting your view back to the centre to allow for a more useful overview of the whole stage.



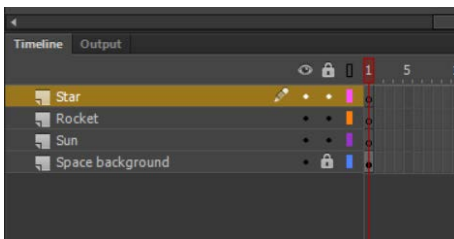
We are now going to use the **text tool** to add some text to the background. We are going to add “Shooting stars!”. Select a colour which contrasts well with the background such as yellow. Use the tools to select a suitable font and size. Select the text and move it to the bottom right hand corner of the stage.



We are now finished with the background for the moment. It is useful to **lock** the layer to prevent any accidental editing. Lock the layer using the padlock button. You will also notice a line is placed across the pencil icon which shows that no editing can be done to this layer until it is unlocked.

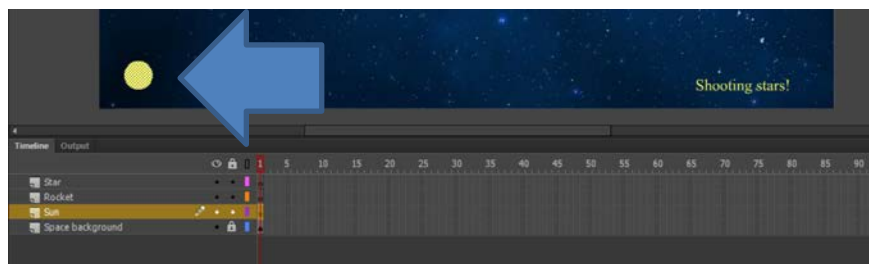
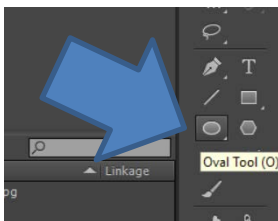


Now insert three other new layers called Sun, Rocket and Star. Remember to use the add **new layer** button. Once you have added your layers it should look something like the screenshot below.



Again, remember it is good idea to lock any layers you are not working on to prevent accidental changes.

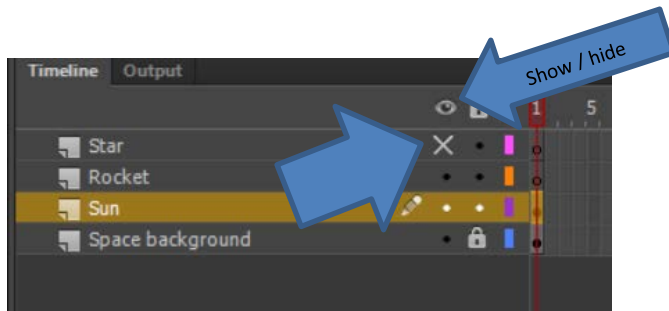
Next we are going to add an **object**, which in this case will be a sun. Use the **oval tool** to draw a small sun in the bottom left hand corner of the stage. Change the colour of the sun to something suitable such as the yellow used here. This can be found on the properties on the right hand side of the screen. Remember you can always use the **selection tool** to click on the sun and reposition it if required. You can also use the **free transform** button you used earlier for resizing.



Tip: Check that you have put the sun object in the correct layer. It is very easy to put objects and images in the wrong layer by accident. This can then make working with the animation confusing, particularly when you reach a point with lots of layers. As stated above it is a good idea to lock out the layers you are not working with to save you working on the wrong layer, and causing yourself further issues later in the project.

Another very useful tool for working with layers is called the **show / hide button**. This can be found separately on each individual layer. If you are not sure if you have put something in the correct layer, use this tool to help you decide.

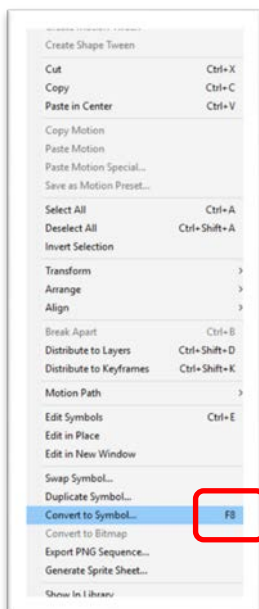
Click on the layer you think the object is in and then click on the **show/hide button**. If the object disappears then it is on the correct layer as the hide tool temporarily hides this layer from the animation. This tool is shaped like an **eye**. Underneath the eye there are black dots for each layer and if you click on them a cross will appear. You can see in this example that the star layer has been hidden.



In the rocket layer add the **rocket.png** image and place it on the left hand slide of the stage, using the **file tab – import to stage** option.

In some instances, it is necessary to convert an object to a **symbol**. You do not need to concern yourself too much with the reasons for this, other than it allows objects which you convert to be placed in a library for future multiple use. For example, you could import or draw a planet, which could then be used multiple times to create a solar system by adding it several times from the library, and resizing it to make small and large planets.

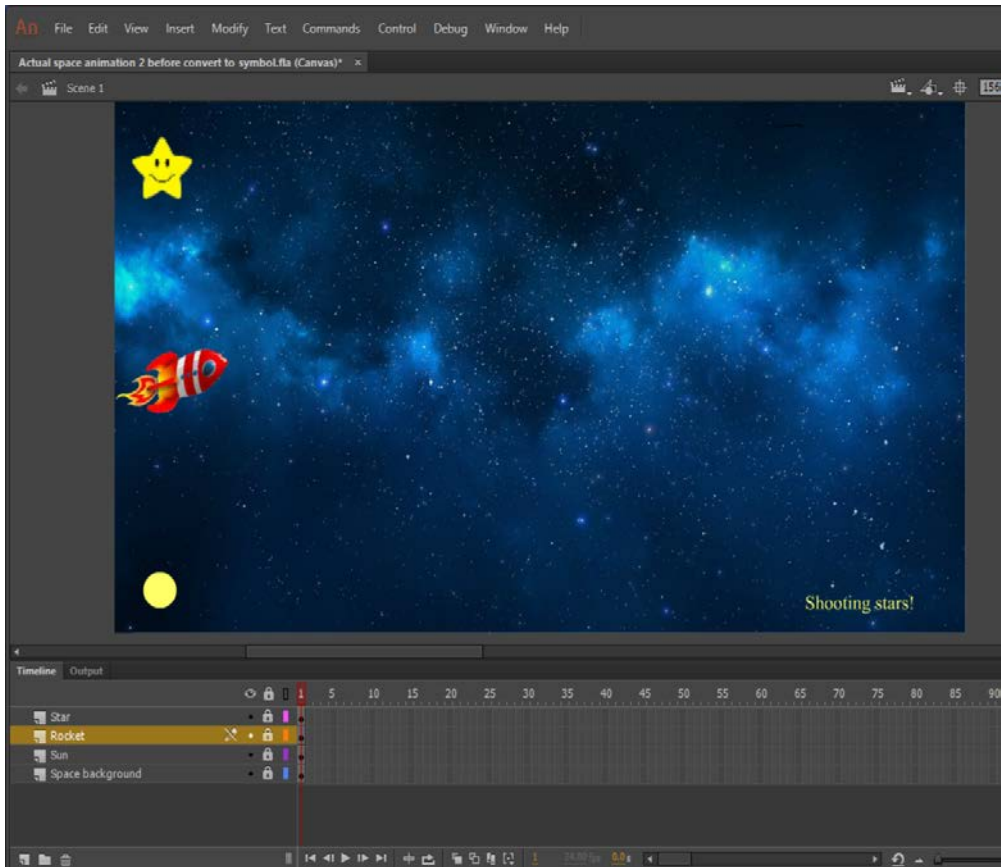
Not all animation software requires this but in some cases it does. Adobe Animate does with some objects, as it is required to allow you to animate them in certain ways. To convert to a symbol, you right mouse click on the rocket and a menu will appear which is shown on the left hand side of the screen. Then select **“convert to symbol”**.



For clarity, in the case of this project the planet can be left as an object and not a symbol, as we are going to apply a different animation technique to it.

In the star layer import the **star.png** image. This needs to be **converted to a symbol**.

Finally, check each object is in the correct layer by using the **show / hide** tool, and save your animation. It should look something like the screenshot below.



Save your work at this point.