

AFTER EFFECTS BASICS GUIDE

Essential tools, shortcuts, and workflow to help you create amazing motion graphics.

YOUR QUICK REFERENCE
CHEAT SHEET

VOL. 1

Ae



PRO TIP

Learn the basics, master your workflow, and create without limits!

1 WORKSPACE OVERVIEW

Knowing your workspace is the first step to a faster workflow. Here are the main panels and their purpose.

Project Panel

All your assets and compositions live here.

Effects & Presets Panel

Find and apply effects, presets and animations.

Timeline Panel

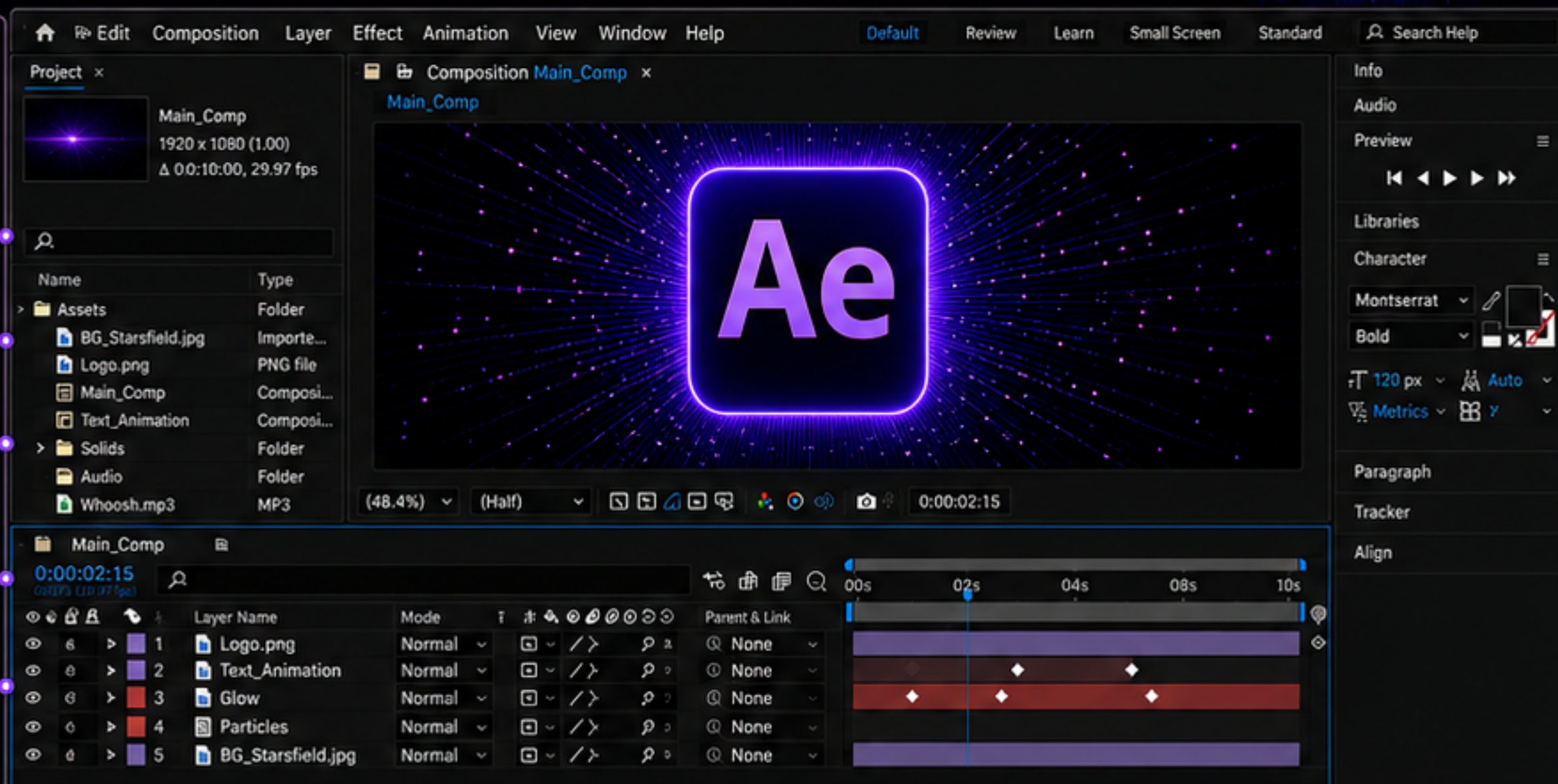
This is where you build your animation. Layers, keyframes and timing all live here.

Composition Panel

See your composition in action.

Preview Panel

Play, preview and cache your animation.



Composition Panel

See your composition in action.

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Properties Panel

Edit layer properties, text, transform and more.

2 ESSENTIAL TOOLS

- Selection Tool (V)** Select and move layers.
- Hand Tool (H)** Move around the view.
- Zoom Tool (Z)** Zoom in and out.
- Rotation Tool (W)** Rotate layers.
- Pen Tool (G)** Create masks and shapes.
- Text Tool (T)** Create and edit text.
- Shape Tool (Q)** Create shapes.
- Camera Tool (C)** Create cameras.

3 ESSENTIAL SHORTCUTS

SHORTCUT	FUNCTION
Spacebar	Play / Pause
0 (Numpad)	Preview from RAM
B	Show / Hide Keyframes
U	Show / Hide Properties
P	Position
S	Scale
R	Rotation
T	Opacity
Ctrl + D	Duplicate Layer
Ctrl + Shift + D	Split Layer
Ctrl + Alt + Y	Create Adjustment Layer
Ctrl + Y	New Solid
Ctrl + S	Save
Ctrl + Shift + S	Save As

4 ANIMATION BASICS (KEYFRAMES)

Create smooth animations using keyframes.

- Set Start Position**
Move playhead to start and set keyframe.
- Move to End**
Move playhead forward in time.
- Change Property**
Adjust value (position, scale, opacity, etc.).
- Easy Ease (F9)**
Select keyframes and press F9 for smooth animation.



5 LAYERS BASICS

	New Layer	Ctrl + Y
	Duplicate Layer	Ctrl + D
	Pre-compose	Ctrl + Shift + C
	Adjustment Layer	Ctrl + Alt + Y
	Toggle Switches / Modes	F4
	Guide Layer	Ctrl + Shift + Y
	Solo Layer	(Click Solo Icon)
	Shy Layer	(Click Shy Icon)

6 EXPORT SETTINGS

	For Web / Social		For High Quality		With Alpha (Transparency)
	Format: H.264		Format: H.264		Format: QuickTime
	Preset: Match Source - High Bitrate		Preset: High Quality		Codec: Animation
	Resolution: 1920x1080		Resolution: 3840x2160		Depth: Millions of Colors+
	Frame Rate: 29.97/30		Frame Rate: 29.97/30		Include Alpha: ON

7 PRO TIPS

- Use Pre-comps to keep your projects organized.
- Work with Adjustment Layers for non-destructive edits.
- Preview with RAM Preview (0 on Numpad) for smooth playback.
- Use Easy Ease (F9) for natural animation.
- Save often and use incremental saves.
- Keep assets organized in folders.

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