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MASKING

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You need to know (to do the tutorial):

- Motion Guides
- Gradients & Fills
- Tweening
- Layers

WHAT DOES MASKING DO?

When you mask a layer (click on the layer and select mask), it will show something similar to this below:



A masked layer hides everything in the layer beneath it. But the cool thing about it is you can allow certain areas to show through by editing the top layer (which is what we'll work on below). If you put text on the top layer and a moving fill beneath it, then the fill will show up **ONLY** where the text is. All the area around the text won't show anything.

There's not much technicality to learn about this subject. What you read above pretty much sums up what exactly it does. But *practice* will make up for the rest :) Masking has a lot of potential. I haven't worked with it much, but the little that I have I've gotten some nice effects from it. I bet if you play with it enough you'll be able to find all kinds of neat things that you can do!

[DOWNLOAD THE .FLA](#)

A SMALL TUTORIAL

Here we will work on a spotlight type effect for masking like in the .gif below. There is also another possibility of masking at the [Text Fades](#) effect page.

1. Create 3 layers in your main movie. On the top layer type your text. Copy your text and paste it into the bottom layer using the Edit > 'Paste In Place' command. This way you don't have to worry about lining the text up. The concept behind this is that the top layer will mask the second one thus 'blocking' the fill from going outside your text edges. Well if you didn't have the bottom layer with the text in it you would get something that looked like this:



Yea it looks kinda cool, but most of the time you want something you can read all the time. By placing another layer of text and the bottom that has nothing to do with the mask, allows you to get the effect. So you have 3 layers

working together.

- 1) The top which is masking the middle layer (making it to where it does not go outside the text edges)
 - 2) The middle layer which has the moving fill
 - 3) The bottom layer that leaves the text up all the time
2. Now, those two layers are finished! All we need to do is work on that fill. Start by drawing a fairly large circle in the middle layer. Fill it with a radial gradient that is colorful in the center and 'clear' (100% Alpha) on the edges. Fill your circle and delete the outer edges (we do that a lot in Flash..hehe).
 3. Now add a motion guide to the middle layer. With the pencil tool draw the path you want it to follow (Or hey, better yet.. just to make it easy.. you can just tween the fill straight across the middle layer). If you will use the motion guide the only think left to do... is to grab your fill on the first frame and 'Snap' it to the beginning of your pencil line path. (NOTE: Make sure View > Snap option is on).
 4. Create a keyframe about 15 frames down and paste your fill into it except this time.. Snap it to the end of your line.
 5. The last step is to mask the two top layers. So, select the first layer properties... and on the menu select 'Mask'. And that should be it. You'll have a couple of icons next to the top two layers.. showing that they are masked. (Look at the pic at the top of this page for an example)
 6. Test your movie.

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