Adobe Certified Professional in Visual Effects and Motion Graphics Using Adobe After Effects 2021 (v 18.x)

All objectives must be mastered at a level appropriate to the Target Candidate.

The Target Candidate (TC) has approximately 150 hours of instruction and hands-on experience with the product and is familiar with product features and capabilities, as well as with relevant career concepts. The TC is generally self-sufficient and able to apply knowledge of video composition and motion graphics principles to perform basic or routine tasks involved in her or his job role with limited assistance from peers, product documentation or support services. The TC generally works in collaboration with colleagues or with supervision. Furthermore, the TC will be able to answer most routine conceptual and applied questions about how to use After Effects and usually does not have to refer basic questions to others. He or she can speak credibly to other users or clients about what can be done with After Effects and how to use it effectively.

Details about software concepts can be found on the Adobe After Effects Learn & Support website at https://helpx.adobe.com/support/after-effects.html.

1. Working in the Visual Effects and Motion Graphics Industry

This objective covers critical concepts related to working with colleagues and clients, as well as crucial legal, technical, and design-related knowledge.

1.1 Identify the purpose, audience, and audience needs for preparing visual effects and motion graphics projects.

1.1.a Determine whether content is relevant to the purpose, the audience, and their needs.

i. *Key Terms: client goals, target audience, demographics, accessibility, etc.*

1.1.b Identify requirements based on how the video will be delivered, distributed, and/or consumed.

i. *Key Terms: Email file size limits, compression, codec and architecture, input and output file formats, aspect ratio*

ii. *Key Concepts: Select the correct codec and architecture based on format and delivery requirements*

1.2 Communicate with colleagues and clients about project plans.

1.2.a Demonstrate knowledge of techniques for communicating ideas about project plans with peers and clients.

i. *Key Terms: Pre-production: planning, shot list, script writing, storyboarding, design compositions or sketches, style guides, and animatics*

1.2.b Demonstrate knowledge of basic project management concepts.

i. *Key Terms: project specifications, milestones, deadlines, deliverables, and file types*

1.3 Determine the type of intellectual property rights, permissions, and licensing required to use specific content.

1.3.a Identify legal and ethical considerations for using third-party content.

i. Key Terms: Creative Commons, public domain, copyright, intellectual property, derivative work, commercial use, attribution, work for hire, fair use/fair dealing

1.3.b Identify when and how to obtain permissions to use images, audio, or footage.

i. Key Terms: model release, location permitting, property release, rights, permissions, licensing

ii. Key Concepts: permission to use an image is separate from permission to use a person's face or a restricted location, etc.

1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of key terminology and tools related to digital audio and video.

1.4.a Demonstrate knowledge of digital video and audio terminology.

i. Key Terms: frame rate, aspect ratio, title/action safe zones (areas), image and video resolution, file formats, video and audio codecs, pixels, rendering, monitoring audio

1.4.b Demonstrate knowledge of how color is represented in digital video.

i. Key Terms: white balance, bit depth, and working color spaces (RGB, CMYK, YUV, HLS).

ii. Key Concepts: Choosing the right color space

1.4.c Understand and use key terms related to video and audio post-production.

i. Key Terms: editing, transitions, audio levels, waveforms, effects, etc.

1.5 Demonstrate knowledge of common animation, visual effects (VFX), and design principles.

1.5.a Demonstrate knowledge of common animation terms and principles.

i. Key Terms: easing, squashing, stretching, anticipation, staging, straight-ahead action and pose-to-pose, follow through and overlapping action, slow in and slow out, arc, secondary action, timing, exaggeration, solid drawing, appeal, etc.

1.5.b Demonstrate knowledge of standard compositing techniques.

i. Key Terms: lighting, color, scale and perspective, working in 3D space, rotoscoping, masking, blending modes, match moving, etc.

1.5.c Define common cinematic composition terms and principles.

i. Key Terms: aspect ratio, rule of thirds, foreground, background, color, tone, contrast, cropping, depth of field, field of view, etc.

1.5.d Identify general design principles and guidelines for motion graphics.

i. Key Terms: space, line, shape, form, color, texture, emphasis/focal point, unity/harmony, variety, balance, alignment, proximity, repetition, rhythm, scale, movement, negative space, gestalt, etc.

2. Project Setup and Interface

This objective covers the interface setup and program settings that assist in an efficient and effective workflow, as well as knowledge about importing digital assets for a project.

2.1 Create and modify projects and compositions.

2.1.a Choose appropriate project settings to meet requirements.

i. Key Concepts: project location on drive(s), folders with media assets, Video Rendering and Effects (GPU), etc.

2.1.b Create and modify compositions to match the delivery requirements.

i. Key Concepts: frame rate, resolution, duration, dimensions, aspect ratio, presets, adjusting the work area, background color, naming compositions, composition from footage, etc.

2.2 Navigate, organize, and customize the application workspace.

2.2.a Identify, navigate, and manipulate elements of the After Effects interface.

i. Key Concepts: menus, toolbars, panels, navigating, and zooming, search within panels, etc.

ii. Key Panels: Project panel, Timeline panel, Composition panel, Preview panel, Effects & Presets panel, Effect Controls panel, Layer panel, etc.

2.2.b Customize and manage workspaces.

i. Key Concepts: using/switching workspaces; showing, hiding, grouping, and docking panels; Workspace panel, shortcuts, menus; customizing, saving, and resetting workspaces

2.2.c Configure application preferences.

i. Key Settings: Appearance, Auto-Save, Grids & Guides, Media & Disk Cache, Memory, Previews, etc.

2.3 Use non-visible design tools in the interface to aid in video workflow.

2.3.a Controlling and working with the timeline and media.

i. Key Concepts: panning, zooming, playing, pausing, keyboard shortcuts (spacebar, mouse wheel, etc.), timecodes, current time indicators (playhead), etc.

2.3.b Use markers.

i. Key Concepts: composition (timeline) and layer (clip) markers

2.3.c Use guides and grids.

i. Key Concepts: title/action safe zones (areas); adding, removing, locking, and unlocking guides; setting color; hiding and showing guides and grids; using snap or align options; rulers

2.4 Import assets into a project.

2.4.a Import media from various sources.

i. Key Concepts: compatible files, importing layers from Photoshop (.psd) and Illustrator (.ai) files, Adobe Dynamic Link, understanding that all files are linked, dragging and dropping, image sequences

2.4.b Manage assets/footage in an After Effects project.

i. Key Concepts: finding, replacing, and reloading linked media files; interpreting footage; organizing assets using folders, placeholders, metadata, etc.

3. Organizing Projects

This objective covers composition structure such as layers and managing composition structure for efficient workflow.

3.1 Use the Timeline panel.

3.1.a Recognize the different types of layers in the Timeline panel.

i. *Key Layer Types: footage, text, solid, shape, camera, adjustment, light, null object, and pre-comp*

3.1.b Use the Timeline panel to manage layers.

i. *Key Concepts: quality and sample; adding, deleting, locking, unlocking, renaming, and reordering layers; managing labels; using switches and modes; etc.*

3.1.c Manage multiple layers in a complex composition.

i. *Key Concepts: pre-composing, parenting, null objects, render order, synchronizing/aligning audio with visual effects, etc.*

3.2 Modify layer visibility using opacity, blending modes, track mattes, and masks.

3.2.a Adjust a layer's visibility.

i. *Key Concepts: hiding and showing layers; solo, shy, and mute layers; blending modes, opacity*

3.2.b Create, apply, and manipulate masks and track mattes.

i. *Key Concepts: layer masks, track mattes, tools for creating masks*

4. Creating and Modifying Visual Elements

This objective covers core tools and functionality of the application, as well as tools that affect the visual appearance of composition elements.

4.1 Use core tools and features to create content.

4.1.a Create visual elements using a variety of tools.

i. *Key Concepts: solids, shape layers, and creating shapes from vector layers*

ii. *Key Tools: Shape (e.g. Rectangle, etc.), Pen, and vector editing (e.g. Add Vertex, etc.) tools*

4.1.b Place assets into a composition.

i. *Key Concepts: asset placement, temporal (timeline) position, spatial (coordinates) position, layer stacking order*

4.2 Create, manipulate, and animate text.

4.2.a Create text in a composition.

i. *Key Concepts: point text, paragraph text, adding a path to text*

4.2.b Adjust character settings.

i. *Key Settings: font, size, style, kerning, tracking, leading, horizontal and vertical scale, etc.*

4.2.c Adjust paragraph settings.

i. *Key Settings: alignment, indentation (e.g. Indent left margin, etc.), paragraph spacing, and left-to-right text direction.*

4.2.d Animate text.

i. *Key Concepts: apply and adjust preset animations.*

4.3 Adjust footage for use in compositions.

4.3.a 4.3 a Adjust layers using a variety of tools.

i. Key Concepts: moving, sequencing, trimming, and splitting layers; setting In and Out points in the Footage panel

4.4 Modify digital media within a project.

4.4.a Transform visual elements in the composition.

i. Key Terms: scaling, rotating, flipping, moving, fitting to, etc.

4.4.b Change the speed of a video clip.

i. Key Concepts: time remapping, time stretching, creating freeze frames. changing speed, time reverse.

4.5 Manipulate digital video.

4.5.a Use basic auto-correction methods and tools.

i. Key Tools: stabilization and color correction.

4.6 Add and modify effects and presets.

4.6.a Apply and adjust a video effect or preset to a layer.

i. Key Concepts: adding and adjusting video effect properties in the Effect Controls panel and timeline

4.6.b Use 3D space to modify composition elements.

i. Key Concepts: X, Y, and Z axes; two-dimensional objects in three-dimensional space; cameras; lighting; animating objects

4.6.c Create composites.

i. Key Concepts: keying, opacity, masking effects, mattes, and alpha channels

4.6.d Apply and modify effects and presets on multiple layers.

i. Key Concepts: adjustment layers and animation presets

4.7 Create and modify keyframes for motion graphics.

4.7.a Apply and adjust transformations using keyframes.

i. Key Concepts: keyframing the transform properties, motion paths, spatial and temporal interpolation, using the Graph Editor

4.7.b Animate effects using keyframes.

i. Key Concepts: keyframing in the Effect Controls panel and timeline

5. Publishing Digital Media

This objective covers saving and exporting compositions or specific assets in multiple formats.

5.1 Prepare a composition for publishing and archiving.

5.1.a Check a composition for errors and verify specifications.

i. Key Concepts: hidden layers, animation timing, audio levels, resolution, title safe area, frame rate, work area, etc.

5.1.b Archive a project.

i. Key Concepts: find missing files, fonts, file names, file locations, etc.

ii. Key Tool: Collect Files command

5.2 Export digital video to various file formats.

5.2.a Export frames.

i. Key Concepts: exporting one or multiple frames, file formats, file names, export locations, layered Photoshop files, etc.

5.2.b Export a composition.

i. Key Concepts: exporting to Premiere Pro, file formats, video codecs, file locations, exporting for more than one target screen size or playback device, exporting in multiple formats, etc.

ii. Key Tools: Render Queue, Adobe Media Encoder, etc.

NOTE: All key items (Key Terms, Key Tools, Key Concepts, and Key Settings) are examples and not a comprehensive list. Changes in the industry or application may necessitate coverage of items not listed that apply to the Target Candidate description for the Adobe Certified Professional program.

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