

# The Layer Cake

## Lesson 3 Hotkeys, Notes, and Tips

### HAVE YOUR LAYERS AND EAT THEM TOO

If you already know a little bit about Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, you have a leg up on learning After Effects.

Adobe has done a really good job of connecting their software together through things like common tools, identical hotkeys (in many cases) and various work flow shortcuts designed specifically for regular users.

### IMPORTING INTO AFTER EFFECTS

In After Effects, you OPEN projects and then IMPORT artwork and assets into those projects.

Import ..... Command + I  
Open (a project) ..... Command + O

Import as Footage..... Use this to import assets that only have one layer, like audio, video, photos, etc.

Import as Composition ..... Use this to import layered artwork, in order to preserve the layers. Anchor point defaults to center of the comp. Layers default to comp size, not layer size.

Import as Comp  
(Retain Layer Sizes)..... Use this for layered artwork also. The anchor points of each layer default to their own center, and the individual layer sizes are preserved.

### BASIC RULES OF THUMB

When you create and import artwork into After Effects, you should know about a few basic rules to make your life easier.

1. Color Space: Always RGB, never CMYK
2. Pixels per Inch: Always 72 ppi.

If you import CMYK files, AE will not always accept them. Even if it does, the colors will be all sorts of messed up and sometimes do spooky stuff that makes you think everything is broken. If you bring in artwork at 300 ppi AE will treat it like 72 ppi, so it won't give you any advantages, but it will slow down your project like crazy.

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### VECTORS vs PIXELS

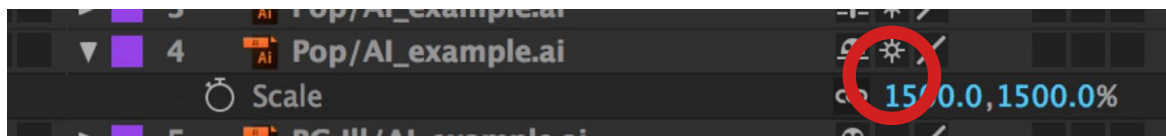
Photoshop..... Pixel-based artwork (also known as bitmap).  
Cannot scale up over 100% in AE (looks pixely).

Illustrator ..... Vector-based artwork.  
Can scale up infinitely in AE if you press the  
Continuous Rasterization button.



Scale vectors up as high as you'd like.

PS art looks crappy above 100% in AE.



Press the Continuous Rasterization button (aka the “sunshine button”) when you scale Illustrator layers above 100%.

### KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Show Masks..... M

Move layers from  
Project Window to Comp ..... Command + /

Pro Tip: To make an animation longer or shorter without moving your keyframes one at a time, select a group of keyframes, then hold Option while dragging the first or last keyframe in the group. WARNING: Occasionally this will cause your keyframes to fall in between the frames. If this happens your animation may not look right.