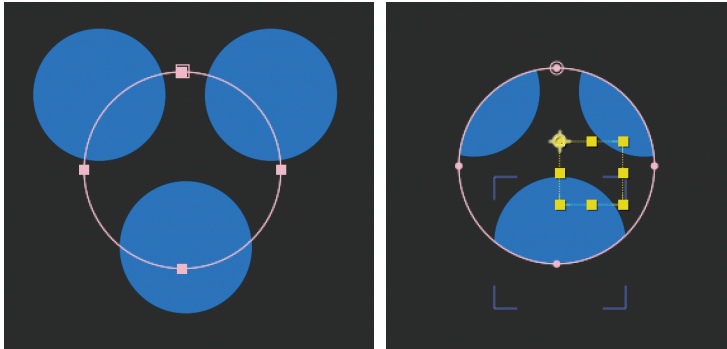


NEW in V1.4 (installation and all other features on proceeding pages)



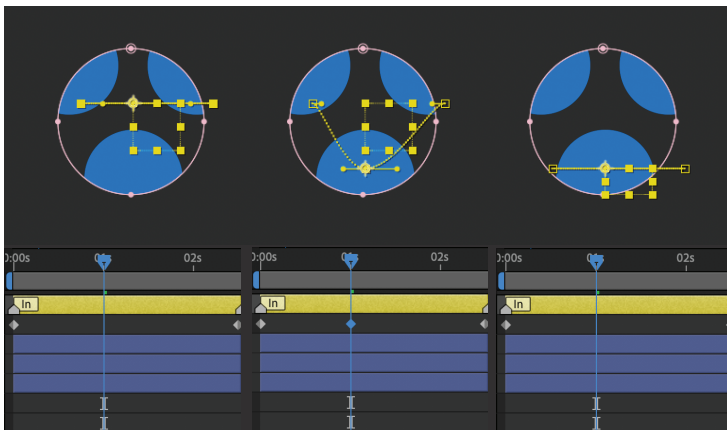
Mask Capabilities!

Simply add a mask to your Group Control Layer and sync. You will see a Set-Matte effect applied to the group. You can update the mask in any way at any time, just sync if changing mask type/lock/invert. You can also put the set-matte effect before or after your fx.

Images and videos will be precomposed and collapse transformations turned on.

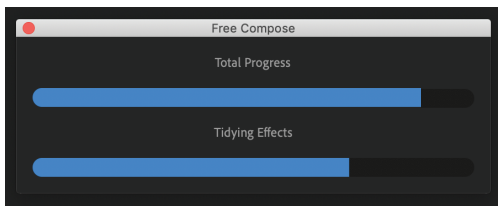
Important: It will not un-precompose these layers when releasing a group.

If you require this, alt/opt drag your footage from the project panel to the selected pre-comp after.



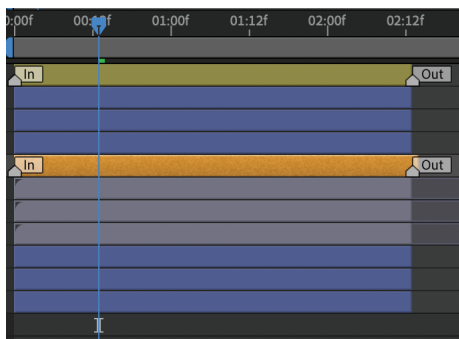
Reposition group null/anchor point

To reposition the group null, use the pan-behind tool at a time without pre-existing position keyframes. *Keep the tool selected*, and sync immediately. Free Compose will delete the key made by the pan-behind tool.



Progress Bars

For small groups, Free Compose is very fast at syncing. Larger groups, or groups with heavy effects may take longer. I've added progress bars so you know what's happening at all times.



Effects keep nesting order!

When you add FX to a nested group and sync, it will order the effects as per the nesting order. Also, effects of the same type will no longer replace each other.

Parent-group syncing

When you add or subtract layers from a group, syncing the group will also sync the parent group if there is one.

Installation

- (1) Unzip Files.
- (2) Copy the file 'Free Compose.jsxbin' into the folder "Support Files/Scripts/ScriptUI Panels" (on Windows) or "Scripts/ScriptUI Panels" (on Mac) of your After Effects installation.
- (3) Start 'Free Compose' (via the "Window" menu in After Effects)

Syncing Groups



Important:

When Auto-Sync is selected, going to Layer > Solid Settings or Composition > Background color, and using the eye dropper will cause issues.

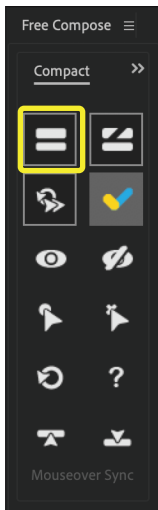
When Mouse-Over is checked, you can use that eye dropper but you cannot click on the Free Compose panel with the eye dropper.

Auto-Sync Vs. Mouse-Over

Whenever changes are made to your group, you will want to sync them with the layers. When mouse-over is checked, you can do this simply by selecting a group and hovering over the Free Compose panel. This syncs the number of layers in the group, its position in the timeline, effects, and stretch. When unchecked, press Sync 1x.

Auto-sync will refresh selected groups every 100ms, when something has changed. Nice.

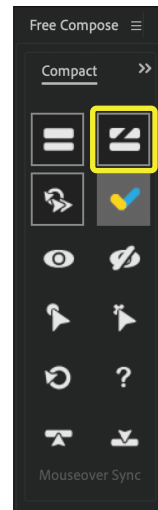
Functions



Make Group

This will take the selected layers and create a group from them with your chosen name. Technically, it creates a Null Object above the selected layers, and an empty shape below them, then counts everything in between as part of the group. You can rename the group at any time but do not remove "Group: #" or put any text before it, as this is how Free Compose knows which layers are FC Groups. Similarly, do not change the name of "End Group #".

The Null Object will be created at the average position of the selected layers in either 2D or 3D space depending on the layers selected.

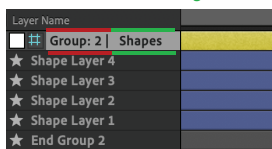


Release Group

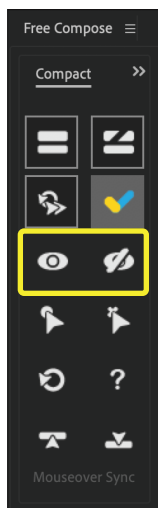
If you would like to release a group's layers, you should not simply click the group layer and hit delete on your keyboard. You should use this 'Release Group' button, which will release the contained layers and remove the effects of that group from those layers. It will also remove the 'End Group' shape layer.

If you would like to release the group, as well as the nested groups contained within, you can Alt-click the 'Release Group' button.

DO NOT CHANGE. OK to change.



Layers will be parented to the group (and nested groups will be parented to the containing group). If you would like to avoid parenting, simply hold Alt when you click.

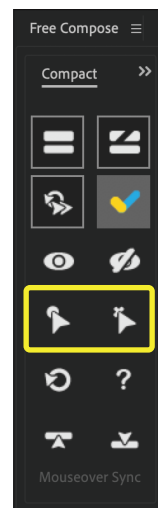


Show Layers

The 'Show' button will show all the layers contained in a group. If you would like to show only the *group* layers that are nested within, hold the Alt key while you click it.

Hide Layers

The 'Hide' button will hide all the layers contained in a group. If you would like to hide everything but the *group* layers that are nested within, hold the Alt key while you click it.



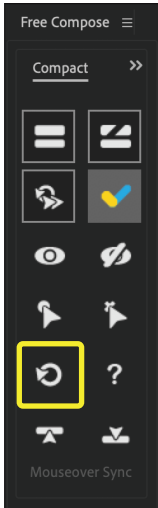
Select Layers

The 'Select' button will select all the layers contained in a group, and the group layer itself.

Deselect Layers

The 'Deselect' button will deselect all the layers contained in a group.

Functions P.2



Sync 1x

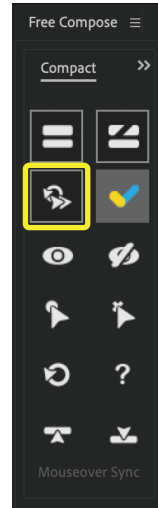
The 'Sync 1x' button will sync the selected group's layers with that group.

If there have been layers added, Free Compose will count them and include them.

If there have been effects applied or removed from the group layer, they will be updated on its contained layers.

If the group layer has moved time in the timeline, its layers will be moved to match.

**** If you move a group layer up or down in the layer stack, Free Compose will not know. To move a group, you must select it, then its layers with the 'Select' button, before reordering them in the stack. This also moves the 'End Group' layer and any nested groups.**

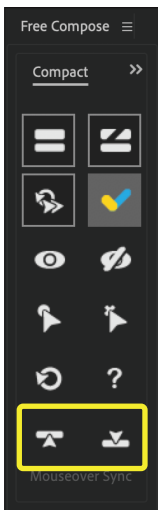


Auto-Sync

This will automatically sync groups' layers with the group whenever you select one. It checks every 100ms to see **if** something has changed.

For example, if you have a group selected and add an effect, it will immediately apply to the layers without mousing over the panel. If you move the group's time in the timeline, the layers will immediately follow, if you add layers to the group it will update its number of layers counter. Checking this unchecks the mouse-over syncing. It will not cut the groups layers based on the group's in/out point. That is reverse.

**** This is nice, but the thing to watch is that if you go to *Layer > Solid Settings* or *Composition > Background Color* and use the eye dropper, it will break the script and you will have to restart it. You will also have to hit undo very quickly twice in succession or stop auto-sync to undo.**

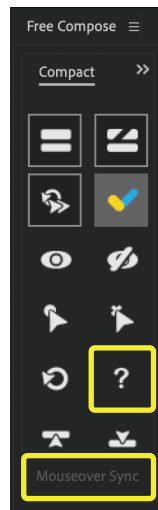


Move Layers

When you move layers from outside a group to just below a group in the layer stack, with the way 'shy' layers work, you may accidentally be putting those layers *inside* the group, instead of underneath it and its layers.

If this happens, you can click the left or right arrows to move the selected layers outside the group either above (left arrow), or below (right arrow) the group that they are now contained in. If they are not inside a group, the script will let you know with an alert.

This is also a great way to release



Help

A couple of tips and reminders, as well as the email to reach me at if you have any questions or concerns, bug alerts, feature requests, compliments, etc.

This little indicator shows whether you are in mouse-over sync, auto sync, sync off, or if the script is currently syncing.

Known ways to break Free Compose:

Renaming Groups...

Renaming groups is possible! Just make sure to only change words *after* "**Group: # |**" ... this text is how Free Compose knows a layer is an FC group.

With Auto-sync on...

If you go to **Layer > Solid Settings** or **Composition > Background Color** and use the eye dropper, the script will stop and you will have to reopen it. The problem is modal dialog boxes stopping the script from running every 100ms. There may be other modal dialogs that interfere.

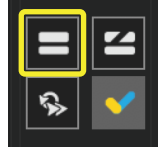
With Mouse-over on...

You can use the aforementioned eyedroppers as usual, but don't actually click with them on the Free Compose panel.

Moving groups in the layer stack without using the 'Select' function...

If you do this, the End Group Layer may not move with the group, and you will probably end up adding layers in between the original location and the new location to this group. This could also cause it to look for layers beyond the number of layers in the composition.

NEW in V1.2 (installation and all other features on proceeding pages)



Duplicate Groups

With a single group selected, hold the Shift key, and click the 'Make Group' button.

```

1  var freeCompose = (function () { /*
2  //YOUR EXP BETWEEN THESE COMMENTS
3  //Leave as 'value;' if you want no expression
4
5  wiggle(10,100)
6
7  //YOUR EXP BETWEEN THESE COMMENTS
8  */}).toString().match(/[\^]+\([\^]+\*\*\$)/[1];
9  try{
10 if(thisComp.layer("Group: 3 | Squares").marker.numKeys > 0){
11 if(time < thisComp.layer("Group: 3 | Squares").marker.key("In").time || time >
12 thisComp.layer("Group: 3 | Squares").marker.key("Out").time){
13   0;
14 } else {
15   eval(freeCompose)*(thisComp.layer("Group: 3 | Squares").transform.opacity/100);
16 }
17 }
18 catch(Err){
19 //If the layer is in a different composition from the group control green:
20 value
21 }

```

In/Out Points

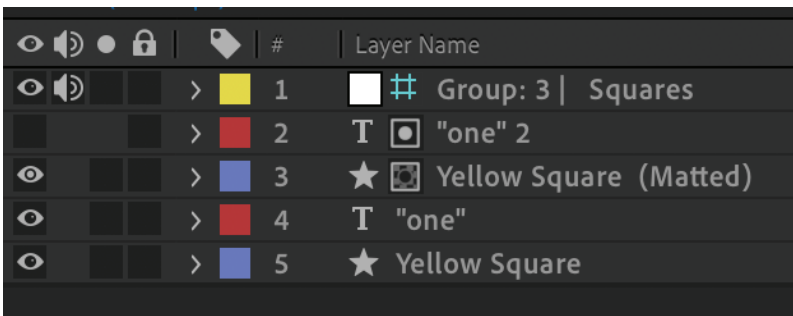
Group layers now have an "In" and "Out" marker that are used in its layers' opacity expressions to create a virtual in and out for all of them. Move these as you would a normal in/out point.

Layers' opacity and audio levels will now have expressions on them.

For opacity, keep your own expressions inside the '//YOUR EXP BETWEEN THESE COMMENTS' lines. If you'd like no expression, put 'value;'

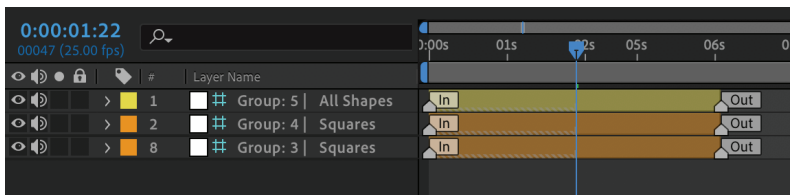
For any newly added layers, refresh or press Sync 1x on the group, and it will add expressions to layers that don't have them.

You cannot have a comment block: /* */ inside your expression.



Visibility/Audibility

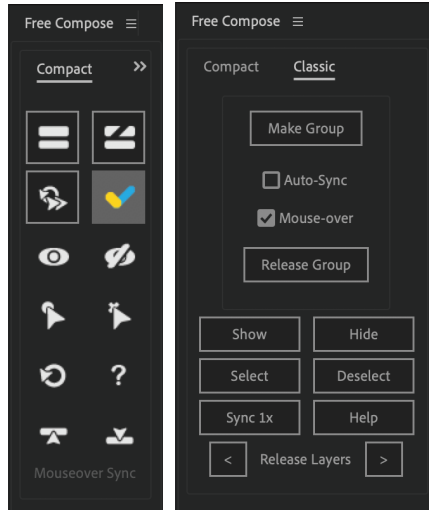
Group layers now have the ability to turn on and off their layers' audio as well. When you turn off either visibility or audibility for a group layer and refresh, it will note what state the layer was in, and revert back to that when group visibility or audibility is turned back on. This uses layer comments separated by '| FC |'



Nesting Colour Hierarchy

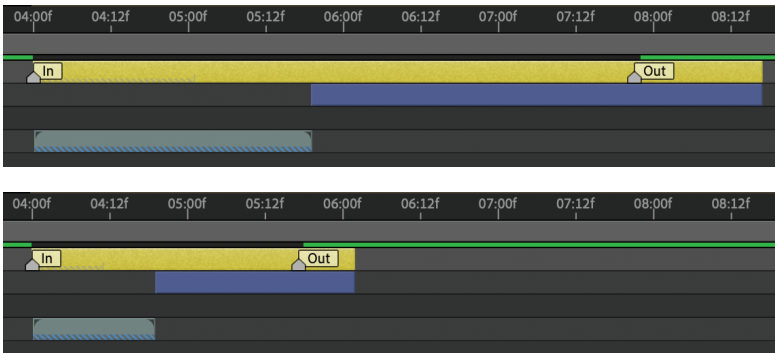
Nested groups now turn orange for a visual queue that they're inside another group.

NEW in V1.3 (installation and all other features on proceeding pages)



New UI!

A more streamlined, compact, pretty version with all the same functions. Buttons also update more nicely after being clicked. Use the >> arrows to switch back to classic if you prefer words to icons.



Time Stretching!

You asked, I spent 35 hours delivering. Time Stretching is now fully supported except for reversing time on the Group Control Layer. Simply stretch it as you normally would (you can even move it at the same time), and refresh with mouse-over/auto/sync 1x. Works for nested groups as well. On release, layers/groups will take the stretch of the nester group, or revert to normal if being brought out to comp level.

Important: *before* stretching, just make sure no layers are beyond the In/Out point by clicking "Sync 1x" button first.

	#	Layer Name
>	1	T Text
>	2	★ Shape Layer 5
>	3	T Text 2
>	4	★ Shape Layer 4
>	5	★ Shape Layer 3
>	6	T Text 4
>	7	★ Shape Layer 2
>	8	T Text 3
>	9	★ Shape Layer 1

Non-sequential Layer Grouping

You can now select layers in any order to group them. Free Compose will move all the layers together in order of top to bottom, at the location of the top layer and make the group.