



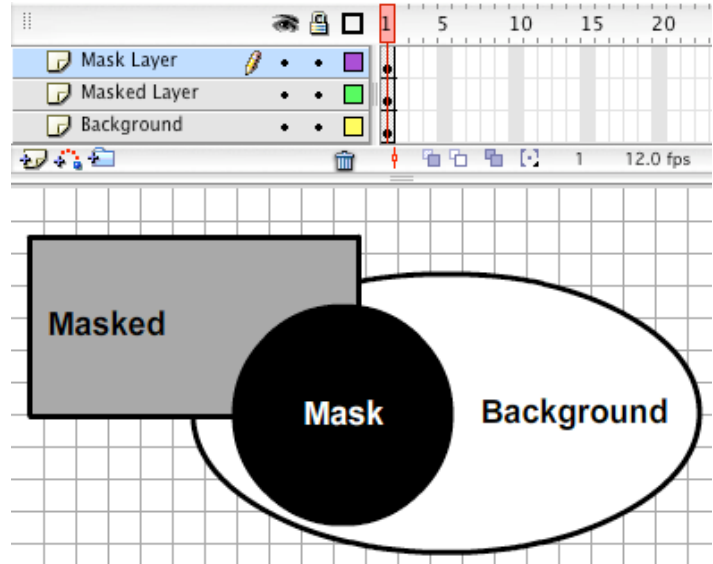
When you have something to hide: Masking in *Flash*

A mask is like the window on a return envelope; after you put the bill inside only the return address shows through. When you mask an item in *Flash*, only the parts covered by the mask show through.

1. Create a layer with a filled shape (It's called *Masked Layer* in the illustration, but you can call it anything you like).

2. Create a new layer above it and draw a shape there. (*Mask Layer* in the illustration).

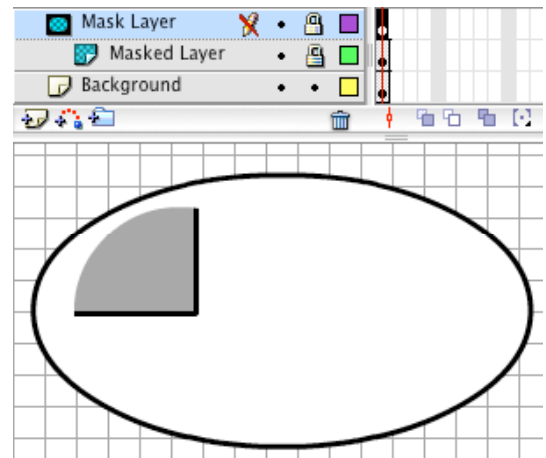
A mask can be a shape, a group, text, or a symbol (such as a movie clip). However, a mask cannot be translucent – its alpha is 100%.



3. Right-click the *Mask Layer* name in the Timeline and choose "Mask" from the menu.

The layer below is linked to the mask, and its contents show through the filled area on the mask. The *Masked Layer* name is indented and both layers' icons change.

To preview the effect while viewing the Timeline, both Mask Layer and Masked Layer must be locked.



Sample techniques that use masks

- Use text as a mask and have an animated image or color gradient show through.
- Reveal a title over an image or animate text in a marquee.
- Let your mask take the form of a spotlight, flashlight, pair of binoculars, or magnifying glass (to allow a version of the mask to be seen, copy it to a higher layer and then edit).
- Reveal masked objects through a window or TV screen.
- Place one version of an image in a masked layer and another below in an unmasked background layer (same size & location). Image pair ideas include sharp / blurred, color / grayscale, map / satellite photo. Use an animated mask to reveal the sharp or colored image.
- Fade the masked layer using an alpha tween (fading a mask will have no effect).
- Make a draggable mask out of a movieclip (requires a behavior or ActionScript).
- Have multiple masks in effect at one time.