

## Flash - The Basics

To build an application in Flash Professional CS5, you create vector graphics and design elements with the drawing tools and import additional media elements such as audio, video, and images into your document. Next, you use the Timeline and the Stage to position the elements and define how and when they appear. Using [Adobe ActionScript](#) (a scripting language) you create functions to specify how the objects in the application behave.

When you author content in Flash Professional (by choosing File > New), you work with the master document, which is called a FLA file. FLA files use the file extension .fla (FLA). While editing a FLA file in the Flash authoring environment, you'll notice that the user interface is divided into five main parts:

- The [Stage](#) is like the canvas that defines the visible area during playback; you arrange graphics, videos, buttons, and other elements on the Stage while authoring projects.
- The [Timeline](#) controls the timing that specifies when elements in the movie appear on the Stage. The playhead begins at Frame 1 and moves from left to right as the movie proceeds through the frames. Drag the [layers](#) in the Timeline to arrange the layering order of graphics on the Stage. Graphics in the higher layers appear to be placed on top of the graphics in the lower layers.
- The **Tools panel** contains the tools used to select objects on the Stage, create text elements, and draw vector graphics.
- The [Property inspector](#) displays contextual information about the attributes of any selected object; you can edit these options to adjust an object's settings.
- The [Library panel](#) contains media elements and symbols that are stored for a project. Use this panel to manage and organize the project's elements. When you publish a SWF file, only the Library items you actually use are included in the published file; you don't have to "clean out" unused elements that weren't used because they won't increase the published SWF file's size (although they do increase the size of the master FLA file).

The five areas of the **workspace** are identified in Figure 1.

