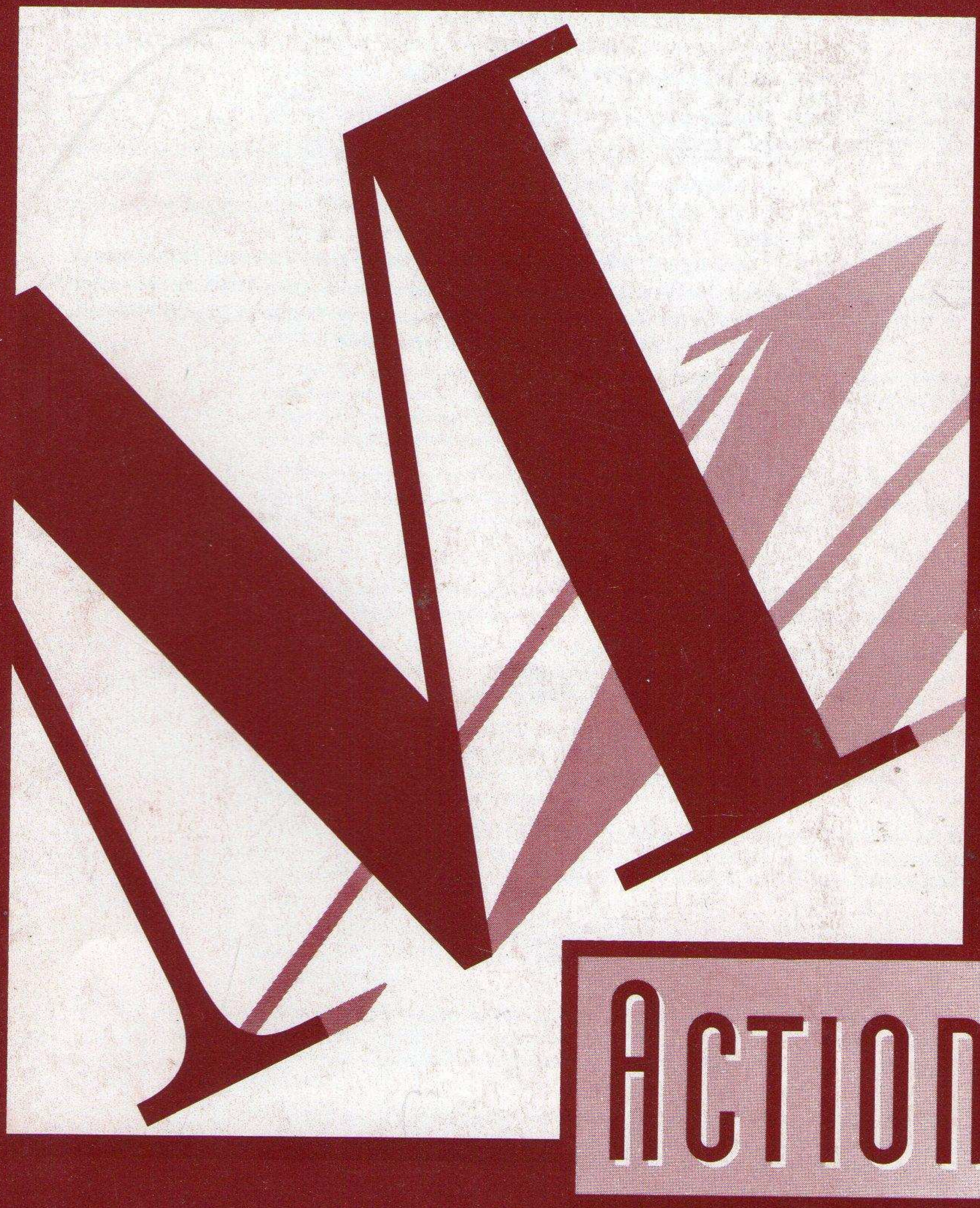
MACROMEDIA



ACTION!

SPECIAL EDITION

USERS GUIDE

Action! Technical Support

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Chapter 1: Getting Started

You have something important to say. You want to explain an idea, sell a product, or persuade your listeners to a certain course of action. You've analyzed the facts and organized your ideas; you know the points you want to make. But how will you make your message memorable? How will you make sure it stands out above all the other information competing for your audience's attention?

Whether you're designing a live presentation or creating a self-running demo for a trade show, Macromedia® Action!™ can help. This powerful product from the industry leader for multimedia software lets you choose the media elements—sound, motion, text, graphics, and interactivity—that best communicate your message, and quickly combine them into a compelling multimedia presentation.

Introducing Action!

The past few years have brought dramatic advances in multimedia computing. The hardware costs for capturing, storing, and processing pictures and sounds have plummeted while the power of the personal computer has soared. Video boards bring high-quality graphics to your screen, while sound boards and digitizers bring music and digitized sound under your computer's control.

Until now, much of this power has been beyond the reach of most users. Creating presentations that combine text, graphics, motion, and sound has required the use of sophisticated, complex software packages, intended for use by multimedia professionals. But Action! changes all that. Action! is designed to make creating multimedia presentations straightforward and intuitive. Even if you have no previous multimedia experience, you'll soon be able to create a presentation that combines sound, motion, text, graphics, and interactivity—instant multimedia!

The personal computer software market already offers an impressive choice of presentation packages. But until now, all of them have had one thing in common: They use static images—color slides or overhead transparencies—to communicate their message.

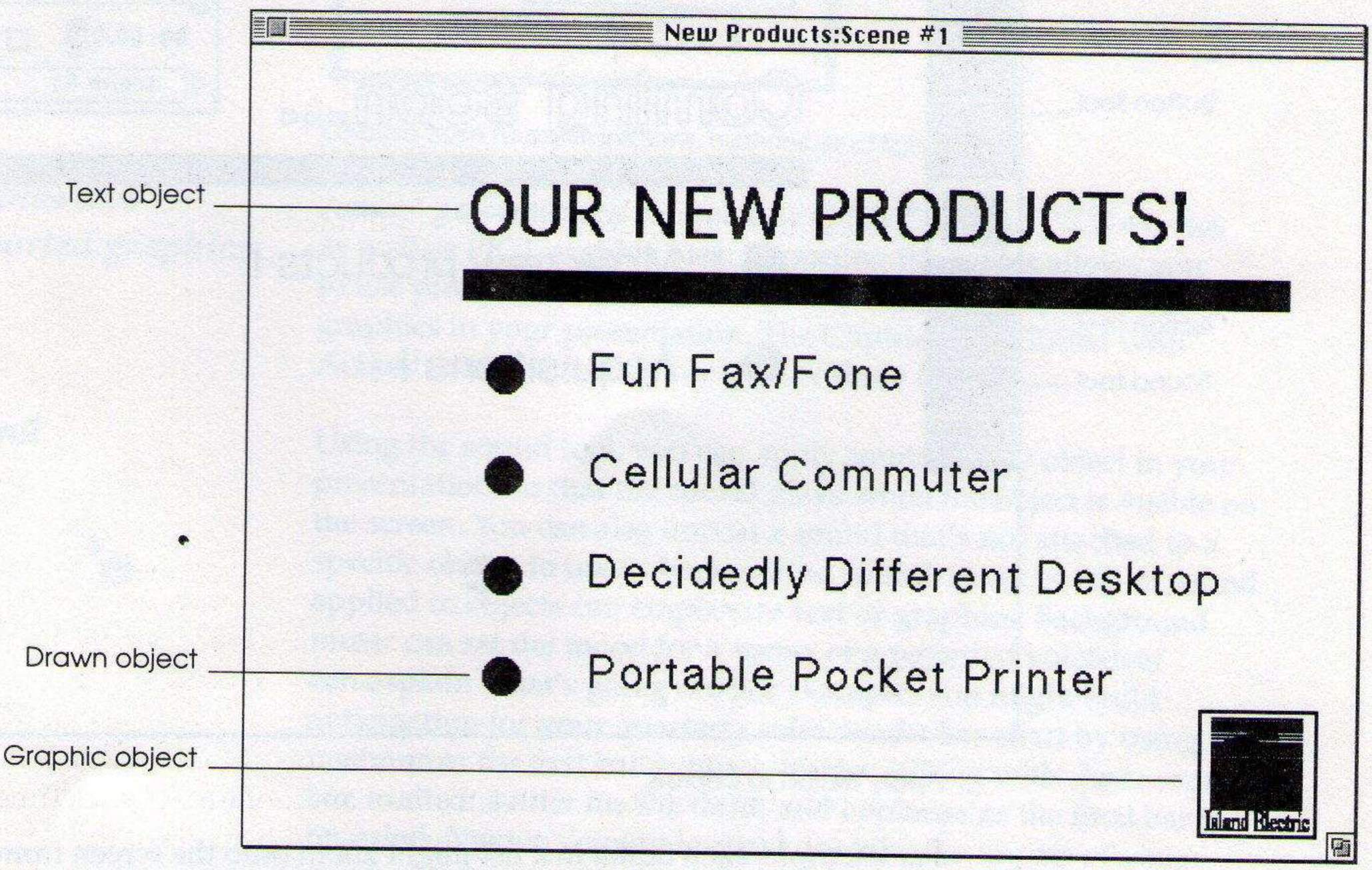
Action! is different. Rather than just static images, an Action! presentation contains shapes, graphics, and text that move around on the computer screen—with sound effects, if you want them. Not only can you have an animated logo that sweeps across the screen, it can be accompanied by the sound of a racing sports car engine. The introduction of new products in a bulleted list can be emphasized by revealing the text from the top of the screen and accompanying each item with a triumphant fanfare. A QuickTime movie can be used to explain the features and benefits of the product. Since your audience is much more likely to remember a message that they both see and hear, Action! is the product to use when you need to grab and hold their attention.

Action! Concepts

Action! is designed to be easy to learn. Understanding a few key concepts will help you use it effectively.

Scenes and objects

An Action! presentation is made up of **scenes**, which are like slides in other presentation packages, but with the added dimension of time. Each scene contains **objects** (such as text, graphics, sounds, and movies) that are drawn using the tools on the Tool Palette, imported from other applications, or imported from the ClipMedia™ supplied with Action!



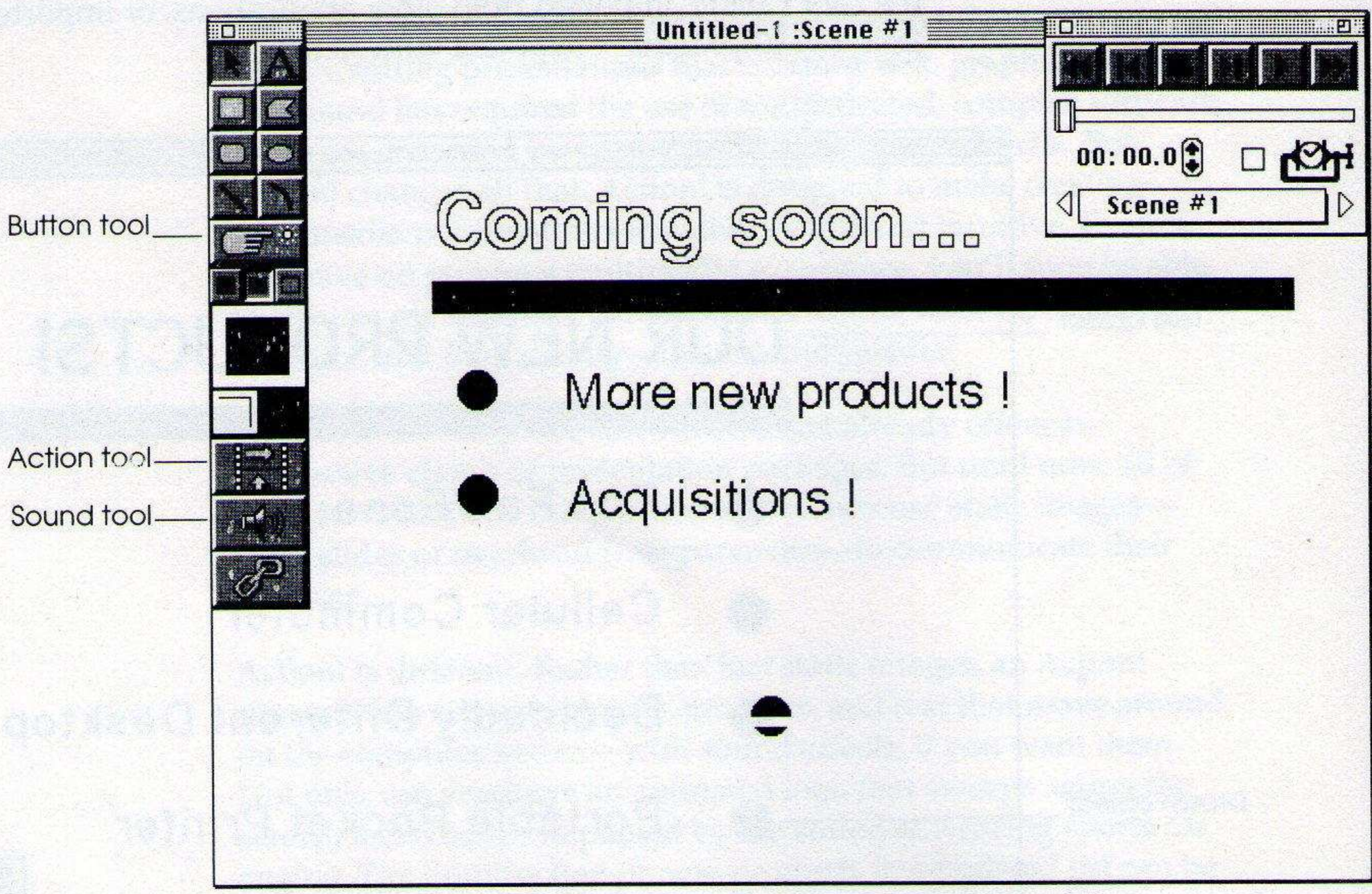
You create and view scenes in a presentation window.

Most of the tools on the Tool Palette—pointer, text tool, rounded rectangle, and polygons—are familiar to you from drawing programs. However, the Tool Palette contains three tools that are

unique to Action! They are the **action**, **sound,** and **link** tools, which you use to add action, sound, and interactivity to an Action! presentation.

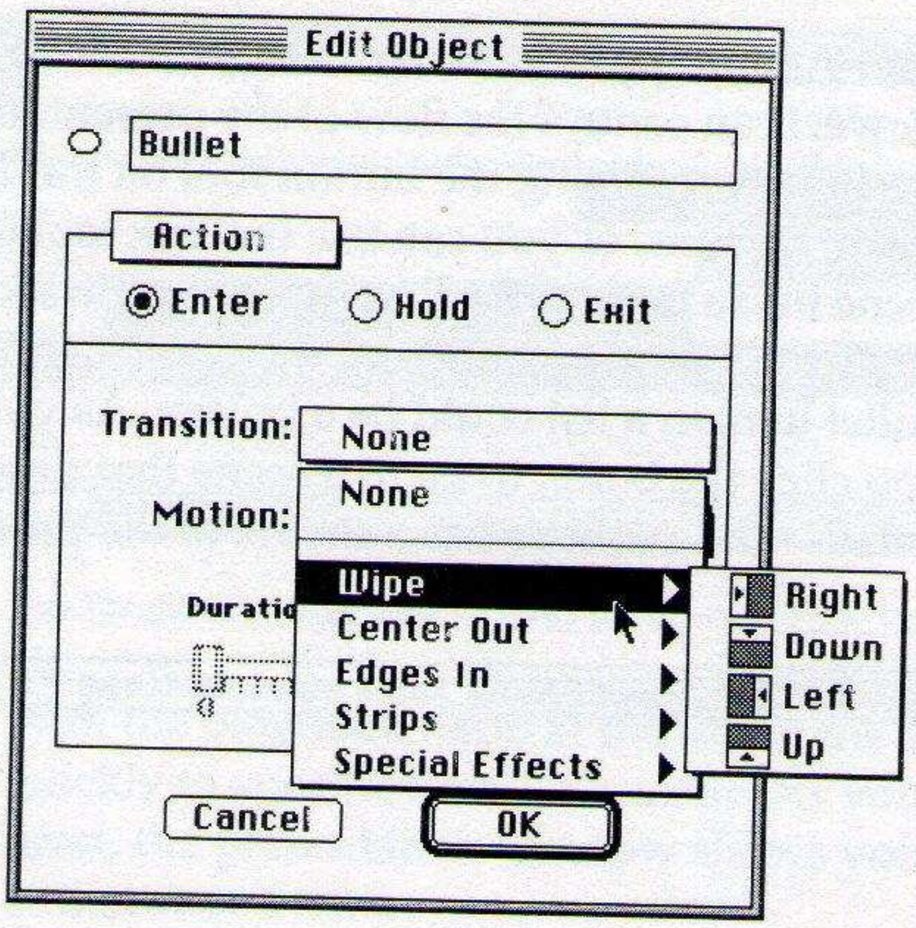
Action

Using the action tool on the Tool Palette, you can apply **action** to an object in a scene. Actions include both **motion** and **transitions** that control the direction the object moves as it enters or leaves the scene. **Light effects** supply the action when an object is not moving in the scene.



Apply action to objects.

For example, each bullet in a list might zoom onto the screen from the right. Once all the bullets are on the screen, the text could slowly dissolve, making an effective transition to the next scene. Or you might create a chart in which each bar grows from the bottom and sparkles as it remains on the screen.



Choose from many transitions, motions, and light effects.

Movies and imported graphics

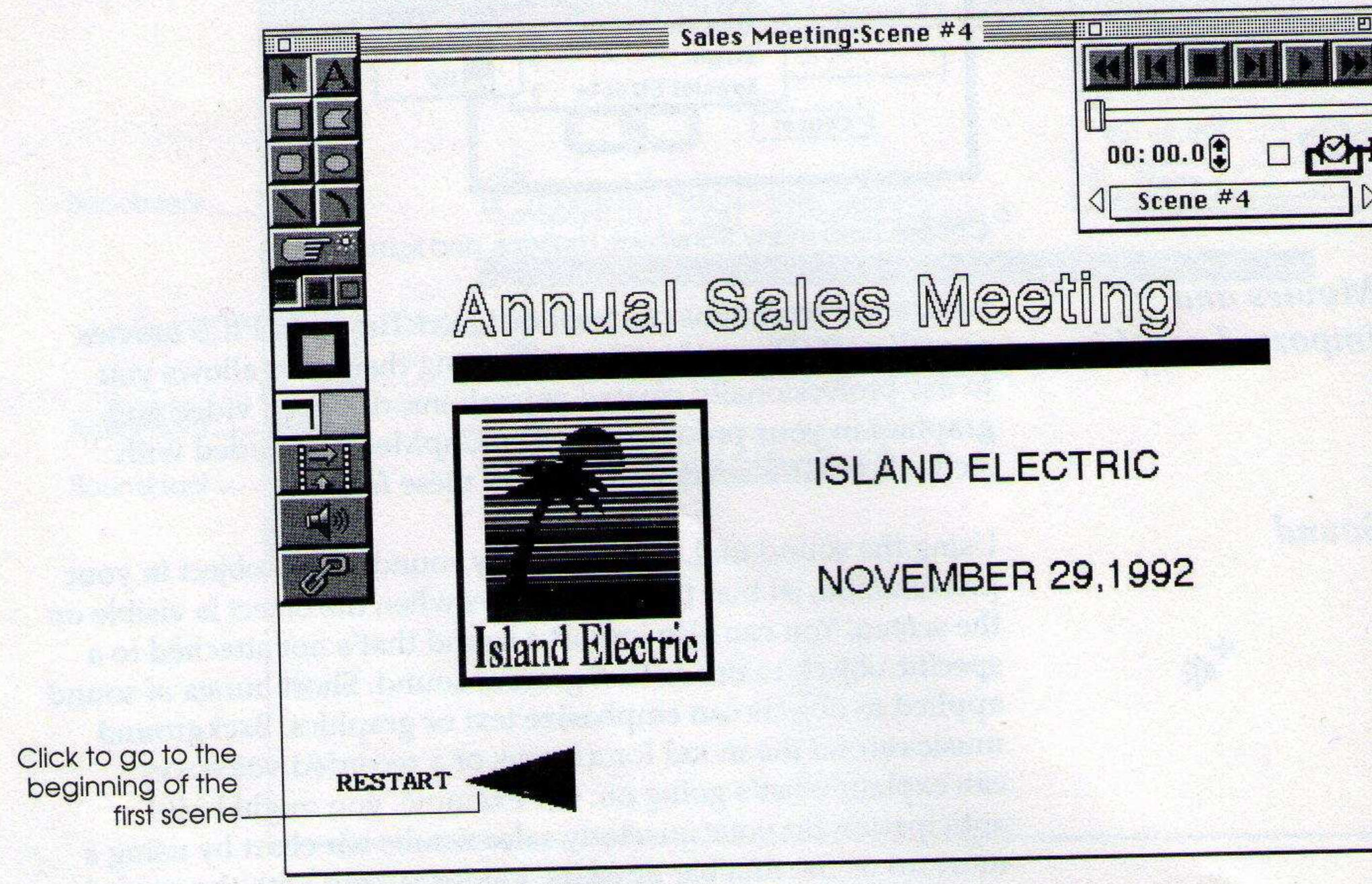
Action! presentations can include QuickTime and PICS movies as well as PICT graphic files. Importing these files allows you to use professionally created animations, digitized video and graphics in your presentation. The ClipMedia included with Action! contains several samples of these formats.

Sound

Using the sound tool, you can apply sound to any object in your presentation, so that the sound plays when the object is visible on the screen. You can also import a sound that's not attached to a specific object, to use as background sound. Short bursts of sound applied to objects can emphasize text or graphics. Background music can set the mood for a scene, or a recorded voiceover can explain what's going on. For example, you might build anticipation for your quarterly sales results bar chart by using a murmur as the first bar appears, louder talking with the second bar, excited chatter for the third, and applause as the final bar is revealed. Next, a voiceover could describe the impact of your results. Check the ClipMedia for sounds you might use.

Interactivity

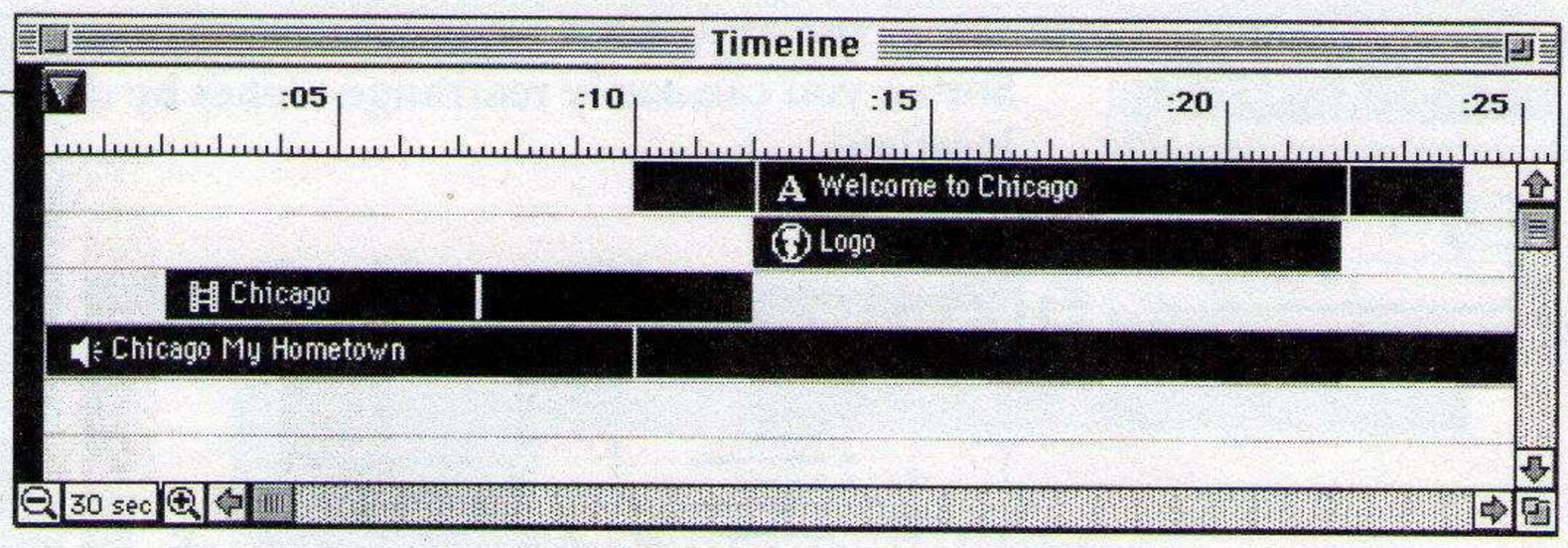
Your Action! presentation can be **interactive**—that is, you (or the viewer) can control the flow of the presentation by clicking **buttons** on the screen. Using the button tool on the Tool Palette, you can create buttons; or you can use the link tool to turn any object in a scene into a button. Each button has an associated action that takes you to a different location in the presentation. For example, each bullet item in a list could be a button. As you discuss each item, you click the bullet to go to a scene that describes the product in detail—and perhaps has a movie of the product in operation.



A button takes you to another location in the presentation.

Timeline

As you create objects in a scene, they appear in the presentation window and in the **Timeline.** The Timeline, chosen from the Window menu, shows how all the objects in a scene relate to one another. In the Timeline, each object appears as a bar; the length of the bar shows the duration of the object in the current scene. You can stretch or shrink an object's bar in the Timeline to increase or decrease the object's duration, or move the object to a different time in the scene.



The Timeline shows where and when an object appears in the scene.

With the **playback head** at the top of the Timeline, you can move quickly to specific times in a scene. As you move the playback head, the presentation window shows you the objects that appear at that **scene time**.

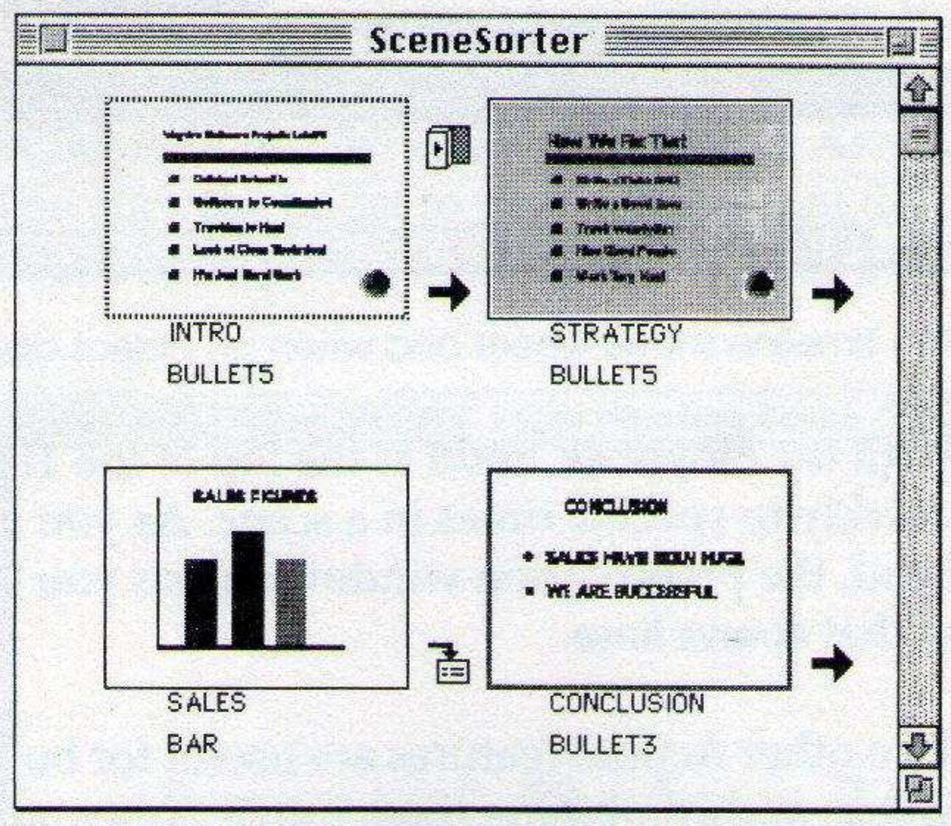
Content List and Scene Sorter

Two other Action! features are useful for building and rearranging scenes and combining them into a presentation. The **Content List,** chosen from the Window menu, displays a list of all the scenes in the presentation and all the objects in each scene. Use it to get an overview of your presentation and to edit text objects.

The Content List shows the objects in all scenes.

The **Scene Sorter,** chosen from the Window menu, shows an image of each scene in the presentation. It also gives the name of each scene and its associated template, what happens at the end of the

scene, and any sound that plays between scenes. Using the Scene Sorter, you can easily rearrange scenes by dragging them to new locations.

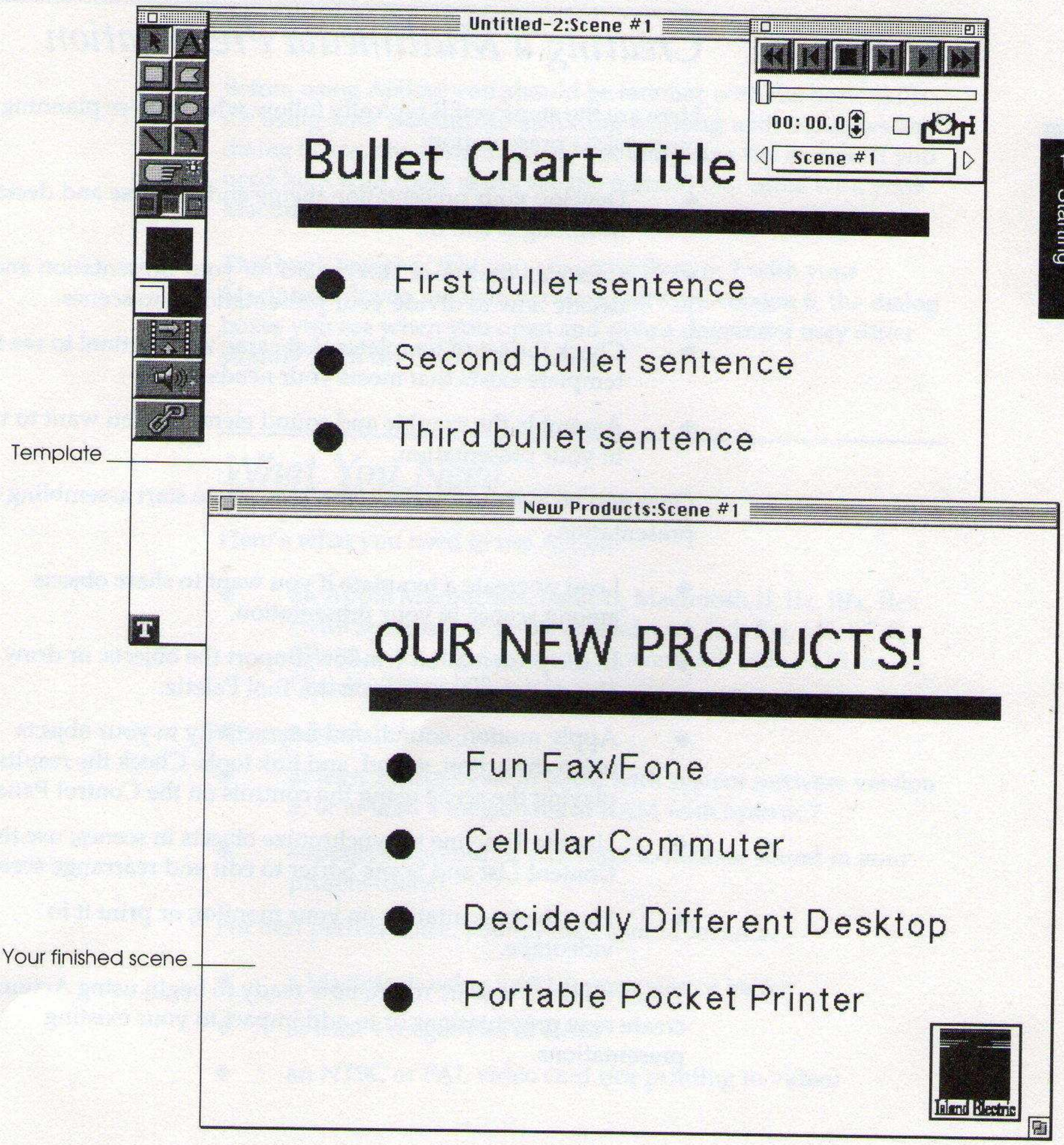


The Scene Sorter shows the sequence of the scenes.

Templates

Action! comes with a set of templates that you can use to create professional-looking presentations right away. Templates are ready-made scenes that contain objects, motion, transitions, and text. To create your own presentation, just edit the text, replace the graphics, movies, or sounds if necessary, and you're done!

Action! also lets you create your own templates. The templates you create are useful when you repeatedly use the same objects in many scenes, such as a logo, a sound, or headers and footers.



Templates let you use ready-made presentations.

Creating a Multimedia Presentation

Here are the steps you'll typically follow when you're planning a multimedia presentation:

- Develop your presentation theme and purpose and decide how long it will be.
- Create an outline or storyboard for your presentation and decide how to divide your presentation into scenes.
- Check the set of templates that came with Action! to see if a template exists that meets your needs.
- Assemble the graphic and sound elements you want to use in your presentation.

Once you've installed Action!, you're ready to start assembling the presentation.

- Load or create a template if you want to share objects among scenes in your presentation.
- In the presentation window, import the objects; or draw objects using the tools on the Tool Palette.
- Apply motion, sound, and interactivity to your objects using the action, sound, and link tools. Check the results by playing the scene using the controls on the Control Panel.
- Use the Timeline to synchronize objects in scenes; use the Content List and Scene Sorter to edit and rearrange scenes.
- Play the presentation on your monitor, or print it to videotape.

That's all there is to it! You're now ready to begin using Action! to create new presentations or to add impact to your existing presentations.

Before You Begin

Before using Action! you should be familiar with the basic skills for using your Macintosh, including working with windows and dialog boxes, choosing from menus, and using the mouse. If you need help with these skills, see the manual that came with your Macintosh.

This book assumes that you are using System 7 with your Macintosh. If you are using system software version 6, the dialog boxes you see when you open and save a document may differ slightly from the ones in this book.

What You Need

Here's what you need to use Action!:

- an Apple Macintosh Classic II, Macintosh II, IIx, IIfx, IIcx (with System 7 or 32-bit Quickdraw), IIci, IIsi, LC, LC II, SE/30 (with color monitor), PowerBook 140 or 170, or Quadra 700 or 900.
- a hard disk
- at least 2 megabytes of RAM with system software version 6, or at least 4 megabytes of RAM with System 7
- support for sound (if you want to include sound in your presentations)

For best performance, your system should include:

- a Macintosh using a 68020 processor or better
- at least 4 megabytes of RAM
- an NTSC or PAL video card (for printing to video)

Manual conventions

This manual uses some conventions and symbols to help you learn and use Action!

When you're working in Action! you frequently use key combinations as procedural shortcuts or alternative ways of choosing commands. Keys you press simultaneously are separated by a hyphen (-)—for example, shift-click.

Words in italics—such as *Action! User's Guide*—refer to book titles, chapters, or sections. Words in bold type—such as **scene view**—are defined in text where they appear.

Steps to perform a specific task are preceded by numbers or square bullets and are in bold text. For example:

To create text,

- **Click the text tool in the Tool Palette.**

Paragraphs preceded by ➠ ***Tip*** provide additional information for using Action! efficiently.

Registering Action!

Before you install Action! take a minute to complete and mail the registration card. Technical support is available only if you register the application.

As a licensed Action! user, you'll be notified of enhancements to the application. Macromedia provides technical support to registered users, who also receive early notification of new Macromedia products and services.

So take a minute to fill out the registration card. It's worth it!

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Because of the threat of computer viruses, it's wise to write-protect the original disks before you insert them in your disk drive. This prevents a virus from infecting the disk. If you need to restore an infected program, your original disks will be available.

If you need information about copying disks, see the manual that came with your Macintosh.

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An application like Action! makes it possible for you to use audio and visual material that you haven't created yourself—for example, graphics, animations, and sounds. These are likely to be covered by copyright. The artists who create them earn their living from the small fees you pay to use these artistic works in your own productions.

Installing Action!

The Macromedia Action! application and supporting files come compressed on a set of disks. You decompress the program onto your hard disk by running the installation program.

At a minimum, you can install the Program and Help disk, which requires 1.5 megabytes of disk space.

To install the program, templates, and ClipMedia,

1. **Create a new folder on your hard disk and name it Action!**
2. **Insert the Action! program disk into your disk drive.**
   The disk icon appears on your desktop and the contents of the disk are displayed.
3. **Double-click the Program Installer icon.**
   Running the Installer decompresses the files and places them on your hard disk.
4. **Click Continue in the Program Installer dialog box.**
5. **When asked to indicate where the program should be installed, locate and open the Action! folder, then click Install.**
6. **Click Quit when the dialog box appears telling you that installation is complete.**
7. **Eject the disk.**
8. **Repeat steps 2 through 7 to install the contents of the remaining disks.**

Note After you finish installing, double-click the Sample Presentation folder and drag the QuickTime icon to your System folder. Before using QuickTime movies, restart your computer so the changes in the system folder can take effect.

Starting Action!

Once you've installed Action!, an application icon appears in the Finder.

To start Action!,

- **Double-click the Action! application icon.**

Playing the Sample Presentation

Action! comes with a sample presentation. Take a look at this presentation to become more familiar with the concepts discussed in this chapter and to get ideas for your own presentations.

To play the sample presentation,

1. **Double-click the Sample Presentation icon in the Finder.**
2. **Choose Play Presentation from the Control menu.**

To stop playing the presentation at any time,

- **Press Command Command-period.**

Using Online Help

Action! comes with an online help system that explains each menu command.

To use help,

1. **Choose Help from the Apple menu.**
2. **Double-click a command in the Action! Command Index.**
   The help for that command appears.

Exiting Action!

To prevent you from losing work, Action! prompts you to save your presentation if you've made changes since the last time you saved.

To quit Action,

- **Choose Quit from the File menu.**

Action! closes the document and returns you to the Macintosh desktop or to the workspace of the next open program.

Chapter 2: Working with Objects

Each Action! scene is made up of objects, such as text, graphics, sounds, or movies. You can create objects in scenes using Action! tools, use the ClipMedia objects included with the application, or import objects from other programs.

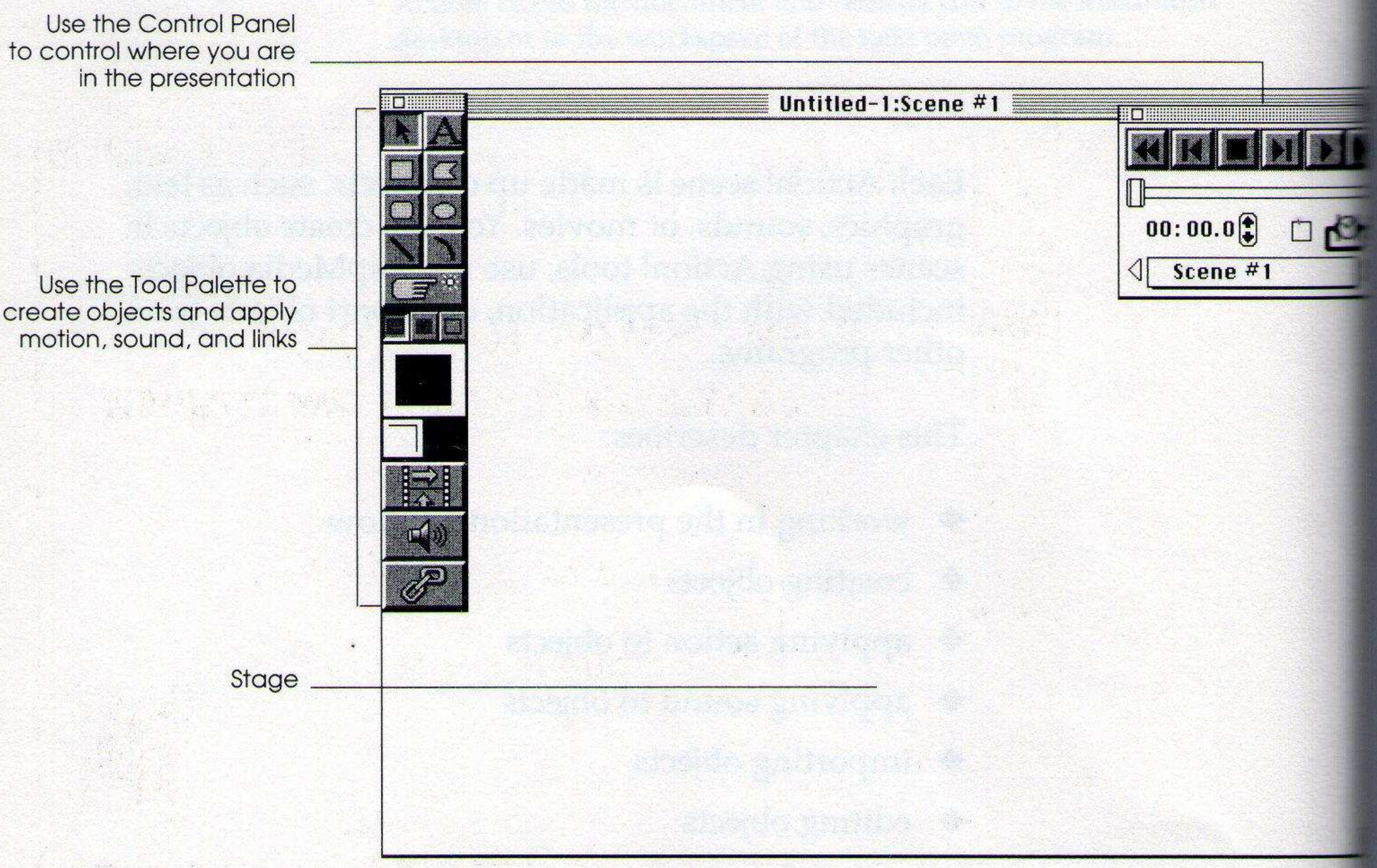
This chapter describes:

- working in the presentation window
- creating objects
- applying action to objects
- applying sound to objects
- importing objects
- editing objects

Before beginning this chapter, be sure you've installed Action! following the instructions in Chapter 1. If you're unfamiliar with Action!, read *Introducing Action!* and *Action! Concepts* in Chapter 1 before you start working with Action! objects.

Working in the Presentation Window

When you first open Action! you see an empty presentation window. You create and edit objects, and preview and play presentations in this window. Each scene is created in a separate presentation window, and only one presentation window can be open at a time.



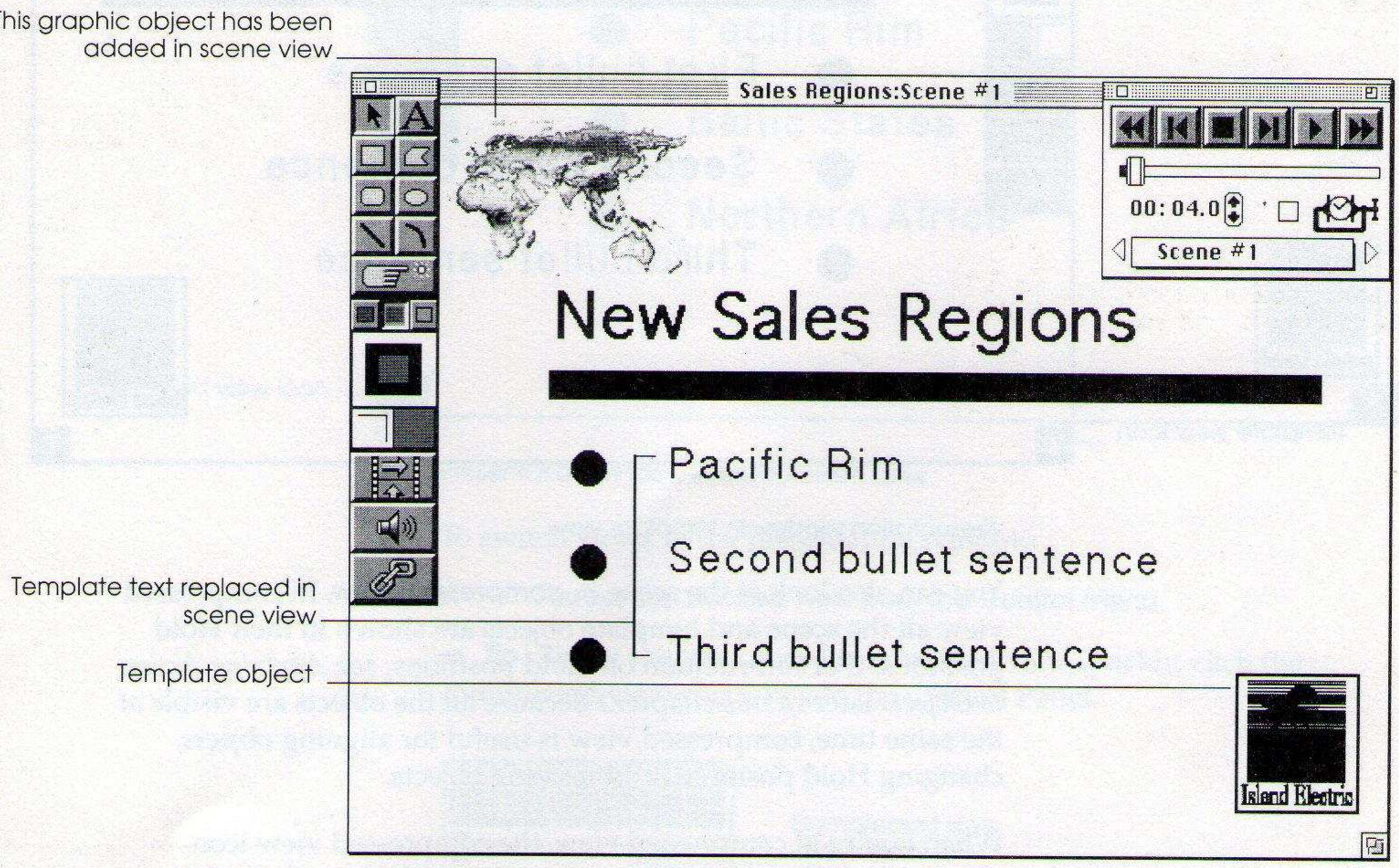
Empty presentation window

The part of the window where you play the presentation is called the **stage**. The only time you might change the size of the stage is when you're creating a presentation that's going to be played on a larger or smaller monitor.

Changing views

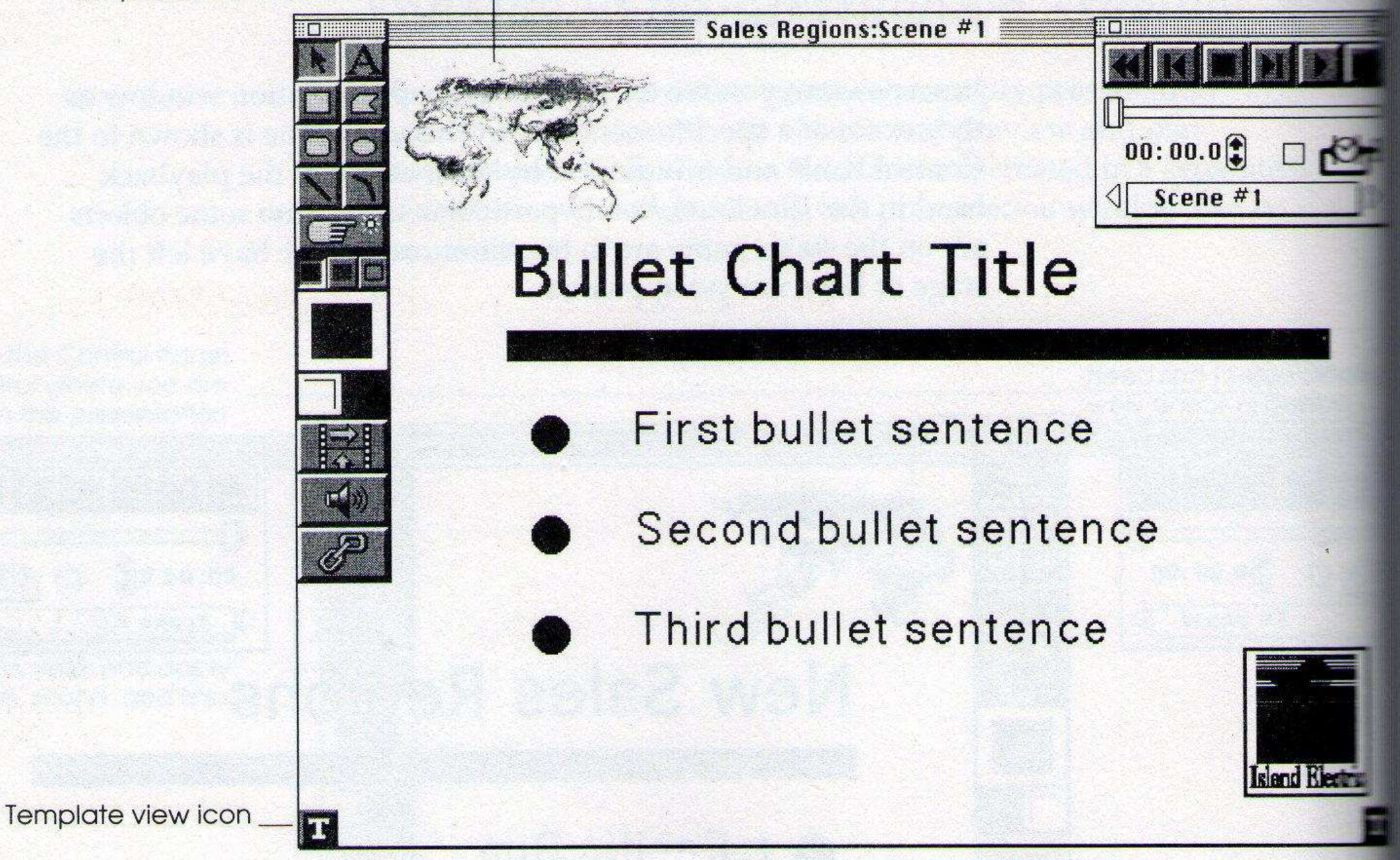
When creating a presentation, you usually work in **scene view**. Both scene and template objects (if there's a template applied to the scene) are visible in this view.

In scene view, you see the objects in the presentation window as they occur at a specific scene time. (The scene time is shown in the Control Panel and is indicated by the location of the playback head in the Timeline.) At any particular scene time some objects are on the stage, some are in transition, and some have left the stage or have not yet appeared.



Presentation window in scene view

When you're creating and editing a template, you work in **template view**. Only template objects can be created and edited in this view (scene objects are visible but dimmed). When you're in template view, the template view icon appears in each corner of the presentation window.

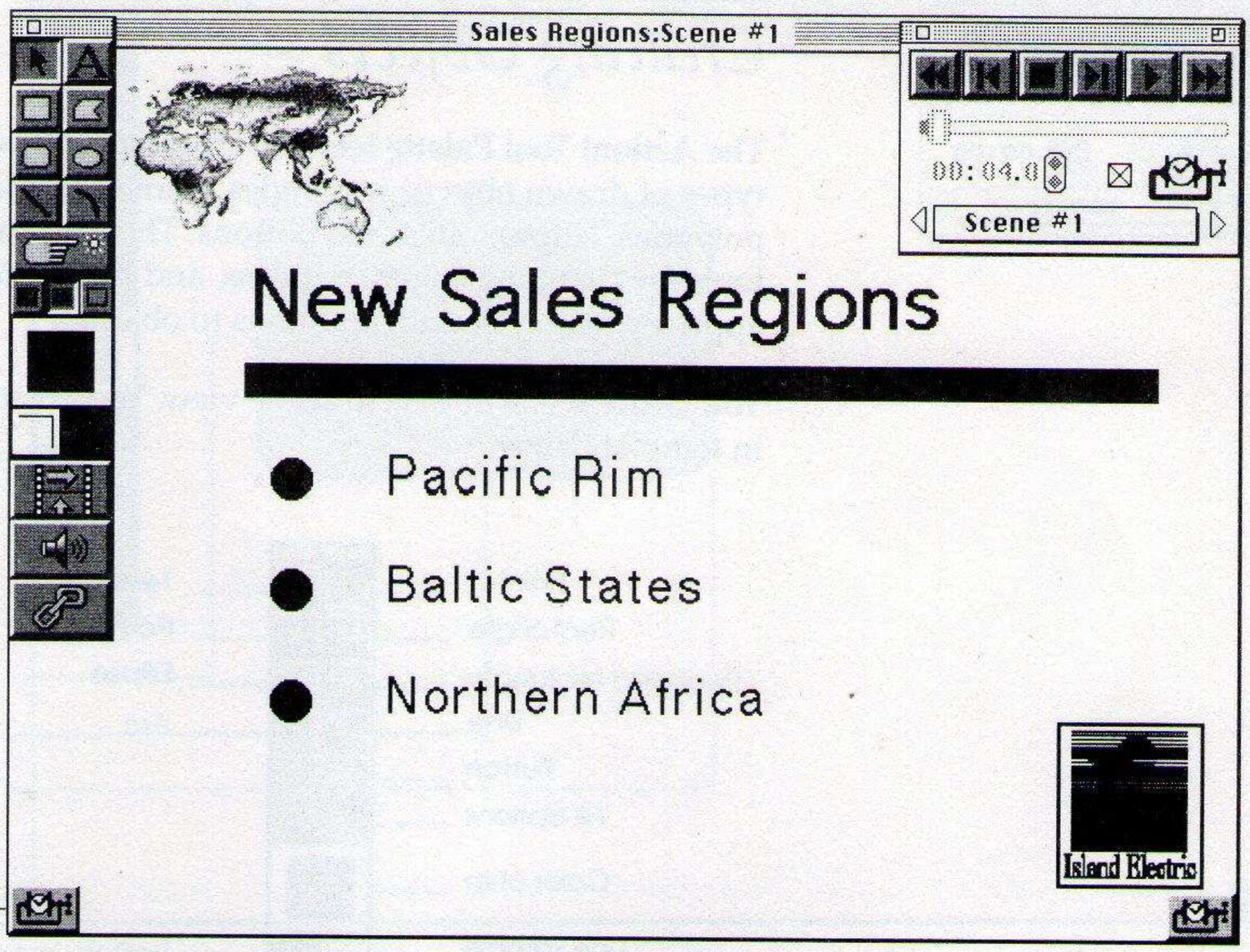


Presentation window in template view

You can also look at the scene in **compressed view.** In compressed view all the scene and template objects are shown in their Hold positions. (For information on Hold positions, see *Applying Action to Objects* later in this chapter.) Because all the objects are visible at the same time, compressed view is useful for aligning objects, changing Hold positions, and resizing objects.

When you're in compressed view, the compressed view icon appears in each corner of the presentation window. You can't change the scene time in compressed view, so the time counter and slider are grayed in the Control Panel.

Compressed view overlays scene or template view. In compressed scene view, you can move and edit scene objects. In compressed template view, you can move and edit template objects.



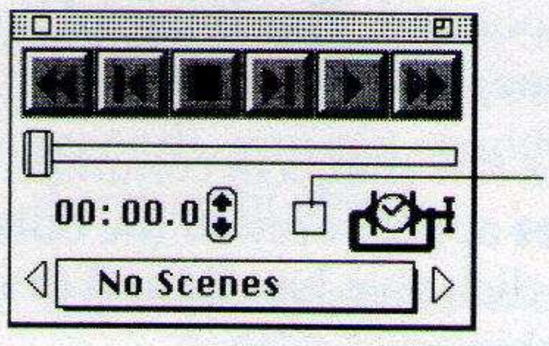
Compressed view icon

Presentation window in compressed view

To switch views in the presentation window,

■ **Choose the desired view from the Control menu.**

➠ ***Tip*** To get into and out of compressed view quickly, click the compressed view check box in the Control Panel.

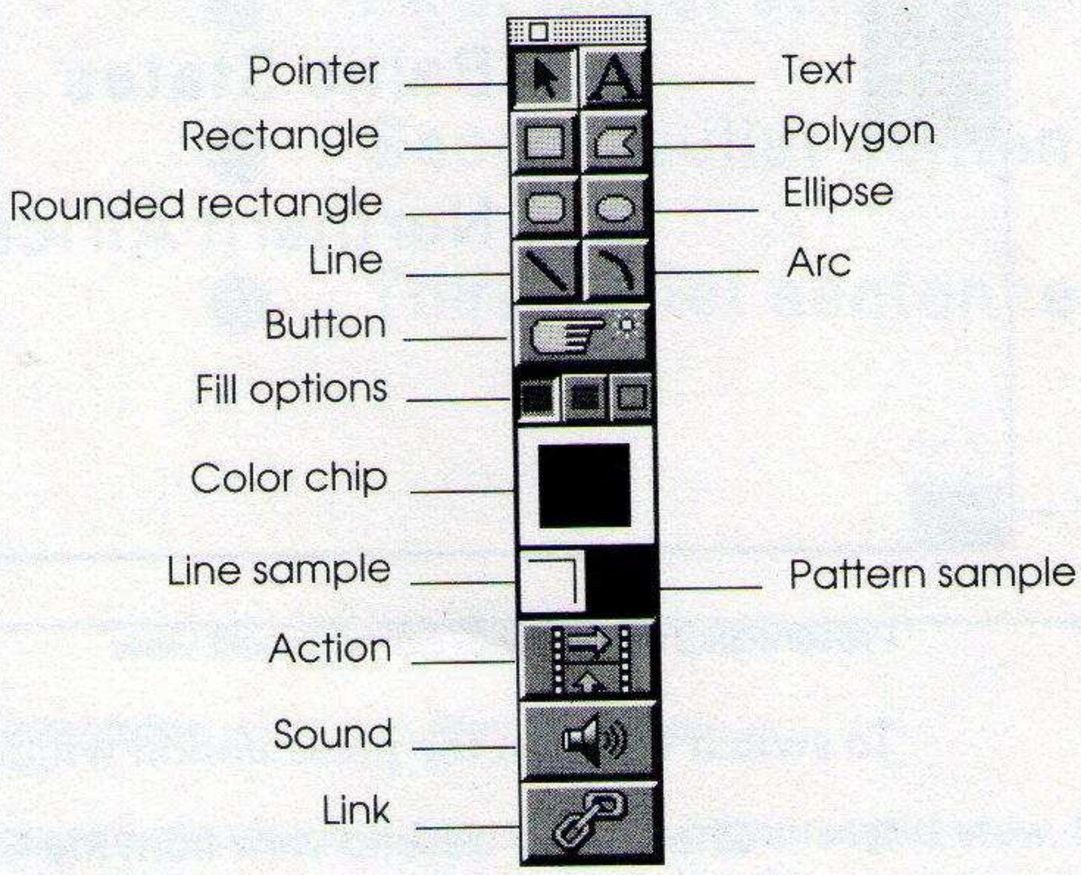


Control Panel

Creating Objects

The Action! Tool Palette lets you create text objects and seven types of drawn objects: rectangles, rounded rectangles, lines, polygons, ellipses, arcs, and buttons. The Tool Palette also contains tools for changing colors, patterns, and line widths, and for applying action, sound, and links to objects.

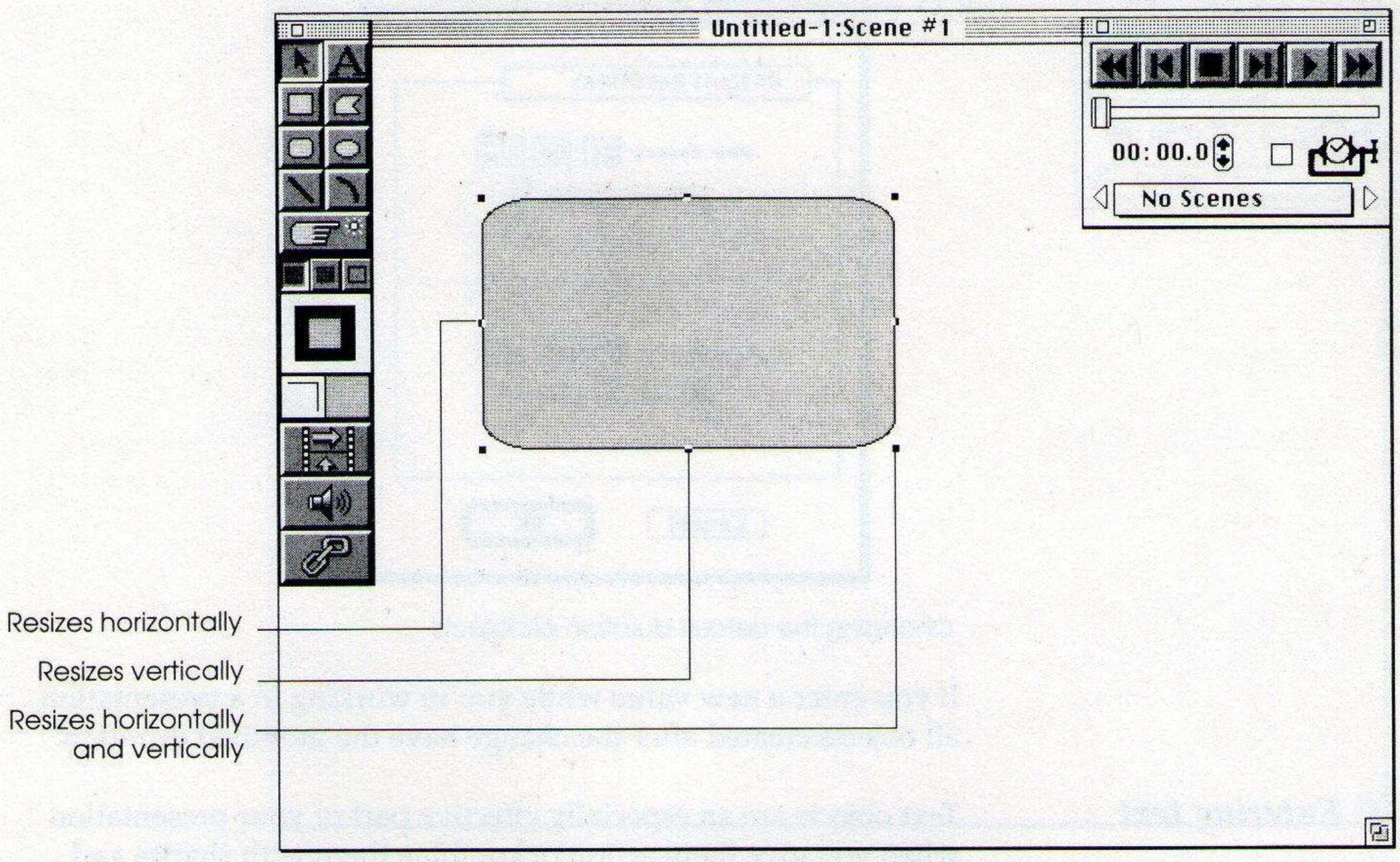
You create scene objects in scene view. You create template objects in template view.



➠ ***Tip*** Hold down the Option key when you click a drawing tool to keep the tool selected after you draw the object (instead of returning to the pointer). This is useful if you're creating several objects of the same type at one time.

All objects have a few things in common. When you click to select an object, **handles** appear around the outside of the object. To resize an object, click on a handle and drag. To move an object, click inside the object and drag.

➠ ***Tip*** To move an object one pixel, press Control and an arrow key. To move an object one grid space, press Shift and an arrow key. You can also move objects in small increments using the Snap to Grid command in the Edit menu.



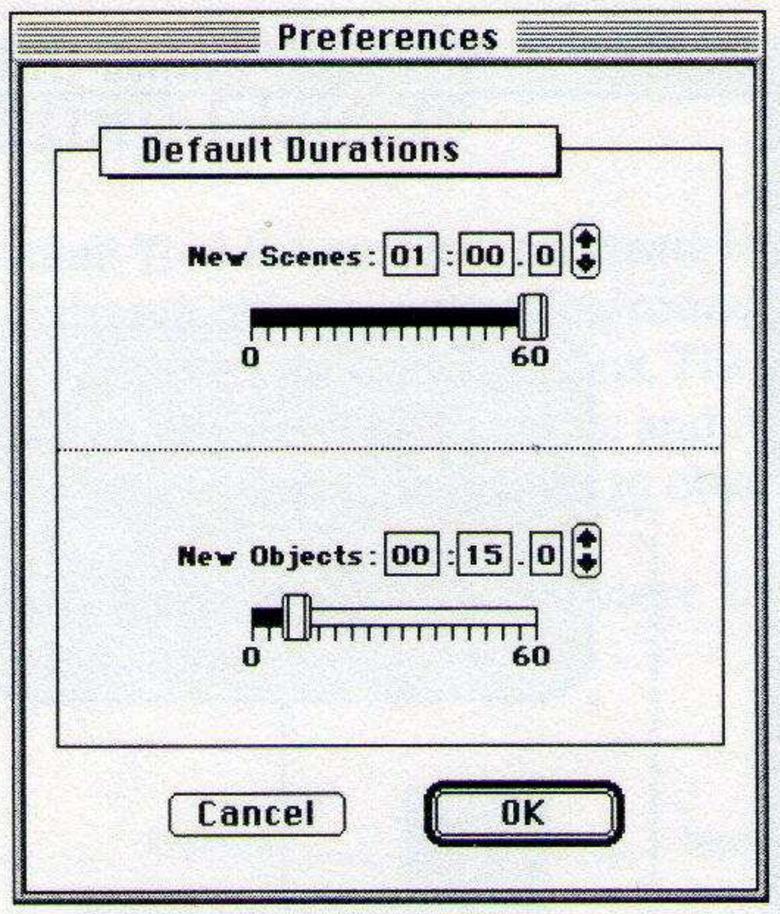
Handles appear around selected objects.

All objects have a **start time**, an **end time**, and a **duration**. The start time is the scene time when you create the object. The end time is when the object leaves the scene. By default, objects have a 10 second duration. For example, if the scene time is 5 seconds when you create a text object, its start time is 5 seconds and its end time is 15 seconds. (The duration for sounds and QuickTime movies is determined by their length.)

If you want most of your objects to be longer or shorter than 10 seconds, you can change this default. To change the default duration of objects,

1. **Choose Preferences from the Edit menu and then choose Default Durations from the pop-up menu.**

2. **Enter a different value for New Objects.**



Changing the default duration of objects

If you enter a new value while you're working in a presentation, all objects created after the change have the modified duration.

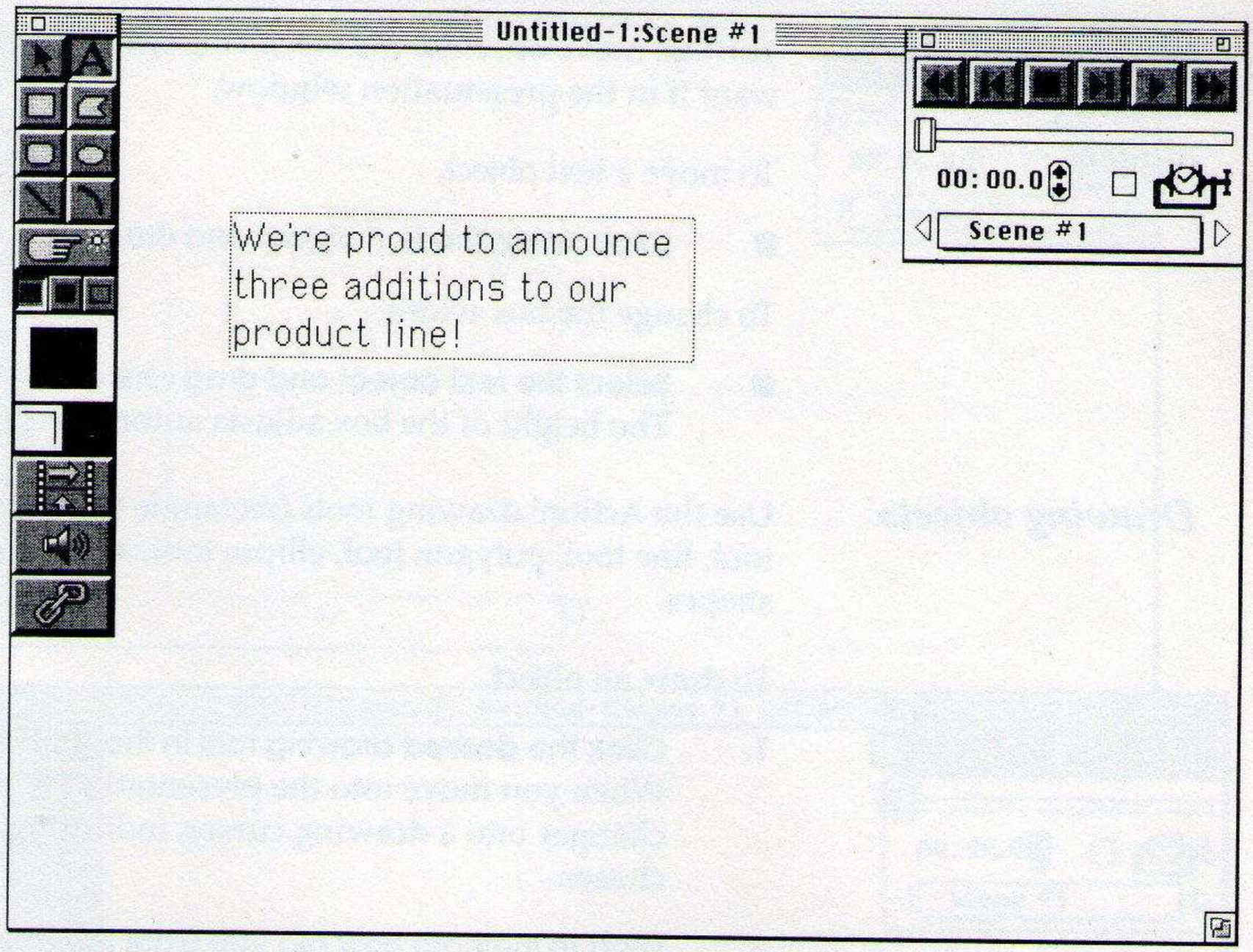
Entering text

Text objects are an especially effective part of your presentation when you give them action or combine them with shapes and sounds.

To create text,

1. **Click the text tool in the Tool Palette.**
   When you move into the presentation window, the pointer changes into the text cursor.

2. **Drag to create a box for the text.**
   The box width determines the right margin. Initially, the box is high enough to contain one line of text. This box expands as you type and the text wraps to fit inside the box.



The box expands as you enter text.

3. **Type the text and then click outside the text box.**
   The cursor changes back to the pointer and the text box is selected.

To edit text,

1. **Click the text tool in the Tool Palette.**
2. **Click the text object to place the insertion point.**
3. **Drag inside the box to select text or double-click to select a word, then type the replacement text.**
4. **Click outside the box when you're finished editing.**

For information about changing the font, size, and style of the text, see *Changing text* later in this chapter.

Moving and resizing text objects

You can move or resize the box so the text appears where you want it in the presentation window.

To move a text object,

- **Click inside the text object and drag.**

To change the box width,

- **Select the text object and drag one of the handles.**
  The height of the box adjusts automatically to fit the text.

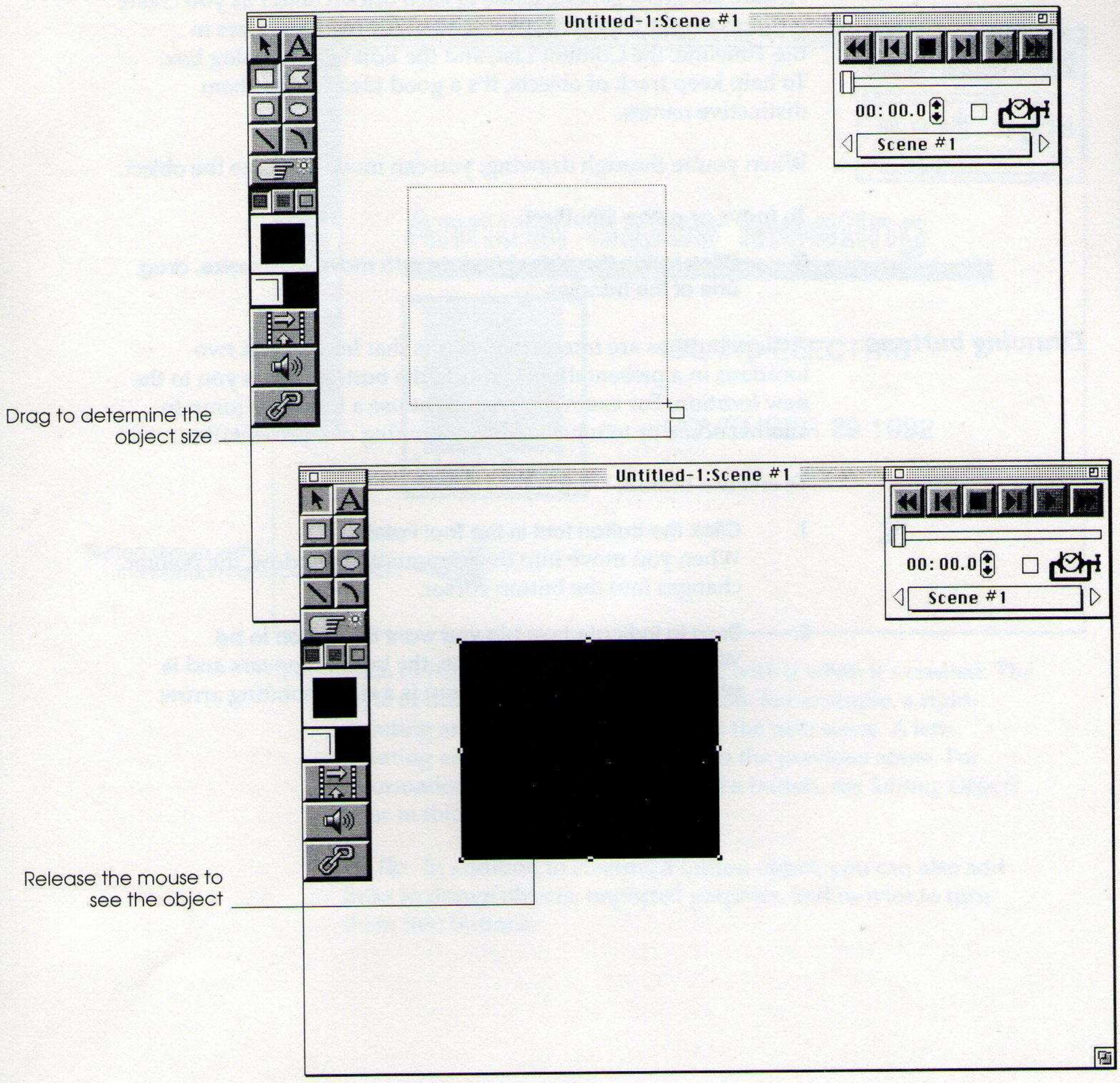
Drawing objects

Use the Action! drawing tools (rectangle tool, rounded rectangle tool, line tool, polygon tool, ellipse tool, and arc tool) to draw shapes.

To draw an object,

1. **Click the desired drawing tool in the Tool Palette.**
   When you move into the presentation window, the pointer changes into a drawing cursor, indicating the tool you've chosen.

2. **Drag to indicate how big you want the object to be.**
   No matter what shape object you're drawing (except for a line), you see a box on the screen. When you release the mouse, the object appears and is selected.



➠ ***Tip*** To create objects of equal horizontal and vertical proportions (for example, circles and squares), hold down the Shift key while you drag.

Action! assigns a generic name to each drawn object as you create it (for example, Object #1, Object #2). This name appears in the Timeline, the Content List, and the Edit Object dialog box. To help keep track of objects, it's a good idea to give them distinctive names.

When you're through drawing, you can move or resize the object.

To move or resize an object,

- **Click inside the object and drag to move it. To resize, drag one of the handles.**

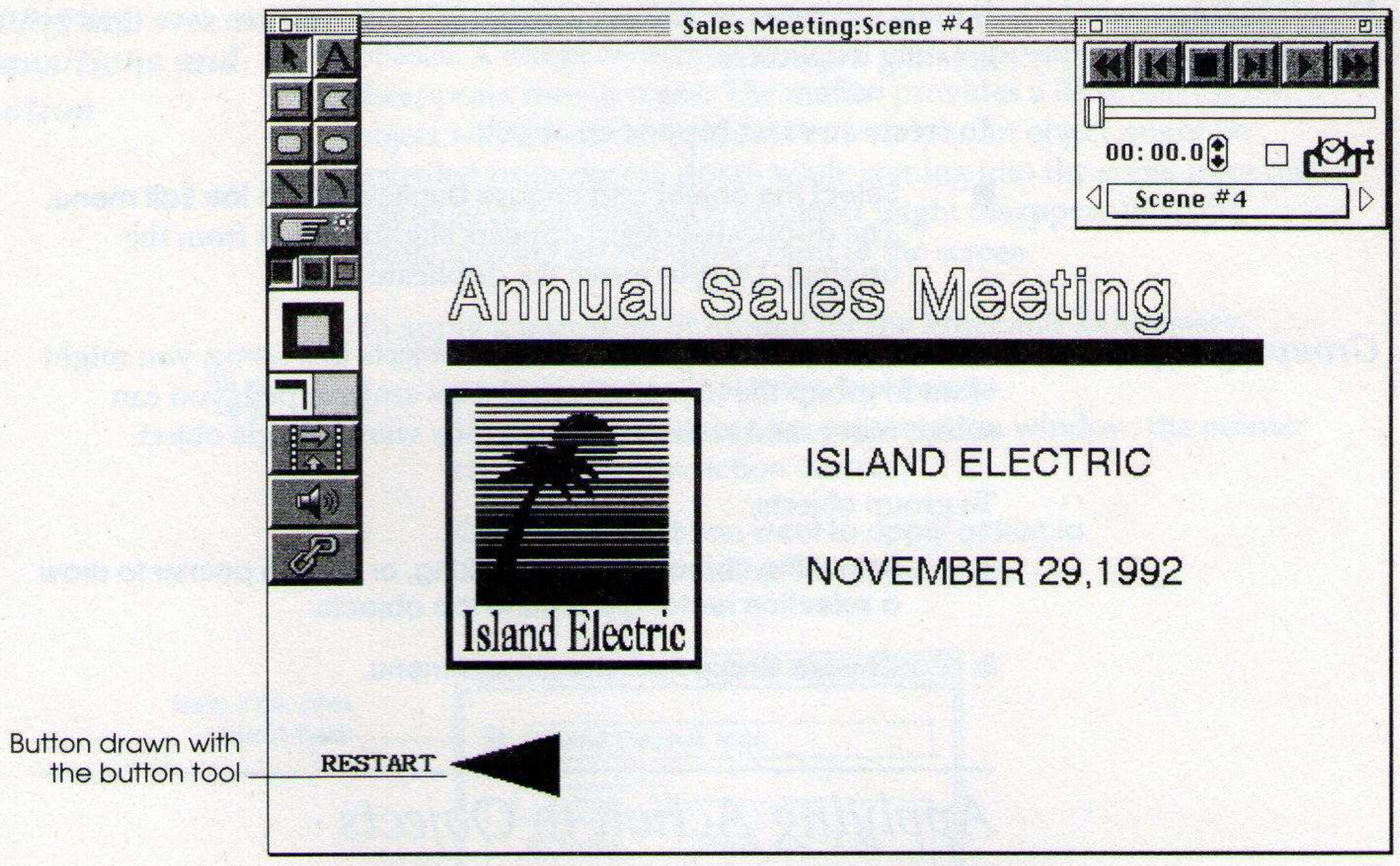
Drawing buttons

Action! buttons are interactive objects that let you link two locations in a presentation. Clicking the button moves you to the new location. For example, you might use a button to jump to another scene or to return to the beginning of a presentation.

To create a button,

1. **Click the button tool in the Tool Palette.**
   When you move into the presentation window, the pointer changes into the button cursor.

2. **Drag to indicate how big you want the button to be.**
   When you release the mouse, the button appears and is selected. By default the button is a right-pointing arrow.



Each button has an action associated with it when it's created. The style of the button indicates this action. For example, a right-pointing arrow button moves you to the next scene. A left-pointing arrow button returns you to the previous scene. For information on changing the style of a button, see *Editing Objects* later in this chapter.

➠ ***Tip*** In addition to creating a button object, you can also add links to drawn objects, imported graphics, and movies to turn them into buttons.

Duplicating objects

If the scene contains several identical objects, you can save time by creating duplicates.

To create an exact copy of an object,

- **Select the object and choose Duplicate from the Edit menu.** The duplicated object appears slightly offset from the original. Drag to move the duplicate.

Grouping objects

When you're working with multiple objects in a scene, you might want to group the objects. Once objects are grouped, you can select, move, and resize them as if they were a single object.

To group objects,

1. **Select the objects by shift-clicking, or use the pointer to draw a selection rectangle around the objects.**
2. **Choose Group from the Object menu.**

Applying Action to Objects

In Action! you're not limited to simply showing a static object in a scene. Instead, you can bring each object to life by applying **action**—transitions, motion, and light effects. When you apply action to an object, you control how and when it comes into the scene, how long it stays in the scene, and how and when it leaves the scene. It's the interaction between objects as they enter and exit a scene that grabs and keeps your audience's attention.

Each object can have three separate phases: **Enter**, **Hold**, and **Exit**. During the Enter phase the object comes into the scene and moves to its Hold position. During the Hold phase the object remains still in the scene. During the Exit phase the object moves from its Hold position out of the scene.

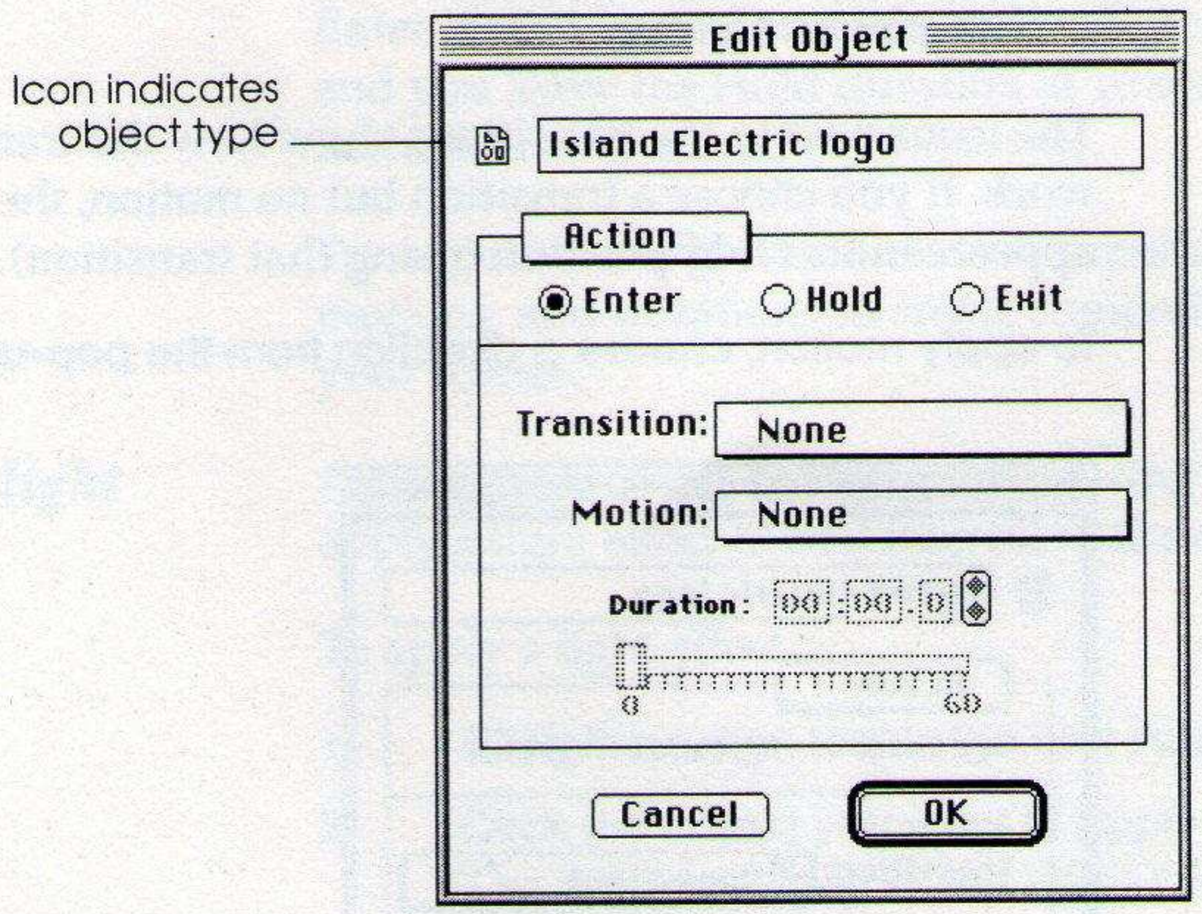
Applying transitions and motion

You can apply a transition, a motion, or both for Enter and Exit phases. A **transition** defines how the object appears in or disappears from a scene. The **motion** provides a direction for the object while it's in transition. For example, an object might be revealed from the top down while coming into the scene from the left edge of the screen. Or an object might disappear in strips, while moving off the upper right of the screen.

To apply a transition or motion for the Enter and Exit phases,

1. **Click the action tool in the Tool Palette.**
   When you move into the presentation window, the pointer changes into the action cursor.

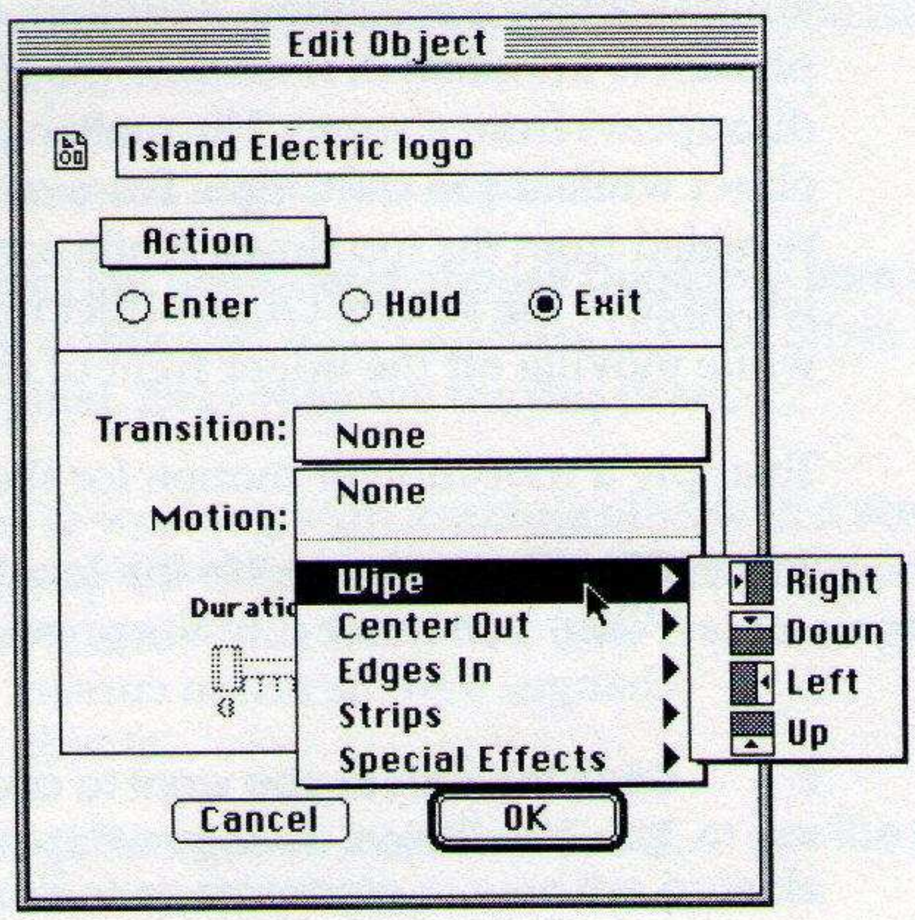
2. **Click the object you want to apply action to.**
   The Edit Object dialog box appears.



The Edit Object dialog box is a powerful editing tool that contains several displays for changing object attributes. When you use the action tool, the dialog box automatically opens to the Action display.

3. **Click Enter or Exit.**

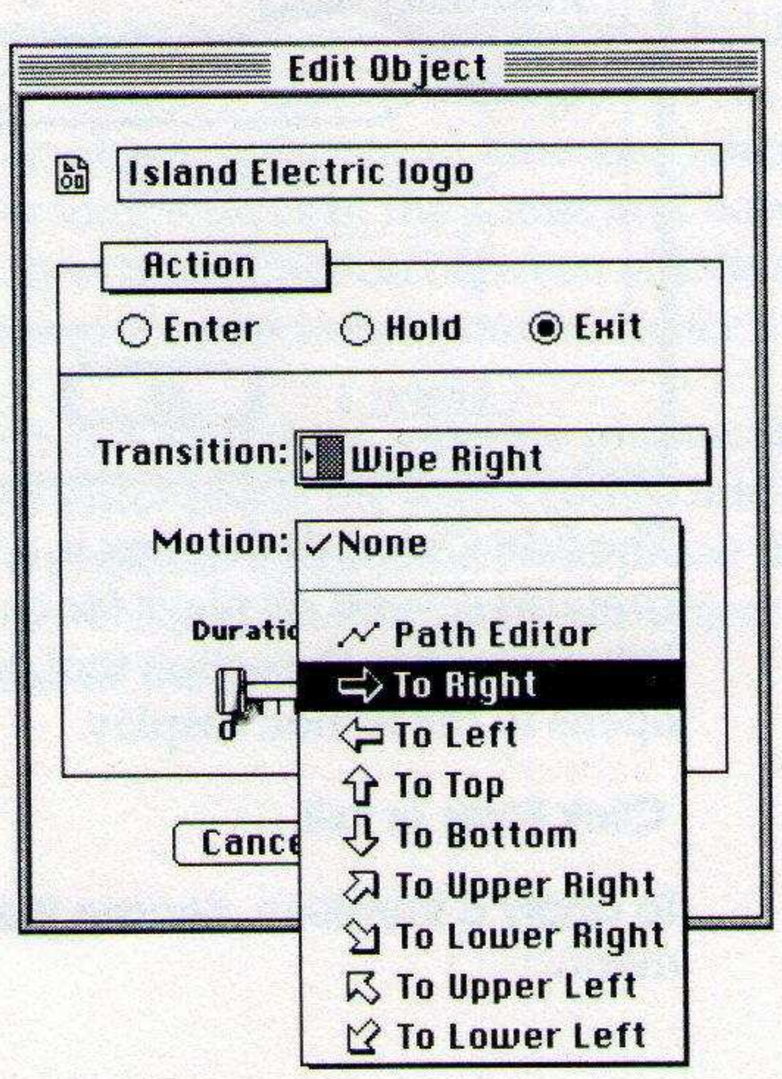
4. **To apply a transition, choose the transition from the pop-up menu.**



Choosing an Exit transition

The icons next to the transitions show how the transitions work. If you choose a transition but no motion, the object appears in its Hold position (using that transition).

5. **To apply motion, choose a direction from the pop-up menu.**



Choosing motion

The icons next to the motions show how the motions work. If you apply a motion but no transition, the completely revealed object moves from that direction to its Hold position in the scene.

➠ ***Tip*** The Path Editor option lets you create key points to define the path the object travels as it enters or leaves the scene.

6. **Drag the slider, type in numbers, or use the arrows to enter a duration for the Enter and Exit phases.**
If you don't enter a value, Action! gives the enter or exit phase a duration of 1 second.

When it's created, each object has a default duration of 10 seconds (except for sounds and QuickTime movies). This is how long the object stays in its Hold phase. The Enter and Exit durations are added to the object's Hold duration. For example, if you apply an Enter transition of 2 seconds and an Exit transition of 3 seconds, and you leave the Hold duration at 10 seconds, the object appears in the scene for a total of 15 seconds.

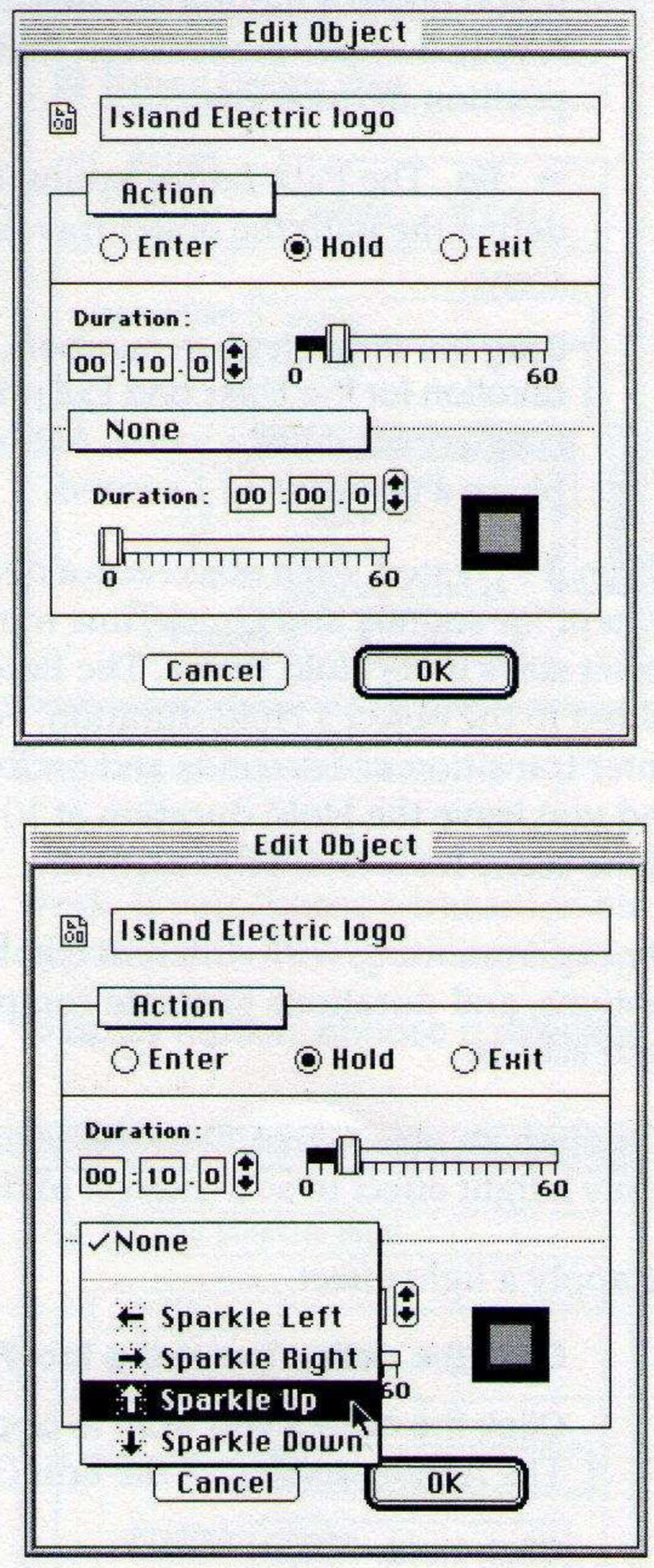
Try experimenting with different combinations of transitions, motions, and durations to create compelling action sequences in your scenes.

Applying light effects

Although an object doesn't move during its Hold phase, you can apply a light effect to add interest to the object.

To apply a light effect,

1. **Click the action tool in the Tool Palette.**
2. **Click the object you want to apply the light effect to.**
The Action display of the Edit Object dialog box appears.
3. **Click Hold.**
The display changes so you can apply action to the Hold phase.
4. **Choose a light effect from the pop-up menu.**



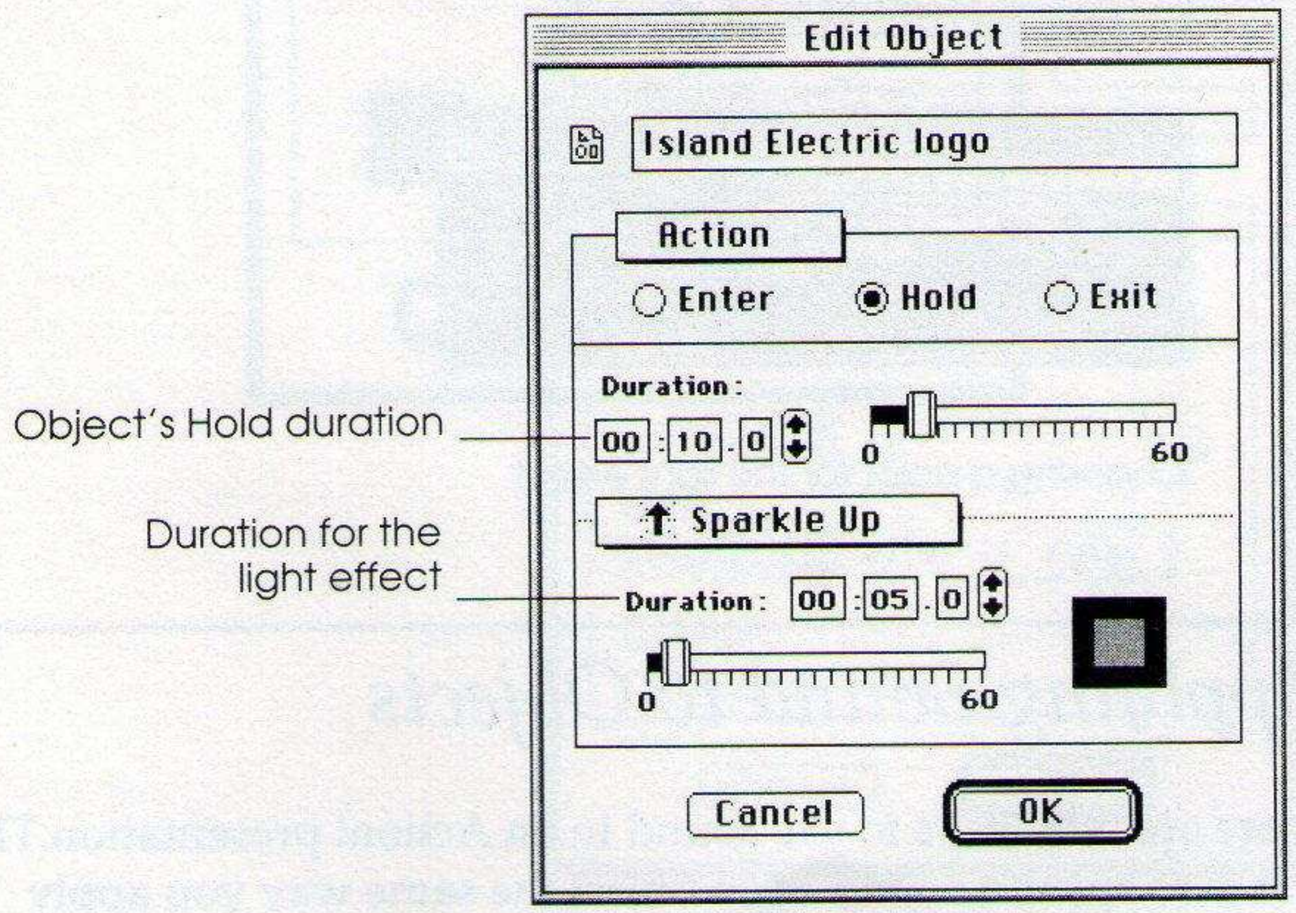
Choosing a light effect

5. **Drag the slider, type in numbers, or use the arrows to set a duration for the light effect.**
The light effect doesn't have to be the same duration as the object's Hold phase. If it's shorter, the effect starts at the beginning of the Hold phase and continues for the time you've set. For example, if an object has a Hold duration of

10 seconds, and you set a light effect duration of 5 seconds, the light effect appears for the first 5 seconds of the Hold phase.

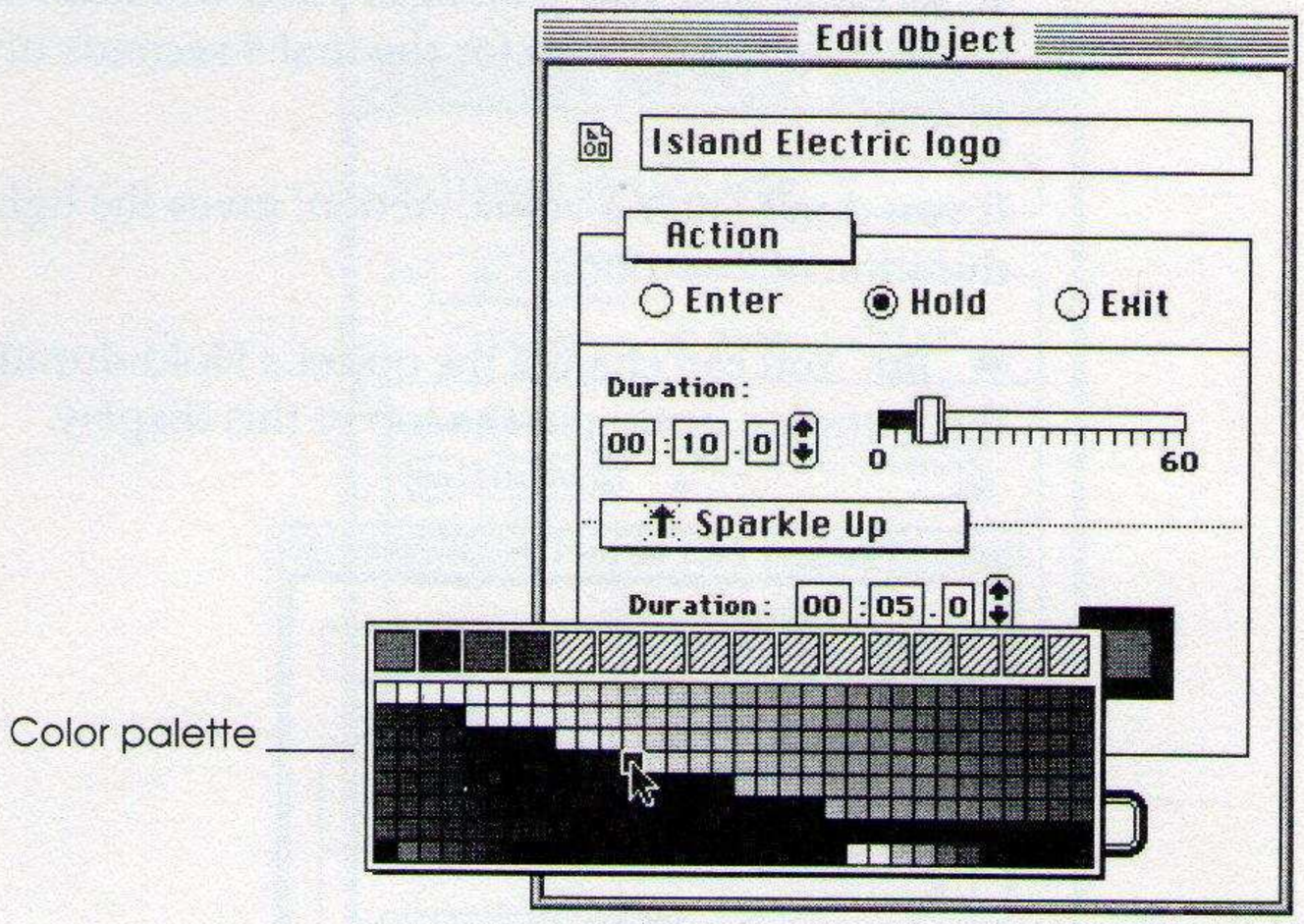
If you don't enter a value, Action! gives the light effect a duration of 2 seconds.

➠ ***Tip*** You can change the object's Hold duration by using the Duration option in the top of this display.



Setting a light effect duration

6. **To choose a color for the effect, click the color chip to open the color palette and drag to the color you want.**
   Click the inside rectangle to choose a foreground color for the sparkle. Click the outside rectangle to choose a background color.



Choosing a color for the light effect

Applying Sound to Objects

There are two ways to use sound in an Action! presentation.The first is to apply a sound to an object the same way you apply transitions and motion. Each object can have one sound applied to it.

The second way is to import an independent sound object that plays no matter what objects are in the scene. For more information on sound objects, see *Importing sound objects* in the next section.

➠ ***Tip*** Use sound objects as a voiceover or to add background sound to an entire scene. Assign sounds to objects to emphasize specific information or to punctuate action in a scene.

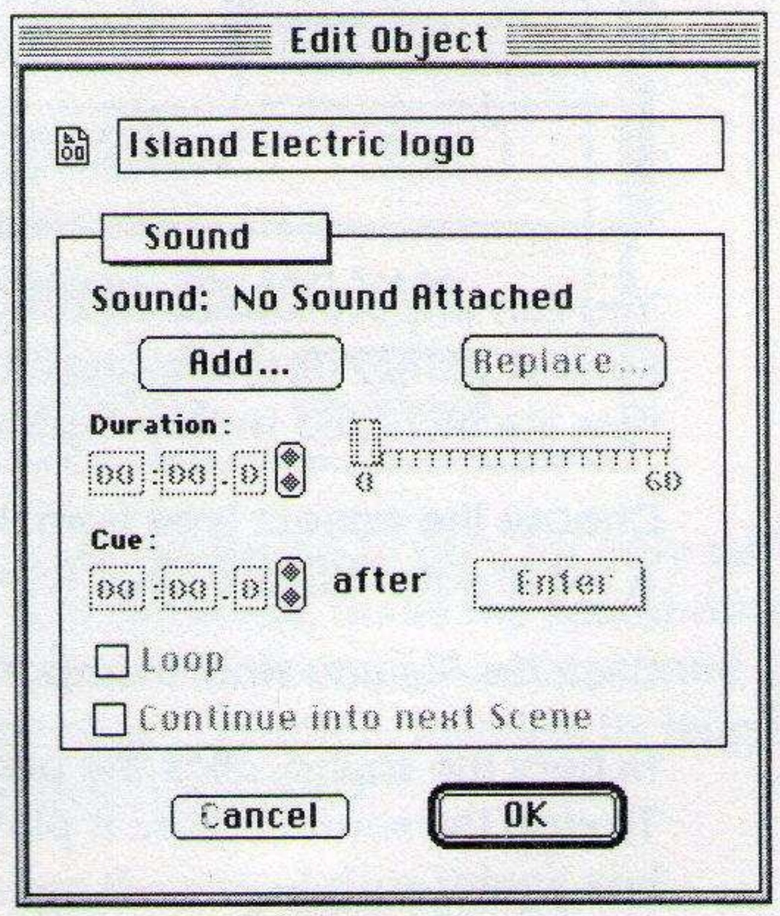
You can have as many sounds as you want in a scene; however, only two sounds can play at one time. When importing sound objects or assigning sound to an object, be sure that no more than two sounds overlap.

Applying sound

To apply sound to an object,

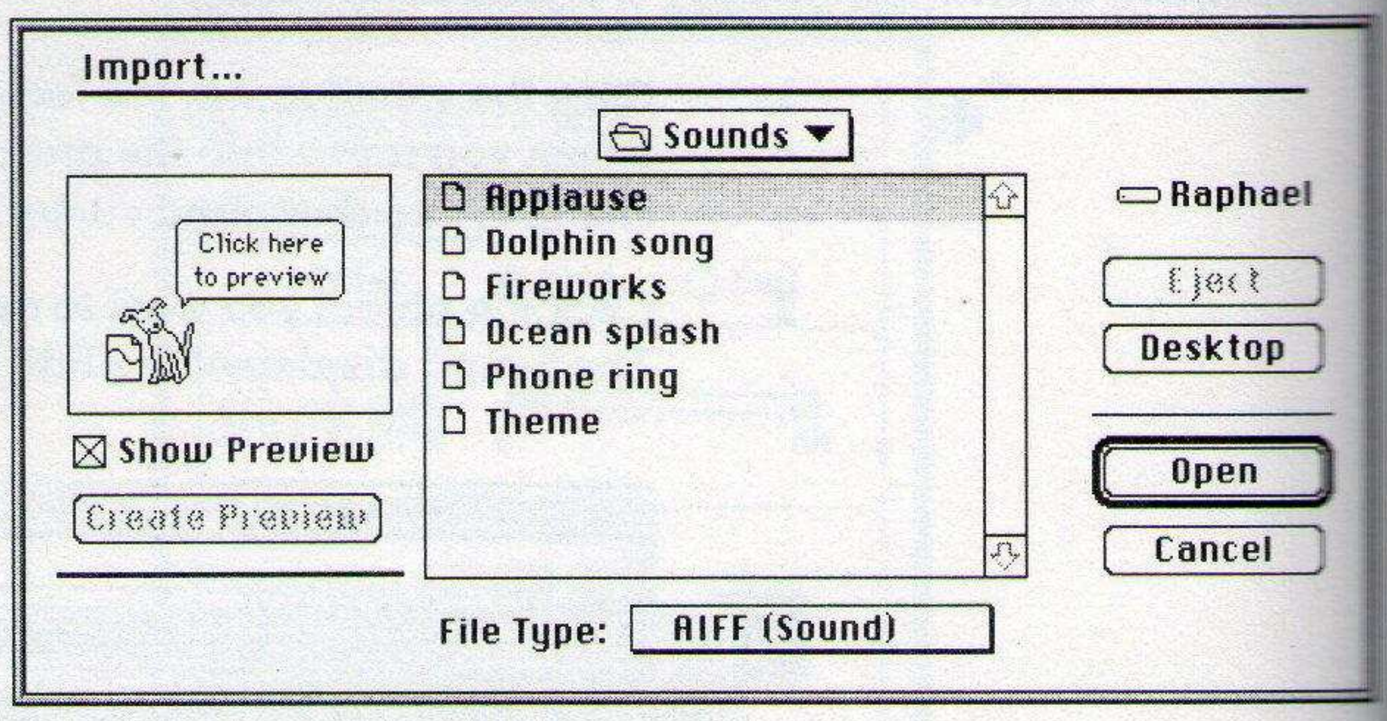
1. **Click the sound tool in the Tool Palette.**
   When you move into the presentation window, the pointer changes into the sound cursor.

2. **Click the object you want to apply sound to.**
   The Sound display of the Edit Object dialog box appears.



   The Edit Object dialog box is a powerful editing tool that contains several displays for changing object attributes. When you use the sound tool, the dialog box automatically opens to the Sound display.

3. **Click Add to apply a sound to the object.**
   The Import dialog box appears so you can select a sound.



You can import sounds in either the Audio Interchange File Format (AIFF) or the SoundEdit format. Some SoundEdit files are included in the ClipMedia that comes with Action!

4. **Choose the correct type from the File Type pop-up menu.**
   A list of sound files of that type appears.

5. **Click the file you want to import.**

6. **To hear the sound, click the preview box.**
   To stop the sound before it plays through, click the preview box again.

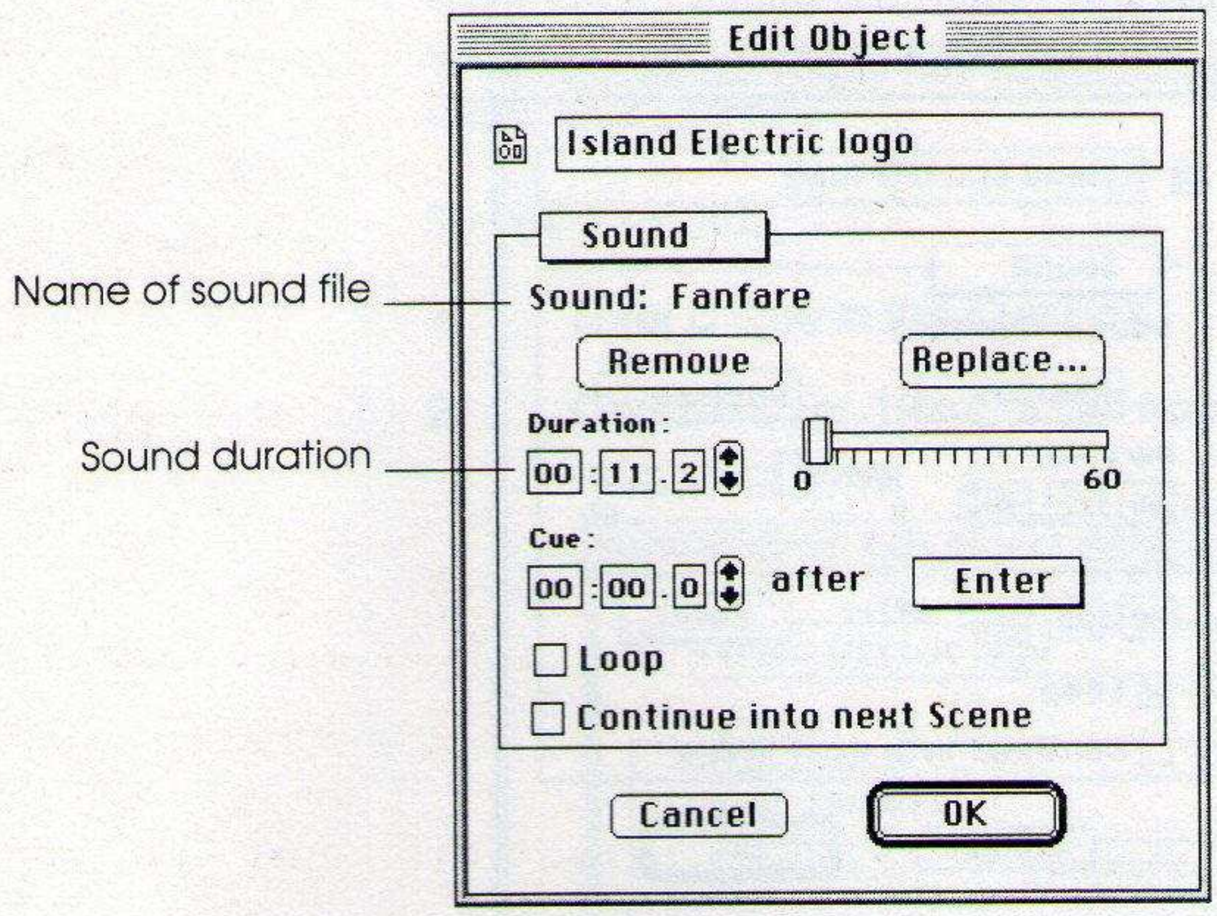
7. **Click Open.**
   After you import the sound, Action! returns to the Sound display of the Edit Object dialog box.

Note AIFF files are imported into a presentation by reference; that is, the file name is associated with the presentation. When the presentation is opened, the referenced file is also opened. To be sure your referenced files are always available, keep them in the same location after they're referenced. If you copy the presentation to another disk, copy the sound files as well.

Setting sound durations

A sound has its own duration. The sound's duration doesn't have to be the same as the duration of the object it's applied to. If the sound duration is longer than the object, it continues to play after the object leaves the scene.

You can increase and decrease the duration of a sound in the Sound display of the Edit Object dialog box.



If you want the sound to play for only part of the time that the object is in the scene, make the sound duration shorter than the object's duration. To make a short sound play as long as or longer than the object duration, increase its length (and turn on the Loop option, described next).

To change the sound duration,

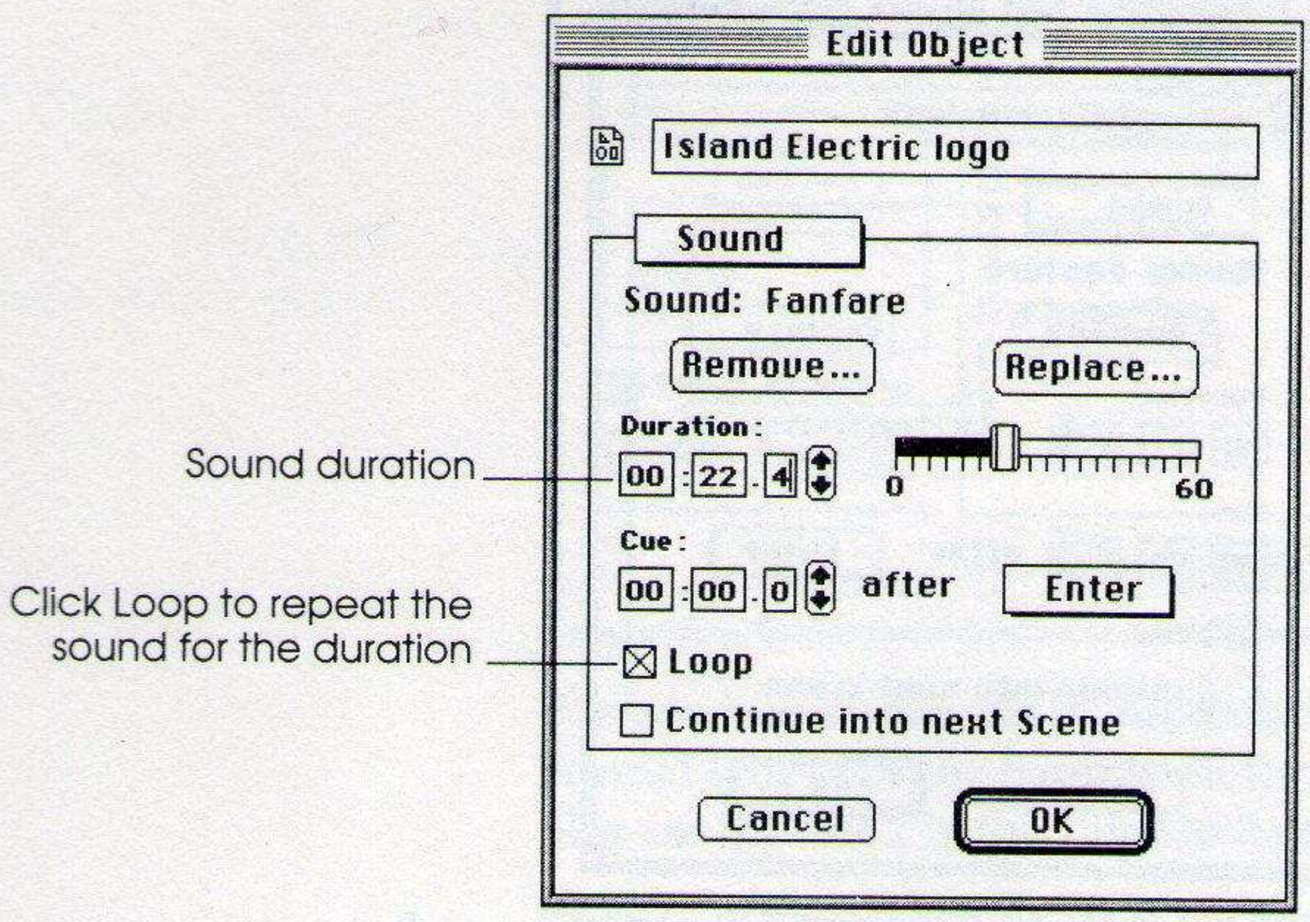
- **Drag the slider, type in numbers, or use the arrows to enter a time in the Duration box.**

Looping sound

Sometimes the length of your sound might not be long enough for the duration you want, or you might not have enough memory to import a large sound file. In these cases, you can make a sound repeat for a given duration.

To repeat the sound for the desired duration,

1. **Set the duration in the Sound display in the Edit Object dialog box.**
   The duration for the looped sound and the object's duration should be the same. Looped sounds stop when the object they're applied to leaves the scene.
2. **Click Loop.**



For example, suppose you had a 2 second sound that you wanted to last for the duration of an 8 second object. Set the sound duration to 8 seconds and click Loop. When you play the presentation, the sound repeats four times.

Continuing sound

Continuing a sound between scenes can provide a smooth interlude and keep your audience's interest while the next scene is being set up. For example, you might continue a sound when a scene has a long IN Transition.

1. **Set the duration in the Sound display in the Edit Object dialog box.**
   Be sure to make the sound duration longer than the remaining time in the current scene. The original duration of the sound must exceed the scene's duration; you can't continue looped sounds.
2. **Click Continue into next Scene.**

Cuing sound

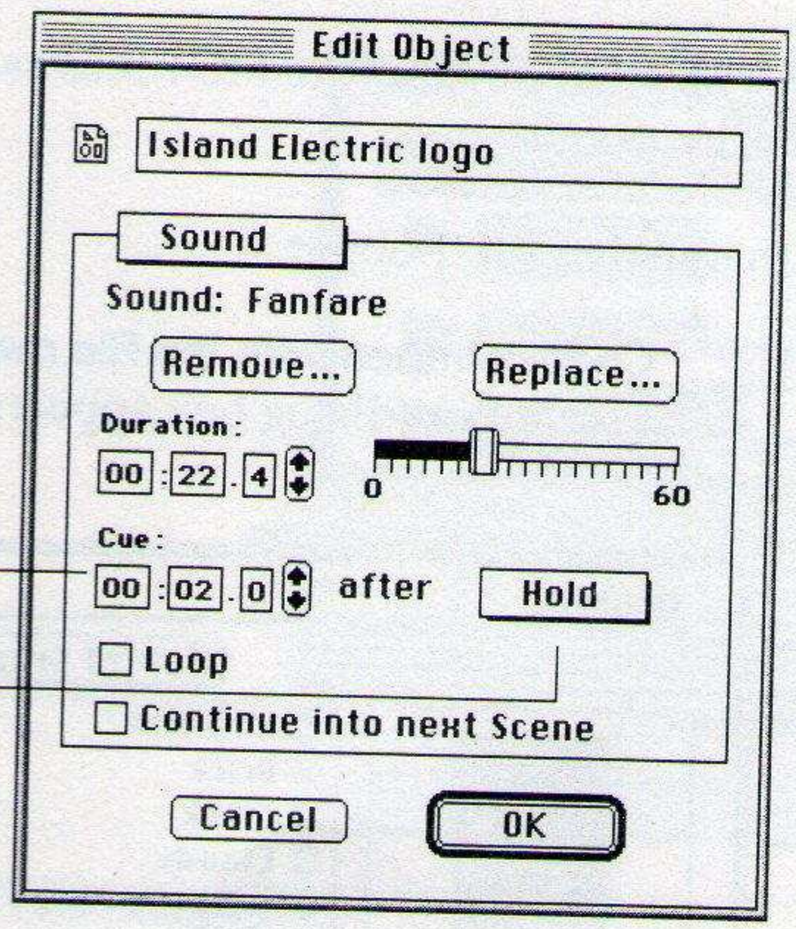
You can cue a sound so it begins playing during a specific phase of the object. In addition, you can start the sound at a specified time after the beginning of the phase.

For example, assume you have a text object that describes a new product. When the text is being revealed during the Enter phase, there is no sound. You can extend this silence into the Hold phase for a few seconds while the audience reads the product name.

Once they've read the name, you want them to hear thunderous applause. To do this, cue the applause to the Hold phase and set a delay of 2 seconds.

To cue a sound,

1. **Enter a time in the Cue box.**
2. **Choose Enter, Hold, or Exit from the pop-up menu.**



Removing and replacing sounds

After a sound is applied to an object, you can easily remove or replace the sound.

To edit the sound that's applied to an object,

1. **Choose the sound tool and click the object.**
   The Sound display of the Edit Object dialog box appears.
2. **Click Remove or Replace.**
   When you remove the sound, the button changes to Add and the name of the sound disappears. When you click Replace, the Import dialog box appears so you can select a new sound.

Importing Objects

Part of the power of Action! is its ability to import many different types of files. You can use graphics, movies, and sounds from other products or from the Clipmedia included with Action!

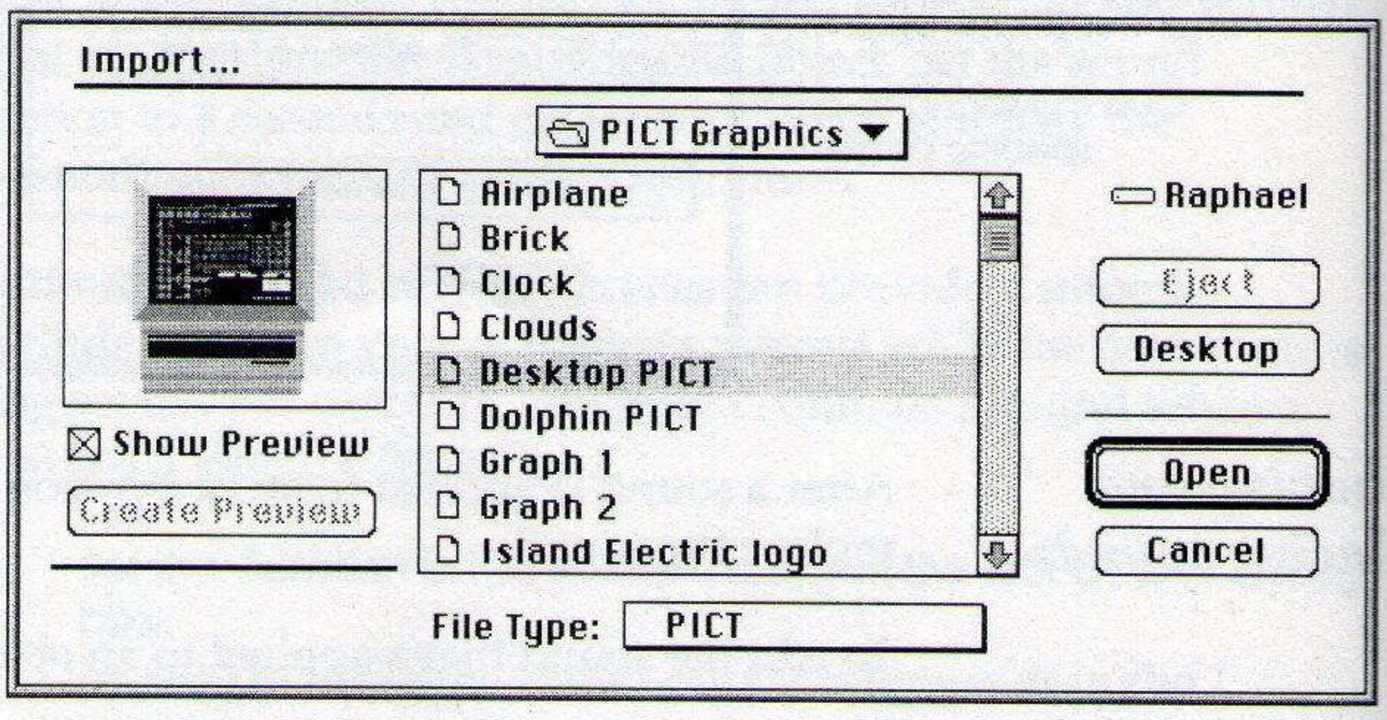
Importing graphics

Action! lets you import graphics in the PICT format to use as scene and template objects.

➠ ***Tip*** You can also use PICT files as scene and template backgrounds.

To import a PICT object,

1. **Choose Import from the File menu.**
   The Import dialog box appears.

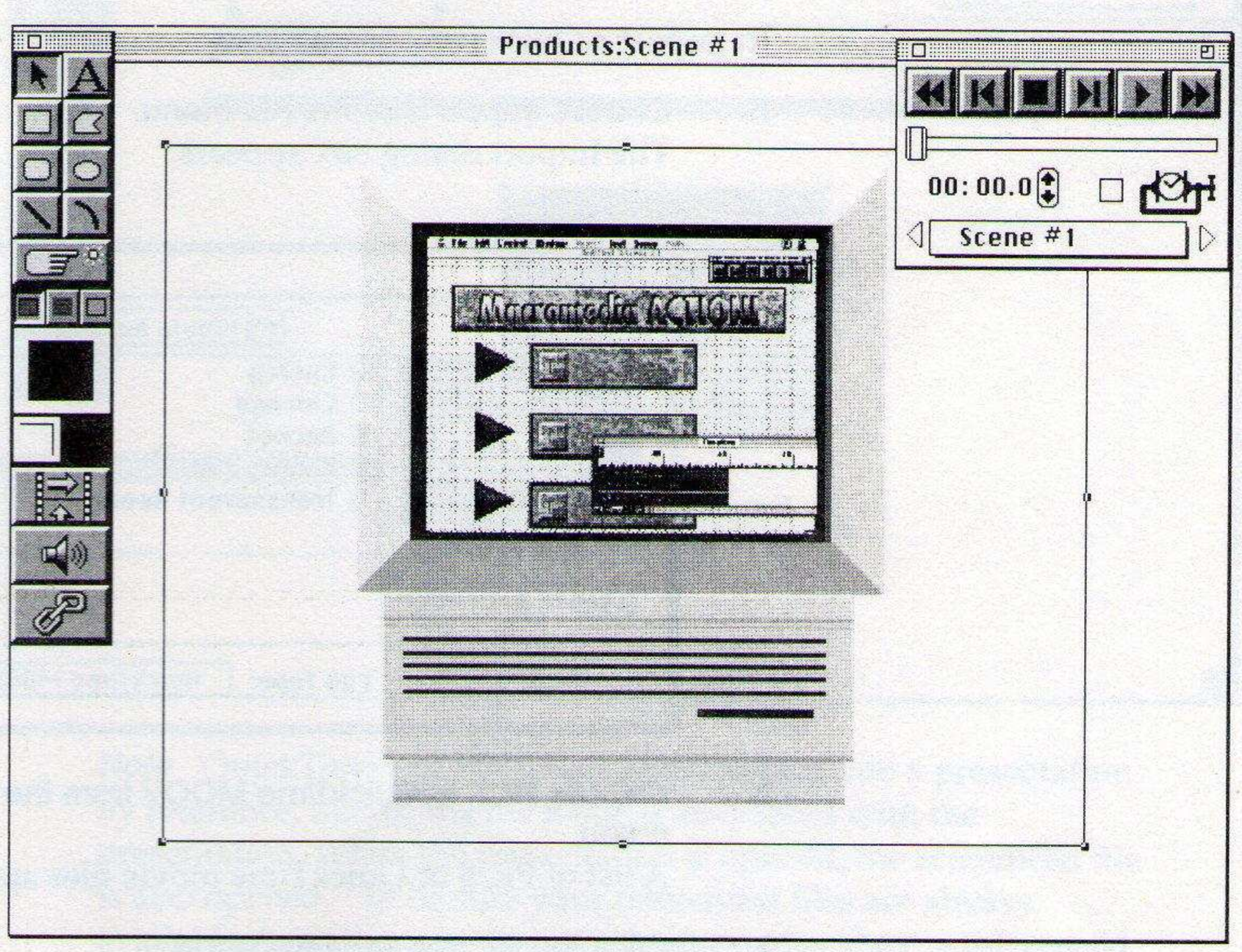


2. **Choose PICT from the File Type pop-up menu.**
   A list of available PICT files appears.

3. **Click the file you want to import.**
   An image of the graphic appears in the preview box.

   If this is the first time you've imported the PICT file, click Create Preview. Action! creates a preview image and stores it with the PICT file.

4. **Click Open.**
The graphic appears in the center of the presentation window. Imported graphics objects are given the default object duration set in Preferences and are named after the PICT file.



Moving and resizing imported graphics

You can change the size and location of the PICT image.

To move and resize the imported graphic,

- **Select the object and drag to move it. Drag one of the handles to resize.**

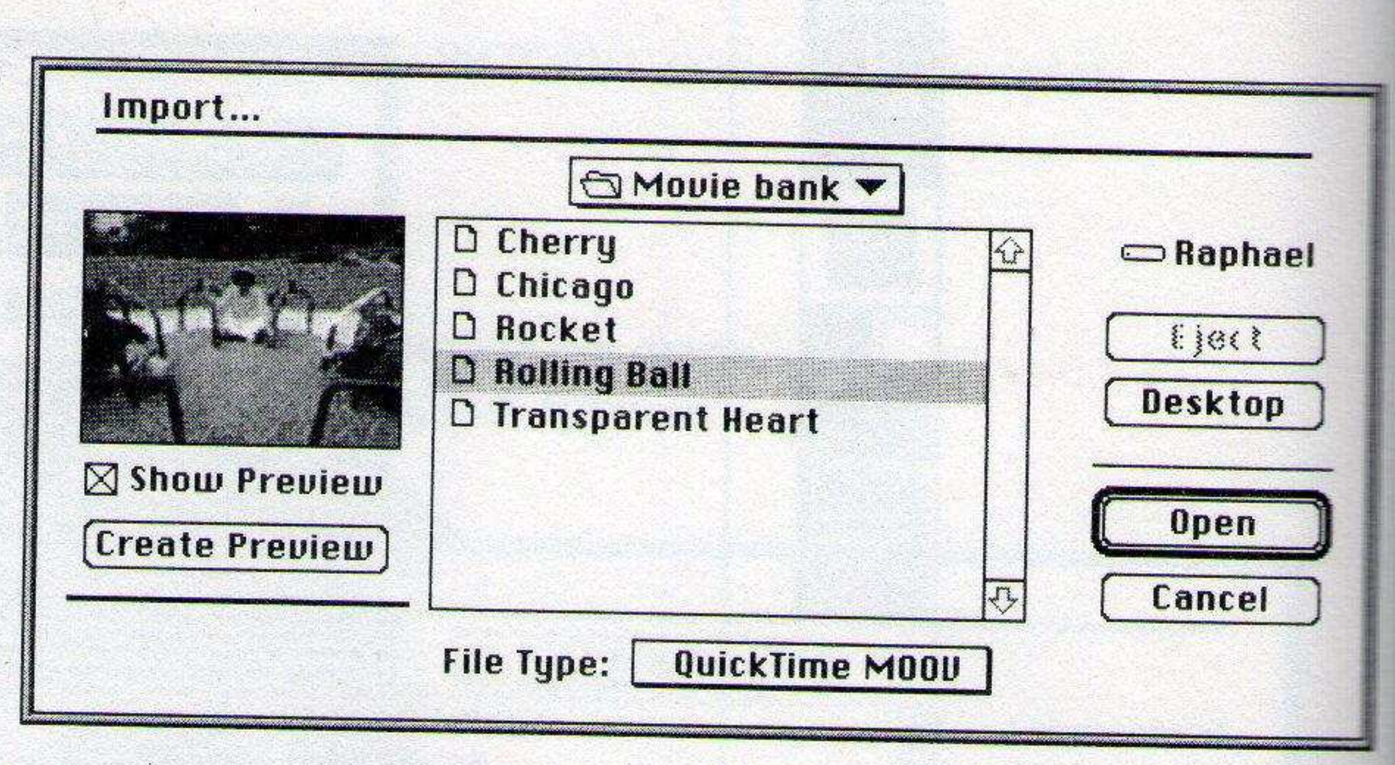
➟ ***Tip*** To resize the graphic while keeping its original proportions, hold down the Shift key and drag. To return a graphic to its original size, hold down the Option key and drag a handle a short distance, then release the mouse.

Importing movies and PICS files

Action! allows you to import QuickTime movies and PICS files as objects in scenes and templates. QuickTime movies are digitized video images that you can cut, copy, and paste just as you do static images. PICS files are animation sequences created by such programs as MacroMind® Director™.

To import a QuickTime or PICS file,

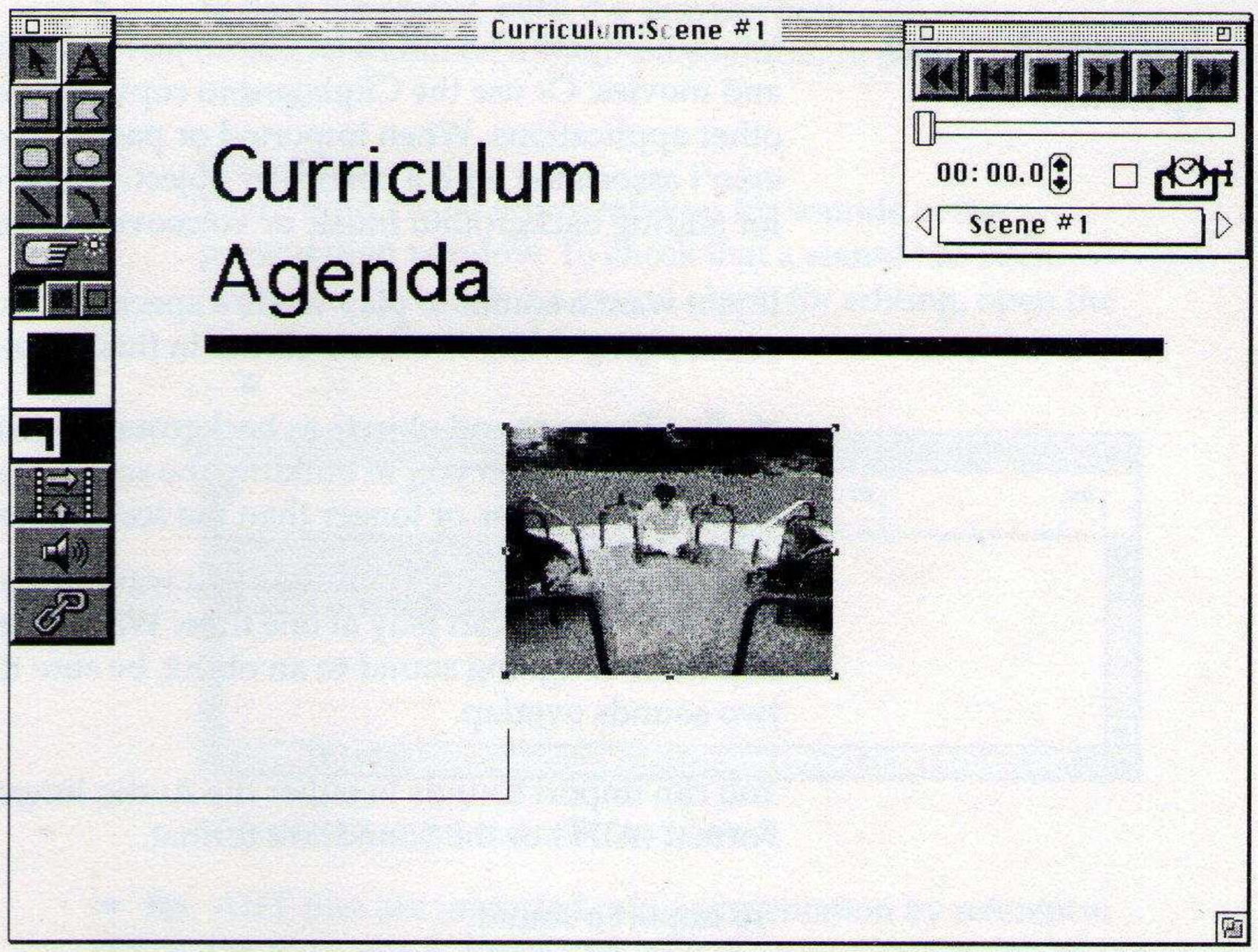
1. **Choose Import from the File menu.**
   The Import dialog box appears.



2. **Choose PICS or QuickTime MOOV from the File Type pop-up menu.**
   A list of PICS or QuickTime movie files appears.

3. **Click the file you want to import.**
   An image of the movie appears in the preview box.

4. **Click Open.**



Note QuickTime and PICS files are imported into a presentation by reference; that is, the file name is associated with the presentation. When the presentation is opened, the referenced file is also opened. To be sure your referenced files are always available, keep them in the same location after they're referenced. If you copy the presentation to another disk, copy the movie files as well.

When you import a movie, it appears in a rectangle centered on your screen. The size of the rectangle is set when the movie is created. Resizing this rectangle scales the movie and can affect the movie's speed. To return a movie or a PICS image to its original size, hold down the Option key and drag a handle a short distance, then release the mouse.

A PICS movie has the default object duration. A QuickTime movie's duration is determined by its length.

Importing sound options

You can import a sound as an object, just as you import graphics and movies. Or use the Clipboard to copy and paste sounds from other applications. When imported or pasted as objects, sounds aren't associated with a particular object. Sound objects are useful for adding background music or voiceovers to a scene.

If you want a sound to play while a specific object is in the scene, see *Applying Sound to Objects* earlier in this chapter.

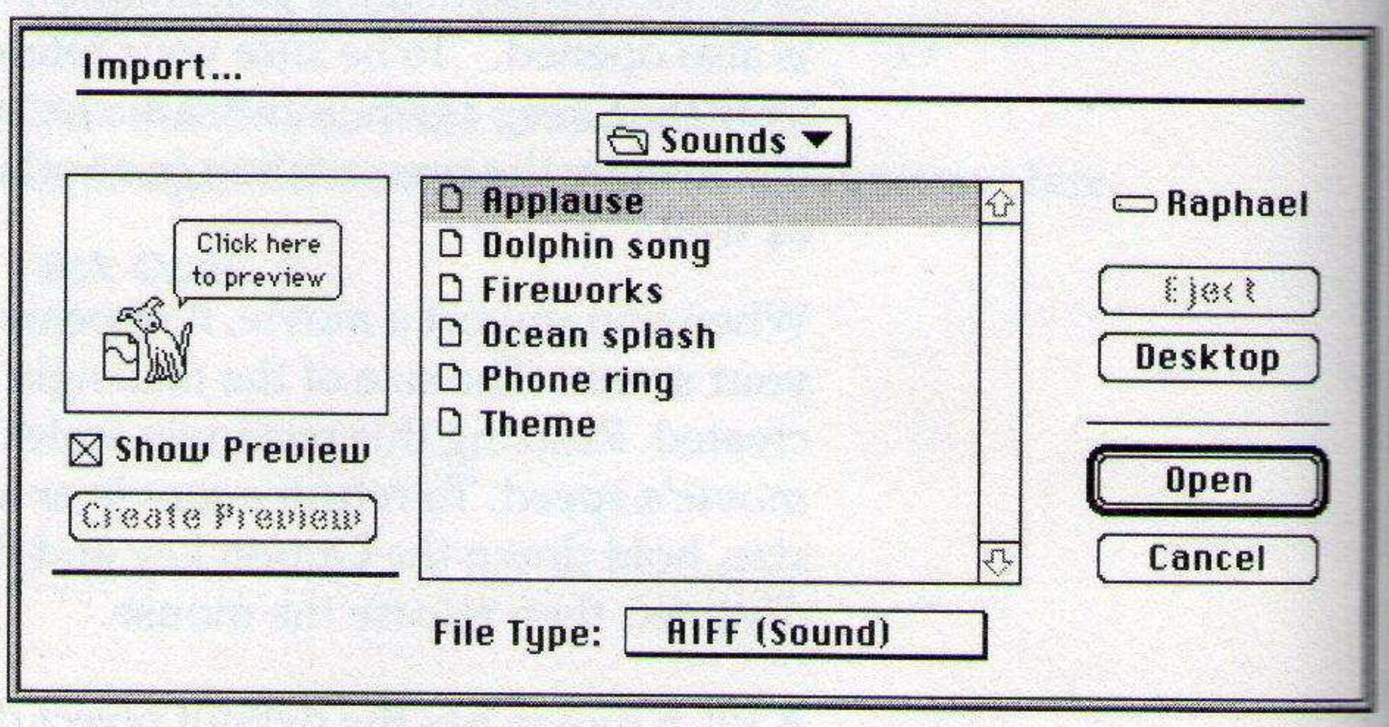
➠ ***Tip*** To use sound objects as background music, import the sound object when you're building the scene. Make the sound duration as long as or longer than the scene duration.

You can have as many sounds as you want in a scene; however, only two sounds can play at one time. When importing sound objects or assigning sound to an object, be sure that no more than two sounds overlap.

You can import sounds in either the Audio Interchange File Format (AIFF) or the SoundEdit format.

To import a sound,

1. **Choose Import from the File menu.**
   The Import dialog box appears.

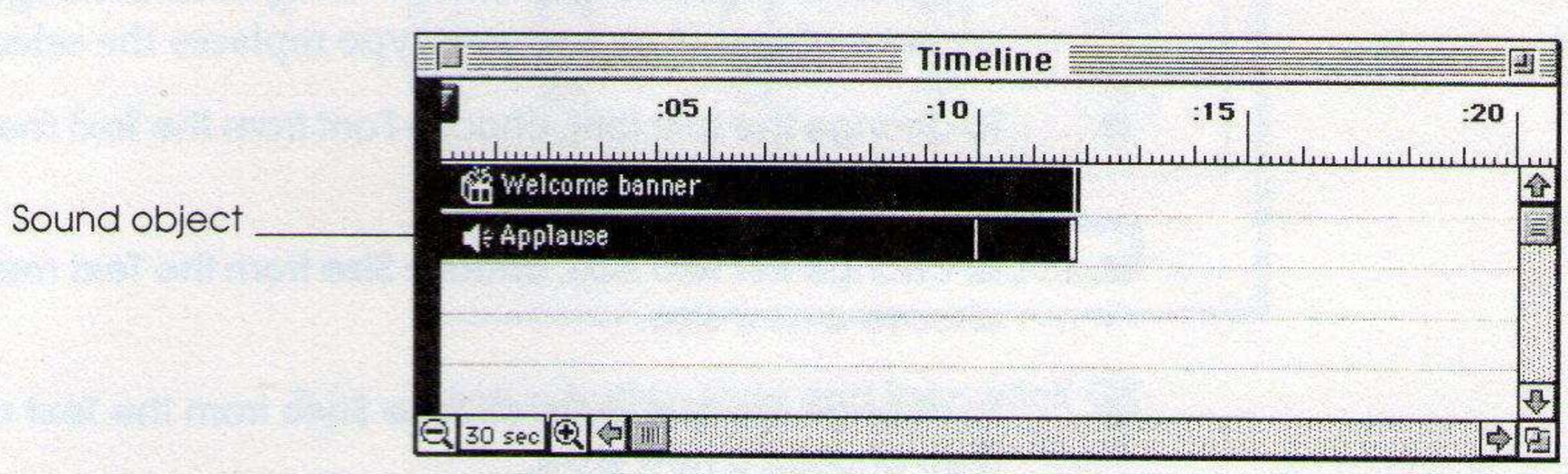


2. **Choose the appropriate format from the File Type pop-up menu.**
   A list of available sounds appears.

3. **Click the file you want to import.**

4. **To hear the sound, click the preview box.**
To stop the sound before it plays through, click the preview box again.

5. **Click Open.**
There is no visual representation for sounds in the presentation window. To check that a sound has been imported, or to select a sound object for editing, open the Timeline or Content List.



An imported sound object in the Timeline

➡ ***Tip*** AIFF files are imported into a presentation by reference; that is, the file name is associated with the presentation. When the presentation is opened, the referenced file is also opened. To be sure your referenced files are always available, keep them in the same location after they're referenced. If you move the presentation to another disk, copy the sound files as well.

An imported sound object's duration is determined by the length of the sound itself; the default object duration doesn't apply to sound objects.

Editing Objects

There are several ways to edit Action! objects. You can use commands from the menus or make choices from the Tool Palette.

If you choose tool settings before drawing an object, the new object uses these settings. If you change the tool settings and then select an object, the selected object changes to reflect the new settings. Tool settings stay in effect until you make different choices.

You can select objects for editing in the presentation window, the Timeline, or the Content List.

Changing text

You can change the font, size, style, and alignment of text.

To edit text,

- **Choose the text tool from the Tool Palette and click the text object to place the insertion point.**
  To select a word, double-click it. Drag to select larger sections of text. Any text you type replaces the selected text.
- **To change the text font, choose Font from the Text menu, then choose a new font.**
- **To change the text size, choose Size from the Text menu, then choose a new size.**
- **To change the text style, choose Style from the Text menu, then choose a new style.**
- **To change the text alignment, choose Alignment from the Text menu, then choose a new alignment.**

Once you change the text settings, the new settings remain in effect the next time you create or edit text.

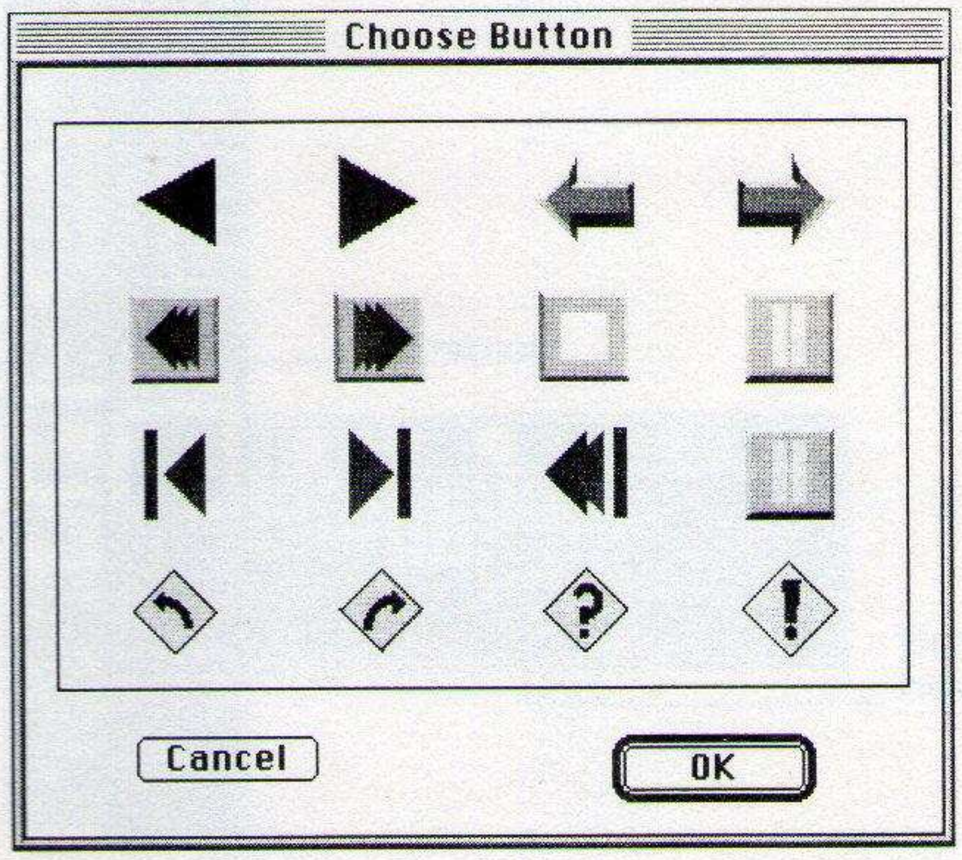
➠ ***Tip*** To make multiple changes to all the text in an object at one time, double-click the object to display the Edit Object dialog box. Choose Text from the attribute pop-up menu and change the options.

Changing button styles and actions

When you create a button, it is drawn in the last button style you chose from the button dialog box.

To change the style of a button,

1. **Select the button.**
2. **Double-click the button tool.**
   The Choose Button dialog box appears.



3. **Click a button style and then click OK.**

When you change a button style, you also change its action. You can override the associated action.

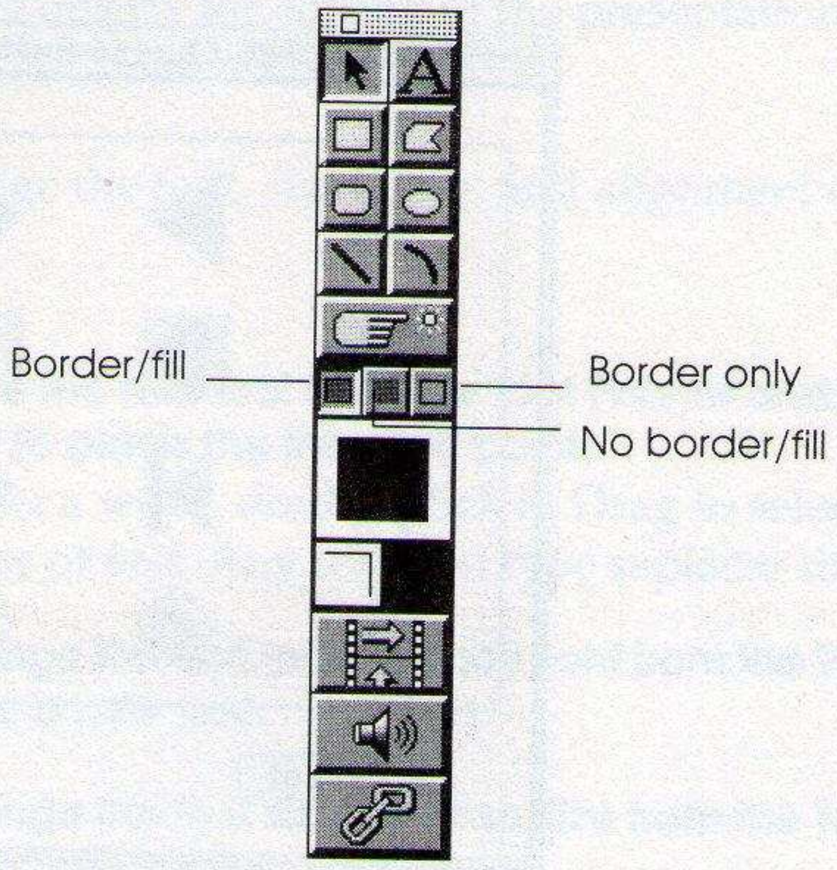
To change the button's action,

1. **Choose the link tool and click the button.**
   The Edit Object dialog box opens to the Link display.

2. **Choose a different action from the Action pop-up menu.**

Changing fill options

By default, Action! draws a filled object with a border. The color or pattern of the fill and border are determined by the current selections in the color chip and line sample. You can change the type of fill using one of the three fill options in the Tool Palette.



The left fill option draws a filled object with a border. The middle fill option draws a filled object with no border. The right fill option draws an object with a border and no fill. The fill option stays in effect until you choose a different one.

To change the fill type of a drawn object,

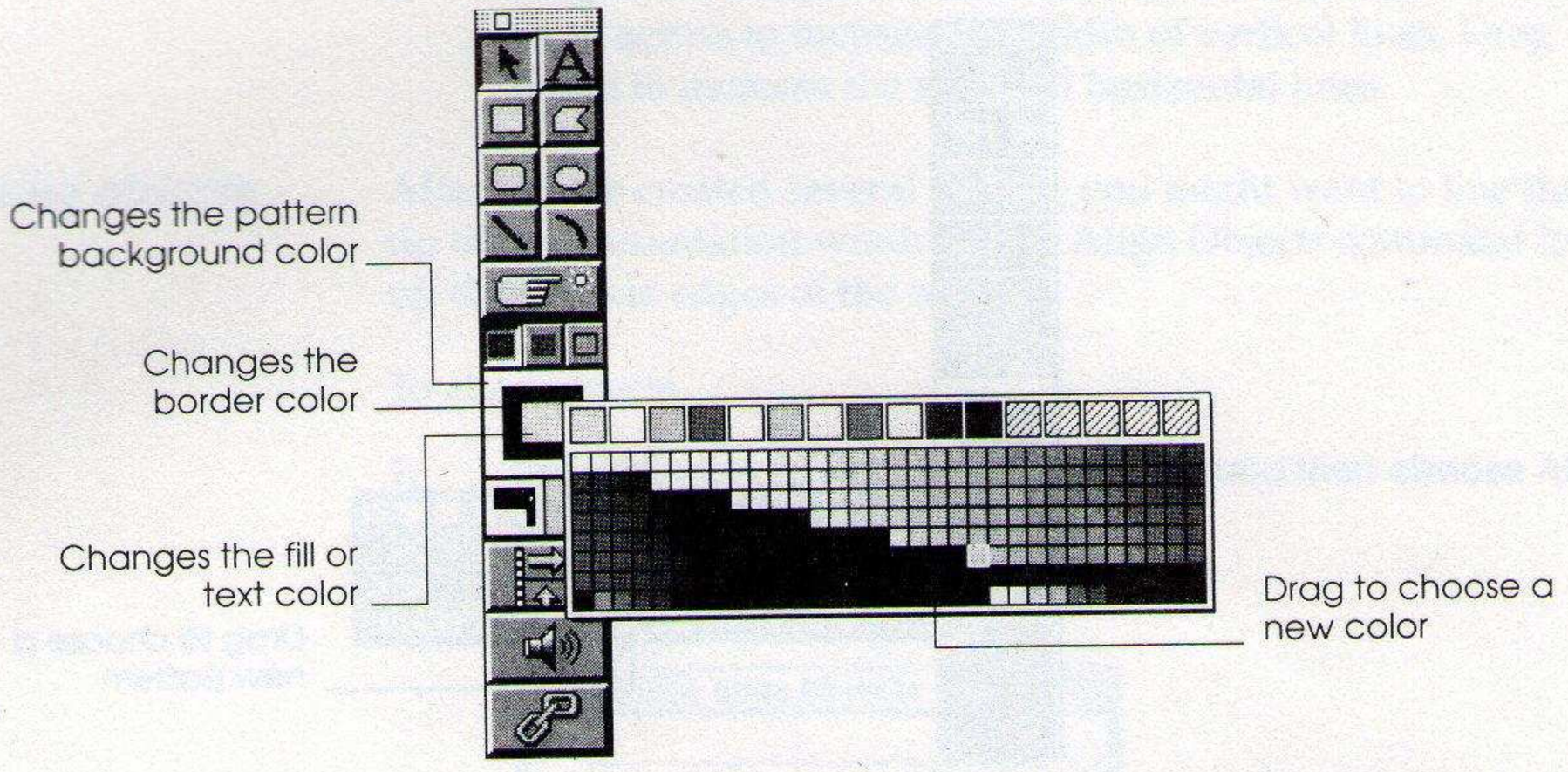
- **Select the object and click a fill option in the Tool Palette.**
  The selected object takes on the new fill type.

Changing colors and patterns

When you create an object, Action! fills it with the current color and pattern indicated in the Tool Palette (text objects use the current color). You use the **color chip** to change text and object colors.

To change the color of an object,

1. **Select the object and click the color chip rectangle in the Tool Palette.**



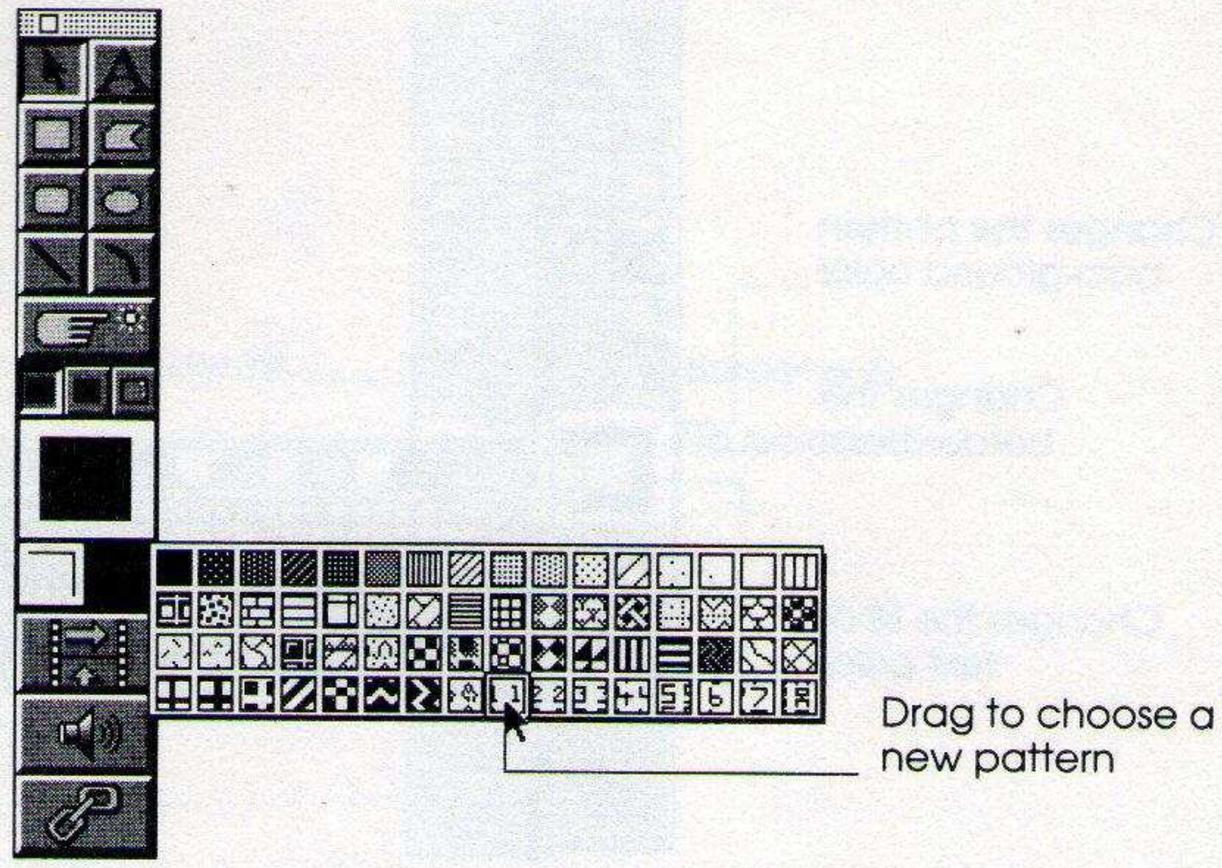
The inside rectangle changes the fill color and the color of text. The middle rectangle changes the object's outline (border) color. The outside rectangle changes the object's background color. You only see the background color when a drawn object is filled with a pattern.

2. **Drag in the color palette to choose a new color.**
The sixteen most recently used colors appear in the top row of the color palette.

Use the **pattern sample** to change an object's fill pattern.

To change the fill pattern of an object,

1. **Select the object and click the pattern sample in the Tool Palette.**



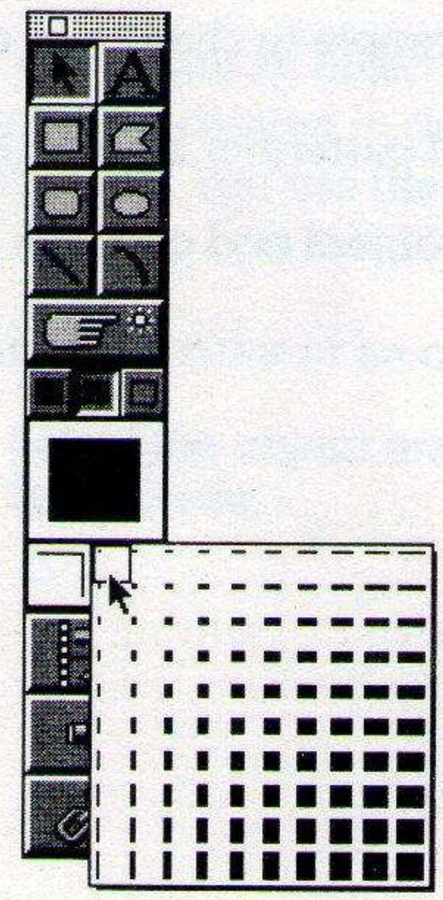
2. **Drag in the pattern palette to choose a new pattern.**

Changing line width

Use the **line sample** to change the width of lines and the borders around objects.

To change the line width,

1. **Select the object and click the line sample in the Tool Palette.**



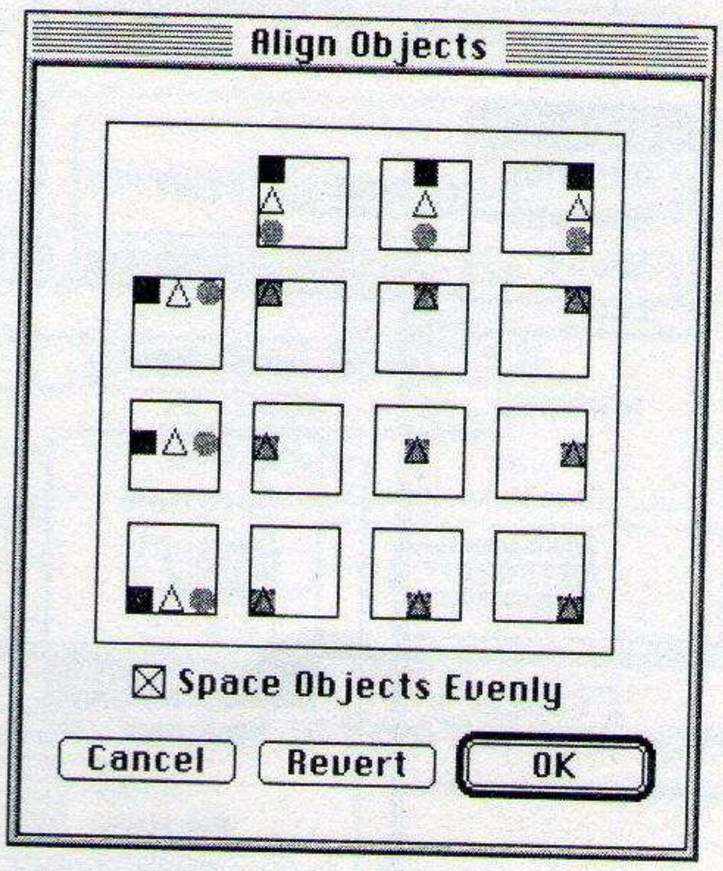
2. **Drag in the line palette to choose a new line width.**
Drag across to increase the width of vertical lines. Drag down to increase the width of horizontal lines.

Aligning objects

After you've created several objects, you might want to line them up in the presentation window. The Align Objects command lines up the outside edges of the objects.

To align objects,

1. **Use shift-click to select all the objects and then choose Align Objects from the Object menu.**
The Align Objects dialog box appears.



2. **Click the alignment you want.**

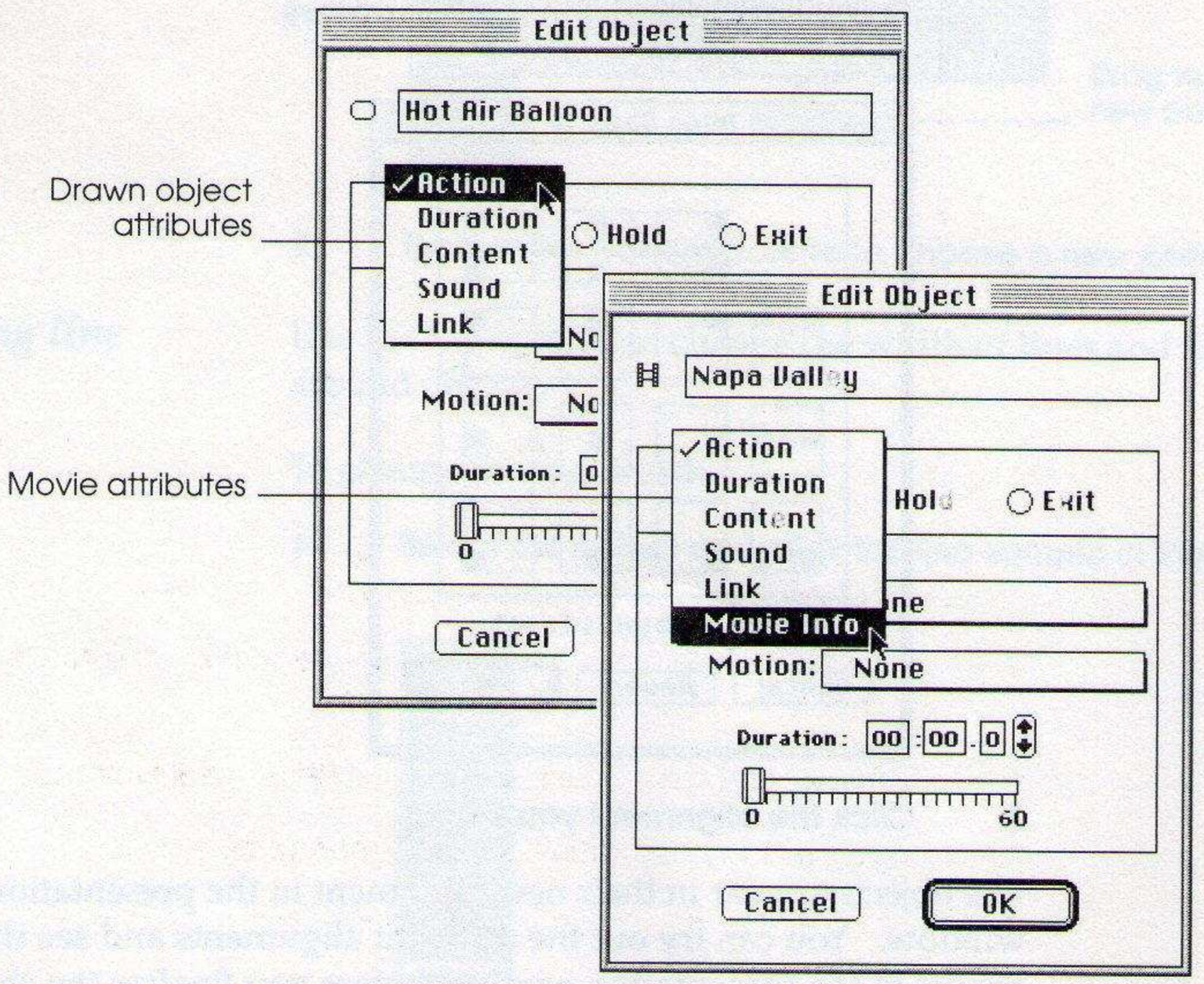
The objects appear in their new alignment in the presentation window. You can try out the different alignments and see the results in the presentation window before you finalize the change by clicking OK. Click Revert to return to the original alignment.

Power editing

Action! offers a powerful editing tool—the Edit Object dialog box—that lets you edit many **attributes** of an object (such as duration, transitions, sound, links, inks, and object names) in a few simple steps. The Edit Object dialog box appears when you choose Edit Object from the Edit menu, or when you double-click an object in the presentation window, in the Timeline, or in the Content List.

There are several different displays in the Edit Object dialog box. If you've applied action or sound to an object using the tools in the Tool Palette, you've already seen two of the Edit Object dialog box displays.

The attributes and options you see in the Edit Object dialog box are similar for all objects, but the choices change depending on the type of object you've selected. For example, here are the attribute lists for a drawn object and a movie.

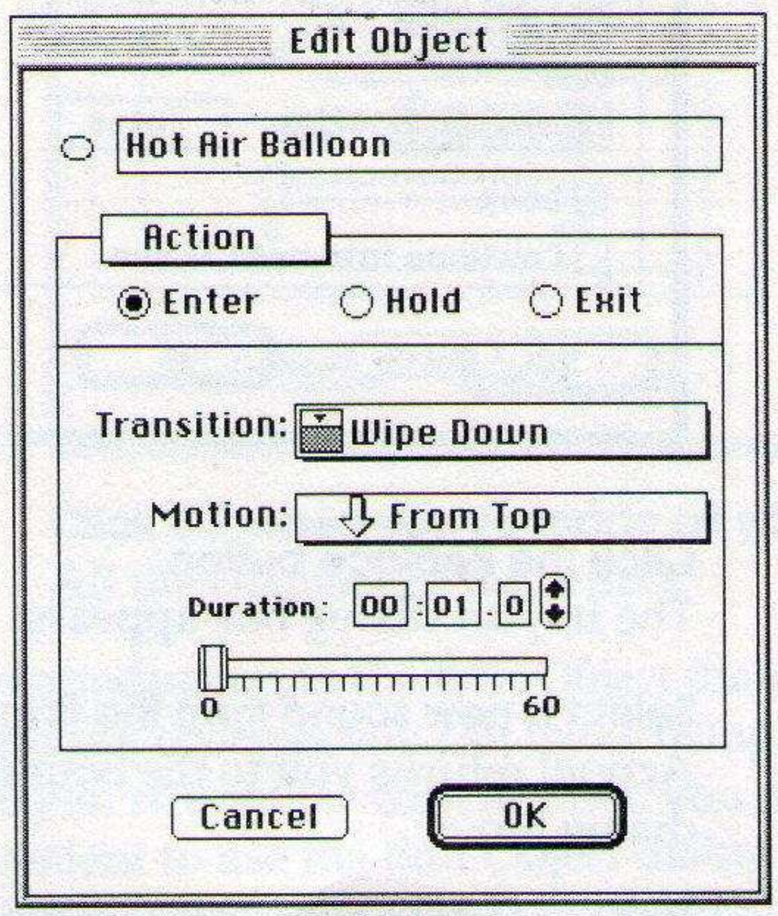


Use the Edit Object command when you want to make several changes to an object at one time. The following example shows the type of changes you can make using a few of the options for a drawn object.

Suppose you've drawn a hot air balloon, added action to the Enter, Hold, and Exit phases of the object, and assigned a sound to the object. You want to change all of these attributes, replace the sound, and link the object to another scene in the presentation. Of

course, you could use the tools in the Tool Palette to change these attributes one at a time. But here's how to use the Edit Object dialog box to make these changes much more quickly.

1. **Double-click the object to display the Edit Object dialog box.**
   The Edit Object dialog box opens to the last attribute you were editing.



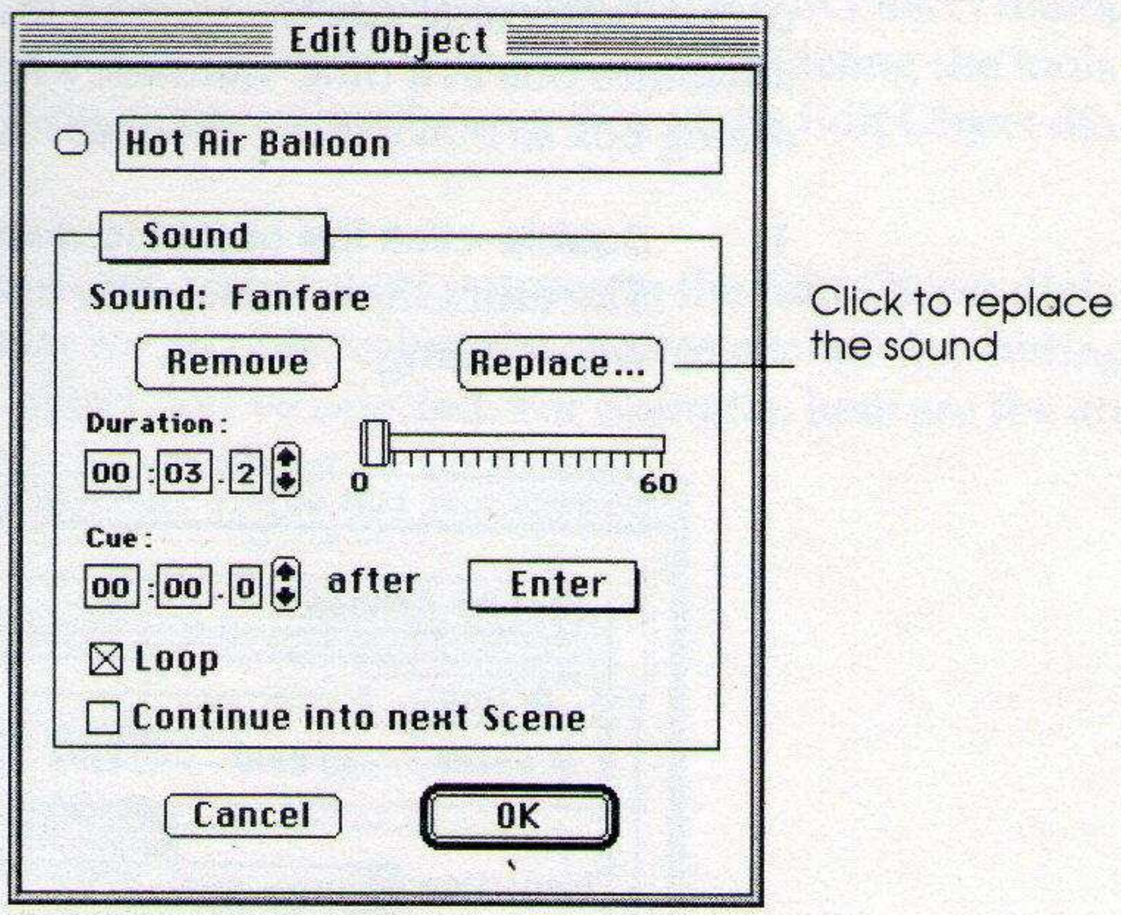
2. **Choose Action from the pop-up menu if it's not already chosen.**

3. **Click Enter and choose a new transition and motion.**

4. **Click Hold and choose a new light effect.**

5. **Click Exit and choose a new transition and motion.**

6. **Choose Sound from the attribute list.**
   The dialog box changes and you see the same settings that appear when you apply a sound to an object using the sound tool.



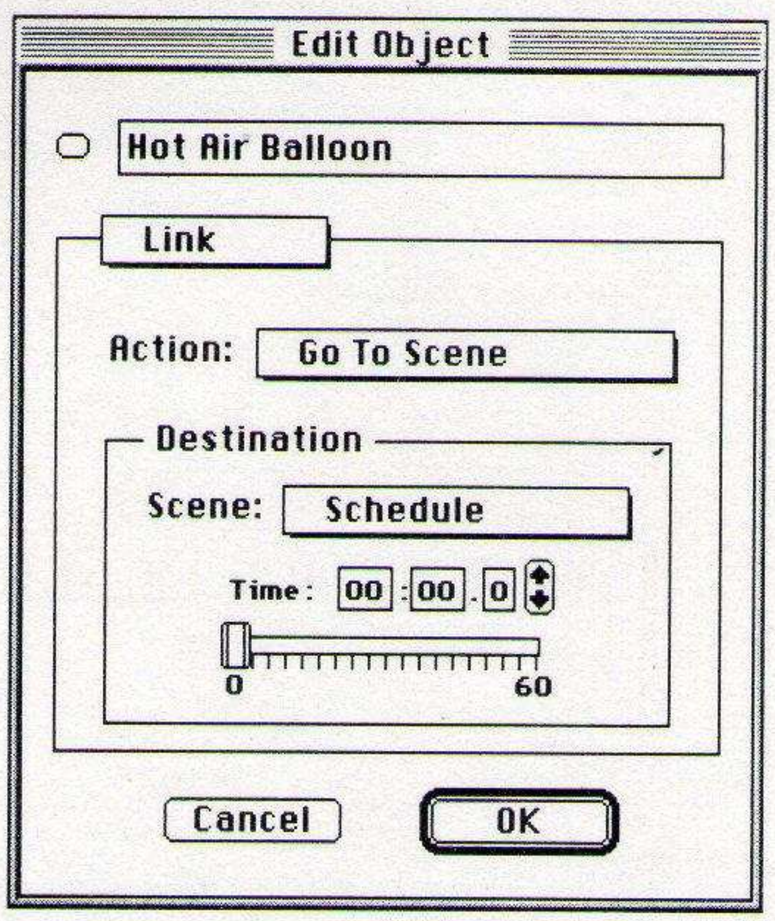
7. **Click the Replace button.**
   The Import dialog box appears.

8. **Select a new sound from the Import dialog box.**
   Action! returns you to the Sound display in the Edit Object dialog box.

9. **Choose Link from the pop-up menu.**
   The dialog box changes and you see the options for creating a link.

10. **Choose Go To Scene from the Action pop-up menu.**

11. **Select a destination scene from the Scene pop-up menu.**
    The object now acts like a button. When you click it while you're playing the presentation, you move to the new scene.



12. **Click OK when you've made all your changes.**
All the changes go into effect.

This introduction to the Edit Object dialog box describes a few of the editing changes you can make using this powerful feature. Once you're familiar with Action!, you may find it more convenient to use the Edit Object dialog box to assign or change attributes instead of using the individual tools from the Tool Palette.

The Edit Object command is also a convenient way to change the attributes, such as motion and duration, of many objects at once. Just select multiple objects and then change the attribute for one object. Whenever they apply, the attributes are changed for all selected objects.

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