

Frame by Frame Animation Workflow

HTML Canvas Document using Adobe Animate CC

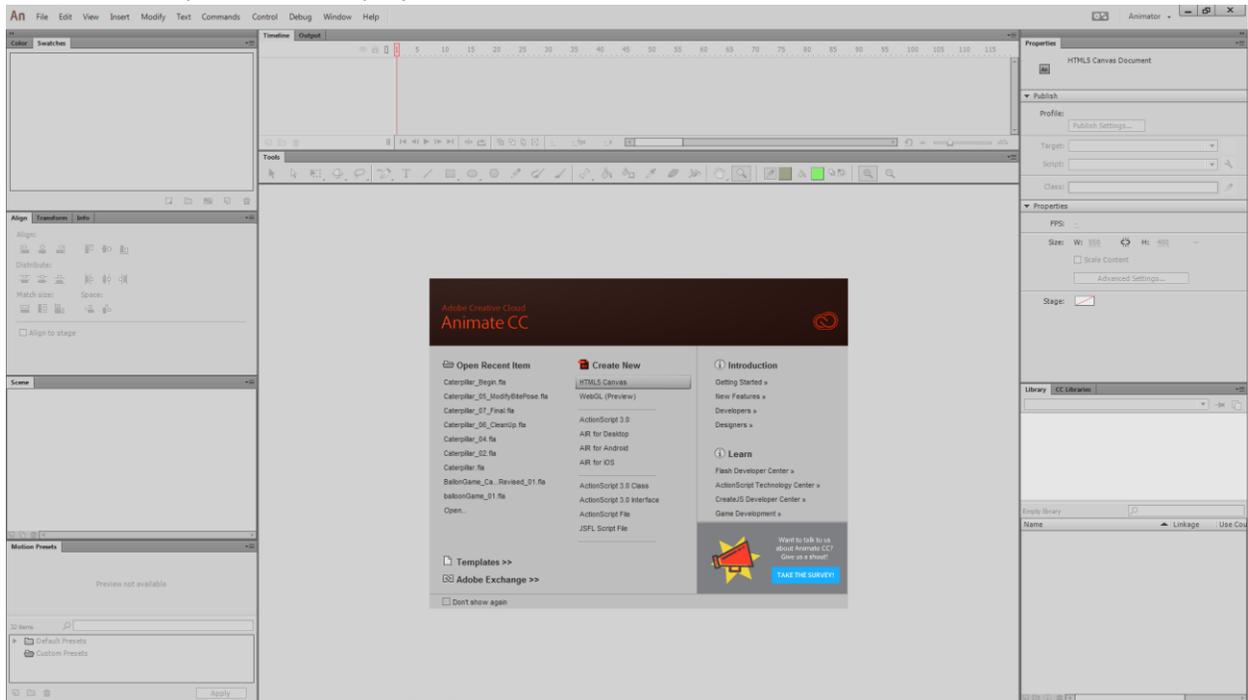
By Stig Plantell

Note: I've done my best to indicated keystrokes for Mac, please notify me if they don't act as expected.

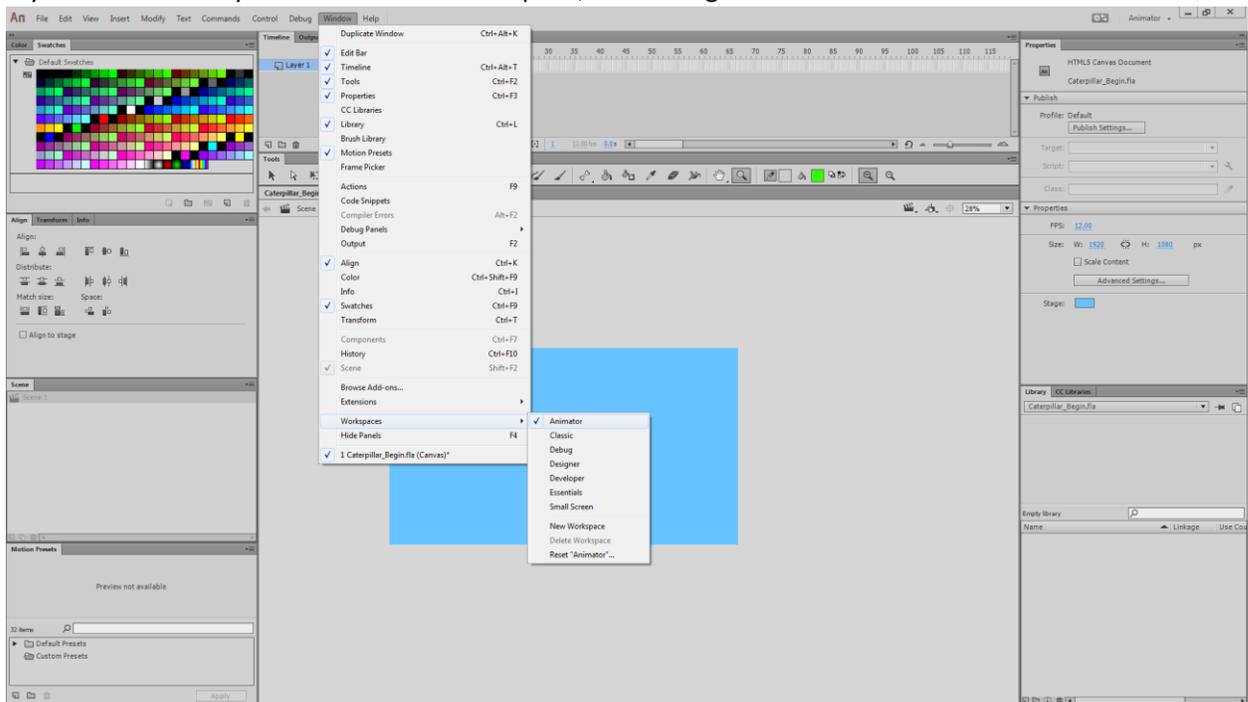
ALERT: Although Animate CC is a really fine program for creating digital 2D animation, it can be heavy and slow. By hiding the layers that you're not directly working on and using wireframe modes, you should improve your speed and productivity.

1. This short demo is intended to improve your workflow, in regards to frame-by-frame animation, in Animate. At this point, you should have a fair working knowledge of the tools and their applications, but possibly having unexpected results and workflow issues while constructing your animations, editing artwork and making sense of the process.
2. The aspects of any animation you might tackle should bear in mind twelve (12) time tested principles: staging, timing, appeal, solid drawing, arcs, anticipation, exaggeration, follow-through/overlap, slow in/out and stretch/squash. More advanced elements like secondary/supporting actions are encouraged as well. Please refer to "The Illusion of Life" by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnson if you desire a more robust understanding. Our journey will take us through staging/layout to alterations/cleanup.

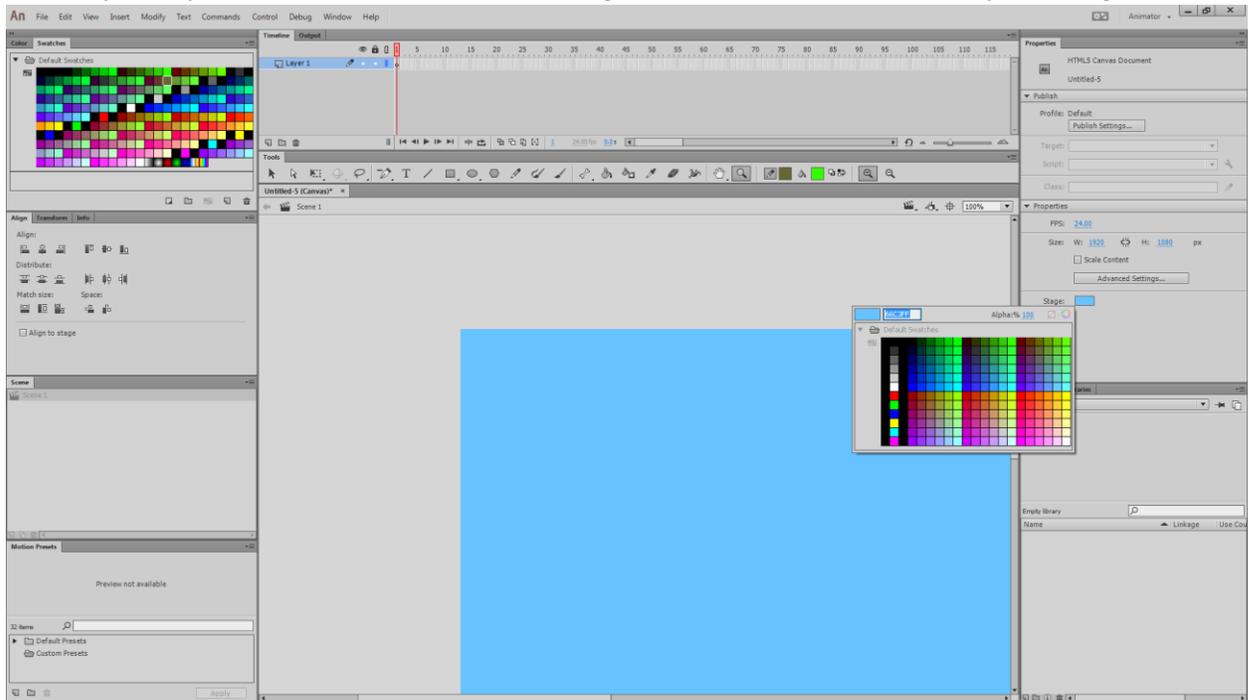
3. First, let's set up a new HTML project.



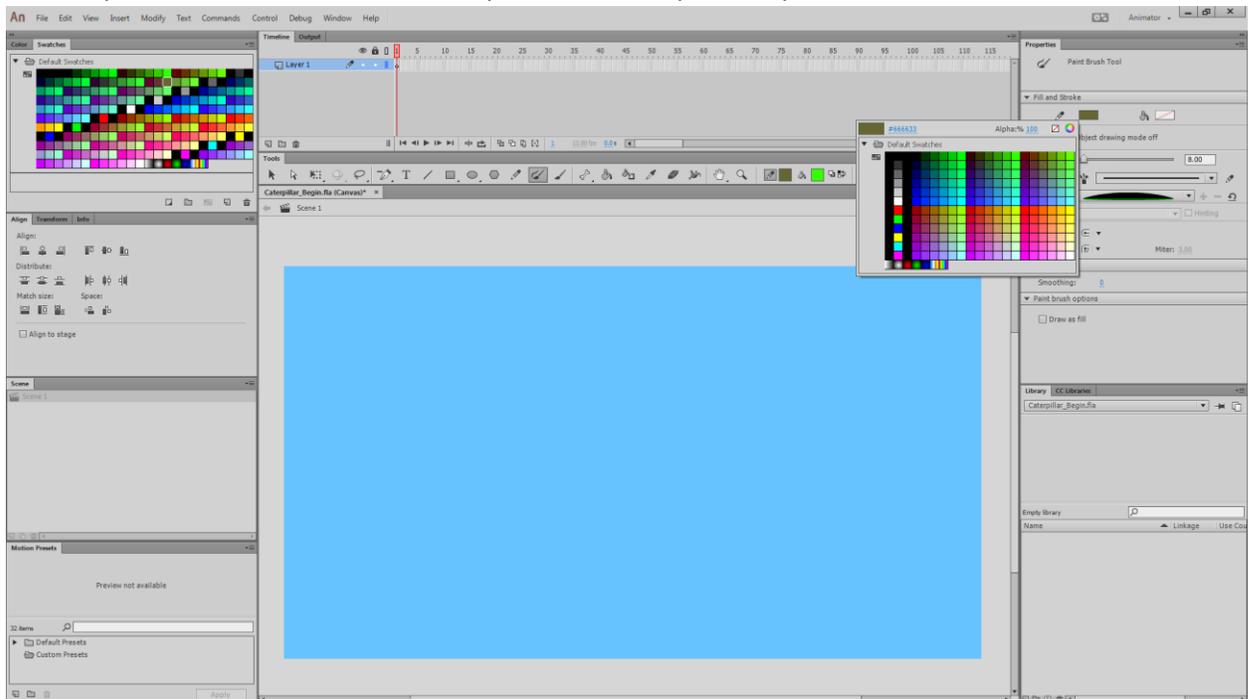
4. If you're not already in the Animator Workspace, let's change that now.

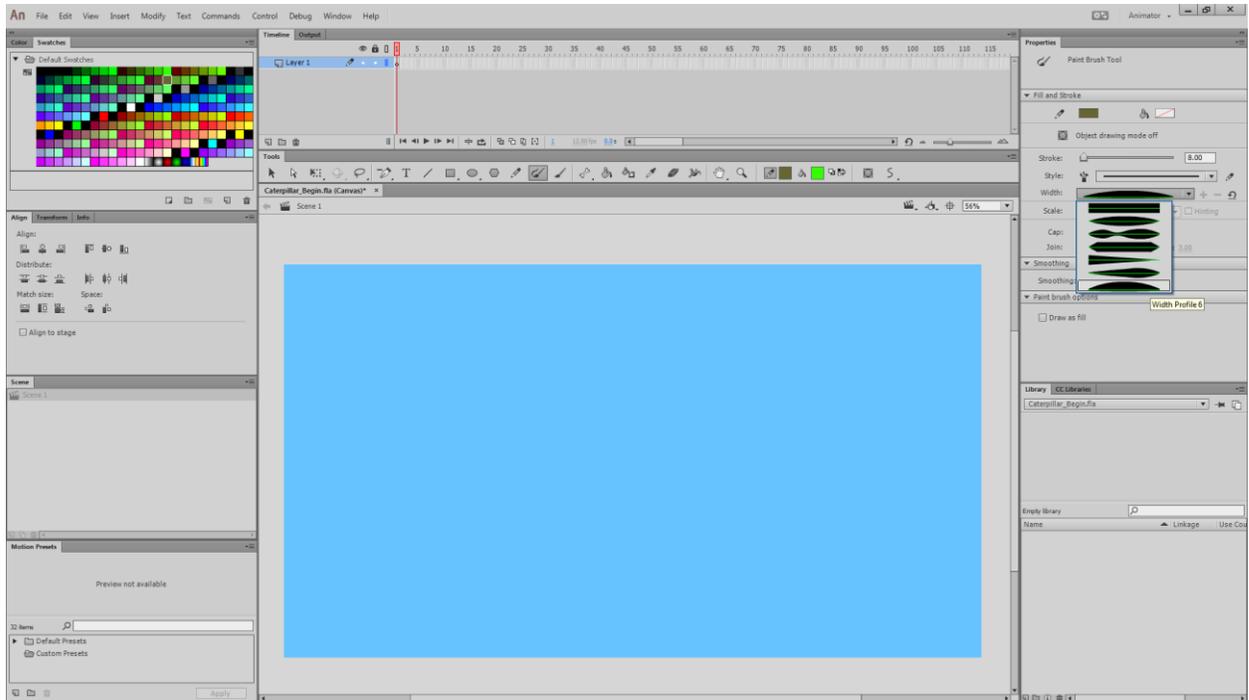


5. Be sure your aspect ratio is at 1920 x 1080. Set stage color to #66C3FF for a nice skylike background.

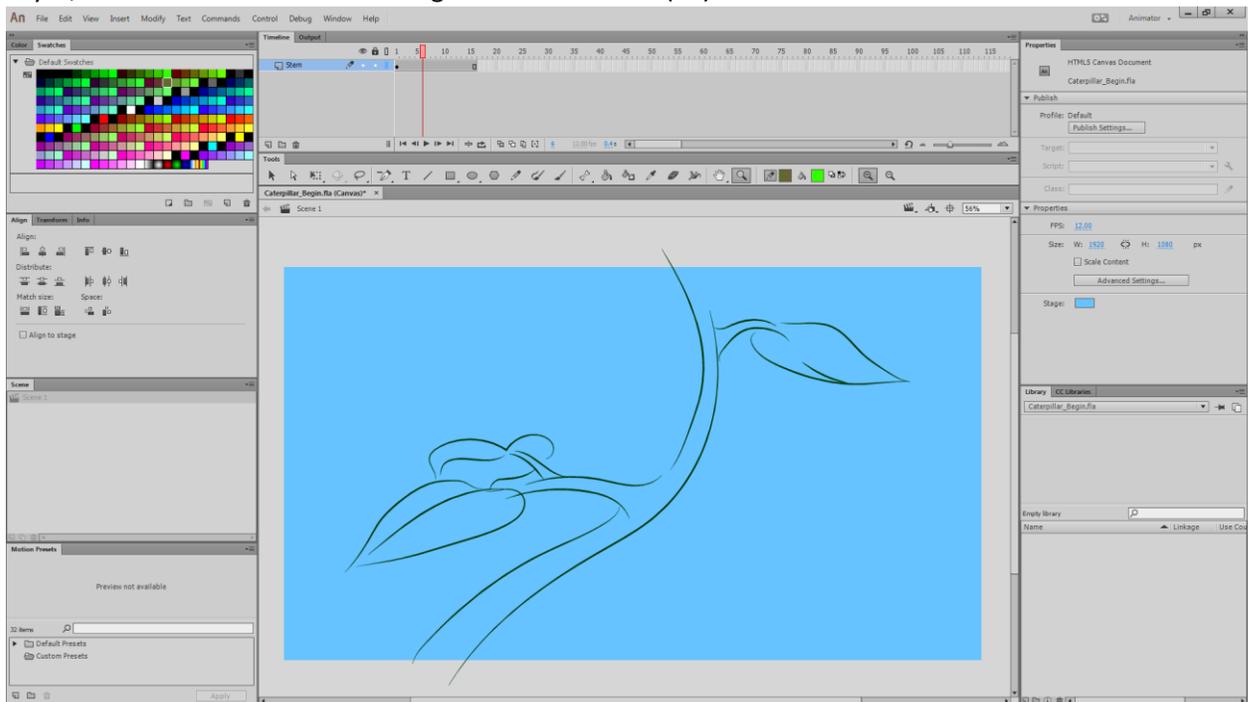


6. This animation will be a tight static frame of a caterpillar, sitting on a tomato vine, taking a big bite from an unripe tomato. Hit Y to access the Paint Brush Tool. Set line color to #666633, width to about 8 pix and choose the last stroke style from the dropdown options.

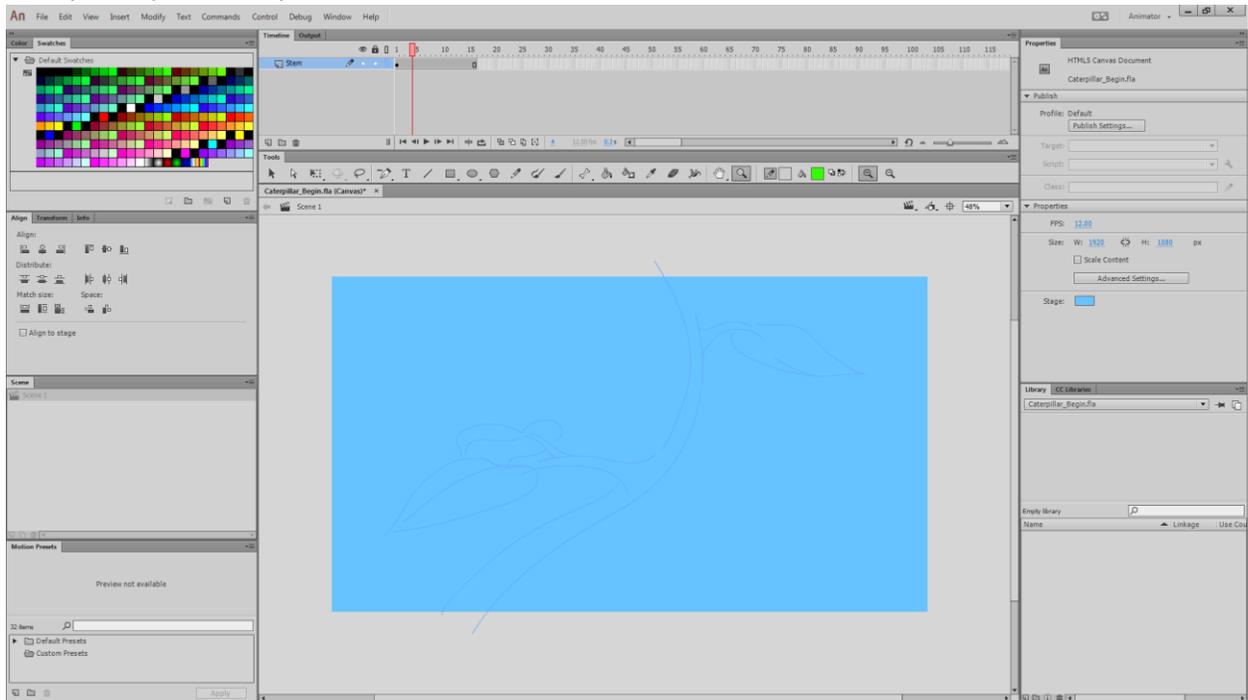




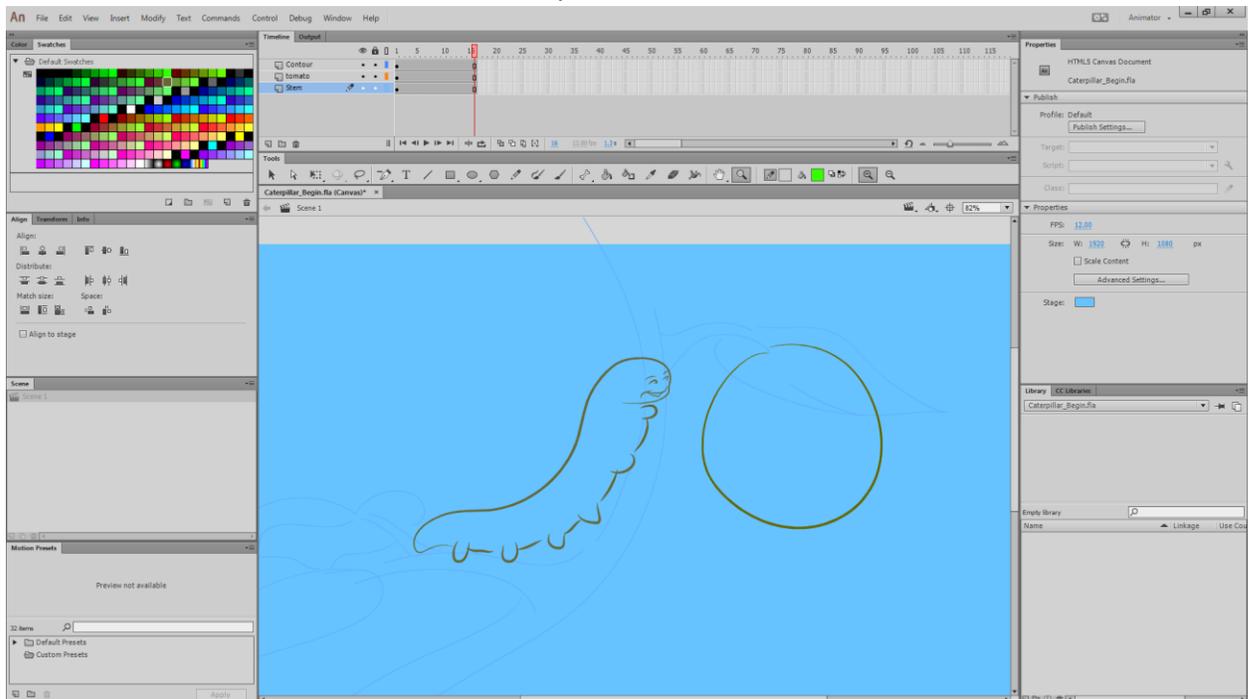
7. Start drawing on the stage to create a vine. This creates a frame on a new Layer. Then on that very Layer, Hit F5 and create a frame range of about sixteen (16) on the timeline.



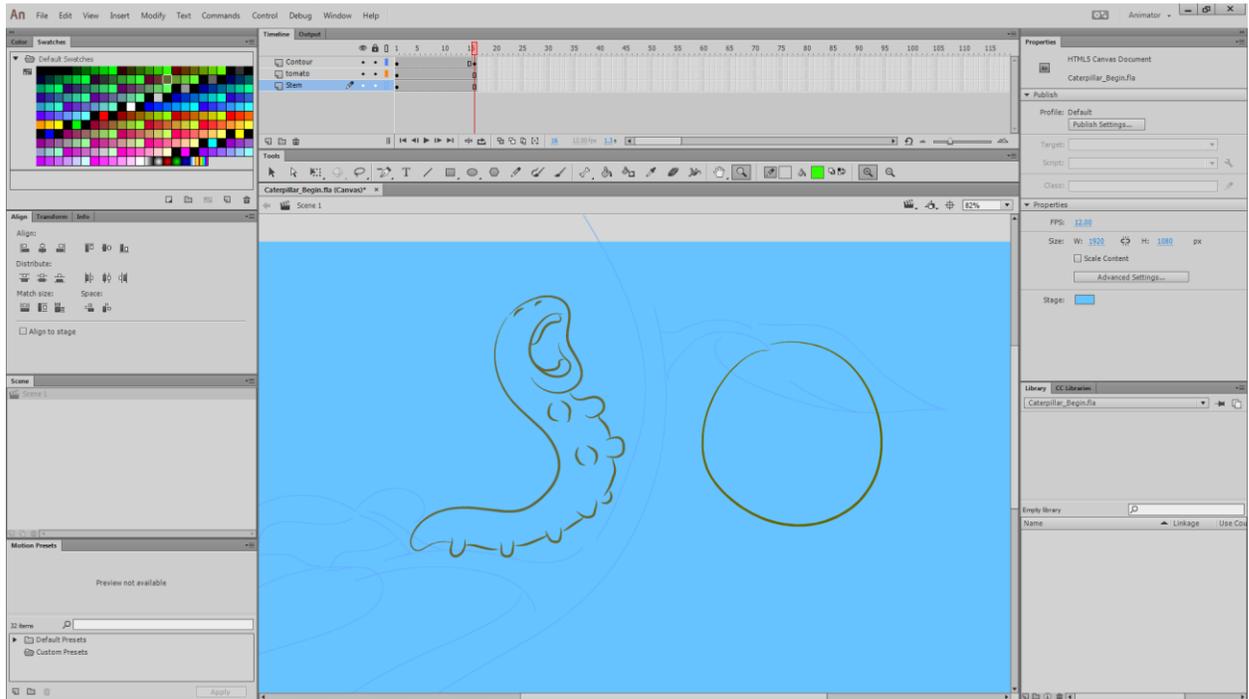
- Turn your layer visibility to wireframe.



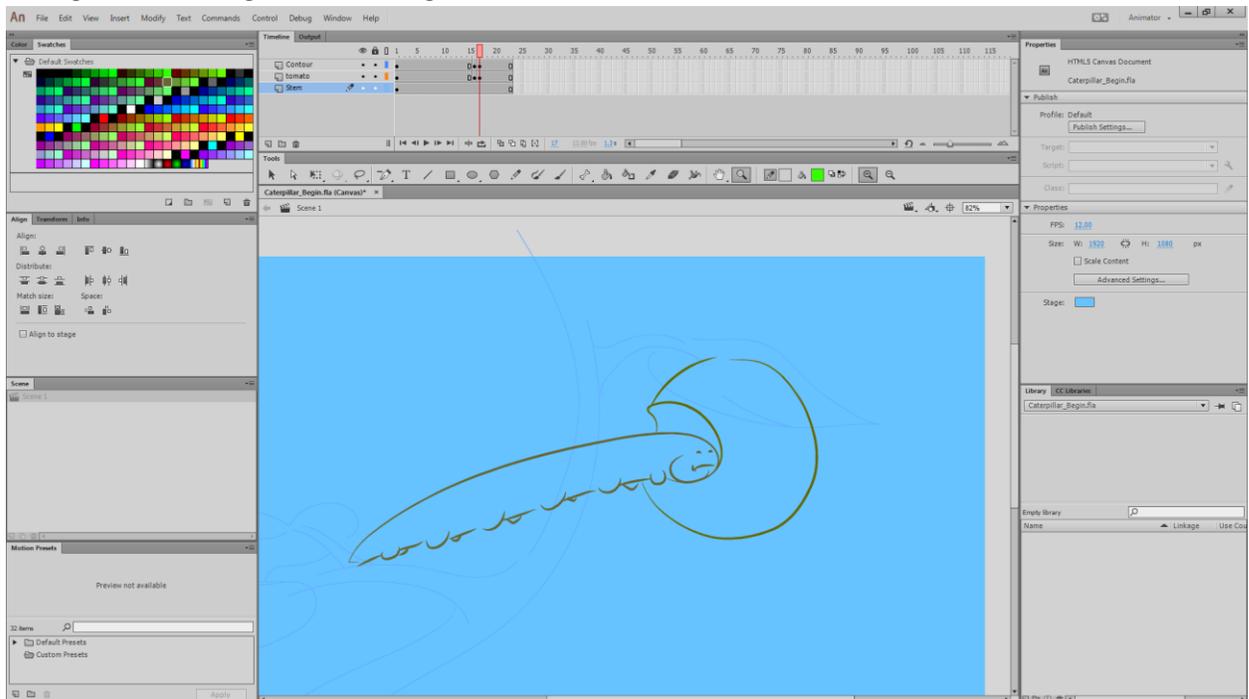
- Add a new layer with a tomato. Then draw your first keypose on another layer. Our caterpillar is fairly simple so that we can draw him many times in various positions over the course of a few seconds or even a few minutes. He looks ready to eat.



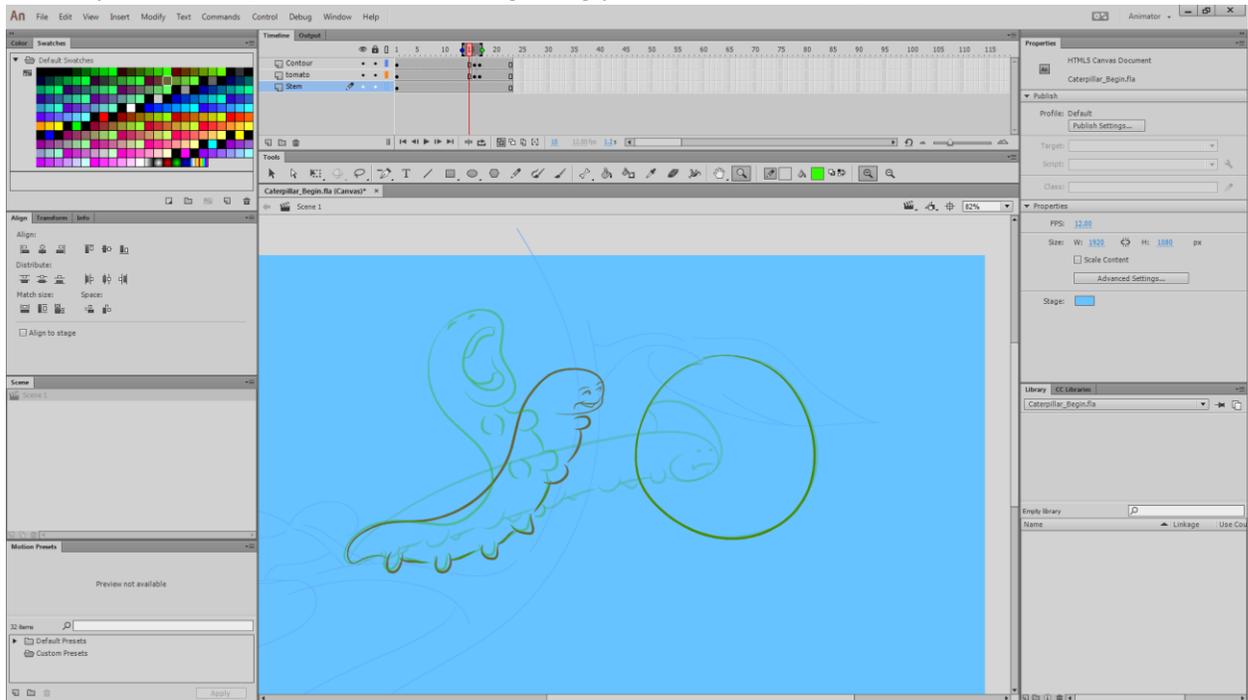
10. Second keypose of a big anticipatory bite. Hit F7 for a new keyframe. Can't you just imagine the bland taste of that tough green tomato?



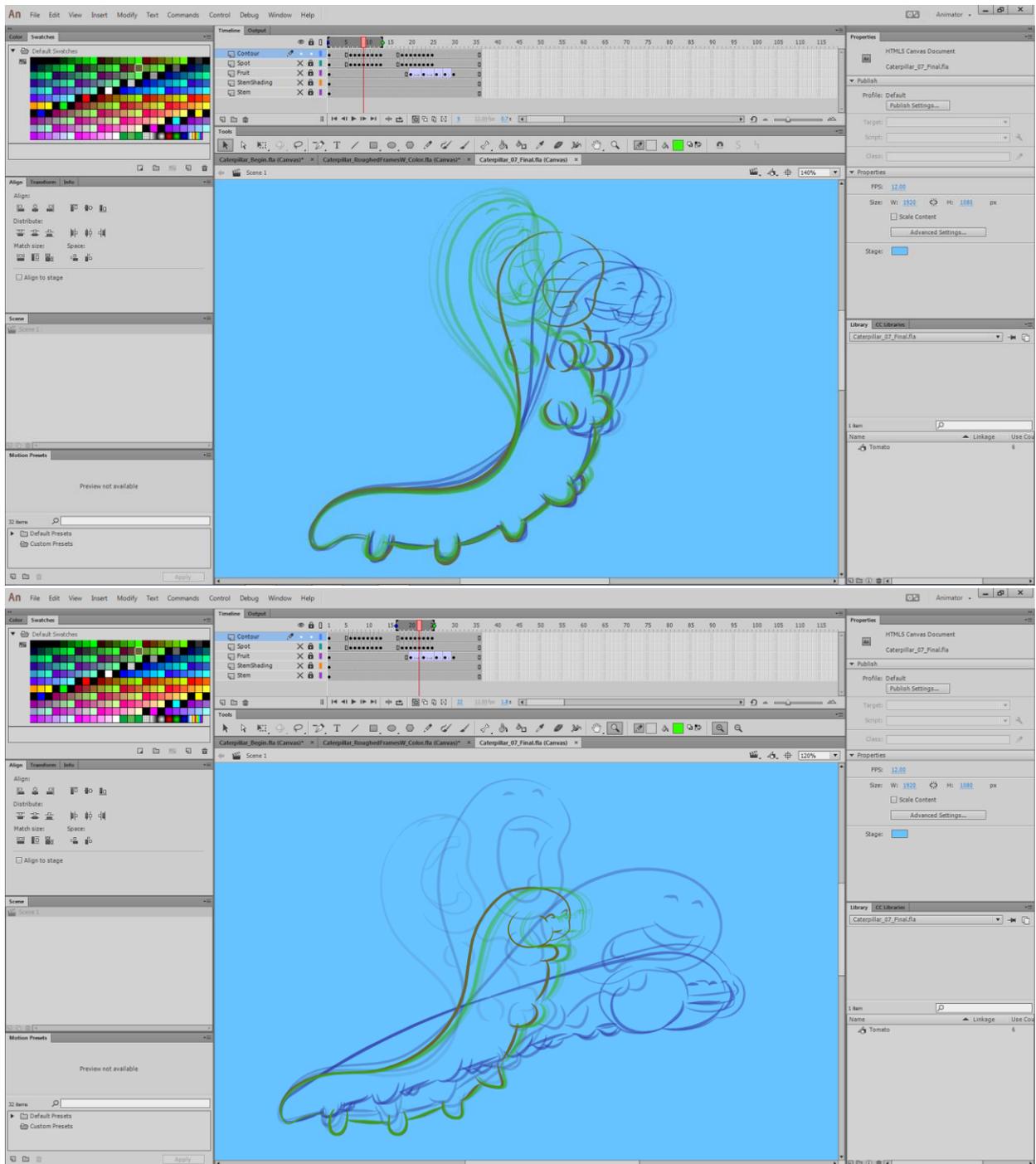
11. Final keypose of an extended caterpillar stretched for a bite. Make a bitten tomato keyframe by hitting F7 and adding a new drawing.



12. Here is your three (3) frame backbone for guiding your entire animation, in an Onion Skin view.

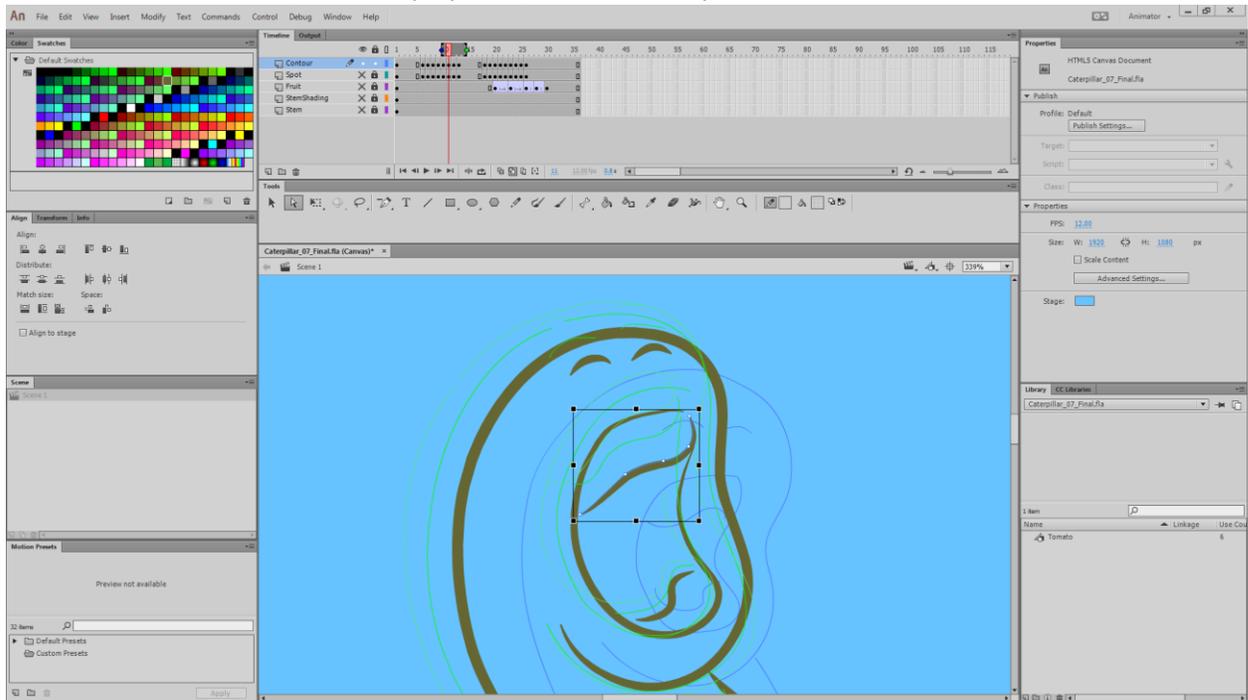


13. In a future view, we can see the flowing movement of the the caterpillar's snakeline action and what we will strive for in drawing movement. Take it step-by-step and at your own pace. This looks daunting but slowly build up your frames and see what works for you. You may delete a bunch of sturff, but you will get faster and understand how your drawings will eventually look in motion.

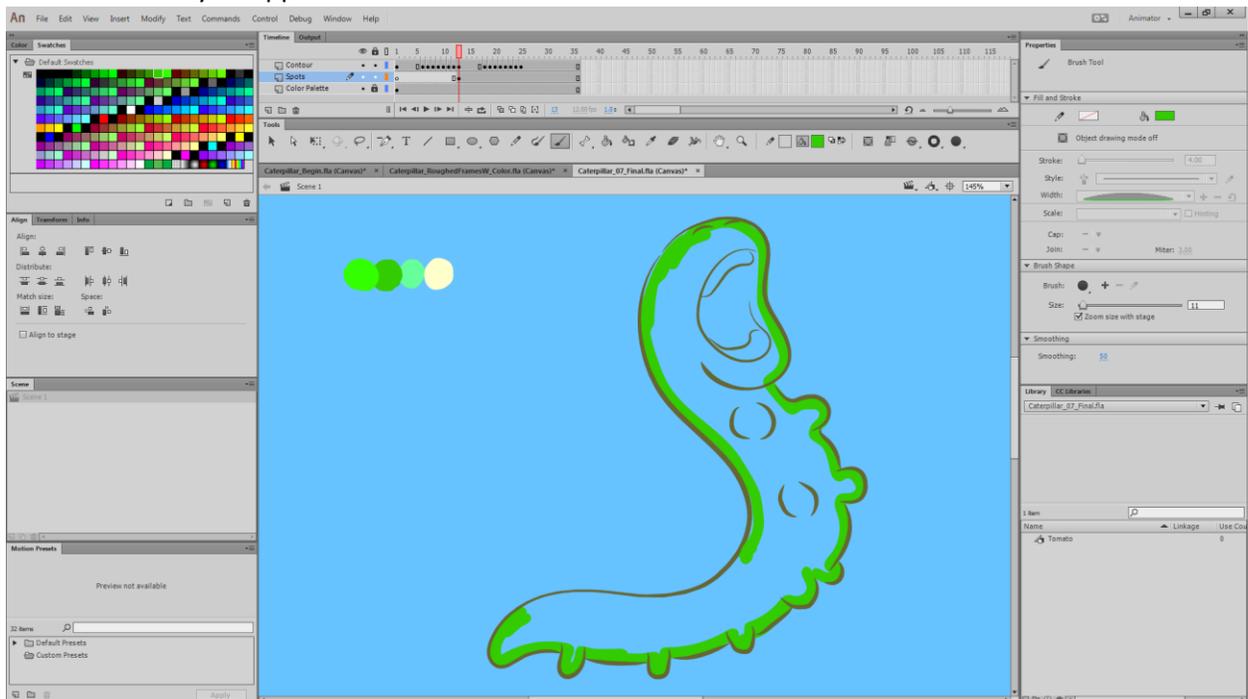


14. We are well on the way to making something visually appealing and fun to watch. We can even edit our anchor points on any inbetween frame using the depicted Onion Skin Mode that uses wireframes

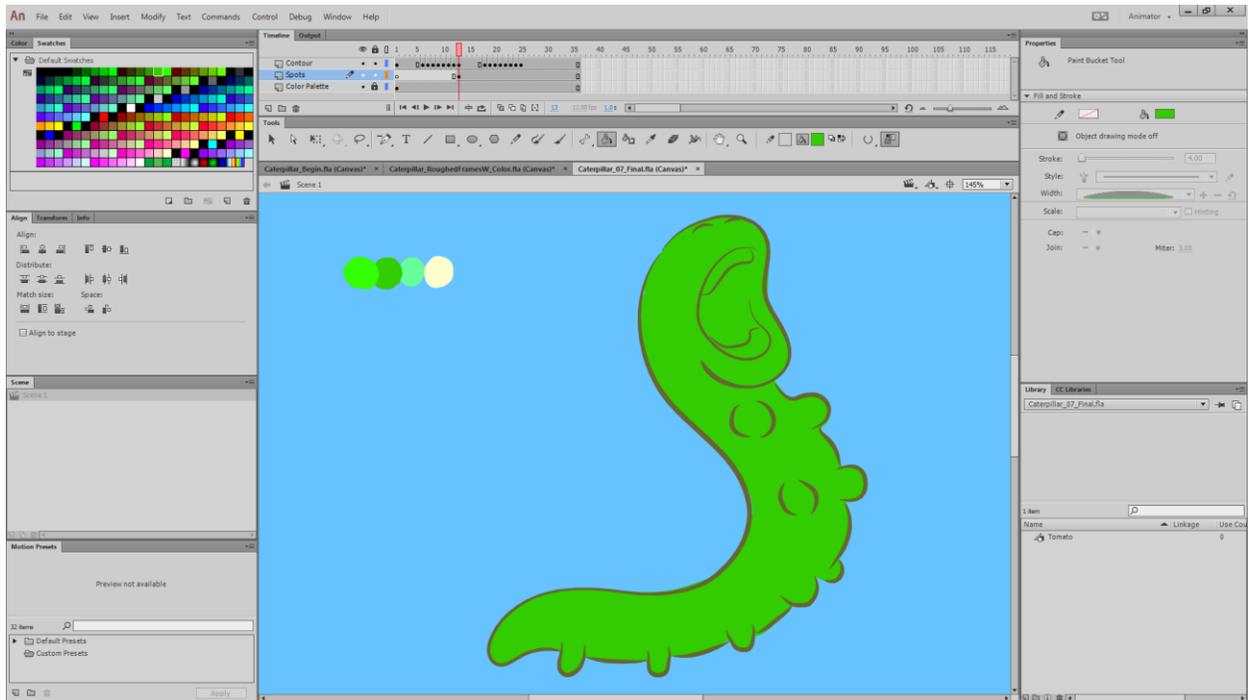
and shows the contours, note the playhead, simultaneously.



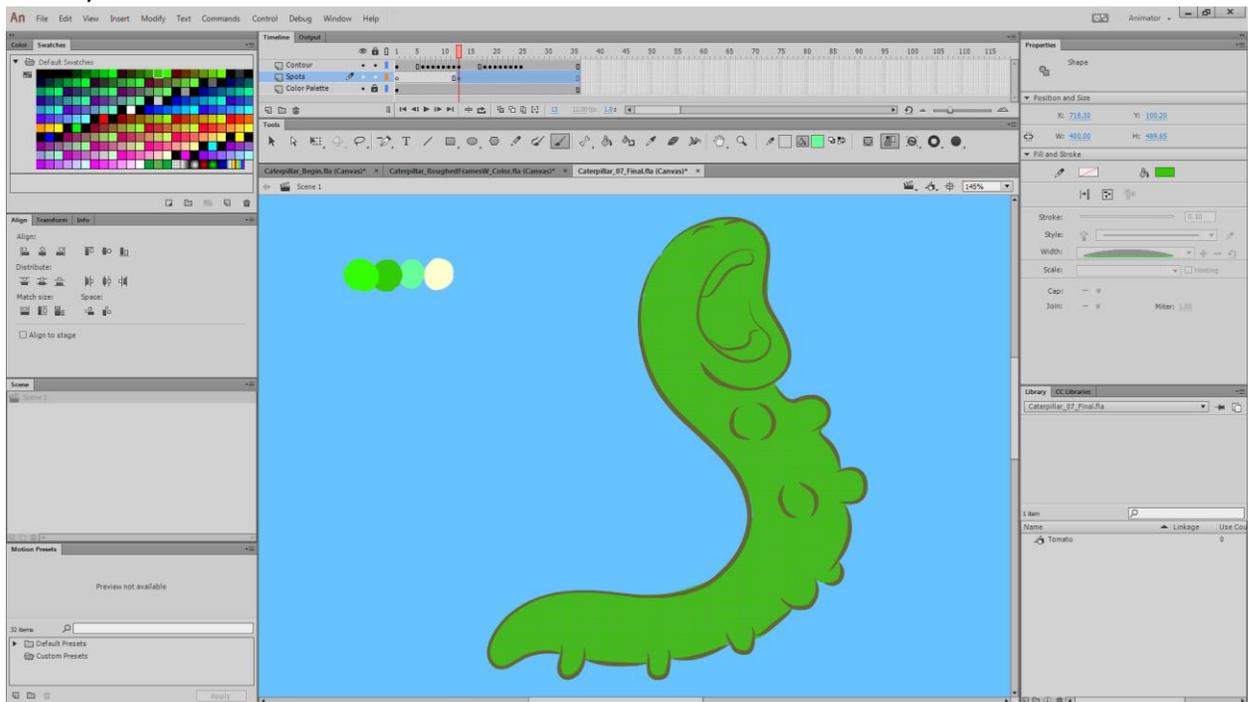
15. Now, let's explore some techniques for coloring in Animate CC. Using the Brush tool, or B hotkey, let's paint in Normal Mode on layer beneath. Avoid using the fill tool to close gaps and muck around with that process on the same layer. Notice I've made a palette of colors on their own layer to help me build up the caterpillar's markings. You can even select that color palette with the "I" shortcut or Eyedropper tool when it's locked!



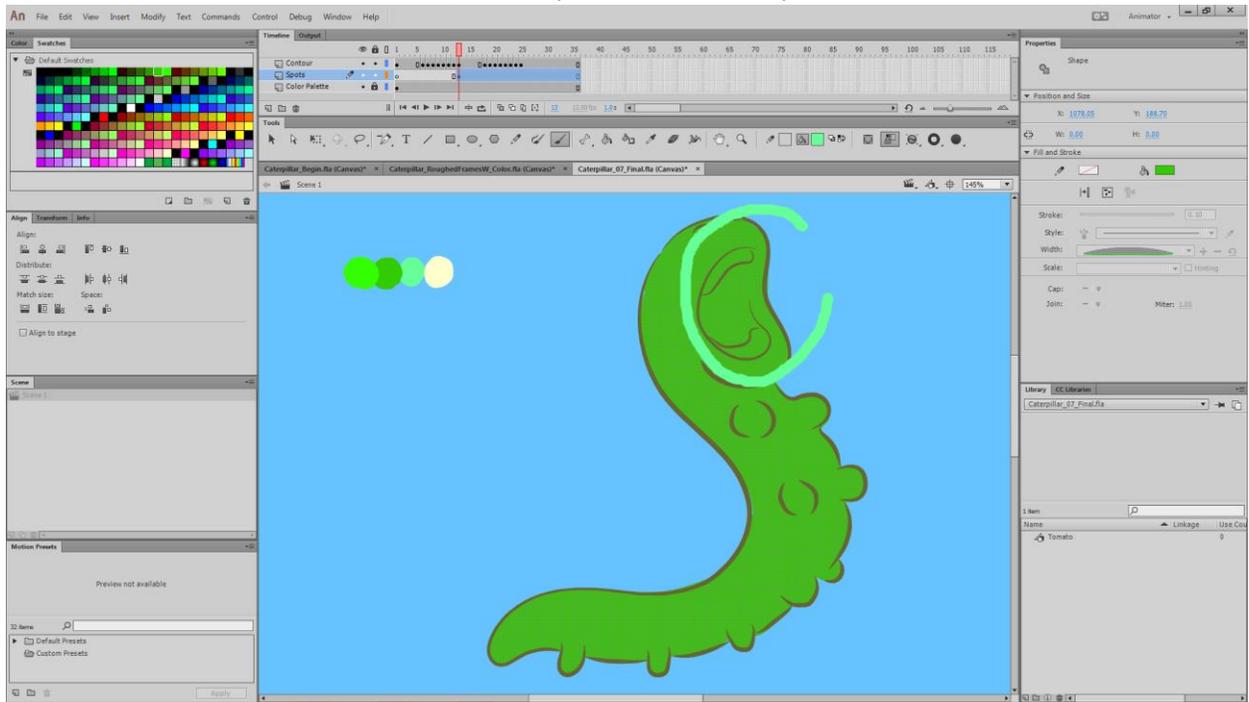
16. Fill it in with the Bucket Tool or “K” shortcut.

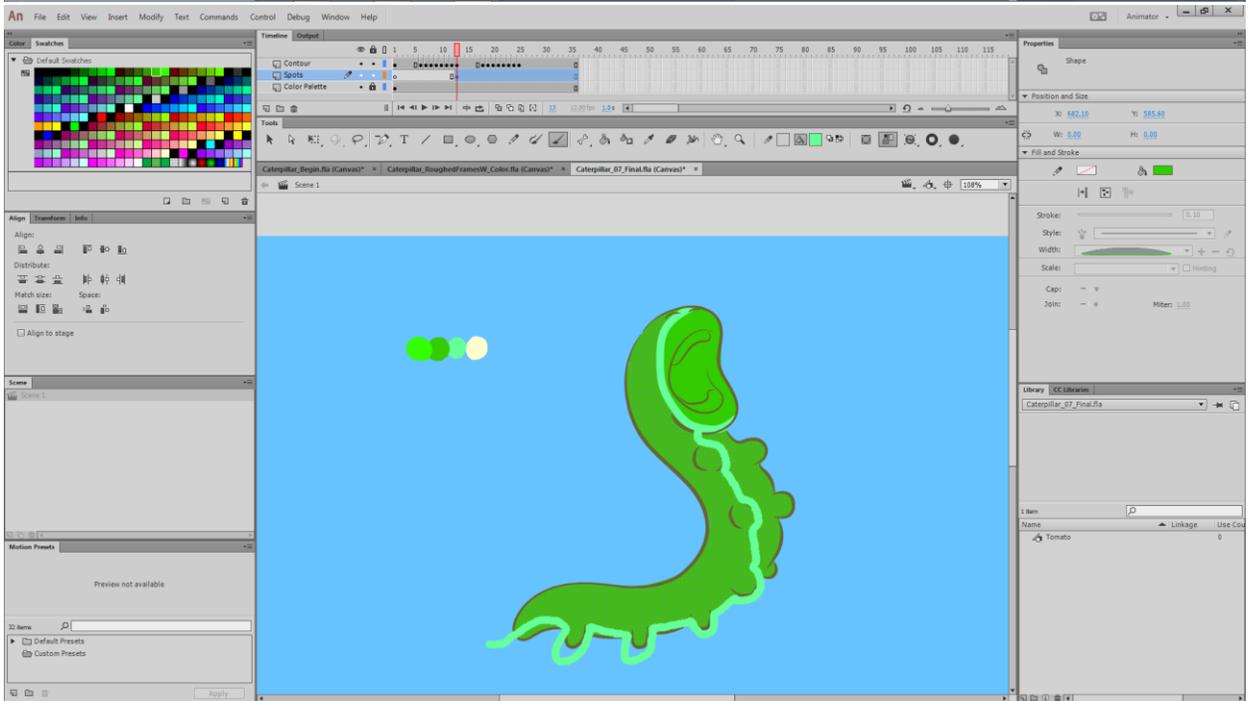
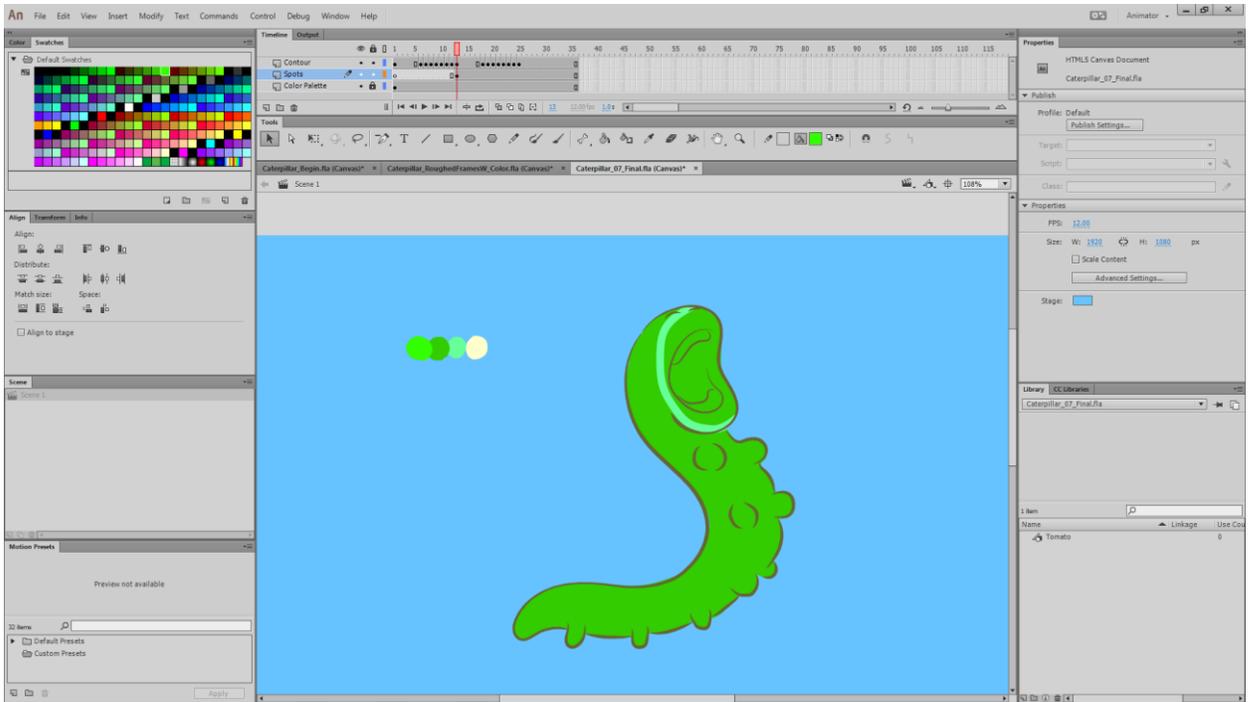


17. Select your fill.

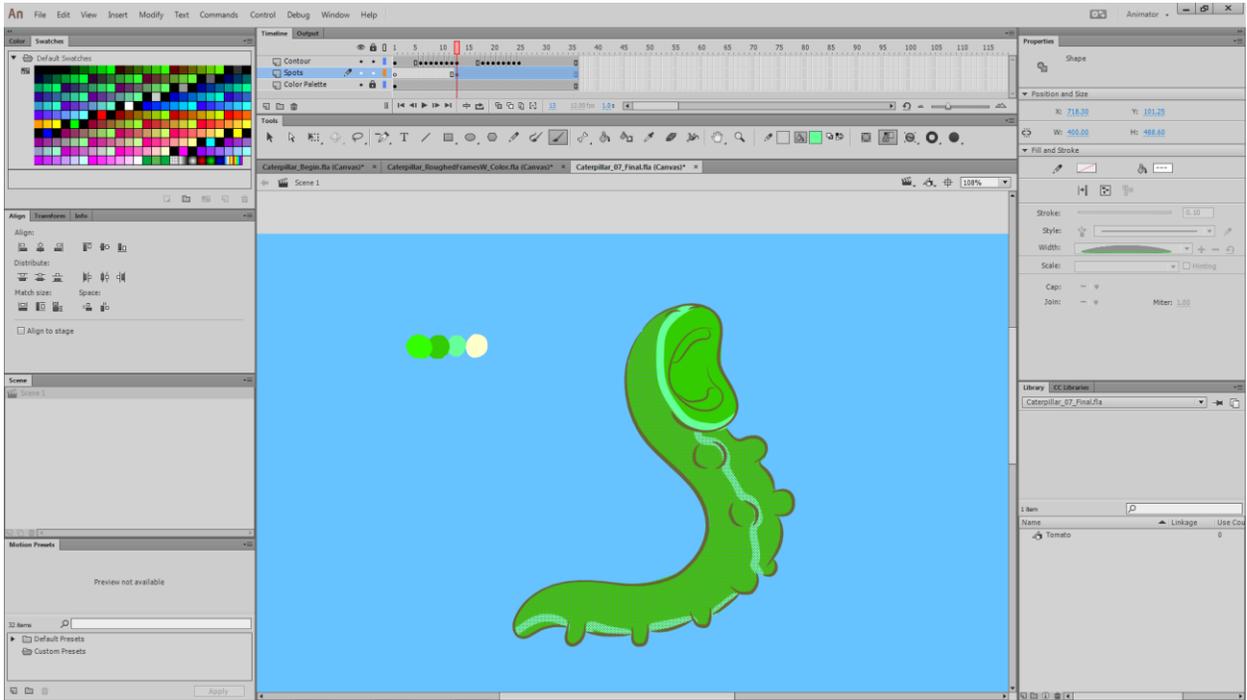


18. In Paint Selection, under Brush Mode, to add spots and underbelly coloration.

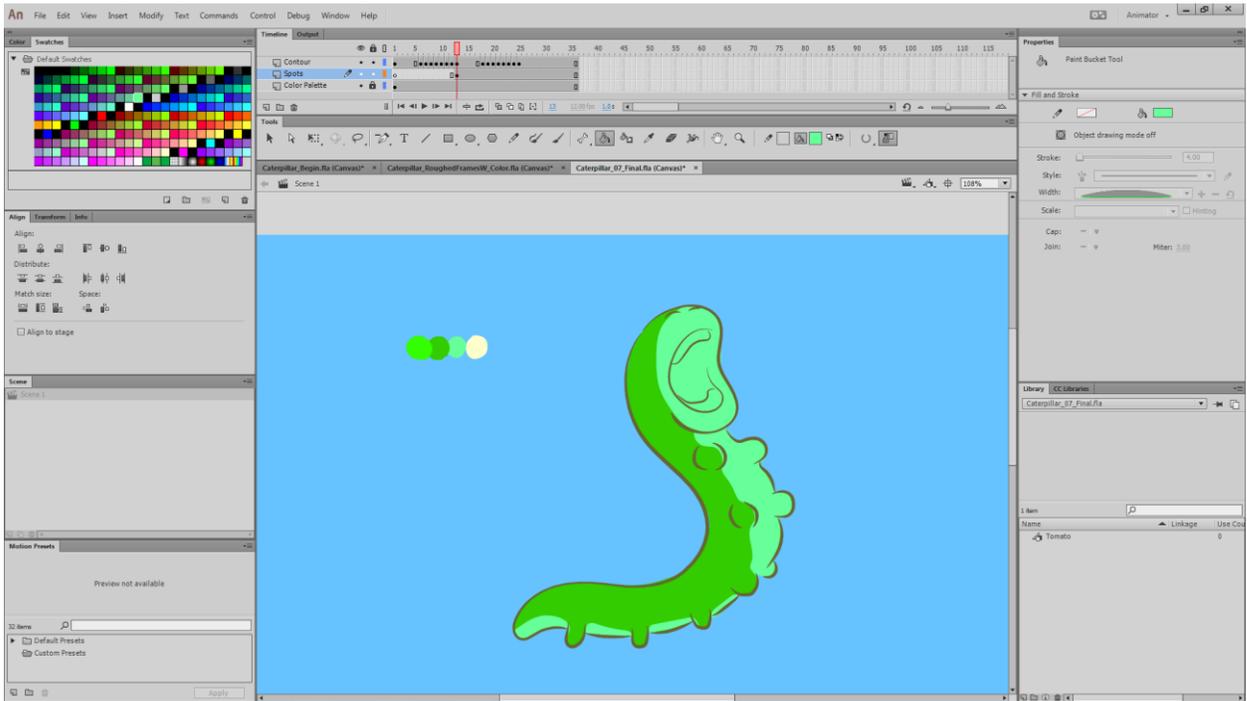




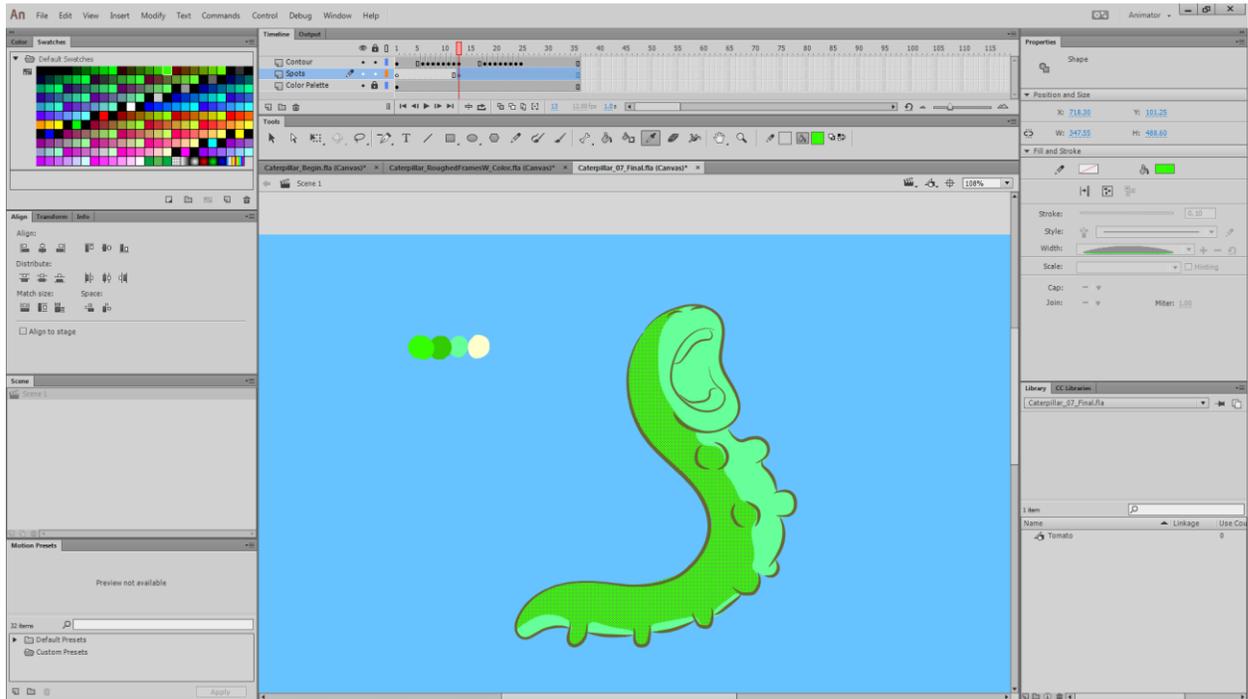
19. No need to erase overcoloring.



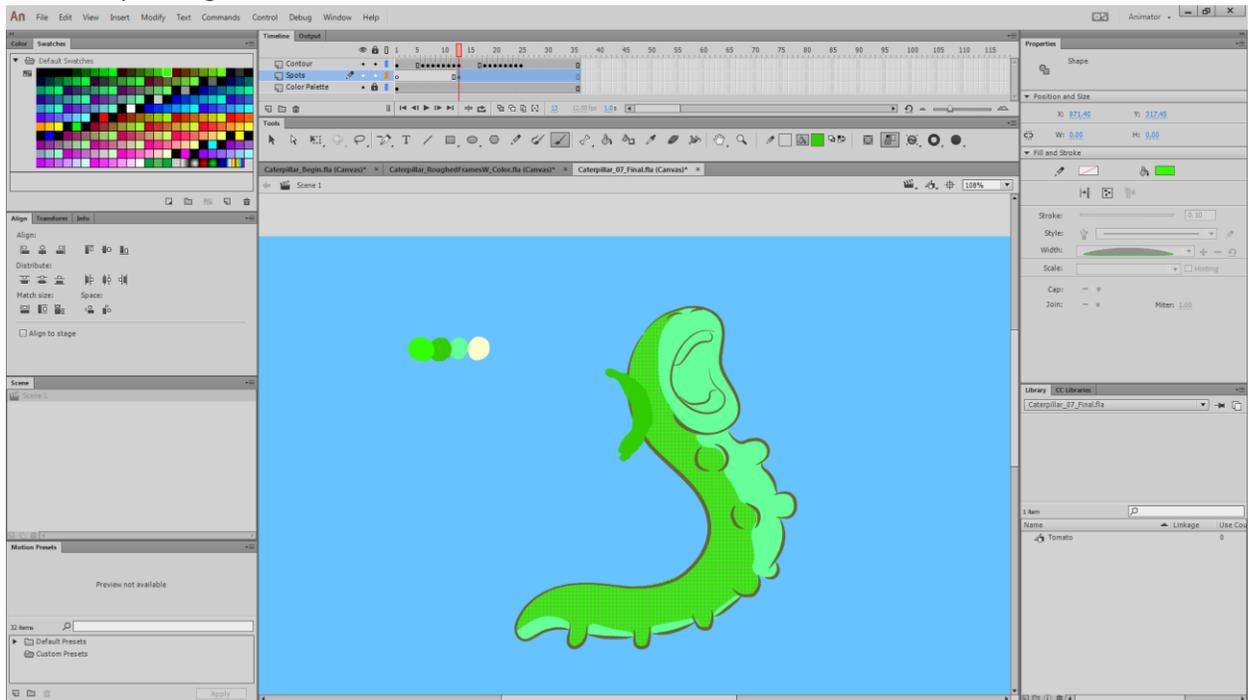
20. Continue your paintwork using the Bucket Tool and click to fill.

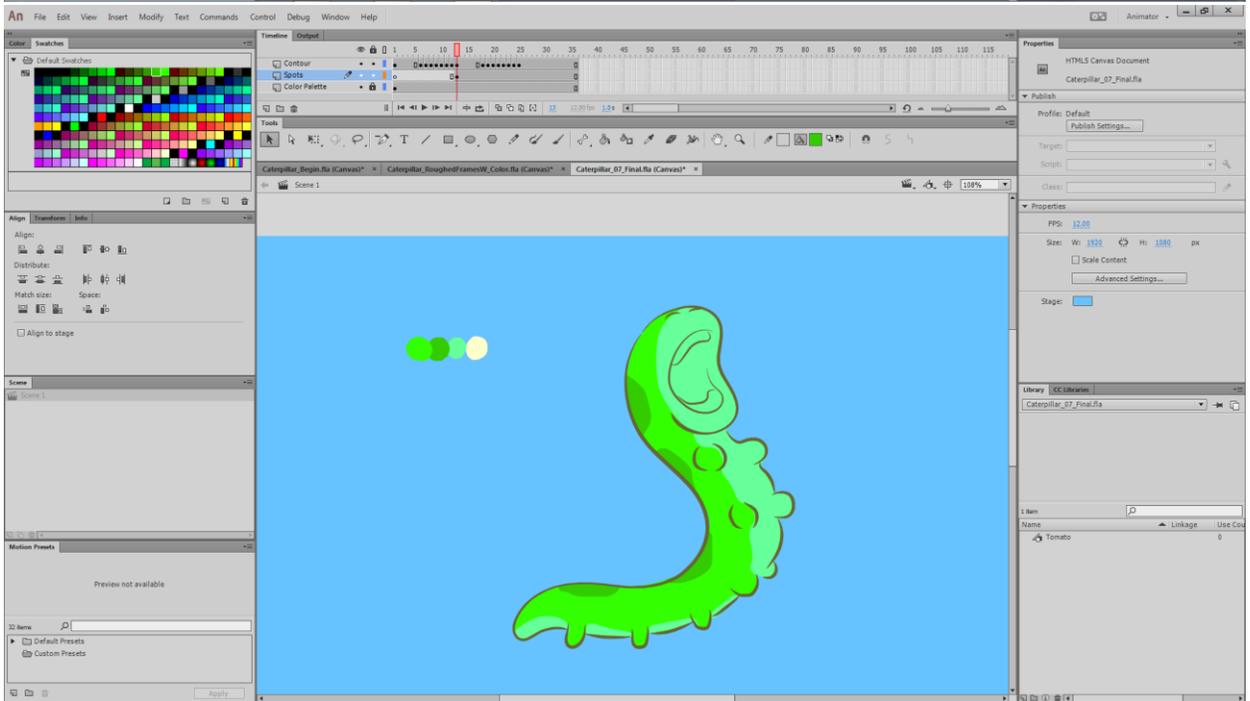
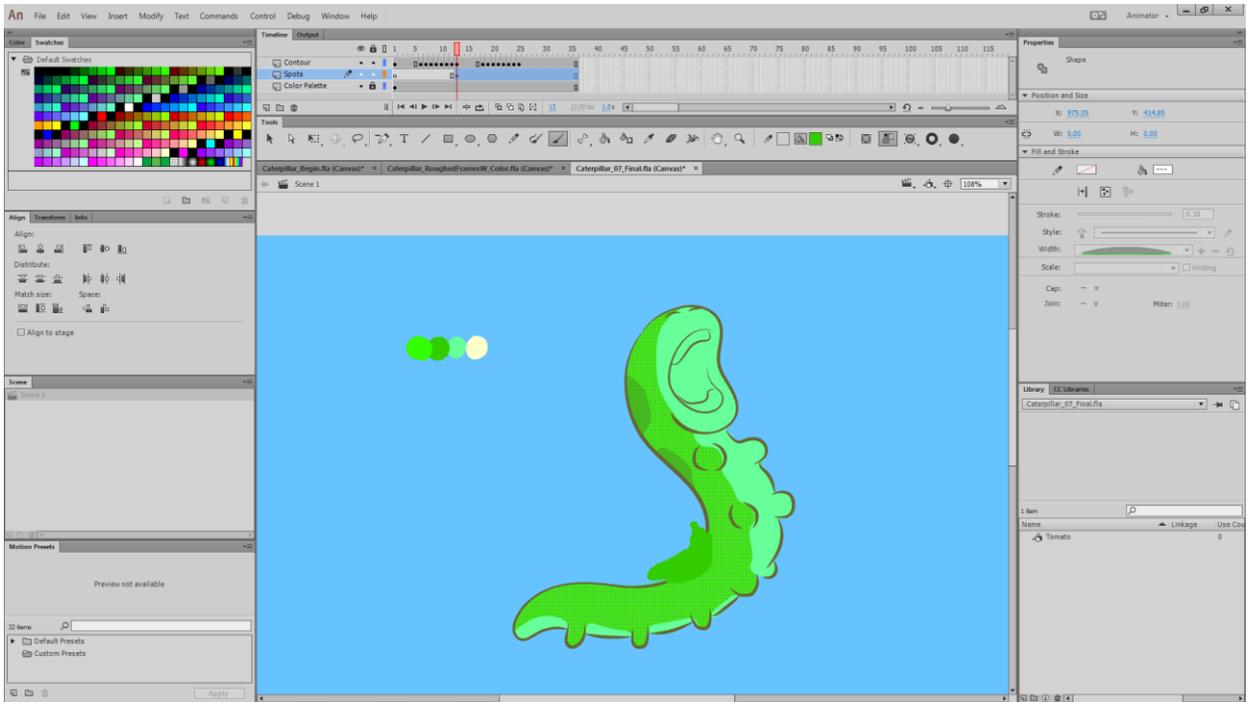


21. To change a current color, select region with a click and then eyedropper over palette and double click to update.

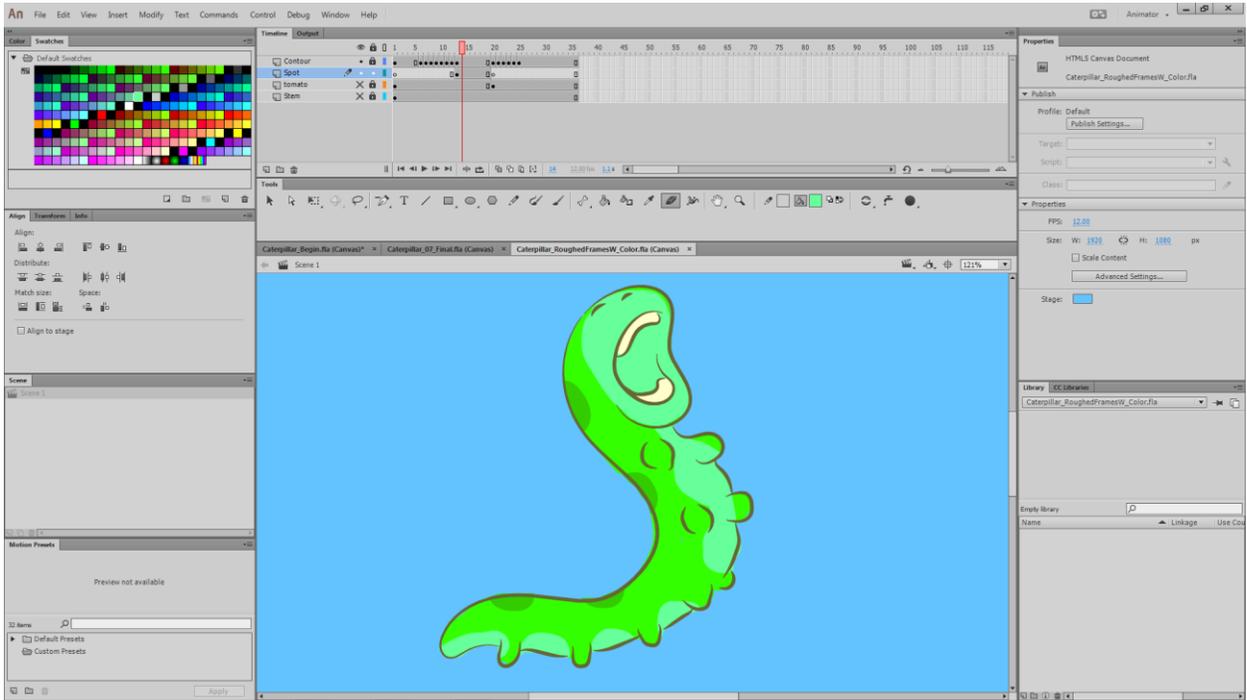


22. Continue painting in Paint Selection Mode.

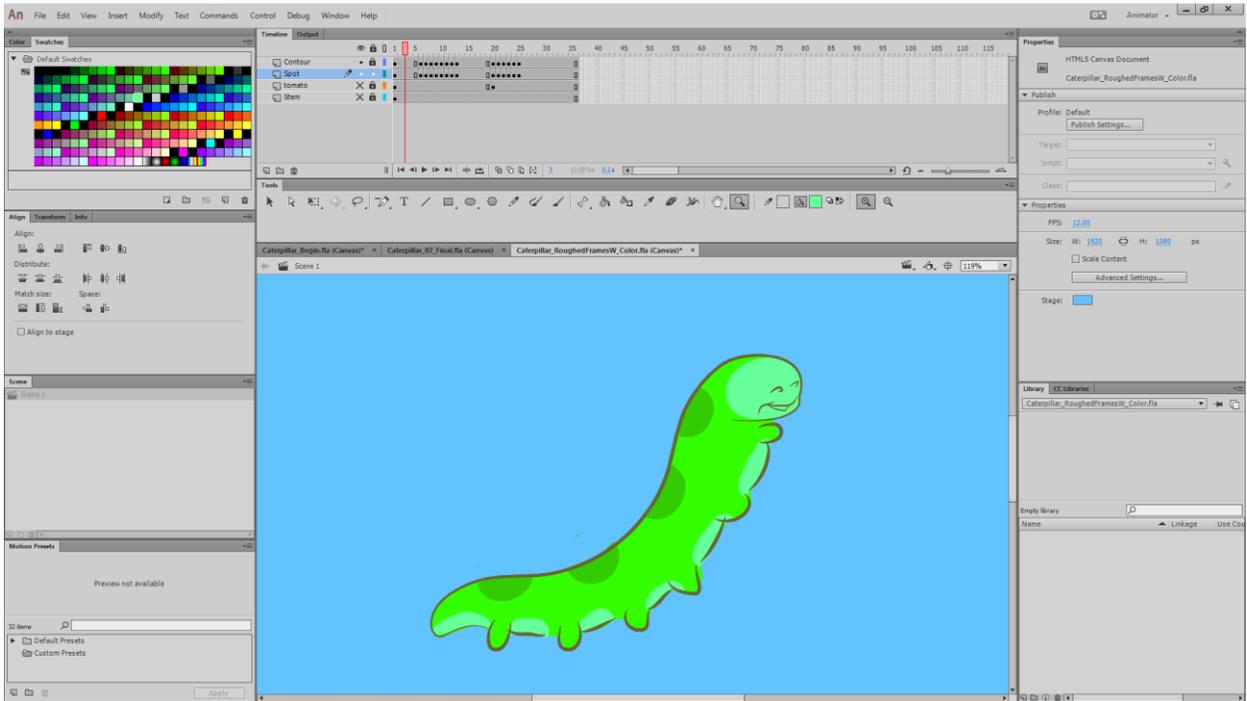




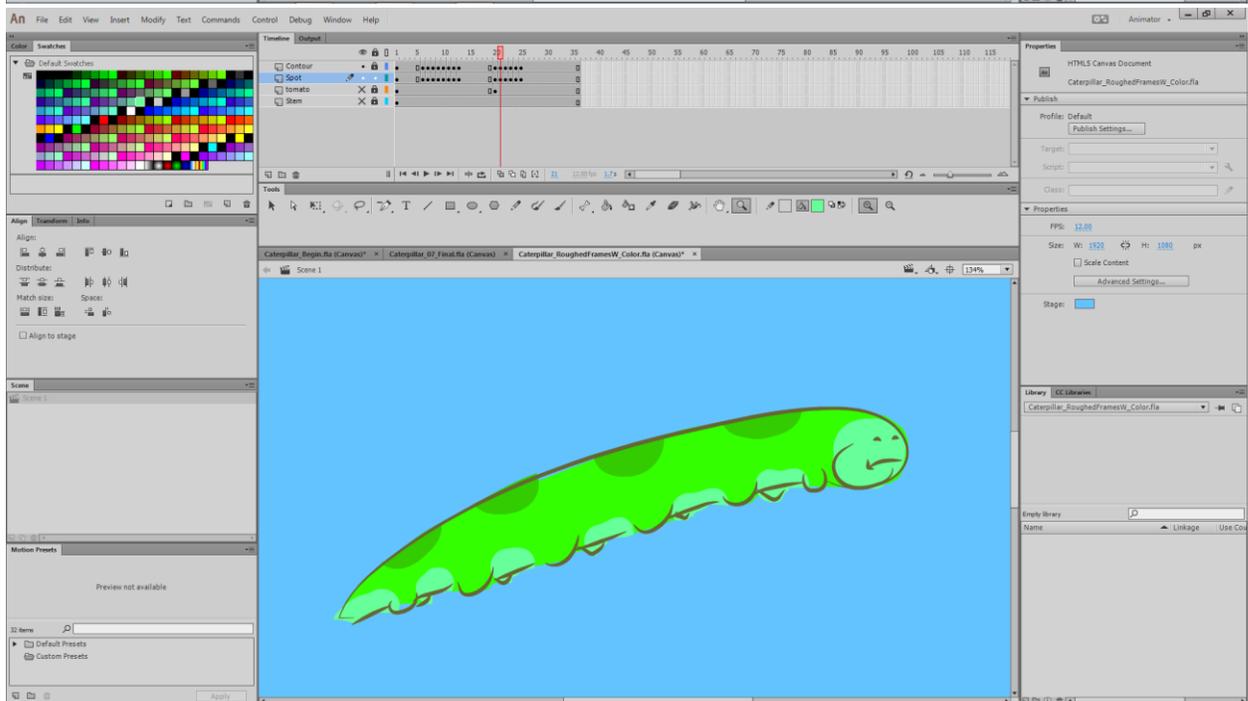
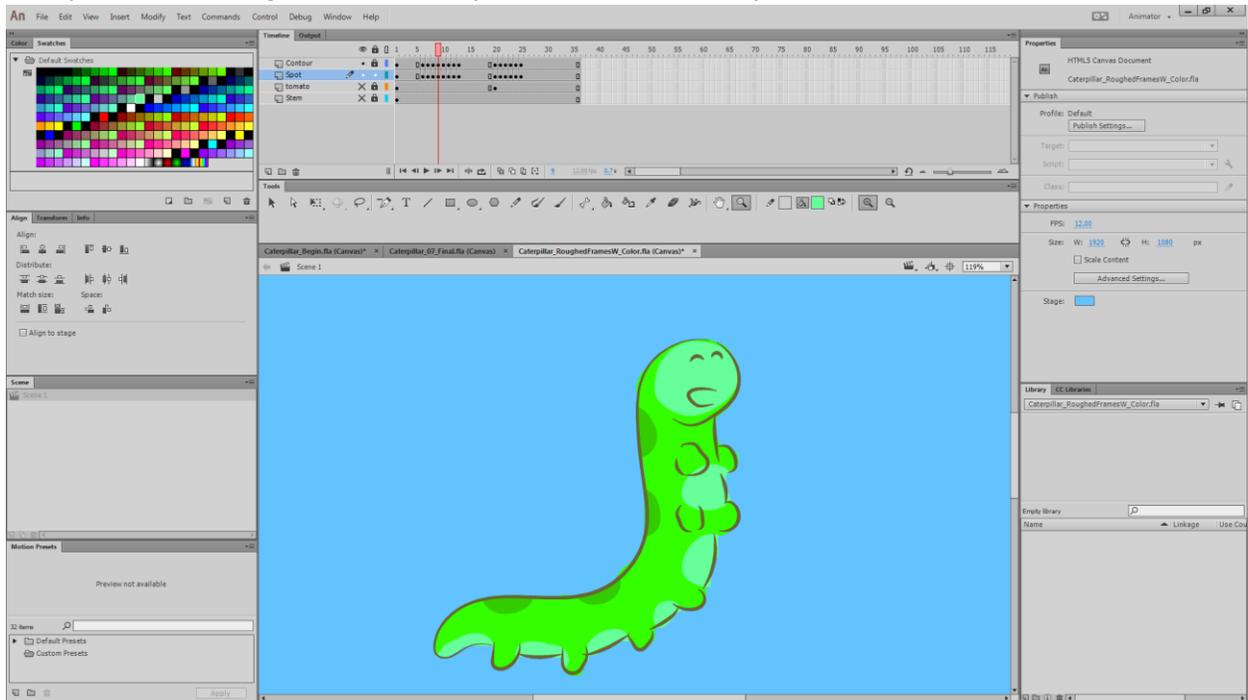
23. Add finishing teeth touches and now you're finished for that frame.



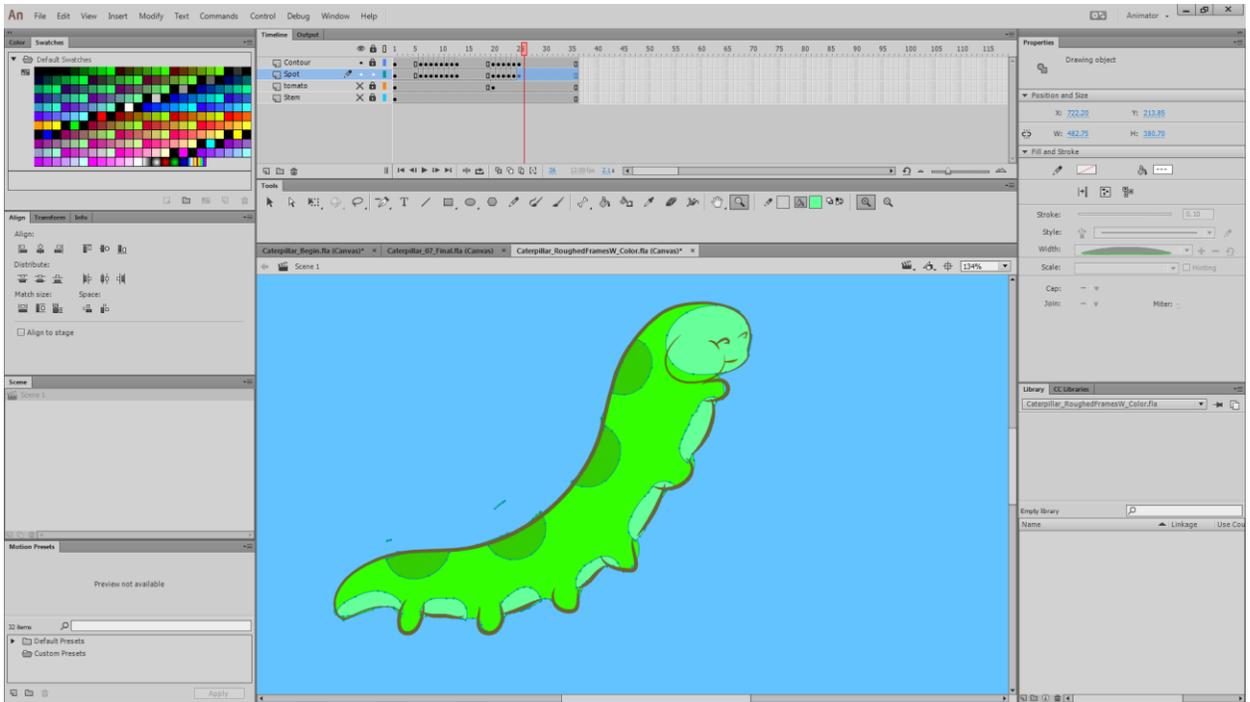
24. Continue the sequence.



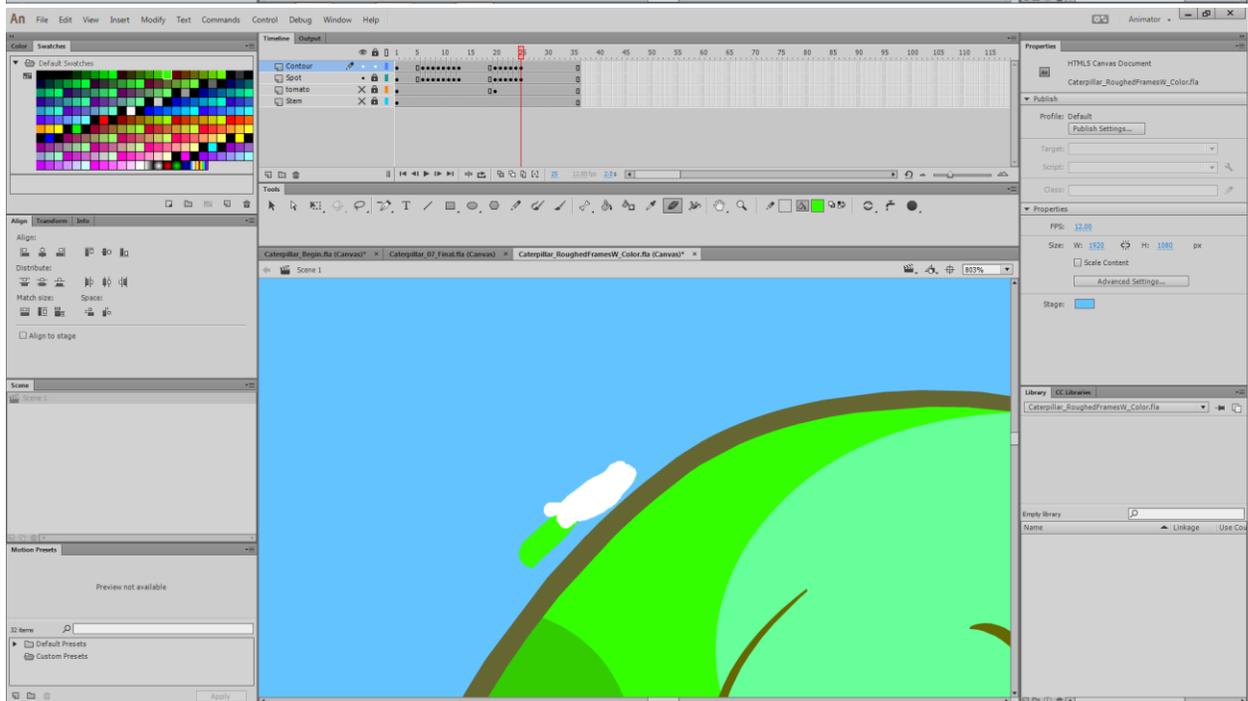
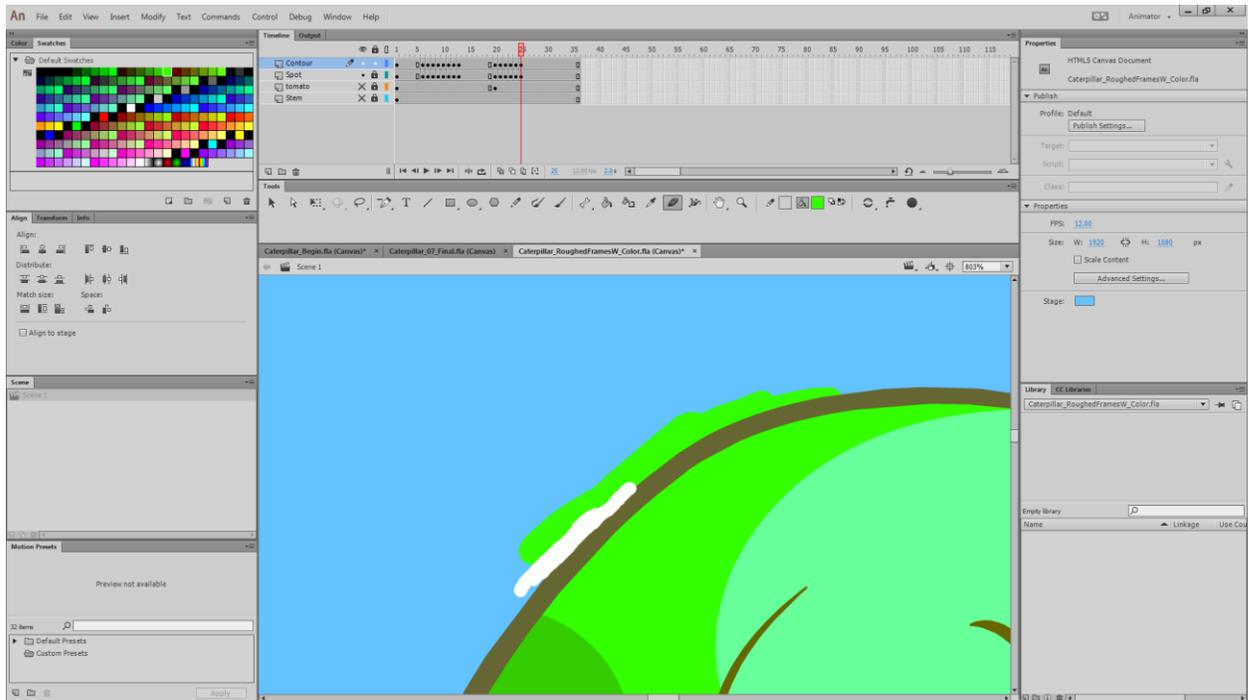
25. It may still be a bit rough, but that's okay. You can clean and adjust later.



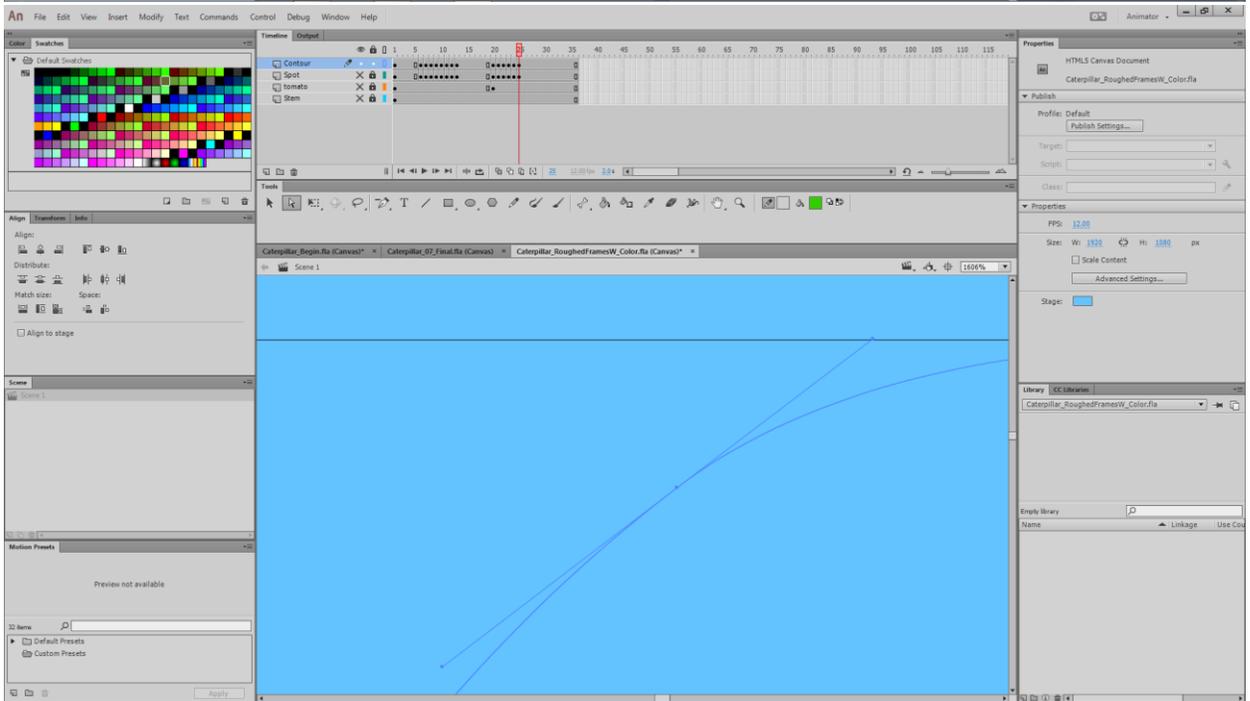
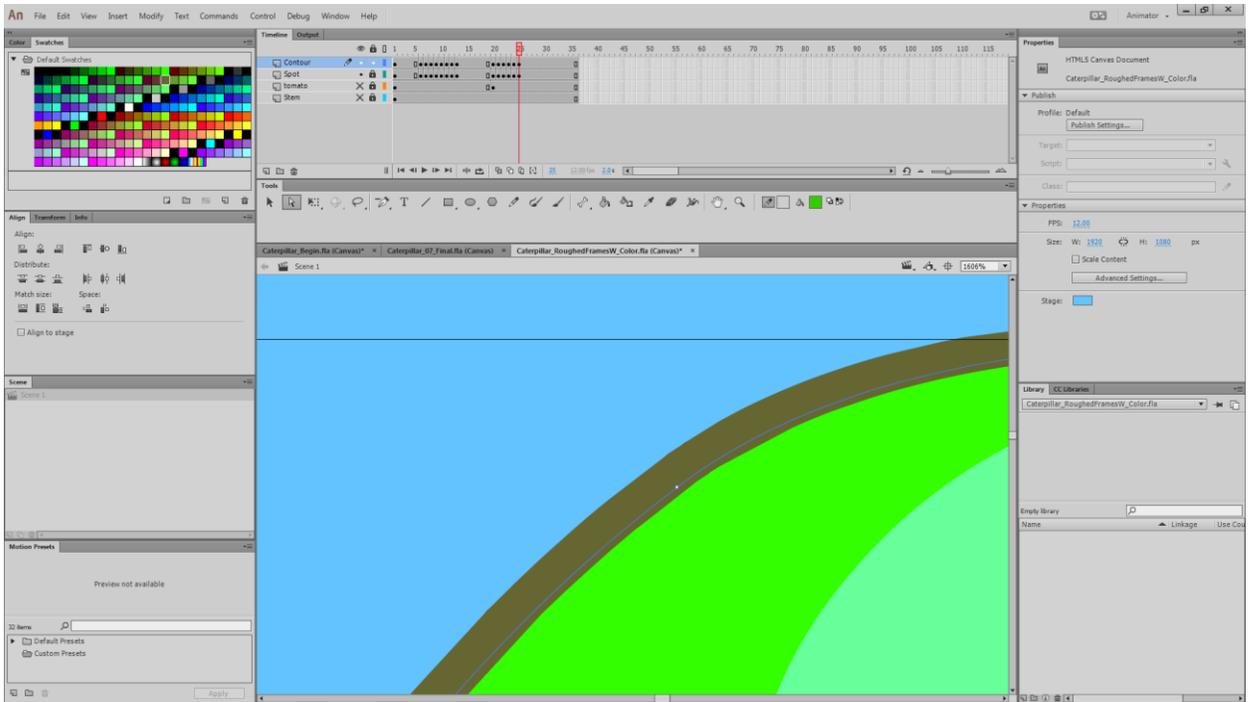
26. If things are confusing and don't apply color when you paint, you may have some objects to break. Ctrl-B or Cmd-B.



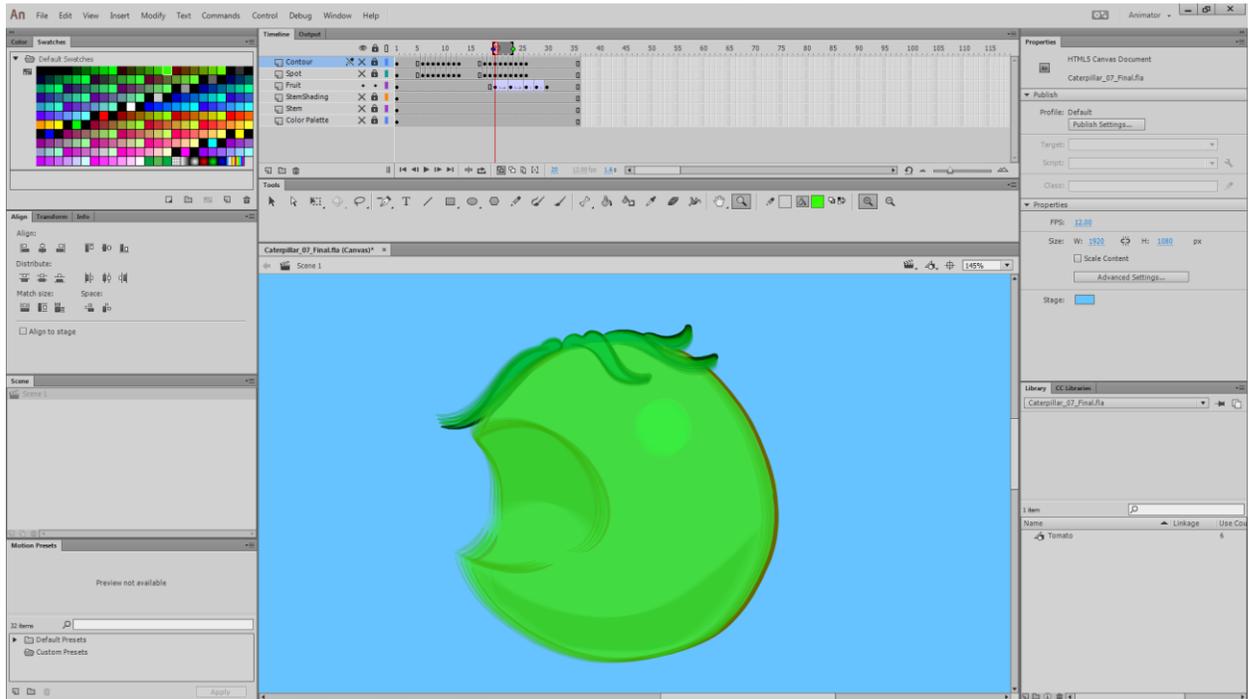
27. That's the basics of it. Continue to refine with the Eraser Tool "E".



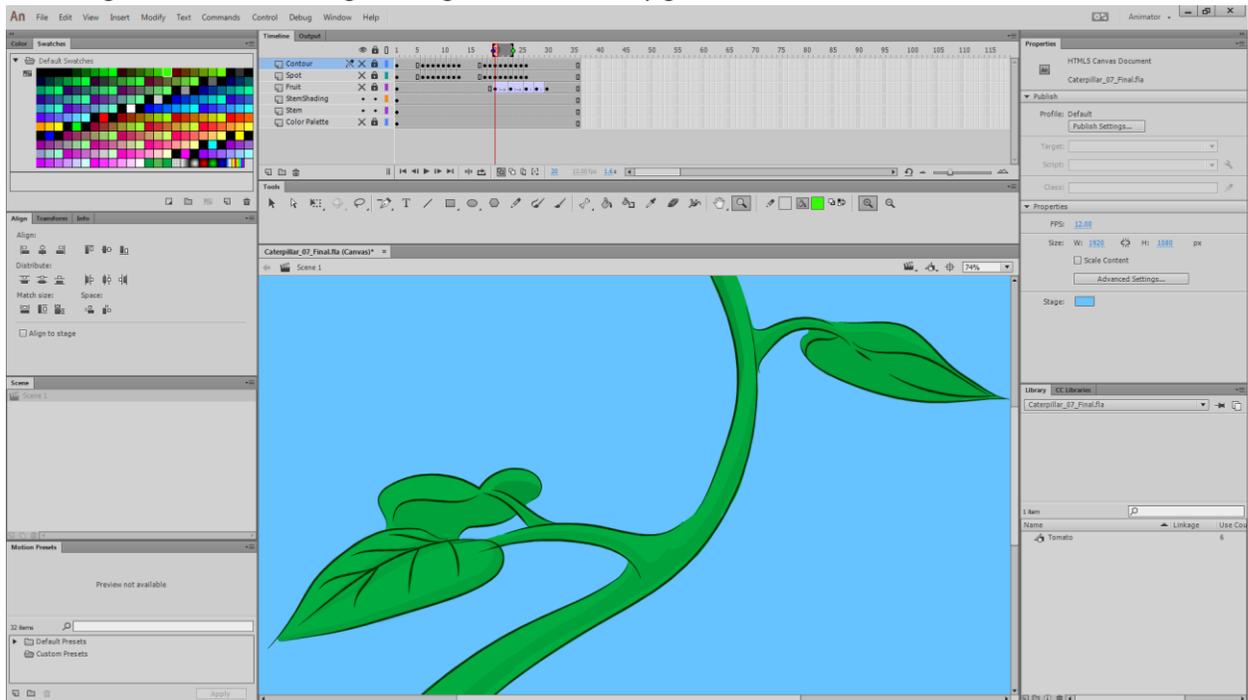
28. Edit contours with the "A" selection tool while altering between "-" and "+" to subtract and add Anchor points.



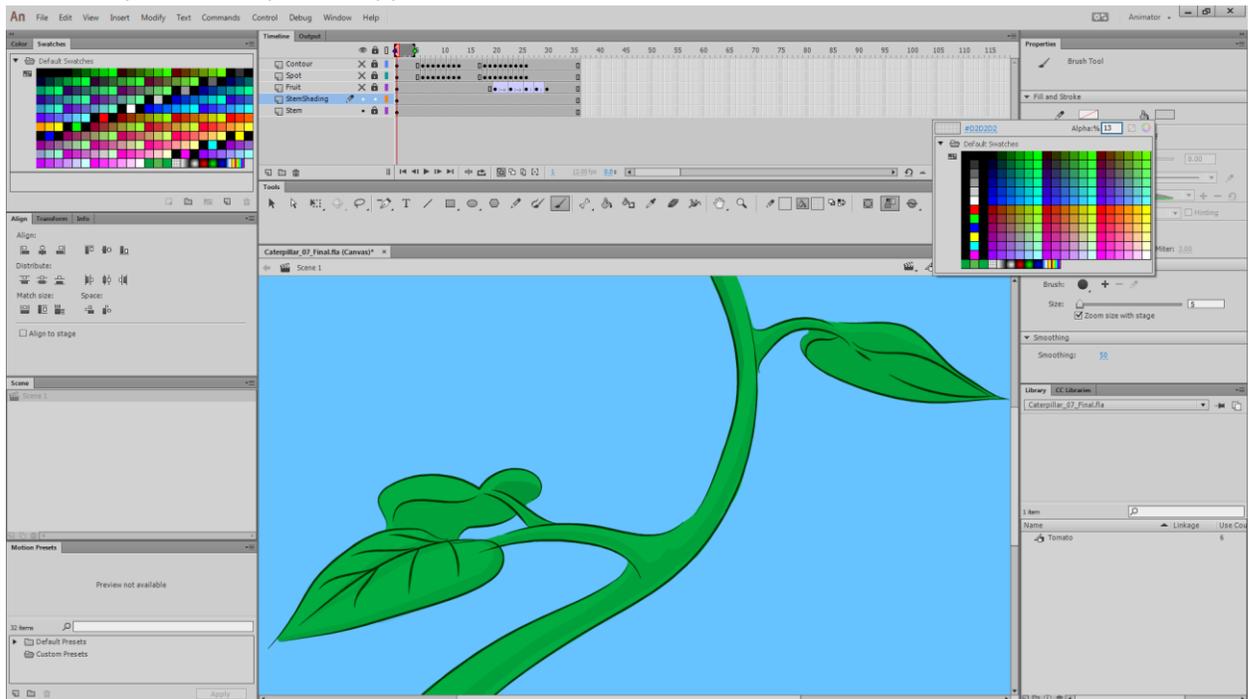
29. For any final touches. The tomato could be animated more easily by turning it into a symbol. Using Ctrl-F8 or Cmd-F8. Place it on the timeline and animate it wiggling after the bite.



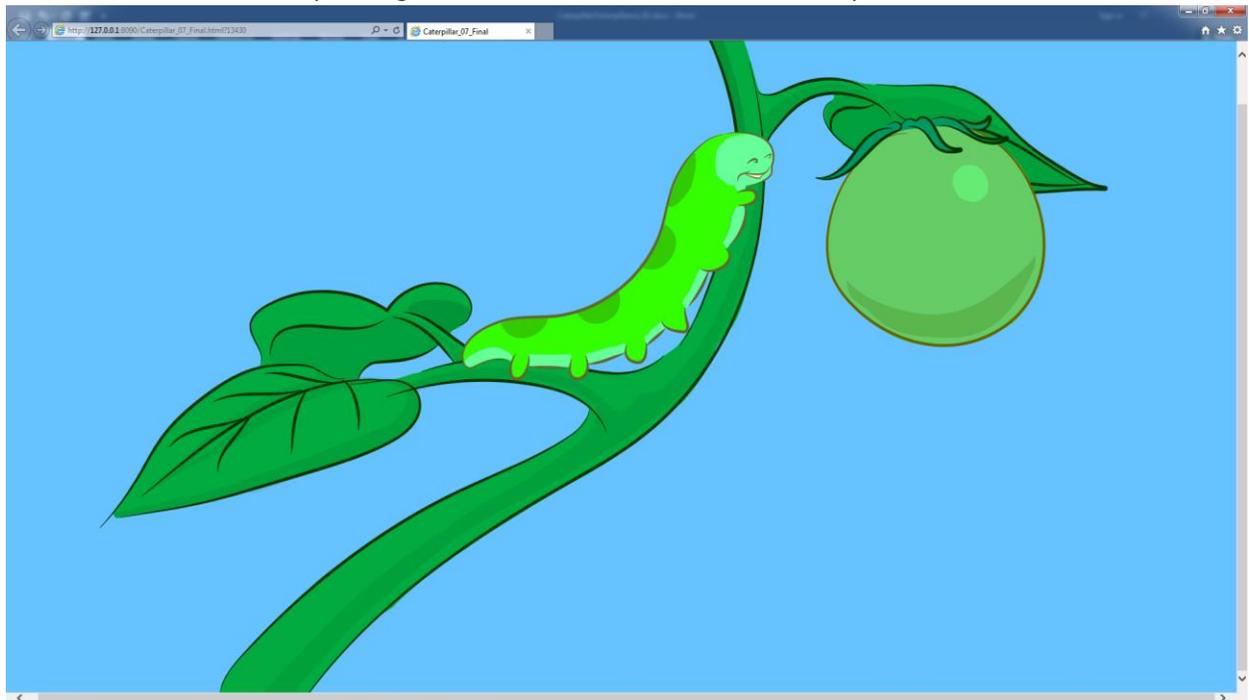
30. Finalizing the vine and adding shading could look really great.

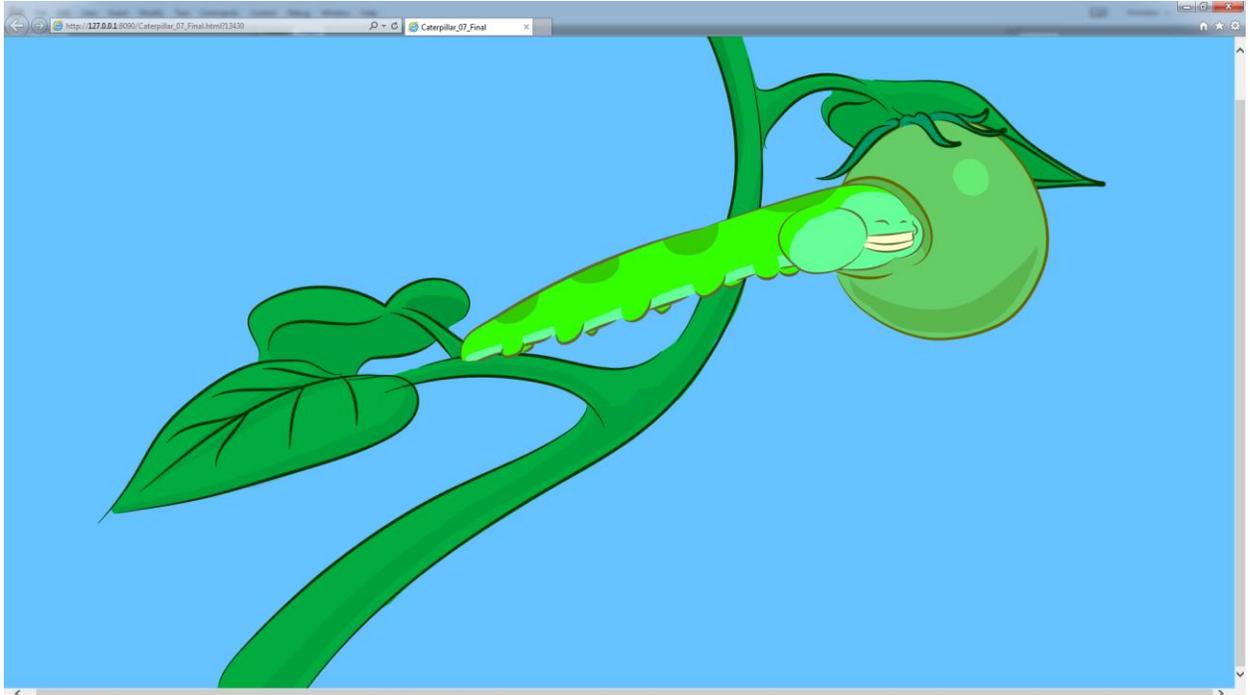
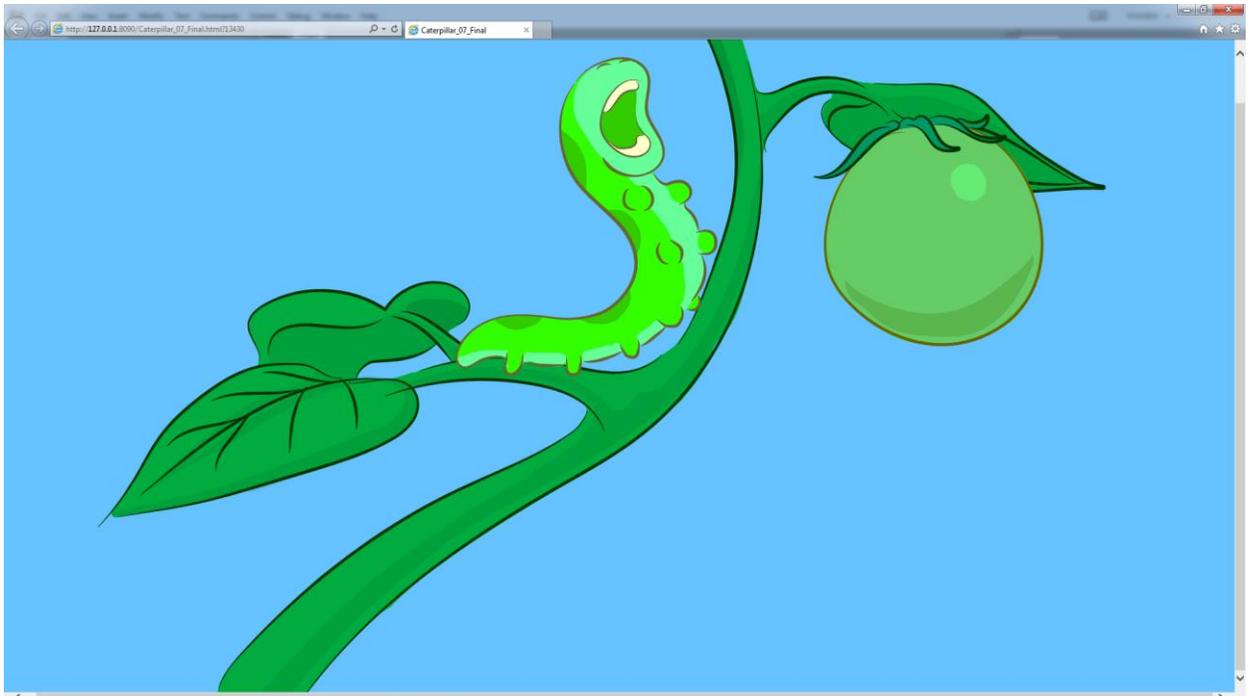


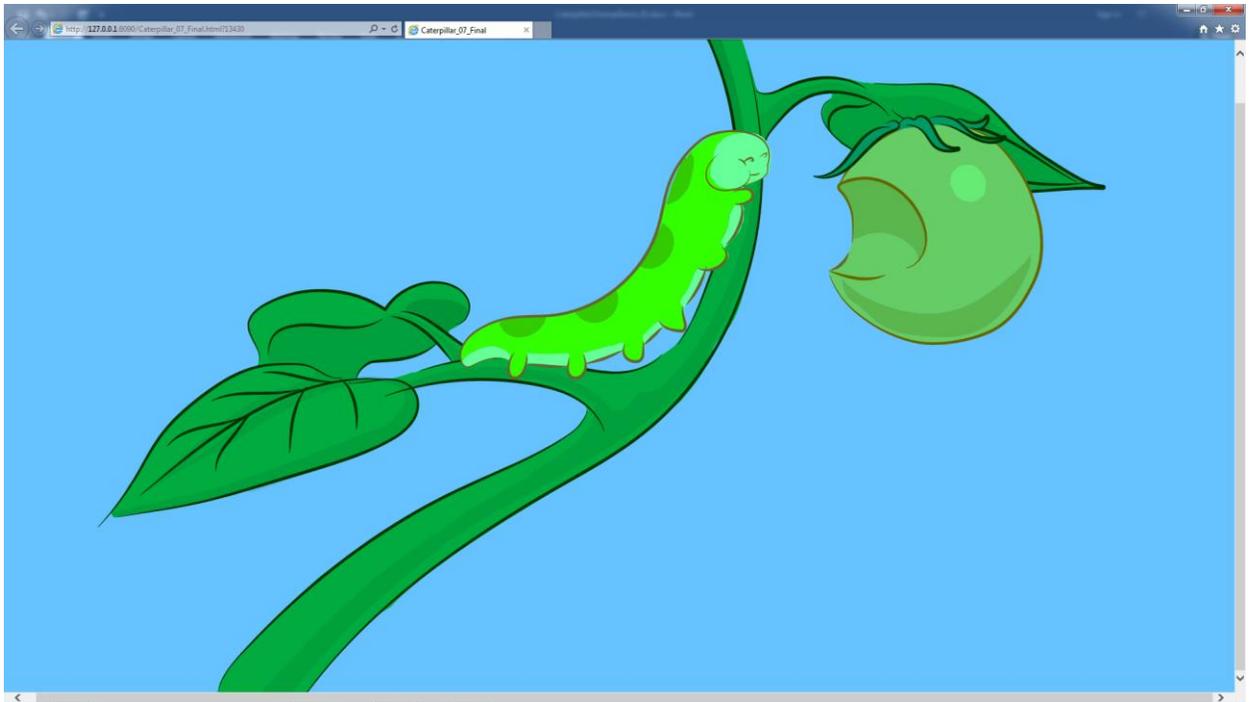
31. This example uses another layer with a bluish-black color at a low opacity. Check the color palette and the alpha intensity in the upper left corner.



32. Check out the HTML file by hitting Cmd-Return, or Cntrl-Enter to check your results.







33. Happy animating!