USING LAYER GROUPS IN TIMELINE ANIMATION

Layer groups
Layer groups are created in the Layers panel by clicking on the small folder icon at the foot of the panel. Individual layers can then be dragged into the group and then the properties of the group (visibility, opacity, layer effects) will apply to all the layers within it. This can be used to create accurate outlines for multiple moving objects. Let’s see how.

Using Layer Effects with individual layers
Make two plain layers in a Timeline animation. These should have transparent backgrounds and contain block shapes. Here I have used a blue square and a green circle.

I’ll now double click to the right of the layer name in the layers panel to add Layer Effects. Let’s make it a five pixel black stroke for each layer.

You can see how the black outlines show that one is on top of the other. But supposing we want to animated them so that they appear to merge and then separate. This continuous outline round the top object destroys that illusion.
Click on the Make Group icon at the foot of the layers panel (the little folder icon). Choose one of your original layers and right click to the right of the layer name. From the drop down list choose Copy Layer Style. Then right click to the right of the layer group name and choose Paste Layer Style. Finally choose Clear Layer Style for both the original layers. The outlines will disappear.

Then drag the layers over the layer group so that they become part of it.

The outline now surrounds both elements and will continue to do so as the layers are animated. However the Layer Effect for groups can not be animated as it can for layers. The only thing that can be animated for a layer group is its opacity.

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