The Attribute Editor in Maya 2018

Introduction
The Attribute Editor gives you control over many parameters (properties) of your objects.

When you first create an object (in this case a sphere) you'll get something like the tabs above. The leftmost tab, pSphere1, contains the general properties of the object like its location, rotation, scale, and shear values. The top box, next to the word transform, is where you can change the name of the object. Let’s call it Earth.

Now you can see that both the first and second tabs’ names have changed. The second tab is the object’s general characteristics; we won’t be dealing with any of these yet. However the third tab, polySphere1, is the creation properties of the object. These can be changed and animated at any point, and are part of the history of the object. Maya’s history feature is what in other softwares is called parametrics, and is very powerful. However it can also become very complex, with dozens of tabs all dependent on one another to develop the final shape. Often it’s better to keep a copy of the object, with its initial history, on a hidden layer, then collapse the history with the command Edit – Delete by Type – History. This removes the polySphere1 tab as well as any other editable changes made since the object was created.
The InitialShadingGroup tab is the overall look of the object, combining the material and texture tabs that follow. Finally, there is Lambert1, the default material in Maya. You probably don’t want to mess too much with this, as it’s what every new object will be created with. Overlay it with a new, favorite, or existing material by right clicking on the object and choosing from the vertical list (they’re at the bottom).

Chris Yonge  20181019