

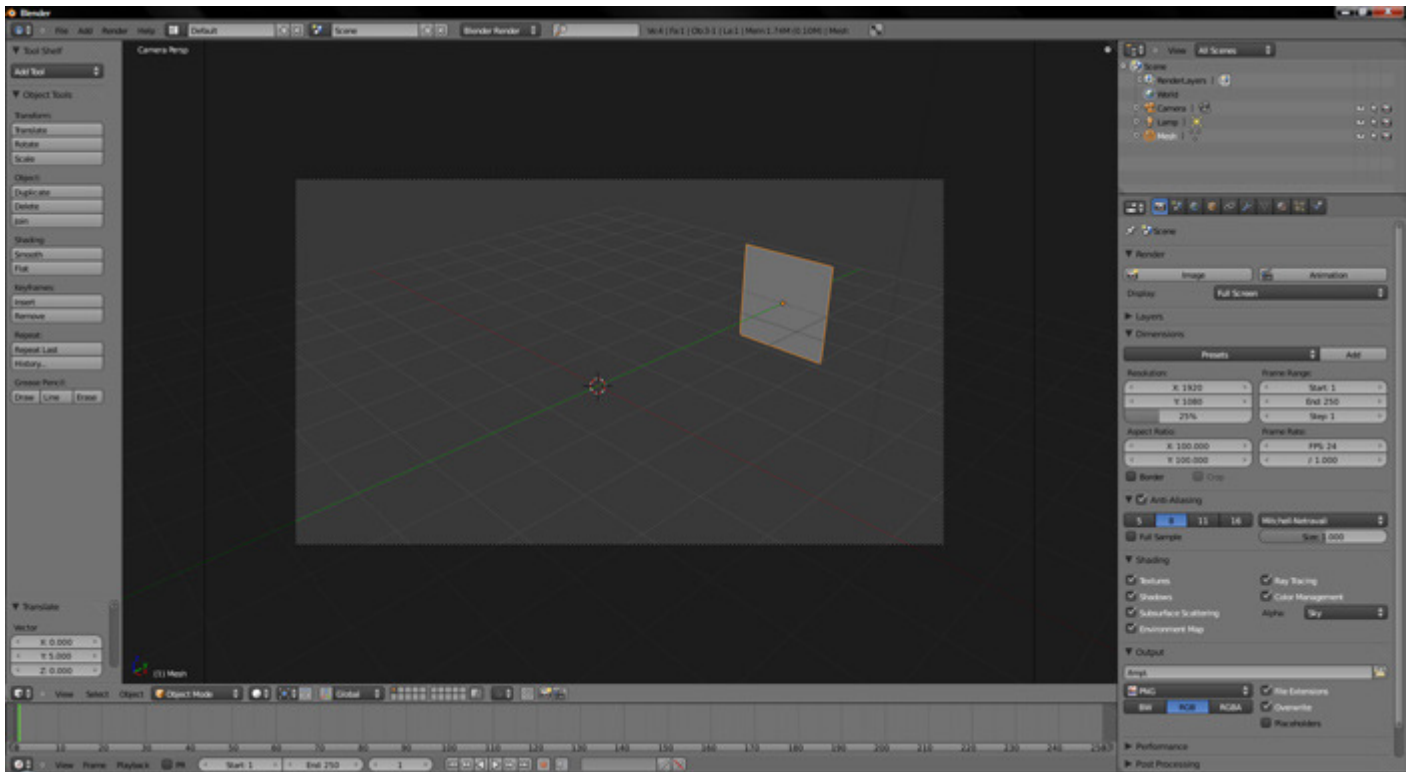
Particle Clouds

Dark Scarab Tutorials -- Blender 2.5

In this tutorial, just like nearly all of my tutorials, I have provided what I call keystrokes lines. These are highlighted throughout the tutorial and are meant to allow you to see the actual keystrokes that I went through in order to get the results I shown in the tutorial. You should try not to rely too much on the keystrokes, as blindly punching the keys will not help you learn anything. More advanced users should be able to go through a tutorial without the keystrokes lines assuming I have explained myself sufficiently.

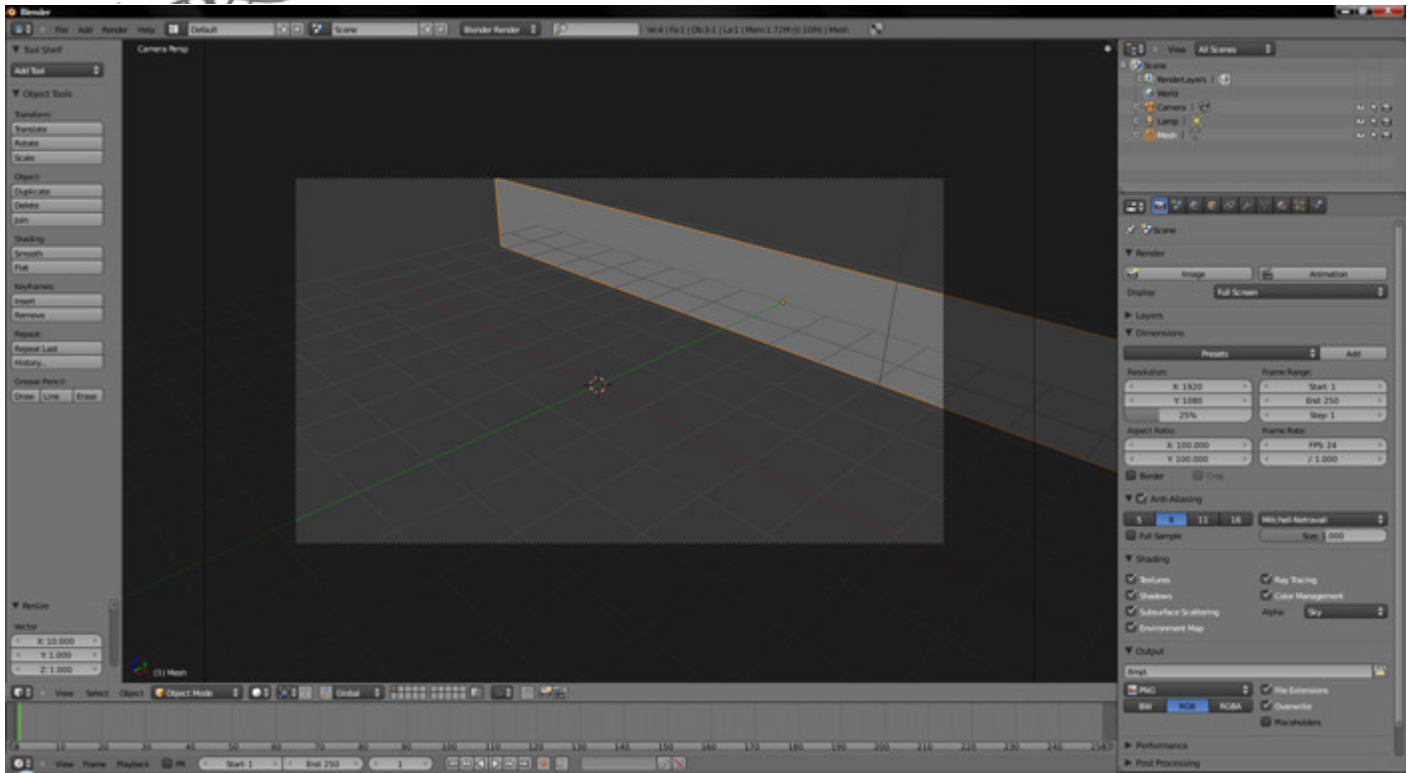
Before we start, if you have the default cube in your scene please delete it. Instead of using the cube we are going to be using a plane as our emitter for our clouds. So, the first thing that you want to do it add the plane. After that we need to position our plane correctly, so rotate the plane along the x-axis by 90 degrees the move it along the y-axis by 5.

Add-->Mesh-->Plane, R, X, 90, G, Y, 5



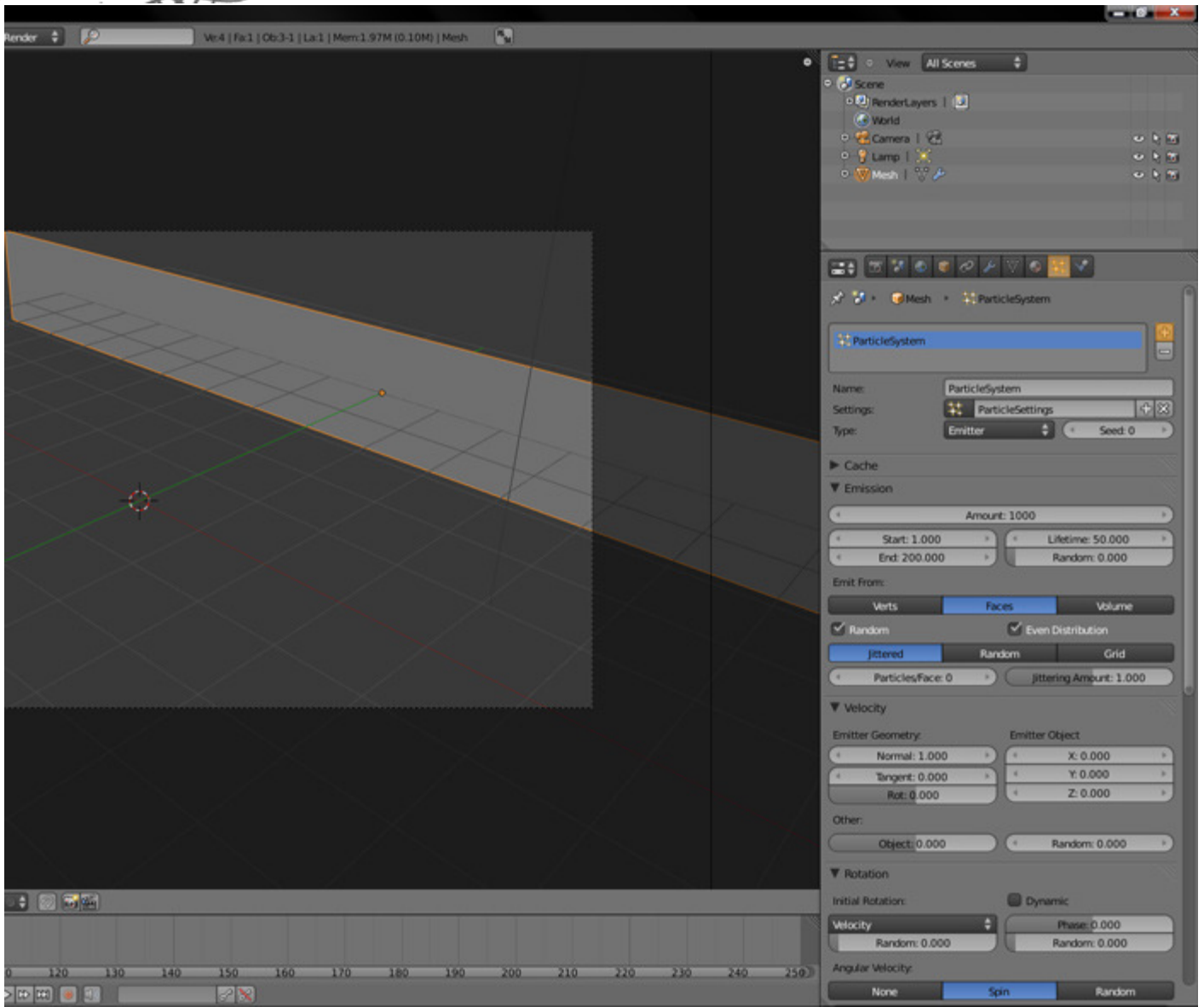
Now we need to make the plane larger so that the particles coming out of the plane will spread across the view of the camera. What we are going to do is stretch the plane along the x-axis by a factor of 10. You can see the positioning of the plane to the camera by going into camera view. Sometimes it can be simpler to just edit the position while in camera view so that you have an idea as to what it will look like when you render.

Select the plane, S, X, 10, Num Pad 0 (Camera View)



The last bit of setup we need to do is actually assign our plane as an emitter for our particles. Make sure your plane is selected and in the right hand sidebar there should be a row of buttons, one of them being for particles. Click on that one and an empty box with a plus and minus should appear. Press on the plus to add a particle system to the plane. A whole bunch of settings should appear when you do so. If you are having trouble finding the buttons to click, I've highlighted them in the image below.

Select the plane, Go to the particle settings, click on the plus

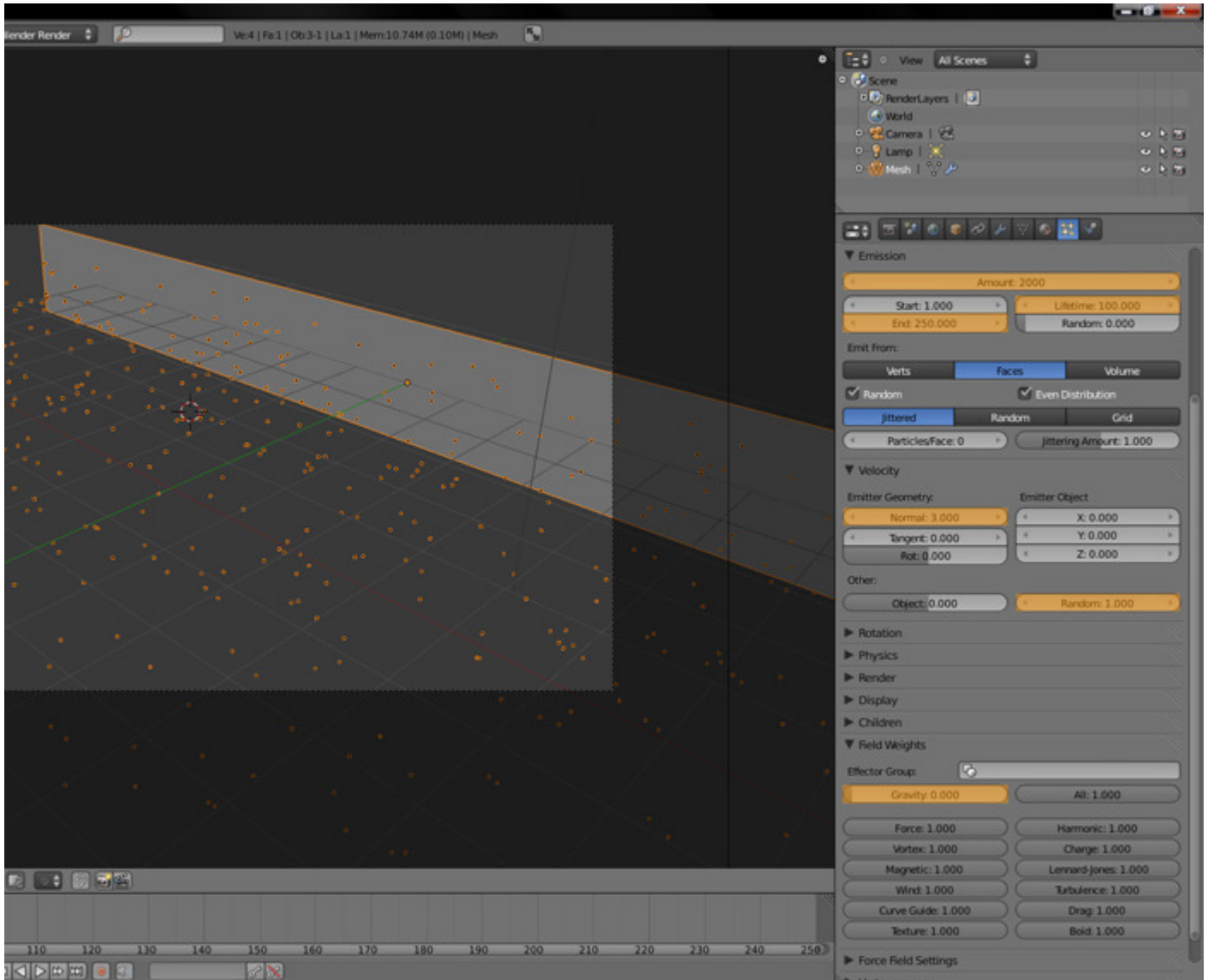


The setup is now complete so now we are going to change a bunch of settings. Within all of the particle settings there is a section labeled 'Emission'. We are going to change three settings here: Amount to 2000, End to 250, and Lifetime to 100. These settings are to make sure that the particles emit long enough to fill out the view of the camera when we render.

Change Amount to 2000, Change End to 250, Change Lifetime to 100

Now in the section below the 'Emission' section is the 'Velocity' section. First we need to make the particle move more quickly. We do this by changing Normal to 3.000. In order to keep our clouds from looking too uniform, change random to 0.500. This will cause the particles to emit in a more random manner. The last particle setting that we need to change is way down in the 'Field Weights' section. In there, change Gravity to 0. We don't want our clouds to fall, we need them to float, this fixes that. If you are not sure where all of these settings are, you can see them all in the image below. When you have done all of that you can hit play in the timeline to see the particles come out of the plane.

Change Normal to 3.000, Change Random to 0.500, Change Gravity to 0.000

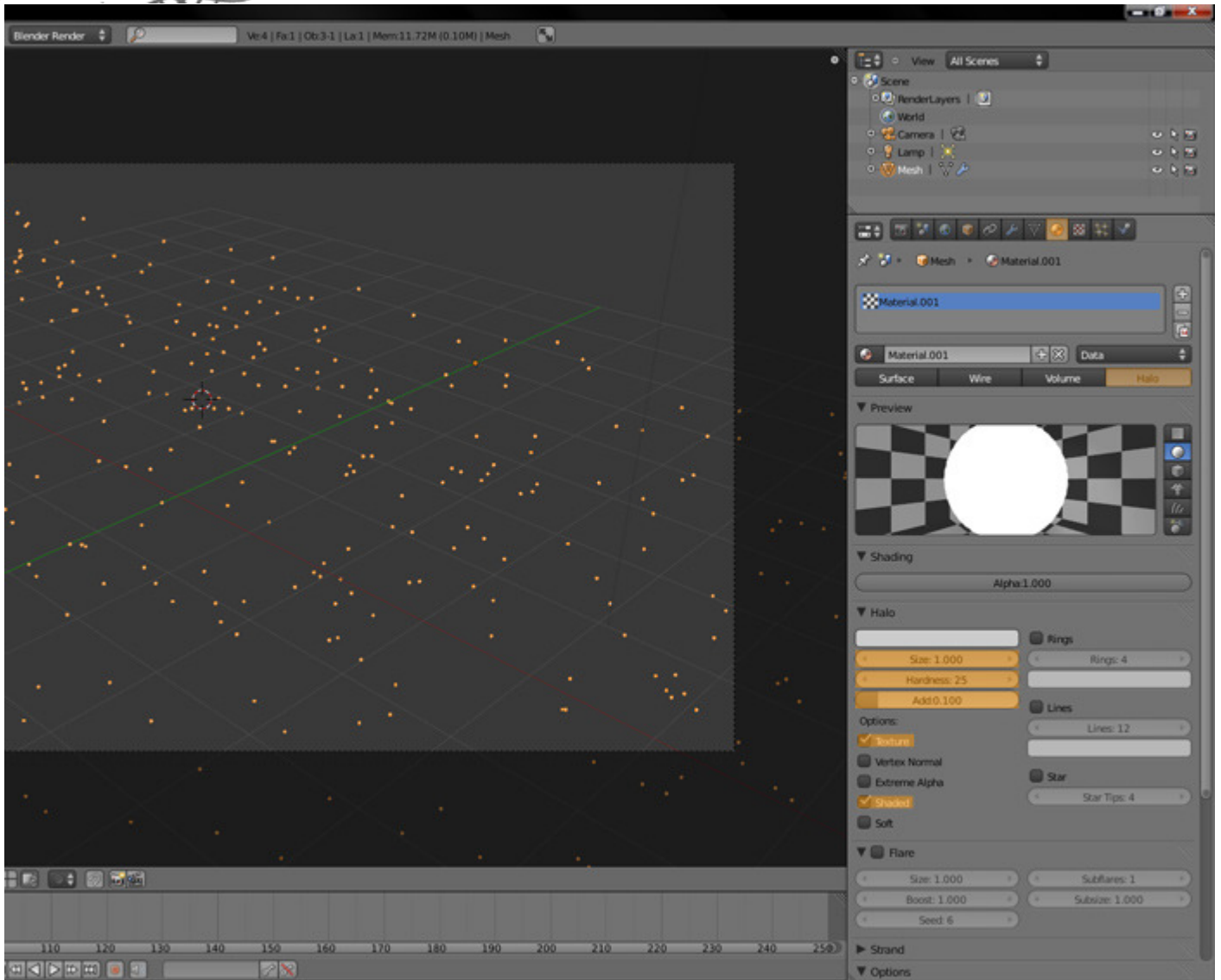


With the particle settings all done we can move on to the materials and texture settings for the particles. First off, we need to assign a material to the particles. To do this, go to the materials settings. This should be directly to the left of the particle settings buttons. Once there, click on the 'New' button and all of the settings for the materials should appear.

Go to the materials panel, click on 'New'

The first setting we will change is the type of material. There is a group of four buttons above the preview image, click on 'Halo'. This will allow us to change the look of our particles. Once we've done that we will move on to the 'Halo' section. We want to change the size to 1.000, Hardness to 25, and Add to 0.100. We also want to check 'Texture' and 'Shaded'.

Change material type to Halo, Change size to 1.000, Change Hardness to 25, Change Add to 0.100, Check Texture, Check Shaded



Right now, if you look in the preview image, it does not look much like clouds. The next thing that we need to do is add a texture to our particles. To get to the texture settings we need to click on the button that appeared to the right of the materials button when we made the material. Once there, click on the 'New' button to add the texture.

Go to textures panel, click on 'New'

The default texture type is 'Clouds' which is exactly what we are going to use, so we will keep it. In the 'Clouds' section we need to change a few settings to make our clouds look more like clouds. First change the 'Noise' setting from Soft to Hard. Then change Size to 2.00 and Depth to 6. After that, in the 'Color' section, change Brightness to 2.000 and Contrast to 4.000. Lastly, we need to go all the way down to the 'Influence' section and turn on Alpha by clicking the checkbox and then clicking on the pink bar and change it to medium-light grey color.

Change Noise to Hard, Size to 2.00, and Depth to 6, Change Brightness to 2.000, and Contrast to 4.000, Turn on Alpha, and Change the Pink to a light grey color



At this point we have finished changing all of the settings. You can now hit play in the timeline below and you should see the particles start to emit. Pause it sometime in the middle and render your image. You should see your nice fluffy clouds.