The Design of Naming Features in App Inventor 2

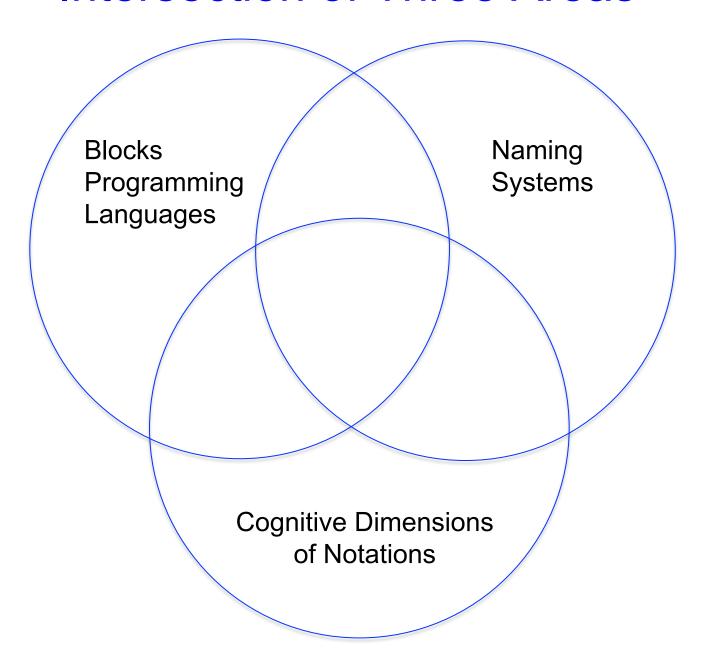


Lyn Turbak Wellesley College

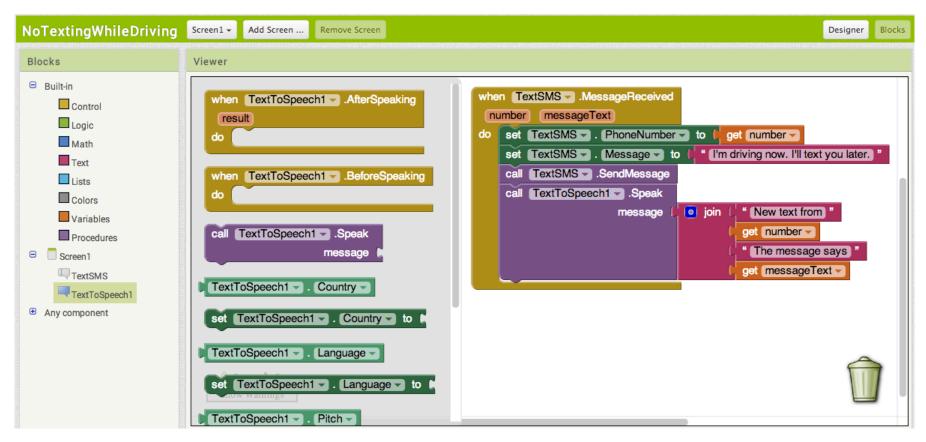
Dave Wolber
U. of San Francisco

Paul Medlock-Walton MIT

Intersection of Three Areas



Blocks Programming Languages



Code.org's *Hour of Code* (launched Dec. 2013): > 26 million participants.

74% used a blocks language: Blockly, Scratch, App Inventor 2, Tynker, Hopscotch.

Big Ideas of Naming

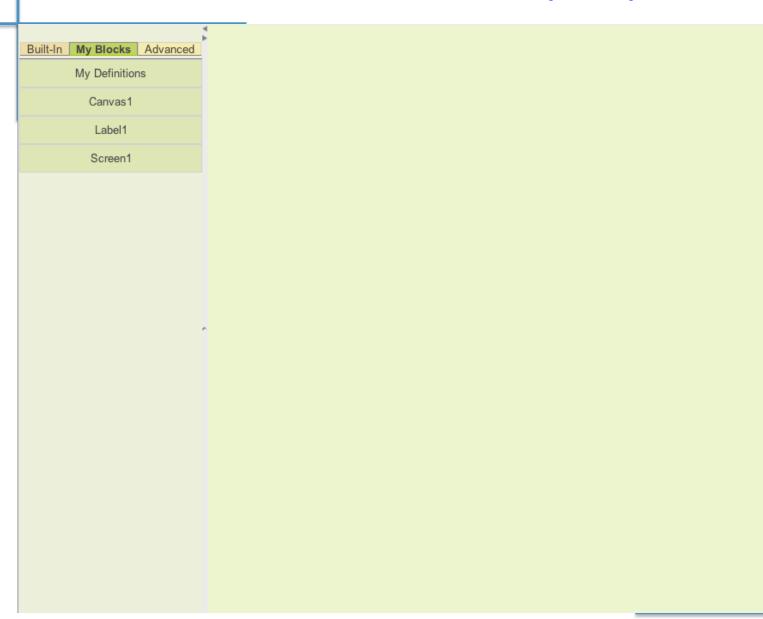
- A declaration introduces a name.
- A reference uses a name (in programming, have getters and setters).
- The scope of a declaration is the area in which the name can be referenced.
- A nested declaration of the same name shadows/introduces a hole in the scope of the outer name.
- Name locality: names in non-intersecting scopes can be chosen independently.
- A declaration and all its references can be consistently renamed by a substitution that avoids variable capture.
- Names can be organized into noninteracting namespaces.

```
public class Example {
  public static int test (int x) {
    int sum = 0;
    for (int i = 1; i < x; i++) {
      int x = square(i);
      sum = sum + x;
    return sum;
  public static int square (int n) {
    return n * n;
```

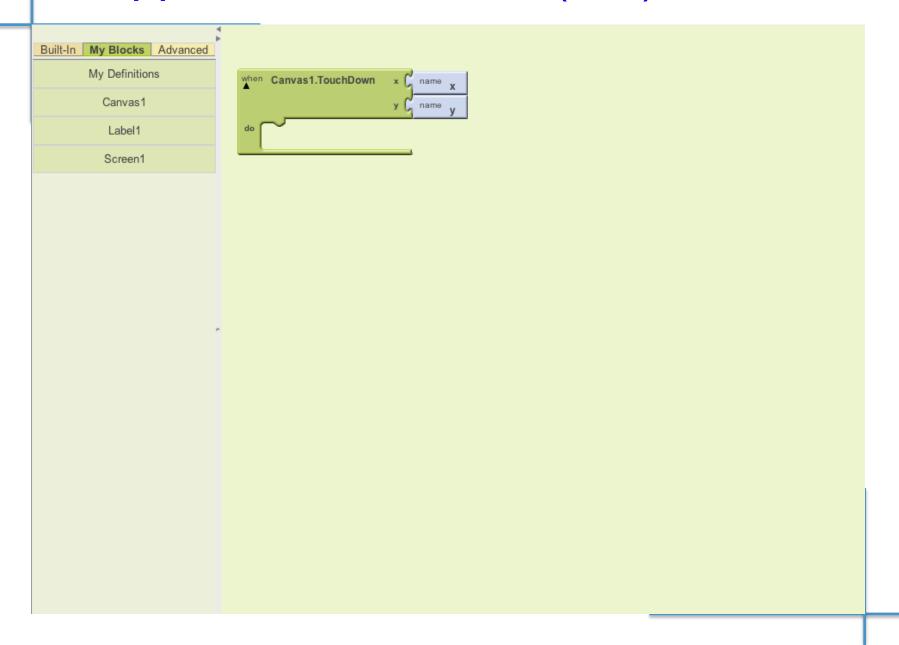
```
\int_{a}^{b} x \cdot \left( \int_{c}^{x} \Box \ dx \right) dx \qquad \prod_{x=1}^{n} \left( \sum_{x=1}^{x} \Box \right)\forall x. \left( \left( f(x) = g(x) \right) \land \exists x. \Box \right)
```

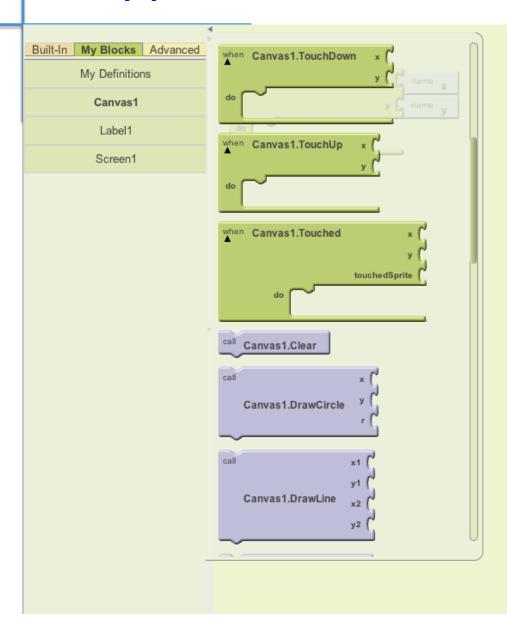
Cognitive Dimensions of Notations

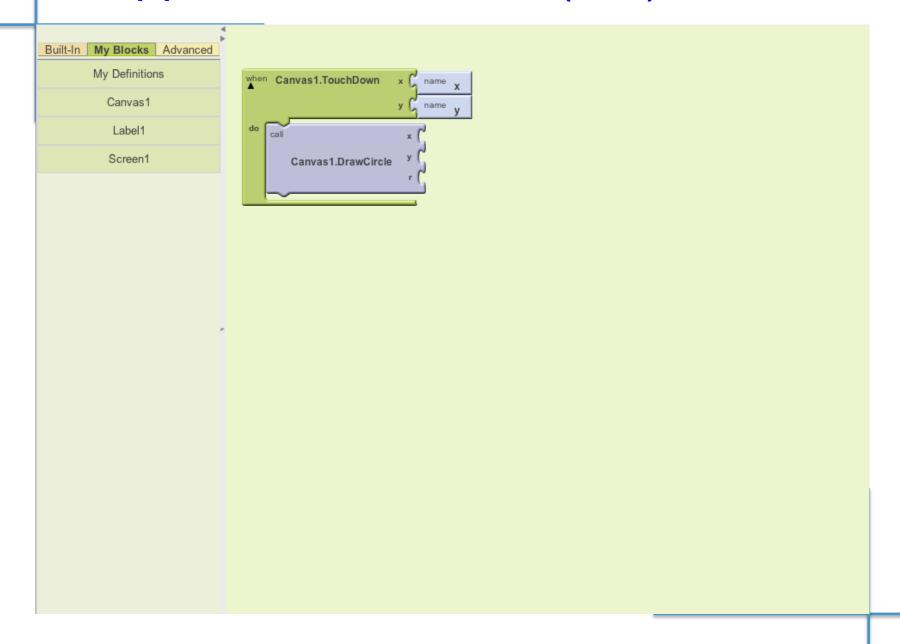
- A way to evaluate visual programming languages (Green, 1989)
- Three are particularly relevant for our work:
 - 1. Error-proneness (main error = unbound variable)
 - 2. Viscosity
 - 3. Consistency

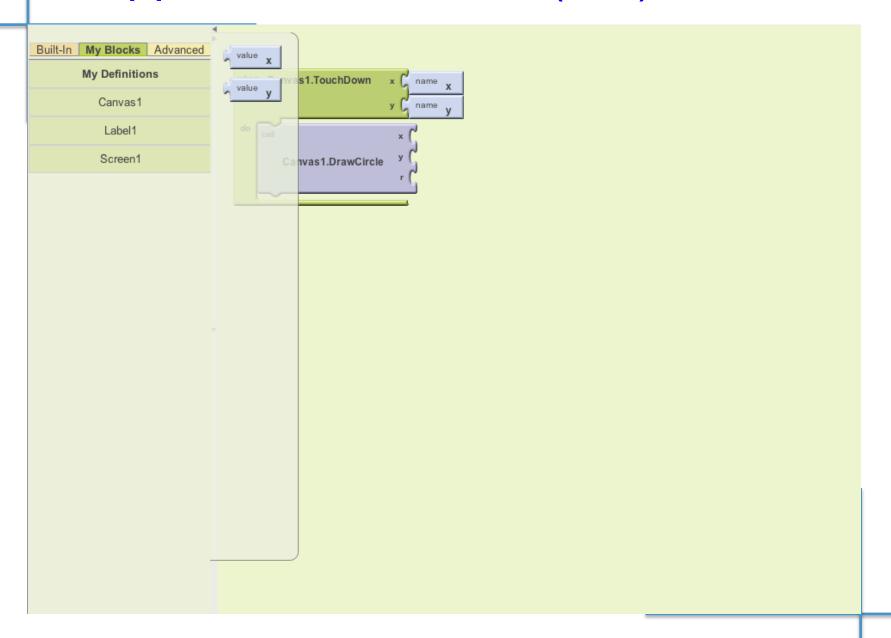


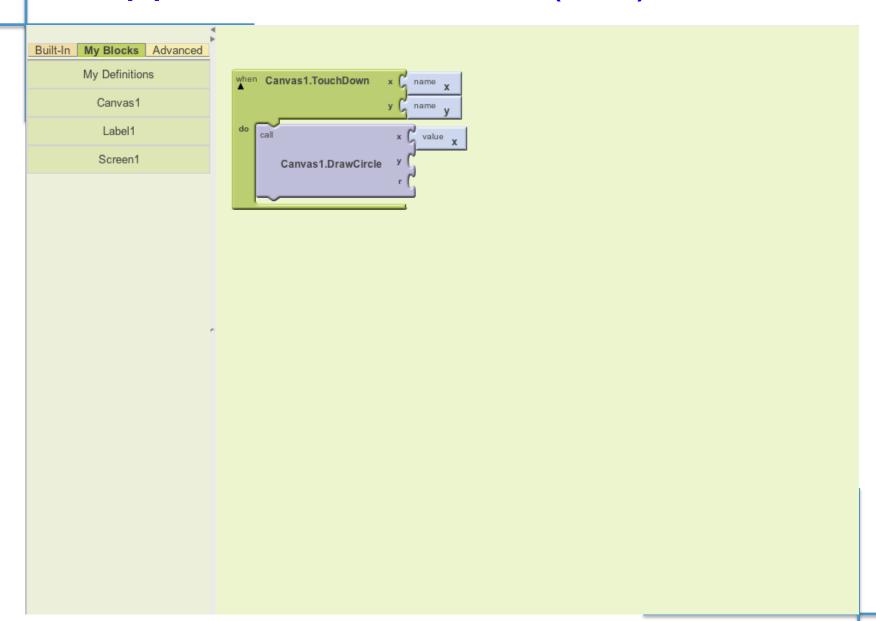


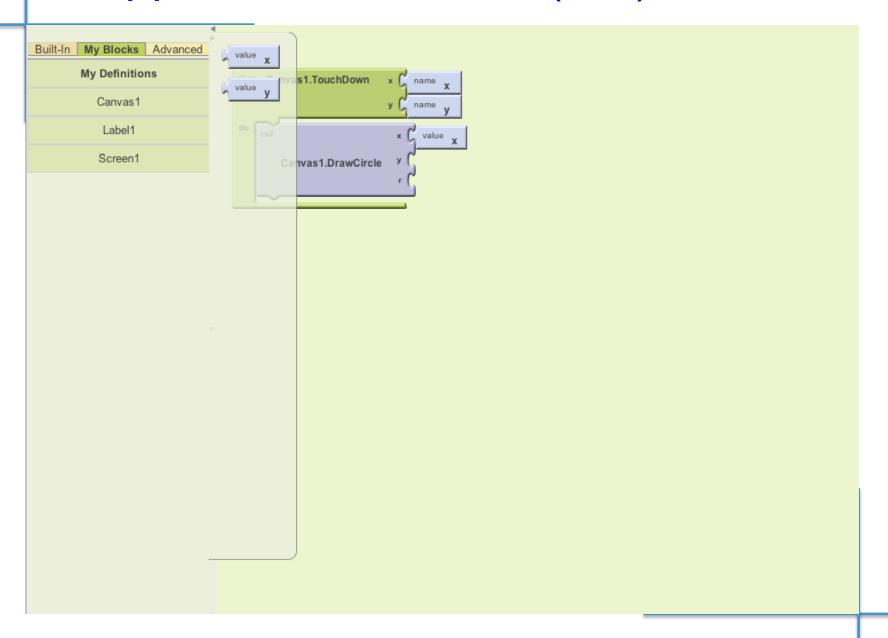


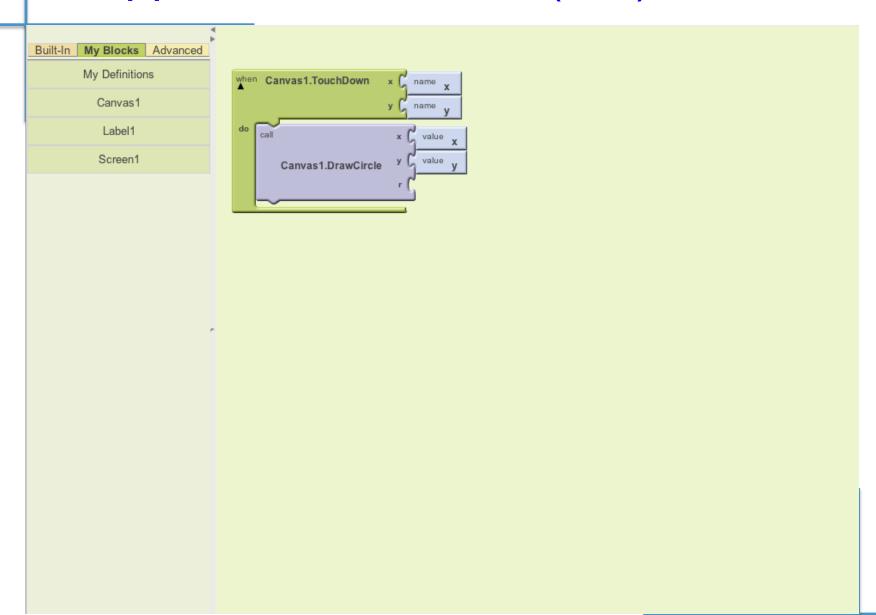


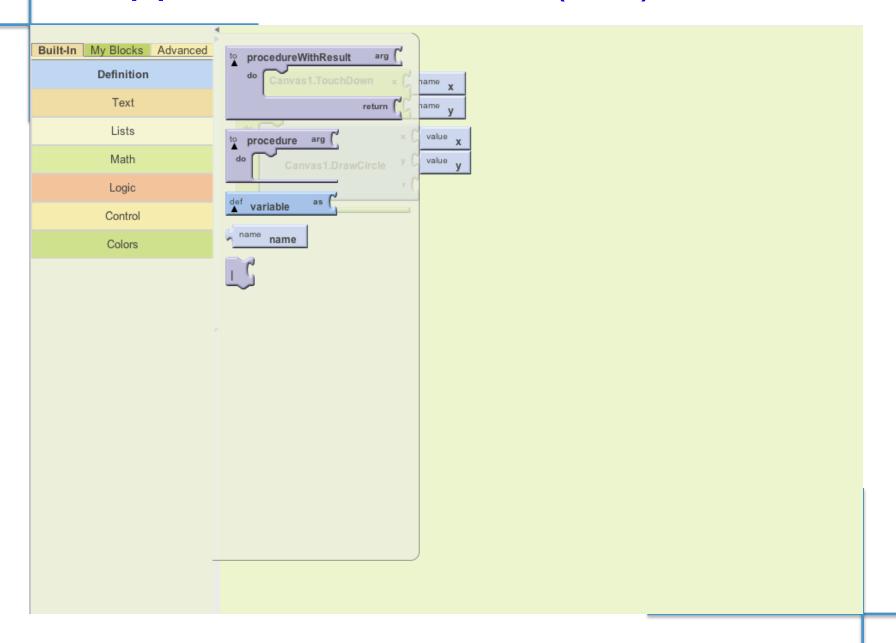


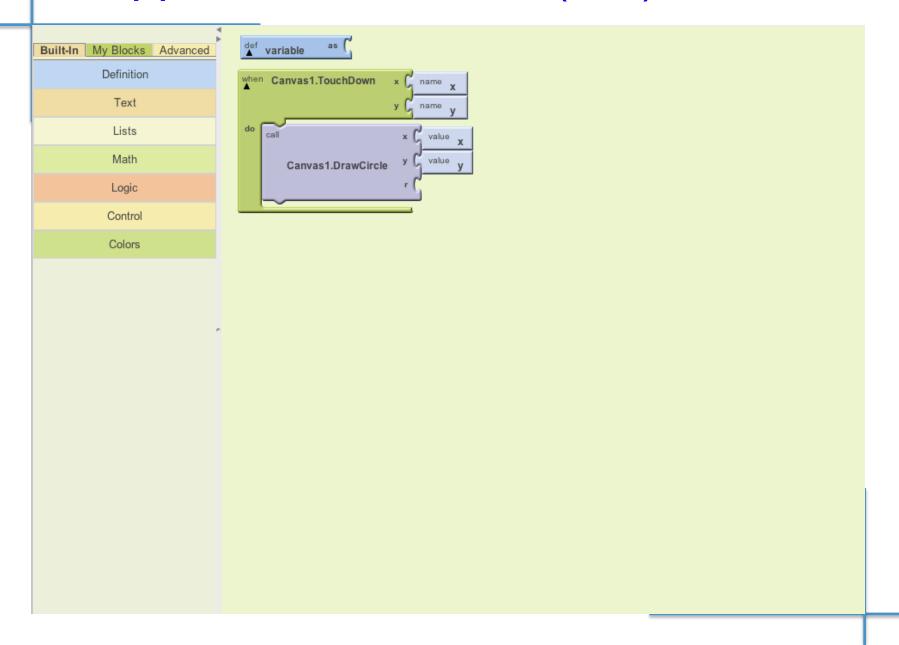


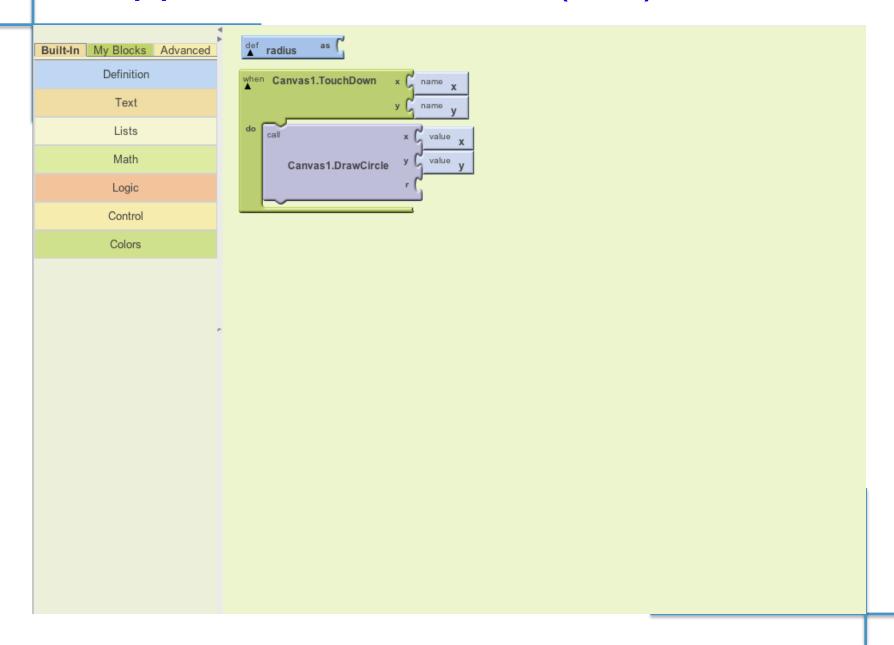


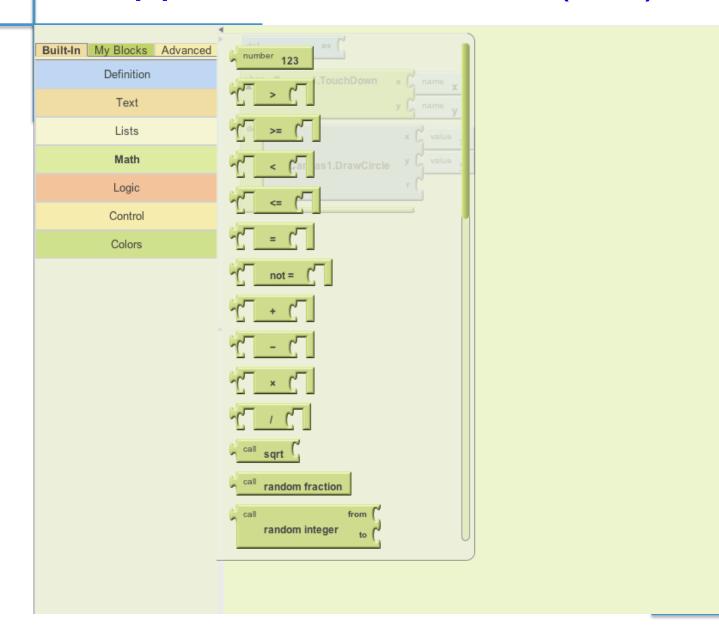


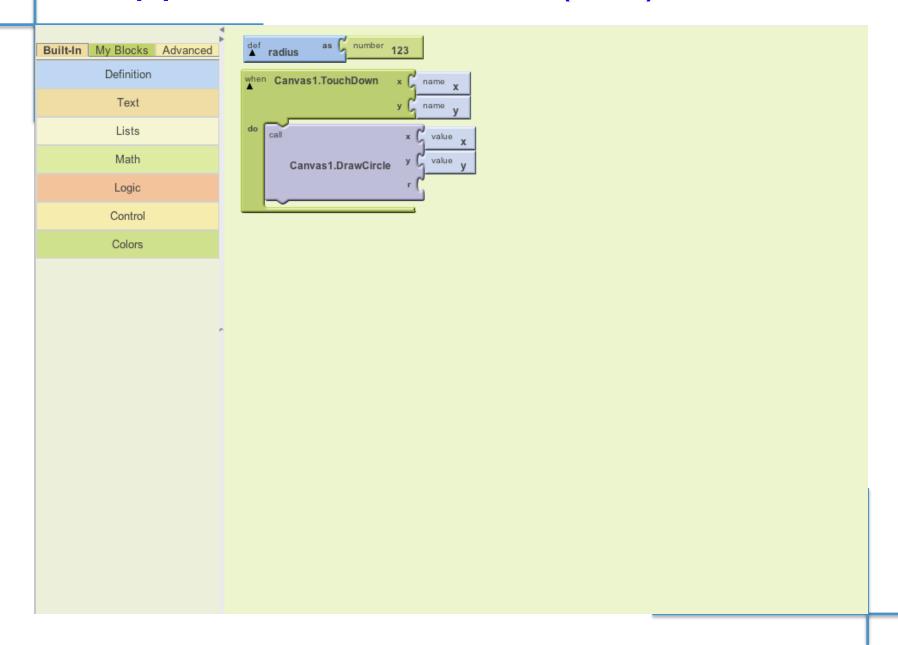


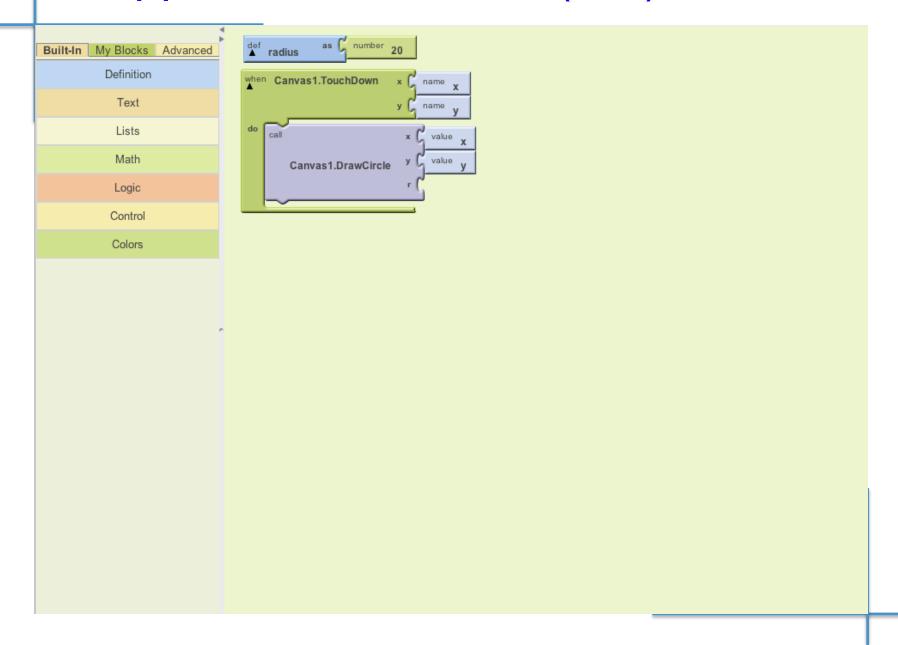


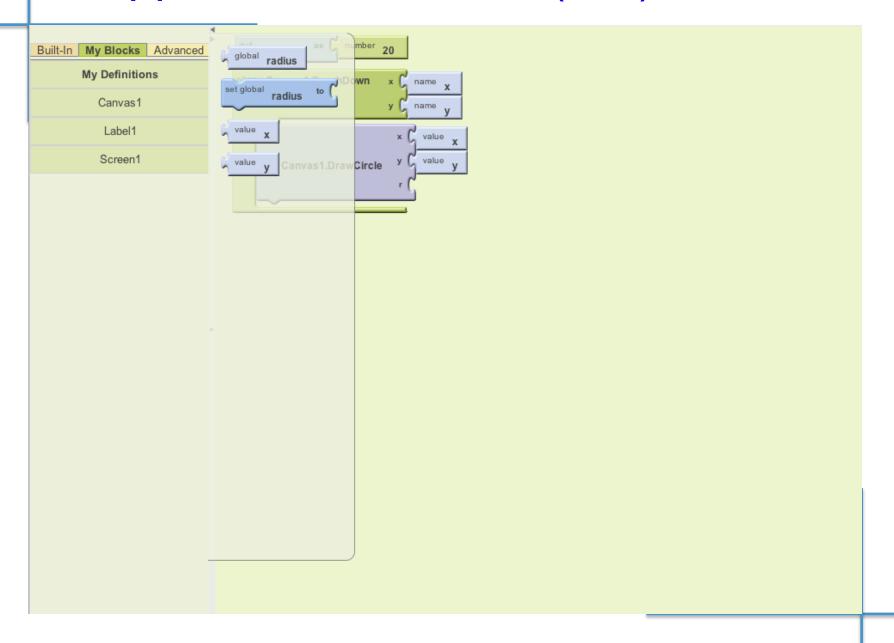


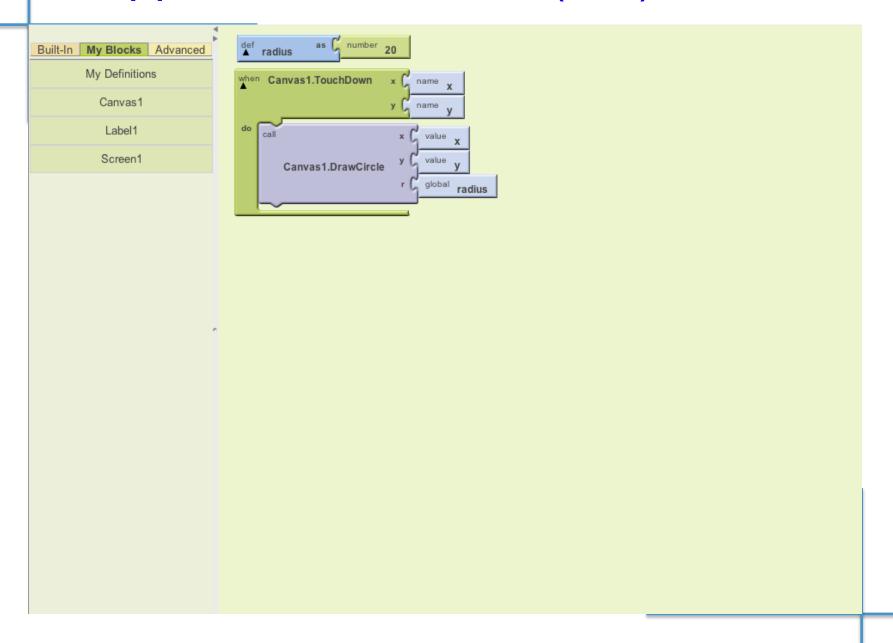


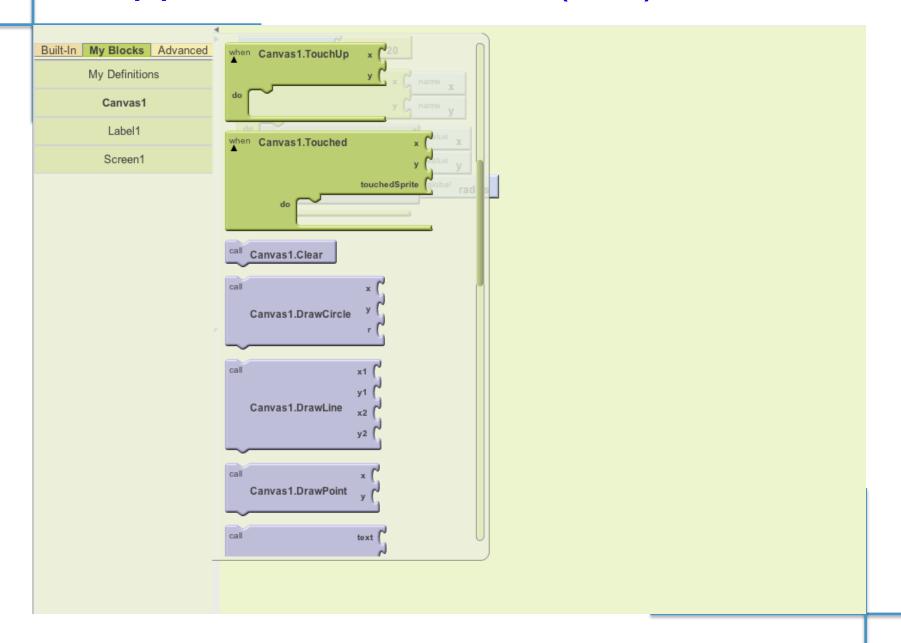


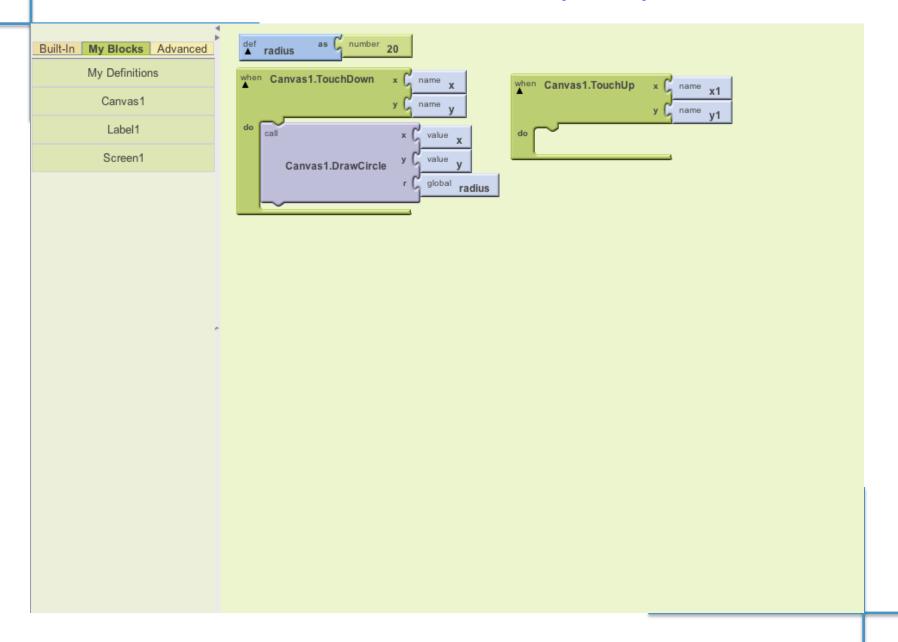


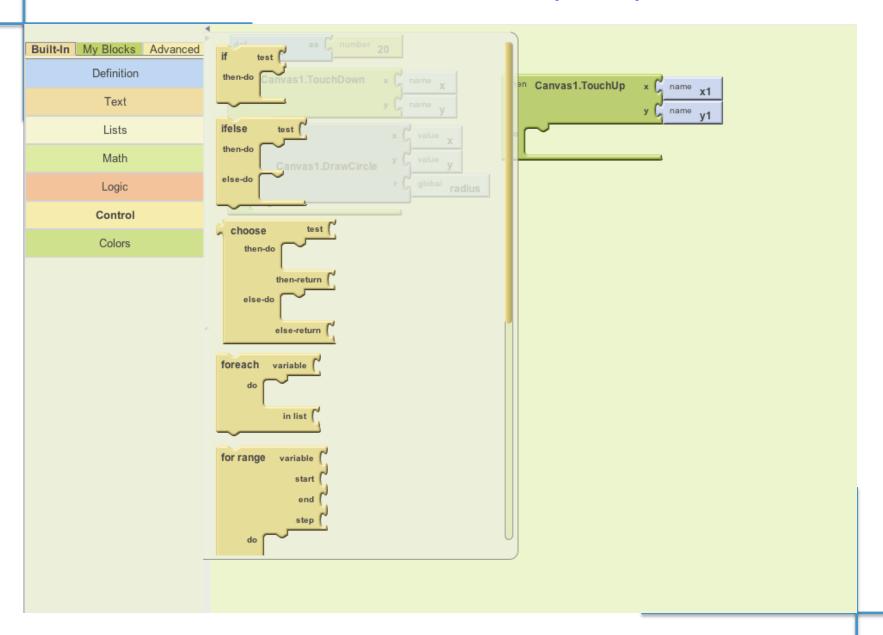


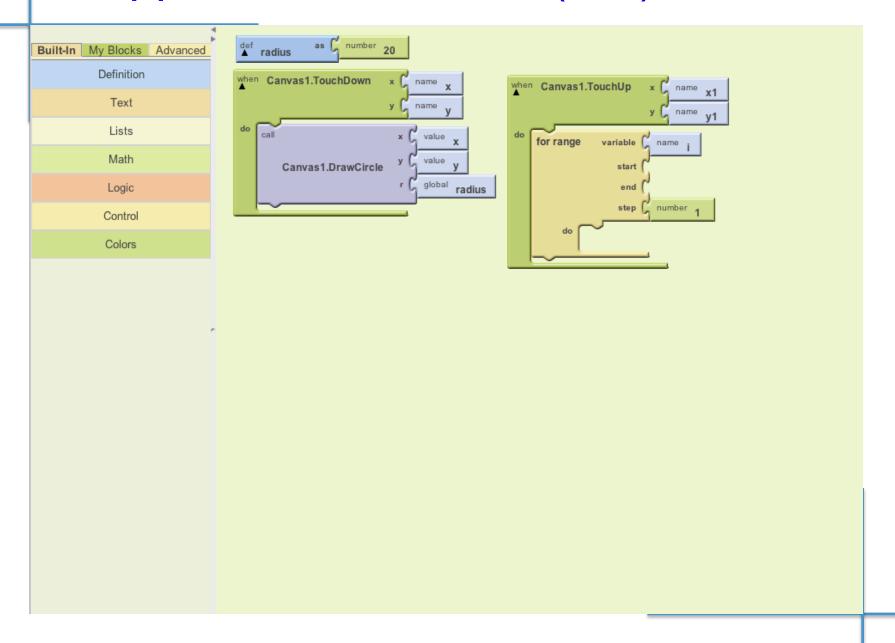


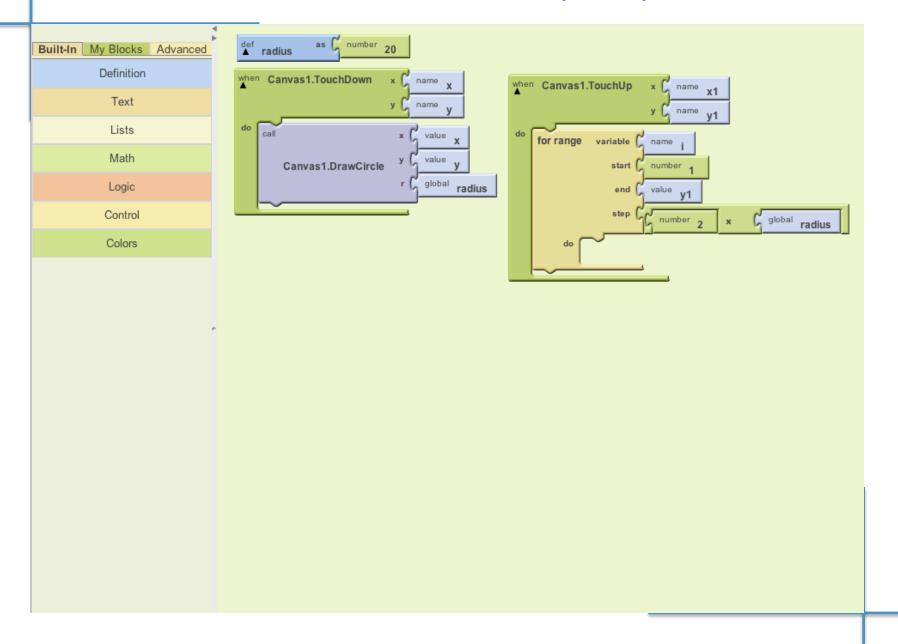


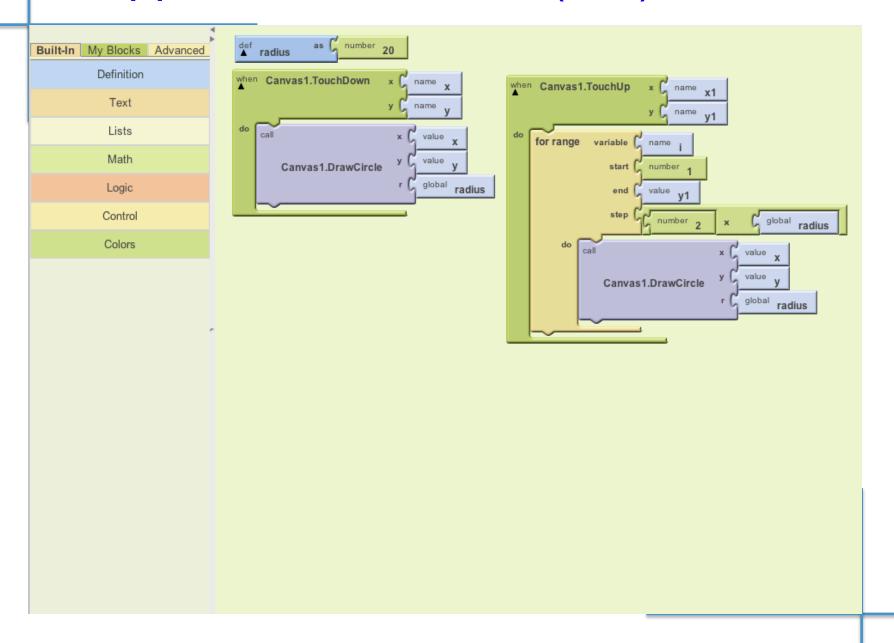


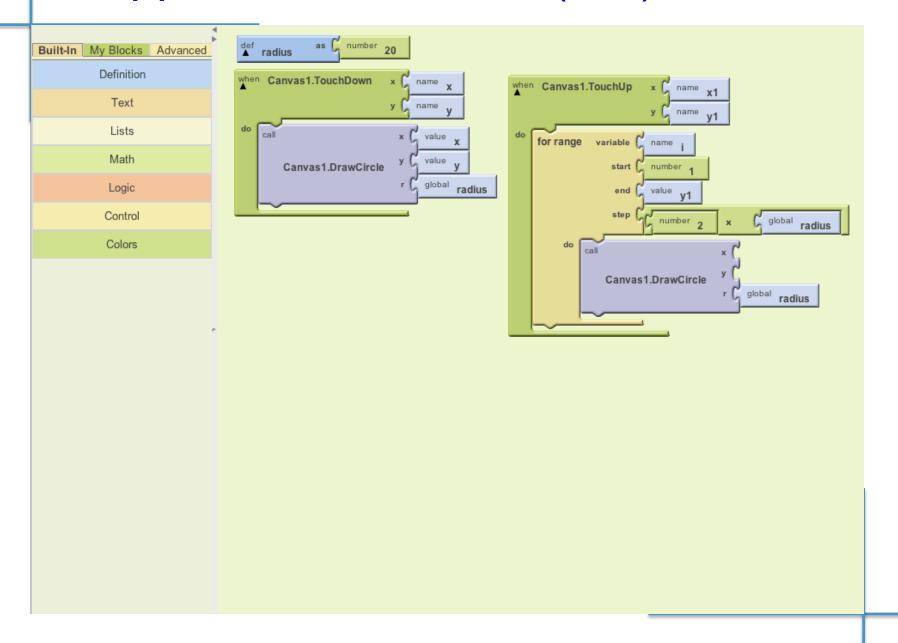


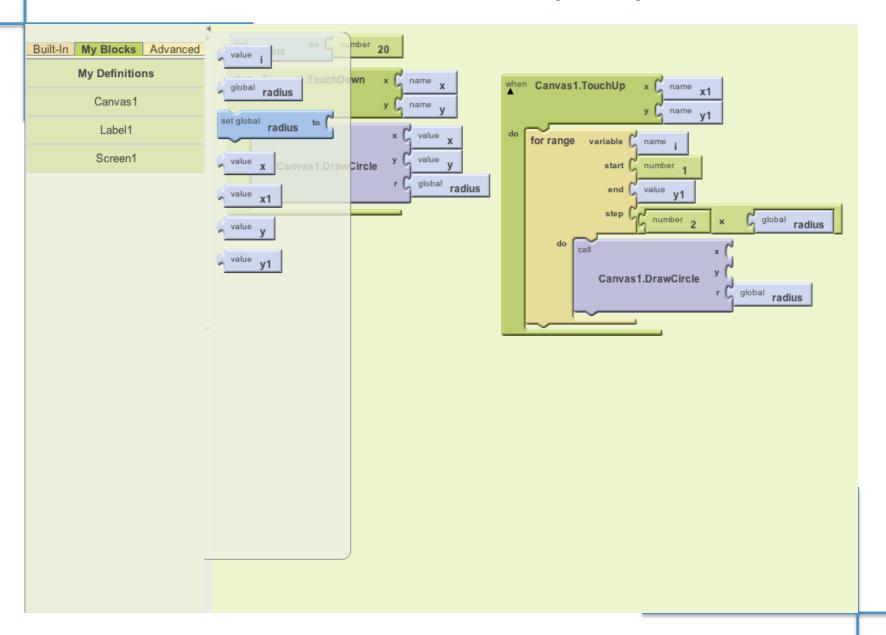


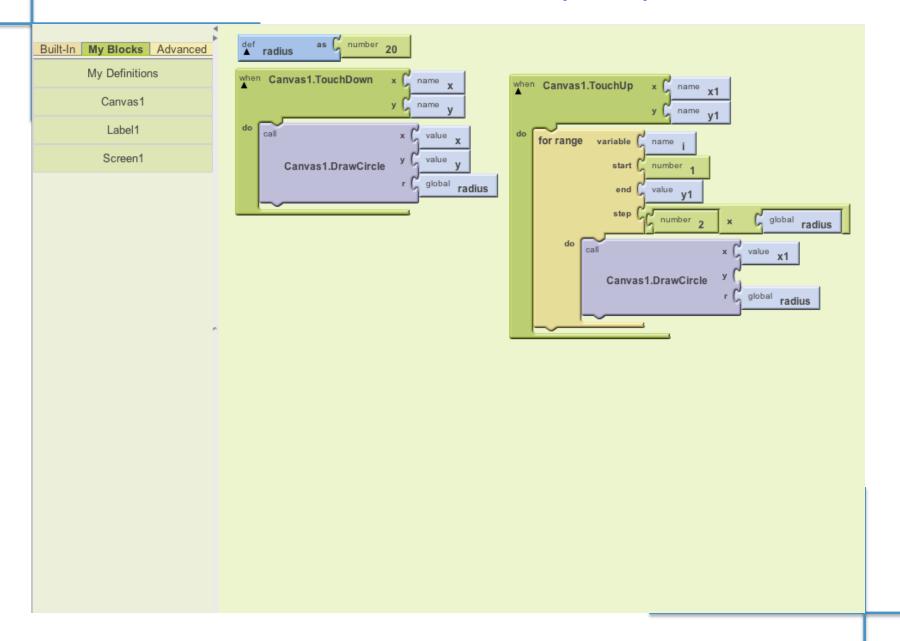


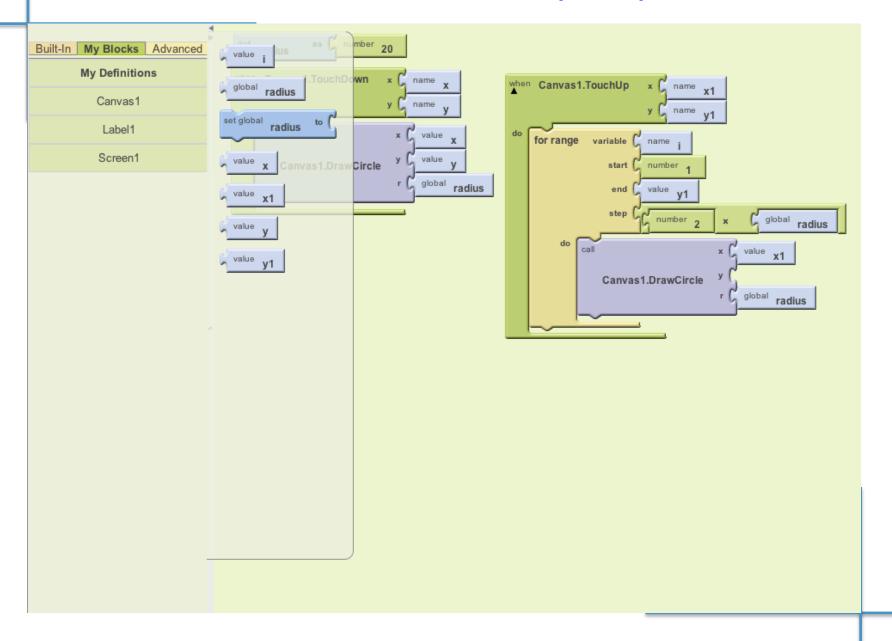


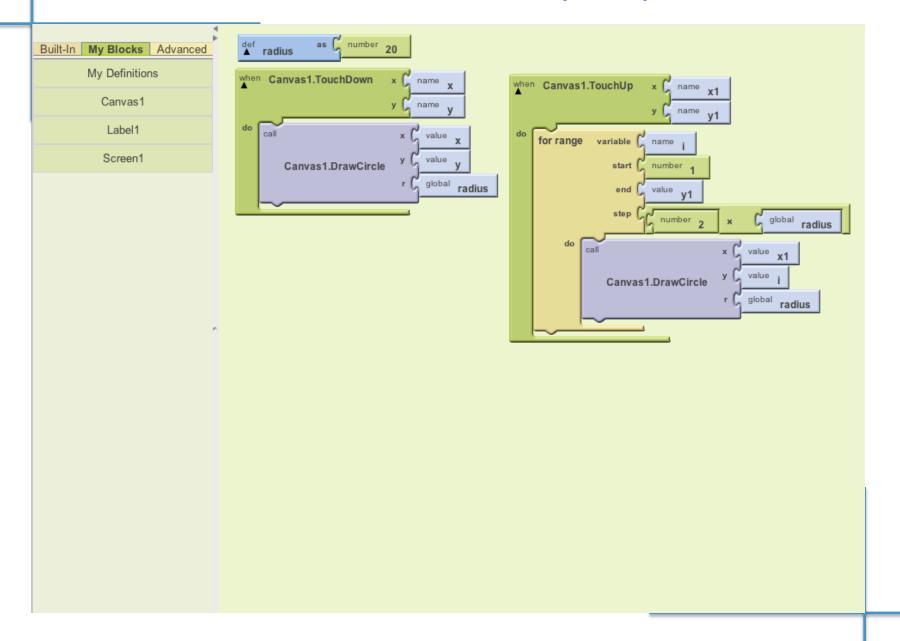


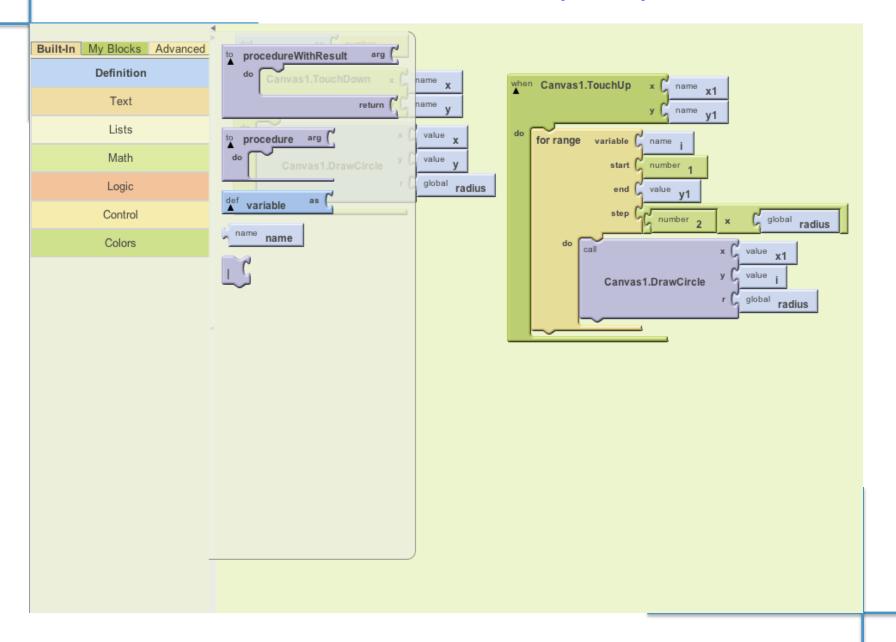


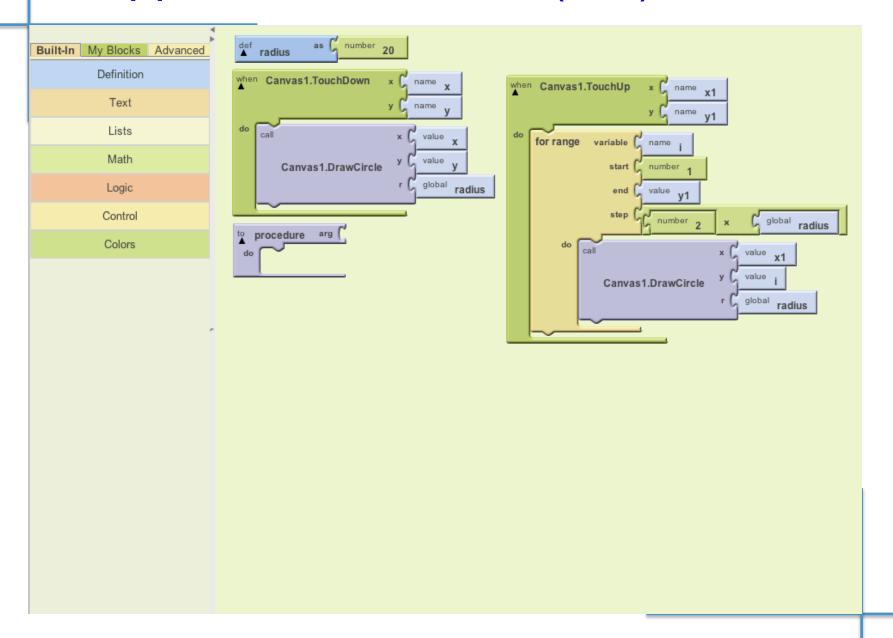


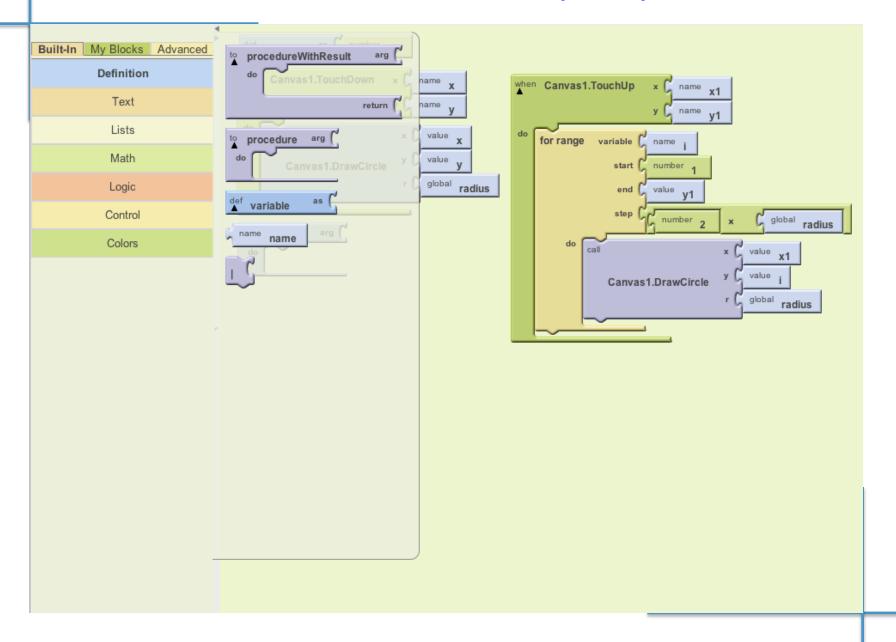


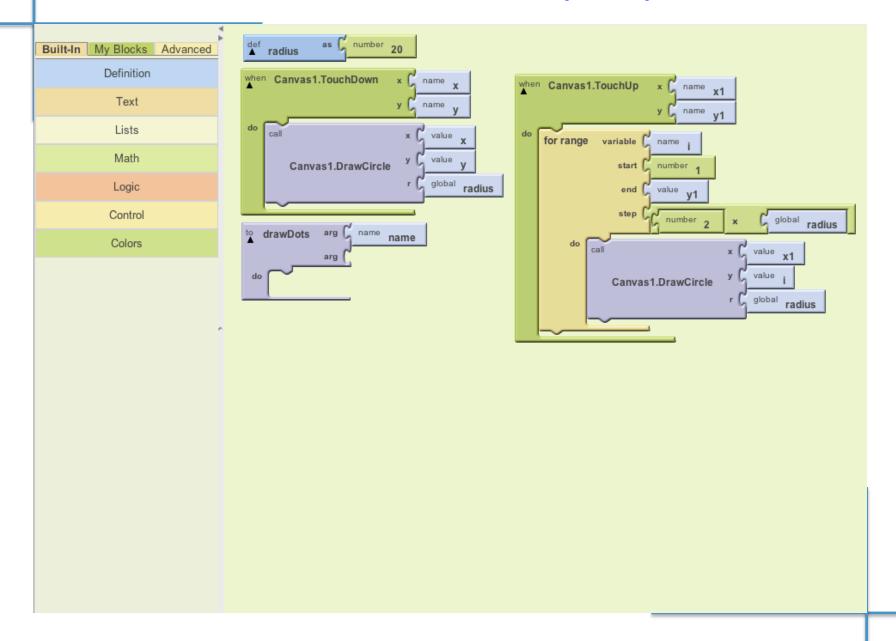


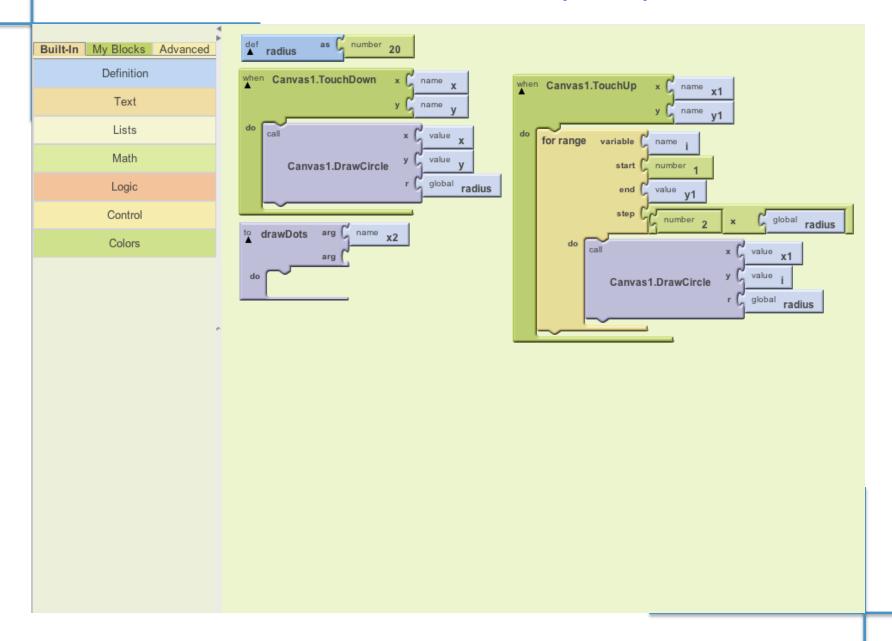


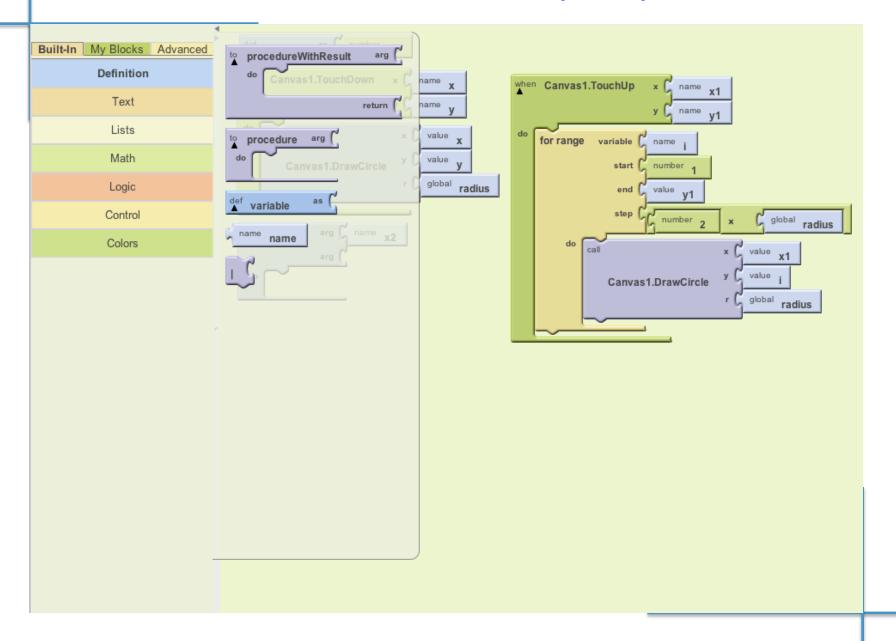


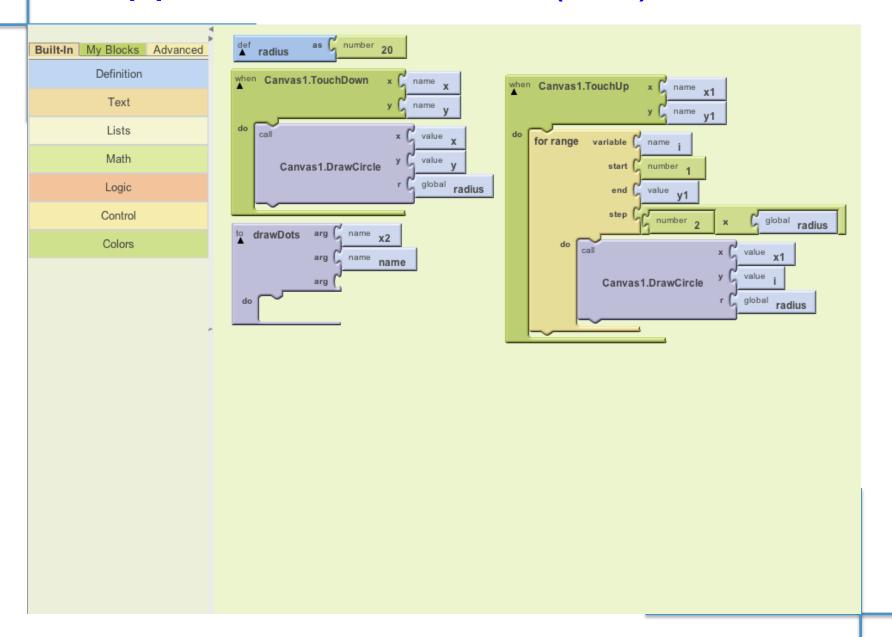


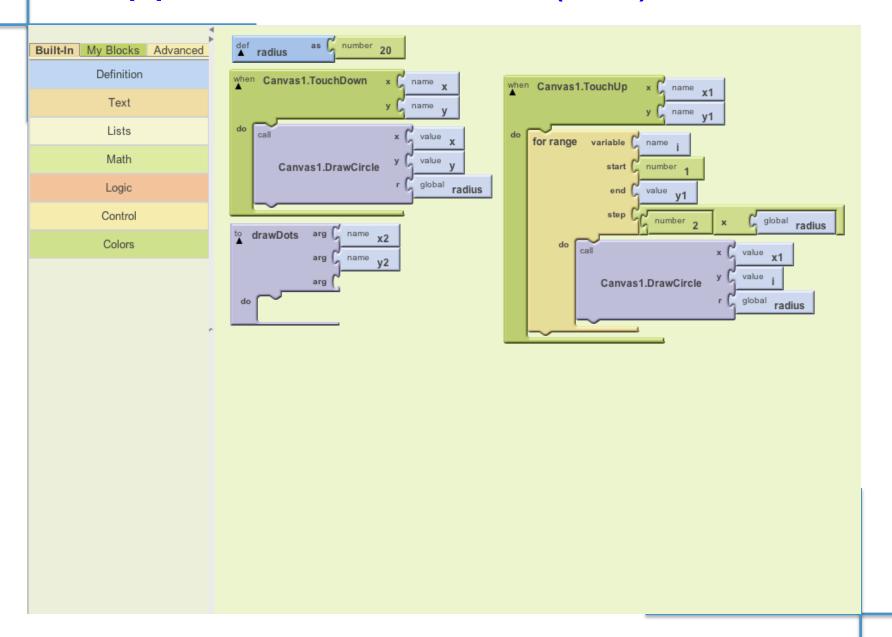


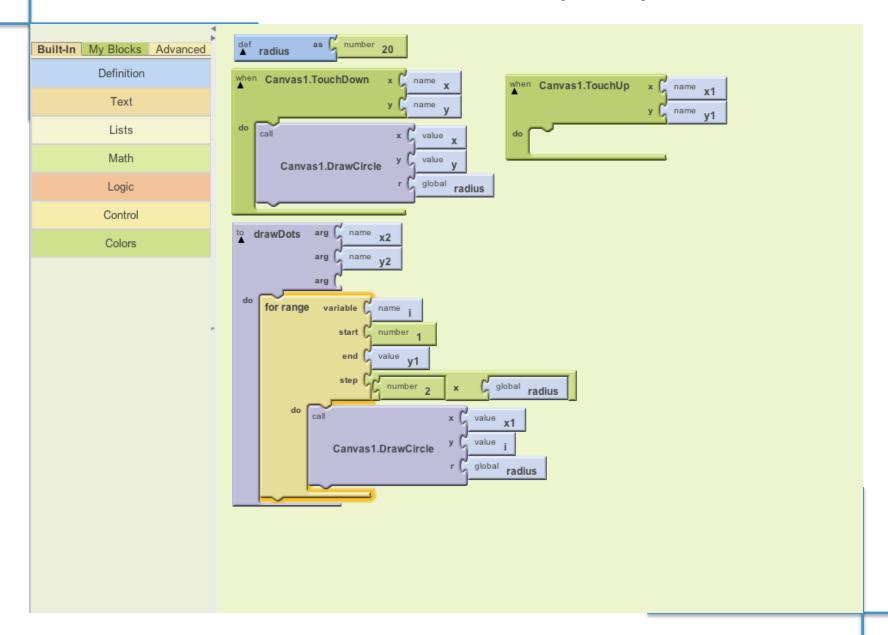


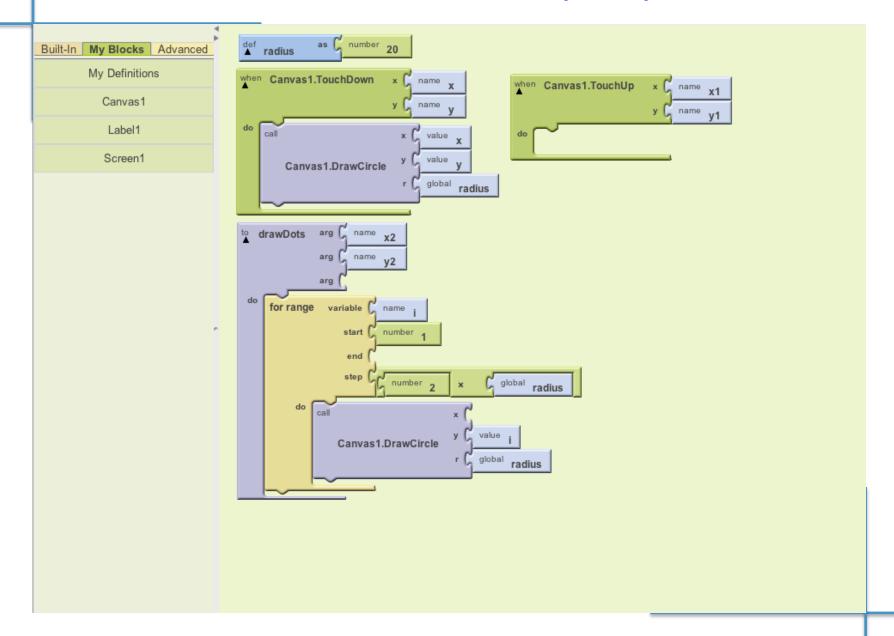


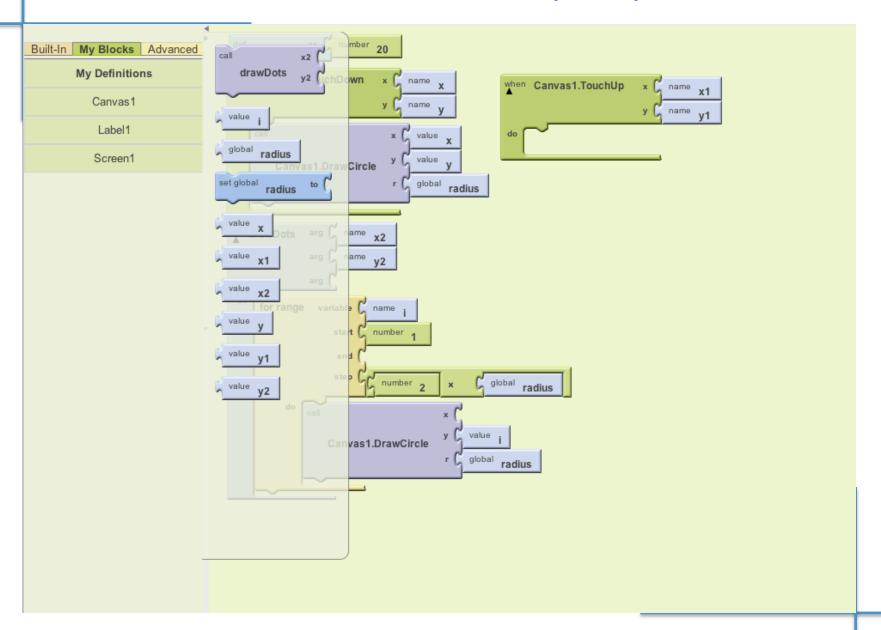


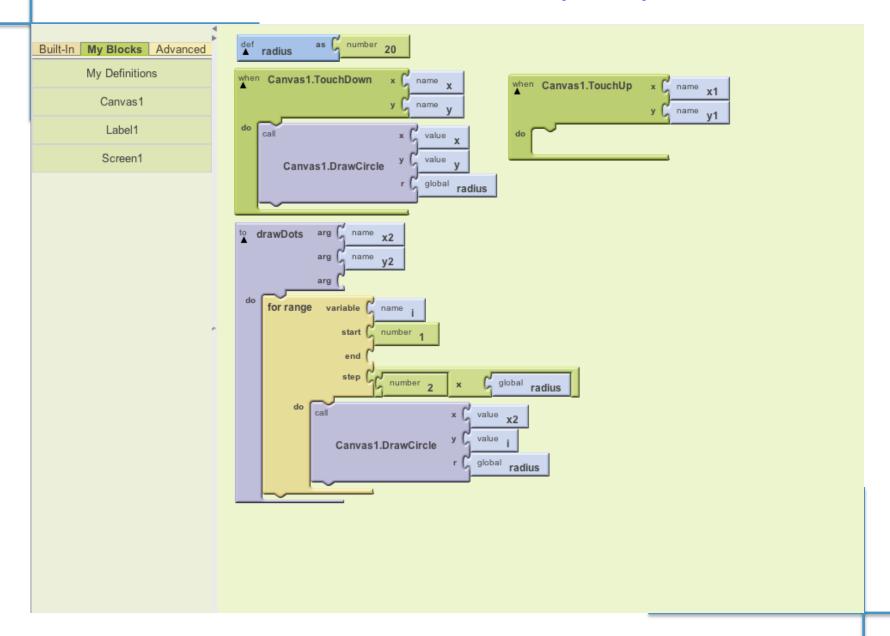


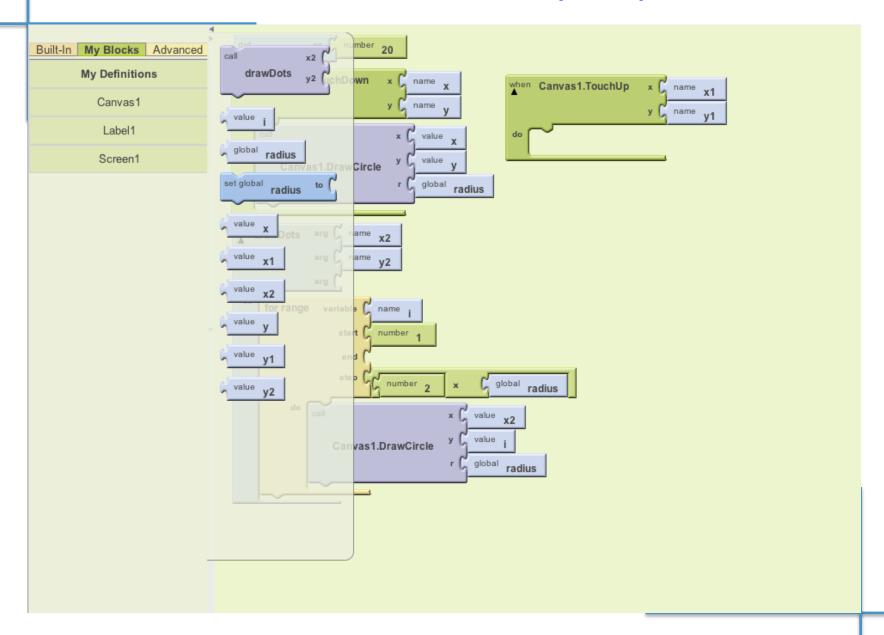


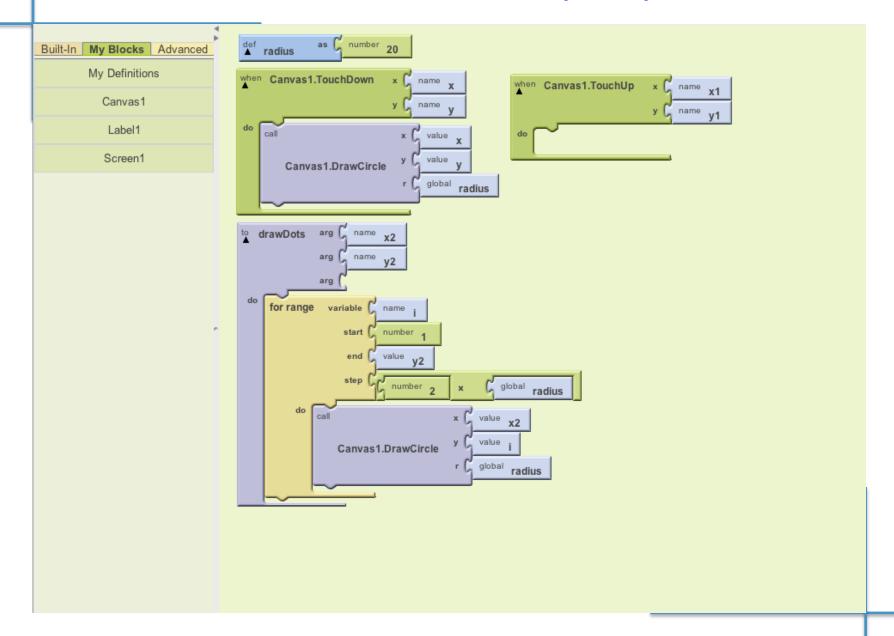


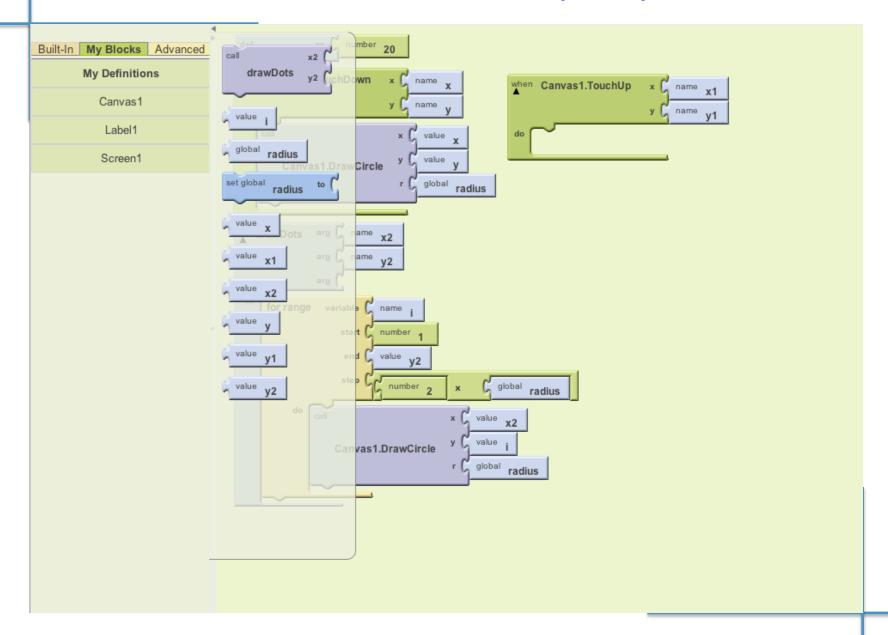


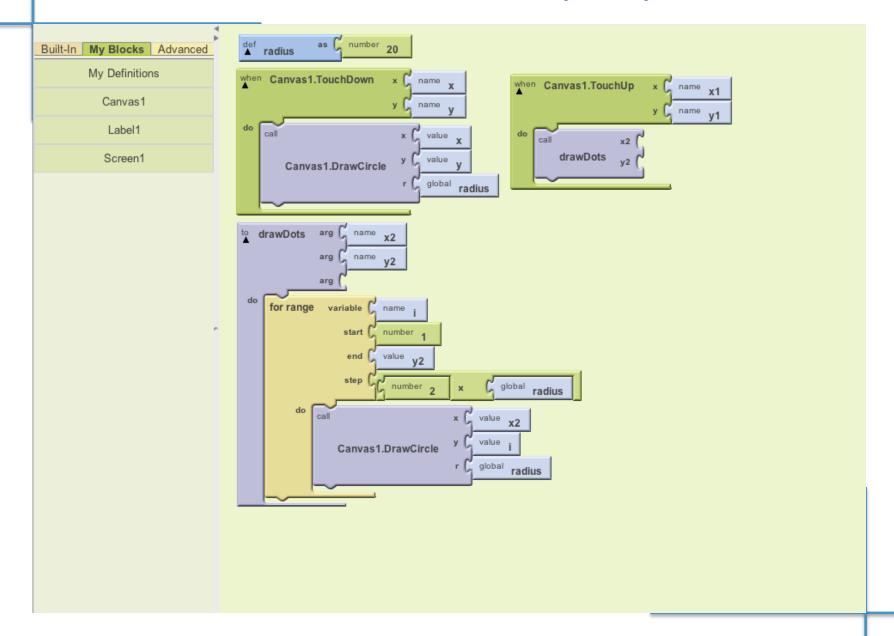


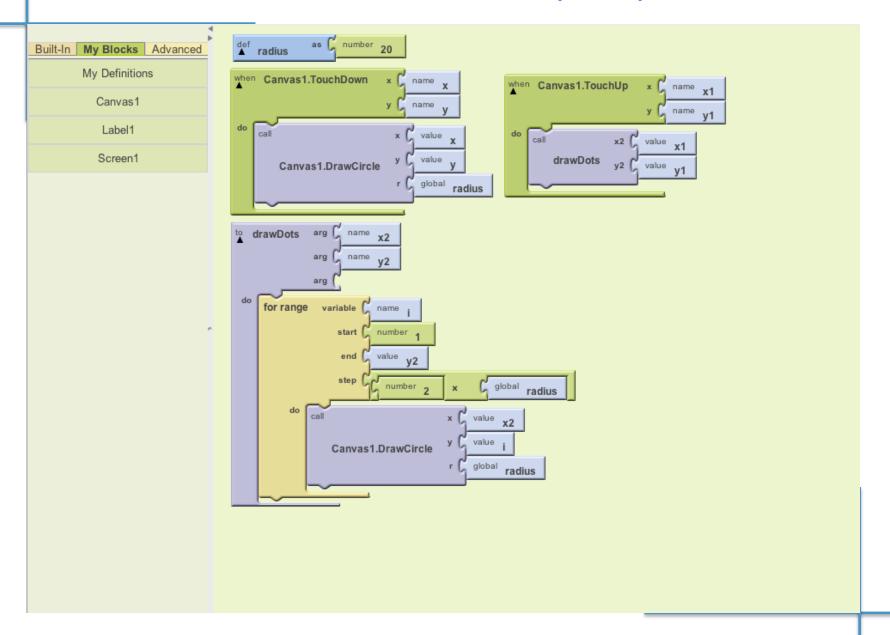


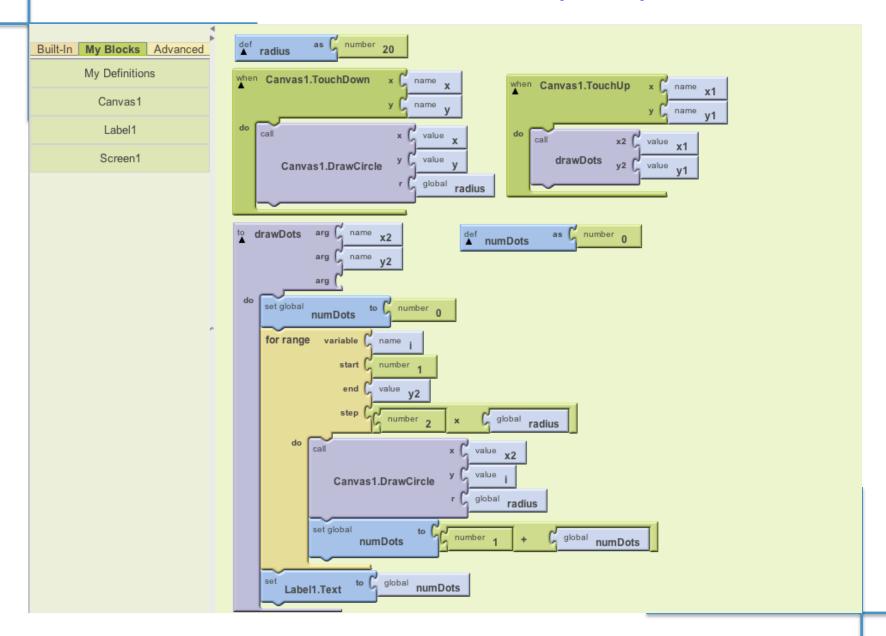


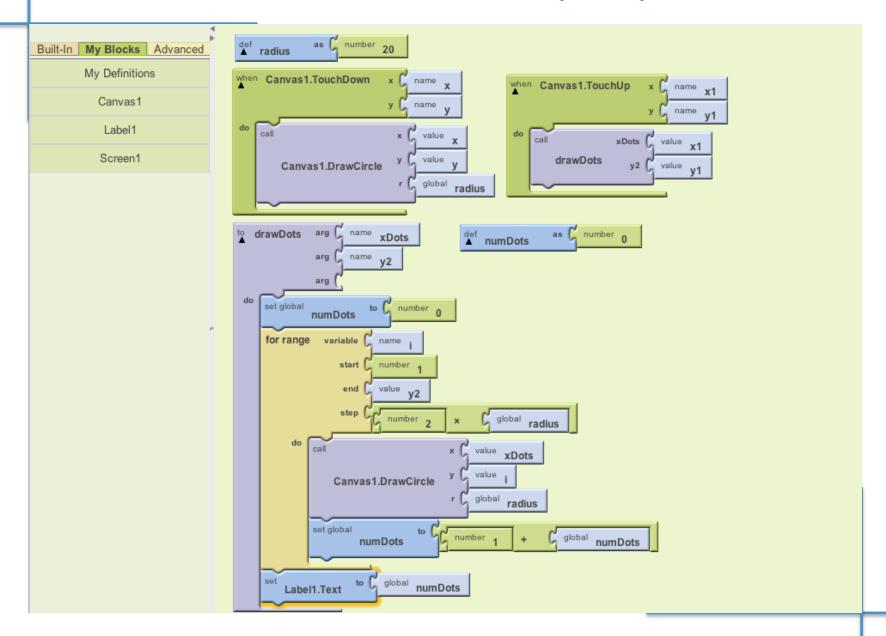


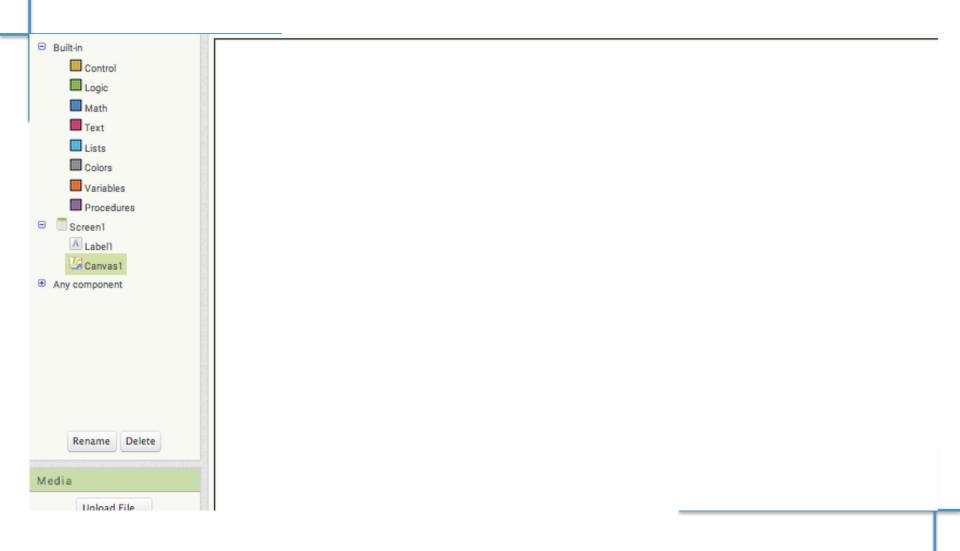


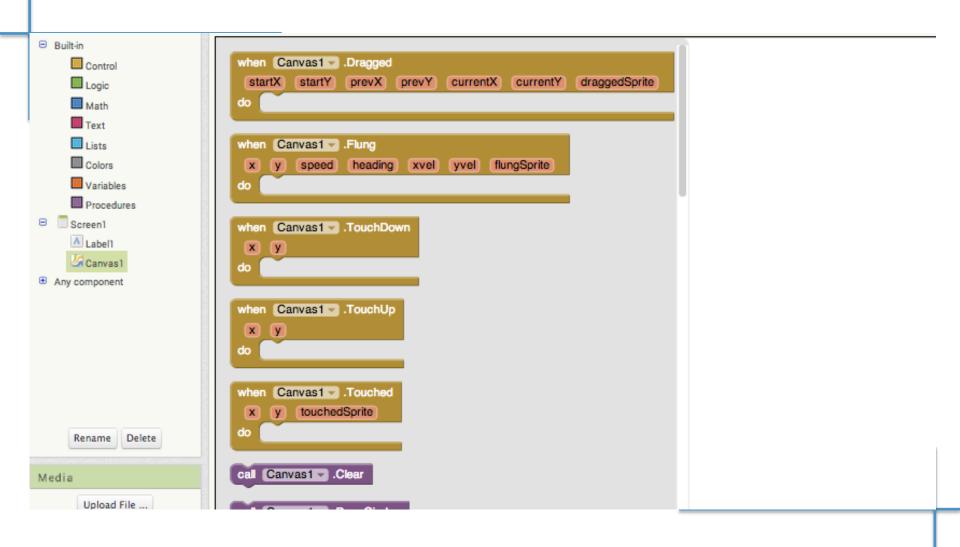


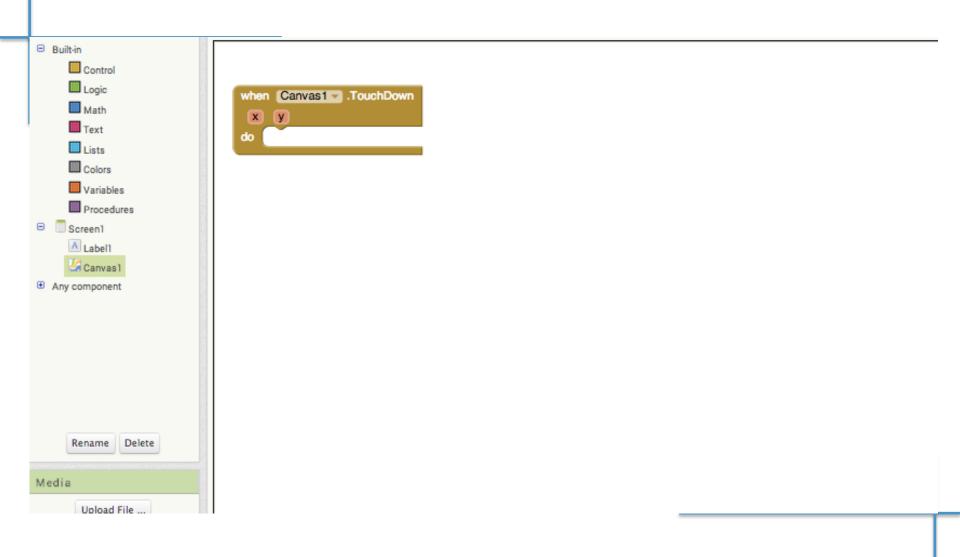


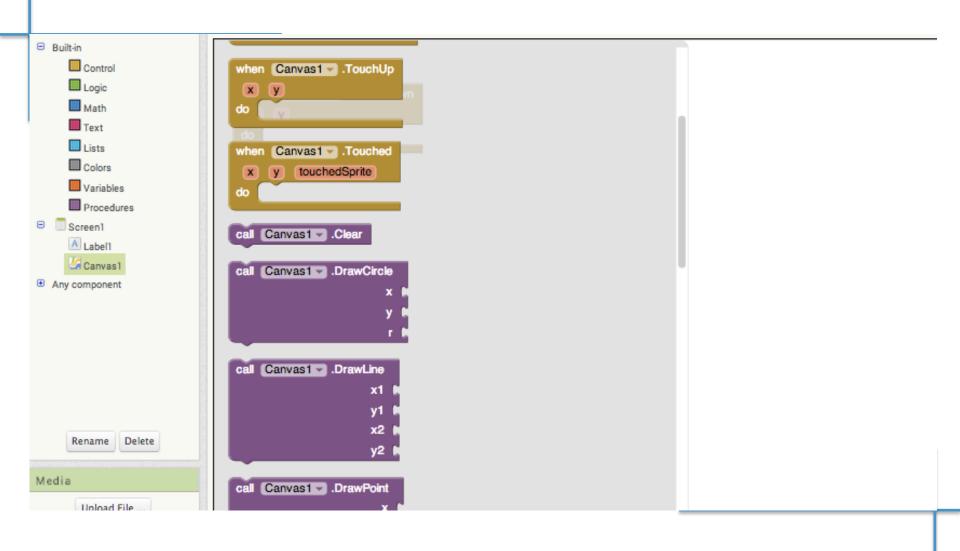


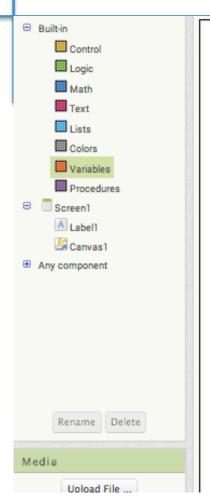












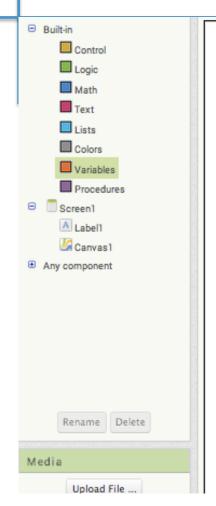
```
when Canvas1 .TouchDown

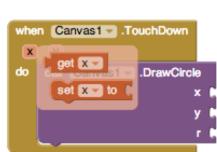
x y

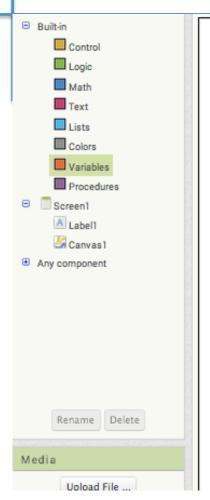
do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle

x y

r
```



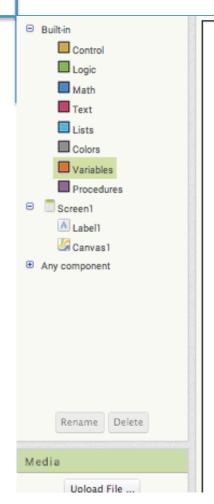




```
when Canvas1 .TouchDown

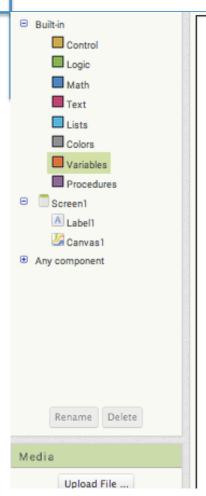
x y

do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
 x y
 y
 r
```



```
when Canvast .TouchDown

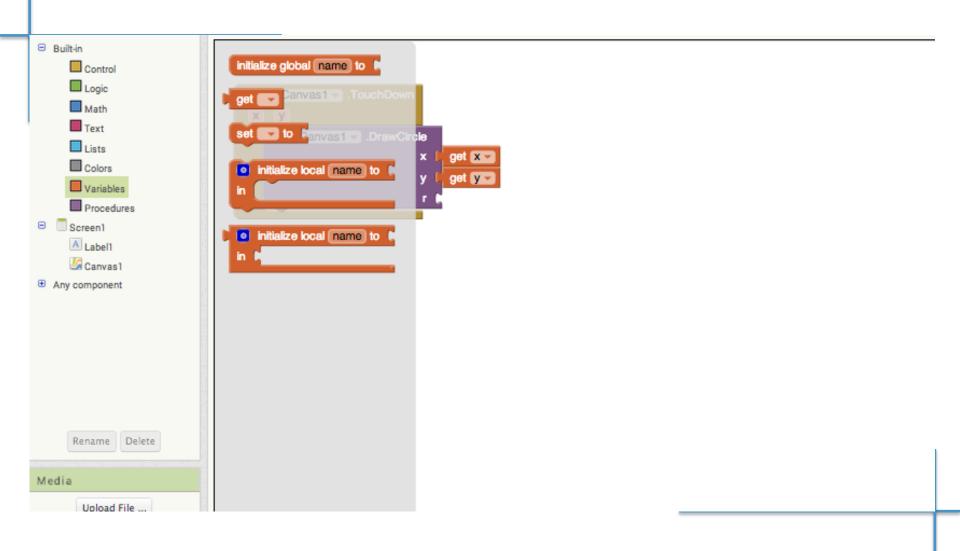
x y get y .DrawCircle
set y to x get x y
r
```



```
when Canvas1 .TouchDown

x y

do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
 x y
 get x y
 r
```

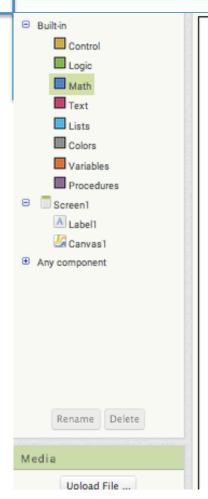




```
when Canvas1 .TouchDown

x y

do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
 y |
 y |
 get y |
 r |
```



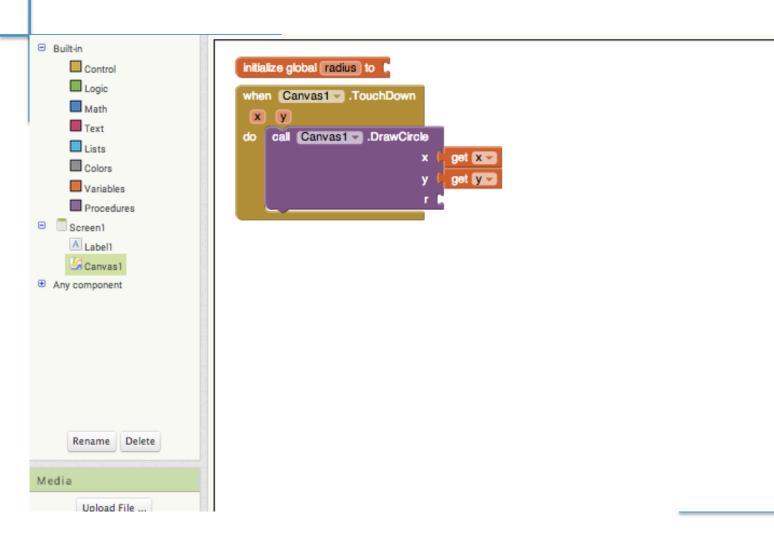
```
when Canvas1 .TouchDown

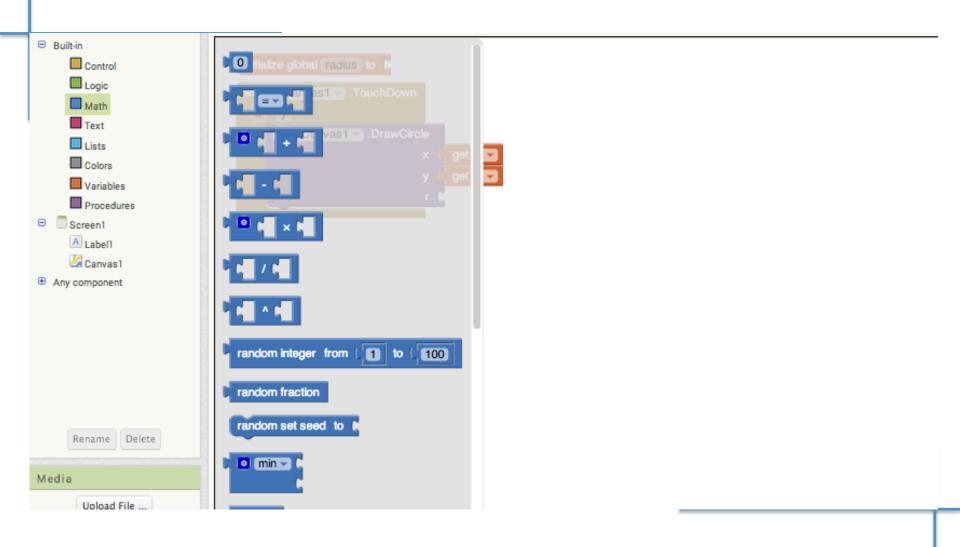
x y

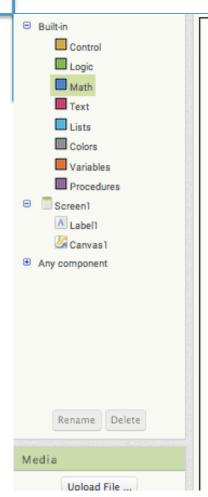
do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle

x get x y

y get y
```







```
initialize global radius to 0

when Canvas1 .TouchDown

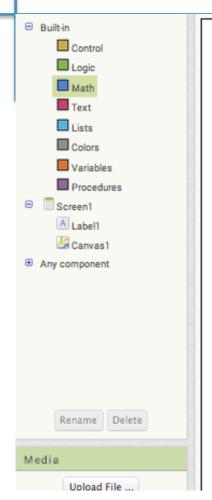
x y

do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle

x y

get x

y get y
```



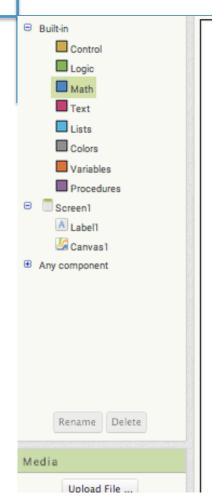
```
when Canvast .TouchDown

x y

do call Canvast .DrawCircle

y get y

r
```



```
when Canvast .TouchDown

x y

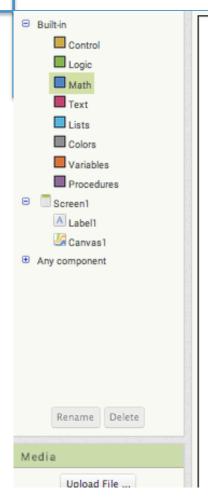
do call Canvast .DrawCircle

x y

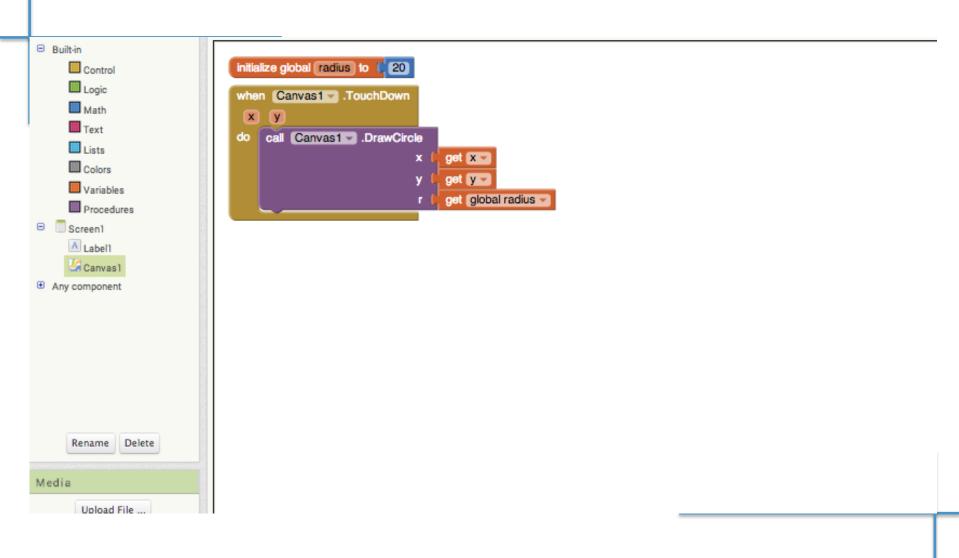
get x

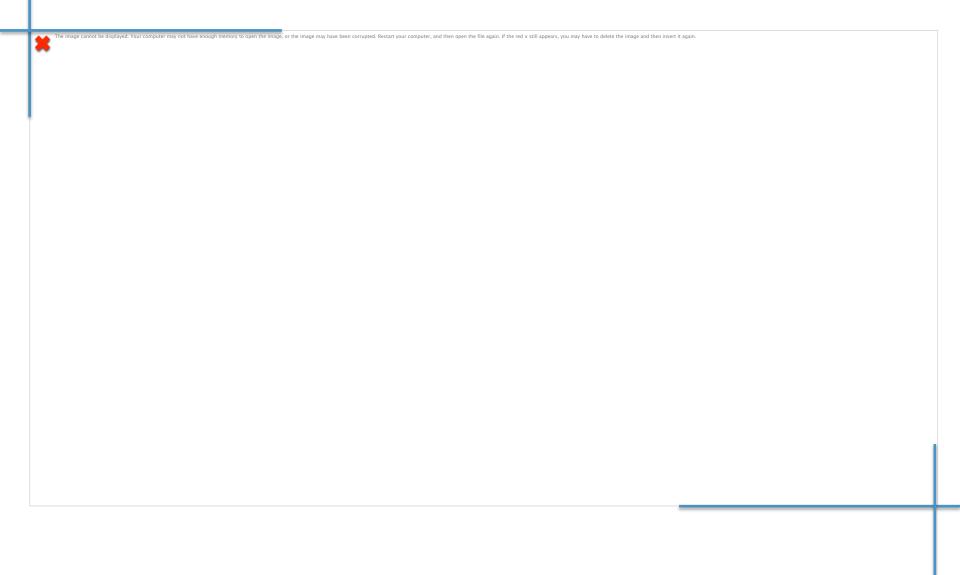
y

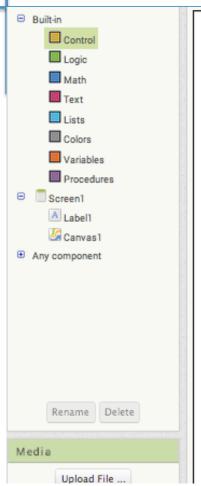
r
```



```
when Canvas get global radius to when Canvas get global radius to call Canvas DrawCrole to get y
```







```
initialize global radius to (20)

when Canvas1 .TouchDown

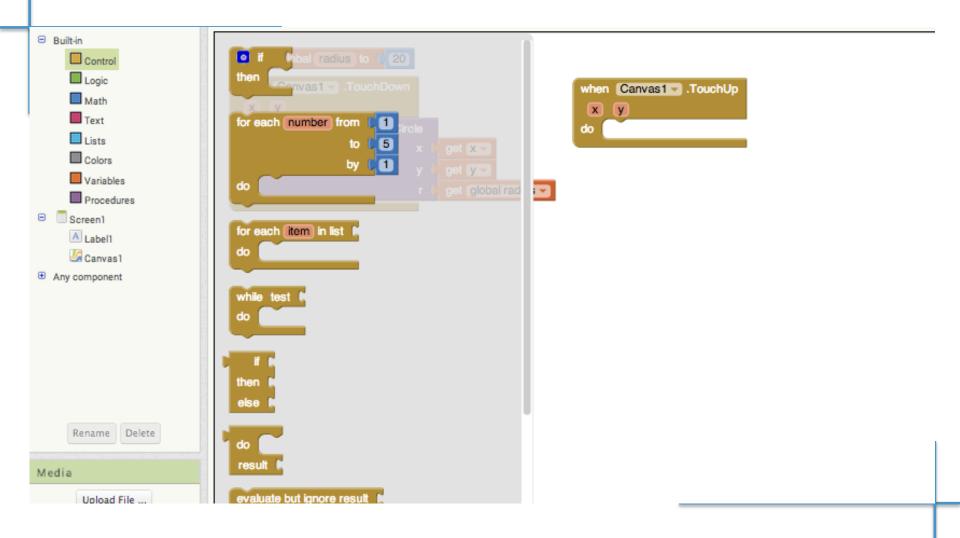
x y

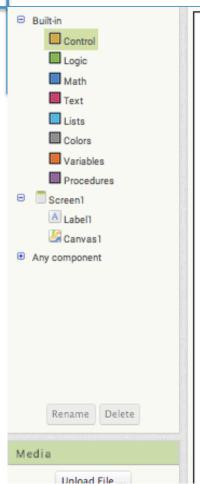
do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle

x get x

y get y

r get global radius
```





```
when Canvast .TouchDown

x y

do call Canvast .DrawCircle

x get x

y get y

r get global radius .

when Canvast .TouchUp

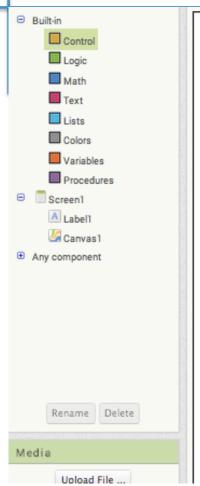
x y

do for each number from 1

to 5

by 1

get global radius ...
```



```
when Canvas1 .TouchDown

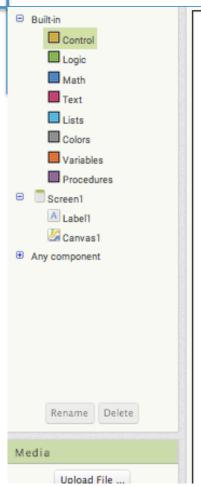
x y

do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle

x get x

y get y

r get global radius
```



```
when Canvas1 .TouchDown

x y

do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle

x get x

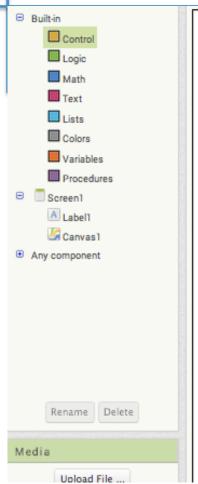
y get y

r get global radius .TouchUp

x to 5

by 1

do
```



```
when Canvas1 .TouchDown

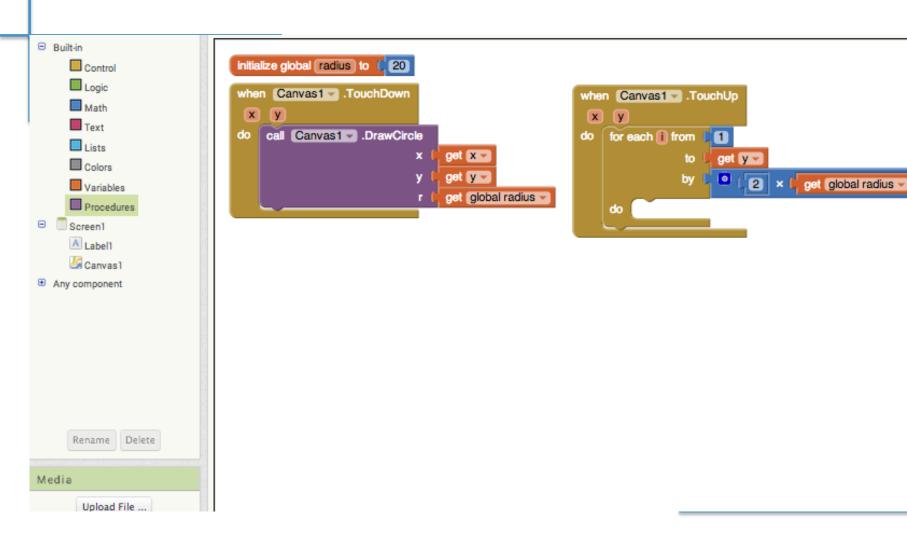
x y

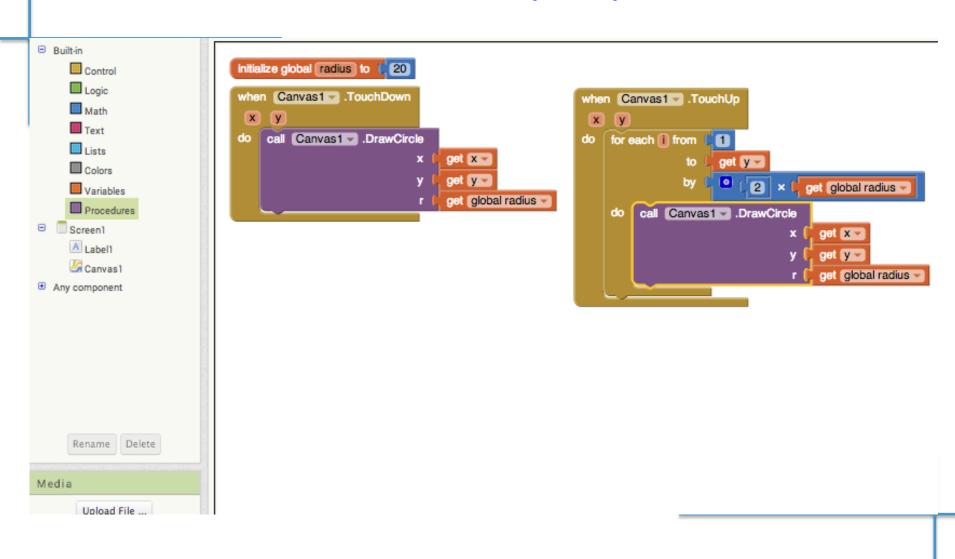
do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle

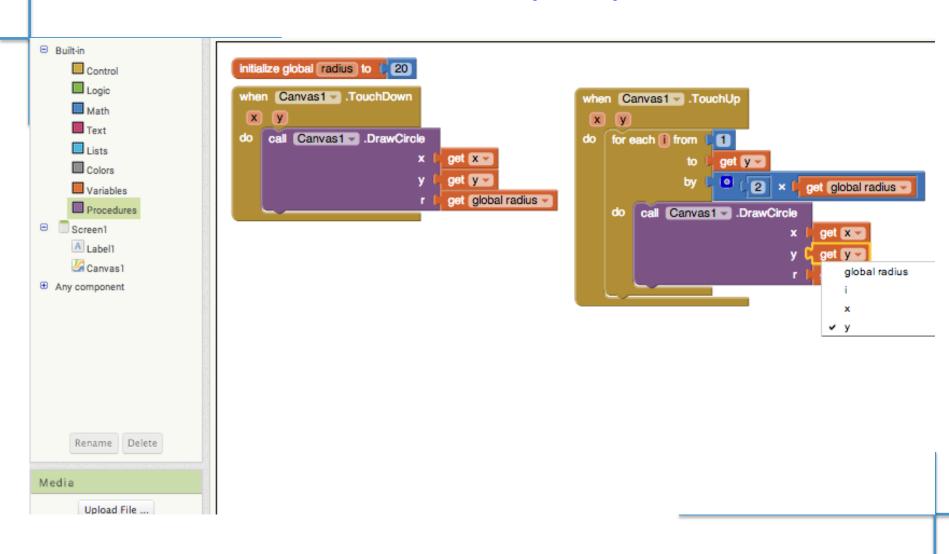
x get x y

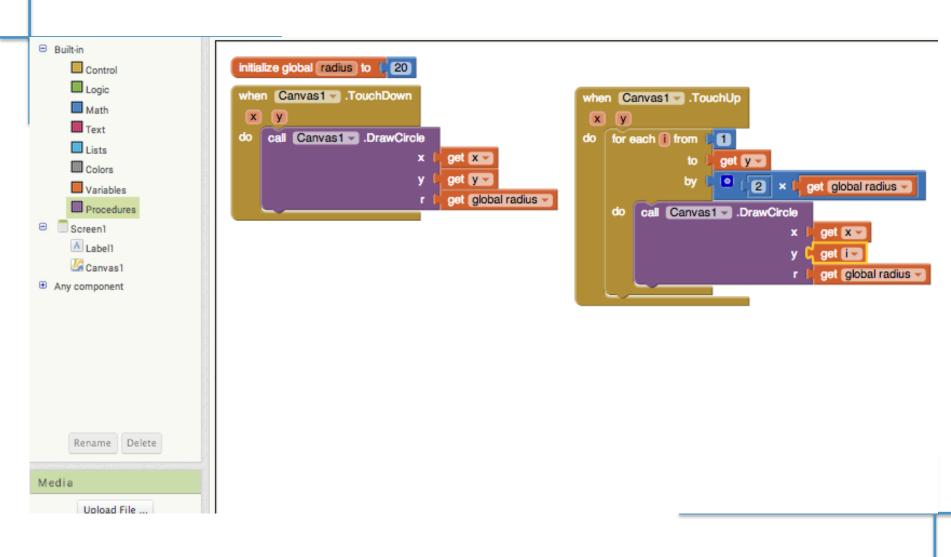
y get y by

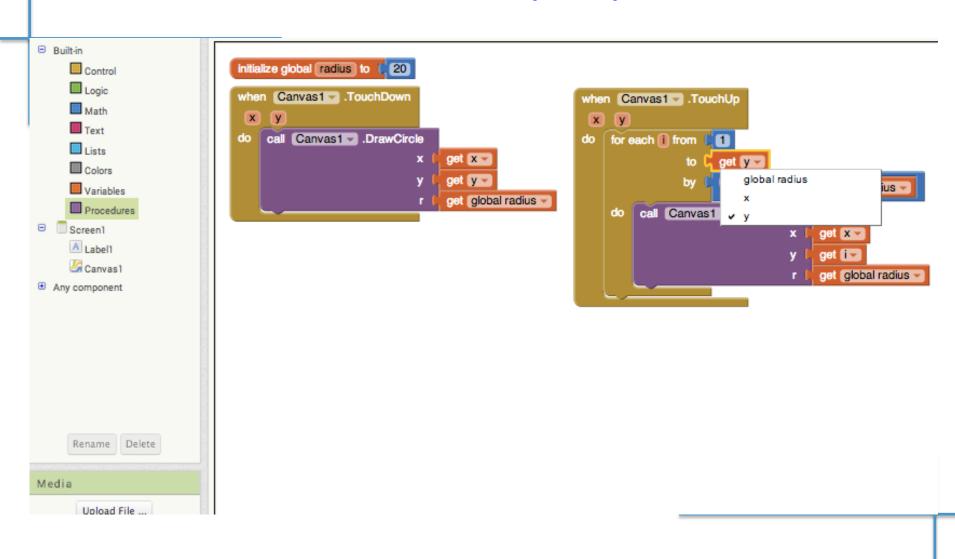
r get global radius
```

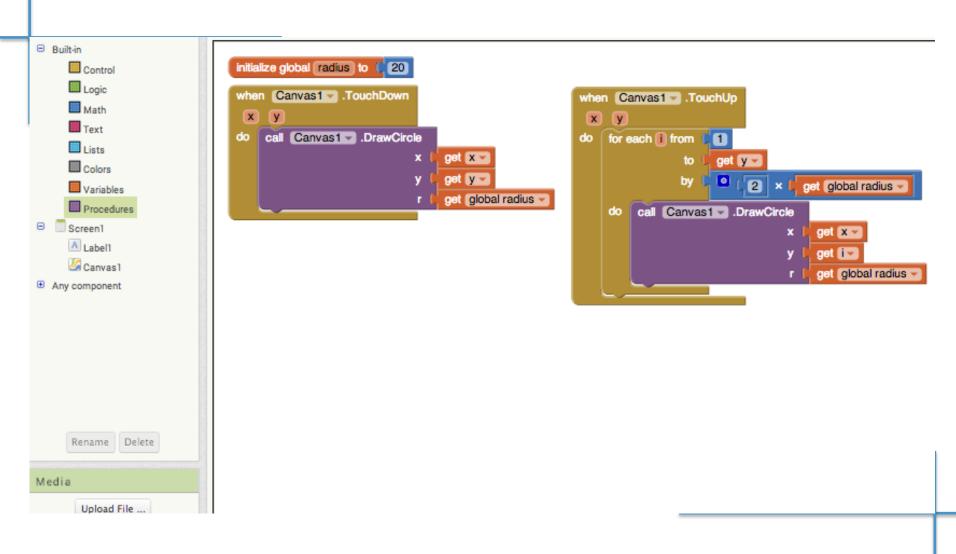


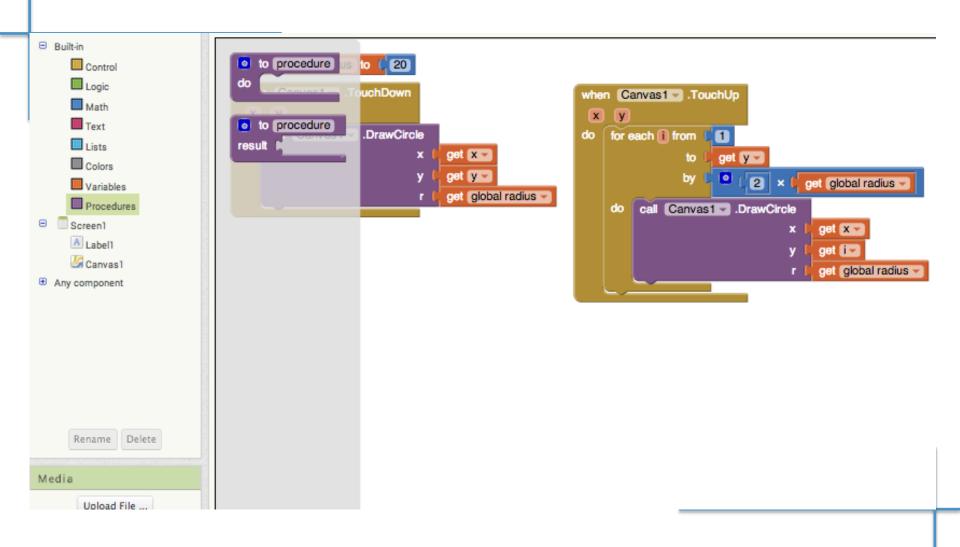


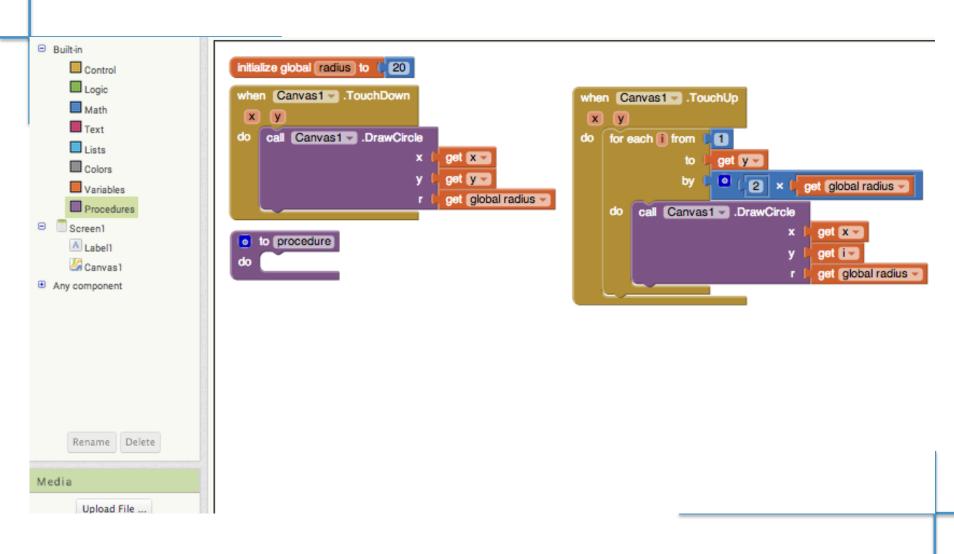


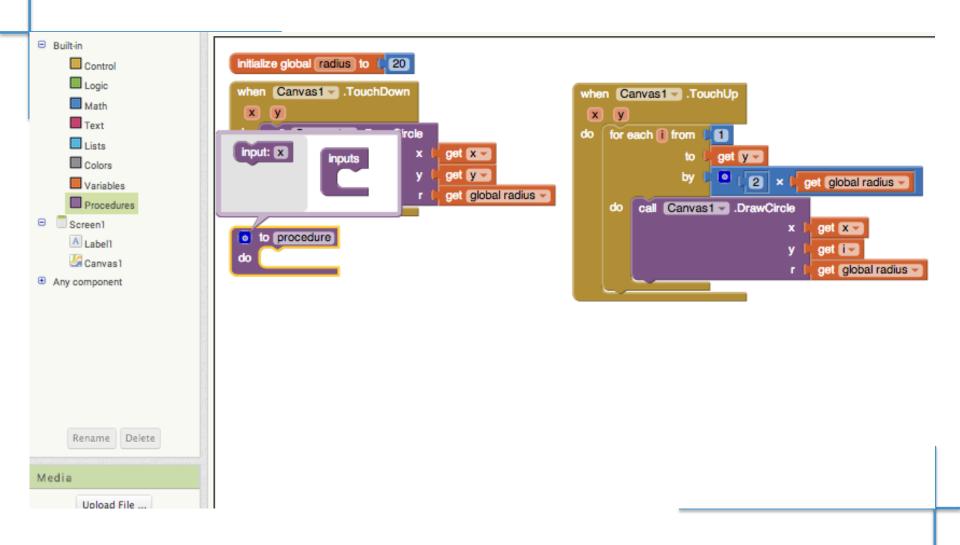


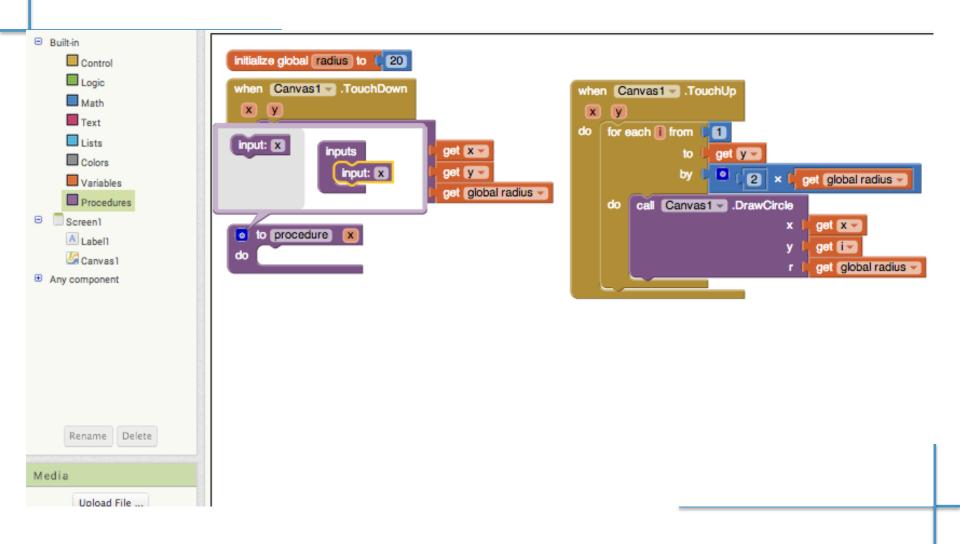


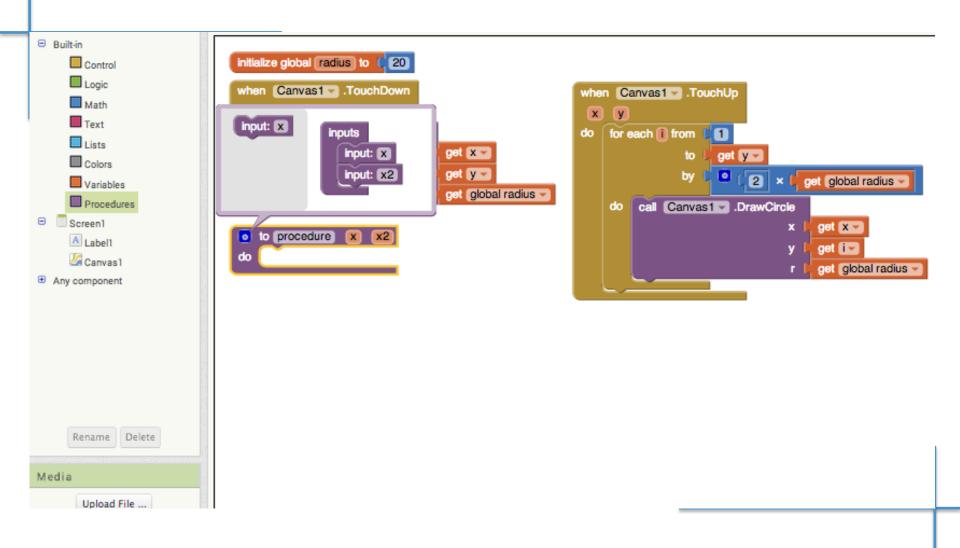


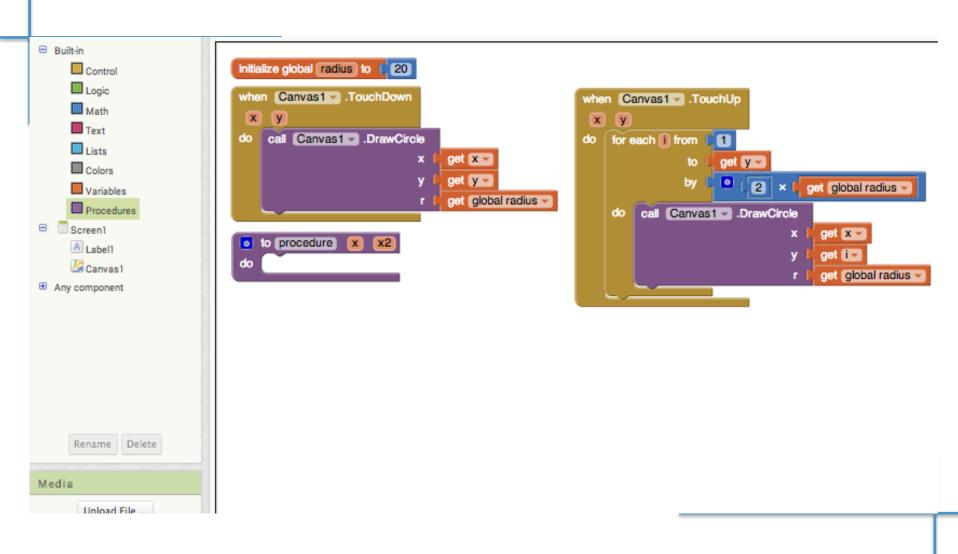


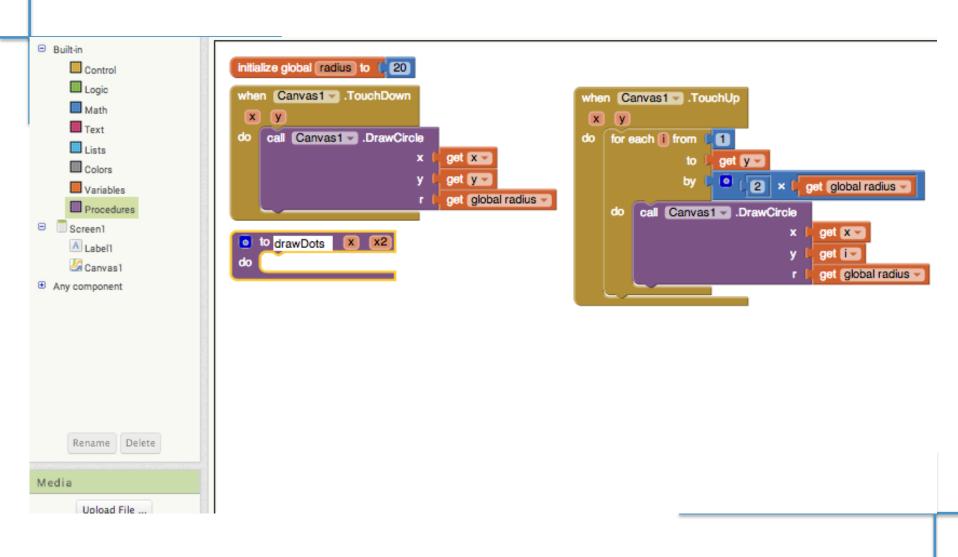


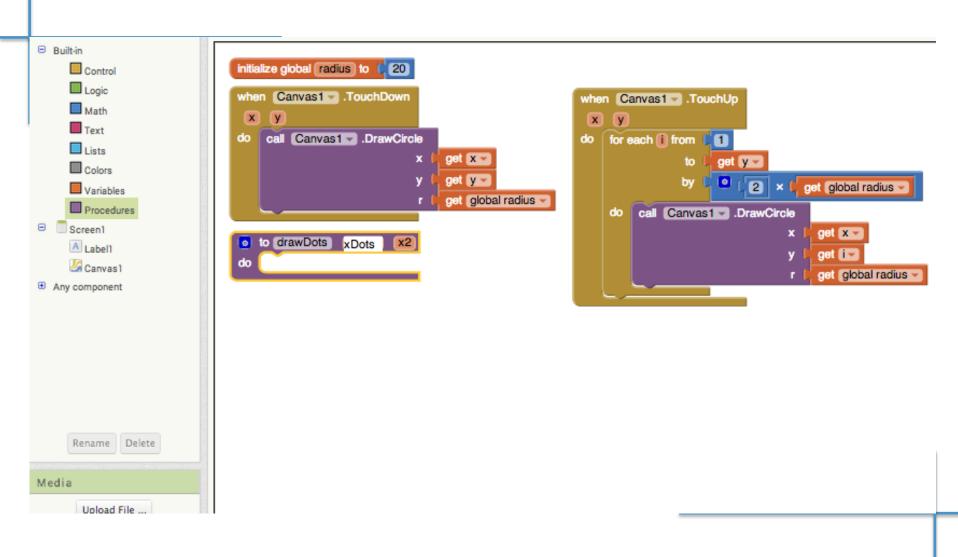




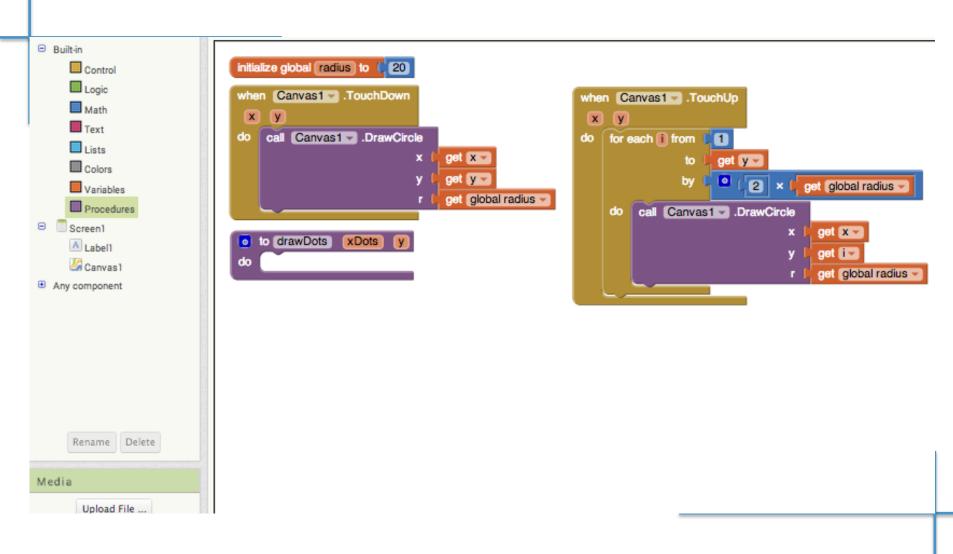


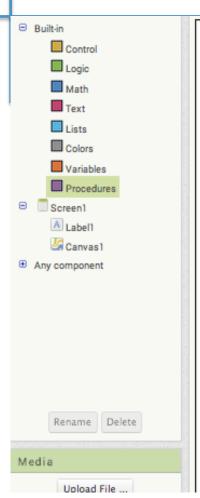




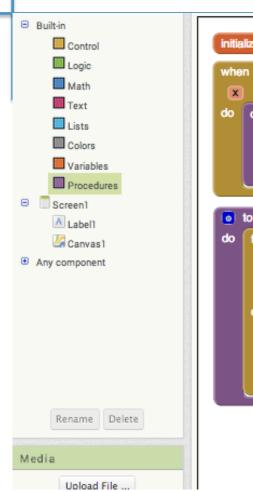


```
■ Built-in
                               initialize global radius to (20)
     Control
     Logic
                               when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                                                     when Canvas1 .TouchUp
     Math
     Text
                                   call Canvas1 ▼ .DrawCircle
                                                                                         for each i from
     Lists
                                                               get X =
                                                                                                          get y
     Colors
                                                               get y -
                                                                                                              2 × get global radius
    Variables
                                                                get global radius
    Procedures
                                                                                             call Canvas1 . DrawCircle
□ Screen1
                                                                                                                         get X
                               to drawDots
                                               xDots
     A Labell
     Canvas1
                                                                                                                          get global radius
Any component
     Rename Delete
Media
      Upload File ...
```

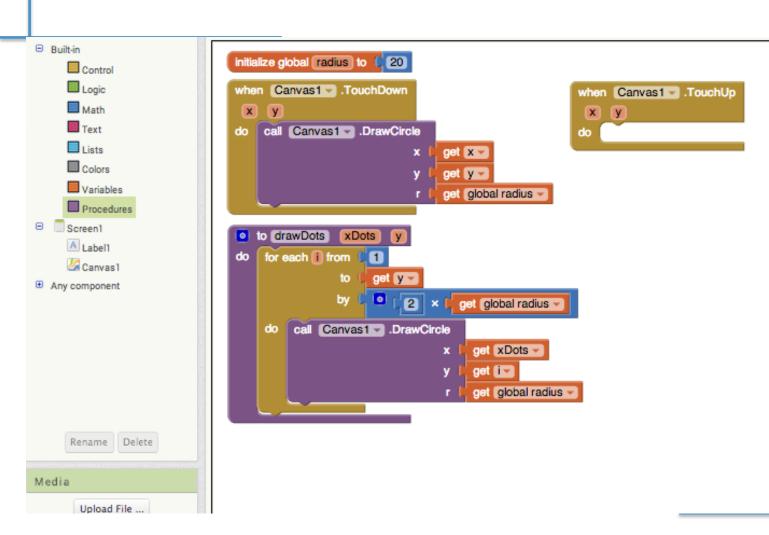


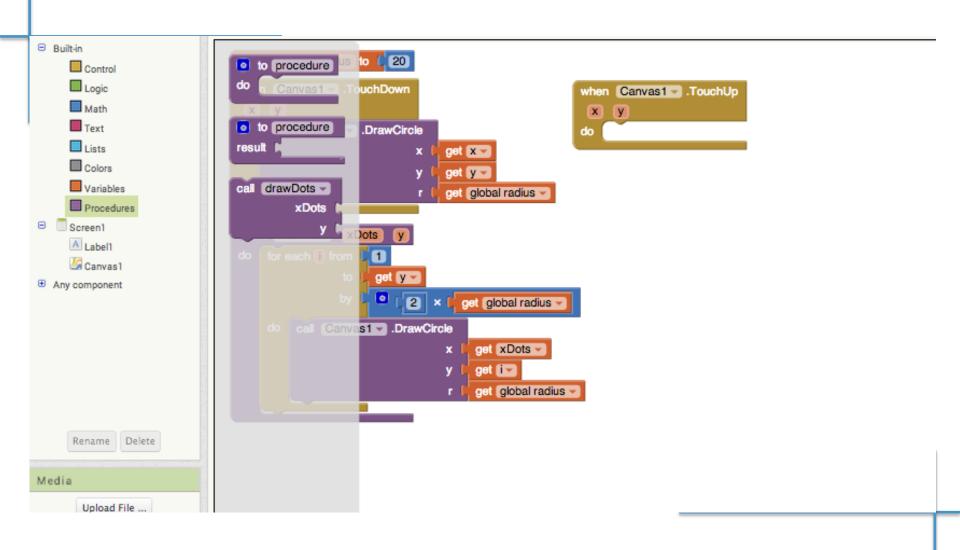


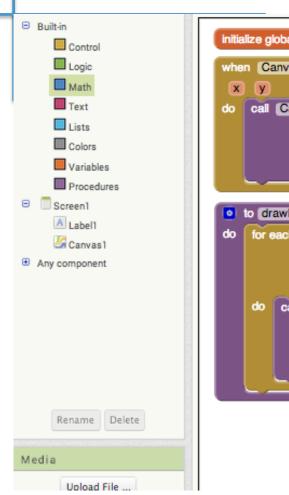
```
initialize global radius to (20)
when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                    when Canvas1 .TouchUp
                                                     X
    call Canvas1 ▼ .DrawCircle
                                                    do
                               get X =
                                get global radius -
o to drawDots
               xDots
    for each i from
                    get y
                         2 x get global radius
    do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                    ⚠ get x =
                                    get 🔯
                                    get global radius
```



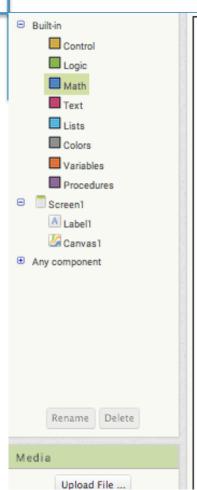
```
initialize global radius to (20)
when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                     when Canvas1 .TouchUp
                                                      X
    call Canvas1 ▼ .DrawCircle
                                                     do
                                get X =
                                get global radius -
o to drawDots
                xDots
    for each i from
                          2 x get global radius
    do call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                     ⚠ get X =
                                            global radius
                                            xDots
```



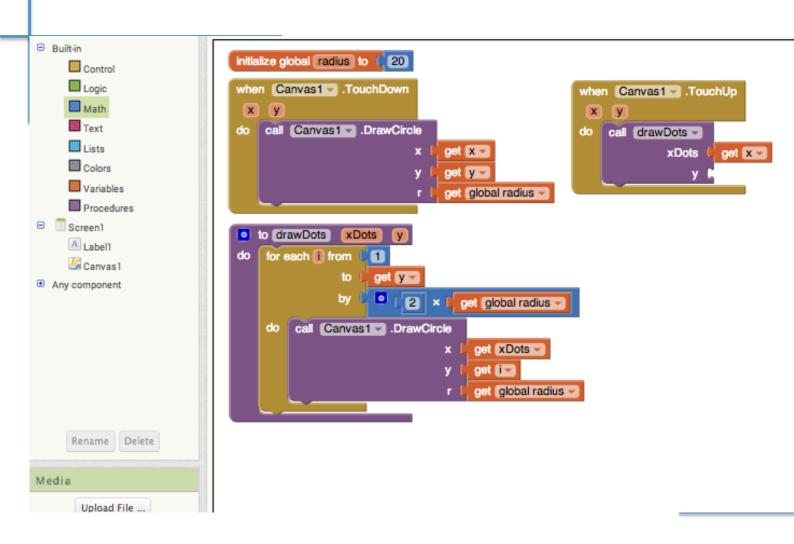


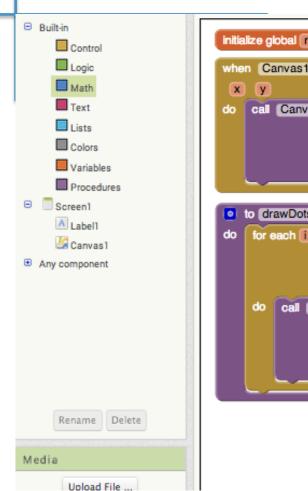


```
initialize global radius to (20)
when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                       when Canvas1 .TouchUp
    call Canvas1 ▼ .DrawCircle
                                                           call drawDots -
                                 get X =
                                                                     xDots |
                                 get y ▽
                                 get global radius
to drawDots
                 xDots
    for each i from
                      get y =
                           2 × get global radius v
        call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                      get xDots -
                                      get global radius
```

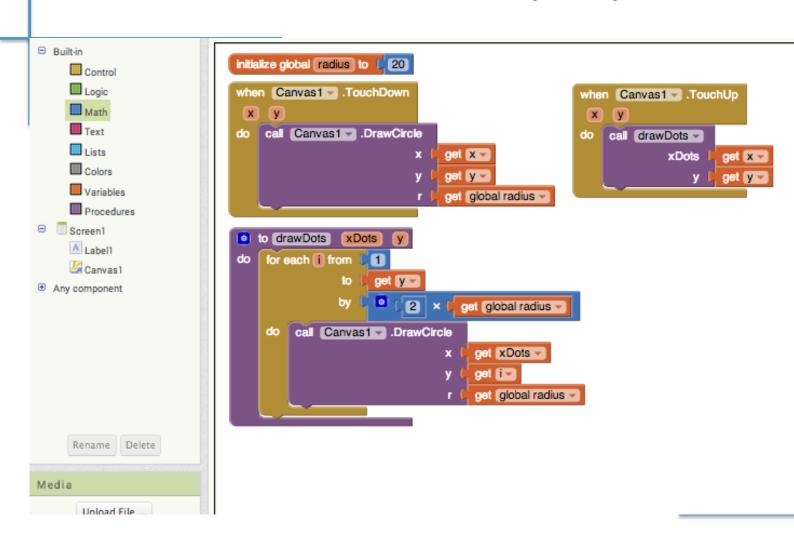


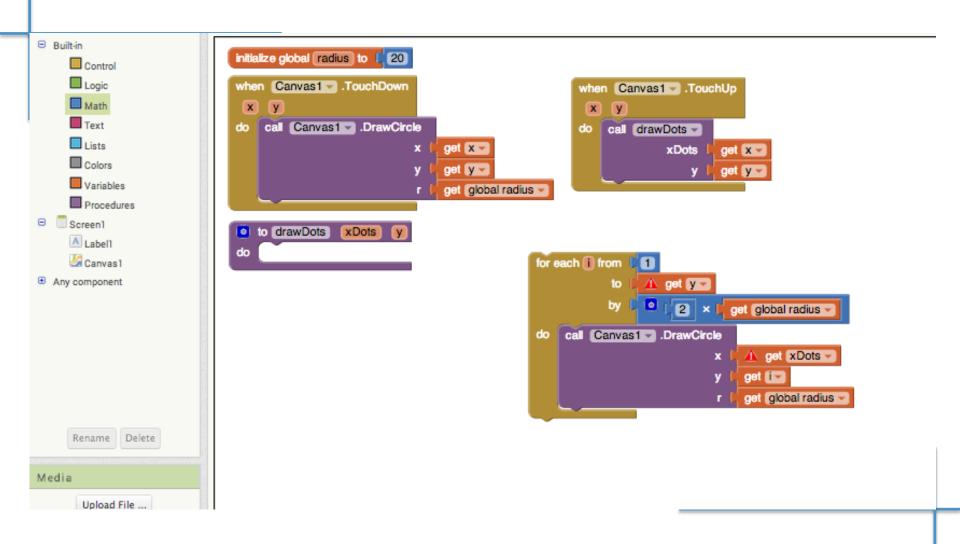
```
initialize global radius to 20
when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                      when Canvas1 .TouchUp
                                                            get X >
    call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                                            set X to
                                get X 🔻
                                get y ✓
                                get global radius
to drawDots
                xDots
    for each i from
                     get y
                          2 × get global radius
        call Canvas1 ▼ .DrawCircle
                                     get xDots -
                                     get global radius
```

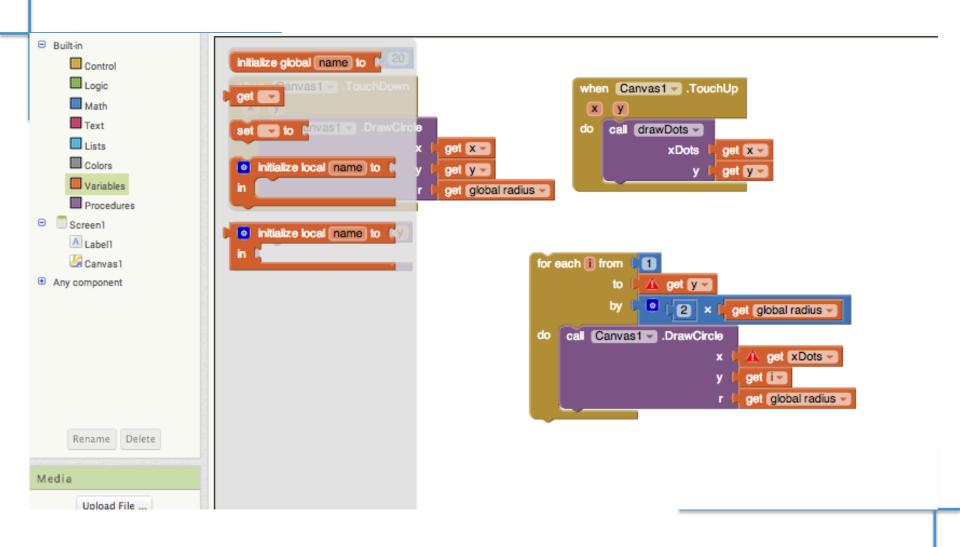


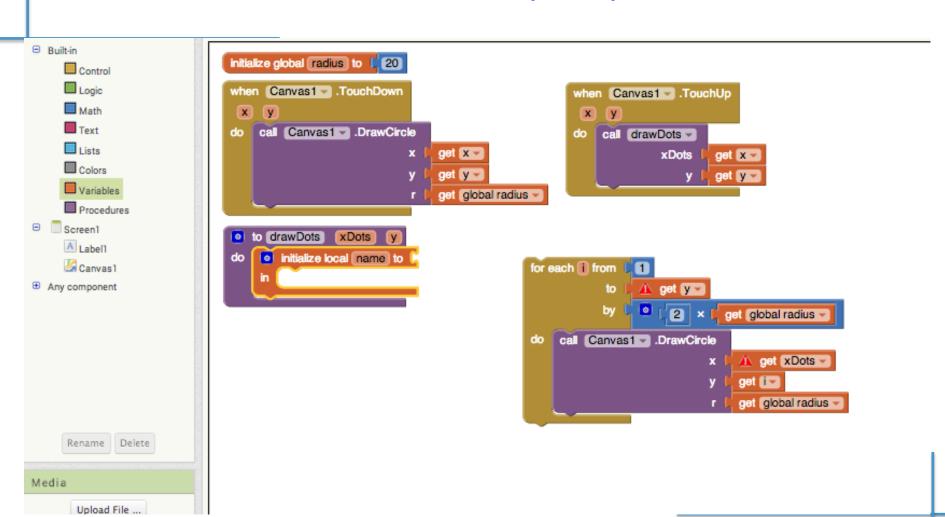


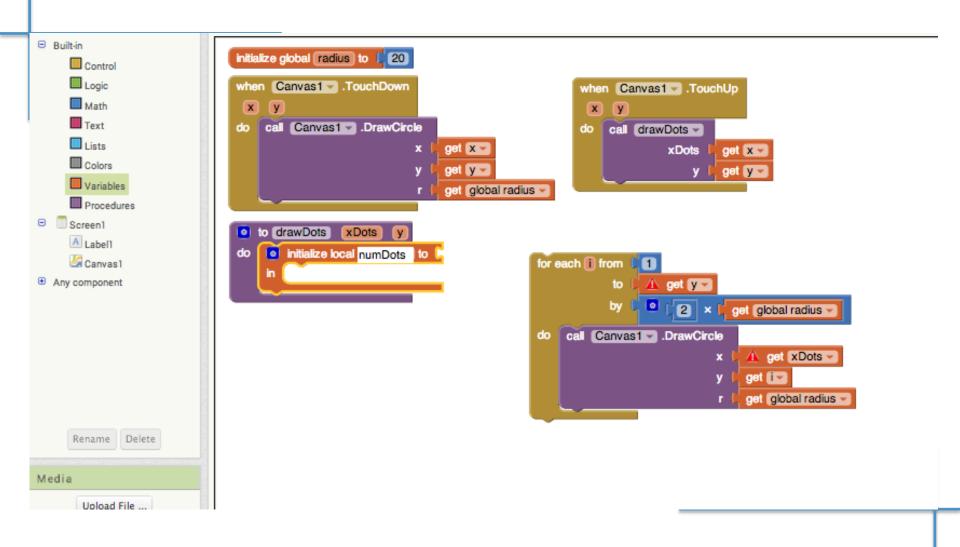
```
initialize global radius to 20
when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                               when Canvas1 ▼ .TouchUp
                                                      get y
   set y to get x
                            get X =
                            get y =
                            get global radius
  to drawDots
              xDots
   for each i from
                  get y
                      2 × get global radius
       call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                get xDots -
                                get global radius
```

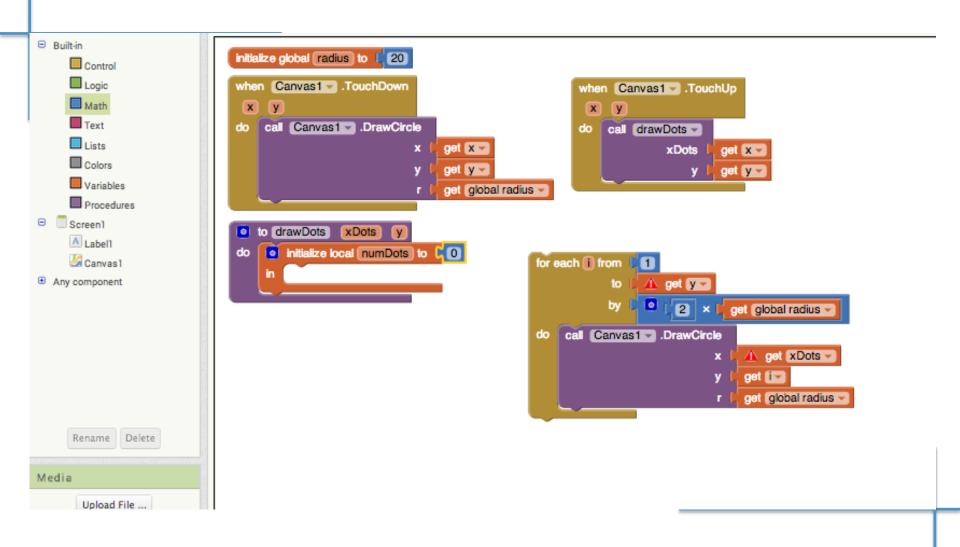


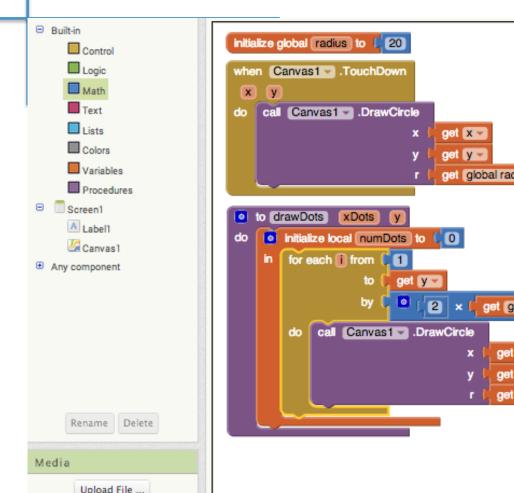




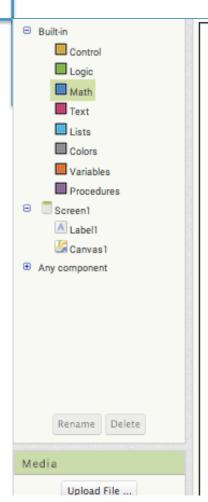




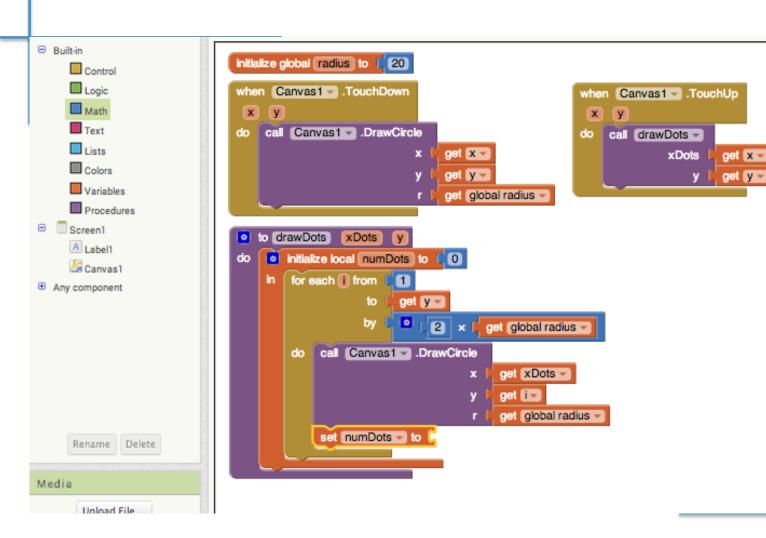




```
when Canvas1 .TouchUp
                            call drawDots -
                                              get x -
                                              get y
  get global radius
2 x get global radius
           get xDots -
           get 🔯
           get global radius
```



```
initialize global radius to 20
when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                      when Canvas1 .TouchUp
    call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                                          call drawDots -
                                get X =
                                                                   xDots
                                                                            get X 🔻
                                get y =
                                                                            get y
                                get global radius
to drawDots
                xDots
    initialize local numDots
                              get numDots
        for each i from
                               set numDots v to
                              2 x get global radius
            call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                         get xDots -
                                         get global radius
```



get x -

get y =

xDots

```
■ Built-in
                               initialize global radius to 20
     Control
     Logic Logic
                               when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                                                     when Canvas1 .TouchUp
    Math
     Text
                                   call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                                                                         call drawDots ▼
     Lists
                                                               get X
     Colors
                                                               get y -
     Variables
                                                               get global radius
     Procedures
□ Screen1
                                  to drawDots
                                               xDots
     A Labell
                                   initialize local (numDots) to ( 0
     Canvas1
                                       for each i from
Any component
                                                        get y
                                                             2 × get global radius
                                           call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                                                        get xDots -
                                                                        get (IV
                                                                        get global radius
                                            set numDots to [ 0 1
                                                                           get numDots
     Rename Delete
Media
      Upload File ...
```

get X

get y

xDots

```
■ Built-in
                            initialize global radius to 20
    Control
    Logic
                            when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                                             when Canvas1 .TouchUp
    Math
    Text
                                call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                                                                cal drawDots ▼
    Lists
                                                         get X
    Colors
                                                         get y -
    Variables
                                                         get global radius
    Procedures
□ Screen1
                               to drawDots
                                           xDots
    A Labell
                                initialize local numDots to 0
    Canvas1
                                   for each i from
Any component
                                                   get y
                                                       2 x get global radius
                                       call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                                                 get xDots -
                                                                 get 🔯
                                                                 get global radius
                                        set numDots to
                                                                     get numDots
    Rename Delete
                                   Media
      Upload File ...
```

```
    Built-in

     Control
     Logic
     Math
     Text
     I ists
     Colors
     Variables
     Procedures
□ Screen1
     A Labell
     Canvas1
Any component
     Rename Delete
Media
       Upload File ...
```

```
initialize global radius to 20
when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                   when Canvas1 

.TouchUp
    call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                                       call drawDots -
                               get X =
                                                                xDots
                                                                        get X
                               get y -
                                                                        get y
                               get global radius
  to drawDots
               xDots
    initialize local numDots to 0
       for each i from
                        get y
                            2 x get global radius
            call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                       get xDots -
                                       get 🔯
                                       get global radius
            set numDots - to
                                   1 + get numDots
    set Label1 ▼ . Text ▼ to A get numDots
```

```
Built-in
                              initialize global radius to 20
     Control
     Logic
                               when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                                                    when Canvas1 

.TouchUp
    Math
     Text
                                   call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                               do
                                                                                        call drawDots -
     Lists
                                                               get X =
                                                                                                 xDots
                                                                                                         get X =
    Colors
                                                               get y -
                                                                                                         get y
     Variables
                                                               get global radius
    Procedures
□ Screen1
                                  to drawDots
                                               xDots
    A Label1
                                   initialize local (numDots) to
     Canvas1
                                       for each i from
Any component
                                                       get y -
                                                            2 × get global radius
                                       do call Canvast .DrawCircle
                                                                       get xDots -
                                                                       get 🔯
                                                                       get global radius -
                                           set numDots to
                                                                           get numDots
     Rename Delete
                                       set Label1 ▼ . Text ▼ to get numDots ▼
Media
      Upload File ...
```

```
    Built-in

                              initialize global radius to 20
    Control
    Logic
                              when Canvas1 .TouchDown
                                                                                   when Canvas1 

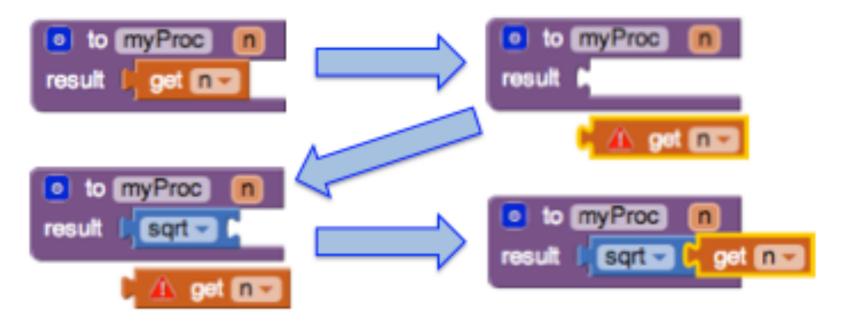
TouchUp
    Math
    Text
                                  call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                                                                       call drawDots -
    I ists
                                                              get X =
                                                                                                        get X
    Colors
                                                              get y
                                                                                                        get y
    ■ Variables
                                                              get global radius
    Procedures

□ Screen1

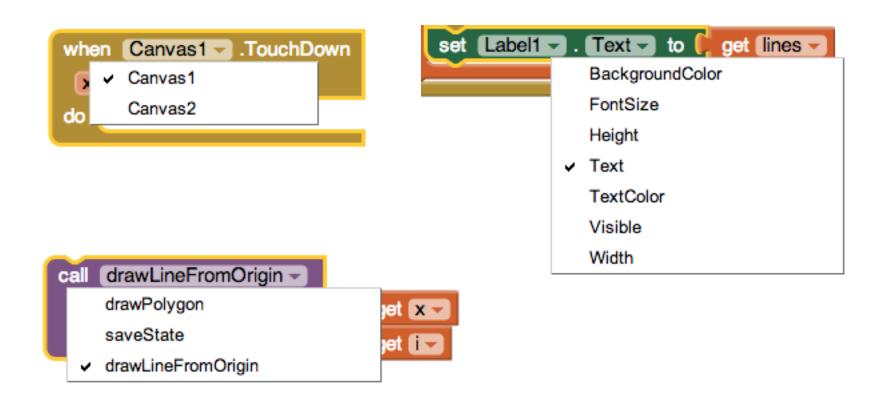
                              to drawDots
    A Labell
                                  initialize local (numDots) to
    Canyas1
                                      for each i from
Any component
                                                       get y
                                                           2 x get global radius
                                          call Canvas1 .DrawCircle
                                                                      get (i2 ▽
                                                                      get 🔯
                                                                      get global radius
                                           set numDots to
                                                                          get numDots
     Rename Delete
                                      set Label1 . Text to get numDots
Media
      Upload File ...
```

Flagging Unbound Variables

Unlike AI1 & other blocks languages, AI2 flags unbound variables (with a red error triangle). This makes variable errors more obvious and reduces viscosity when editing programs:



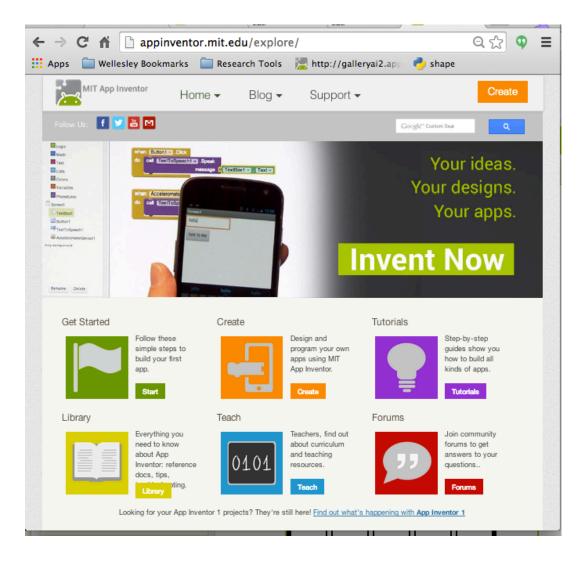
Reducing Viscosity with Drop-Downs



Summary

- Al2 naming features respect the big ideas of naming.
- Al2 reduces error-proneness via:
 - Drop-down menus of in-scope names for references.
 - Flagging unbound variables
- Al2 reduces viscosity via:
 - In-place edits with drop-down menus.
 - Remembering unbound variable names.
- Al2 increases consistency by:
 - representing all variable declarations using the same nonblock notation.
 - Eliminating extensible sockets for procedure declarations.
- Unlike Al2, Al1 supports local variable declarations.

Thank You! Questions?



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