



 Digital Scrapper Premier 2021, Volume 5

Knockout Letter Boxes

Digital Scrapper Premier 2021, Volume 5 Knockout Letter Boxes (Photoshop Elements)

by Carla Shute

Create a catchy word or phrase for any digital project using knockout letter boxes with masks.

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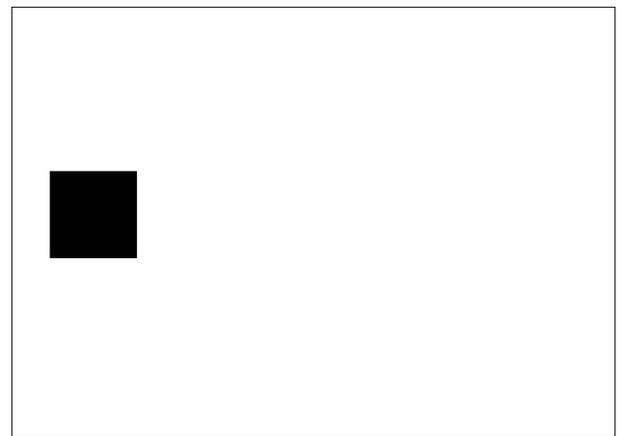
Prepare the Workspace

- Begin in Expert Mode of Photoshop Elements.
- Create a new 7x5 inch document (File > New > Blank File) at 300 ppi with a white background, or create a new document in your preferred scrapping size at 300 ppi with a white background.
- Press the letter D to reset the Color Chips to black over white.

Create the First Letter Box

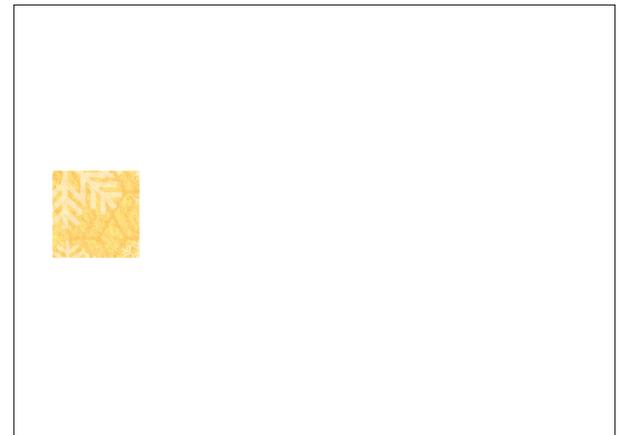
- In the Layers panel, click on the Create a New Layer icon.
- Double click directly on the name of the new layer and rename it Block 1.
- Press Enter/Return to commit the change.

- Get the Rectangular Marquee tool.
- In the Tool Options, click on the New Selection icon. Set the Feather to 0 and the Aspect to Fixed Size. Set the Width to 1 inch and the Height to 1 inch.
- On the left side of your document, click once to create the selection.
- Press Alt Backspace (Mac: Opt Delete) to fill the selection with black.
- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.



Add a Paper to the First Letter Box

- In the Layers panel, the Block 1 layer should be active.
- Open a paper (File > Open) you would like to add to your project. Choose a paper that contrasts with the background color for the best look. I'm using the DSP21-V5-paper3 from the downloads.
- Get the Move tool.
- Click and drag the paper onto your document, making sure the block is completely covered by the new paper.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask.



Create the First Knockout Letter

- Get the Horizontal Type Tool.
- In the Tool Options, open the Font Picker and choose a thick sans serif style font. I'm using Arial Black. Another good font choice is Impact.

Note: You want the layer below your letter box to show through your paper, so the thicker the letter, the more the layer will show.

- Set the Size to 60, the Leading to Auto, and the Tracking to 0. Click on the Left Alignment icon. Click on the Color Chip and choose black.
- On the document, click once in the center of the letter box to place the cursor.
- Type the first letter of the word or phrase you want to create with the knockout boxes. I'm going to type an "h" for the word "hello".



Note: If you want to reposition the letter so it's in the middle of the knockout box, hold down the Ctrl key (Mac: Cmd key) and click and drag inside the bounding box. It doesn't have to be centered. The type just needs to be within the box.

- Click the checkmark to commit.

Create the Knockout Effect

- In the Layers panel, the type layer should be active.
- Holding the Shift key, click on the Block 1 layer. All the layers between the type layer and Block 1 layer should now be active.
- Click on the Create a New Group icon.
- Double click directly on the name of the group and rename it Letter Box 1.
- Press Enter/Return to commit.
- Click to open the Letter Box 1 group.
- Hold down the Ctrl key (Mac: Cmd key) and click on the thumbnail of the type layer to get a selection outline.
- The Letter Box 1 group should still be active.
- Hold down the Alt key (Mac: Opt key) and click on the Add Layer Mask icon.



Note: Adding the Alt/Opt key will mask the selected pixels instead of the unselected pixels.

- Click to close the Letter Box 1 group.

What Is the Knockout Effect?

The Knockout Effect allows you to “punch out” part of a layer to reveal layers below it. We are using type for this effect, but you can use shapes as well. We will use masks to achieve this look.

Add a Drop Shadow

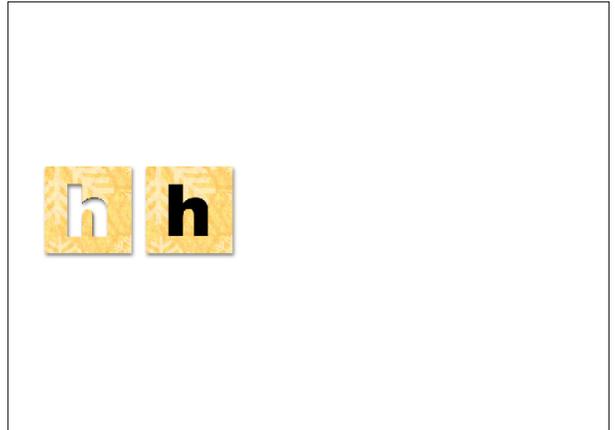
- The Letter Box 1 group should still be active.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Layer Style > Style Settings.
- In the dialog box, set the Lighting Angle to 120°.
- Click directly on the word Drop Shadow to open the settings.



- Set the Size to 13, the Distance to 8, and the Opacity to 50.
- Click OK to close the Style Settings dialog box.

Create Additional Knockout Letter Boxes

- In the Layers panel, the Letter Box 1 group should be active.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the group.
- In the Layers panel, double click directly on the name of the new group and name it Letter Box 2.
- Press Enter/Return to commit the change.
- Get the Move tool.
- In the Tool Options, uncheck Auto Select Layer.
- On the document, click and drag directly on the letter box to reposition it to the right of the first letter box.



Note: If you would like to keep the groups aligned, press and hold the Shift key as you drag the letter box to the right.

- In the Layers panel, click and drag the layer mask for Letter Box 2 to the Trash icon.

Note: A dialog box will appear and ask if you want to delete layer mask. Click delete.

- Click to open the Letter Box 2 group.
- Double click directly on the thumbnail of the type layer and type in the next letter in your word or phrase. I'm typing the letter "e".

Note: To reposition the letter so it's in the middle of the knockout box, hold down the Ctrl key (Mac: Cmd key) and click and drag inside the bounding box. It doesn't have to be perfectly centered.



- Click the checkmark to commit.
- Hold down the Ctrl key (Mac: Cmd key) and click on the thumbnail of the type layer to get a selection outline.
- Click on the Letter Box 2 group to close the group.
- Hold down the Alt key (Mac: Opt key) and click on the Add Layer Mask icon.

- Repeat these steps for each letter in your word or phrase.

Note: You can change out papers or substitute photos for papers for each group for some fun effects.



Crop and Save the Document

- Press Ctrl A (Mac: Cmd A) to select the entire document.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Image > Crop.
- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.

Note: Cropping the image removes pixels outside the document and reduces the size of the file.

- To preserve the knockout letter boxes for later use, save the document (File > Save As) as a PSD file with a unique name.
- Finish your project as desired.

Here is my finished project using the knockout boxes. I love the bright, cheerful boxes with the neutral background paper showing through the letters.



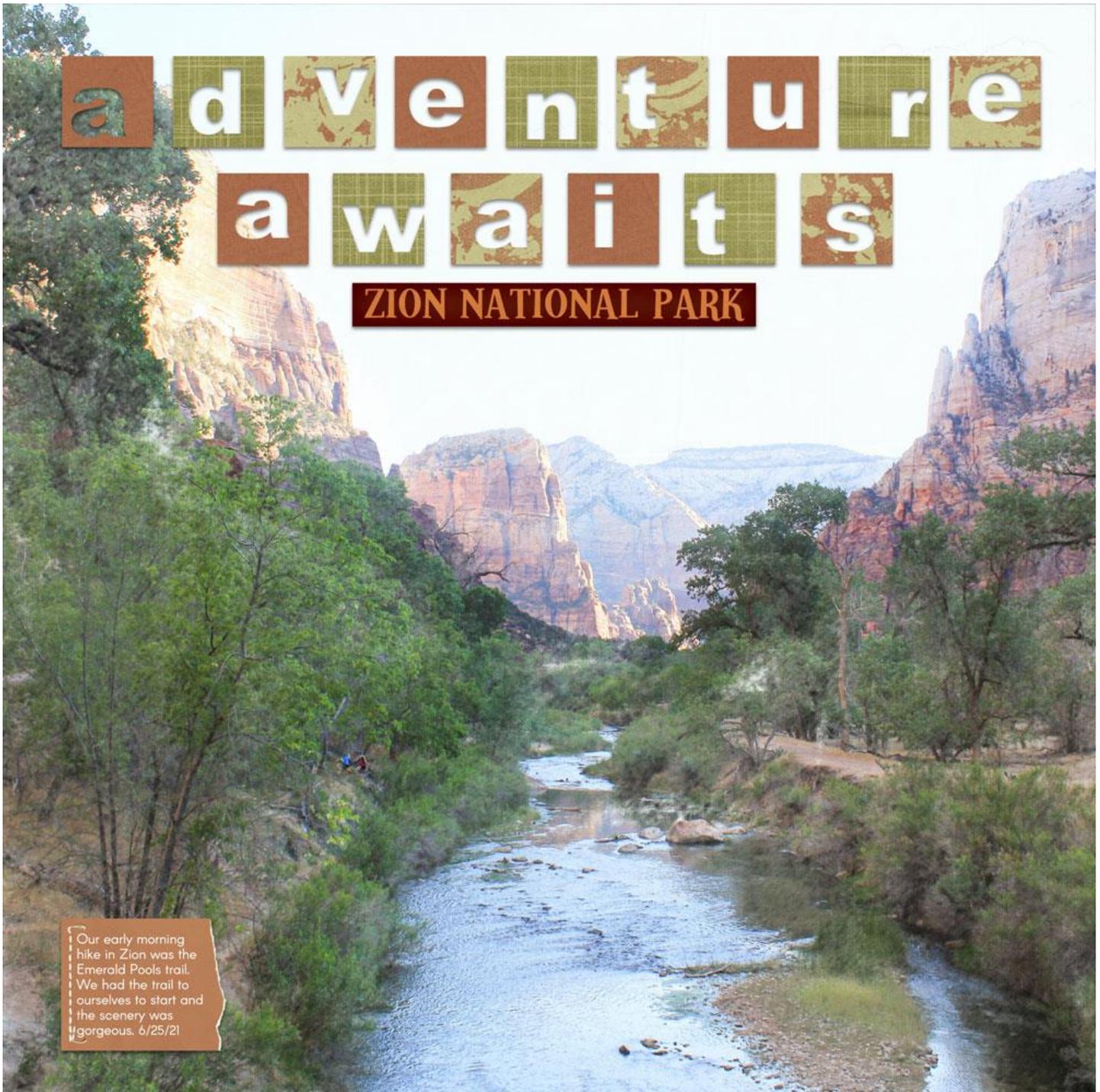
Card by Carla Shute

Tutorial: DS Premier 2021, Volume 5 Knockout Letter Boxes

Kits: DSP21-V5-paper3, Winter Woods Collection by Connie Prince

Fonts: Arial Black, Easy Going

Here is a page I created using knockout letter boxes and different papers. I also varied the position of the type in each box, creating a fun, unique look.



Page & Photo by Carla Shute
Tutorial: DS Premier 2021, Volume 5, Knockout Letter Boxes
Kit: Canyonlands by Aimee Harrison
Fonts: Arial Black, Arcon