



♥ QwikLearn



QwikLearn Photoshop® Elements

PART 2 LAYERS MADE EASY

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Step-by-Step
Instructions
for
WINDOWS

Layers Made Easy—Photoshop Elements for Windows

Lesson 02-01: What Is A Layer?

Practice Image is in QwikLearn Part 2 Lesson 1 Practice Folder.

The concept of layers tends to puzzle those who are just beginning to learn Photoshop Elements.

Physical Layers

Physical layers are quite familiar to us:

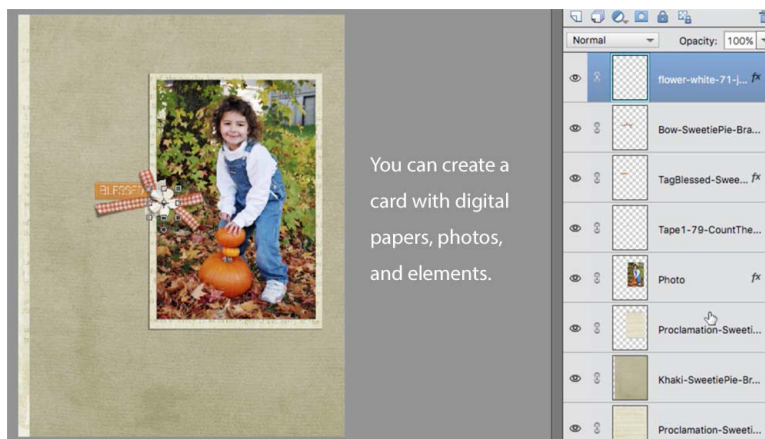
- If you place several papers and a photo in a stack on your kitchen table, each item is a single layer in the stack.
- If you make a card out of the paper and photo and add some artistic elements, you now have a layered art project held together by glue or tape or some other means.
- Each layer is one item in your “composite” art project. (A composite is something made up of various parts or elements.)
- The order of layers is important. Each layer covers up any layer below it.
- Gluing or taping the layers together essentially turns them into one layer.



Digital Layers

The layers in a digital project are a lot like the physical layers in a craft project:

- Each layer is one item in your “composite” digital art project.
- You can rearrange a layer by clicking and dragging it to a new spot in the stack of layers.
- Just like physical layers, digital layers hide the layers below them.
- The digital equivalent to gluing layers together is to flatten Layers. Click on the icon in the upper, right corner of the Layers panel to get a fly-out menu and choose Flatten Image. This will flatten all the layers into one layer.
- The good news is that you don't need to flatten your layers to keep them all in place, so I recommend that you don't flatten your image. Click on the Undo icon in the Task Bar at the bottom of Photoshop Elements to get all your layers back.

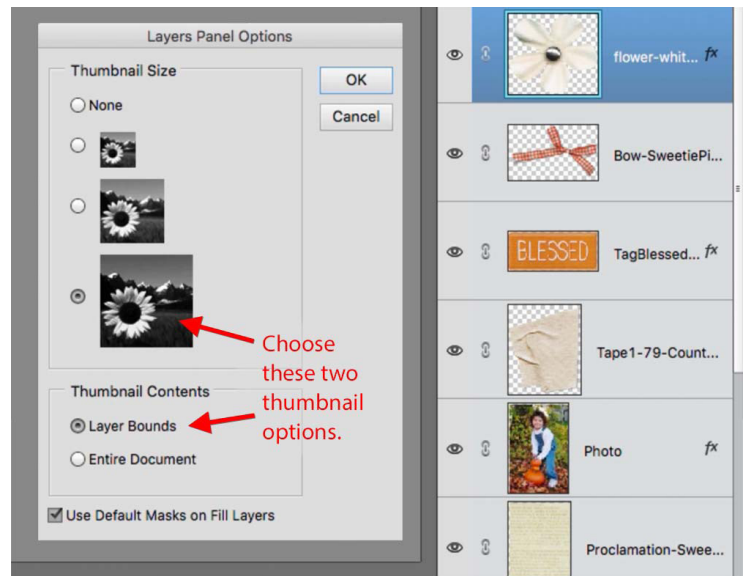


Hide And Reveal Digital Layers

- You can hide a layer temporarily by clicking on the visibility icon to the left of the thumbnail. Click again in the same spot to reveal the layer.
- To view only one layer, press the Alt key and click on the visibility icon to hide every layer but that one. Press Alt and click again in the same spot to reveal all the layers.

Change The Layer Thumbnail

- Digital layers that only cover part of the document will have transparency around them.
- The default setting of the thumbnail shows the item on a layer with all the transparency around it. If an item is small it can be hard to tell what it is by looking at the thumbnail.
- To change the thumbnail appearance, click on the icon in the upper right corner of the Layers panel to get a fly-out menu and choose Panel Options.
- When the dialog box comes up, choose the largest thumbnail size.
- Under Thumbnail Contents choose Layer Bounds instead of Entire Document and click OK. This setting removes the extra transparency from the thumbnail allowing you to better see what's on the layer.

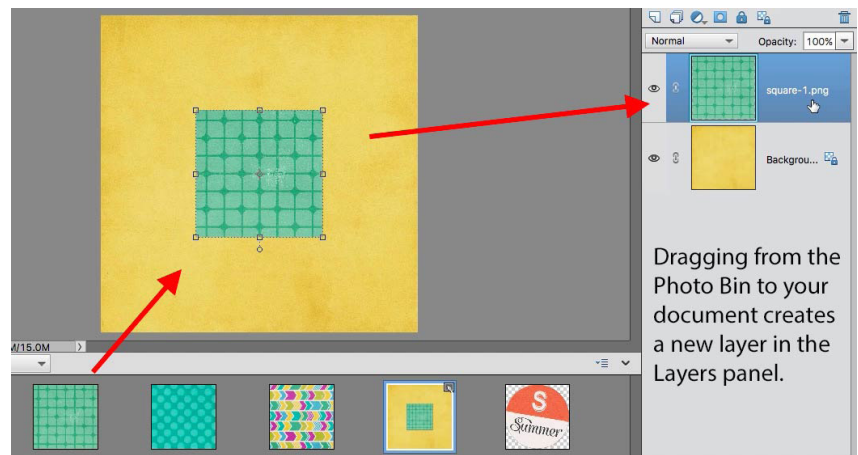


Lesson 02-02: Let's Get Moving, Part 1

Practice Images are in QwikLearn Part 2 Lesson 2 Practice Folder.

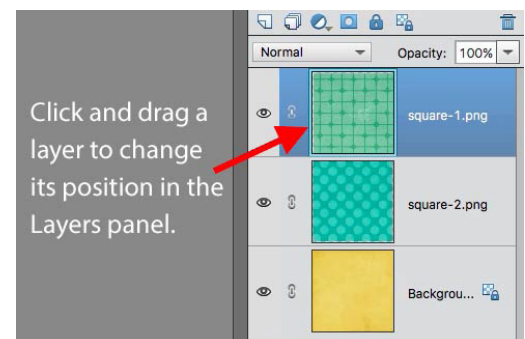
The easiest way to create a layer in the Layers panel of Photoshop Elements is to move a file, such as a photo or an element, from one document to another.

- Open (File > Open) the files you plan to use.
- If the Photo Bin isn't open, in the Task Bar click on Photo Bin.
- In the Photo Bin click on the thumbnail of the destination document to make it the active document.
- Click and drag a thumbnail from the Photo Bin to the destination document on the desktop to move that file onto the destination document.



When you move a file from one document to another using the Photo Bin:

- Photoshop Elements creates a copy of the file you moved without changing the original file.
- The copied file lands in the center of the destination document.
- Photoshop Elements automatically creates a new layer for the copied file in the Layers panel. The new layer has a thumbnail of the copied file.
- The new layer created when moving from the Photo Bin lands above the layer where you let go of the mouse on your document.
- Since the new layers also land in the center of the destination document, it's possible they might be hidden or partially covered by a layer above them.
- To make a layer more visible, in the Layers panel click and drag the layer to a higher level in the stack of layers.



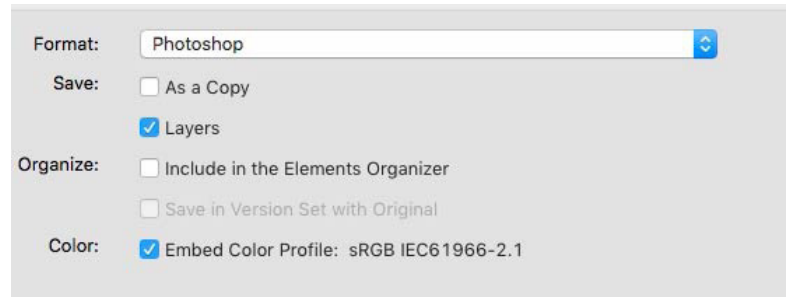
Lesson 02-03: Save A Layered File

There are no Practice Images for Part 2 Lesson 3.

If you close a document without saving it, the layers will disappear and you'll lose all the work you did. Here's how to save files:

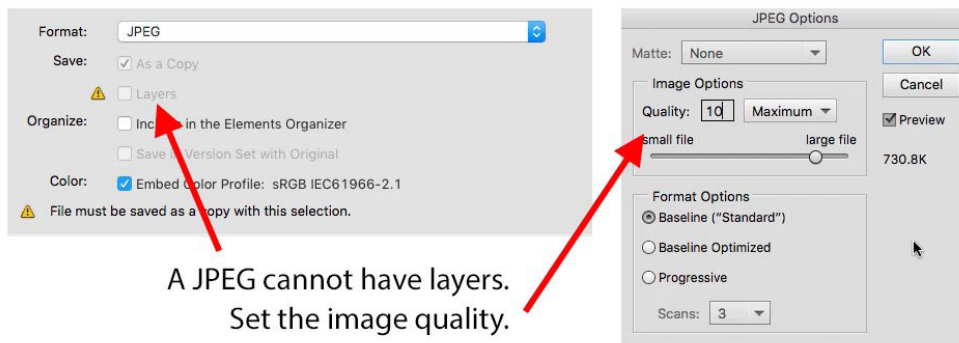
Save a layered file:

- In the Menu Bar choose File > Save.
- Choose a name for your document that's different from the original file.
- Choose a location for your document.
- Choose Photoshop from the Format menu.
- Optional: check to save the file in the Organizer.
- Check "Layers" and "Embed Color Profile."
- Click Save.



Save a JPEG (single layer) version of your file:

- In the Menu Bar choose File > Save As.
- Choose a unique name for your file.
- Choose a location for your document.
- Choose JPEG from the Format menu.
- Optional: check to save the file in the Organizer.
- Check "Embed Color Profile."
- Click Save.
- In the JPEG Options dialog box enter the Quality you want. I rarely go above 10, and I get great results. The quality you choose will display how large the file is on the right.
- Under Format Options choose Baseline ("Standard"). If you are saving for the web or to send an image by email you would choose Baseline Optimized. I never choose Progressive. It harks back to the old days of the web where images would load a section at a time.
- Click OK.



Lesson 02-04: Auto Select Layer: Check Or Uncheck?

Practice Images are in QwikLearn Part 2 Lesson 4 Practice Folder.

You can activate a layer in your digital project by clicking on it in the Layers panel or you can use the Move tool on your document.

Auto Select Layer

- In the Tool Bar, click on the Move tool.
- Open Tool Options and make sure Auto Select Layer is checked.
- On your document click on an item to select its layer in the Layers panel. Click and drag on your document to move an item.
- If you uncheck Auto Select layer, you can click and drag anywhere on your document but only the selected layer in the Layers panel will move. This can be helpful when you're trying to select a very small or thin object on your document.

Auto Select Tip

Temporarily disable Auto Select Layer by pressing the Ctrl key:

- If you have Auto Select Layer checked, press the Ctrl key to temporarily uncheck it.
- If Auto Select Layer is not checked, press the Ctrl key to temporarily check it.
- When you release the Ctrl key, Auto Select returns to its original setting.

Action: Decide whether you prefer Auto Select Layer checked or unchecked and then use the Ctrl key shortcut whenever you want it to do the opposite.

Show Bounding Box

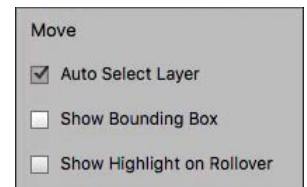
When Show Bounding Box is checked in Tool Options, the active layer in the Layers panel will have a dotted bounding box around it. This shows which layer is the active layer and allows you to quickly resize the layer by clicking and dragging on the resize handles, but for moving small items, the bounding box can actually get in the way.

I prefer to uncheck Show Bounding Box.

Show Highlight On Rollover

This option shows you items that aren't selected. Hover your mouse over any item and when you see the blue outline, you know you can click and that item will be selected.

I find the blue outline more annoying than helpful, so I deselect it.



Lesson 02-05: Let's Get Moving, Part 2

Practice Images are in QwikLearn Part 2 Lesson 5 Practice Folder.

There are several ways to move files.

Method 1: Tabbed documents

Drag a file from one tabbed document to another:

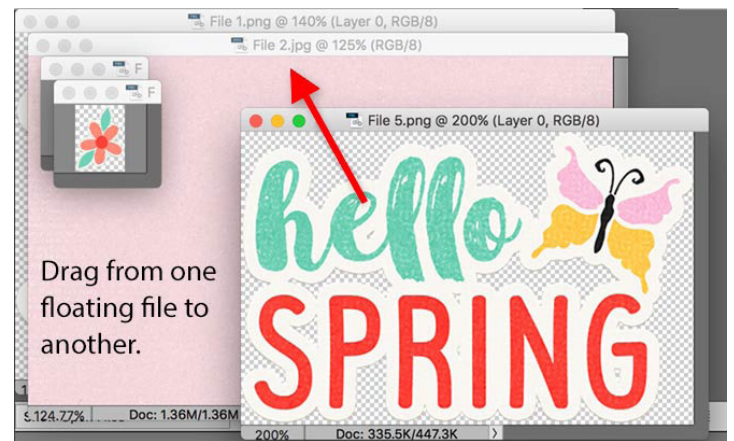
- Choose the Default view (Tabbed view) from the Layout icon in the Task Bar.
- Get the Move tool.
- Activate the document you want to move by clicking on its thumbnail in the Photo Bin or by clicking on its tab.
- On your document click and drag the photo or object to the tab of the destination document and wait until the destination document becomes the active file. Usually that happens pretty quickly. Important: Don't let go of the mouse on the tab.

- When the destination document appears, **move your mouse down into the document before letting go of the mouse**. When you let go of the mouse, Photoshop Elements will copy the file onto the destination document.
- The file will land wherever you let go of the mouse—not in the center as it always does when moving from the Photo Bin, and the layer created in the Layers panel will be above the currently selected layer.
- If you want the file to land in the center of your document, press the Shift key as you let go of the mouse.
- Photoshop Elements will create a new layer with a generic name in the Layers panel, not the actual file name.



Method 2: Floating Window

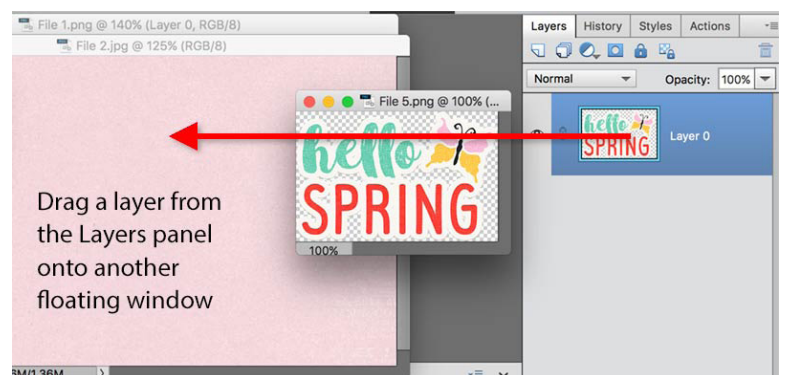
- Choose the All Floating view from the Layout icon in the Task Bar. (If this view is grayed out press Ctrl K to open Preferences and check Allow Floating Documents in Expert Mode.)
- To move a floating window click and drag on the bar across the top.
- Activate the file you want to move by clicking on it, either on the floating window itself or on the thumbnail in the Photo Bin and make sure you can see the destination document as well.
- Click and drag from one document to the other and let go of the mouse on the destination document. It will land wherever you let go of the mouse unless you press the Shift key as you move it.
- Photoshop Elements will create a new layer with a generic name, not the actual file name, and the new layer will land above the currently selected layer.



Method 3: Layers Panel

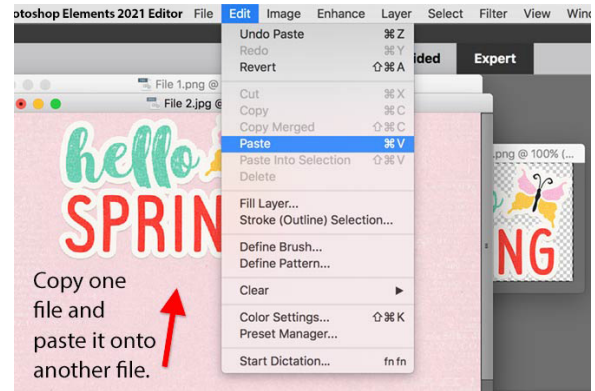
Move a layer from the Layers panel onto another document. This method only works in the Floating Window view and doesn't require the use of the Move tool.

- Click anywhere on the layer in the Layers panel and drag it onto the new document.
- Press Shift as you as you let go of the mouse if you want it to land in the center of the destination document.
- Photoshop Elements will create a new layer that lands above the currently selected layer. If the layer has a generic name it will change to "Layer + a number" in the destination document. If it has a specific name that name will be retained.
- Once it's copied to the new document, you'll need the Move tool to move the layer to a new spot on your document.



Method 4: Copy & Paste

- Activate the file you want to move.
- In the Menu Bar choose Select > All to put a selection outline around the entire document.
- In the Menu Bar choose Edit > Copy, or use the common shortcut, Ctrl C to copy the selection.
- Click on the destination document to make it the active document and Choose Edit > Paste, or use the common keyboard shortcut, Ctrl V.
- By default, the copied image will land in the center of your destination document. Photoshop Elements will create a new layer with a generic name.



Copy & Paste Tip

If you want your file to land somewhere other than the center of the document, here's how:

- Get one of the Marquee tools, such as the Rectangular Marquee tool.
- On your document click and drag a small outline where you want the object to land.
- When you choose Edit > Paste, the image you copied will land in the center of the selection outline, not the center of the document.
- Photoshop Elements will create a new layer with a generic name.
- Use the Move tool to move the new layer if desired.

Layer Order

When you use these four methods of moving files from one document to another, the new layer will always land above the selected layer in the Layer panel, not above the layer where you let go of the mouse, as it does when you move a file from the Photo Bin onto your document.

Lesson 02-06: Resize A Layer, Part 1

Practice Images are in QwikLearn Part 2 Lesson 6 Practice Folder.

Resize a layer using the Move tool.

Adjust Tool Options And Photo Viewing Size

- Get the Move tool.
- Open Tool Options and check Show Bounding Box. This will put an outline around the selected layer.
- If the layer is so large that part or all of the bounding box is out of view, press Ctrl 0. This will change the viewing size so you can see all four sides of the bounding box.
- If you want to make the bounding box even smaller, press Ctrl - until it's the size you want.

Adjust Layers Proportionately

Most layers, but especially photos, need to be resized proportionately. Here are two ways to do that:

- Click and drag from a bounding box corner handle to keep the original proportions. This will resize three corners at the same time while the corner opposite to the corner you're dragging will remain in the same place without moving.
- To resize all four corners at the same time, press Alt and click and drag from a corner handle.
- Both methods work, so choose the method that works the best for what you need at the time.

IMPORTANT! If you want your photo or element to remain proportionate, never click and drag from a side handle!

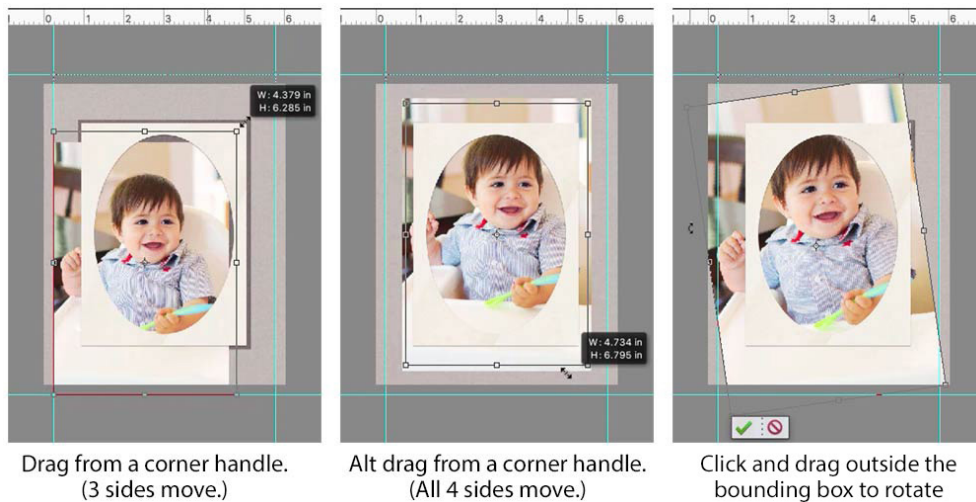
Move and Rotate Layers

- To move the position of the file while resizing, click and drag inside the bounding box or use the Arrow keys.
- To rotate the file move your mouse just outside the bounding box, anywhere along the edge, and when you see a curved double arrow, click and drag to rotate the photo.
- When you're satisfied with the position and size of a file, click on the check mark to commit the change.
- When you're finished with the bounding box, open Tool Options and uncheck Show Bounding Box.

Access Rulers And Guides

In this lesson I used rulers and guides.

- To access or hide the Rulers, in the Menu Bar choose View > Rulers.
- To access a guide, click and drag out a guide from either the vertical or horizontal ruler.
- To remove all guides, in the Menu Bar choose View > Clear Guides.



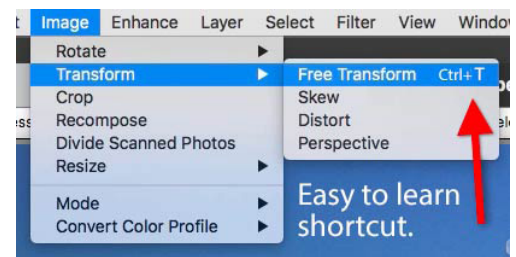
Lesson 02-07: Resize A Layer, Part 2

Practice Images are in QwikLearn Part 2 Lesson 7 Practice Folder.

Resize a layer using the Transform tool.

- When you use the Transform tool to change the size of a layer, you can have any tool active, unlike Show Bounding Box where you must access the Move tool first.
- Activate the layer you want to resize.
- In the Menu Bar choose Image > Transform > Free Transform or use the shortcut listed on the right: Ctrl T.
- A transform outline will appear that works the same way as Show Bounding Box.
- Click on a corner handle and drag inward or outward to resize the image and keep the original proportions. Avoid using side handles because that will distort your image.
- To resize from the center moving all four corners at the same time, press Alt and click and drag from any corner handle.
- Click and drag inside the outline to move the image.
- Click and drag outside the outline to rotate the image.

You now have two options to resize. You can use Show Bounding Box when the Move tool is the active tool, or you can use the Transform tool with any tool. I personally prefer the Transform tool.



Lesson 02-08: What Are Smart Objects?

Practice Images are in QwikLearn Part 2 Lesson 8 Practice Folder.

In Part 1 when I told you how to set up your Preferences, I had you check “Disable Smart Objects.” If you don’t disable smart objects, then every image you drag from the Photo Bin onto another document becomes a smart object. You can tell it’s a smart object because it has an icon in the lower right corner of the layer thumbnail.

Smart Object Positive Feature

In Photoshop there are several beneficial reasons to use smart objects, but in Photoshop Elements a smart object has only one positive feature: Every time you resize a photo or element, it starts over with the original image so you have the least loss of quality possible.

Smart Object Negative Features

- You cannot use a filter on a smart object.
- You cannot use most tools, like the Eraser tool or Brush tool or Healing tools, etc. on a smart object.
- You cannot use the Enhance features on a smart object.

Basically all you can do is resize a smart object. This is why I had you turn off this feature in Preferences. The many negatives outweigh the one positive feature.

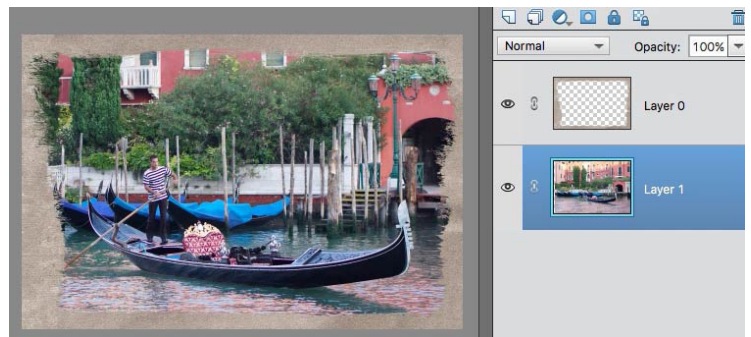
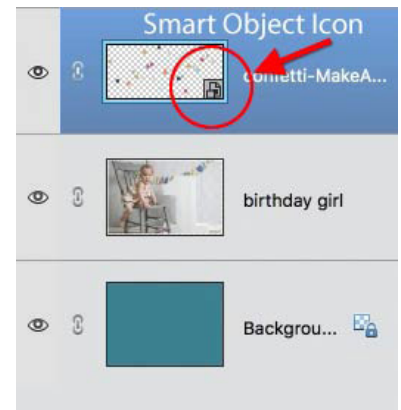
Lesson 02-09: Part 2 Project—Postcard

Practice Images are in QwikLearn Part 2 Lesson 9 Practice Folder.

Normally I won’t be giving you all the steps to a project, but for this first project I’ll list the steps I took. You may decide to do something different, and that’s perfectly fine.

Combine the Photo and Template

- Click on the Open button on the desktop and navigate to the Part 2 Lesson 9 practice files.
- Click on the file called postcard-template-LindaSattgast-StudioManu.png and Cmd click on the photo called Venice gondola.jpg. (If this creates a new line, combine the 3rd bullet point with the second one.)
- Click Open to open the two images.
- Make the postcard template the active file by clicking on its thumbnail in the Photo Bin.
- If I click and drag the Venice thumbnail from the Photo Bin to the template, Photoshop Elements will resize the image to fit within the bounds of the document, even if the original photo is larger. Since I didn’t want that to happen, I made the photo the active document by clicking on its tab.
- Click and drag the photo onto the tab of the postcard template, down into the document, and then press Shift as you let go of the mouse to center it on your image.
- In the Layers panel click and drag the photo layer below the template layer, so that it shows through the transparent postcard opening.
- Press Ctrl T to get a transform outline.
- Press Ctrl 0 to make the transform outline fit the available desktop.
- Press Alt and click and drag from a corner handle to resize all four corner at once. When you’re satisfied with the size and position, click on the green checkmark to commit the change.
- Click on the “close” icon on the tab of your photo to close it.



Add Elements

- Open the elements you want to place on your postcard. I opened the travel adventure stamp, the white seal image, the cancellation mark, and the airmail sticker.
- Click and drag the postage stamp from the Photo Bin onto your document.
- If you want to resize the stamp, press Ctrl T to get transform options. Click and drag from a corner hand until it's the size you want and click on the check mark to commit the change.
- In the same way, add any other elements to the page and resize them as needed.
- When you add the cancellation marks, lower the opacity at the top of the Layers panel to around 40%.



Here's how my post card looked when I was done.

Save Your document

- When you're finished, in the Menu Bar choose File > Save As. Give your project a name. I called mine Travel Postcard.
- Use PSD for the Format and check "Layers" and "Embed Color Profile."
- If you want you can also include this file in the Elements Organizer.
- Decide where to save your postcard and click Save.

Lesson 02-10: Print Your Project

There are no Practice Images for Lesson 10.

Choose Photo Paper

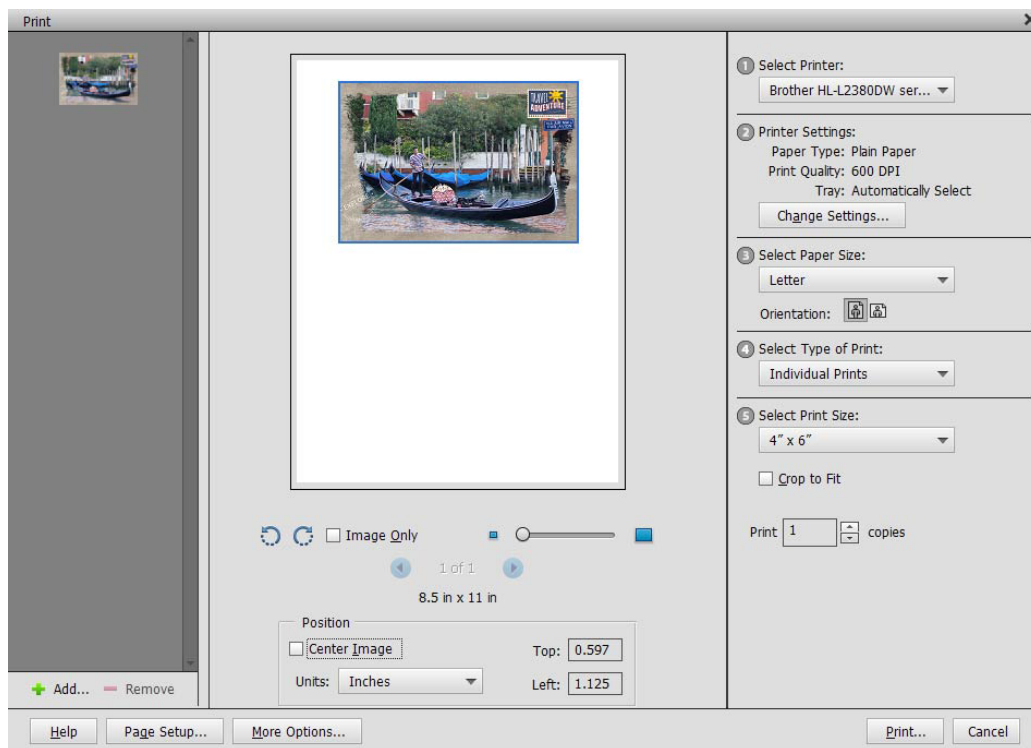
You need good quality photo paper for your image to look good, but you also need the back side to be suitable for writing. A high quality double sided matte photo paper works great for this. Staples has a brand called Photo Supreme Double Sided Matte that I use when I make cards or postcards.

Print Your Postcard

You do not have to flatten your layered postcard file before you print it.

- In the Menu Bar choose File > Print, or use the shortcut Ctrl P.
- When the dialog box comes up select a Printer if you have more than one printer.
- Click on Change Settings and the settings for your printer will come up. You may need to expand the dialog box to see all the features. In my case I had to click on Advanced Settings and then click on Advanced Settings again, but your printer may vary.
- Choose Photo Quality for the Paper Type. For the brand of paper I recommended above, choose matte instead of glossy. Click OK until you get back to the Print dialog box.
- Select your Paper Size. I chose US Letter.
- Choose the Orientation. For this image it makes more sense to choose the vertical orientation.
- Select Type of Print. Selecting Individual Prints will place one photo on one piece of paper. You can also choose Picture Package to print more than one photo on a page. You'll learn about Picture Package in the next lesson.

- Select Print Size. The postcard is 4x6 inches, and since that's a standard size, it's listed in the menu, but if you have a non-standard size to print choose Actual Size, as long as it fits on the size of paper you're using.
- Another option is to choose Crop to Fit, if it doesn't fit.
- You can select the number of copies you want to print, but remember that if you've chosen individual print, each photo will print on a separate sheet of paper. I chose 1 for the number of Print copies.
- You can change the position of your postcard on the page by clicking and dragging on the blue line around the photo. This deselects the Center Image check box. Don't click and drag on the image itself, though, or it will hide part of the image. If you do this accidentally, check Center Image and try again making sure you get a cross icon rather than a hand icon. Drag the photo to the top to save paper.
- When you're satisfied with the settings, click Print.
- After printing your postcard, let the ink dry and then cut it out, and it's ready to use as a postcard!



Lesson 02-11: Print With Picture Package

There are no Practice Images for Lesson 11.

Picture Package is a great way to set up multiple photos for printing—either one photo printed multiple times or two or more different photos printed at the same time. Let's say, for example, that you want to print two of the same post card.

- Open the image you want to print in Photoshop Elements
- In the Menu Bar choose File > Print.
- When the dialog box comes up, choose Picture Package from Step 4. Elements will then open Organizer, the organizing software that comes with Photoshop Elements.
- Follow the steps on the right. Make sure you have the correct printer, the correct printer settings, and the correct size of paper you're printing on. The Type of Print should already be set to Picture Package.
- In Step 5, open the Layout menu and choose the layout you want. Because this dialog box assumes you aren't going to print to the edge, you will get a warning dialog box. Click OK to the warning.
- If you want the same photo to fill every place in the layout, check Fill Page With First Photo. You can put more than two images on a page as long as they fit.
- To print all three of the post cards on one piece of photo paper, open the Layout menu and choose Letter (3) 4x6.
- Click OK to accept the warning.
- If you don't want the first image to fill the layout, uncheck Fill Page With First Photo.
- Click on the Add icon.
- In the Add Media dialog box, click on an image you want to add. If you want to add more than one image, hold down the Ctrl key and click on an additional thumbnail. Then click Add Selected Media and click Done.
- When you've added all your images, click Print.

