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Picture Perfect Gift Books—How To for Photoshop Elements, Pt 2

Lesson 02: Gift Book Templates

A template makes it easy to create pages for your gift books and to add a nicely designed cover.

The templates I'm supplying for the Picture Perfect Gift Book class are for Shutterfly and AdoramaPix, two online book printing companies.

THERE ARE MANY OTHER OTHER FINE
BOOK PRINTING COMPANIES,
BUT SINCE WE CAN'T FEATURE THEM ALL,
WE HAVE CHOSEN THESE TWO.

- There are three sets of page templates:
DS-Boy-Meets-Girl-SF-11x8.5
DS-Grandmas-Garden-AP-8x8
DS-Senior-Yearbook-SF-12x12

DS stands for DigitalScrapper, the template designer.

SF stands for Shutterfly.

AP stands for AdoramaPix

The size of the template is listed on the main template folder.

- In the download folder for each set of page templates, you'll find a preview image of the PSD template files. On a Mac, .psd images are visible, but on Windows computers they're not, so I've included JPEG previews so you'll know what the templates look like. On the preview images, I included a notice that these are only previews. This is so you don't accidentally open the previews thinking they're the templates and then wonder why they don't work.
- There are two categories of cover templates, one for gift books for adults and one for children's picture books.
- Open one of these folders, and you'll find more folders—one for each cover.
- Inside the cover folder are the templates. The template names give important information:
DS means Digital Scrapper, the template creator
Cover indicates this is a book cover template
The letter C means this is a book cover for children
If the template has the letter A, it's a book cover for Adults
The number after the letter indicates which template it is
The dimensions of each template are in the name
AP means AdoramaPix
SF means Shutterfly

Use the appropriate template for the company you choose.

If you have facility with Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, you can modify these covers for use with another company, but training for how to do that is beyond the scope of this class.

Lesson 09-03: Intro to Templates

How to Use The Cover Templates

In this video we'll learn how to open a template, save a copy, and prepare our workspace for using the template.

Open Your Files

- Open Photoshop Elements.
- Click on Expert at the top of your program.
- In the Menu Bar, choose File > Open. Navigate to the folder of templates you downloaded.
- Look at the preview to find the template you want to use.
- Look at the filenames of the .psd templates in the same folder as the preview to know what size of template you want to open.
- To open a template, double click on the .psd template file for the size you want and the company you plan to use.
- Create a copy of the cover template so you don't overwrite the original file. To do that, in the Menu Bar choose File > Save As. In the Save As dialog box, give the file a new name. Navigate to the folder where you plan to save it. Save the file as a .psd layered file. Click Save.
- Save frequently as you work on your template by choosing File > Save.
- Open the photo(s) you plan to use with the template.
- Open any digital paper you plan to use for the cover.
- To get a tabbed view for your photos, in the Menu Bar choose Window > Images > Consolidate all to tabs.

Prepare Your Workspace

- Open the Photo Bin and activate the template document by double clicking on its thumbnail.
- In the Tool Bar, click on the Move tool. In Tool Options, check Auto Select Layer and Show Bounding Box.
- Make sure the Layers panel is open. If you don't see it, in the Menu Bar choose Window > Layers. In the Layers panel you'll see all the template layers.
- Take note of the guides. The guides show you the location of safe areas. Keep important parts of an image inside the guides. With cover templates, any place between the guides and the edge of the document may be folded over as part of the cover edge.

Lesson 09-04: Add & Resize Photos

In this video we'll learn how to add photos to a template and resize them, if necessary.

- On your document, use the Move tool to click on the part of the template you want to work with. Whichever template part you click on will get a bounding box around it.
- Clicking on part of your template will also select it's layer in the Layers panel. The Layers panel will tell you which layers are for photos and which layers are for paper. And then there may be some other kinds of layers as well. This document also has some lines, an element, and two type layers.

To Move a photo onto a cover template

- Open the Photo Bin.
- Click and drag the thumbnail of your photo onto the template document.

Resize Photos

How your photo responds when it's copied onto your document will depend on the version of Photoshop Elements you're using. Some versions bring the photo in at the full size. Others like this one, resize the photo to fit within the bounds of your document.

No matter which way the photo displays, though, you can adjust the size to your liking by clicking and dragging from a corner handle of the bounding box.

- Don't click and drag from a side handle, or you'll distort the photo. Only use the corner handles.
- To reposition the photo, click and drag inside the bounding box.
- When you're satisfied with the position and size of the image, click on the green check mark to commit the change.
- If your photo is large and your version of Photoshop Elements doesn't resize it to fit within your document, you may not be able to see the corners of the bounding box. If that's the case for you, in the Menu Bar, choose View > Fit on Screen, and that will change the view of your document to include the entire bounding box.
- The bounding box only shows up when the Move tool is the active tool. If you choose another tool, the bounding box disappears. It reappears when you choose the Move tool again.

Clipping Mask

Notice in the Layers panel, that the layer below the photo is called a PHOTO clipping mask.

- To clip a photo layer to a PHOTO clipping mask layer, make sure the photo layer is immediately above the clipping mask layer. If it isn't, click and drag to change the layer order.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create clipping mask and that will make the layer conform to the size and shape of the PHOTO clipping mask layer.

In this case, nothing appeared to change because other layers were covering up part of the photo. So let's look at another example.

Here's a cover with an interesting clipping mask shape:

- Click on the template shape to select its layer in the layer panel.
- Click and drag your photo onto your document and it will land above the clipping mask layer.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask, and that instantly adheres the photo to the shape of the clipping mask layer.
- Now all you have to do is adjust the size of your photo and commute the change by clicking on the green check mark.

This is the way page templates work as well.

- To unclip a layer, activate the layer in the Layers panel.
- In the Menu Bar choose Layer > Release Clipping Mask.
- To clip it again, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask.

So that's how to use the clipping masks in the templates.

Lesson 09-05: Add Color or Paper to the Template

In this video we'll learn how to change the color of a template layer. And I'll show you how to add digital paper to a template layer, if you prefer that over a flat color.

To Add Color

- Click with the Move tool to select the template layer you want to change.
- Click on the Foreground Color Chip. When the Color Picker comes up, choose a color or click on your photo to sample a color.
- Press Alt Backspace (Mac: Option Delete) to fill the template layer with the Foreground color.
- Repeat with other template layers.

To Add Paper

If, instead, you prefer to add digital paper to the template layers, here's how to do it.

- Select the template layer with the Move tool.
- Open the Photo Bin and click and drag the paper onto your template.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask.
- Resize as necessary, using the corner handles of the bounding box. Click the green check mark to commit the change.
- And finally, if you decide you don't want a particular layer, simply click on the Visibility icon to hide it.

Lesson 09-06: Create Your Title

In this video we'll look at how to customize the title or other type on your cover.

- In the Tool Bar, get the Horizontal Type tool.
- Open Tool Options if you're not sure you have the right tool.
- On the template, click on some type to activate it.
- If you click on a type layer and get a warning, that means your computer doesn't have the font used by the type layer. Your computer will offer to change the font, so say OK.
- Highlight the title by clicking and dragging over the type with your cursor, or by choosing Select > All in the Menu Bar.
- Type the title you want.
- To change the font, in Tool Options open the Font menu and choose a new font.
- In Tool Options you can also change the type color and size.
- Adjust any other type layers as desired.
- Get the Move tool and use your Arrow keys to adjust the type location as needed.

Lesson 09-07: Back Cover & Spine

In this video we'll look at the back cover and spine, which is different depending on whether you use Shutterfly or AdoramaPix.

- With AdoramaPix, the front and back cover and the spine are created in one document. Use a color or digital paper for the back cover that matches the front cover.
- With Shutterfly, there are three documents: the front cover, the spine, and the back cover. We only provide layered templates for the front cover, but we do supply Shutterfly's empty spine and back cover templates in the class downloads. You can also get them at Shutterfly.com.

- Start by filling the spine and back cover with a color or you can add digital paper.
- To add a title to the spine, first copy the type on your cover. To do this, get the Horizontal Type tool and highlight the title. Choose Edit > Copy. Then press Escape to deselect the type.
- Activate the Spine document.
- Click once on the spine document to activate a type layer.
- In the Menu Bar choose Edit > Paste.
- In the Menu Bar choose Select > All.
- In Tool Options, click on the Color Swatch to change the color of the type. Choose your color and click OK.
- Press Enter to commit the type.
- In the Menu Bar choose Image > Rotate > Layer 90° Right.
- Get the Move tool and use the Bounding Box to resize the title, if necessary. Place the title in the center of the spine, and don't make it too big or it won't fit on the printed spine.
- Use the same instructions to create the author credits.

Lesson 09-08: Finish Your Cover

In this video we'll talk about the finishing touches for your cover, including saving your file as a JPEG.

- Look over your document one last time to make sure everything is as you want it.
- When I looked at my page, I liked everything except for the color of blue on the title. It didn't quite match the color of blue on the boy's jacket.
- Activate the type layer by clicking on it with the Move tool.
- Click on the Foreground Color Chip. When the Color Picker comes up, sample the blue on the baby's jacket.
- Press Alt Backspace (Mac: Opt Delete) to fill the type with the new color.

Once you're satisfied with everything:

- In the Menu Bar choose Select > All.
- In the Menu Bar choose Image > Crop. This gets rid of anything outside the bounds of your document.
- In the Menu Bar choose Select > Deselect to get rid of the selection outline.
- Save your document one last time (File > Save). That saves the layered document, but now we need a flat JPEG version of this document.
- Choose File > Save As. When the Save As dialog box comes up, choose JPEG from the Format menu and click Save. In JPEG options, choose 10 for the Quality, Baseline Standard for the Format Options, and click OK.

This will save a flat version of the cover that you can upload to the online book publishing website.

Do the same for the back cover and the spine.

So that's how to use the cover templates to create beautiful covers for your gift books!