By Linda Sattgast

Picture Perfect Gift Books—Adoramapix Part 2
Making Books with the AdoramaPix Book Editor

If you don't know how to use Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, you can still create beautiful books using the templates and book editor on AdoramaPix.

There's a always a learning curve with any new piece of software, so by the time you learn how to use the templates on AdoramaPix to get exactly what you want, you probably could have learned the basics of Photoshop or Photoshop Elements.

But if you prefer to use the online editor, you can certainly create beautiful books. You can even create spot art, as long as you can photograph objects against a white background and adjust them in either Photoshop or Photoshop Elements.

Lesson 04: Online Editor Part 1

AdoramaPix Templates

You might start by looking at the children's photo book template category on AdoramaPix.

There's an alphabet book, which is just OK. I think you can do better on your own.

Baby Boy has a lot of high drop shadows. Just so you know, high drop shadows tend to be something beginners use, and experienced designers don't tend to use them, so I don't recommend them, though you can certainly do whatever you want. I'm not going to dictate what you can and can't do.

My favorite of the children's template books is Flower Girl. It has some pretty decent layouts that are simple and, for the most part, nicely designed.

So feel free to experiment with the templates created by AdoramaPix, but in this video I want to show you how to duplicate the look of some of the books I've shown you in this class.

I recommend using the Build Your Own option. It actually works pretty well when you're starting with only digital photos—no finished pages.

Upload Your Photos

After selecting the Build Your Own option, you are invited to upload your photos. Once your images are uploaded, you'll be taken to the book editor where you get a blank cover and blank pages so you can build your own.

In the Asset strip on the left, click on Layouts. Open the menu at the top and choose the number of photos you want on each page. I chose one photo per page.

Spread Design 1

A very simple design is to put type on the left page and one photo that fills the page on the right. That is a very common design for a children's picture book. Go to the library and you'll see this design repeated over and over.

The layout menu doesn't have a full bleed option. Full bleed just means that the photo goes to the edge of the page on all four sides. To make your own full bleed page:

- Choose a layout with one photo that covers the entire right side of the page.
- Click and drag the layout thumbnail onto the page on the right.
- Click on the gray photo placeholder to activate the bounding box.
- Drag from the center left handle to the left until you reach the center. It will snap into place.

Add Type

- Click on Settings to enter Global settings that apply to your entire book. You can change it later, but whatever you set will be the default. Here's what I chose:

Font: Verdana	No Shadow
Font Size: 24 points	Color: black

- You can also choose to add a shadow or a border to your photos. I didn't add shadows, but I did add a border. The smallest border is the number 3, and I left black as the color.
- Click on the Text tab. Click and drag the text icon onto the left page.
- Double click on the type to select it and type the words you want on the page.
- Click outside the type outline to commit the type.
- Click and drag the type to place it where you want. If you want it centered, drag until you see two cross hair lines, which indicate the center.

That's how to create a very simple but elegant children's picture book double spread.

Lesson 05: Online Editor Part 2

Spread Design 2

- To access the next spread, click on the next thumbnail in the thumbnail strip at the bottom, or you can click the triangles below the editor.
- The triangles with the lines take you to the first or last spread of your book, and the single triangles take you to the previous or the next spread.
- I already created a full bleed right hand page and inserted a photo as I showed you for the first spread.
- On the left page we'll add a photo and change the type size and color.
- In the Layout tab, choose a layout with a photo size you can repeat over and over without having to resize it manually. Drag the thumbnail of the layout onto the left page.
- Decide where you want your photo. I wanted mine in the center.
- Click and drag the type out of the way.
- Click on the photo preview and drag it to the location you want. When you see both crosshair lines, you'll know the photo is centered.
- Click and drag a photo onto the gray photo placeholder and adjust the photo as necessary.
- Click off the photo to deselect the bounding box.
- Even though I selected a black outline in the settings, it didn't actually give me a black outline, but it's easy to add one. With the photo selected, choose Border from the Tool Box at the top. Click the up arrow once to get 3. Use black for the color. Click outside the photo to deselect.

Adjust the Type

- Double click on the type layer and type what you want to say.
- I didn't get the size I asked for in settings, so I had to change it. I used Verdana, Size 30, Bold.
- Click on Color to choose a new color. I chose a bright green to contrast with the red and pink.
- Click on the Text tab and drag another Text block onto your page.
- Double click and type what you want. I typed the letters Aa.
- Another way to change color is to sample a color from your workspace.
- Click the color icon and use the Eyedropper to click on a color, such as a color from your photo. If you can't get the Eyedropper to work, change the position of the floating Tool Bar.
- I clicked on the color of my other word to get the same green.

Spot Art

- You can replace a photo by clicking and dragging a new photo over the old one.
- You can create the look of spot art. If you want to do this, watch my tutorial on creating spot art in the How To section of the classroom.
- When you replace a photo, use the Zoom and Pan tools to adjust it.
- In the Tool Box, click on Clear Style to make the photo look like spot art. You may be able to see a small edge of a different color around the photo, but that's OK.

Lesson 06: Online Editor Part 3

Add a Sticker

- Click on the Stickers tab.
- Choose a category or enter a keyword in the search box. I chose the animals category.
- Click and drag the sticker of your choice onto your layout, resize it, position it, and click off of it to commit it.

Multiple Photos on a Page

- In the Layouts tab, choose layouts with more than one photo. I chose 4 photos per page and used this option for the right hand page.

Alphabet Stickers

To replace alphabet letters with stickers:

- Click on the type you want to remove, and choose Cut from the Tool Box to delete the type.
- Click on the Stickers tab.
- Type block into the search field.
- Scroll down until you see the blocks. They're not in alphabetical order, but I checked to make sure all the letters were there.
- Click and drag a block sticker onto your page and resize it and position it.
- As you resize it, note the dimensions in pixels. You'll want to resize each block to the same pixel dimension.

Add Styles to Multiple Layers

- Click on one photo and Shift click on additional photos to select them.
- Unfortunately, I don't know of a way to move more than one photo at a time, but you can add styles to multiple layers.
- Click on Outline in the Tool Box and add an outline to all selected photos.

I've been showing you an alphabet book, but the same skills can be used for any kind of children's picture book.

Lesson 07: Online Editor Part 4

Add a Background

Let's look at one more picture book spread and learn a few more tricks.

- If you want a colored background, click on the Backdrops tab.
- You have three choices of backgrounds: Solid colors, Color gradients, and Patterned backdrops.
- There are so many patterned backdrops, that it helps to choose a category, like Abstract.
- Click and drag a thumbnail to your background to apply it.

Solid Color

You can also choose a solid color:

- Drag a preset color onto your background, and it will replace whatever is already there.
- To choose your own color, click on the Color icon—the one with an Eyedropper. Choose a color, and then drag it onto the background of your page.
- If your color is too dark, making it difficult to read the type, you can click on the type and change the color to white.
- Another option is to put a layer of white behind the type. I created a 12 x 12 inch JPEG image of a white document, which is in the same download as the manual for this series of lessons. If you upload it as one of your photos, you can use it for a variety of purposes. One is to create a white background.
- Click and drag the white paper onto the page and position it over the type.
- In the floating Tool Box, click Backward to move it behind the type.
- Adjust the size as necessary, and click off of it to remove the bounding box. It makes a nice little placeholder for type that you can make any size you like.

White Photo Border

To add a white photo border:

- Click on the photo to reveal the bounding box.
- In the Tool Box at the top, click on the Border icon.
- Move the slider to the left to create a border outside of the photo, and move it to the right to create a border inside the photo. Either way it has nice square corners.
- Choose any color you want for the border. I usually choose white.

Lesson 08: Online Editor Part 5—The Cover

Usually the cover is the last thing I do for a book. Covers can be designed in many different ways just as the inner pages can, but I would advise you to keep it pretty simple.

- Click on the cover thumbnail in the Thumbnail Strip along the bottom of the book editor to select the cover spread, which includes the front cover on the right, the back cover on the left, and the spine in the middle.
- If you click on the Cover tab in the Asset column on the left, you're given no options for a hardbound book. There are options for other kinds of books, but not for hardbound.
- If you click on Layouts, you'll find that none of the layouts work for the cover.
- You'll need to work with the Images and Backdrop tabs instead.
- Click on the Images tab and drag the photo you want to use onto the cover. You can click and drag from any handle, and it won't distort the photo.

- Ideally, the photo should have enough space around the main subject to go all the way to the edge of the flaps. The photo I used didn't have enough space around the subject, so I didn't extend it all the way out to the edge of the flaps. Instead I added color to the background using the same technique I showed you earlier.

Rotate Type

- Create the title for the spine in the usual way.
- Click on the Rotate icon on the floating Tool Bar to rotate the type 90°.
- Click and drag the type into place, making sure you've centered it to the line that appears when you drag over the center.
- Be careful not to make the type on the spine too large.
- Do the same with the author credits.

Workspace Tip

If you click on an asset tab, it shows those assets. If you click on the same tab again, it hides the assets and gives you more room for the book editor

Lesson 09: Online Editor Part 6—Grandma's Garden Tips

Here's how to get a similar result in AdoramaPix that others get when creating a Grandma's Garden spread in Photoshop or Photoshop Elements.

- Grandma's Garden layouts are for an 8 x 8 book so that's the size I chose to use with the Build Your Own template option.
- Even though the layouts in the Layouts tab are for a single page, you can adjust them to go across a double spread.
- Click and drag the closest template you can find onto your page.
- If necessary, you can choose the Mirror option in the Tool Box to flip the photo templates.
- Click on a photo placeholder to activate it. Then drag from a side handle until you reach the size you want, even if it goes across the center of the spread.
- Add your photos to the photo placeholders.
- In my original design, the smaller image overlaps the large image, and it has a white border. To copy that effect:
- Click on the smaller photo to select it.
- In the Tool Box, click on the Border icon. Change the color to white, and move the slider to the right a little to give your photo a white inner stroke outline.
- The white outline looks great where it overlaps the larger photo, but the part of the stroke that's over the background disappears into the white.
- You could put a drop shadow on this, but the smallest drop shadow is huge, so I don't recommend it.

Here's a workaround to keep the white border from fading into the background:
- Right click on the small photo with the white border and choose Copy from the pop up menu.
- Right click on the spread and choose Paste to create a second identical photo.
- Click on the original photo.
- In the Tool Box, click on Border. Choose a light gray color and change the stroke outline to a -3, which will place the gray outline slightly outside the photo.
- Click on the copied photo and drag it directly above the original photo. Now there's a nice little gray line that's visible over the background.
- Include some journaling, and you're done with the page!

Lesson 10: Online Editor Part 7—Senior Yearbook

In the Senior Yearbook example and templates, I used stroke outlines to give the book an elegant air. Sometimes I placed a stroke around each photo, and other times I placed a stroke around a group of photos. Here's how to do that in AdoramaPix's book editor.

- Start with the "Build Your Own" template option in a 12 x 12 inch size.
- Instead of adding a pre-designed layout, you can simply drag your photos onto the layout.
- Drag the first photo onto your page and resize it.
- When you drag the second photo onto your page, place it near the first one. A line will appear when the tops of both photos line up.
- Click and drag from a corner handle to make the bottom of the second photo line up with the first one. Again, a line will appear when you're in the right place.
- Continue to add photos and line them up as desired.
- If you get too close to another photo, the one you're moving snaps to it, so you have to be careful not to get too close.
- Once you've created a grid of photos, add a stroke outline around them using the white 12 x 12 inch JPEG that came packaged with the manual.
- Drag the white JPEG image onto your page over a blank area of the background, not over a photo, or it will replace the photo.
- On the floating Tool Bar, click "To Back" to send it behind all the other photos.
- Resize the white paper so it's a little larger than the grid of photos.
- In the Tool Box, click on Border.
- Choose a medium gray color and click once on the up arrow to get a stroke outline.
- Click off the outline to remove the bounding box.
- Use the Type tab to create a title for your page.