



Text Effects

# Text Effects

In this lesson, we're going to use a variety of Photoshop features to create some unique type effects. Note that the techniques that you learn will be useful for other purposes as well. We are just going to demonstrate how they can be used for creative text treatments.

When creating these effects, we're going to make sure that we are using smart objects. A smart object places a layer [or layers] inside a protective container that we can open and change at a later time. For example, let's say we take an image layer and scale it down. Then, we try to scale it up again later. This will result in a loss of quality because the image becomes blurry when being scaled up. If, however, we were to convert that image layer into a smart object before scaling down, we will have protected the original image within its own file of sorts. When we scale back up, it will be referring to that original file and there will be no loss in quality.

In this lesson, we're going to do the same thing with the text layers. This will allow us to go back layer and change the text at any time. When you think about it, that's a big deal. Some of these effects will require a lot of steps to execute. If we had to go through the same process for every word or phrase we want to use, it could be very time-consuming. Smart objects will allow us to save time and work with more versatility.



**This is the first effect we're going to try and replicate. I had saved the image on Pinterest because I liked it.**

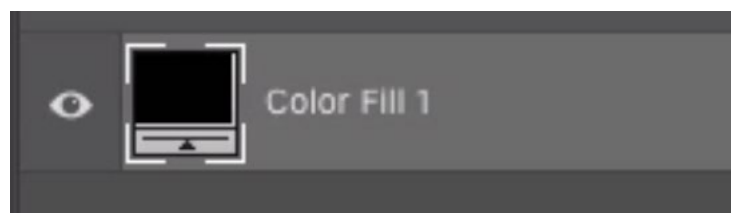
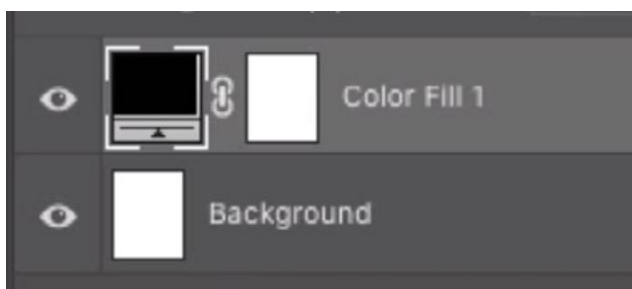
## 3D Fan Effect (Timestamp 2:45)

I like to save visual effects that I like on a Pinterest board. One of these effects takes a single word and repeats it, creating a three dimensional effect that looks like book pages being fanned out. We're going to try and re-create this effect. I like to open the reference image so that I can see it in a separate window next to my Photoshop window.

**Create new document** Create a new Photoshop document by clicking on the File menu and choosing New. Using the settings on the right side of the New Document window, make sure that the Color Mode is set to RGB. In the video example, I used a document size of 8.5 x 11 inches, but you don't need to use that same exact size. Click the Create button and the new document will be created.

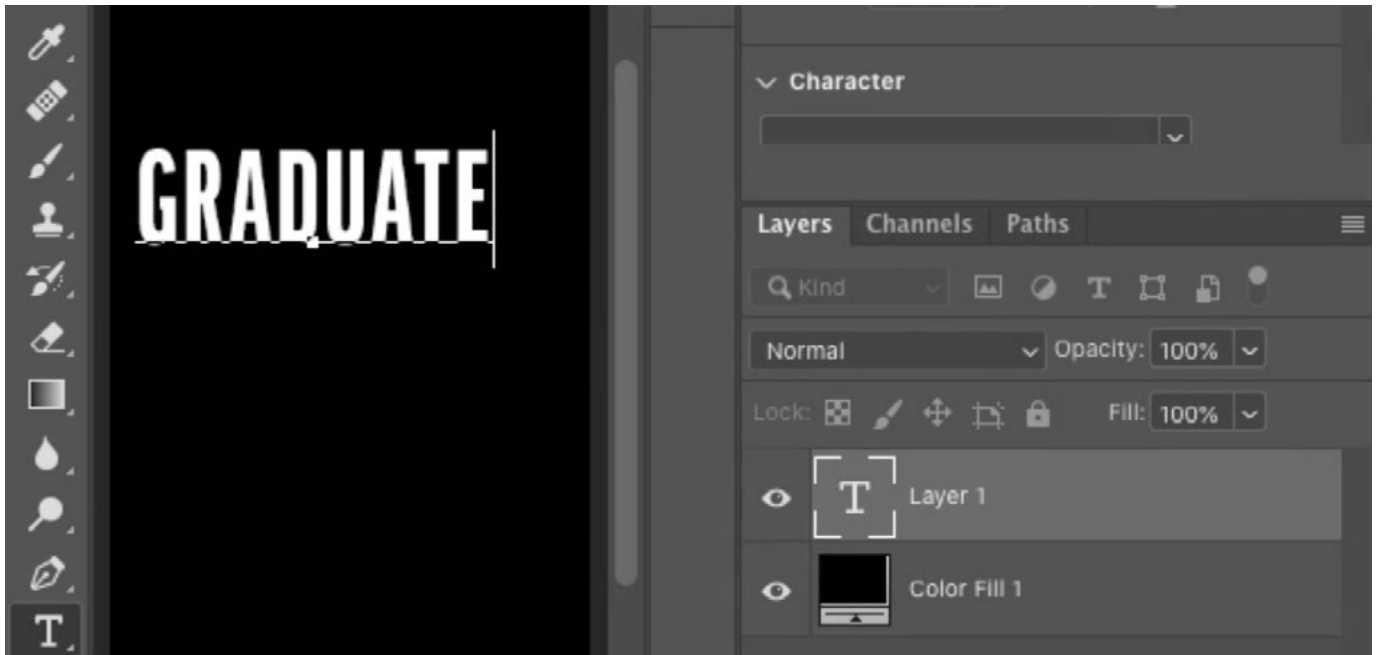
**Set background color** The first step will be to control the background color and that will be done with a Solid Color layer. This will allow you to easily change and experiment with the color. Click on the Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel and choose Solid Color. The Color Picker dialog will appear. Set the color to black and then click OK.

You can also discard the original background layer by dragging it to the Trash Can icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel. This isn't required, but the background layer is no longer needed, and I like to keep the Layers Panel as tidy as possible. For this reason, I will also discard the layer mask that's attached to the Color Fill layer because I know that I want the color to fill the entire document.



**LEFT:** A new Color Fill layer was added and set to black. **RIGHT:** The Background layer was discarded. The layer mask attached to the Color Fill layer was also discarded.

**Add text** The next step is to add some text. Activate the Text Tool from the Tool-bar on the left side of the screen. Click within the document and some placeholder text will be inserted. This placeholder text will automatically be highlighted so you can type in your own text. In the video example, I typed in the word Graduate, in all caps. This text is being added to its own new layer in the Layers Panel. Activate the Move Tool so that you are no longer editing the text.



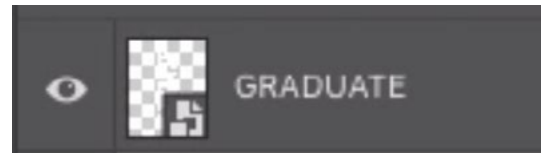
A new text layer was added and a new word is being typed into the document.



The text is being scaled up using the Free Transform command.

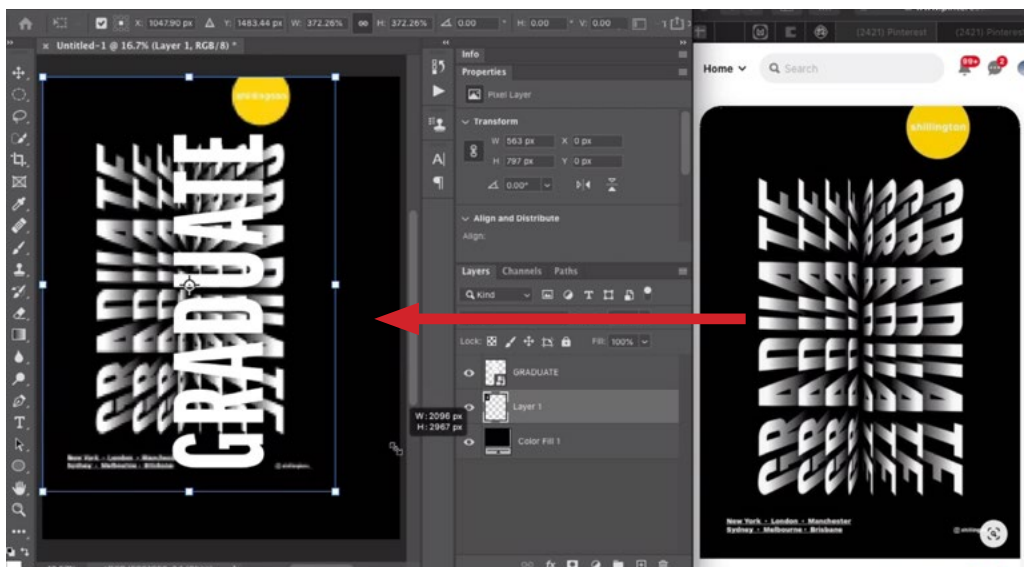
You can also scale the text by using the Transform command. Use the keyboard shortcut Command+T (Ctrl+T on Win) and transform handles will appear around the text. Click and drag on these handles to scale the text and then tap the Return/Enter key to lock in the transformation and remove the handles.

**Convert to Smart Object** Before doing anything to the text, convert the layer into a Smart Object. This will allow you to make changes to it later, after you have completed the effect. With the text layer active, click on the Layer menu and choose Smart Objects > Convert to Smart Object. In the Layers Panel, you can tell that the layer is a smart object because it has a little icon in the bottom right corner of its thumbnail. Because it's a smart object, Photoshop no longer thinks of the layer as text, so you can not simply grab the Text Tool and change it. Instead, that text is contained inside the smart object.



**You can tell that the layer is a smart object because of the icon in the lower right corner of the thumbnail.**

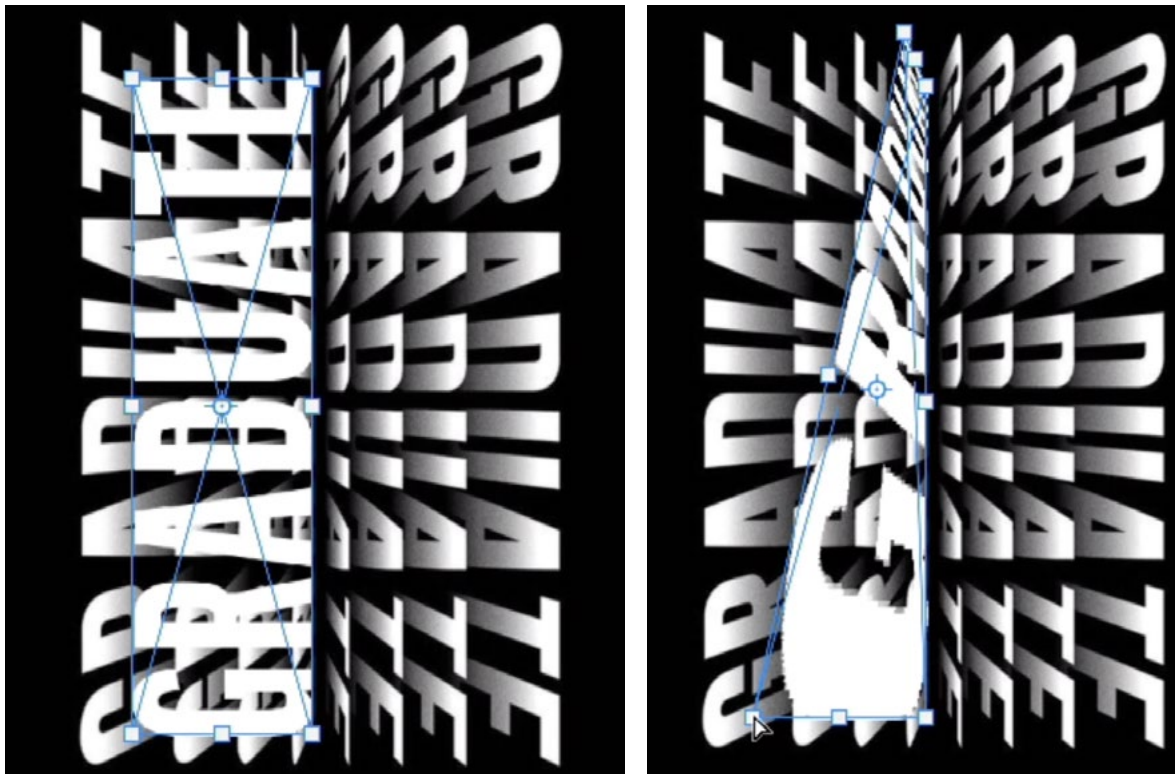
**Place reference image in Photoshop document (optional)** In the video example, I decided to take the reference image (from Pinterest) and place it within my Photoshop document so that I could refer to it for comparison and use it for alignment. You can do this by simply dragging an image from your web browser, directly into the Photoshop document. Scale the image (if necessary) by using the Transform command (Command+T, or Ctrl T on Win). If the image becomes distorted by changing proportions as you drag the transform handle, hold down the Shift key to constrain the proportions. (This behavior is determined by your Preferences.) Tap the Return/Enter key to lock in the transformation and remove the handles. Then, move this reference layer beneath the text layer in the Layers Panel.



**The reference image was placed within the Photoshop document and positioned beneath the text layer.**

**Rotate & position text** The text needs to be rotated 90 degrees. Make sure the text layer is active, click on the Edit menu and choose Transform > Rotate 90 degrees Counter Clockwise. Then, use the Move Tool to position the layer so that the base line of the text is near the vertical center of the document. In the video example, I aligned the bottom of the text with the base line of the text in the reference image. I also used the Transform command to make sure that the bottom corners of the text letter aligned with the bottom corners of the text letters in the reference image.

The word needs to be distorted so that the top of the word is larger than the bottom, creating that three-dimensional effect. Click on the Edit menu and choose Transform > Distort. The Distort command will allow you to move the four corners of the layer independently of one another. Drag the top corners of the text so that they are wider than the bottom corners. In the video, we matched the corners to the reference image. Press Return/Enter to lock in the transformation and remove the transform handles.



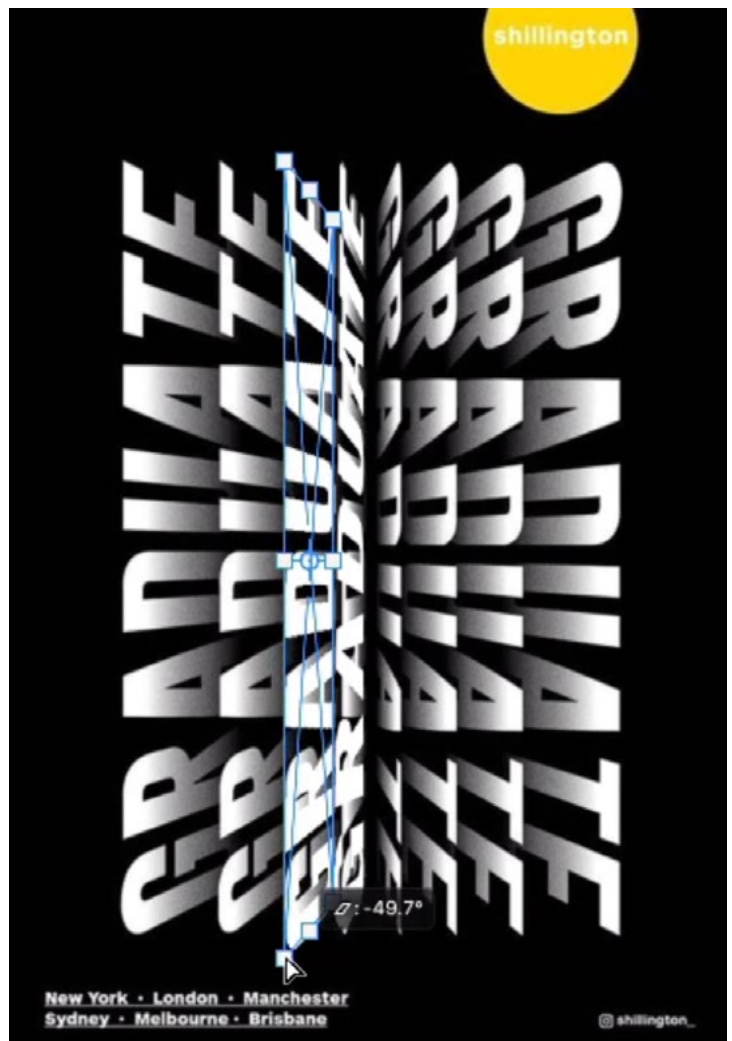
**LEFT:** The text layer is positioned to match the bottom edge (and corners) of the text in the reference image (on the underlying layer). **RIGHT:** The text layer is being distorted so that the top of the word is larger than the bottom. Again, the reference image is being used for alignment.



**Duplicate text layer** To create this effect, the text layer needs to be duplicated several times. You can duplicate the active layer by using the keyboard shortcut Command+J (Ctrl+J on Win). If you duplicate a smart object layer using this method, you will be creating a second instance of the exact same smart object. What does that mean? Well, if you were to open the smart object and make a change to it, that change would be reflected in ALL other instances of that same smart object. In this case, that is what you want. This will allow you to change the text in one layer and have it automatically update all of the other layers as well.

After duplicating the layer, use the Move Tool to move the layer slightly to the left, so that the second text layer is parallel with the first. In the video, we used the reference image to determine the layer's exact position. When the Move Tool is active, you can also use the arrow keys to move the layer with more precision.

This duplicate layer needs to be further distorted in order to create the “fanning pages” effect. Click on the Edit menu and choose Transform > Distort. The transform handles will appear around the layer. Use the handles in the top corners of the word to make the top of the word even more wider than the bottom of the word. Again, it helps to use the reference image layer so that you have something to use for alignment. Press Return/Enter to lock in the transformation.

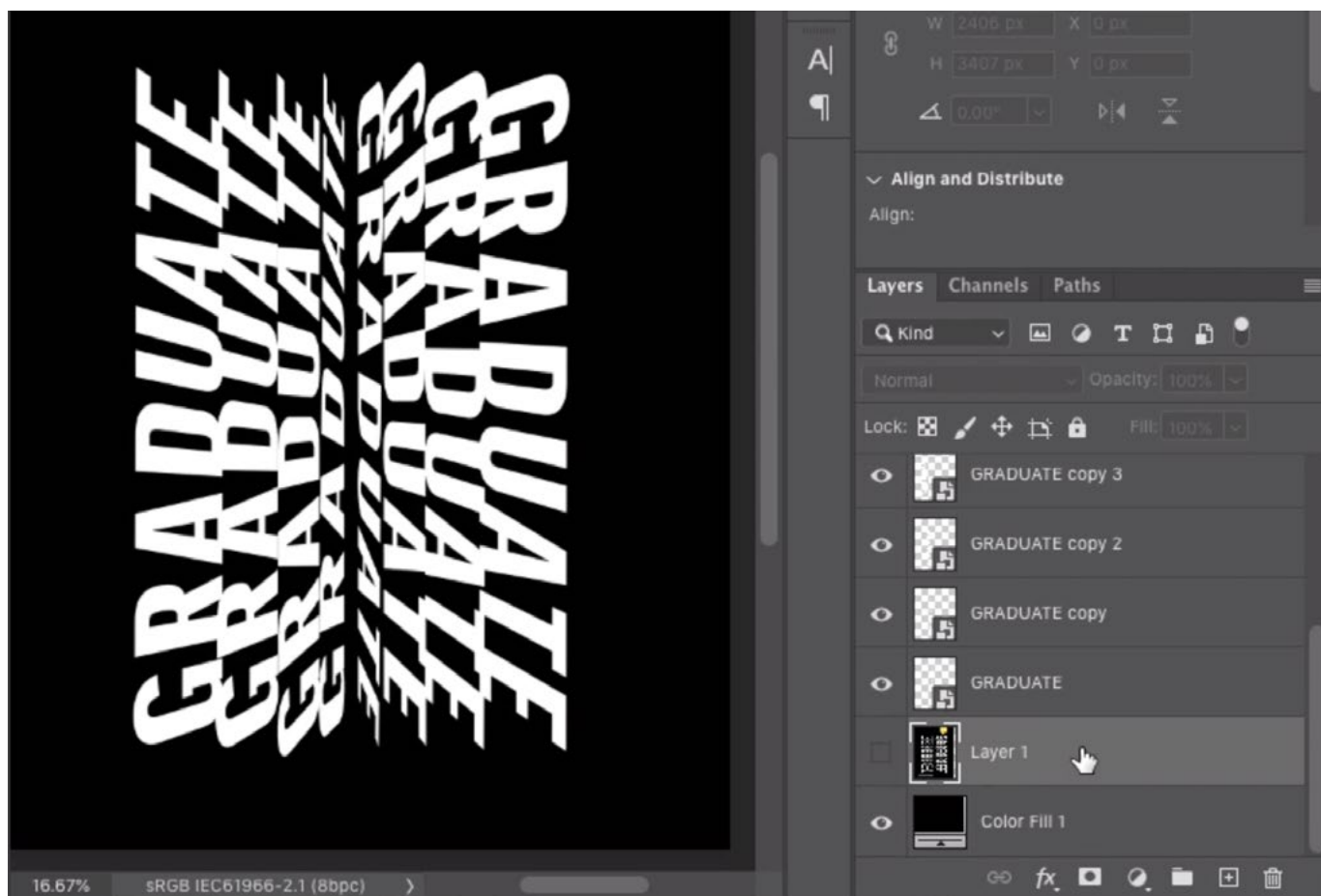


The text layer was duplicated and the duplicate is being positioned and transformed using the Distort command.

**Repeat the process** You already duplicated and repositioned the original image layer. You'll need to do this two more times, so that you have four copies of the word on the left side of the document. Repeat the same process that you followed in the last step.

**Duplicate text layers and position on the right side** The left side of the image is complete, with four copies of the text layer positioned correctly. These words should be mirrored on the right side of the image. Make sure that all four of the text layers are selected and then duplicate them by using the keyboard shortcut Command+J (Ctrl+J on Win).

With the four duplicate layers selected, click on the Edit menu and choose Transform > Rotate 180 degrees. This will flip the layers so they face the correct direction. Then, use the Move Tool to move the four layers to the right side of the document.



The four text layers on the left were duplicated, rotated and repositioned to the right side of the document.



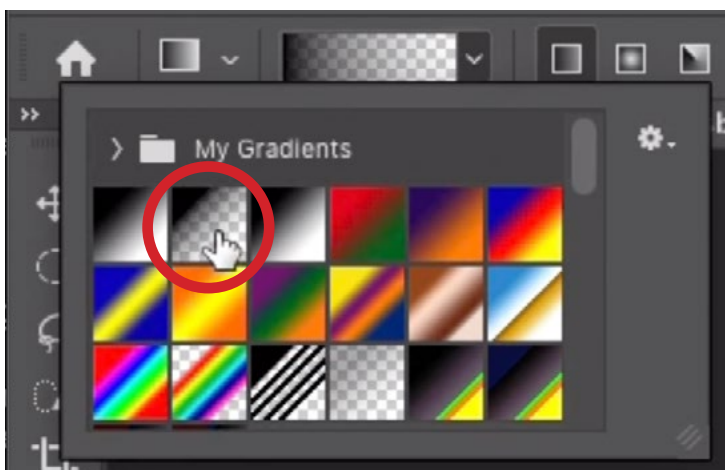
**Add gradient to the text layers** If you were using the reference image layer, you can now turn off the visibility of this layer to better see your results. The text is positioned correctly, but there is still work to do in order to create the effect. Each word needs a gradient such that the top of the word is white and it fades to get darker toward the bottom of the word.

Remember, these layers are all instances of the same smart object. If you make a change to one of them, they will all be affected. This will be useful in helping you add the gradient to all the layers. You'll need to open one of the smart objects in its own document window and you can do that by double-clicking on the thumbnail for one of the layers. (They are all the same smart object, so it doesn't matter which one you double-click on.) The original contents of the smart object will open in a separate Photoshop document.



**The text layer smart object was opened in a separate Photoshop document.**

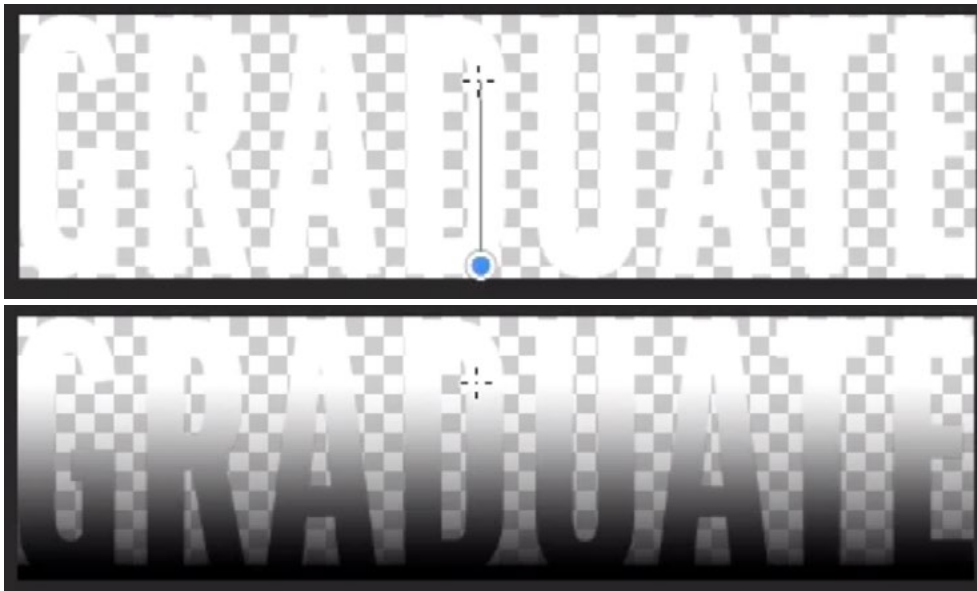
You'll need to add a gradient to this smart object. Create a new, empty layer by clicking on the New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel. Make sure that the foreground color is set to black and activate the Gradient Tool. When the Gradient Tool is active, some settings will



**With the Gradient Tool active, the Foreground to Transparent gradient is being chosen.**

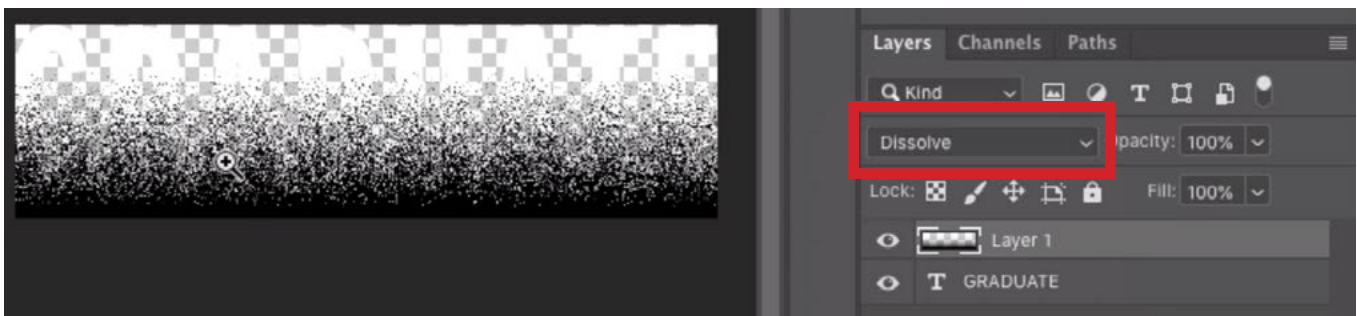
appear in the Options Bar above the image window. This is where you can specify what type of gradient you'd like. Click on the down-pointing arrow next to the gradient preview to expand the menu of gradients. Make sure that the second gradient option is active. This is the Foreground to Transparent gradient.

To apply the gradient, click within the image in the area where you'd like the gradient to begin, drag the mouse to the area where you'd like the gradient to end and then release the mouse button. In this image, start near the very bottom of the text. Click and drag up to an area that is about two thirds of the way to the top of the text and release the mouse button. This will apply a black to transparent gradient, with black on the bottom (where you initially clicked).



**ABOVE:** The Gradient Tool is being used to drag out a gradient.  
**BELOW:** When the mouse button is released, the black to transparent gradient is applied.

**Add noise to the gradient** In the reference image, there is a bit of noise (or grain) in the gradient. There are a few ways that you could add noise. In the video example, I used the Dissolve blending mode, which is useful for adding grain to areas that have partial transparency. With the gradient layer active, click on the Blending Mode menu at the top of the Layers Panel and change the blending mode to Dissolve.



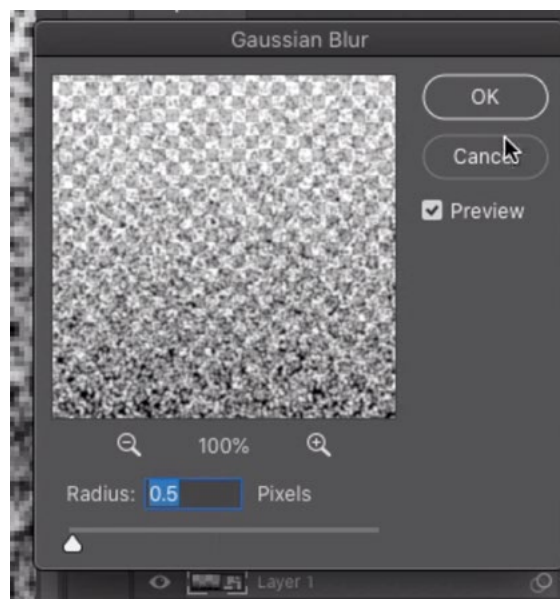
The blending mode of the gradient layer was set to Dissolve.

This adds noise, but the results are too crisp and jagged. This can be corrected by blurring the layer slightly. The challenge lies in the fact that the noise is being applied via a blending mode. If you were to blur the layer, the noise will still be applied AFTER the blur. You can get around this by first converting the layer into a smart object. (Yes, you can have a smart object within another smart object.)

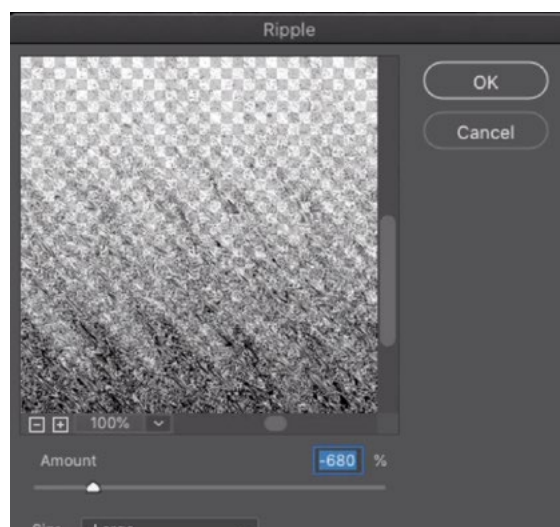
Click on the Layer menu and choose Smart Objects > Convert to Smart Object. You will see the little smart object icon appear on the layer's thumbnail. You can now change the blending mode back to normal and the effect will not be changed because it's contained INSIDE the smart object.

Now you can apply a filter to blur the layer. Click on the Filter menu and choose Blur > Gaussian Blur. The Gaussian Blur dialog will appear and it will contain the Radius slider. Move this slider up until the noise is just slightly blurred. In the video example, I set the Radius to 0.5 pixels. Click OK to exit the filter.

In the lesson video, I also applied a ripple effect to the noise in order to create more randomness to the noise. You can do this by clicking on the Filter menu and choosing Distort > Ripple. In the Ripple dialog box, move the Amount slider up while watching the effect in the Preview window. Once satisfied with the amount of randomness, click the OK button to exit the dialog.



**The Gaussian Blur filter is being applied to the gradient layer to slightly blur the noise.**



**The Ripple Filter is being applied to the gradient layer to add more randomness to the noise.**

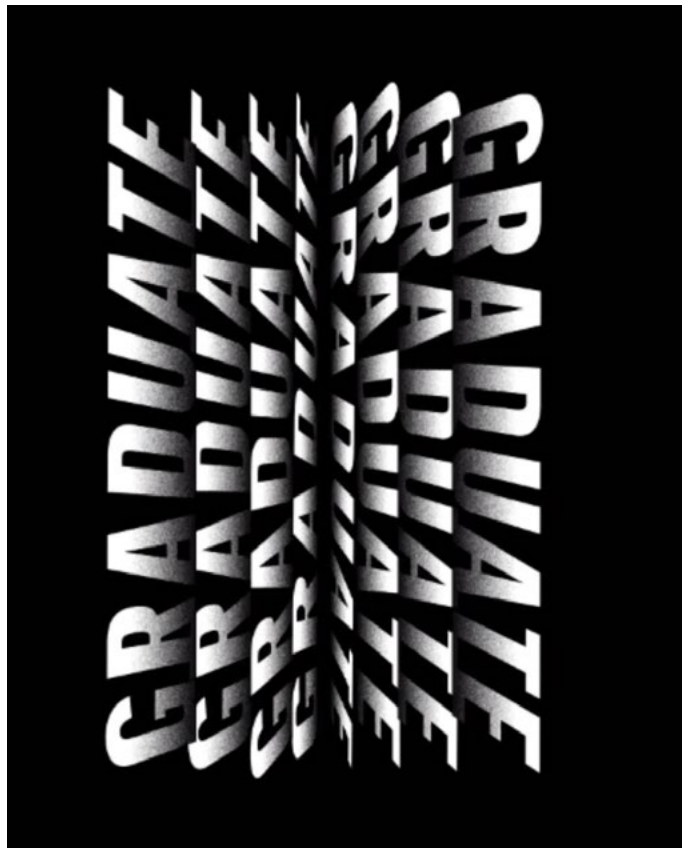
NOTE: Because this noise layer is a smart object, any filters added are applied as smart filters. This means that they can be changed or removed at any time. Any filters applied to a smart object will be listed below the smart object's icon in the Layers Panel. Double-click on the name of a filter to make its settings appear again. The dialog will remember the last settings you used and you can refine them further.

You can also adjust the opacity of the noise layer in order to make the effect more subtle. In the video example, I lowered the opacity very slightly.

### **Return to main Photoshop document**

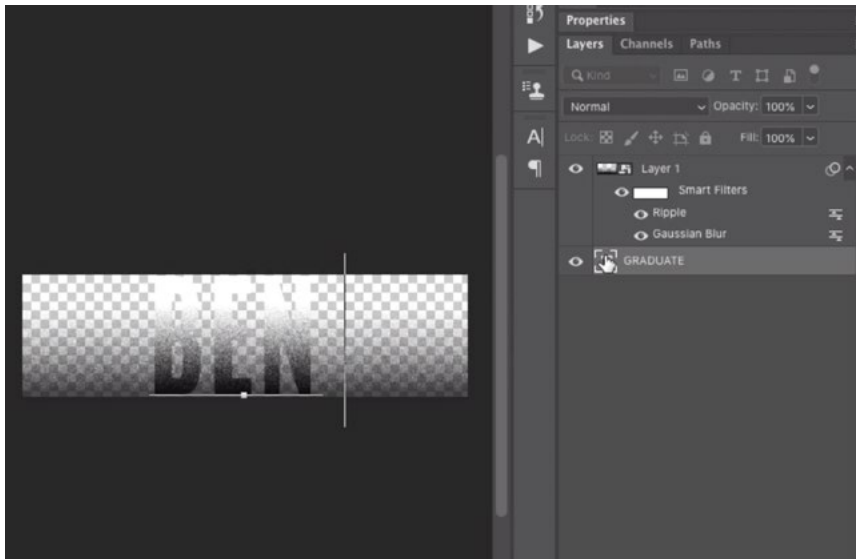
The gradient effect has been applied to the smart object, so you can now close this second Photoshop document. Photoshop will ask you whether you'd like to save the document. Choose the Save option. Back in the original image document, the smart object will be updated to reflect the changes you made. Because every text layer is an instance of the SAME smart object, the gradient effect will be applied to all of them.

**Updating the Text** This effect is very versatile because the text can be changed at any time (thanks to the use of smart objects). If you'd ever like to change the text, double-click on one of the layer thumbnails in order to open the smart object in a separate document window. (It doesn't matter which layer you open because they are all instances of the SAME smart object.)

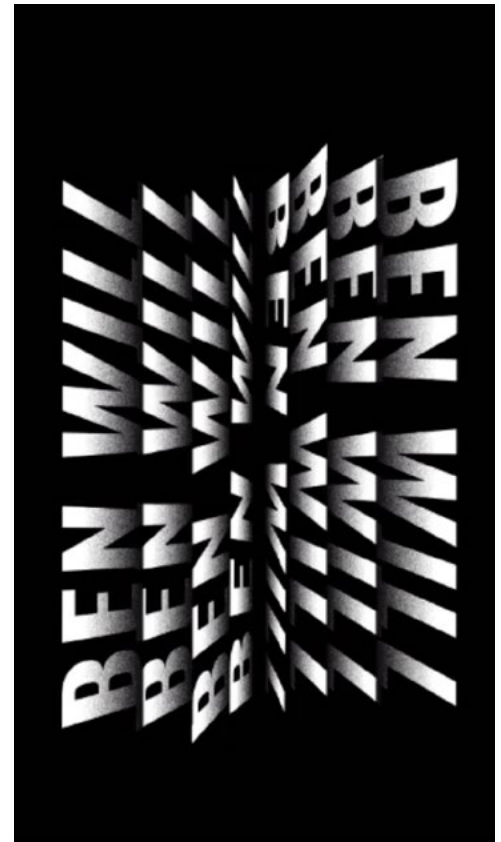


**After saving the smart object document, we returned to the main image document and all of the type layers were updated.**

In the smart object document window, double click on the icon to the left of the text layer name in the Layers Panel. This will highlight the text so that you can type in something new. Type in the new text and then close the document window. Remember to choose the Save option when Photoshop presents you with the dialog. Back in the original image document, all of the text layers will be updated.



Because all of the text layers are copies of the same smart object, they can easily be updated. Here, we double-clicked on the thumbnail for one of the text layers to open the smart object in a separate document. New text was typed in and, when the document was closed and saved, all of the text in the original document was updated.

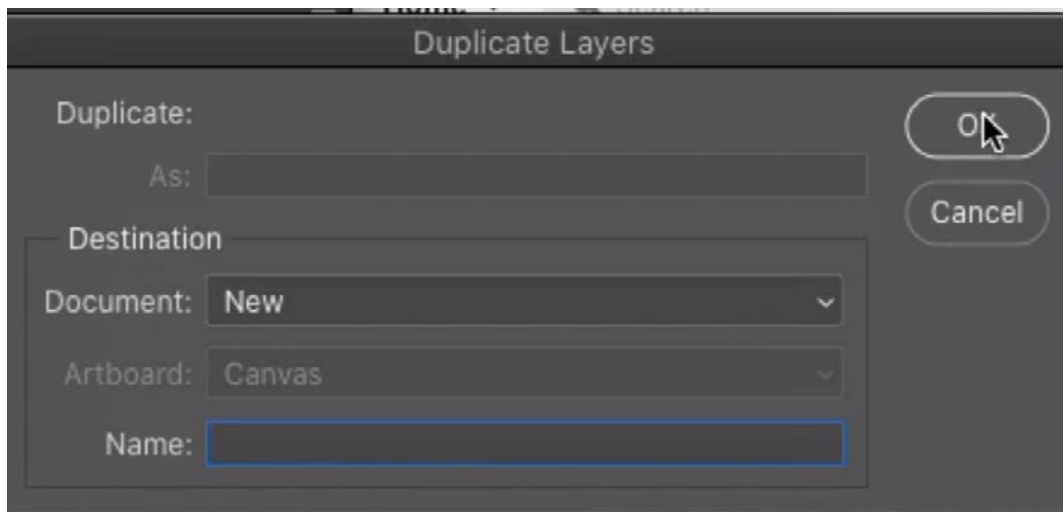


**Change the text on just one side** Let's say that you want the left layers to use one word and the right layers to use another word. This will be tricky because all of the text layers are currently connected to the same smart object.

You will need to trick Photoshop here by putting the layers into a different document and then bringing them right back. My moving them into another document, Photoshop will forget that they are associated with the other four smart object layers in the original document.



Select the top four layers in the Layers Panel. These are the words on the right side of the document. Hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) and drag these layers to the New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel. This will cause the Duplicate Layers dialog to appear, asking where you'd like these layer duplicates to go. Set the Document menu to New and then click OK. The layers will be opened in a separate new Photoshop document.



**The top four layers were dragged to the new layer icon as we held down the Option key (Alt on Win). This caused the Duplicate Layers dialog to appear. We are choosing to copy these layers to a new document.**

Immediately after doing this, follow the same steps to copy the layers back to the original document. With all the layers active, hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) and drag the layers to the New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel. When the Duplicate Layers dialog appears, set the Document menu to the name of that original document and click OK. You can now close this second document and you do not need to save it.

Back in the original document, there are four extra layers at the top of the Layers Panel. These are the four layers that were just added. The four layers below those are the original right-side text layers. You can now discard these.

Now, the layers on the left are associated with one smart object and the layers on the right are associated with a different smart object. This means that you can change the text on the left to say one thing and you can change the text on the right to say another.



## Intertwined Text Effect (21:36)

In the next text effect we're going to create, there are two layers of overlapping text and those two layers are three-dimensionally intertwined. A layer mask will be used to create the intertwined effect and then we'll need to use some tricks to add the drop shadow and fix some potential issues.

**Create new document** Create a new Photoshop document by clicking on the File menu and choosing New. In the New Document dialog, make sure that the color space is set to RGB. In the video, I used a size of 8.5 x 11 inches, but you can use a different size if you prefer. Click the Create button.

**Match font feature** I would like to use a font that is either the same or very close to the font in the reference image. Photoshop has a feature that will attempt to match the font in an image, but the image will need to be contained within the Photoshop document. If you have the reference image, drag it into the active Photoshop document. It will be added as its own layer.

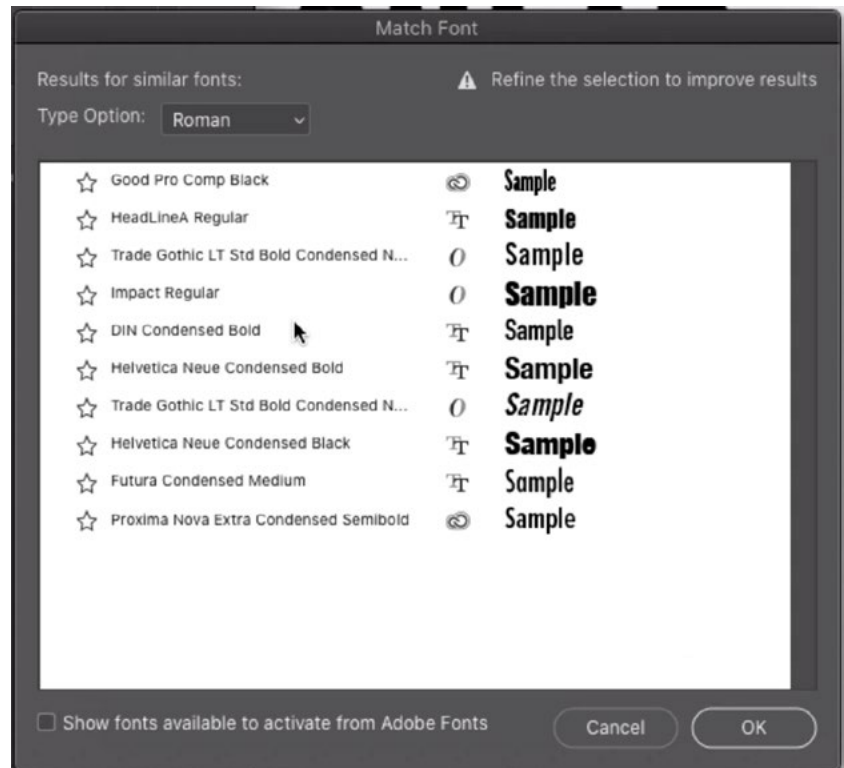


This is the next text effect we're going to create. This is another design that I liked from Pinterest.

Click on the Type menu and choose Match Font. Photoshop will place a rectangle on the screen that has some handles on the edges. You will need to use the handles to position the rectangle so that it encases up to three lines of the font you want to match. When you do this, the Match Font dialog will display a list of fonts that are similar to the reference font and that you have installed on your computer.



**ABOVE:** The Match Font rectangle is being positioned around the font we want to match.  
**RIGHT:** The dialog is presenting a list of fonts that are similar to the one contained within the rectangle.



If there are no similar fonts, or if you don't like the results, you can turn on the check box at the bottom of the dialog, which reads "Show fonts available to activate from Adobe Fonts." This will search the online library of Adobe Fonts for similar fonts. If you have a Creative Cloud subscription, you have access to all of these fonts. Click on the little icon to the left of a font name and it will automatically download and install the font.

In the lesson video, I am using an Adobe Font called Good Pro Comp Black. Know that it's not going to automatically choose this font in your Photoshop document. You will need to remember the name and then navigate to that font once you create your text layer.

**Keep reference image on hand** In the lesson video, I turned off the visibility of the reference image layer in the Photoshop document, but I kept the image open in my web browser. I positioned the Photoshop window and the web browser window next to each other, so that I could see the reference image as I worked. This will be useful when trying to replicate an effect.

**Add text** Now it's time to add the first layer of text. Activate the text tool and click within the document. Placeholder text will appear and it will be highlighted so you can type in your own text. In the lesson video, I am using the same text as the reference document to start. I will change it later.

For this effect, the text should be black and it should be quite large. The text settings will appear in the Options Bar above the main image window. Here, you can change the color, font, size, etc. For additional type settings, click on the little icon that looks like a folder. This will open the Character Panel, which presents many more options, including the line spacing setting.

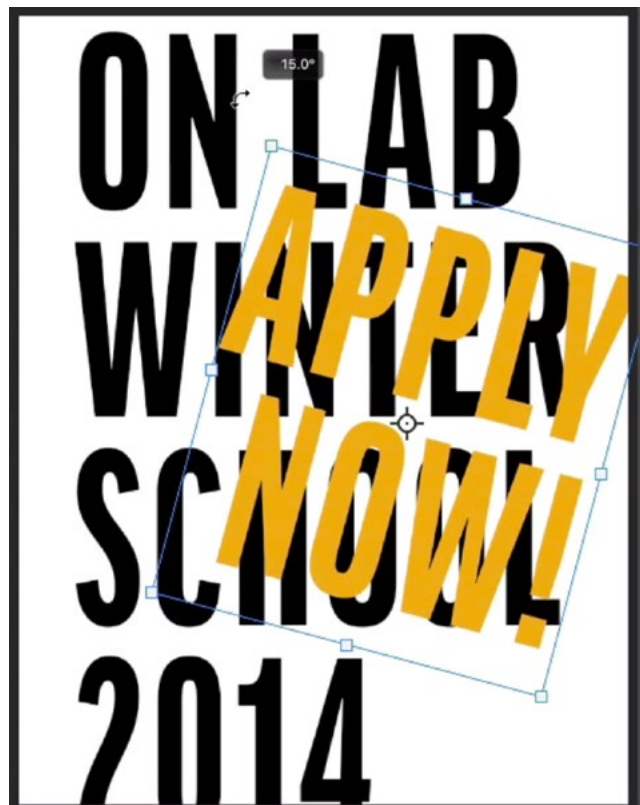


The first text layer was added and the text is being adjusted. You can adjust the text settings in the Options Bar above the image window. For additional settings, click on the circled icon in order to open the Character Panel, which you can also see above.

After creating the initial text layer, you'll need to create the second text layer. This layer will be angled and then intertwined with the first text layer. If the Text Tool is still active, click away from the current text so that it doesn't think you want to edit what's already there. Then click in another area and some more placeholder text will appear. This is creating a second text layer. Type in the words you want for this second layer of text. Remember that this is the layer that will be angled and intertwined.

While the text is still active, click on the Align Right icon in the Options Bar and use the color swatch setting to specify what color this text should be. In the lesson video, we are using the same color as the reference image, which is a deep yellow.

**Position text** Activate the Move Tool and use it to position the new text layer over the current one, positioned near the right side. The text needs to be angled, so click on the Edit menu and choose Free Transform. The transform handles will appear around the layer. If you hover your mouse outside of these handles, you will see that the cursor turns into little right-angle arrows. This means that you can click and drag to rotate the layer.



A second layer of text was added and the Free Transform command is being used to rotate the text a bit.

Rotate the layer clockwise a bit. Click the Return/Enter key to lock in the rotation and remove the transform handles. Again, you can use the Move Tool to reposition the text if necessary. When repositioning the text, remember that you are going to use a layer mask to make it look as if the two text layers are intertwined. The positioning should allow for this.

**Use layer mask to intertwine text** A layer mask is going to be used to hide parts of the colored text layer so that it looks to be intertwined with the underlying, black layer. With this colored text layer active, click on the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel. You will see that the layer mask is added to the text layer because the mask thumbnail will appear next to the layer thumbnail.

We only want to be able to hide the layer in the areas where the black text is, so you can use a little trick. You'll start by making a selection of the black text. You can do this by holding down the Command key (Ctrl on Win) and clicking on the "T" icon to the left of the black text layer in the Layers Panel. The "marching ants" selection will appear around the black text.

With this selection active, you can use the Brush Tool to paint with black on the areas where the active layer should be hidden. Because there is a selection active, that selection will limit your paint strokes to the area where the black text is. Remember,



**The black text was selected. This will limit the strokes when we paint on the mask attached to the color layer.**



**We are painting with black on the layer mask that is attached to the colored text layer, hiding the areas where we want it to look as if the text is intertwined.**

you are painting on the layer mask. Paint wherever you want it to look as if the colored text is underneath the black text. If you accidentally paint with black in an area you didn't intend, you can always paint with white to correct it. When it comes to layer masks, black conceals and white reveals.



Note that you can hide the “marching ants” while maintaining the active selection by typing Command+H (Ctrl+H on Win). I will sometimes do this when the marching ants distract me from what I’m doing.

When you’re done painting on the mask, discard the selection by clicking the Select menu and choosing Deselect. Alternatively, you can use the keyboard shortcut Command+D (Ctrl+D on Win).

**Add drop shadow** Now the text should look as if it is intertwined, but in order to complete the effect, we need to add a drop shadow. This will give the design a more three-dimensional look.

The drop shadow is based on the black text, so make sure that text layer is active. Then, duplicate the layer by typing Command+J (Ctrl+J on Win). Drag this duplicate to the top of the layer stack. Make sure the Move Tool is active and nudge the layer down and to the right just a bit. This is designed to replicate the position of a drop shadow. You can do this using either your mouse or the arrow keys on your keyboard.

Use the Opacity setting at the top of the Layers Panel to lower the opacity of this layer a bit. In the lesson video, I set the Opacity at about 75%.

This shadow should be blurred, but you can not apply a blur effect to a text layer. It will either need to be rasterized first or converted into a smart object. The smart object option allows for more versatility. Click on the Layer menu and choose Smart Objects > Convert to Smart Object.



**The black text layer was duplicated and moved down and to the right. This mimics the position of a drop shadow. Then, we lowered the opacity to about 75%.**



Now you can apply a blur filter. Click on the Filter menu and choose Blur > Gaussian Blur. In the Gaussian Blur dialog, move the Radius slider up to create the blur effect. In the lesson video, I set the Radius slider to about 10. Click OK to exit the dialog and apply the blur.



**The Gaussian Blur filter is being applied to the shadow layer.**



**The shadow layer was clipped to the text layer. You can tell that a layer is clipped because a down-pointing arrow will appear next to its thumbnail.**

Now the shadow should only appear in the area where the colored text is. You can accomplish that with a clipping mask. A clipping mask makes it so that a layer can only be visible when there is contents in the layer below. Click on the Layer menu and choose Create Clipping Mask. The shadow layer will now only appear in the area where the colored text is. You can tell that a layer is clipped to the layer beneath it because it will become indented in the Layers Panel and a little down-pointing arrow will appear to the left of its thumbnail.

You'll need to further remove parts of the shadow layer so that it only appears in the areas where the black text overlaps the colored text. This can be done with a layer mask. With that top shadow layer active, hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) and click the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel. A mask will be added to the layer. Because the Option key was held down at the time you created the mask, the layer mask will be filled with black, which means that the entire layer will be hidden. You will need to manually add white to the mask in order to reveal the layer in specific areas.

Activate the Brush Tool and make sure that the foreground color is white. This is the color you'll be painting with. It will also be best to use a soft-edged brush. Because you are painting with white, you will be painting in the shadow effect that was created with the layer. Paint over the colored text in the areas where it is overlapped by the black text. This is where the shadow should appear. If you make a mistake, you can always switch to painting with black in order to hide parts of the layer again. Continue to paint with white over the areas where the shadow should appear.

When you're done, you can decide if you think that the shadow is too dark. If it feels too dark, you can lower the opacity of the shadow layer by using the Opacity setting at the top of the Layers Panel.

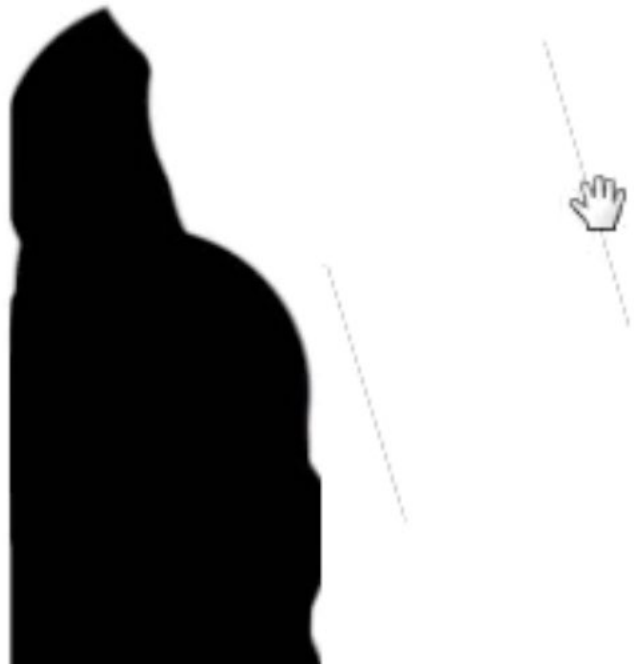


**A black mask was added to the shadow layer, which hid it completely. Here, we are painting with white on the mask in order to reveal the shadow only in appropriate areas.**

**Refine the mask** The effect looks pretty good now, but there are still refinements to be made. Whenever you paint within an active selection, there is a chance of getting an undesirable anti-aliasing effect on the selection edges. It's always a good idea to check for that.

You can view the mask directly within the image window by holding down the Option key (Alt on Win) and clicking on the mask thumbnail. Then, zoom in on the image window and scroll around to inspect for any issues. These anti-aliasing effects will appear as little hairlines that shouldn't be there. If you see these, you can paint on the mask to clean it up. When you're done, you can Option+Click (Alt+Click on Win) on the mask thumbnail again to stop viewing the mask in the main image window.

The other type of anti-aliasing that could occur is a tiny gap in the mask in the areas where the letters meet. Zoom in on the document to look for any of these hairline gaps. If you have them, there's an easy fix.



**The mask is being viewed in the main image window. The little hairlines are the result of an anti-aliasing effect and can be removed by painting on the mask with white.**



**The white hairline between letters is a result of an anti-aliasing effect on the mask.**

Duplicate the angled color layer and place it at the bottom of the layer stack. Delete this layer's mask by dragging it to the trash can at the bottom of the Layers Panel. Then, duplicate the shadow layer and place it above the color duplicate layer, at the bottom of the layer stack. Make sure the shadow duplicate layer is active and clip it to the underlying text layer by clicking on the Layer menu and choosing Create Clipping Mask. Fill this layer's mask with black in order to hide the entire layer. With the mask active, use the keyboard shortcut Option+Delete (Alt+Backspace on Win) to fill the mask with black. Then, activate the Brush Tool and paint with white over the areas where you see this hairline gap in the mask.