

# 4 LAYER BASICS

## Lesson overview

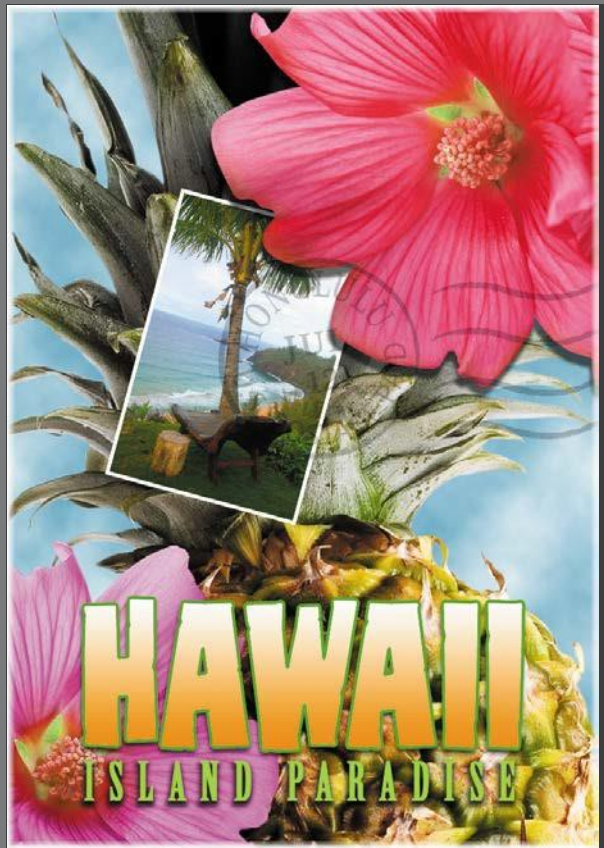
In this lesson, you'll learn how to do the following:

- Organize artwork on layers.
- Create, view, hide, and select layers.
- Rearrange layers to change the stacking order of artwork.
- Apply blending modes to layers.
- Resize and rotate layers.
- Apply a gradient to a layer.
- Apply a filter to a layer.
- Add text and layer effects to a layer.
- Add an adjustment layer.
- Save a copy of the file with the layers flattened.



This lesson will take less than an hour to complete. Please log in to your account on [peachpit.com](https://peachpit.com) to download the lesson files for this chapter, or go to the Getting Started section at the beginning of this book and follow the instructions under “Accessing the Lesson Files and Web Edition.”

As you work on this lesson, you'll preserve the start files. If you need to restore the start files, download them from your Account page.



PROJECT: TRAVEL POSTCARD

In Photoshop, you can isolate different parts of an image on layers. Each layer can then be edited as discrete artwork, giving you tremendous flexibility as you compose and revise an image.

# About layers

Every Photoshop file contains one or more *layers*. New files are generally created with a *background layer*, which contains a color or an image that shows through the transparent areas of subsequent layers. All new layers in an image are transparent until you add text or artwork.

Working with layers is analogous to placing portions of a drawing on clear sheets of film, such as those viewed with an overhead projector: Individual sheets may be edited, repositioned, and deleted without affecting the other sheets. When the sheets are stacked, the entire composition is visible.

## Getting started

You'll start the lesson by viewing an image of the final composition.

- 1 Start Photoshop, and then immediately hold down Ctrl+Alt+Shift (Windows) or Command+Option+Shift (Mac) to restore the default preferences. (See “Restoring Default Preferences” on page 5.)
- 2 When prompted, click Yes to delete the Adobe Photoshop Settings file.
- 3 Choose File > Browse In Bridge to open Adobe Bridge.
- 4 In the Favorites panel, click the Lessons folder. Then double-click the Lesson04 folder in the Content panel to see its contents.
- 5 Study the 04End.psd file. Move the thumbnail slider to the right if you want to see the image in more detail.

● **Note:** If Bridge isn't installed, you'll be prompted to install it. For more information, see page 3.

This layered composite represents a postcard. You will create it in this lesson as you learn how to create, edit, and manage layers.

- 6 Double-click the 04Start.psd file to open it in Photoshop. Click Cancel if the New Library From Document dialog box appears.
- 7 Choose File > Save As, rename the file **04Working.psd**, and click Save. Click OK if you see the Photoshop Format Options dialog box.

Saving another version of the start file frees you to make changes without worrying about overwriting the original.

# Using the Layers panel

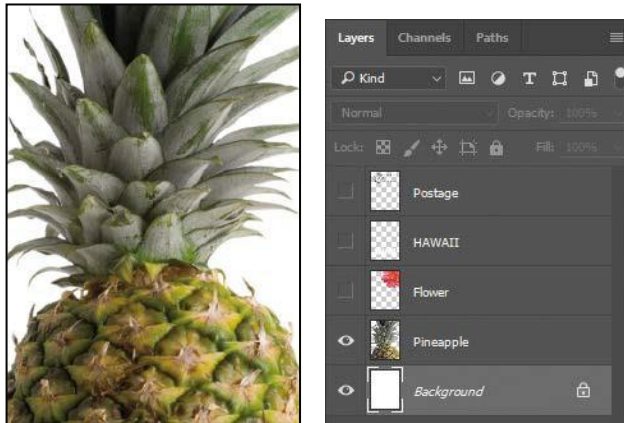
The Layers panel lists all the layers in an image, displaying the layer names and thumbnails of the content on each layer. You can use the Layers panel to hide, view, reposition, delete, rename, and merge layers. The layer thumbnails are automatically updated as you edit the layers.

- 1 If the Layers panel is not visible in the work area, choose **Window > Layers**.

The Layers panel lists five layers for the 04Working.psd file (from top to bottom): Postage, HAWAII, Flower, Pineapple, and Background.

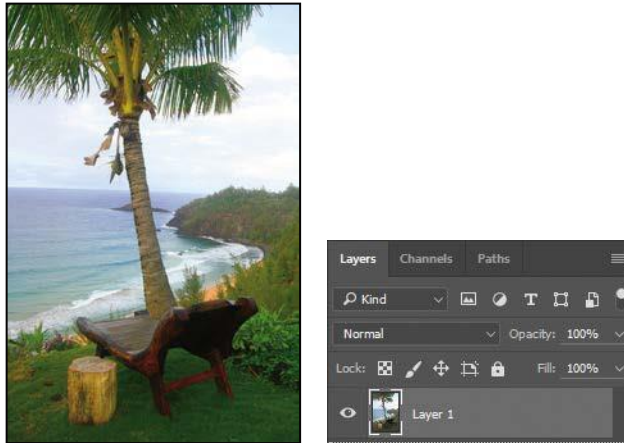
- 2 Select the Background layer to make it active (if it's not already selected).  
Notice the layer thumbnail and the icons shown for the Background layer:
  - The lock icon (🔒) indicates that the layer is protected.
  - The eye icon (👁️) indicates that the layer is visible in the image window.  
If you click the eye, the image window no longer displays that layer.

**Tip:** Use the context menu to hide or resize the layer thumbnail. Right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Mac) a thumbnail in the Layers panel to open the context menu, and then choose a thumbnail size.



The first task for this project is to add a photo of the beach to the postcard. First, you'll open the beach image in Photoshop.

- 3 In Photoshop, choose File > Open, navigate to the Lesson04 folder, and then double-click the Beach.psd file to open it.



The Layers panel changes to display the layer information for the active Beach.psd file. Notice that only one layer appears in the Beach.psd image: Layer 1, not Background. (For more information, see the sidebar “About the background layer.”)

## About the background layer

When you create a new image with a white or colored background, the bottom layer in the Layers panel is named Background, and is always opaque. An image can have only one background layer. You cannot change the stacking order of a background layer, its blending mode, or its opacity. You can, however, convert a background layer to a regular layer.

When you create a new image with transparent content, the image doesn't have a background layer. The bottom layer isn't constrained like the background layer; you can move it anywhere in the Layers panel, and change its opacity and blending mode.

### To convert a background layer into a regular layer:

- 1 Click the lock icon next to the layer name.
- 2 Rename the layer.

### To convert a regular layer into a background layer:

- 1 Select a layer in the Layers panel.
- 2 Choose Layer > New > Background From Layer.

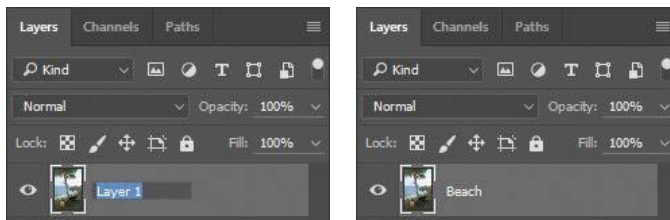
## Renaming and copying a layer

To add content to an image and simultaneously create a new layer for it, drag an object or layer from one file into the image window of another file. Whether you drag from the image window of the original file or from its Layers panel, only the active layer is reproduced in the destination file.

You'll drag the Beach.psd image onto the 04Working.psd file. Before you begin, make sure that both the 04Working.psd and Beach.psd files are open, and that the Beach.psd file is selected.

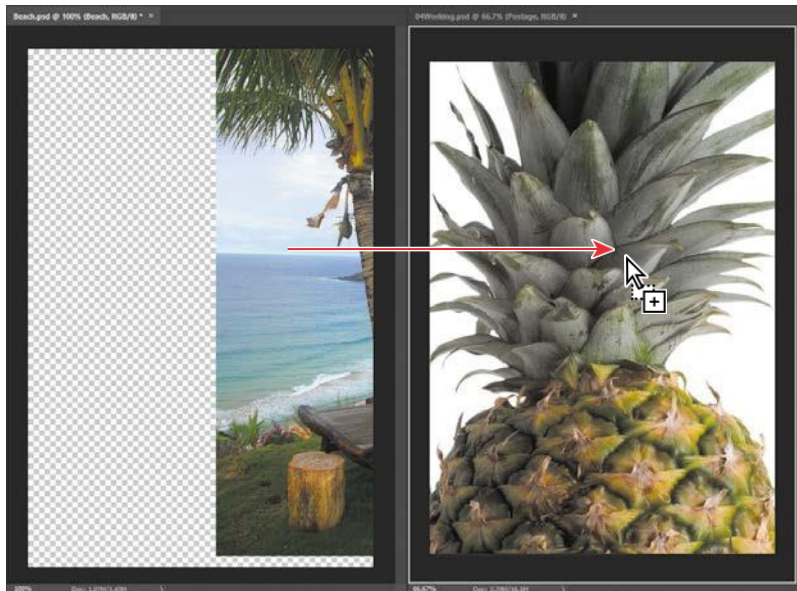
First, you'll give Layer 1 a more descriptive name.

- 1 In the Layers panel, double-click the name Layer 1, type **Beach**, and then press Enter or Return. Keep the layer selected.



**Note:** When you rename a layer, make sure you double-click the layer name text. If you double-click outside the name, other layer options may appear instead.

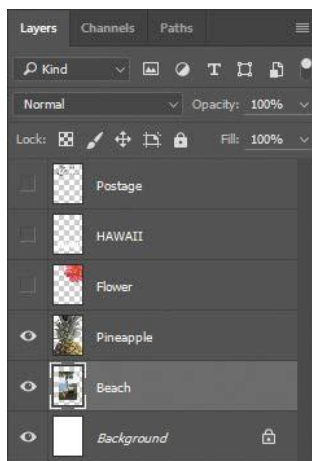
- 2 Choose Window > Arrange > 2-Up Vertical. Photoshop displays both of the open image files. Select the Beach.psd image so that it is the active file.
- 3 Select the Move tool (⇧), and use it to drag the Beach.psd image onto the 04Working.psd image window.



**Tip:** If you hold down Shift as you drag an image from one file into another, the dragged image automatically centers itself in the target image window.

**Tip:** Need images for a project like this one? In Photoshop, choose File > Search Adobe Stock to download low-resolution placeholder images from the Adobe Stock online photo library. If you purchase the images, Photoshop replaces the placeholders with high-resolution images.

The Beach layer now appears in the 04Working.psd file image window and its Layers panel, between the Background and Pineapple layers. Photoshop always adds new layers directly above the selected layer; you selected the Background layer earlier.



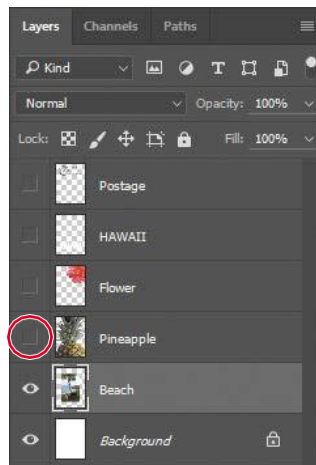
**4** Close the Beach.psd file without saving changes to it.

## Viewing individual layers

**Tip:** If you need to center the Beach layer, select the Beach layer in the Layers panel, choose Select > All, and then choose Layer > Align Layers to Selection > Horizontal Centers or Vertical Centers.

The 04Working.psd file now contains six layers. Some of the layers are visible and some are hidden. The eye icon (👁) next to a layer thumbnail in the Layers panel indicates that the layer is visible.

**1** Click the eye icon (👁) next to the Pineapple layer to hide the image of the pineapple.



You can hide or show a layer by clicking this icon or clicking in its column—also called the Show/Hide Visibility column.

**2** Click again in the Show/Hide Visibility column to display the pineapple.

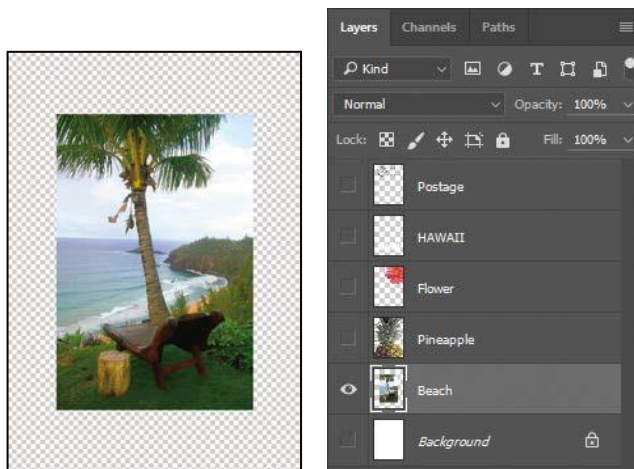
## Adding a border to a layer

Now you'll add a white border around the Beach layer to create the impression that it's an old photograph.

**1** Select the Beach layer. (To select the layer, click the layer name in the Layers panel.)

The layer is highlighted, indicating that it is active. Changes you make in the image window affect the active layer.

**2** To make the opaque areas on this layer more obvious, hide all layers except the Beach layer: Press Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac) as you click the eye icon (👁) next to the Beach layer.



The white background and other objects in the image disappear, leaving only the beach image against a checkerboard background. The checkerboard indicates transparent areas of the active layer.

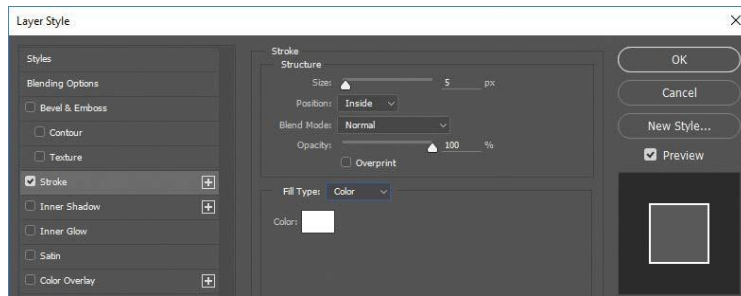
**3** Choose Layer > Layer Style > Stroke.

The Layer Style dialog box opens. Now you'll select the options for the white stroke around the beach image.

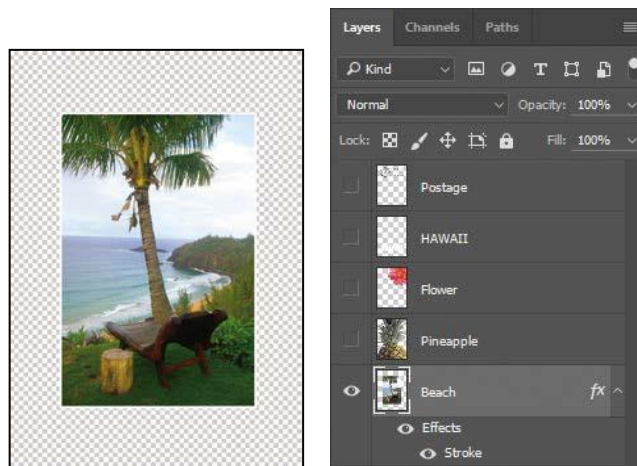


**4** Specify the following settings:

- Size: **5 px**
- Position: Inside
- Blend Mode: Normal
- Opacity: **100%**
- Color: White (Click the Color box, and select white in the Color Picker.)



**5** Click OK. A white border appears around the beach photo.



## Rearranging layers

The order in which the layers of an image are organized is called the *stacking order*. The stacking order determines how the image is viewed—you can change the order to make certain parts of the image appear in front of or behind other layers.

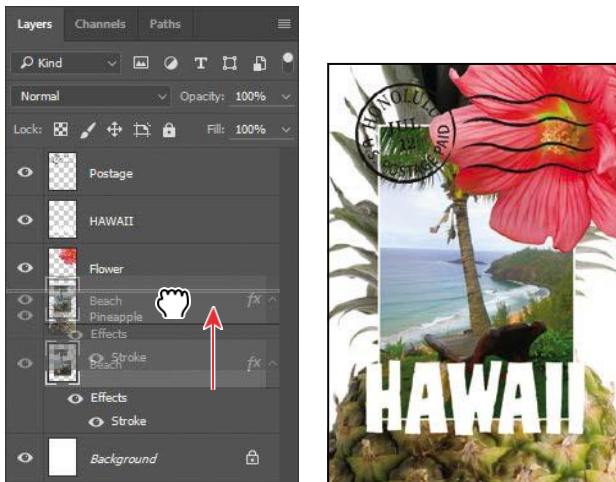
You'll rearrange the layers so that the beach image is in front of another image that is currently hidden in the file.

- 1 Make the Postage, HAWAII, Flower, Pineapple, and Background layers visible by clicking the Show/Hide Visibility column next to their layer names.



The beach image is almost entirely blocked by images on other layers.

- 2 In the Layers panel, drag the Beach layer up so that it is positioned between the Pineapple and Flower layers—when you've positioned it correctly, you'll see a thick line between the layers in the panel—and then release the mouse button.



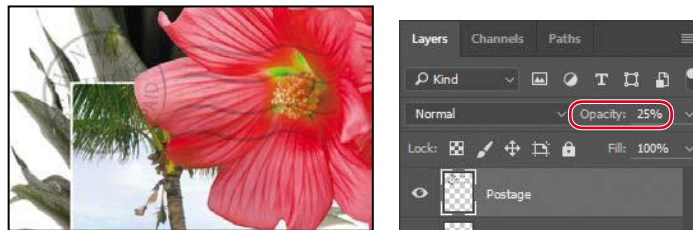
The Beach layer moves up one level in the stacking order, and the beach image appears on top of the pineapple and background images but under the postage, flower, and the word “HAWAII.”

**Tip:** You can also control the stacking order of layered images by selecting them in the Layers panel and choosing Layer > Arrange, and then choosing Bring To Front, Bring Forward, Send To Back, or Send Backward.

## Changing the opacity of a layer

You can reduce the opacity of any layer to reveal the layers below it. In this case, the postmark is too dark on the flower. You'll edit the opacity of the Postage layer to let the flower and other images show through.

- 1 Select the Postage layer, and then click the arrow next to the Opacity field to display the Opacity slider. Drag the slider to 25%. You can also type **25** in the Opacity box or scrub the Opacity label.



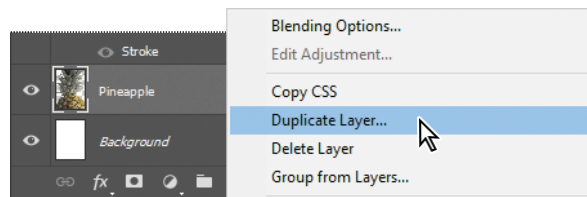
The Postage layer becomes partially transparent, so you can better see the layers underneath. Notice that the change in opacity affects only the image area of the Postage layer. The Pineapple, Beach, Flower, and HAWAII layers remain opaque.

- 2 Choose File > Save to save your work.

## Duplicating a layer and changing the blending mode

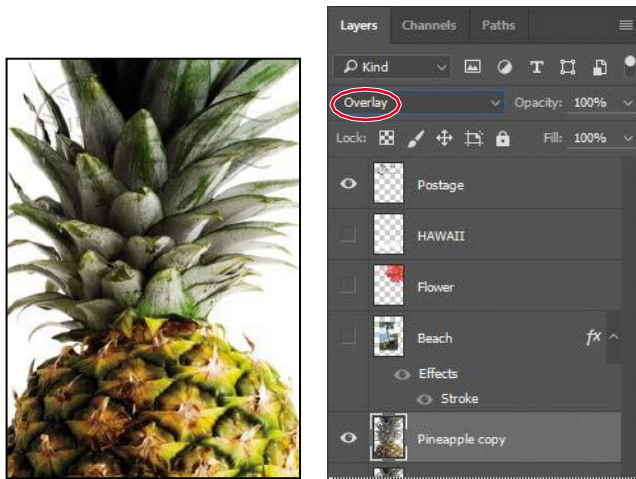
You can apply different blending modes to a layer. *Blending modes* affect how the color pixels on one layer blend with pixels on the layers underneath. First you'll use blending modes to increase the intensity of the image on the Pineapple layer so that it doesn't look so dull. Then you'll change the blending mode on the Postage layer. (Currently, the blending mode for both layers is Normal.)

- 1 Click the eye icons next to the HAWAII, Flower, and Beach layers to hide them.
- 2 Right-click or Control-click the Pineapple layer, and choose Duplicate Layer from the context menu. (Make sure you click the layer name, not its thumbnail, or you'll see the wrong context menu.) Click OK in the Duplicate Layer dialog box.



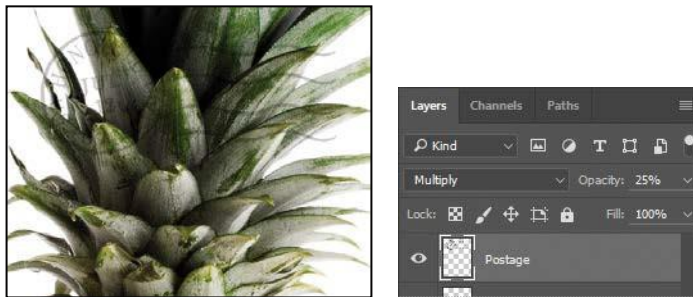
A layer called “Pineapple copy” appears above the Pineapple layer in the Layers panel.

- 3 With the Pineapple copy layer selected, choose Overlay from the Blending Modes menu in the Layers panel.



The Overlay blending mode blends the Pineapple copy layer with the Pineapple layer beneath it to create a vibrant, more colorful pineapple with deeper shadows and brighter highlights.

- 4 Select the Postage layer, and choose Multiply from the Blending Modes menu.



The Multiply blending mode multiplies the colors in the underlying layers with the color in the top layer. In this case, the postmark becomes a little stronger.

- 5 Choose File > Save to save your work.

## Resizing and rotating layers

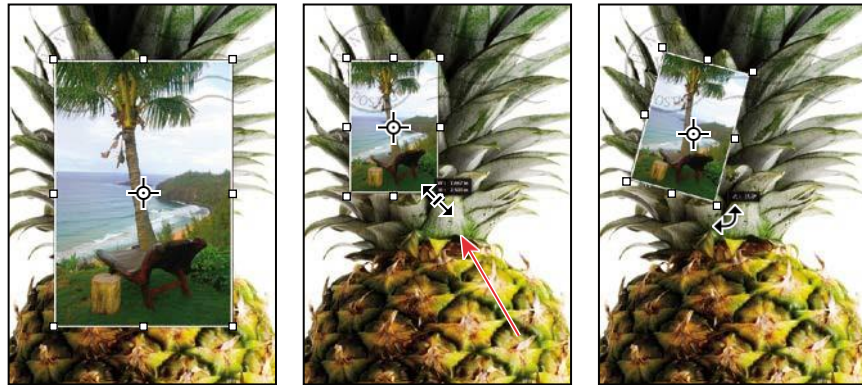
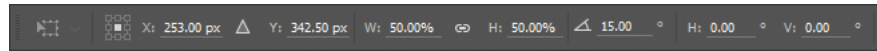
You can resize and transform layers.

- 1 Click the Visibility column on the Beach layer to make the layer visible.
- 2 Select the Beach layer in the Layers panel, and choose Edit > Free Transform.

A Transform bounding box appears around the beach image. The bounding box has handles on each corner and each side.

First, you'll resize and angle the layer.

- 3 Press Shift as you drag a corner handle inward to scale the beach photo down by about 50%. (Watch the Width and Height percentages in the options bar.)
- 4 With the bounding box still active, position the pointer just outside one of the corner handles until it becomes a curved double arrow. Drag clockwise to rotate the beach image approximately 15 degrees. You can also enter **15** in the Set Rotation box in the options bar.



- 5 Click the Commit Transform button ( ) in the options bar.
- 6 Make the Flower layer visible. Then, select the Move tool (⌘), and drag the beach photo so that its corner is tucked neatly beneath the flower, as in the illustration.

7 Choose File > Save.



## Using a filter to create artwork

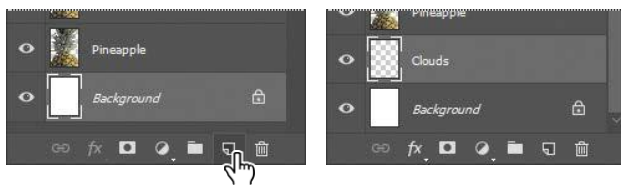
Next, you'll create a new layer with no artwork on it. (Adding empty layers to a file is comparable to adding blank sheets of film to a stack of images.) You'll use this layer to add realistic-looking clouds to the sky with a Photoshop filter.

- 1 In the Layers panel, select the Background layer to make it active, and then click the Create A New Layer button (📄) at the bottom of the Layers panel.

A new layer, named Layer 1, appears between the Background and Pineapple layers. The layer has no content, so it has no effect on the image.

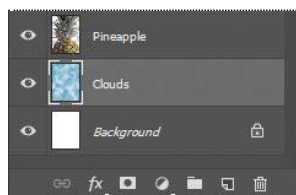
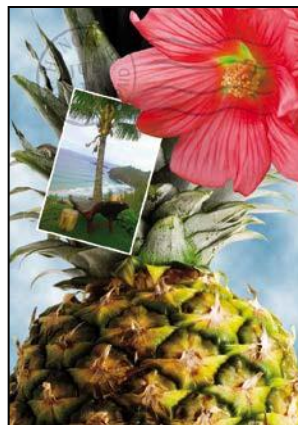
- 2 Double-click the name Layer 1, type **Clouds**, and press Enter or Return to rename the layer.

**Note:** You can also create a new layer by choosing Layer > New > Layer, or by choosing New Layer from the Layers panel menu.



**Tip:** If you expect to use a certain color frequently in multiple documents, add it to your Creative Cloud Libraries. Create a swatch of the color in the Swatches panel, and then drag the swatch to a library in the Libraries panel. Now that color is available to any open Photoshop document.

- 3 In the Tools panel, click the foreground color swatch, select a sky blue color from the Color Picker, and click OK. We selected a color with the following values: R=48, G=138, B=174. The Background Color remains white.
- 4 With the Clouds layer still active, choose Filter > Render > Clouds.



Realistic-looking clouds appear behind the image.

- 5 Choose File > Save.

## Dragging to add a new layer

You can add a layer to an image by dragging an image file from the desktop, Bridge, or Explorer (Windows) or the Finder (Mac). You'll add another flower to the post-card now.

- 1 If Photoshop fills your monitor, reduce the size of the Photoshop window:
  - In Windows, click the Restore button (☐) in the upper right corner, and then drag the lower right corner of the Photoshop window to make it smaller.
  - In Mac, click the green Maximize/Restore button (●) in the upper left corner of the image window.
- 2 In Photoshop, select the Pineapple copy layer in the Layers panel to make it the active layer.

**Tip:** If you're adding artwork from a Creative Cloud library, you can simply drag and drop it from the Libraries panel into a Photoshop document. You can also do this with Adobe Stock images stored in your Creative Cloud Libraries.

## Blending modes

Blending modes affect how the color pixels on one layer blend with pixels on the layers beneath them. The default blending mode, Normal, hides pixels beneath the top layer unless the top layer is partially or completely transparent. Each of the other blending modes let you control the way the pixels in the layers interact with each other.

Often, the best way to see how a blending mode affects your image is simply to try it. You can easily experiment with different blending modes in the Layers panel, applying one after another to compare the effects. As you begin experimenting, keep in mind how different groups of blending modes affect an image. Generally, if you want to:

- Darken your image, try Darken, Multiply, Color Burn, Linear Burn, or Darker Color.
- Lighten your image, try Lighten, Screen, Color Dodge, Linear Dodge, or Lighter Color.
- Increase the contrast in the image, try Overlay, Soft Light, Hard Light, Vivid Light, Linear Light, Pin Light, or Hard Mix.
- Change the actual color values of the image, try Hue, Saturation, Color, or Luminosity.
- Create an inversion effect, try Difference or Exclusion.

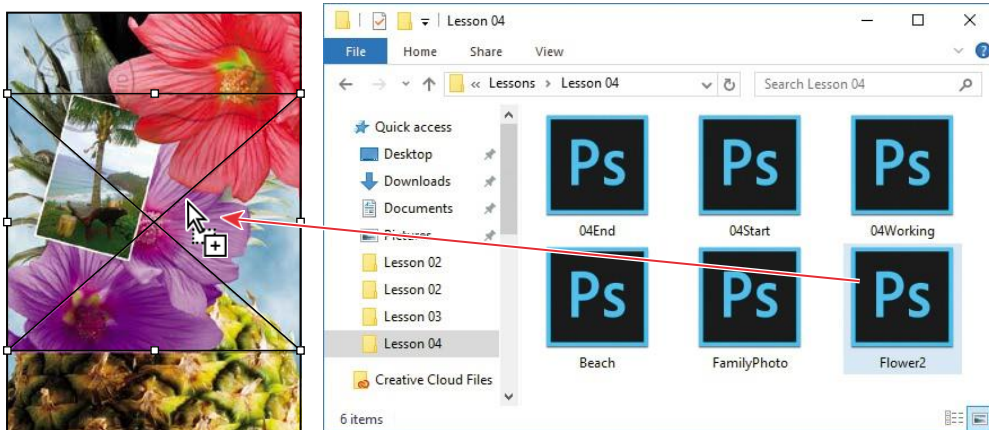
The following blending modes often come in handy, and can be a good place to start your experimentation:

- **Multiply** does just what the name implies: it multiplies the color in the underlying layers with the color in the top layer.
- **Lighten** replaces pixels in the underlying layers with those in the top layer whenever the pixels in the top layer are lighter.
- **Overlay** multiplies either the colors or the inverse of the colors, depending on the underlying layers. Patterns or colors overlay the existing pixels while preserving the highlights and shadows of the underlying layers.
- **Luminosity** replaces only the luminance of the underlying colors with that of the top layer.
- **Difference** subtracts darker colors from lighter ones.





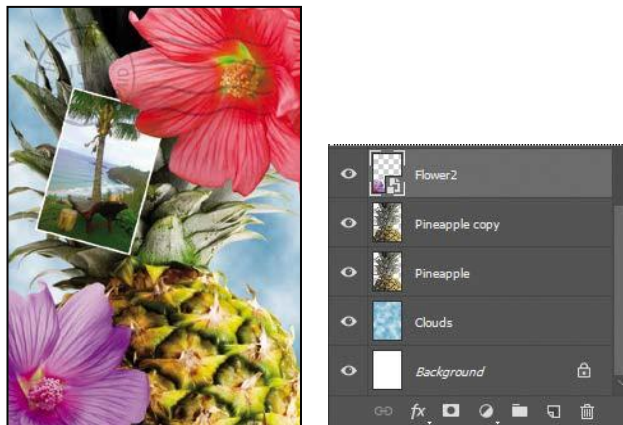
- 3 In Explorer (Windows) or the Finder (Mac), navigate to the Lessons folder you downloaded from the peachpit.com website. Then navigate to the Lesson04 folder.
- 4 Select Flower2.psd, and drag it from Explorer or the Finder onto your image.



**Tip:** You can drag images from a Bridge window to Photoshop as easily as you can drag from the Windows or Mac desktop.

The Flower2 layer appears in the Layers panel, directly above the Pineapple copy layer. Photoshop places the image as a Smart Object, which is a layer you can edit without making permanent changes. You'll work more extensively with Smart Objects in Lesson 8.

- 5 Position the Flower2 layer in the lower left corner of the postcard, so that about half of the top flower is visible.

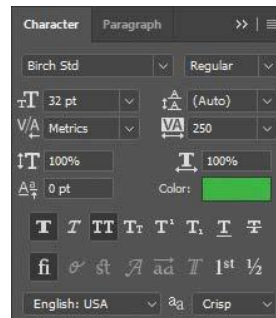


- 6 Click the Commit Transform button (✓) in the options bar to accept the layer.

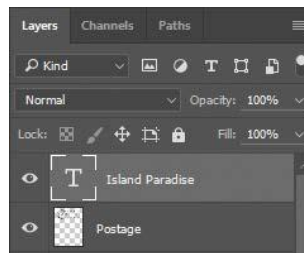
## Adding text

Now you're ready to create some type using the Horizontal Type tool, which places the text on its own type layer. You'll then edit the text and apply a special effect.

- 1 Make the HAWAII layer visible. You'll add text just below this layer, and apply special effects to both layers.
- 2 Choose Select > Deselect Layers, so that no layers are selected.
- 3 In the Tools panel, select the Horizontal Type tool (T). Then, choose Window > Character to open the Character panel. Do the following in the Character panel:
  - Select a serif font (we used Birch Std; if you use a different font, adjust other settings accordingly).
  - Select a font style (we used Regular).
  - Select a large font size (we used 36 points).
  - Select a large tracking value (we used 250).
  - Click the color swatch, select a shade of grassy green in the Color Picker, and click OK to close the Color Picker.
  - Click the Faux Bold button (TT).
  - Click the All Caps button (TT).
  - Select Crisp from the Anti-aliasing menu (aa).
- 4 Click just below the “H” in the word “HAWAII,” and type **Island Paradise**. Then click the Commit Any Current Edits button (✓) in the options bar.



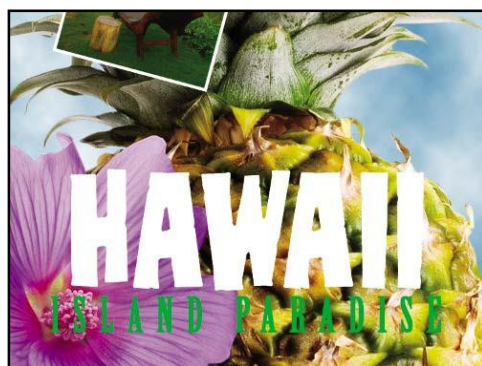
The Layers panel now includes a layer named Island Paradise with a “T” thumbnail, indicating that it is a type layer. This layer is at the top of the layer stack.



**Note:** If you make a mistake when you click to set the type, simply click away from the type and repeat step 4.

The text appears where you clicked, which probably isn't exactly where you want it to be positioned.

- 5 Select the Move tool (⌘) and drag the “Island Paradise” text so that it is centered below “HAWAII.”

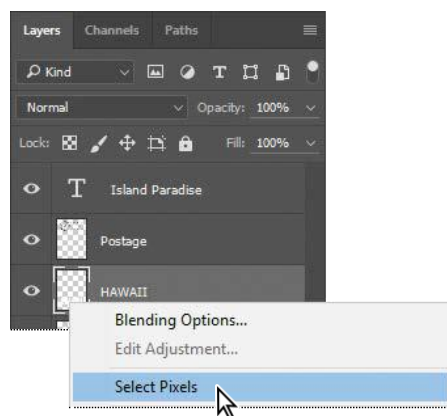


## Applying a gradient to a layer

You can apply a color gradient to all or part of a layer. In this example, you’ll apply a gradient to the word “HAWAII” to make it more colorful. First you’ll select the letters, and then you’ll apply the gradient.

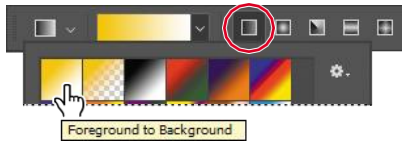
- 1 Select the HAWAII layer in the Layers panel to make it active.
- 2 Right-click or Control-click the thumbnail in the HAWAII layer, and choose Select Pixels.

● **Note:** Make sure you click the thumbnail, rather than the layer name, or you’ll see the wrong context menu.



Everything on the HAWAII layer (the white lettering) is selected. Now that you've selected the area to fill, you'll apply a gradient.

- 3 In the Tools panel, select the Gradient tool (▬).
- 4 Click the Foreground Color swatch in the Tools panel, select a bright shade of orange in the Color Picker, and click OK. The Background Color should still be white.
- 5 In the options bar, make sure that Linear Gradient (▬) is selected.
- 6 In the options bar, click the arrow next to the Gradient Editor box to open the Gradient Picker. Select the Foreground To Background swatch (it's the first one), and then click anywhere outside the gradient picker to close it.



- 7 With the selection still active, drag the Gradient tool from the bottom to the top of the letters. If you want to be sure you drag straight up, press the Shift key as you drag. When the pointer reaches the top of the letters, release the mouse button.

The gradient extends across the type, starting with orange at the bottom and gradually blending to white at the top.

- 8 Choose Select > Deselect to deselect the HAWAII type.
- 9 Save the work you've done so far.

**Note:** Though the layer contains the word "HAWAII," it is not a type layer. The text has been rasterized.

**Tip:** To list the gradient options by name rather than by sample, click the menu button in the gradient picker, and choose either Small List or Large List. Or, hover the pointer over a thumbnail until a tool tip appears, showing the gradient name.

# Applying a layer style

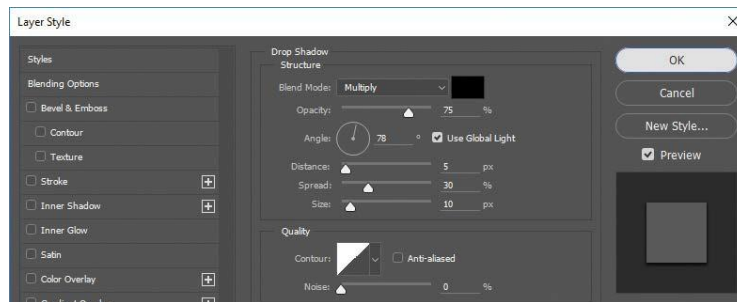
You can enhance a layer by adding a shadow, stroke, satin sheen, or other special effect from a collection of automated and editable layer styles. These styles are easy to apply, and they link directly to the layer you specify.

Like layers, layer styles can be hidden by clicking eye icons (👁) in the Layers panel. Layer styles are nondestructive, so you can edit or remove them at any time. You can apply a copy of a layer style to a different layer by dragging the effect onto the destination layer.

Earlier, you used a layer style to add a stroke to the beach photo. Now, you'll add drop shadows to the text to make it stand out.

**Tip:** You can also open the Layer Style dialog box by clicking the Add A Layer Style button at the bottom of the Layers panel and then choosing a layer style, such as Bevel And Emboss, from the pop-up menu.

- 1 Select the Island Paradise layer, and then choose Layer > Layer Style > Drop Shadow.
- 2 In the Layer Style dialog box, make sure that the Preview option is selected, and then, if necessary, move the dialog box so that you can see the Island Paradise text in the image window.
- 3 In the Structure area, select Use Global Light, and then specify the following settings:
  - Blend Mode: Multiply
  - Opacity: 75%
  - Angle: 78 degrees
  - Distance: 5 px
  - Spread: 30%
  - Size: 10 px



**Tip:** To change the Global Light settings, choose Layer > Layer Style > Global Light.

When Use Global Light is selected, one “master” lighting angle is available in all the layer effects that use shading. If you set a lighting angle in one of these effects, every other effect with Use Global Light selected inherits the same angle setting.

Angle determines the lighting angle at which the effect is applied to the layer. Distance determines the offset distance for a shadow or satin effect. Spread determines how gradually the shadow fades toward the edges. Size determines how far the shadow extends.

Photoshop adds a drop shadow to the “Island Paradise” text in the image.

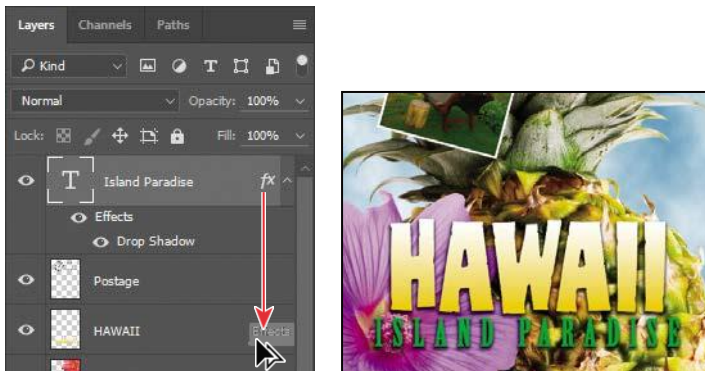
- 4 Click OK to accept the settings and close the Layer Style dialog box.



Photoshop nests the layer style in the Island Paradise layer. First it lists Effects, and then the layer styles applied to the layer. An eye icon (👁) appears next to the effect category and next to each effect. To turn off an effect, click its eye icon. Click the visibility column again to restore the effect. To hide all layer styles, click the eye icon next to Effects. To collapse the list of effects, click the arrow next to the layer.

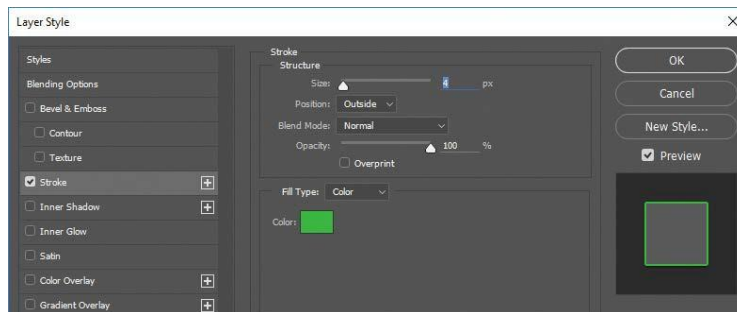
- 5 Make sure that eye icons appear for both items nested in the Island Paradise layer.
- 6 Press Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac), and in the Layers panel, drag the Effects listing or the fx symbol (fx) for the Island Paradise layer onto the HAWAII layer.

**Tip:** If you expect to use a layer style frequently in multiple documents, add it to your Creative Cloud Libraries. Select a layer using the style, then click the Add Layer Style button at the bottom of the Libraries panel. Now that style is available to any open Photoshop document.



The Drop Shadow layer style is applied to the HAWAII layer, copying the settings you applied to the Island Paradise layer. Now you’ll add a green stroke around the word HAWAII.

- 7 Select the HAWAII layer in the Layers panel, click the Add A Layer Style button (fx) at the bottom of the panel, and then choose Stroke from the pop-up menu.
- 8 In the Structure area of the Layer Styles dialog box, specify the following settings:
  - Size: **4 px**
  - Position: Outside
  - Blend Mode: Normal
  - Opacity: **100%**
  - Color: Green (Select a shade that goes well with the one you used for the “Island Paradise” text.)



- 9 Click OK to apply the stroke.



Now you'll add a drop shadow and a satin sheen to the flower.

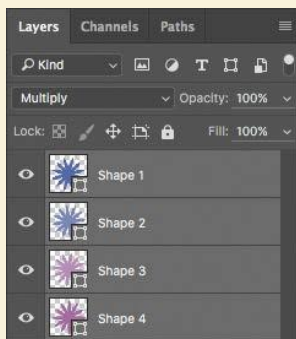
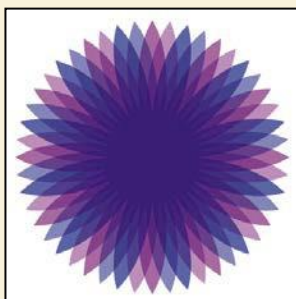
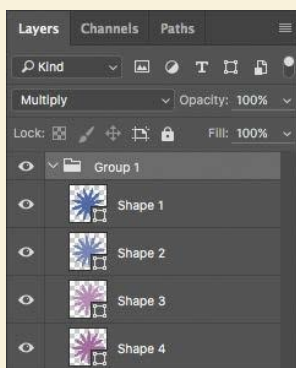
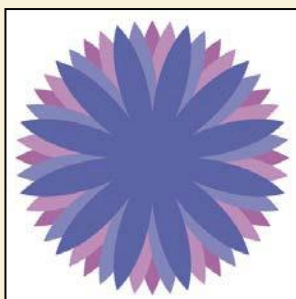
Julianne Kost is an official Adobe Photoshop evangelist.

## Tool tips from the Photoshop evangelist



### Blending effects

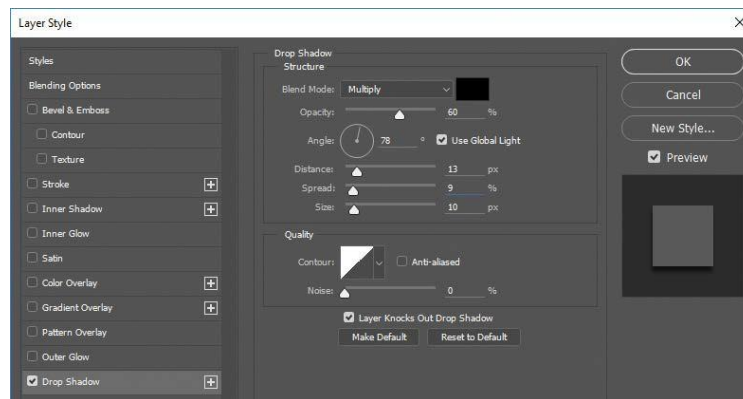
Blending layers in a different order or on different groups changes the effect. You can apply a blending mode to an entire layer group and get a very different result than if you apply the same blending mode to each of the layers individually. When a blending mode is applied to a group, Photoshop treats the group as a single merged object and then applies the blending mode. Experiment with blending modes to get the effect you want.





**10** Select the Flower layer, and choose Layer > Layer Style > Drop Shadow. Then change the following settings in the Structure area:

- Opacity: **60%**
- Distance: **13 px**
- Spread: **9%**.
- Make sure Use Global Light is selected, and that the Blend Mode is Multiply. Do not click OK.

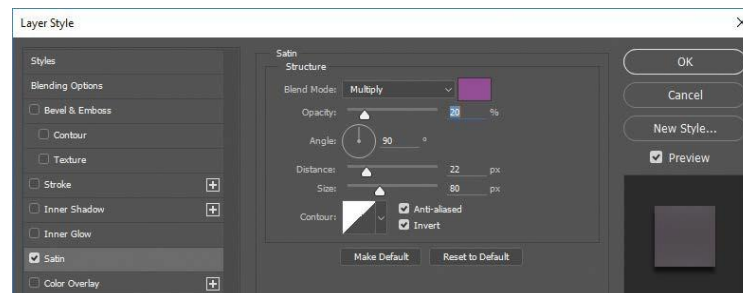


● **Note:** Be sure to click the word Satin. If you click only the check box, Photoshop applies the layer style with its default settings, but you won't see the options.

**11** With the Layer Style dialog box still open, click the word Satin on the left to select it and display its options. Then make sure Invert is selected, and apply the following settings:

- Color (next to Blend Mode): Fuchsia (choose a color that complements the flower color)
- Opacity: **20%**
- Distance: **22 px**

The Satin layer effect applies interior shading to create a satiny finish. The contour controls the shape of the effect; Invert flips the contour curve.



**12** Click OK to apply both layer styles.



*Before applying layer styles*



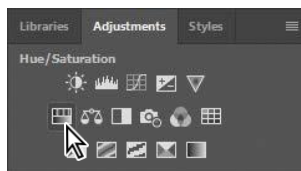
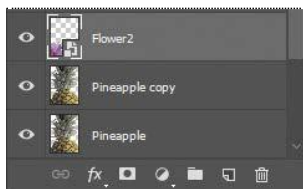
*The flower with the drop shadow and satin layer styles applied*

## Adding an adjustment layer

Adjustment layers can be added to an image to apply color and tonal adjustments without permanently changing the pixel values in the image. For example, if you add a Color Balance adjustment layer to an image, you can experiment with different colors repeatedly, because the change occurs only on the adjustment layer. If you decide to return to the original pixel values, you can hide or delete the adjustment layer.

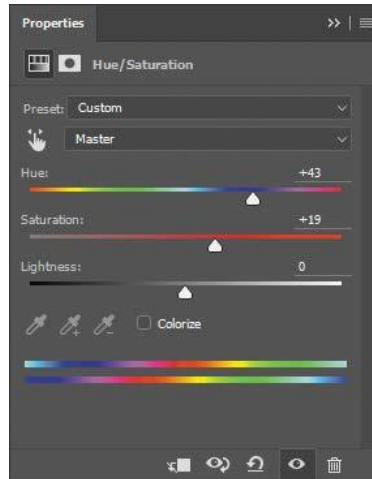
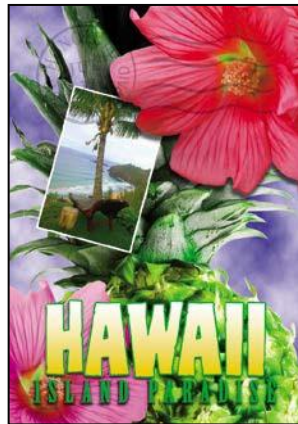
You've used adjustment layers in other lessons. Here, you'll add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to change the color of the purple flower. An adjustment layer affects all layers below it in the image's stacking order unless a selection is active when you create it or you create a clipping mask.

- 1** Select the Flower2 layer in the Layers panel.
- 2** Click the Hue/Saturation icon in the Adjustments panel to add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer.



3 In the Properties panel, apply the following settings:

- Hue: 43
- Saturation: 19
- Lightness: 0



The changes affect the Flower2, Pineapple Copy, Pineapple, Clouds, and Background layers. The effect is interesting, but you want to change only the Flower2 layer.

● **Note:** Be sure to click the layer name, not the thumbnail, to see the appropriate context menu.

4 Right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Mac) the layer name on the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer, and choose Create Clipping Mask.



An arrow appears in the Layers panel, indicating that the adjustment layer applies only to the Flower2 layer. You'll learn more about clipping masks in Lessons 6 and 7.

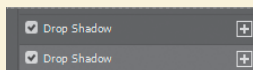


## Extra credit

### Using an effect more than once in a layer style

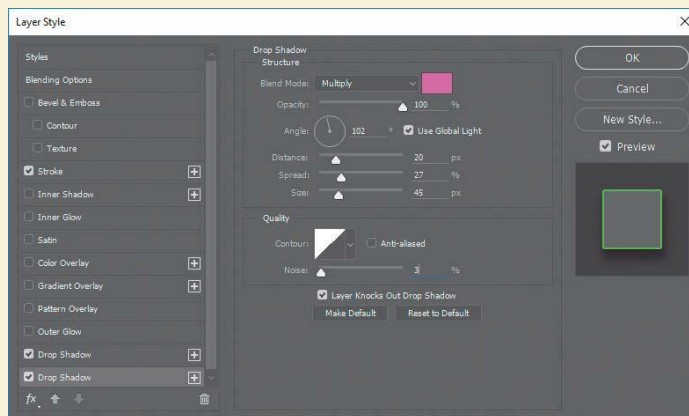
A great way to add visual impact to a design element is to apply multiple instances of effects such as strokes, glows, or shadows. You don't have to duplicate layers to do this, because you can apply multiple instances of an effect inside the Layer Styles dialog box.

- 1 Open 04End.psd in your Lesson04 folder.
- 2 In the Layers panel, double-click the Drop Shadow effect applied to the HAWAII layer.
- 3 Click the + button next to the Drop Shadow effect, and select the second Drop Shadow effect.



Now for the fun part! You can adjust your second drop shadow to change options such as color, size, and opacity.

- 4 In the Drop Shadow options, click the color swatch, move the pointer outside the Layer Style dialog box so that the pointer changes into an eyedropper, and click the bottom flower to sample its pink color. Then match the Drop Shadow settings as shown below, and click OK.



- 5 The new pink drop shadow helps the HAWAII text pop off the page.

## Updating layer effects

Layer effects are automatically updated when you make changes to a layer. You can edit the text and watch how the layer effect tracks the change.

**Tip:** You can search for layers in the Layers panel by layer type, layer name, effect, mode, attribute, and color. You can also display only the selected layers: choose **Select > Isolate Layers**, or choose **Selected from the Kind** menu in the Layers panel to enter Isolation Mode.

**Note:** You do have to click the **Commit Any Current Edits** button after making the text edits, because selecting the **Move** tool has the same effect.

- 1 Select the Island Paradise layer in the Layers panel.
  - 2 In the Tools panel, select the Horizontal Type tool (T).
  - 3 In the options bar, set the font size to **32** points, and press Enter or Return.
- Although you didn't select the text by dragging the Type tool (as you would have to do in a word processing program), "Island Paradise" now appears in 32-point type.
- 4 Using the Horizontal Type tool, click between "Island" and "Paradise," and type **of**.
- As you edit the text, the layer styles are applied to the new text.
- 5 You don't actually need the word "of," so delete it.
  - 6 Select the Move tool (⇧), and drag "Island Paradise" to center it beneath the word "HAWAII."



*When you add text, layer effects are automatically applied.*



*Center the text beneath the word "HAWAII."*

- 7 Choose **File > Save**.

## Adding a border

The Hawaii postcard is nearly done. The elements are almost all arranged correctly in the composition. You'll finish up by positioning the postmark and then adding a white postcard border.

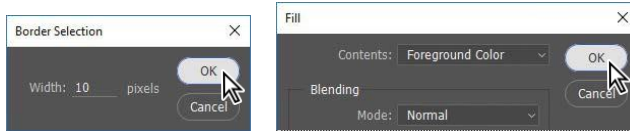
- 1 Select the Postage layer, and then use the Move tool (⇧) to drag it to the middle right of the image, as in the illustration.



- 2 Select the Island Paradise layer in the Layers panel, and then click the Create A New Layer button (⌘) at the bottom of the panel.
- 3 Choose Select > All.
- 4 Choose Select > Modify > Border. In the Border Selection dialog box, type **10** pixels for the Width, and click OK.

A 10-pixel border is selected around the entire image. Now, you'll fill it with white.

- 5 Select white for the Foreground Color, and then choose Edit > Fill.
- 6 In the Fill dialog box, choose Foreground Color from the Contents menu, and click OK.



- 7 Choose Select > Deselect.
- 8 Double-click the Layer 1 name in the Layers panel, and rename the layer **Border**.



# Flattening and saving files

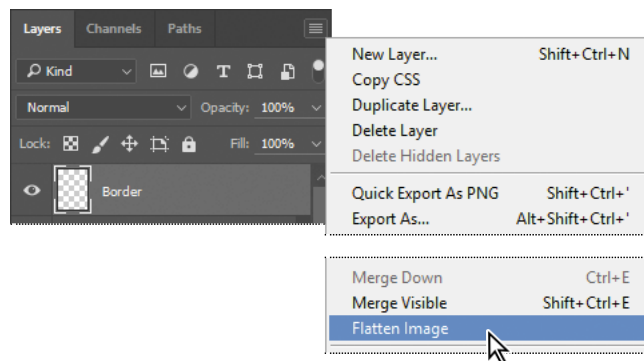
When you finish editing all the layers in your image, you can merge or *flatten* layers to reduce the file size. Flattening combines all the layers into a single background layer. However, you cannot edit layers once you've flattened them, so you shouldn't flatten an image until you are certain that you're satisfied with all your design decisions. Rather than flattening your original PSD files, it's a good idea to save a copy of the file with its layers intact, in case you need to edit a layer later.

● **Note:** If the *i* do not appear in the status bar, click the status bar pop-up menu arrow, and choose Document Sizes.

To appreciate what flattening does, notice the two numbers for the file size in the status bar at the bottom of the image window. The first number represents what the file size would be if you flattened the image. The second number represents the file size without flattening. This lesson file, if flattened, would be 2–3MB, but the current file is much larger. So flattening is well worth it in this case.



- 1 Select any tool but the Type tool (T), to be sure that you're not in text-editing mode. Then choose File > Save (if it is available) to be sure that all your changes have been saved in the file.
- 2 Choose Image > Duplicate.
- 3 In the Duplicate Image dialog box, name the file **04Flat.psd**, and click OK.
- 4 Leave the 04Flat.psd file open, but close the 04Working.psd file.
- 5 Choose Flatten Image from the Layers panel menu.



Only one layer, named Background, remains in the Layers panel.

- 6 Choose File > Save. Even though you chose Save rather than Save As, the Save As dialog box appears.
- 7 Make sure the location is the Lessons/Lesson04 folder, and then click Save to accept the default settings and save the flattened file.

You have saved two versions of the file: a one-layer, flattened copy as well as the original file, in which all the layers remain intact.

You've created a colorful, attractive postcard. This lesson only begins to explore the vast possibilities and the flexibility you gain when you master the art of using Photoshop layers. You'll get more experience and try out different techniques for layers in almost every chapter as you move forward in this book.

**Tip:** If you want to flatten only some of the layers in a file, click the eye icons to hide the layers you don't want to flatten, and then choose Merge Visible from the Layers panel menu.

## About layer comps

The Layer Comps panel (choose Window > Layer Comps) provides one-click flexibility in switching between different views of a multilayered image file. A layer comp is simply a definition of the settings in the Layers panel. You work with them in the Layer Comps panel (choose Window > Layer Comps). Once you've defined a layer comp, you can change as many settings as you please in the Layers panel and then create another layer comp to preserve that configuration of layer properties. Then, by switching from one layer comp to another, you can quickly review the two designs. The beauty of layer comps becomes apparent when you want to demonstrate a number of possible design arrangements. When you've created a few layer comps, you can review the design variations without having to tediously select and deselect eye icons or change settings in the Layers panel.

Say, for example, that you are designing a brochure, and you're producing a version in English as well as in French. You might have the French text on one layer, and the English text on another in the same image file. To create two different layer comps, you would simply turn on visibility for the French layer and turn off visibility for the English layer, and then click the Create New Layer Comp button in the Layer Comps panel. Then you'd do the inverse—turn on visibility for the English layer and turn off visibility for the French layer, and click the Create New Layer Comp button—to create an English layer comp. To view the different layer comps, click the Layer Comp box for each comp in the Layer Comps panel in turn.

Layer comps can be an especially valuable feature when the design is in flux or when you need to create multiple versions of the same image file. If some aspects need to stay consistent among layer comps, you can change the visibility, position, or appearance of one layer in a layer comp and then sync it to see that change reflected in all the other layer comps.





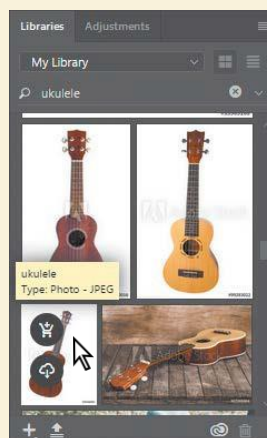


## Extra credit

### Exploring design options with Adobe Stock

Visualizing different ideas for a design project is easier when you can experiment with images. The Libraries panel in Photoshop gives you direct access to millions of Adobe Stock images. We'll add a stock image of a ukulele to this lesson's composition.

- 1 In the Lesson04 folder, open 04End.psd. Save it as 04End\_Working.
- 2 In the Layers panel, select the Beach layer.
- 3 In the Libraries panel, make sure the search field is set to Search Adobe Stock, type **ukulele** into the field, and locate a vertical image of a ukulele on a white background with no shadow.
- 4 Drag the ukulele image into the document. Shift-drag a corner handle to proportionally scale the image to about 25% of its original size. Apply the changes to finish importing the image.
- 5 Click the  in the search field to close the search results. Notice that the image was automatically added to the current library.
- 6 Now remove the background. With the Ukulele layer selected, choose the Magic Wand tool in the Tools panel, and click anywhere within the white background. Choose the Rectangular Marquee tool, and Shift-drag around the numbers in the bottom right corner to include them in the selection. Alt/Option-click the Add Layer Mask button () at the bottom of the Layers panel.
- 7 With the Move tool, drag the Ukulele to the upper left corner so that it partially overlaps with the small photo of the beach view. You've just added an Adobe Stock photo to your postcard image!



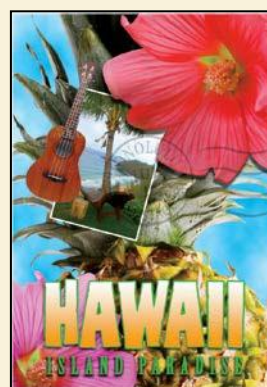
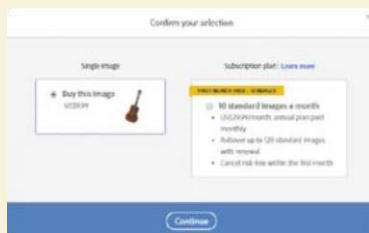
Adobe Stock search results



Stock image in document

### Licensing an image

Until it's licensed, the ukulele image is a low-resolution version with an Adobe Stock watermark. You don't have to license the ukulele image used here, but you must license images used in a final project. To do that, right-click/Control-click the image in the Libraries panel, choose License Image, and then follow the prompts. After licensing, the image is automatically replaced with a high-resolution version without a watermark.



You've added a new element to your postcard using Adobe Stock!

## Review questions

- 1 What is the advantage of using layers?
- 2 When you create a new layer, where does it appear in the Layers panel stack?
- 3 How can you make artwork on one layer appear in front of artwork on another layer?
- 4 How can you apply a layer style?
- 5 When you've completed your artwork, what can you do to minimize the file size without changing the quality or dimensions?

## Review answers

- 1 Layers let you move and edit different parts of an image as discrete objects. You can also hide individual layers as you work on other layers.
- 2 A new layer always appears immediately above the active layer.
- 3 You can make artwork on one layer appear in front of artwork on another layer by dragging layers up or down the stacking order in the Layers panel, or by using the Layer > Arrange subcommands—Bring To Front, Bring Forward, Send To Back, and Send Backward. However, you can't change the layer position of a background layer.
- 4 To apply a layer style, select the layer, and then click the Add A Layer Style button in the Layers panel, or choose Layer > Layer Style > [style].
- 5 To minimize file size, you can flatten the image, which merges all the layers onto a single background. It's a good idea to duplicate image files with layers intact before you flatten them, in case you have to make changes to a layer later.