

# Basic Digital Scrapbook Page

*For Photoshop Elements (PSE)*

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Independent Designer

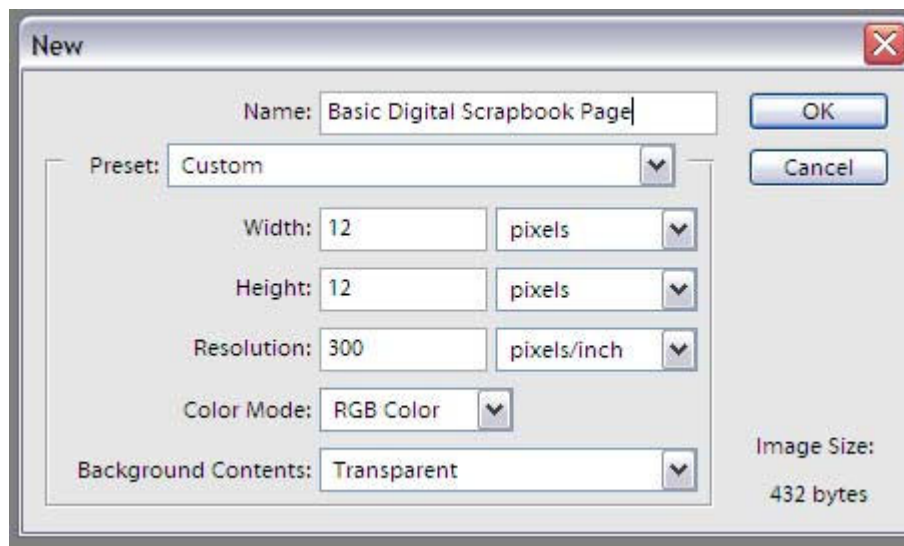
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This tutorial will demonstrate how to create a basic digital scrapbook page using Photoshop Elements. While these instructions are based on Photoshop Elements 3 these instructions should also work in other versions. Features covered by this tutorial include:

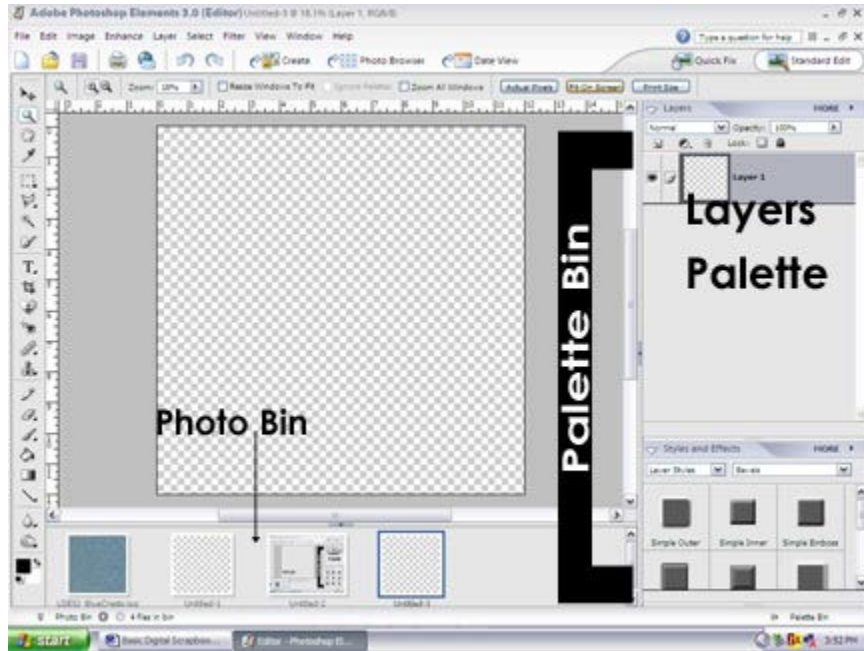
- Opening a Blank Document and Setting Up Your Workspace
- Adding Photos, Backgrounds and Elements to a Blank Canvas
- Managing Layers
- Resizing, Digitally Cutting Papers and Creating Mats
- Duplicating Layers
- Using the text tool for titles and journaling.

## Beginning a Blank Canvas and Setting up Your Workspace

1. After starting PSE, choose File>New>Blank File to get a blank canvas. For a 12X12 page, choose inches from the drop down menus by the width and height categories. For the resolution, choose 300 pixels/inch. If you wish, you can also name your image, but you will have a chance to do this when you save the file. For Background Contents choose Transparent. Choose OK. Now you should have a blank document, with a gray and white checkerboard that indicates transparency.



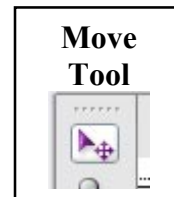
3. Before creating your first page, you need to set up your workspace so that you can see your layers palette, you palette bin, and your photo bin. and. Choose *Windows* from the tool bar and check *Layers*, *Palette Bin* and *Photo Bin* from the options. Now your screen should look like something like this:



## Adding Photos, Backgrounds and Elements to a Blank Canvas

Now you need to open the items you want to put on your layout. This may include papers, attachments, embellishments and photos. For purposes of this tutorial, I'm creating a single-photo layout with minimal elements.

1. Choose *File > Open*. When the window opens, browse for the items you wish to open. By holding the *Ctrl Button* while you click the items in a single folder, you can several items at once. Click *Open*. Thumbnails of these items will appear in the *Photo Bin*. If you cannot see all the open items, you can make the photo bin larger by selecting the arrow in the middle of the divider and dragging it upward
2. Now that you have your items open, activate your background paper by clicking on its thumbnail in the *Photo Bin*. Find your *Toolbox* on the left hand edge of the workspace. (It looks like a column of icons that include a magnifying glass, a hand and a large T.) Choose the *Move Tool*, which looks a little like an arrow with a plus sign and is located at the top of the *Toolbox*.

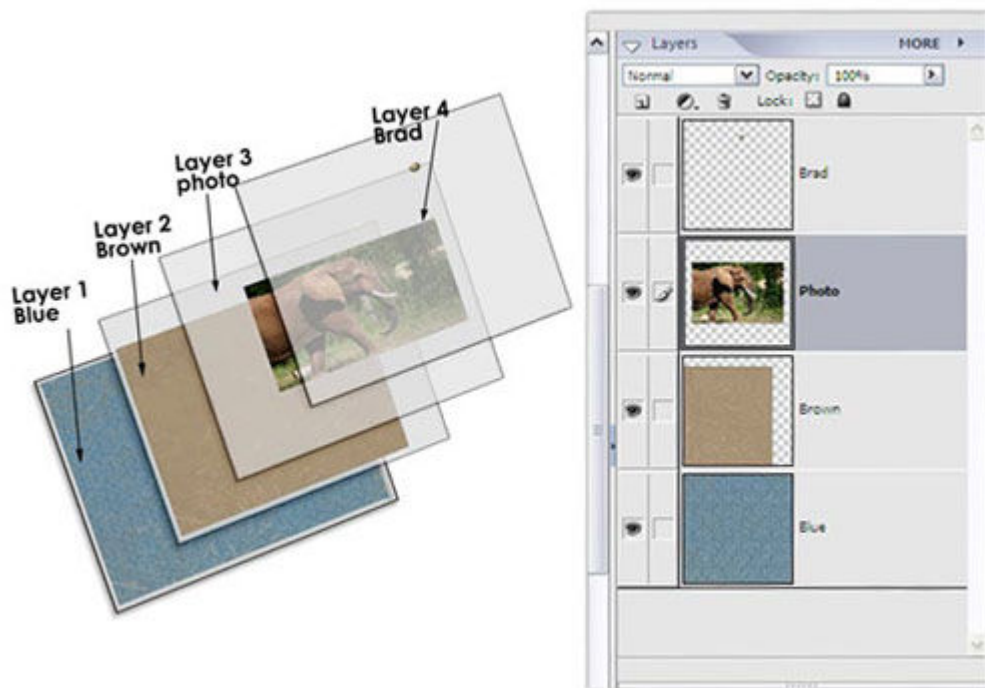


3. Now click on the image and drag the *arrow* down to your canvas thumbnail in the *Photo Bin*. *The background image will not move, only the arrow*. You can let go when you see a plus sign appear beside the arrow. Your canvas should now be activated and the background image should appear on your canvas. It should also appear in the layers palette above the blank checkerboard layer. If you wish you may delete this blank layer by selecting it in the layers palette, right-clicking and choosing *Delete Layer*.
4. To add the remaining items to your canvas, repeat step 4 for each item. When you are finished you can close the Photo Bin, by clicking once on the arrow in the middle of the divider. This will give you more space to work with. It will help to add the items in the

order you want them to appear on the canvas, from the bottom up. For instance, put the papers on the bottom and the photos on the top.

## Managing Layers

No introduction to digital scrapbooking is complete without a discussion of layers, regardless of what imaging program you are using. Now that you have all your images on your canvas, you can examine your layers palette to see how they are arranged. The layers of a digital scrapbook page work the same way they do on a traditional page. Each layer is independent and you can manipulate one without affecting the others. The bottom layer is typically your background paper and the foundation for the other layers. As in a traditional paper project, the top layers usually contains fasteners, titles and journaling while photos and mats are usually somewhere in the middle. Here is an illustration that may help:



The layout in the screenshot above contains four layers. The blue paper is the bottom layer. The next layer up is the brown paper. The next layer contains the photo and the top layer contains a brad. Note that I have renamed my layers to indicate what the layer contains. You can do this by double-clicking on the name of the layer in the palette and typing in a new name.

After you have added all you page elements to the canvas, you may need to re-arrange the layers and in fact, this may be necessary as you add text and other layers to the page. To arrange layers, click on the thumbnail in the *layers palette* and pull it upward. A small hand cursor will appear along with the outline of the layer. Drop the layer when you have it where you want it and when the space between layers is highlighted.

## Resizing Images

Now you may wish to resize some of the items on your page, in particular photos and elements often need to be resized.

(*Note:* While resizing an image smaller will not noticeably affect the image, sizing it too large will cause pixilation, reducing the quality of the overall image.)

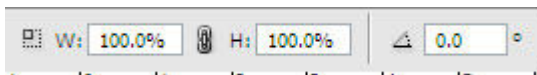
1. Highlight the item you want to resize from the *Layers Palette* and choose the *Move Tool* again from the *Toolbox*.
2. An outline will appear around the image on the canvas along with eight *Handles*, one in each corner and one in the middle of each side. These handles look like tiny squares.
3. To resize an item without distorting it, you will need to grab one of the corner *Handles*. Your cursor will turn into a double arrow. Now *hold down the shift key* and drag the cursor. You should see the image getting larger or smaller.



You can also choose to resize the image using the *Option Bar*. Each tool in the *Toolbox* is accompanied by its own *Options Bar* that will appear just below the tool bar. These *Option Bars* allow you more control over the results of your actions. The *Options Bar* for the *Move Tool* looks like this:



1. Again you need to highlight the item in the layers palette and choose the *Move Tool* from the *Toolbox*. Click on one of the *handles* of the image and the *options bar* will appear below the main tool bar.
2. In the options bar you will see spaces for Width and Height. You will also see a chain link icon between these spaces. Click this link to maintain the proportion of the image. Now you can insert a percentage for the width and the height will adjust proportionally. If your mouse has a scroll wheel, you can double click on the numbers and roll the wheel to adjust the sizing.



3. For precision, you can also adjust the sizing by pixels, inches, centimeter, millimeters, points and picas. To do this, right-click inside the width and height boxes and choose your measurements.

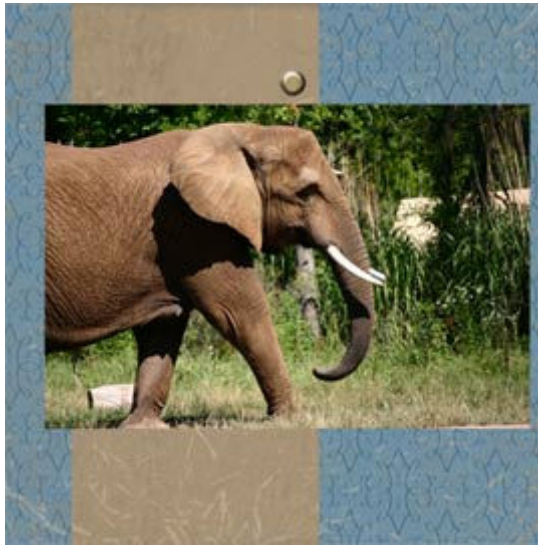
## Digitally Cutting Papers and Photos

Now you will learn to use the *Marquee Tool* to trim papers and photos. This will allow you to create strips and mats from your papers and photos on the layout. In this example we will use the *Marquee Tool* to create a strip behind the photo.

1. Highlight the item you wish to trim from the *Layers Palette*.
2. Choose the *Marquee Tool* from the *Toolbox*. It is the 5<sup>th</sup> item down on the *Toolbox*. It may appear as a dotted rectangle or circle.
3. Look at the *Options Bar* for the Marquee Tool. The *Options Bar* will always be at the top, below the main tool bar. On the left side, you can choose from a dotted circle or a rectangle.
4. Your cursor will appear as a plus sign. Click and drag the cursor to create a rectangular shape. Holding down the shift key as you drag the mouse will create a square shape. When you release the mouse, a dotted line will appear where you have created the selection. We call this dotted line the *Marching Ants*.
5. With the *Marquee Tool* still selected and the appropriate layer highlighted, right click and choose *Layer Via Cut* or *Layer Via Copy*. Either of these options will cut out the area you have selected. You may not see the results immediately on the canvas but you should see a new layer in the *Layers Palette*. This will be just above the original layer in the *Layers Palette*.
6. Now you need to throw away the remainder of the paper you have just cut out. Click on the part of the layer that is gray. And Choose *Delete Layer* or simply hit delete on the keyboard.



Now your canvas should look similar to the one below with a strip of paper behind the photo.



### Create a Mat for the Photo

Creating a mat for a photo is a popular way of separating a photo from its background or emphasizing it as a focal point of a layout. There are a lot of ways to create a mat, but this method will introduce you to *Shape Tools*, *Paint Bucket Tool* and the *Color Picker*.

#### Creating the Mat

1. Choose *Shape Tools* from the *Toolbox*. This icon should appear as a rectangle. It is the 4<sup>th</sup> icon up from the bottom in the *Toolbox*.
2. Take a moment to look at the options bar. There you will see some other shapes to create if you wish. This shape will be rectangular.
3. The cursor on the canvas will appear as a plus sign. Just as you did with the *Marquee Tool*, drag the cursor across the canvas to create your shape. A new shape layer will be created in the *Layers Palette*.
4. The default color of the shape will be the color chosen as the foreground in the color picker. Don't worry you can change this later.
5. You may need to *resize* the mat or to shift it to a lower or higher position in the *Layers Palette* so that it is behind the photo. See previous section for instructions on how to do this.

#### Shape Tool



#### Paint Bucket Tool



#### Eyedropper



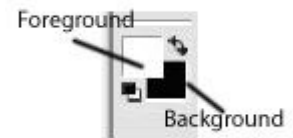
#### Color Picker



## Filling the Mat with Color

Now you will want to fill the mat with a suitable color. The easiest way to do this is to use the *Eyedropper Tool* to select a color from your photos or papers.

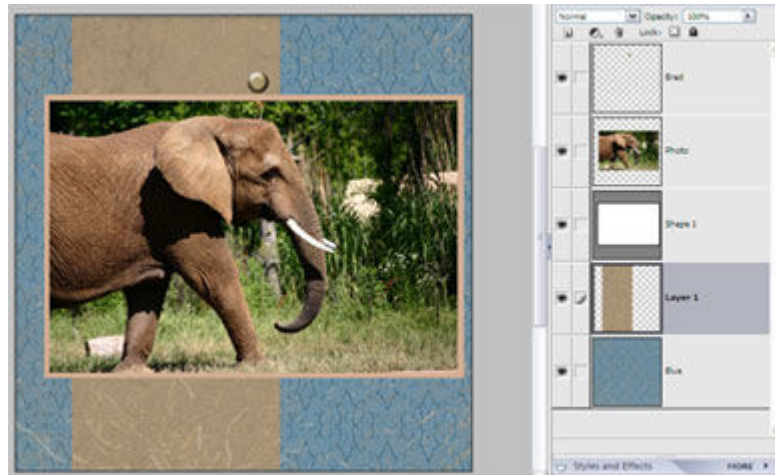
1. Select the *Eyedropper Tool* on the *Toolbox*. It is the fourth icon from the top of the *Toolbox*.
2. Using the *Eyedropper*, click on a color on your canvas that you would like to fill your mat with. You should see this color appear as the *Foreground Color* of the *Color Picker*. In the screenshot to the right, the *Foreground Color* is White.



Now you can use the *Paint Bucket Tool* to fill the mat shape with the color you've chosen.

3. Choose the *Paint Bucket Tool*, which looks like a bucket of paint in the *Toolbox*. Make sure the mat layer is highlighted in the *Layers Palette*.
4. Click on the mat on your canvas. The mat should fill with your chosen color.

Here is my sample layout so far along with the *Layers Palette*:



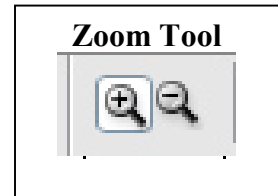
## Duplicating Page Elements

One of the advantages to digital scrapbooking is the ability to easily duplicate photos and elements. This is especially useful for items that you may use more than once on a page such as brads, staples and eyelets. It is also very easy to do.

1. Select the item you would like to duplicate in the *Layers Palette*.
2. Now Right Click and Choose *Duplicate Layer*. A duplicate layer should appear in the *Layers Palette* just above the original item. You can also choose *Cntrl+J* to duplicate the active layer.

3. In the *Layers Palette*, you can see that the duplicate layer is directly over the original layer so you won't see the layers separately on the canvas until you move one of the layers. Choose the *Move Tool* from the *Toolbox*. Click the item and drag it to a suitable position.

*Note:* For small items, you may need to use the *Zoom Tool* to zoom in close enough to easily grab the element. This icon looks like a small magnifying glass. From the *Options Bar* choose zoom in or zoom out and click on the canvas to achieve the effect.

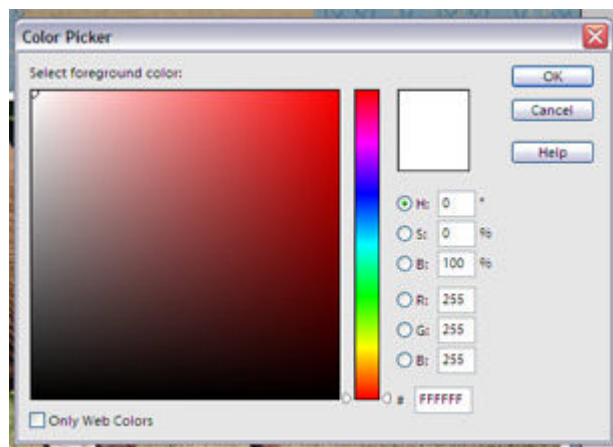


## Adding a Title and Journaling

### Adding a Title

Usually the journaling and title are the last things I put on my page. It is one of the easiest things to manipulate in Photoshop Elements.

1. Choose the *Text Tool* from the *Toolbox*. The icon looks like an uppercase T.
2. In the *Options Bar* at the top of the workspace, look on the right side. You will see a *Color Picker* similar to the one in the *Toolbox*. Click inside this *Color Picker*. A window like this will appear. Choose your color from the palette. If you move the cursor, outside this window, you will see the *Eyedropper Tool*, and you can choose a color from your layout in the same way you did when you colored your photo mat. When you are finished click OK to finalize your choice.



3. In the *Options Bar*, choose a *Font* and *Type Size*. You can change this later if necessary.
4. Click the cursor on your canvas where you would like the title to go. The cursor will turn into a blinking cursor. Type the title and when you have finished, click the check mark in the options bar.
5. To edit the text, click on top of the text or double click the *Layer Thumbnail*. Again, click the check mark to finalize the edit.

## Adding Journaling

Adding journaling works much the same way adding a title does except you may use other options in the *Text Tools' Options Bar*. These options may include leading and if you are using Photoshop Elements 4 the use of a text box. Leading is the space between the lines of text. Leading and font size are both measures in points and directly affect each other. Larger fonts sizes will require a larger leading; smaller fonts sizes require a smaller leading. See the comparison below

I have always been fascinated with these creatures. Maybe it is their size or great strength. Maybe it is the graceful manner with which they move. I can't help but think they are one of God's grandest creations

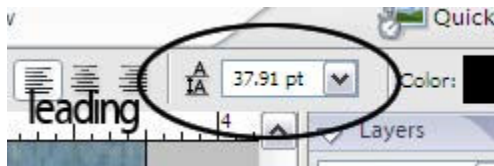
Font Size @ 42 pt  
Leading @ 36 pt

I have always been fascinated with these creatures. Maybe it is their size or great strength. Maybe it is the graceful manner with which they move. I can't help but think they are one of God's grandest creations

Font Size @ 42 pt  
Leading @ 60 pt

6. Now to add your text. If you are using version 3 or below, you will need to plan well, where you put the text, because the text will not automatically wrap – you will have to hard-return after each line. However, using the text box feature in new versions simplifies this.

Click on the canvas where you would like the text to appear. Set your font, and font size and foreground color in the color picker. Then type your text. If necessary, adjust the leading in the options bar until you are happy with the results.



Don't forget text, as with other layers may be obscured by other layers. So if you see your text in the layers palette but not on the canvas, you may need to drag it to the top of the palette by clicking/dragging it upward. Keep in mind the color of the text may also make it difficult to see.

Below is the finished layout. This is a very simple layout – without shadows or a lot of embellishments. I encourage you to play with Photoshop Elements and explore its features and build upon this basic knowledge.

