



Quick Pages for PS/PSE: The Easy Way

by LaWanna Desjardin

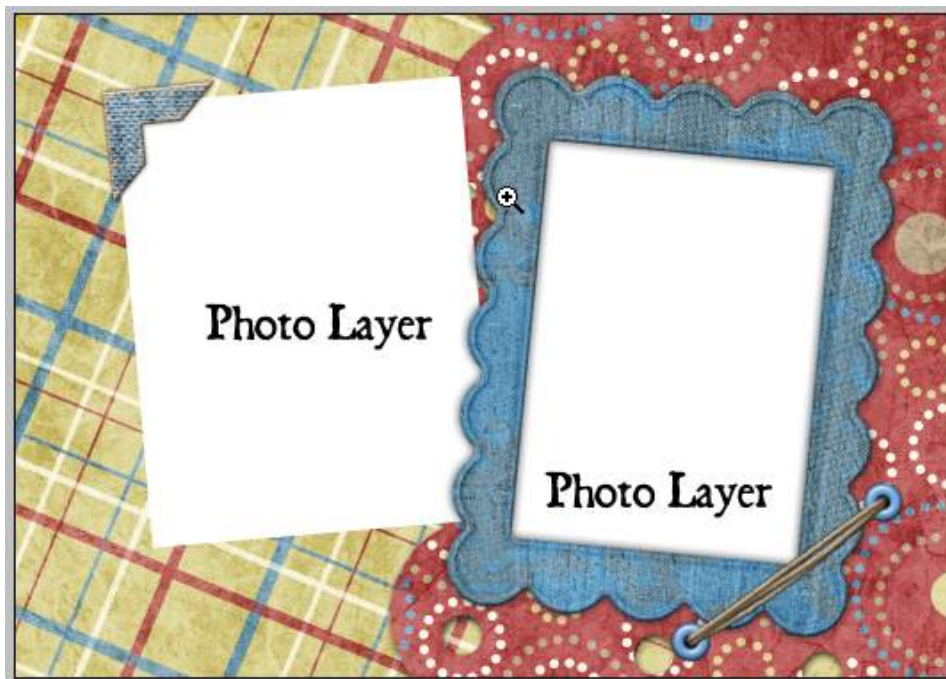
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Creating Quick Pages is a clean and simple process. It's also a great way to make an album ahead of time for an impending birth, a birthday, anniversary or other event. For instance, would it be great to have a party where each guest has their photo taken and then “plugged” into a page for an album. Then the album can be printed and presented to each guest or the guest of honor. In this tutorial, I'm going to show you how to make a quick page with two different methods using Photoshop Elements. The same technique can be used in Photoshop. Trust me, if you can scrap a page you can make a quick page.

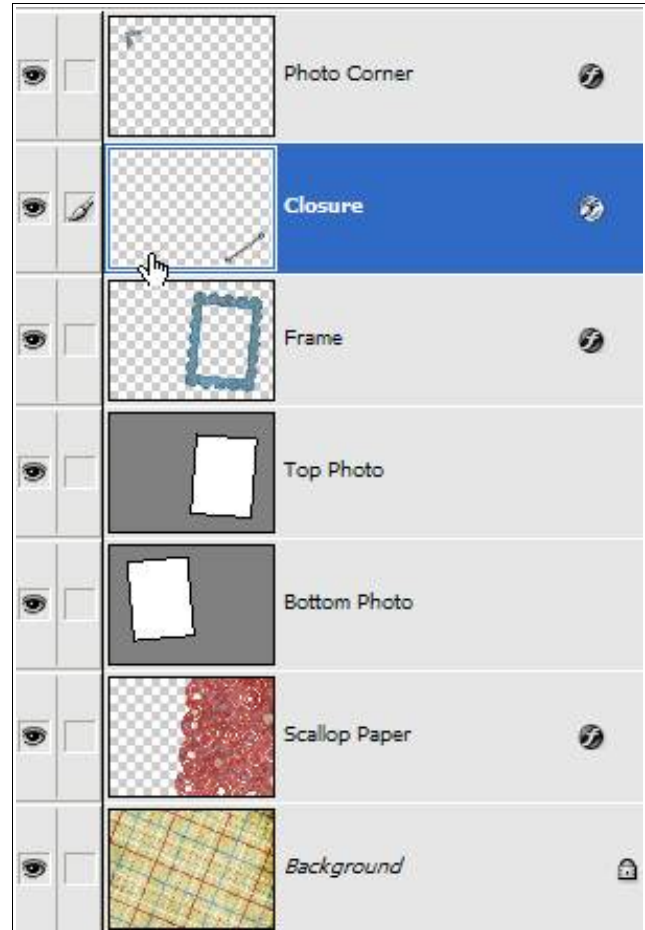
1. First you need to build your page. For this tutorial, I'm make a 5X7 Quick Page that could be used as part of a brag book. However, instead of a photo I'm using a photo sized rectangle as a place holder for the photo.

It's best not to simplify/rasterize anything at this point and to leave all your layers intact. Here is my layout as well as my layers.



When you create your own layout, make note of all the layers that are above your photo place holder(s). This will be important in the final steps.

These layers will include any frames, photo corners, some ribbons, etc. Basically anything that will appear to be on top of the photo in the finished page. It might even include other photos.

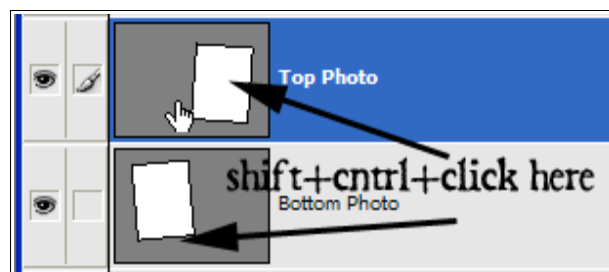


Now you are going to begin to flatten the page.

But before we do, to preserve the original psd. Document, you may want to duplicate the image by going to File>Duplicate. You may also want to give the duplicate a new name.

2. To begin, we need to create a selection around the photo place holders. Why? Because we'll use the selection to cut out a hole in the layout. That way, when the quick page is ready for use, the photo can simply be put underneath the quick page for an instant layout.

To do this, hold down the control key on your keyboard and click the photo-layer thumbnail in the layers palette. If you have more than one photo, you'll need to select them both. To do this, press shift+ctrl and click the layer thumbnail for each photo placeholder.

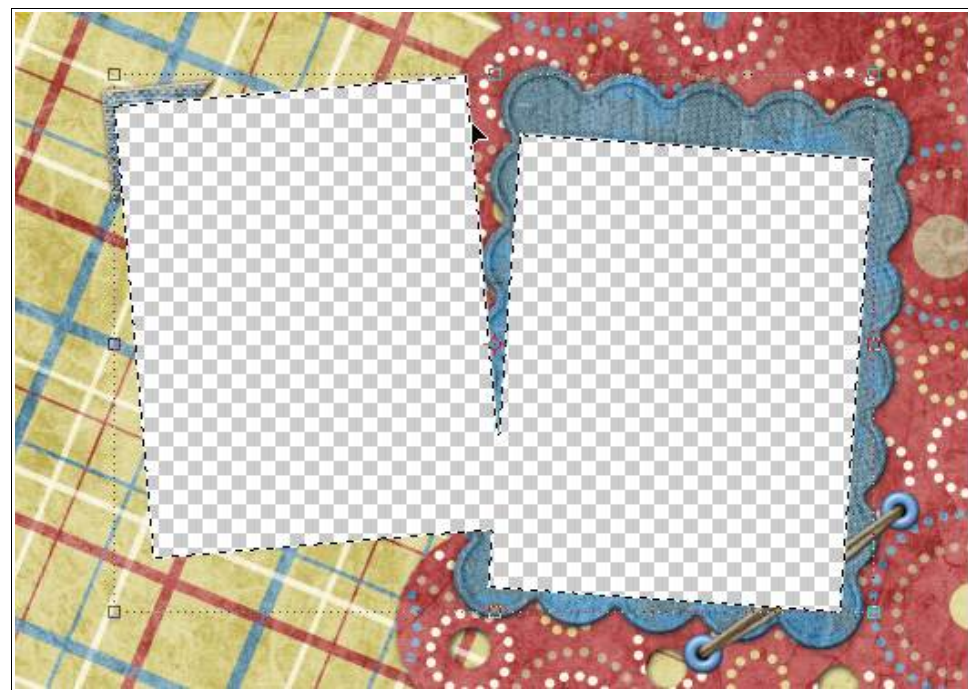
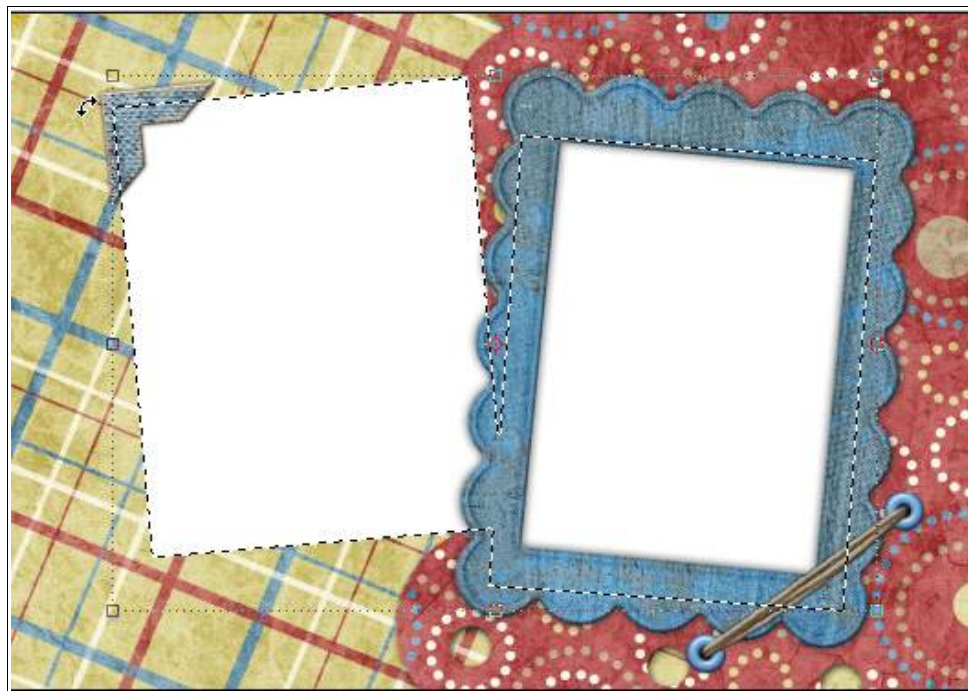


Here is a shot of the canvas with both photo placeholder selected.

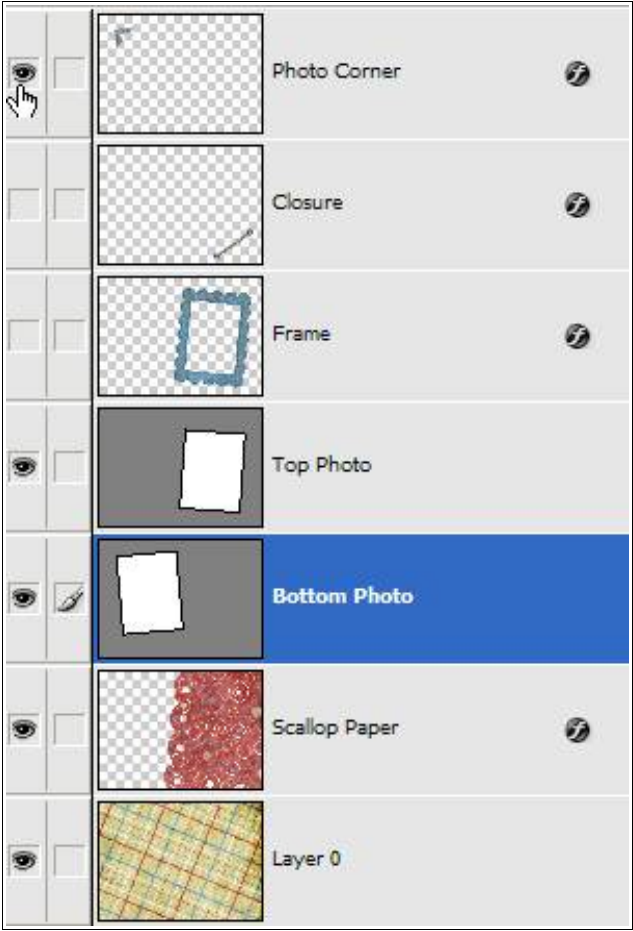
Now at this point we could simply merge visible layers and hit delete and the portions we've selected will disappear, leaving a hole.

The problem is that parts of the photo corner, frame and closure will also be erased, as in the bottom screen shot.

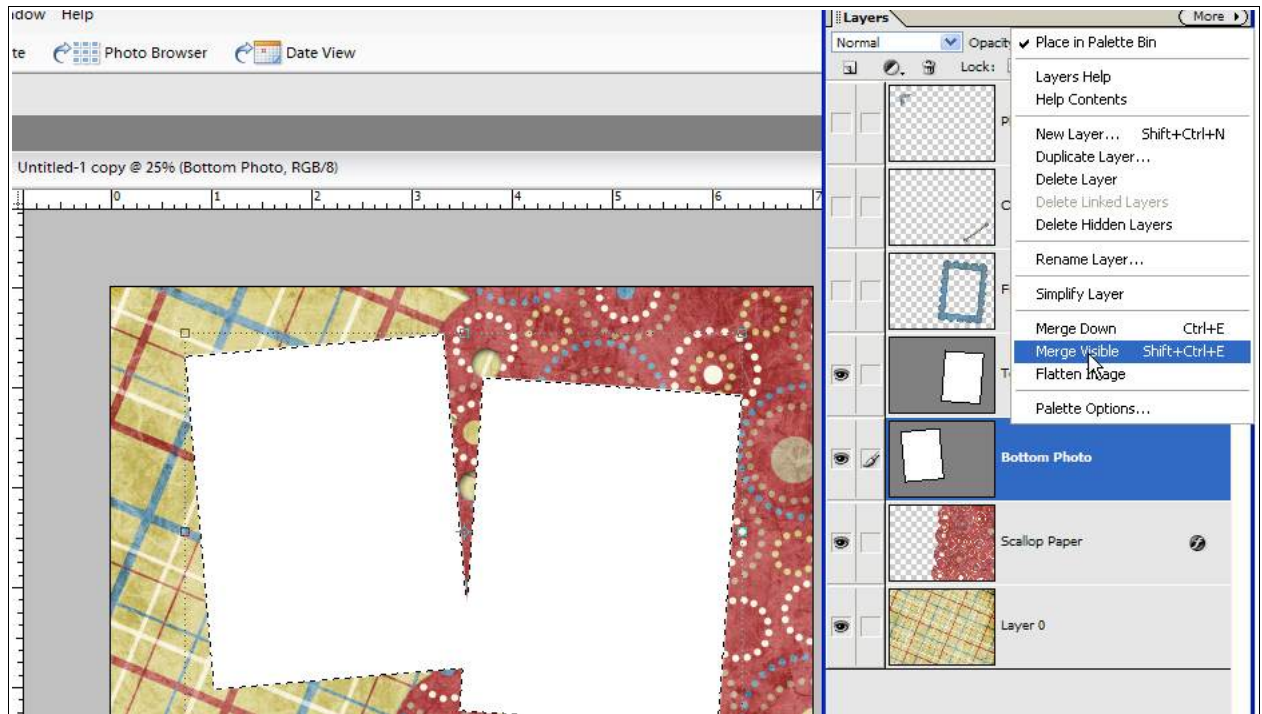
For this to work, we'll have to work in sections.



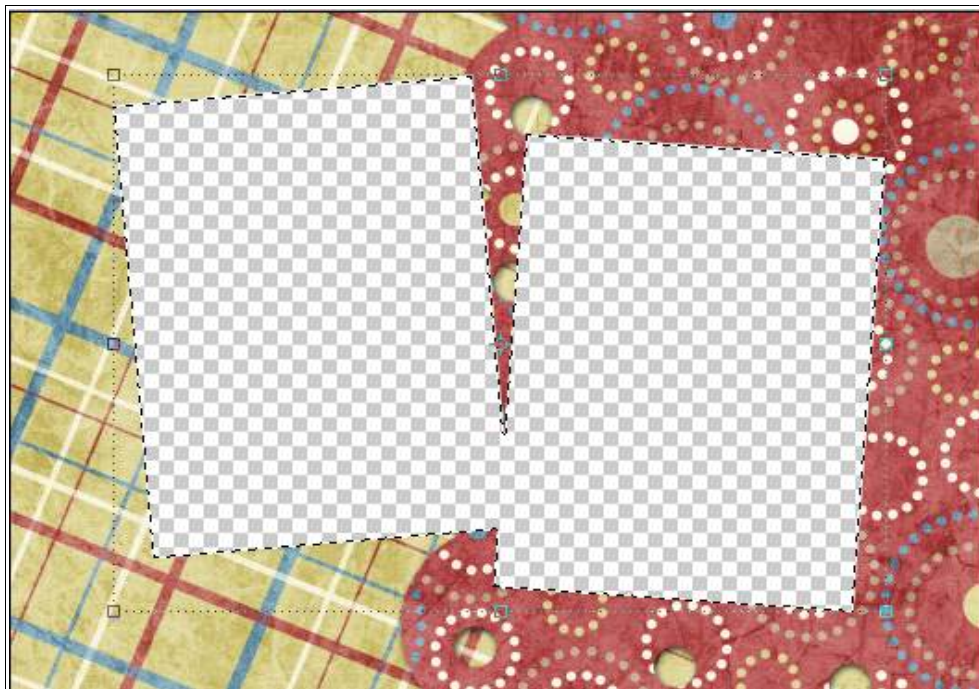
4. *Leave your selections active.* But to preserve the topmost layers, you'll need to hide them for now. In the layers palette, find the “eye” icon. This controls the visibility of the layer. Click the eye icon to hide each layer that is above the photo placeholder.



5. Now that these layers are invisible you can merge the visible layers. In the layers palette, choose the More Tab. Go to Merge Visible. (You can also choose layers from the tool bar and choose Merge Visible from there.) This will combine all but the layers that have the visibility turned off.

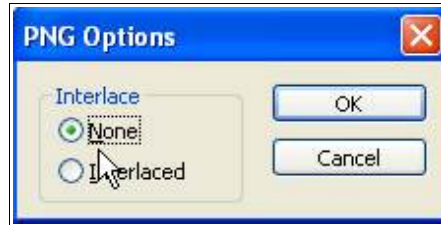


Now hit the delete key. Everything within the selection, which should be your photo place holders, will disappear, showing only the transparency grid. See below to see what I mean.



6. Now you can turn the visibility back on for the top layers by click the “eye” for each layer. The beauty of this is that the shadows you've created from layer styles in the top most layers will remain intact in the finished product. So, in our example, the shadow created from the frame will fall over the bottom photo, just as it would in reality.

Finally save the page as a PNG file. In the PNG Options box, choose None for Interlace. Now you have a new quick page.

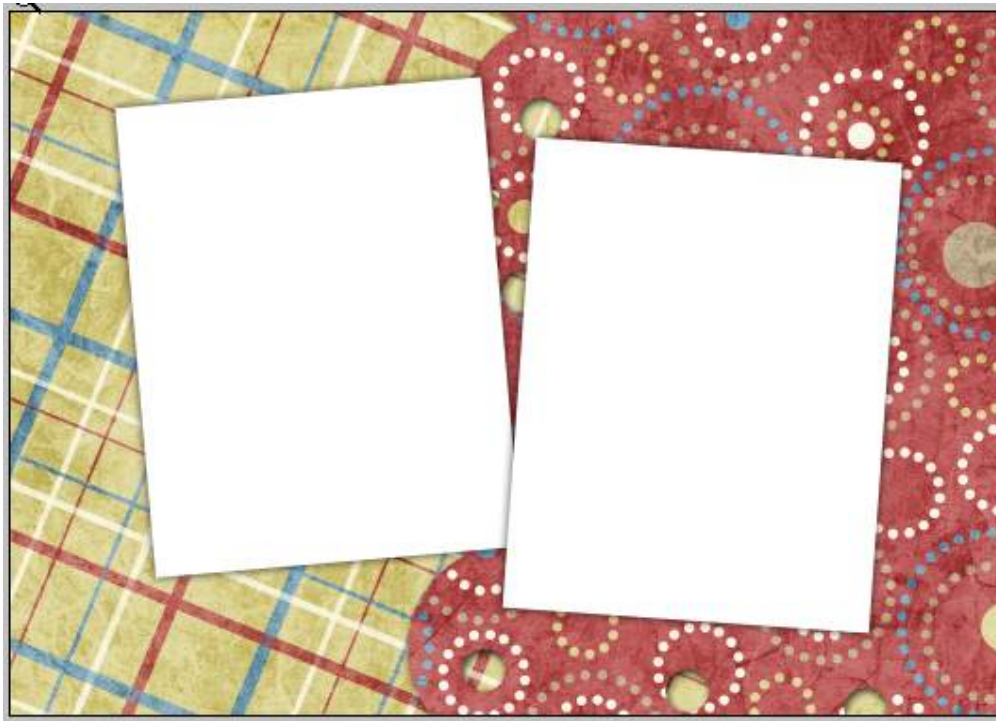


Variation

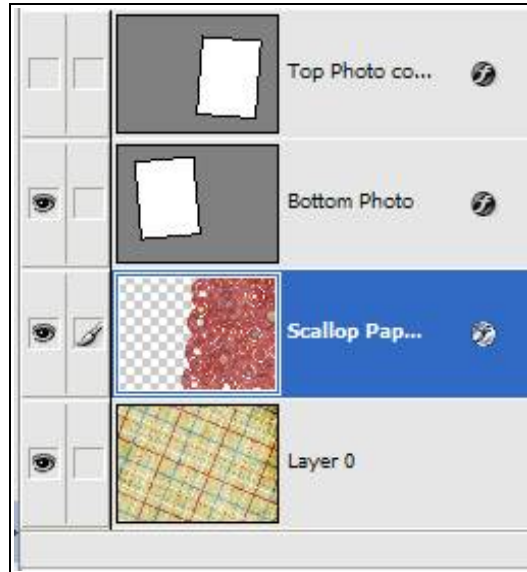
Okay, so after doing a few of these, you're going to run into some other issues, usually involving shadowing. It is almost always resolvable, my taking the layers one at a time, merging little by little.

For example, what if you have two simple photos one on top of the other with nothing else on top. In reality, each photo would have a shadow and the top photo would create a shadow over the bottom one right. Here's how to do that.

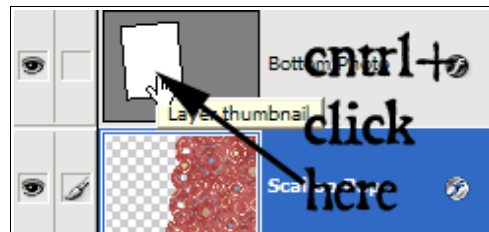
1. Apply a shadow layer style to each of the photo placeholders using your preferred settings. Notice how the shadows fall in relation to the other page elements.



- Remember in the first part when we hid the layers that were on top. We are going to do the same thing here. The top photo falls over the bottom photo and it's on top. So let's hide that layer while we Merge Visible Layers. Click the "eye" icon for the top most photo placeholder.



- Now we are going to select the Bottom Photo placeholder. Cntrl+Click on the layer thumbnail to select that layer. This will make a selection (marching ants) around the placeholder.



- Now go to Layer>Merge Visible.

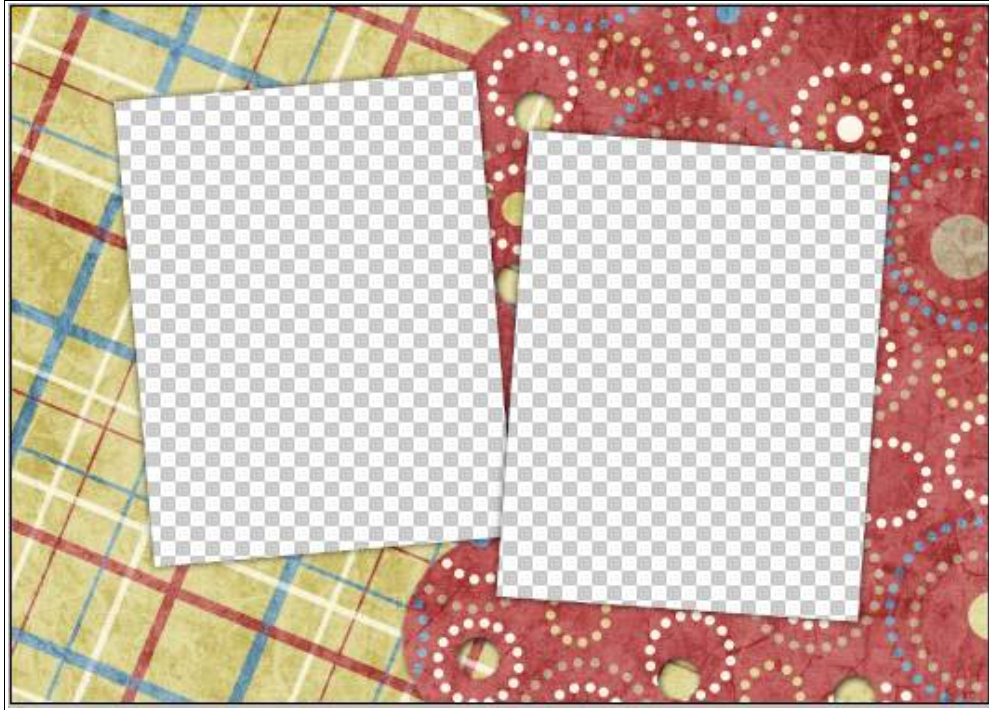
- Now hit delete on the keyboard to erase that placeholder. Notice that while the shape of the placeholder is gone the shadow is still there. That is because cntrl+clicking the layer thumbnail selects the layer, not the layer style.



7. Now we need to deal with that second photo. Turn it's visibility back on using the eye icon. Now cntrl+click the layer thumbnail, as in step 3. Again, this will put the marching ants around the layer.

8. With the selection still active, choose Layer>Merge Visible.

9. Now hit delete. This will erase the photo placeholder, leaving the shadow intact, including the portion that falls over the bottom photo.



Here's a close up of the overlapping parts of the photos.

