Layers in Adobe Photoshop

Essentials for Photoshop Success

Jeff Lackey
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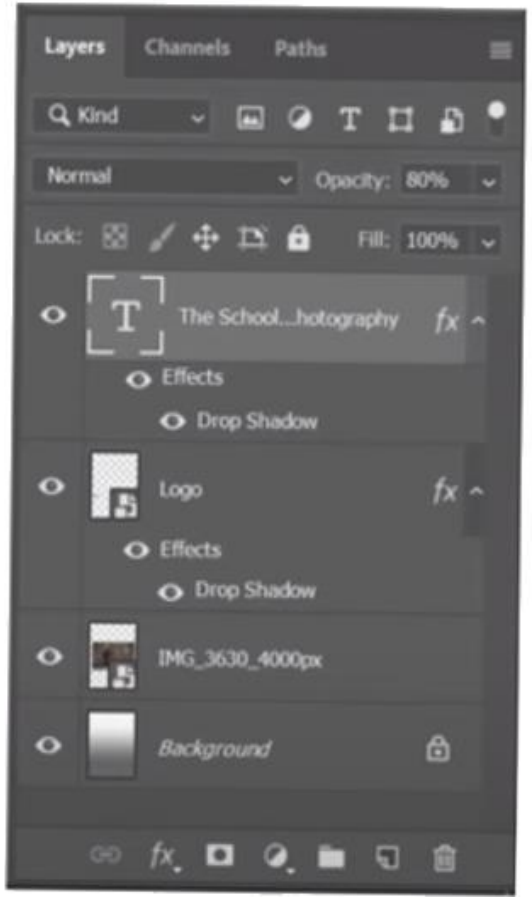
The “Star” of Our Show

The Layers Panel in Photoshop



Explanation of Layers

- Think of layers as clear sheets

Layers Panel



Image we see

3D View

Why Have Layers?

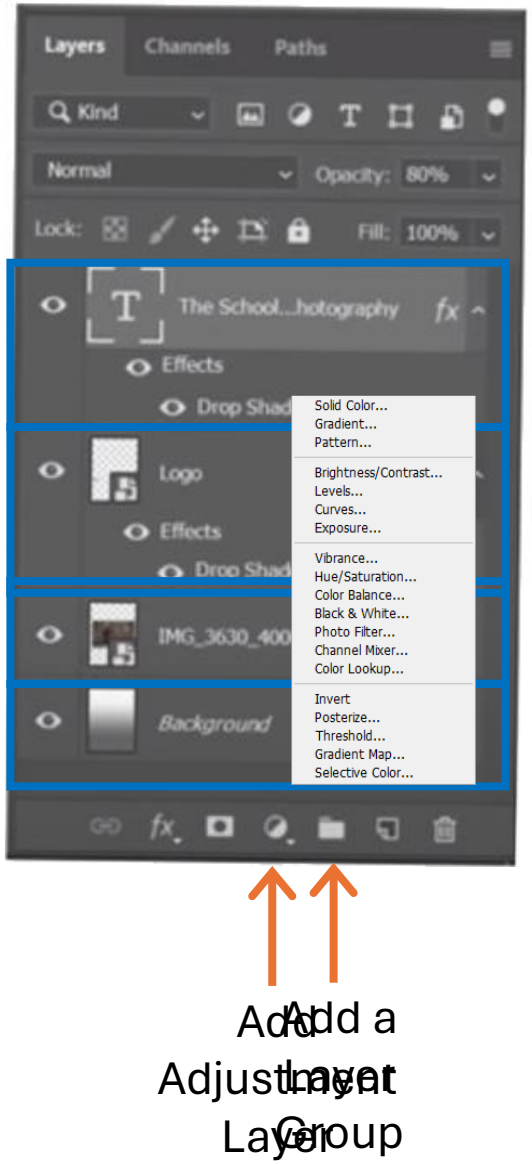
- Non-Destructive Editing – make changes without altering the original
- Isolation – edit individually with the entire power of Photoshop
- Organization – keep related elements grouped together
- Flexibility – try different effects, arrangements, and compositions

Types of layers

- Background layer – Bottom most, typically main image
- Adjustment layers – Adjust without altering underlying layers
- Text Layers – Contain text, effects
- Smart Object Layers – No loss of original detail
- Fill layers – Fill with solid color, gradient or pattern

Not Shown

- Shape Layers – Create and Manipulate Vector Shapes
- Group Layers – Organize and manage collectively



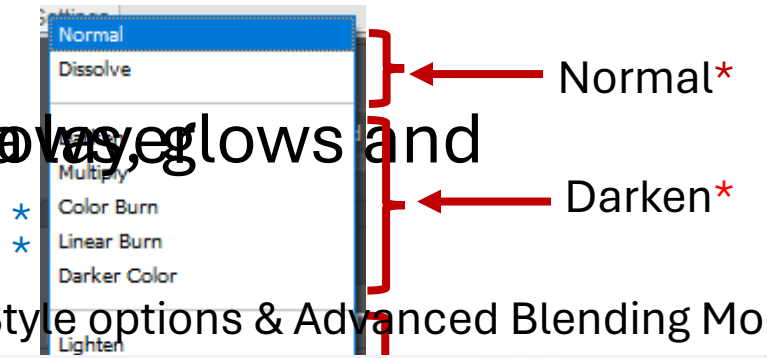
Common Layer Activities

- Create a New Layer – Press the New layer Button -or-Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+N
- Delete Layer(s) – Select layer(s) and hit Delete –or-
  Right-click->select Delete Layer –or- Select and Click Trash Can –or-
  Drag layer to Trash Can
- Renaming a Layer – Double-click and type a new layer name
- Rearranging Layers – drag and drop to change the stacking order
- Duplicating Layers – Ctrl/Cmd+J –or- Right-click->select Duplicate Layer –or-
  Drag a layer to the New Layer button
- Merging Layers – Right-click->select Merge Layer to merge down
- Layer Mask – Make a selection and click the Add Mask button –or
  Create a mask manually
- View a Layer – Click on the eyeball

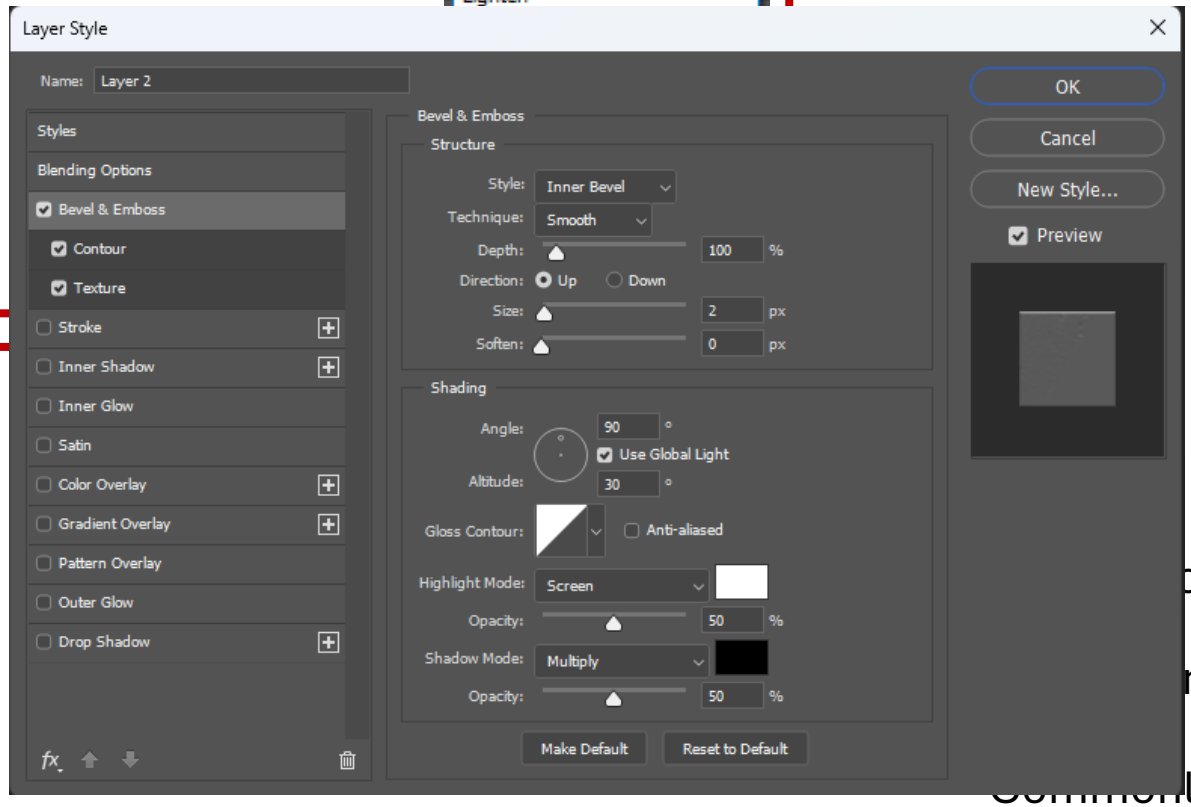
Changing Layer Properties

- Blend Modes – Adjust effects such as shadows, glows and strokes to underlying layers
- Layer Style – Apply effects to layers and alter the layer appearance

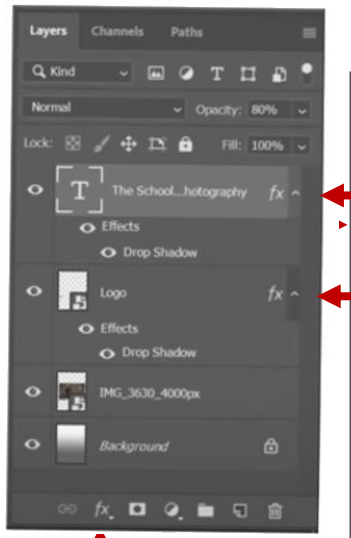
Blend Modes



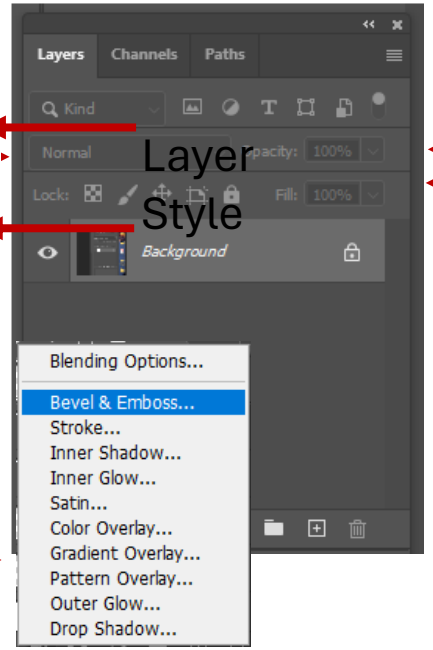
Layer Style Panel: Style options & Advanced Blending Modes



Layers Panel



Layers Panel



Layer Style

Layer Style

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Commonly Used

Additional Techniques

- Clipping Mask – Adjust or blend only to the layer below
- Layer Effects – Layer style and blending modes (Blend-if: Magic 8)
- Adjustment Layers – Apply adjustments non-destructively
- Smart Filters – Adjustments to smart object layers

Best Practices

- Grouping Layers – Group related layers together (can be colored)
- Layer Naming Conventions – Indicate purpose or function
- Non-Destructive Editing – Allow for tweaking or reversal
- Use Keyboard Shortcuts – Increase productivity
- Smart Objects – Add an external object with Place command
- Saving and Exporting with Layers – PSD, TIFF, PDF

Recap

- Layers are a way to organize and isolate different functions and effects providing an efficient and flexible workflow

- The Layers Pallet provides several ways to work effectively with layers

- Practice using layers and dive deeper into any specific layer topics to learn more