

PR 488: INTRO TO VISUAL COMMUNICATION

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# PHOTOSHOP BASICS

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## REMEMBER WHAT PHOTOSHOP IS GOOD FOR!

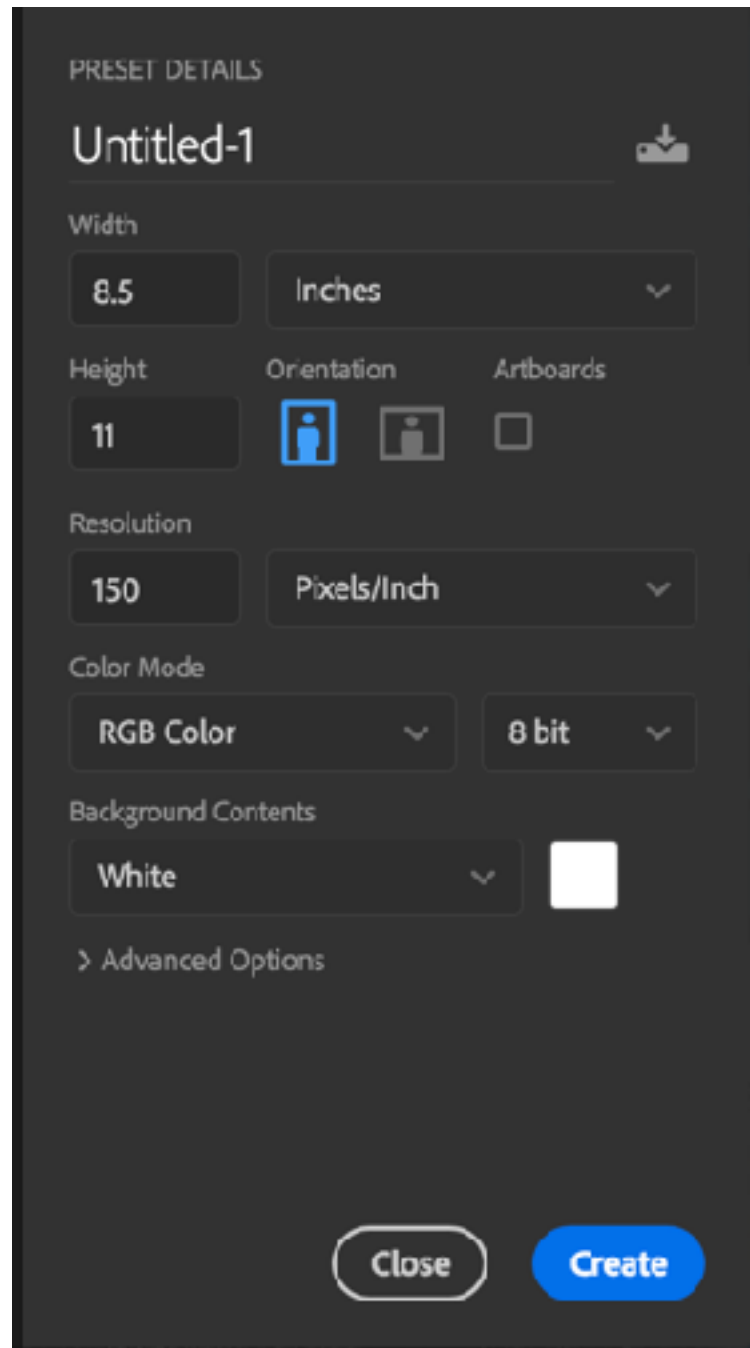
- ▶ Editing photos (changing colors, toning, removing blemishes, removing objects, etc.)
- ▶ Photoshop is a **raster-based** program, so remember that you can't really scale up pixel-based images or things you create in Photoshop.
- ▶ One-page layouts and small blocks of text work best in Photoshop.

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## QUICK TIPS

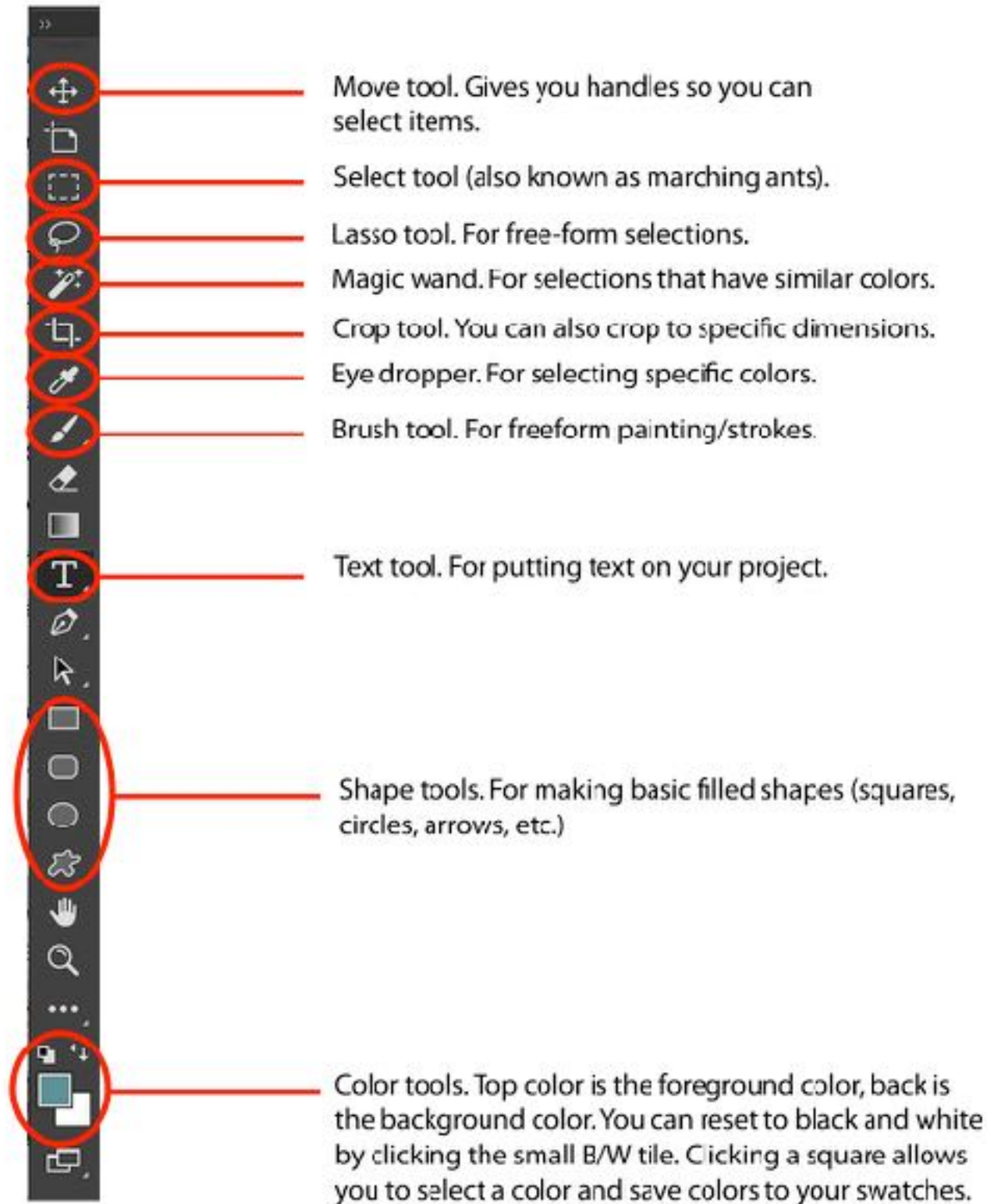
- ▶ You can customize your panels however you want to, but the most recommended one is “Graphics and Web.” It will give you access to the typography tools, color tools, and layers much more quickly.
- ▶ Make sure your rulers are visible. If they’re not, hit Command + R (Mac) or Control + R (PC) to make them visible. This will help with guides and alignment.

# DOCUMENT SETUP



- ▶ For print items, it's easier to measure in inches. Know what size you need.
- ▶ If you're sending this to an actual print house, you need to account for bleed if your design will stretch to the edges. **Bleed** is extra buffer added to a print job on all four sides so that when an item is printed and cut to the correct size, there are no gaps between the colors and the edges. In general, bleed is an extra 0.25 inches around all four sides.
- ▶ Resolution for print products should be 300 pixels/inch (also known as DPI).
- ▶ Your color mode should be CMYK. Some online printers will accept RGB, but make sure you double-check!

# COMMONLY USED PHOTOSHOP TOOLS



# PHOTOSHOP PANEL BASICS

History tool. Step back in time if you need to.

Adjustment layers. Non-destructive changes to photos, etc.



The Swatches/Color panel. You can open up palettes, create your own, or save colors so they're easily accessible for your project. (Helpful for projects with specific color combos and schemes.)

Type panels. Select fonts and sizes and leading/kerning and color in the Characters panel. Choose alignment in Paragraph. Glyphs is for special symbols (only available on certain fonts).

The layers panel. You'll be working with layers as you add elements to your project. You can also play with layer effects, opacity, and other tools to manipulate your content.

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## TOOLS AND PANELS

- ▶ You can change the arrangement and placement of all the tools and panels on the right side. You can drag out a tab so it's in the large column and always visible, or drag a panel into the skinny column so that it's readily accessible but not always visible. (Dragging panels to the skinny column renders them into just an icon.)
- ▶ If you need a panel but it's not visible anywhere, go to Window and check (or uncheck) the panel you need.
- ▶ In general, you'll want Swatches, the type tools (Character, Paragraph), and Layers always visible in the large column. Those are the panels you'll use the most.

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## COMMON SHORTCUTS

- ▶ **Holding down the space bar:** Moves the canvas around (like the hand tool, except easier).
- ▶ **Command/Control + Plus or Minus sign:** Zoom in and out quickly of your project (like the magnifying glass tool, except faster).
- ▶ **Command/Control + 0:** Fit project to screen (for the times you've zoomed in too close and quickly need to zoom back out to figure out where you are).
- ▶ **Command/Control + 1:** Resize project to 100%.



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## COMMON SHORTCUTS

- ▶ **Command/Control + Z:** The magical undo command. You can also use the history panel to step backwards in time, up to 50 steps back. (You can adjust this number in Photoshop CC > Preferences > Performance.)
- ▶ **Selected object + Option/Alt key:** Drag while you've got an object selected (with the move tool, so it has all the handles visible) and press option, and you'll instantly duplicate the object. Helpful when you're making patterns or need to repeat things.

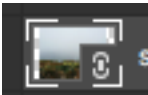
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# GUIDES

- ▶ Guides are most helpful for alignment, or for figuring out what you need to keep in the “safe zone” (i.e. stuff that won’t get chopped off if your design bleeds to the edge).
- ▶ Make a guide by dragging from the ruler (horizontally or vertically) and putting the blue line where you want it. Go nuts, make as many guides as you want.
- ▶ Make sure Snap is on or else your guides are kind of pointless. Go to the View panel and make sure Snap is checked.

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# BRINGING IN ASSETS

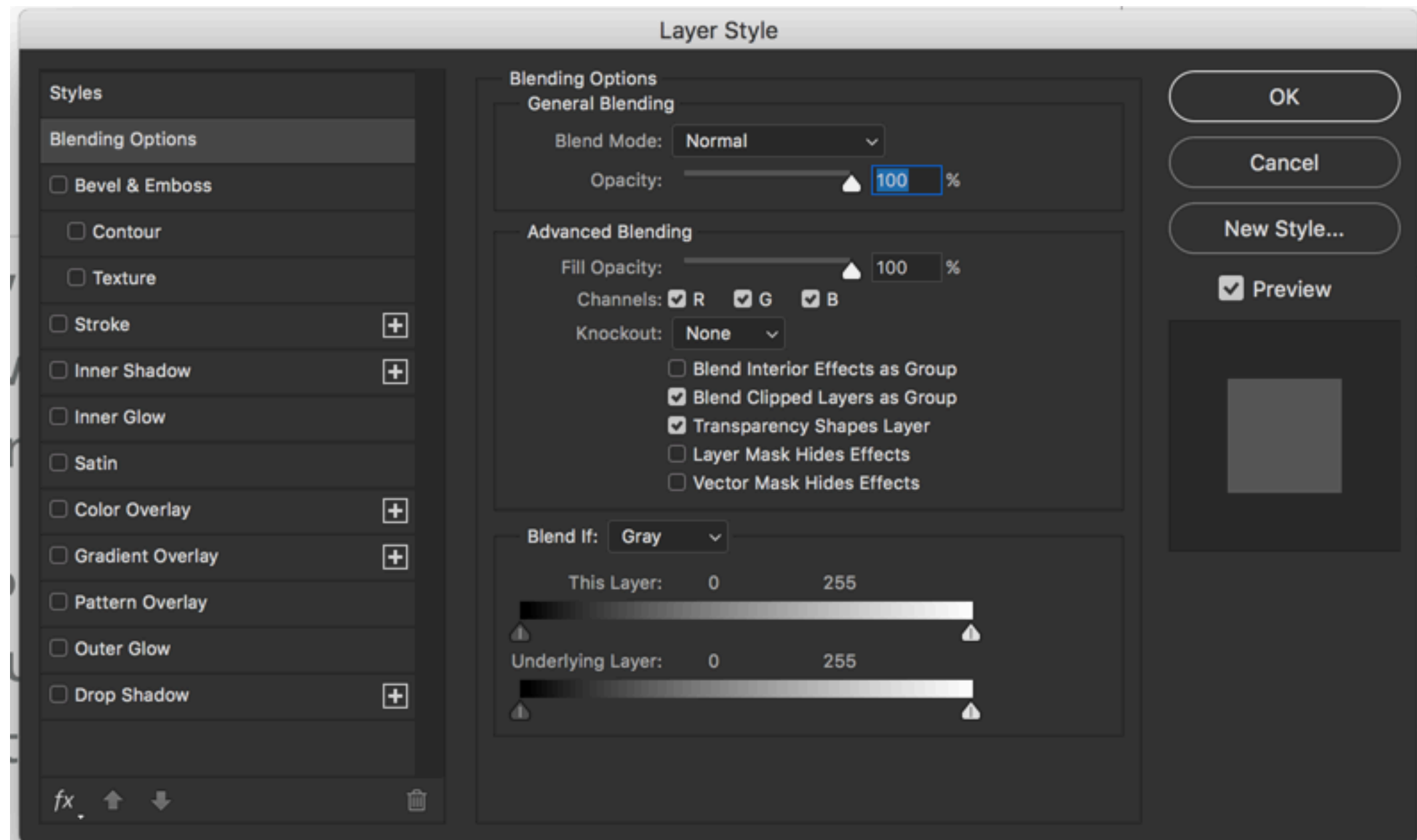
- ▶ There are a couple of different ways to bring assets into a Photoshop project. You can simply drag another image into your open project and it will be placed onto the canvas. You can resize the image as you please.
- ▶ You can also go to File > Place Embedded. That's the equivalent of dragging and dropping an image into a blank canvas.
- ▶ You can also go to File > Place Linked. This is good for when you want to import other Photoshop files, but you can do it with just images. The advantage of this is that you can double-click this object in the layers panel, edit it separately, and the changes you make show up in your current Photoshop document. They often have a different icon on top of the layer thumbnail in the Layers panel, like this: 

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# LAYERS

- ▶ Layers are the main way you'll work in Photoshop. Every time you create a new text box, or import a photo, or draw a shape, you're creating a new layer.
- ▶ You can use Layer Styles to add color overlays or pattern overlays to images, but remember that these are **destructive** edits that change the original image. You're better off using other layers – such as a separate texture – or using adjustment layers for these effects. (To get to Layer Styles, just double-click a layer and a panel will appear.)

# LAYER STYLES PANEL

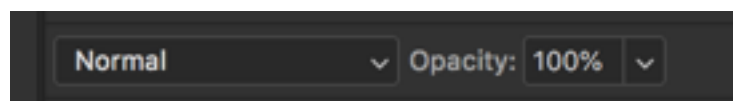


Click a panel on the left to see all the different options.

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# LAYER BLENDING MODES

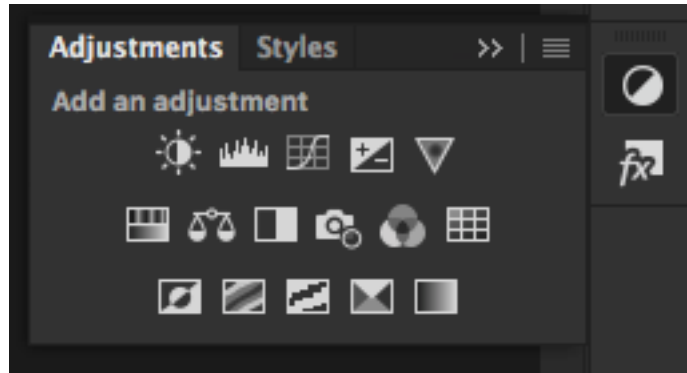
- ▶ Layer blending modes are for blending two layers together. Sometimes you may want to superimpose a texture on top of a photo, or quickly apply a color screen to an image. These modes are in a dropdown next to the Opacity percentage in the Layer panel. (By default, it says Normal).



- ▶ A helpful explanation of what the modes do can be found here: [Photoshop Blending Modes](#)

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# ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

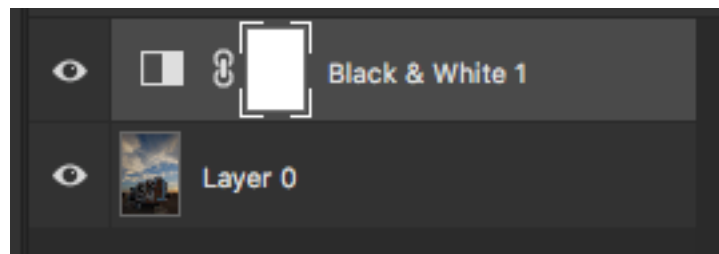


- ▶ You can access the adjustment layers by clicking the half circle in the right panels. If you don't see this symbol, you can also go to Window and make sure Adjustments is checked.
- ▶ The first four adjustments – Brightness/Contrast, Levels, Curves, Exposure – are for fixing the lightness and darkness of images. There is also the Hue/Saturation (first icon, second row) adjustment if you want to do color overlays or change the color of your photo. The Black and White filter is also in the second row (the half-black, half-white square) if you want to change a photo to black and white.

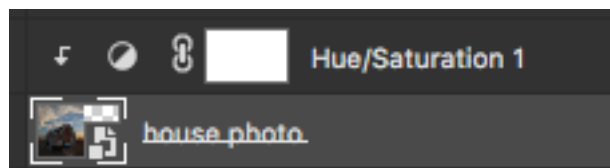
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# ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

- ▶ When you apply an adjustment layer, you'll see it in the layers panel, usually at the top of your layer stack:



- ▶ Sometimes, you'll only want to apply an adjustment layer to a specific image or layer and not the entire canvas. To do that, hover your cursor between layers and hit the option/alt key. You'll see an arrow with a white square. Click the layers and they'll appear like this:





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# KNOW YOUR FORMATS!

- ▶ **PSD:** The native Photoshop format. Preserves all layers and is usually the best way to pass a file to someone if that person needs to do additional work on it. Some print houses ask for PSDs, but beware: Make sure you convert your type to shapes or rasterize your type first or else you could wind up with missing fonts.
- ▶ **PDF:** Some print houses prefer you send your work over as a PDF because this is a universal file format, and it's less likely you'll run into font problems. Make sure you send it as a High-Quality Print at least; some printers may request different settings, such as PDF/1a. Always ask!

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## KNOW YOUR FORMATS!

- ▶ **TIFF:** An old-school format, mainly used for photos only. Sometimes, photos that go for print need to be toned and sent in this format to make sure the colors are printable.
- ▶ **EPS:** Some print houses ask for an EPS. This will flatten all your layers but still leave it high-quality enough for printing.
- ▶ **JPG:** The lowest-quality of the bunch. Some print houses will accept this, but read the requirements carefully. This is really reserved for things that will be put on the web, as it is compressed for size and loading time.

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## SAVING YOUR WORK

- ▶ Always keep a PSD version of your project handy. If you need to adjust something, it will make your life easier – and you won't be sad because you accidentally flattened all your layers and can't edit them anymore.
- ▶ You can use "Save As" to save PDF or EPS files. If you're going to export a JPG for the web, use the Export item under the File menu. (Save for Web is deprecated, though it still works.)