# PR 486: INTRO TO DIGITAL DESIGN TOOLS
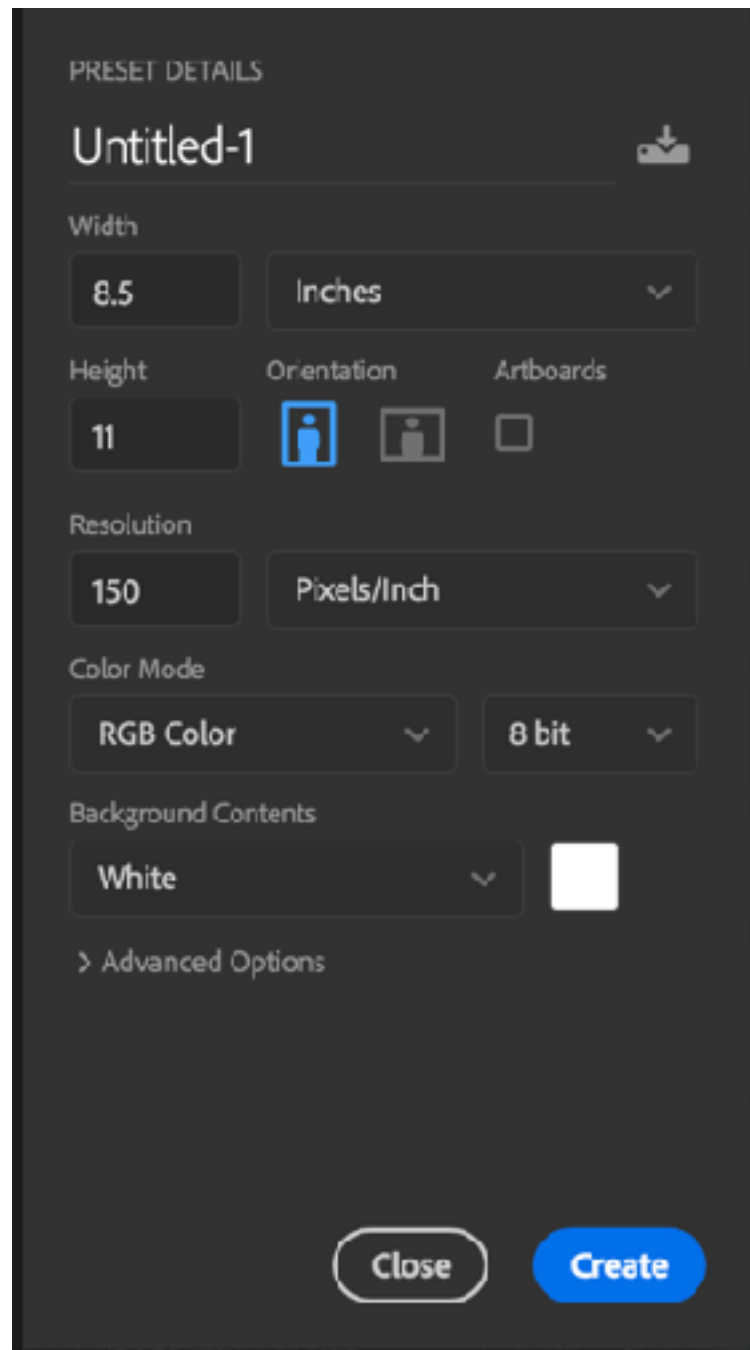
# PHOTOSHOP BASICS

# 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.

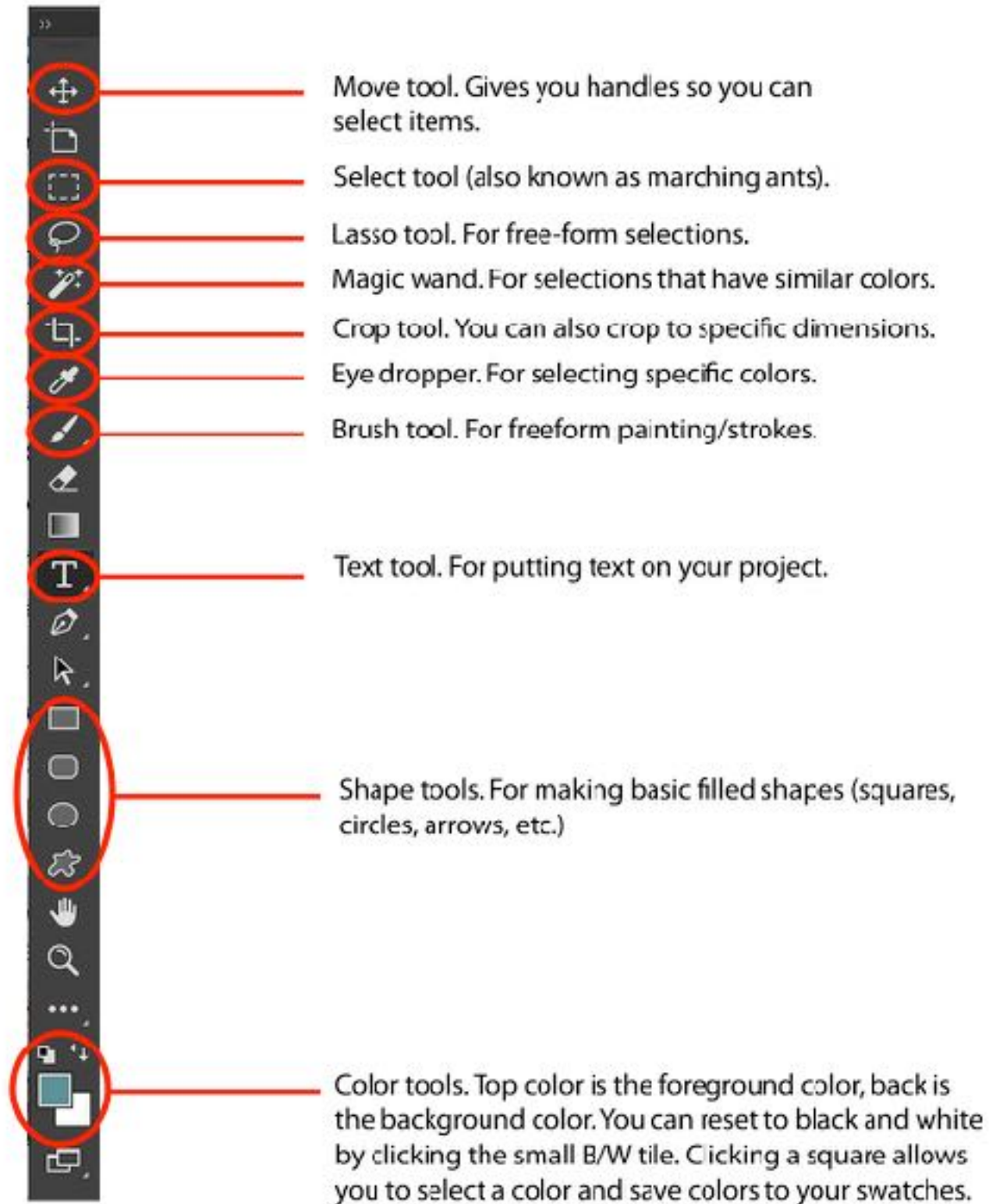▸ One-page layouts and small blocks of text work best in Photoshop.

# 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

Move tool. Gives you handles so you can select items.

Select tool (also known as marching ants).

Lasso tool. For free-form selections.

Magic wand. For selections that have similar colors.

Crop tool. You can also crop to specific dimensions.

Eye dropper. For selecting specific colors.

Brush tool. For freeform painting/strokes.

Text tool. For putting text on your project.

Shape tools. For making basic filled shapes (squares, circles, arrows, etc.)

Color tools. Top color is the foreground color, back is the background color. You can reset to black and white by clicking the small B/W tile. Clicking a square allows you to select a color and save colors to your swatches.

# 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.

# 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).

# COMMON SHORTCUTS

▸ **Command/Control + Z:** The magical undo command. You can also use the history panel to step backwards in time, up to 100 steps back.

▸ **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.

# 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.

# 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!

# 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.

# 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.)