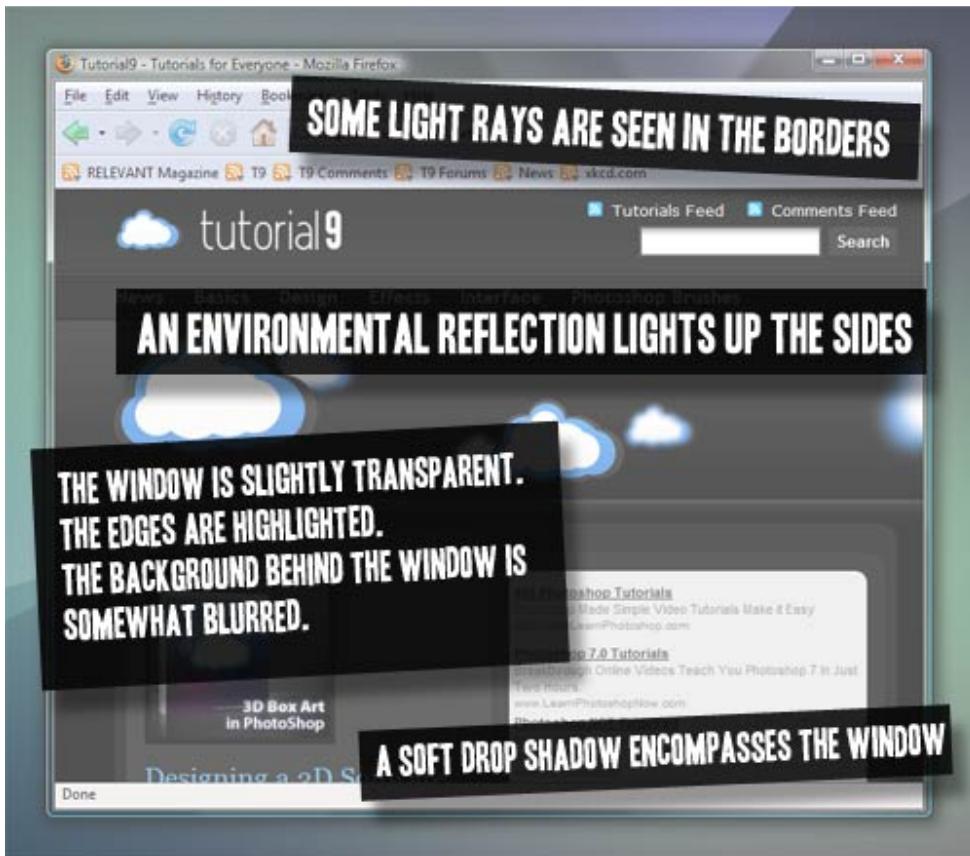


Before you try to design something, it's almost always a good idea to examine the way something should look first. Let's take a look at a Vista "Window".



Making note of all the important parts of this design will help us remake the design ourselves.

Let's start with the **Main Window**.

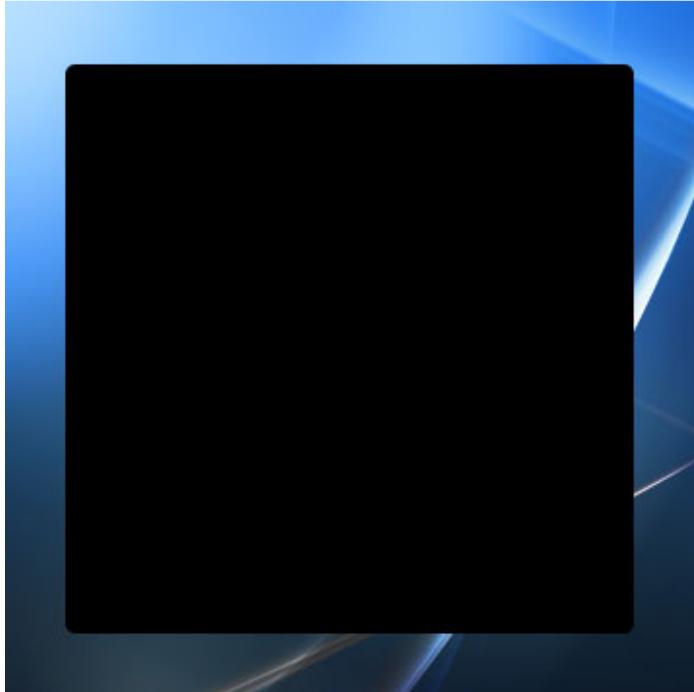
The Main Window

The main window makes up the entire frame of the window, and holds all of the windows smaller components. Therefore, it seems like a good place to start.

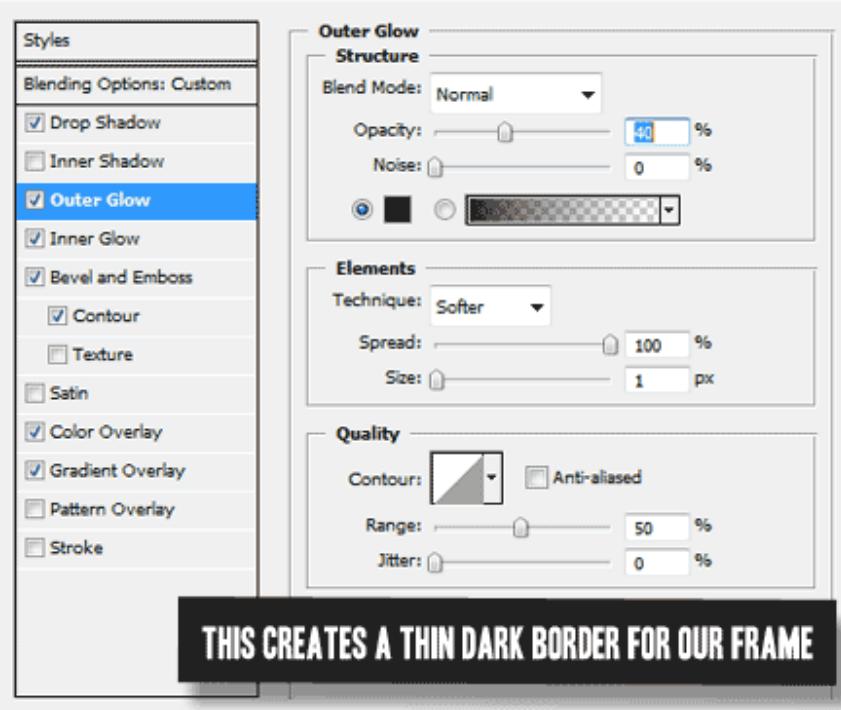
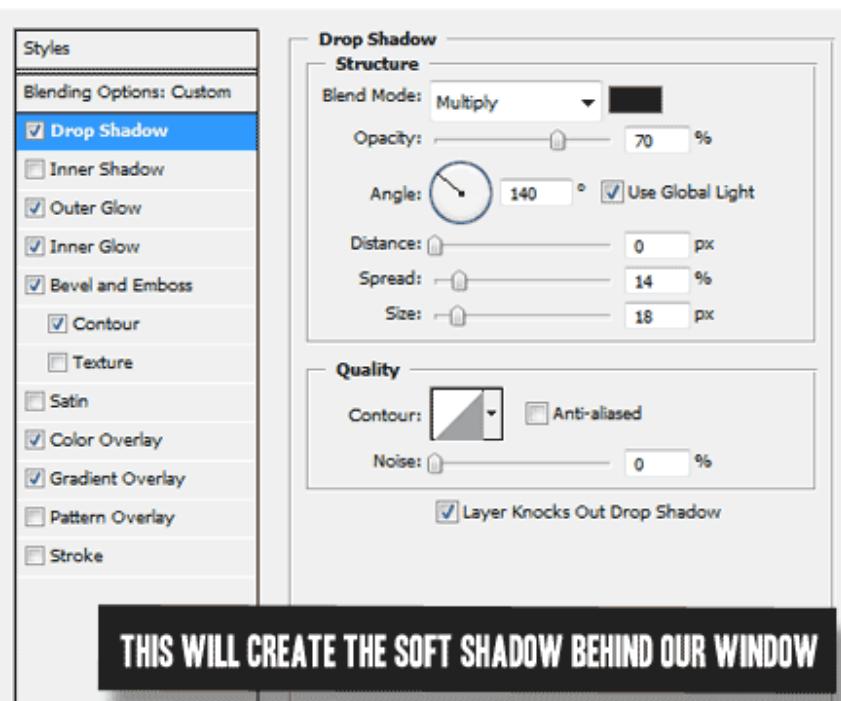
We'll begin by creating a new document (*Choose the document size based on how large you want your window to be*). The background I'll be using is shown below (*You might be familiar with it from our [Windows Vista Lighting Effect Tutorial](#)*).

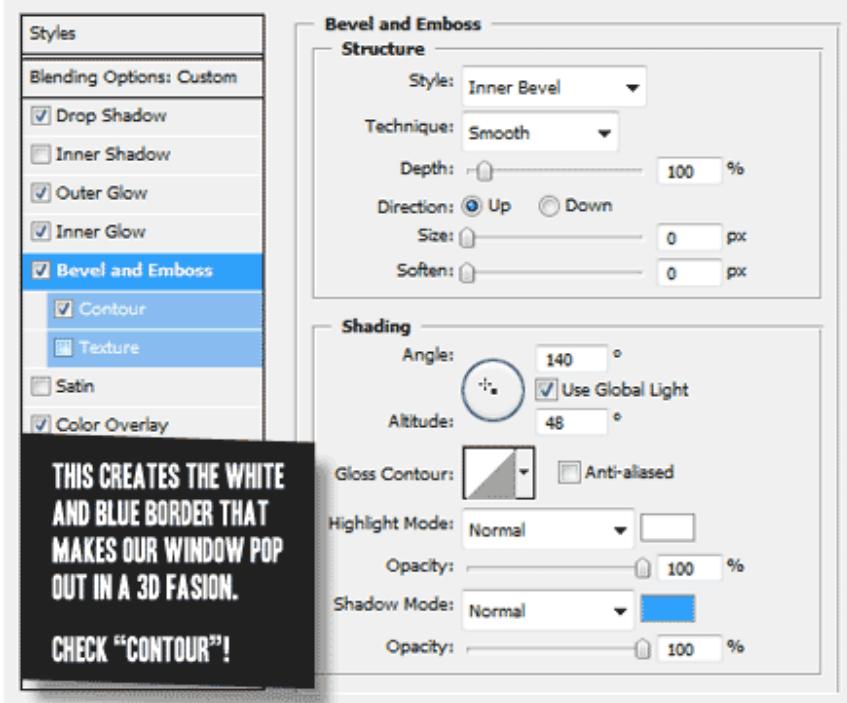
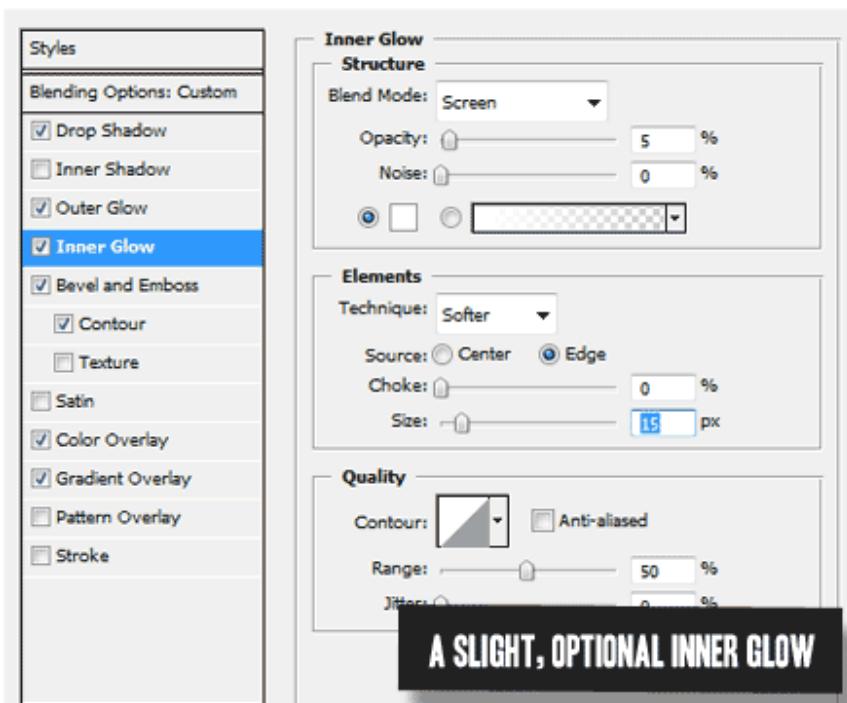


We're going to place the main window in the center of this new document. To create the box, select the **Rounded Rectangle Tool** from the toolbar, and then set the radius of the rectangle to 5px in the *Options Bar*. Select a **foreground color** of *Black*, and **create a nice sized rectangle** across your canvas.



Set the **Blending Mode** of this shape layer to “*Lighten*”. Doing this will keep the shape intact, and make blending options 100% visible, while making the black shape invisible. Go into the **Blending Options** (*Right Click Layer > Blending Options*) and apply the following:





Styles

Blending Options: Custom

Drop Shadow

Inner Shadow

Outer Glow

Inner Glow

Bevel and Emboss

Contour

Texture

Satin

Color Overlay

Gradient Overlay

Pattern Overlay

Stroke

Color Overlay

Color

Blend Mode: Screen

Opacity: 35%

THIS COLOR WILL ADD A SLIGHT TINT TO YOUR OUTER FRAME. CHOOSE WHICHEVER COLOR SUITS YOU.

FOR A MORE OPAQUE COLOR, ADJUST THE OPACITY SLIDER ACCORDINLY, OR SWITCH BLENDING MODES.

Styles

Blending Options: Custom

Drop Shadow

Inner Shadow

Outer Glow

Inner Glow

Bevel and Emboss

Contour

Texture

Satin

Color Overlay

Gradient Overlay

Pattern Overlay

Stroke

Gradient Overlay

Gradient

Blend Mode: Normal

Opacity: 54%

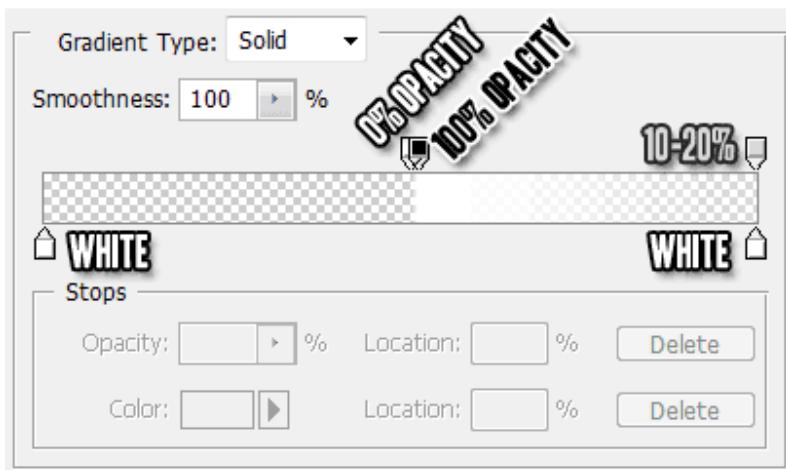
Gradient:

Style: Linear

Angle: 90°

Scale: 100%

THIS GRADIENT LAYER WORKS AS OUR ENVIRONMENTAL REFLECTION. YOU'LL NEED TO MANUALLY GO IN AND MODIFY THE GRADIENT (Click the Gradient to do so).



Phew... That's a lot of styles...



It sure does come out looking nice though!

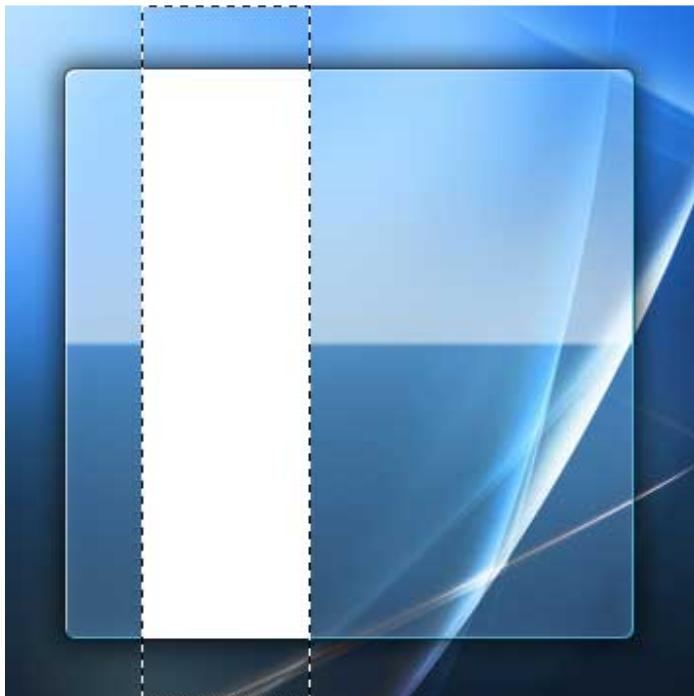
The Light Rays

As we've seen in the real Vista Window, there are some nice rays of light that appear to be passing through the main window. We're going to recreate that effect now.

Turn your **Main Window Layer** into a selection (**Ctrl + Left Click Layer Thumbnail**). Create a **New Layer Set** above this layer. While this layer set is selected, create a **new layer mask to reveal the selection** (**Layer > Layer Mask > Reveal Selection**). Any layers placed inside of this layer set will only be visible now inside of this mask.



Create a **new layer**, and place it *inside* of this Layer set. Using the **Rectangular Marquee Tool**, make a thin selection extending from the top to the bottom of your canvas, and then using the **Paint Bucket Tool**, fill the selection with *White*.



Deselect everything (**Ctrl + D**), and then **Rotate** this layer using**Transform** (**Ctrl + T**, or **Edit > Transform > Rotate**). Try to make it angle out a bit, to about -45*. You can enter in this value in the options bar, or hold shift, and rotate the layer in intervals (*default of 15* intervals*).



Apply a **Gaussian Blur** (**Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur**) with a value somewhere between 2-5. Using the **Eraser Tool** (*Large, Soft default brush 200-250px, 0% hardness*), go just slightly over the right edge. Decrease the **layer opacity** to the 10-30% range.



Complete this series of steps several more times to create a few similar light rays. Try to overlap some, and change the blur value & opacity to get a nice collection of rays.



At long last, the **Main Window** is completed! Now to move onto the **Inner Window**.

Creating the Inner Window

Be sure to be working above all other layers & layer sets at this point.

To begin, we need to create a shape for the inner window. Draw out **arounded rectangle shape**, just as you did to create the shape for the main window.



Set this layers **Blending Mode** to *lighten*, as you did with the original.
Apply the following **blending options** to this shape layer:

Outer Glow

Structure

- Blend Mode: Normal
- Opacity: 40 %
- Noise: 0 %
- Technique: Softer
- Spread: 100 %
- Size: 1 px

Quality

- Contour:
- Anti-aliased:
- Range: 50 %
- Jitter: 0 %

Stroke

Structure

- Size: 1 px
- Position: Inside
- Blend Mode: Normal
- Opacity: 100 %

Fill Type: Color

Color:

Create a new Layer Set, and create a layer mask based off the inner window. In this set, you'll have your Window's contents. You're window might look something like shown below:



That's a pretty slick lookin' Vista Window if you ask me!

Final Remarks

This is an excellent design technique for interface & layout design when used in moderation. I've seen it used in website designs for blogs, forums, and of course Microsoft new Operating System. There are a few notable "Extras" tacked onto the Windows Vista version of the design (such as the "Minimize", "Maximize", and "Exit" buttons, as well as the title), but those probably aren't quite as practical in everyday design. With your new knowledge in blending options, you could probably replicate the exact look yourself!

