

Template Tutorial

By Hummie

A great way to get a layout done quickly is to utilize a template. Templates provide the design structure. You choose the photos and papers to insert and add your own text.

There are two types of templates: flat templates and layered templates. Flat templates have either a .png or a .jpg extension. Layered templates have a .psd extension. Other extensions are available and applicable to other software programs.

I have provided two free templates, each identical, one flat and one layered, for your use along with this tutorial. You can find the download link to the layered template and the flat template in my forum.

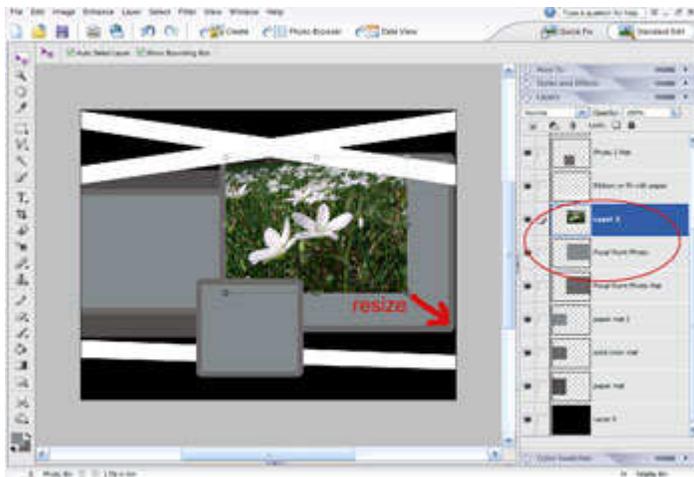
WORKING WITH LAYERED TEMPLATES

Open the layered template and note that it has available many layers of individual element templates, in position, ready for filling.

Each layer is considered a template of its own. There are several techniques available to fill each individual element template. These have all been covered in previous tutorials on my site (i.e. cutting paper, clipping masks) and should you have problems, you may wish to go over the basic tutorials again. I will try to highlight the various techniques in this tutorial, but no one technique is always the right way. You may choose to utilize one way over another more often based on personal preference.

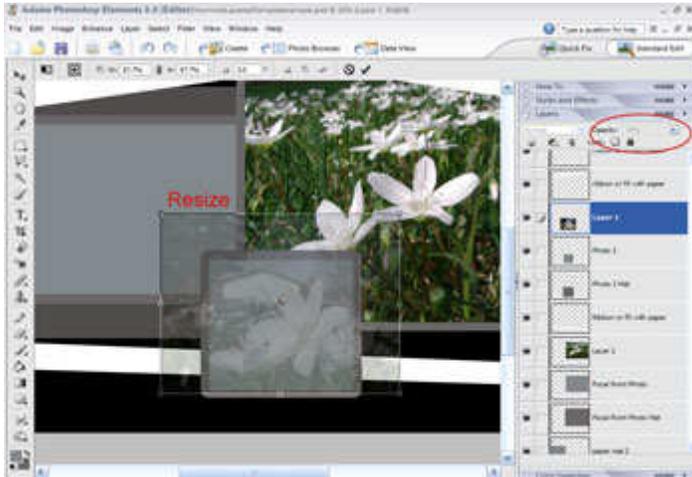
The goal is to replace each individual template layer with your paper, photo, or element.

***THE MOST COMMON METHOD USED IS THE “Control G” method below** and often that is all that is used, but I am providing you with other examples as playing will allow you to learn your program better.*



Sometimes the element you are inserting is the same shape as the individual template layer you are filling, as is my photo. In this case,

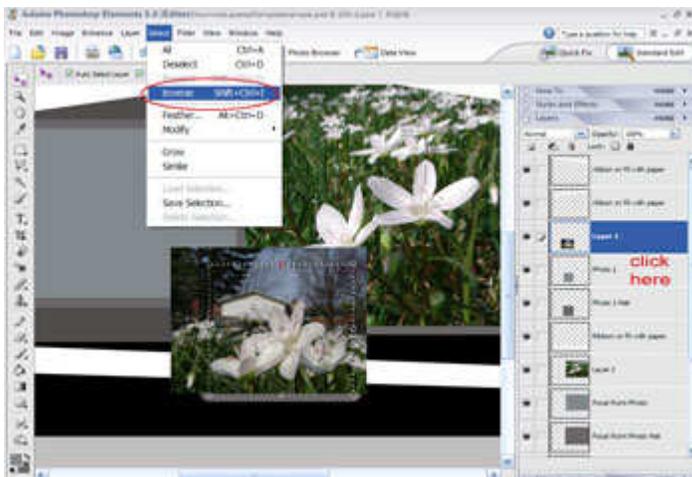
place the photo on a layer above the individual template layer, scoot with your mouse, and resize the photo until it matches the size of the template layer underneath. Once in place, you may choose to delete the template layer or leave it for future use if desired. I prefer to delete it as the file size will get large and may take a while to save.



There will be times when you may want to crop a photo to fit the size of the individual template layer. To do this, lower the opacity temporarily of the photo you are working with so that the template below can be seen. You may have to lower the opacity all the way down to around 5%.

Thereafter, resize the photo and move the photo until the portion you want to be within the template bounds is in place. Return the opacity to 100%.

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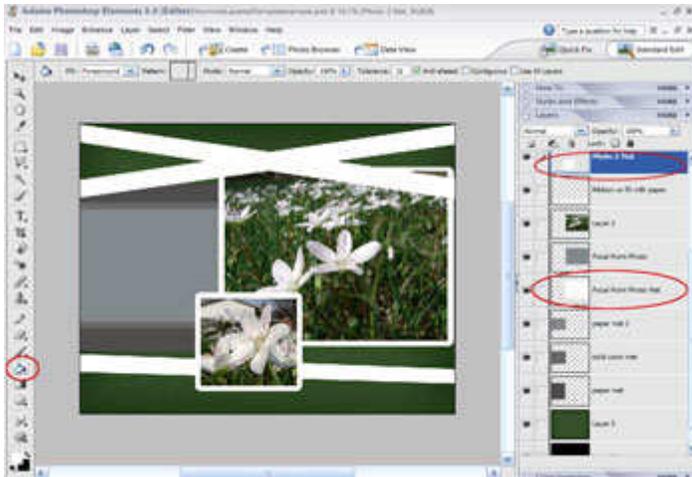


Next, hold down the control key and click with the mouse on the layer of the individual template (in this case, the mat template layer). See the marching ants?

of the photo you will no longer be needing. Hit the delete key on the keyboard and this area will be deleted.

Go to the Select drop down menu and choose Inverse (or Shift, Control, I on the keyboard). At the present, the area outside of the mat is selected, that being the area

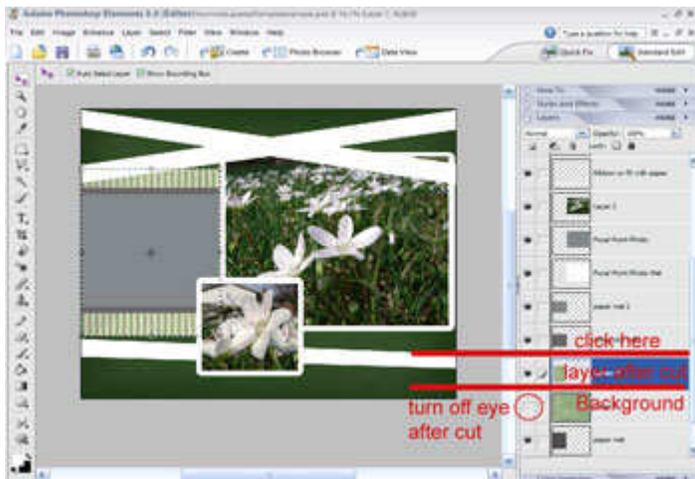
If desired, delete the mat template layer. Also, before cutting permanently as this method shows, you may want to duplicate the photo layer to preserve that layer just in case you change your mind and want to re-cut it later. The duplicated layer can always be deleted after the layout is finished.



There may be times when a solid color is all that is needed and, therefore, no cutting or grouping is necessary.

On my layout, I wanted a simple white solid color border around my photos.

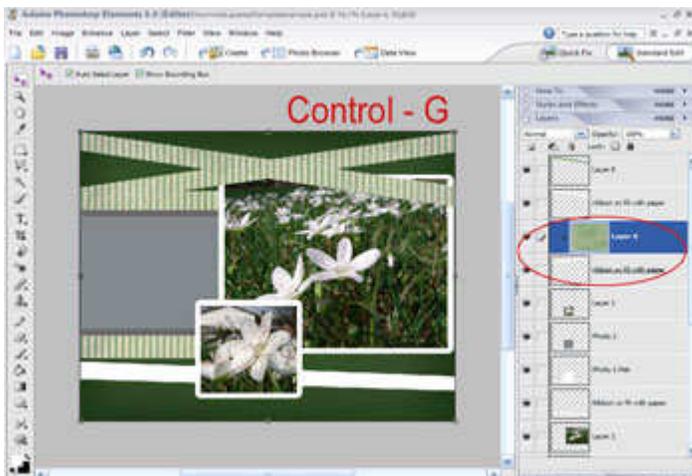
Use the paint bucket to fill the individual template layers in directly.



There are several methods that can be utilized to cut paper out of the templates. It can be cut using the “inverse selection” method used above. A second method is the “Control J” method.

Bring the paper into the layout. Hold down the control key and click on the layer in the layers palette of the individual template.

Make the paper layer the active layer. Hold down the control key and hit J on the keyboard. This will cut the template shape out of the paper onto a new layer (the stripes that you see in my sample image). Click on the eye icon to make the background paper invisible to see the new layer. If desired you may delete the paper layer (unless you intend to cut from it again) and the individual template layer. I would suggest that there is no need to save this template layer because if you choose to redo the layer later, the new cut paper layer may act as a template layer.

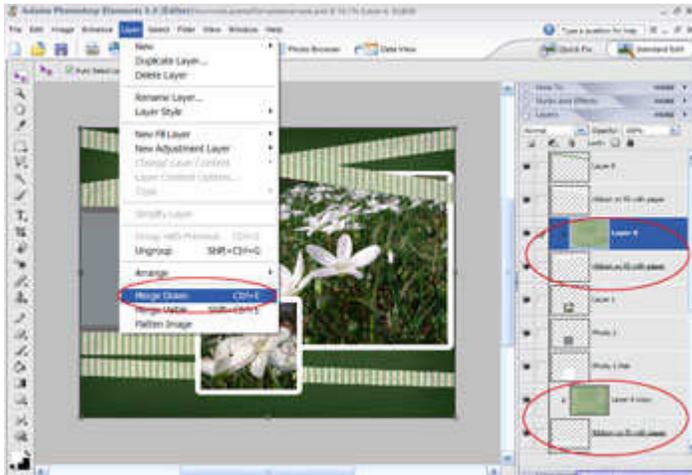


A third method is the “Control G” method.

Bring the paper into the layout and place it on the layer directly above the individual template layer. With the paper layer as the active

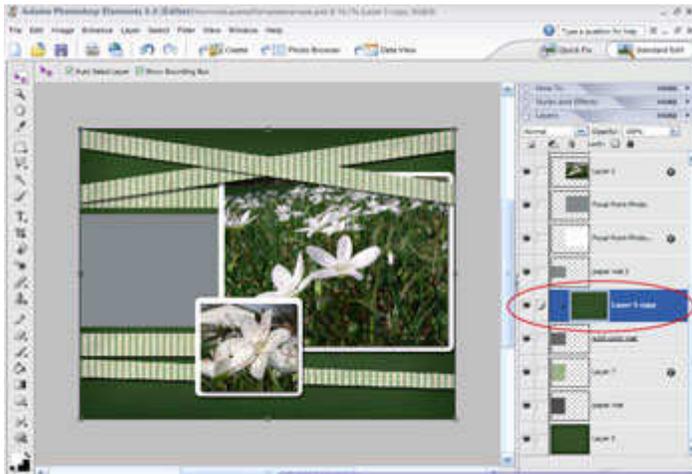
layer, hold down the control key and hit G on the keyboard to “group” the layer below the active layer.

With the photo layer as the active layer, you can now resize and move the photo to fit the template.



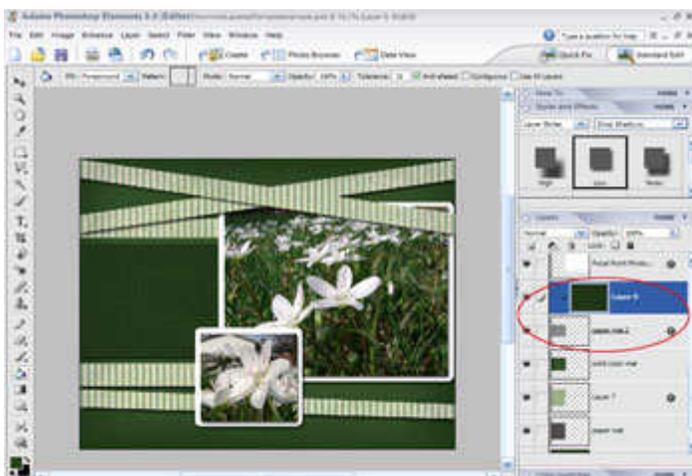
The layers can be left this way; however, it will make the file larger having more layers. If desired, with the paper layer (top layer of the grouping) as the active layer, go to the Layer drop down menu and choose “Merge Down” (or Control E). The two layers will become one.

As indicated above, the new layer can always be used once again as a template to re-cut the layer from a new paper if you change your mind.



I have utilized the Control G method once again in this sample to cut the next mat layer to the left side of my layout.

Note that the ribbon area was previously cut. In the alternative, bring in a ribbon element and move it into place and delete the template.



In this sample, I used the Control G method to cut the last mat.

Note that if a drop shadow is applied and the two layers are not merged, the drop shadow will need to be placed on the

individual template layer, rather than the paper layer.

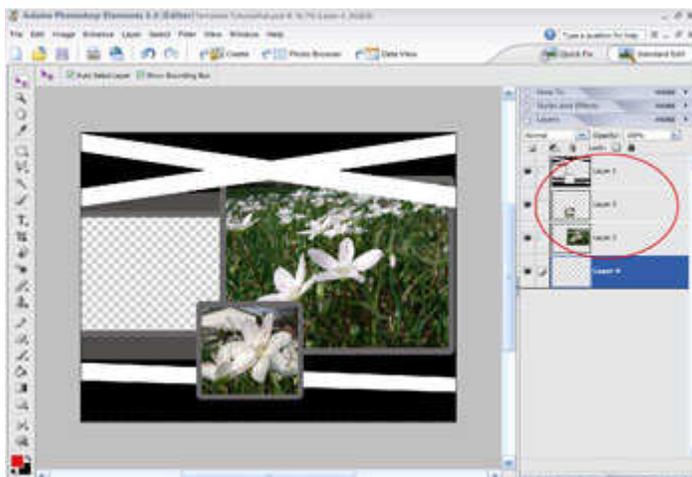


Add text, journaling and other elements as desired.

Here is my finished layout. I did edit a few of the papers too in order to tweak the design.

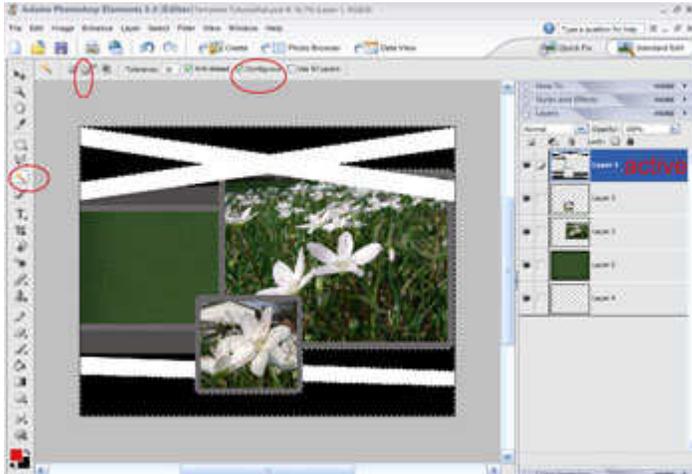
WORKING WITH FLAT TEMPLATES

The skills to work with the flat templates are somewhat similar to the layered template.



Bring the template into a new layer. If the template is a .png and has transparent see-through areas for photos, bring the photos into the file and move them to layers underneath the template.

Resize and cut the photos so that they fit into the holes.



To cut the various elements out of the paper, first make a selection (yep, those marching ants again!) of the space you intend to fill. To do this, use the magic wand selection tool. Set the tool to “contiguous” so that it will only select the areas of color touching (continuing).

Make the template layer the active layer before using the magic wand. Click with the mouse on the area that is to be filled to obtain a selection.

In my sample, I want to select all areas that are in black and, therefore, I have the “add to selection” option activated also so that I can continue clicking on each black area until they all have marching ants around them. See the selection tutorial for more help if you have troubles.

Make the paper layer the active layer, hold down the control key on the keyboard, and hit the J key on the keyboard.

If desired, should the paper layer no longer be needed, you may delete that layer.

Continue on selecting another area to fill.

If the area is to be a solid color, make the selection of that area, create a new layer, then use the paint bucket tool to fill the selection onto the new layer.

Remember that you may need to re-stack your layers appropriately by moving them up or down in the layers palette.

Add text, journaling, and other elements to finalize the layout.