This PDF was created to help beginners design a READ poster using Adobe® Photoshop® Elements for the first time. For additional instruction, view the video tutorial or use Adobe® Photoshop® Elements' Help menu for searchable instructions, tutorials, a glossary, and other valuable learning resources.

ABOUT IMAGES AND TYPE TREATMENTS

READ Design Studio discs contain images and type treatments in a variety of formats, denoted by the following filename extensions: .jpg, .png, .eps, or. psd. You can use the .jpg backgrounds and the .jpg, .png, or .eps type treatments with any desktop publishing software, including Publisher, Paint, PhotoDraw, and Microsoft Word. To work with a Photoshop (.psd) file you will need to use Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Photoshop Elements. Photoshop files are high-resolution, "layered" files that allow you to seamlessly integrate your photos with the READ designs to most closely emulate professional-looking READ posters. The .eps type treatments can be resized without any loss of image quality. The .png type treatments have a transparent background, which allows them to be placed on poster backgrounds without a white background interrupting the poster.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

For READ DVD Files:
- Mac or PC; RAM: Minimum 256 MB / recommended 512 MB
- DVD/CD-ROM required for READ Design Studio Starter Pack or READ DVD Genres & Subjects

For Adobe Photoshop Elements:
- PowerPC G3, G4, or G5 processor; Mac OS X v.10.3 or 10.4; 256 MB of RAM; 750 MB of available hard-disk space; 1024 x 768 16-bit (XGA) display

Editing Photos in Adobe Photoshop Elements

The key to making professional-looking READ posters begins with removing the background of your reader's photo. There are many techniques in Photoshop Elements that allow you to do this. We suggest experimenting with the following options until you find the way which works best for you and your photo.

No matter which option you choose for removing your background, start with these steps:
- Snap a photo of your reader and selected book in front of a solid color, high-contrast backdrop. Next, upload or scan the photo to your computer.
- Open Photoshop Elements and choose Edit and Enhance Photos.
- From menu bar, choose File > Open to locate and open your digital image.

NOTE: In this window you will see many icons representing different tools which allow you to edit your image. For tool names, roll your cursor over the icon. Icons that include a small triangle shape, have different tool options to choose from; left-click and hold on the triangle to review and select the specific tool you want.

Option 1: Using the Magic Wand and Magic Eraser Tools
Works best on photos with high contrast between reader and solid-colored background.
- Click on the Magic Wand Tool from the toolbar; your cursor will now look like a "magic wand".
- Click your cursor on the background of your image. If your background is a solid color and has high contrast with your reader, it should begin to highlight a large portion of the background with a black and white dotted line. To continue highlighting the rest of the background, hold the Shift key and continue clicking on portions of the background until there is an outline around the reader and the edges of the image, indicating you have outlined all of the background.
- If you inadvertently highlight part of your reader (which can happen if your reader and background both share similar colors or tones), you can remove highlighted portions by holding the Alt key and clicking until the highlight is removed.
- When satisfied with your outline, find the Eraser icon on the toolbar and select the Magic Eraser Tool (the eraser with the starburst), from the 3 choices. With the Magic Eraser Tool selected, click on sections of the image background and it will disappear leaving a gray checkered pattern which means the area is now transparent.
- Once you've erased the entire background, choose File > Save As from the menu bar and save your edited image as a Photoshop (.psd), or TIFF (.tif) file to preserve the transparent background.

Option 2: Using the Magnetic Lasso and Eraser Tools

Works best on photos with less contrast between reader and background.

- Left-click and hold the Lasso Tool on the toolbar (it looks like a small lasso) and select the Magnetic Lasso Tool, which has a small u-shaped magnet over the lasso.
- With the Magnetic Lasso Tool, begin tracing and clicking your mouse along the outline of your reader beginning at the bottom left side. Each time you click along the outline of your reader, the Magnetic Lasso will "attach" itself to the outline, shown by a small square shape. If there is a spot where the background and your reader are nearly the same color or tone, you will want to click more carefully to make sure the Lasso follows the outline as closely as possible. Continue over the reader's head and down the right side until you get to the bottom right side of your reader.
- To finish you need to "lasso" the rest of the background in order to erase it. Move your mouse to the right (bottom right corner of the image), then up to the top, to the left, and down, clicking in each corner. Finish by clicking at the point where you started.
- When you have returned to your starting point, a small (very small!) circle will appear on the Magnetic Lasso icon, showing that the lasso's circle has been completed. Click once and a dotted line will appear around your subject and the edges of your photo.
- If the selection is not perfect, you can add to the selection of your background (what will be erased), hold down Shift and click to circle the area you want to include. To add to the selection of the reader (what will remain after the background is erased), hold down Alt and click to circle the part you want to add. Continue the exercise until you are satisfied with your outline. The final dotted outline should be outlining your reader as well as all sides of the photo, thereby demarcating all of the background that you will erase in the next step.
- From your toolbar, select the Eraser Tool (plain pink). With the Eraser Tool selected left-click and hold while you drag the cursor back and forth over the background to erase it. Only what is marked as background will be erased, so you don't need to be careful as you erase. To quickly erase a large portion of background, increase the pixel size of your brush. You'll see a gray checkered background appear which means the area is now transparent.
- Once you've erased the entire background, choose File > Save As from the menu bar and save your edited image as a Photoshop (.psd), or TIFF (.tif) file to preserve the transparent background.

Option 3: Using the Magic Extractor

Works best on photos with little or no contrast between reader and background.

- From menu bar, choose Image > Magic Extractor.
- Select Foreground Brush tool to "paint" over the areas you want to keep (the reader and book). You can enlarge or reduce the size of the selection brush under Tool Options to the right of your photo. Select the Background Brush tool to paint over the areas you want to remove (the background).
- Use Point Eraser, Add to Selection, and Remove from Selection tools to refine the areas you've designated as foreground and background. If needed, select the Zoom tool to magnify any area of the photo.
- Click Preview button in upper right corner to see how your edited image will look (it may take a few minutes or more to generate). The checkered pattern shows the area where the background will be removed or "extracted".
- If needed, apply additional Foreground and Background paint to further refine your selections; select the Smoothing Brush tool to fine-tune any rough edges.
- Continue to adjust and preview until you are satisfied, then click OK to accept changes and close the Magic Extractor.
- Once you've erased the entire background, choose File > Save As from the menu bar and save your edited image as a Photoshop (.psd), or TIFF (.tif) file to preserve the transparent background.

COMBINING YOUR PHOTO WITH A LAYERED PHOTOSHOP FILE

New users may need practice working with .psd files. It may be helpful to visualize a standard "flat" .jpg image as a single sheet of paper, while Photoshop's layers are like stacked sheets of glass on which you can paint images. Consult "Understanding layers" in the Photoshop Elements help menu for additional instructions.

- Keep your new, edited image open in Photoshop Elements.
- Choose a .psd file from any READ Design Studio product; then insert the corresponding disc into your CD/DVD-ROM drive.
- In the Photoshop Elements window with your new image, select File > Open and find the .psd file you want to work with.
- You will see that each layer of the .psd file is indicated by a thumbnail in the Layers window. In the Layers window, select the placeholder layer (indicated by the wooden figure). With placeholder layer highlighted, go back to your edited photo.
- Select your photo's single layer from the Layers menu and drag onto the .psd poster file.
- To resize the new layer, select Image > Transform > Free Transform. Holding the shift key, drag a corner to resize; you can reposition the image by using the Move Tool. When you are satisfied with size and placement, press Enter to accept changes.
- Select the wooden dummy placeholder layer again, and right-click your mouse (Ctrl+click on Mac) and select Copy Layer Style from menu (Note: only select .psd files have Layer Styles; skip this step if this option is not offered); next, right-click (Ctrl+click on Mac) on your new subject's layer and select Paste Layer Style.
- Click the eye icon in the placeholder layer to make it invisible.
- Save your work as a new file; choose to save as .tif or .psd to preserve the layers for future use (this will result in a large file) or for a smaller file size, merge the layers by saving as a .jpg (Note: file layers will no longer be editable).

TIPS AND TRICKS

Digital cameras: A 3.2 megapixel camera is recommended to produce photo-quality prints up to 8.5″ x 11″. Creating poster-size prints larger than 8.5″ x 11″ requires a 5.0 mega-pixel camera or greater.

Scanning images: For best quality in creating poster-size prints, start with originals that are at least 8″ x 10″, and scan them at no less than 300 dpi.

File sizes: All READ poster files are 300 dpi at 11″ x 17″, making them extremely large files. If your final print size will be smaller than 11″ x 17″, save the files you work with at a lower resolution and/or size to speed opening and printing.

Photography: If you plan to drop out the background of your photo in Photoshop Elements, it is helpful to pose your subject against a high-contrast green or blue backdrop. This will make "erasing" the background easier.

Printing: Posters are sized at 11″ x 17″ to accommodate printing with standard, tabloid-sized paper. If you plan to have your posters printed commercially, it is recommended that you save each poster as a PDF which will be easy for the printer to reproduce.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Find help and creative ideas on the RDS Info page **http://alastore.ala.org/rds/**

View READ posters and add yours to Flickr **www.flickr.com/groups/readposters/pool/**