Photoshop Elements Tutorial for Beginners, making Christmas cards.
by Rande Hanson

Disclaimer. There are several ways, to create these cards. As you become more experienced, you will want to try them. For this tutorial, we will cover just one of the ways a beginner can successfully create cards.

   Before you begin, you will want to know the size of the card you are creating. You will want to create a new blank file, sized according to your card. I will start with a 5x7, 300dpi file, and resize later.
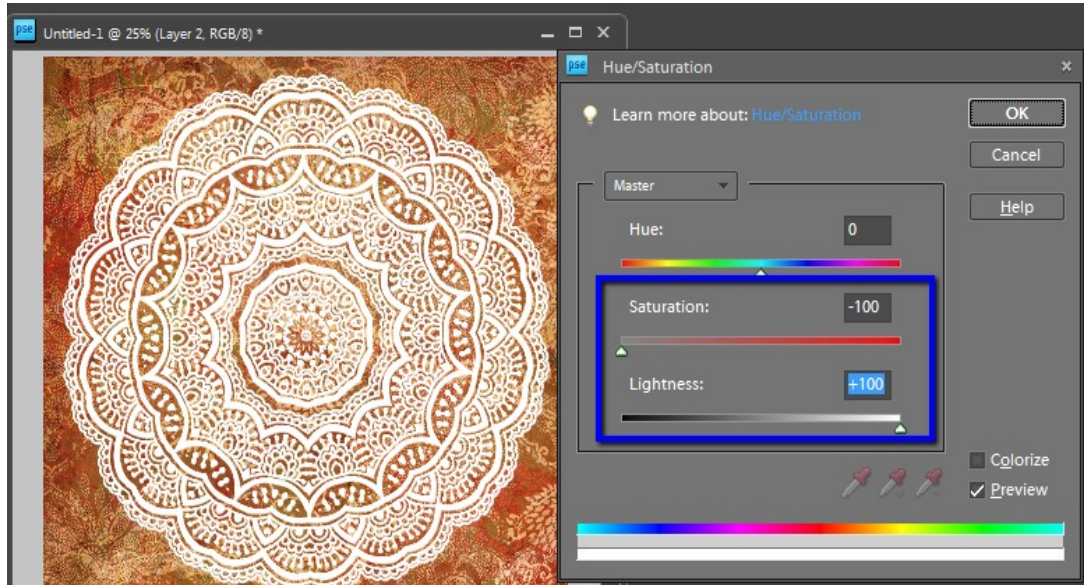
Open the background image you want to use. Copy it to your new blank file. You may have to reposition and resize the image.

Next, you can open the other images you want to work with. I'm using a medallion, a genteel lady, and a Christmas frame.
Make the medallion the active file, and with the rectangular marquee tool draw a box around the medallion, go to the top menu, select edit, then copy. Make your new file active, and paste the medallion image. The medallion should be pasted to a new layer. You will probably need to relocate and resize the image.

When I first saw the medallion image, I thought it might make a pretty doily. So I played with the brightness and color saturation.

From the top menu, select Enhance, Adjust Color, Adjust Hue/Saturation. Move the arrow for the saturation all the way to the left. This will remove all color. Then move the arrow for the lightness, all the way to right to lighten it.
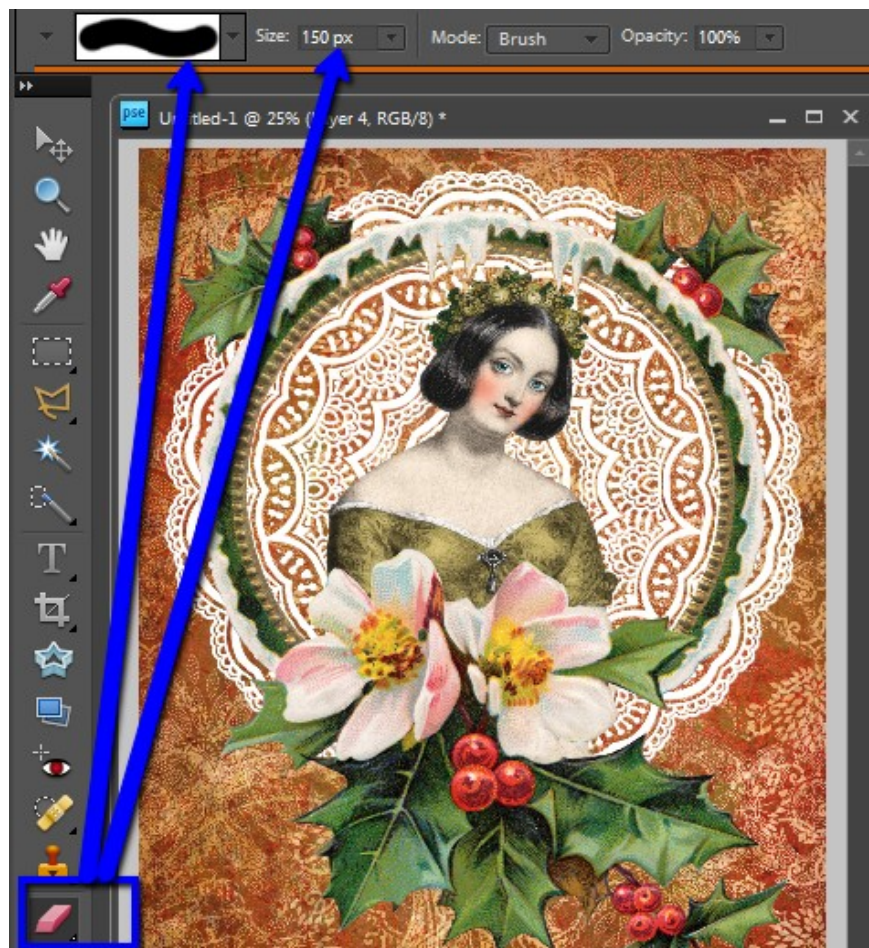

Next make the genteel lady the active file, and select the image with the marquee tool, copy the image and go to your new file and paste. to your new file. It should be the topmost layer. For the time being, just reposition and resize the image. You will probably have to adjust after the frame is added.

For the next layer, make the Christmas frame active, and drag it to the new file. Again, reposition and resize as necessary.
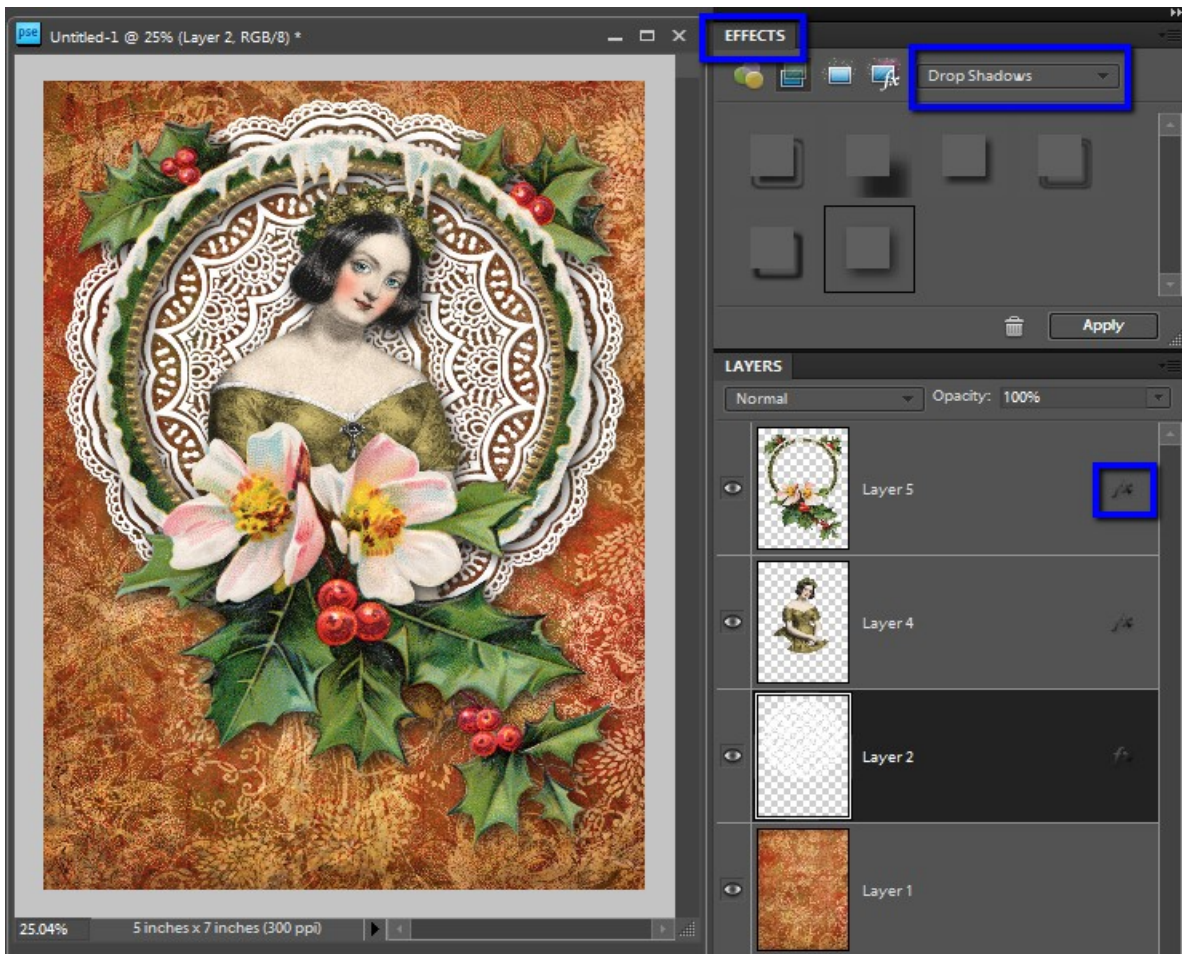
Tip: If you need to move the image just a smidgen, use your arrow keys to nudge the image.

There will probably be a little bit of the skirt of the genteel lady showing that you may want to erase. Just click on the layer with the genteel lady in the layers palette. From the side toolbar click on the eraser. You may need to select a brush and change the size. For this size file, I use the solid black circle with a size around 150 px.

Starting at the outer edges, erase the parts of the dress you don't want to show. When satisfied, I usually change back to the move tool, just so I don't accidentally erase something I didn't mean to.

Next is the adding drop shadows. This can be done at anytime, just a personal preference when you want to add them. Click on the layer you want t add the shadow. In the Effects palette, select drop shadows from the drop down menu. I will usually start by selecting the soft edge shadow. You can double click on the shadow, OR click once and click on the apply button. Do this for every layer you want a shadow to appear. You will see a tiny *fx* to the right of the thumbnail in the Layers palette.

You can save and/or print at this time or add a label or some text.

Extra:

To add text. Usually you will want the text to show up on top of everything else. The main thing to remember is to click on the layer in the layers palette that you want the text to show above.

Next, from the side toolbar, select the Horizontal Test tool, which will look like a capital T.
When that is selected, you will want to select a font, a size, and color. Sometimes you have to experiment with different fonts, sizes, and colors. These can easily bee changed after the test is typed on a layer.
For this sample I chose Times New Roman at 36pt, and a white color. There are familiar icons on the text toolbar, such a Bold, Italic, and alignment. You can select any of these if you know what you want.
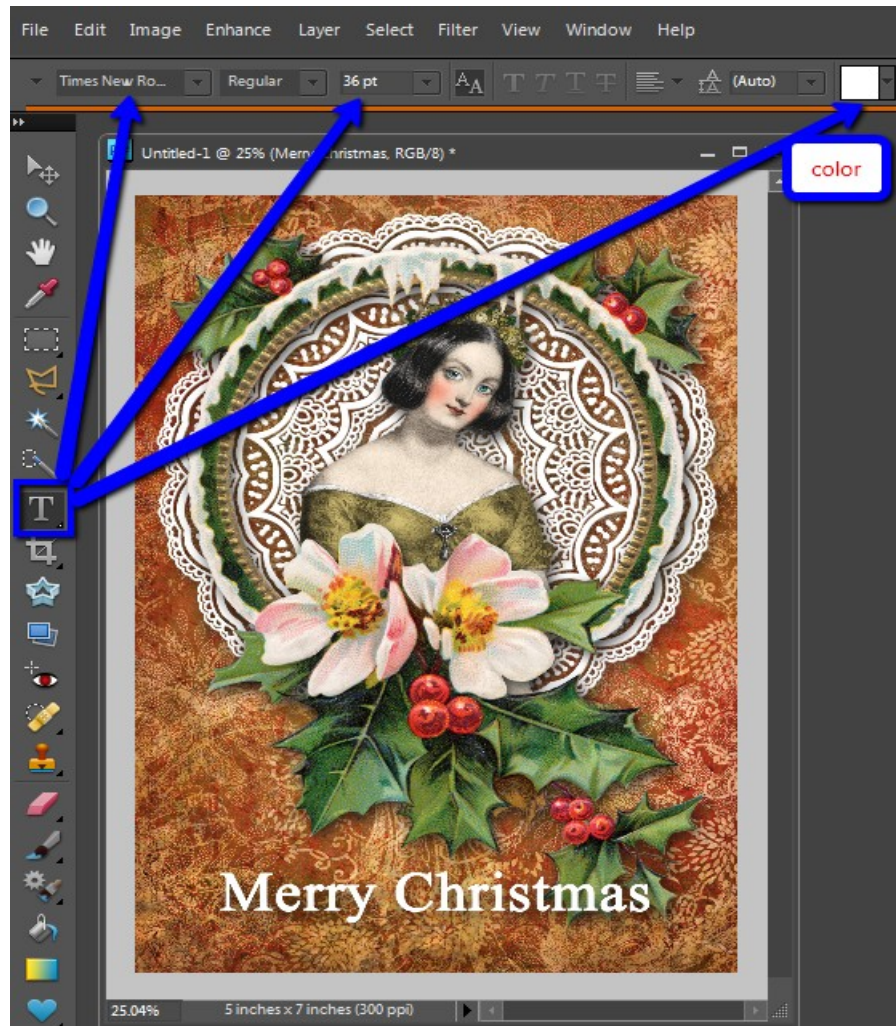So with the first click of the mouse in the position you want to start, you will see a vertical blinking line. This will also be the size of the text when it is typed. You can change the type if you want or wait and do it after the text is typed.

When you have finished, you can make any changes you need.
You will see a layer in the layers palette with a T which is you text layer. If you double click on the T icon it will highlight your text, and you can any changes to include the font, the size, and the color. Also if you need to move the test block to a different position. While it is highlighted, move the mouse around an outer area till you see the arrow with a cross, click and hold and drag the text where you want to move.

Sometimes you have to play around with it a little, but after a few times it will come easier.
If you decide to add text to this collage, don't forget to add a drop shadow. It will make the text stand out from the background a little bit more.

Hope you enjoy this tutorial, and if you have any questions, please feel free to ask.