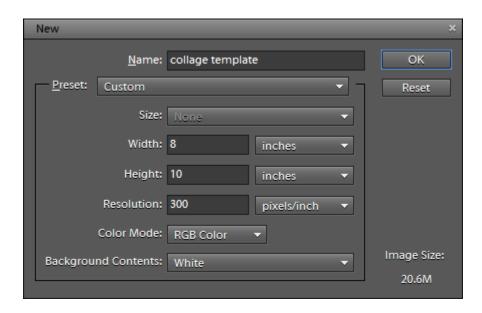
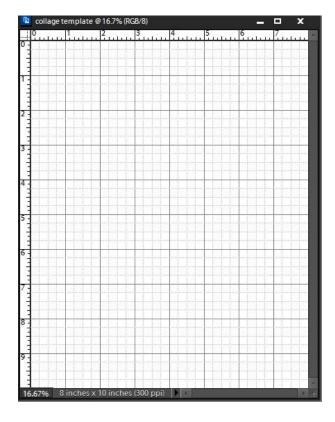
## BUILDING A COLLAGE TEMPLATE in PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS by Marianne Skov Jensen

Knowing how to create a collage template from scratch is good to know if you can't find a pre-made one to fit your needs. Once you master the steps of this basic collage, the sky is the limit for creating vertical, horizontal, mixed image sizes, etc.

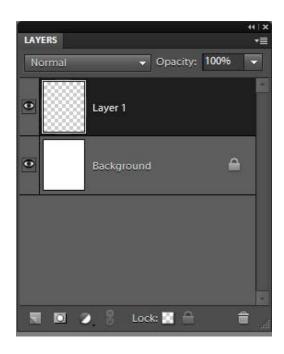
1. FILE/NEW/BLANK FILE – I typically make mine large knowing I can always downsize. MAKE SURE the background contents are NOT transparent. You can choose White or Background color. It doesn't matter because we'll change the color later if desired. Naming the file is good practice. SAVE the file. Then save often!



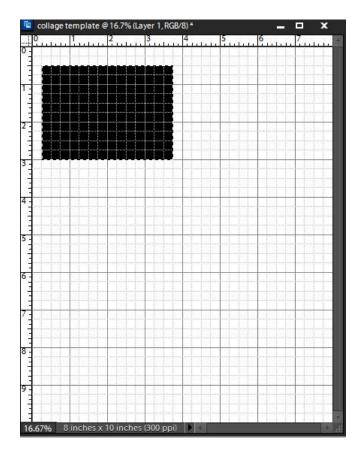
2. On the top toolbar, click VIEW/RULERS. My ruler is in inches because I created my document in inches. Then click VIEW/GRID. Your document should look like below.



3. Open your Layers Palette and note you have one layer (Background) at this point. You need a new layer so on the toolbar, click LAYER/NEW LAYER. You will now have two layers. (Don't use New Layer Shortcut the first time)

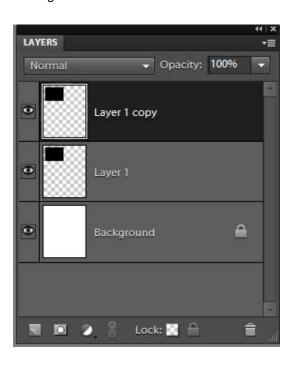


4. You are now going to make place holders for each of your images. Click on your marquee tool and draw out a square or rectangle in the upper left of your document. If you are good at math, you can figure it out exactly where to place it but it is not necessary because you can reposition it later. Once you have your shape drawn and see the "marching ants", click on EDIT/FILL SELECTION and choose BLACK. (Actually....it can be any color, it doesn't matter).

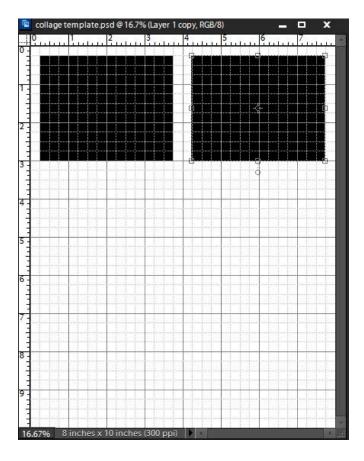


5. This rectangle will hold a photo. You need rectangles for every photo AND EACH MUST BE ON ITS OWN LAYER.

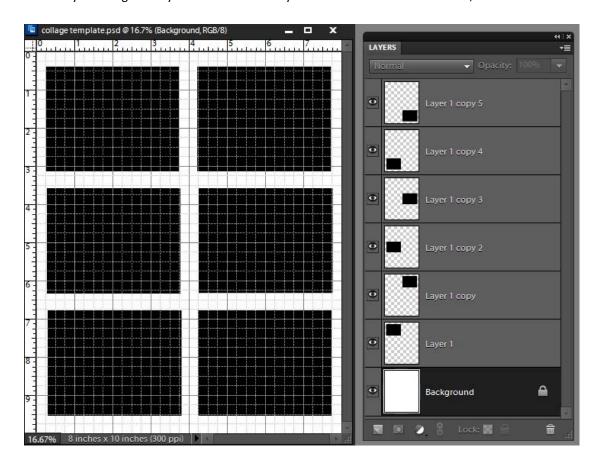
The shortcut for creating a duplicate of the previous layer is to hold the Control key (Command on Mac) and press the letter J. You won't see the new black rectangle but look at your Layers Palette and you'll see you now have two black rectangles.



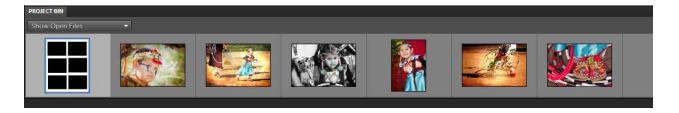
6. Click the MOVE TOOL to make sure it is active. On the Move Tool Option bar, make sure "Auto Select Layer" is checked. CLICK on your black box, HOLD THE SHIFT KEY and then drag it to the right. Holding shift will move it in a straight line. Use your right arrow key to nudge into position.



7. REPEAT STEPS 4 – 6 until you have your desired number of boxes. Rearrange by clicking on each and using your arrow keys to nudge OR if you know how to use your ALIGN TOOLS on the tool bar, use them. Here is mine:



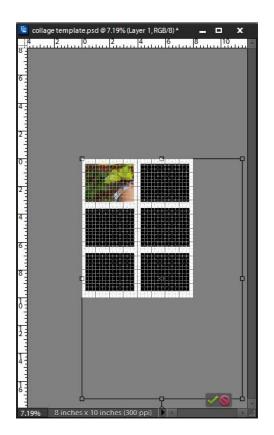
8. Open all the images you want to use in your collage. You don't have to worry about sizing the images just as long as they are at least the size of the box they are going into. Minimize all the images (press the minus sign on the image window) until you only see them in the PROJECT BIN (bottom of the Elements window). Your template will also be there.

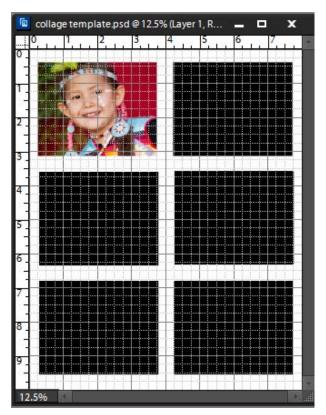


9. Click on any of the black boxes on your template and notice that layer becomes highlighted in the Layers Palette. Hold the control key (command on Mac) and click on the active layer. This will put a selection around your box.

Go to the Project Bin and double click the image you want to start with. This will bring it up. Go to the toolbar to SELECT/SELECT ALL. This puts your image on the clipboard. CLOSE THE IMAGE and you can again see your template with the selection around a box.

On the toolbar, click on EDIT/PASTE INTO SELECTION. If your image is larger than the box, hold the Control/Command key and press the letter T. This will put a transform box around your image. If you can't see all the transform handles, hold the Control/Command key and press 0 (zero). You can now see all the handles. (See image next page on left) Click on a corner and drag down to size the image to your liking. You can also click on the image to move it into position. BE SURE YOU ARE HAPPY WITH YOUR SCALING AND POSITIONING AS YOU CANNOT ALTER AFTERWARD". CLICK THE GREEN CHECKMARK. (See image next page on right)





**NOTE**: If you are using the full version of PHOTOSHOP, you have a huge advantage because your images will come in via a LAYER MASK and thus you can move the image within the mask as much as you want after the fact.

10. On the Toolbar, click SELECT/DESELECT to get rid of the selection

## **REPEAT step 9 for all your images**. Here is mine:

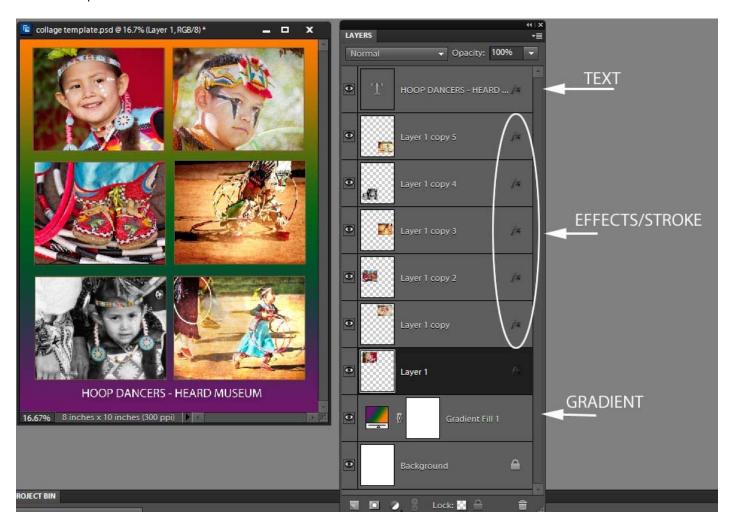


11. At this point (or any point you want) you can turn off the Grid and Rulers. (VIEW and uncheck Grid and Rules)

If you want to add text, first click on the top most layer so text will not be hidden by an image layer. Type what you want and while it is still active move it into position. If you want to add a title to the bottom or either side of your collage but there is no room, go to the top toolbar and click on IMAGE/RESIZE/CANVAS SIZE and add the amount you want. In my case, I decided to add a title to the bottom but I knew I would have room if I moved all my image boxes up a little.

**Here's how:** Click on the top image layer; HOLD THE SHIFT key and click on the bottom image layer. This selects all the layers. Click on the MOVE TOOL and then use your arrow keys to move up all the layers in unison.

To show what else you can do, I also added a stroke around each image and a gradient fill on the background. The possibilities are endless!



YOU NOW HAVE A TEMPLATE YOU CAN USE OVER AND OVER. To change images, first click on the layer you want to change and then hold the control key and click again on the layer. This will create a selection on that layer. Bring in an image. SELECT ALL and EDIT/PASTE INTO SELECTION. Go back in this tutorial to find all the directions.

ENJOY!!!