

Adding A Signature To A Photograph

By Jerry Koons

The addition of a signature can help identify the image owner, which can be desirable for certain uses such as Field Trip shows.

This procedure presents a step-by-step method to create a signature and add it to a photographic image. The image title and/or copyright symbol can also be incorporated with the signature, if desired.

Please be aware that signatures on the face of an image are strictly forbidden by most organizations on any image entered for competition.

The following procedure will utilize a specific file for creating both a signature and a signature with copyright to permit the final photographic image to display whichever signature is desired as well as position it as desired.

Adobe Elements 6 was used for this tutorial and other versions of Elements may have minor differences. The full versions of the Photoshop program also have added features which exhibit minor detail differences from this tutorial.

Please note that the creating a signature file is only required once and can then be transferred to any target image and resized or edited as desired.

Adding A Signature to a Photograph – Step-by-Step

Step One

Create a new document for the signature. Click on *File > New > Blank File* on the upper toolbar.

Step Two

Select an appropriate size, such as 2 x 3 for the new file with a transparent background but please refer to Figure One (on next page) for detailed instructions.

Adding A Signature To A Photograph

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The dialog box below allows you to create a new file with the desired attributes.

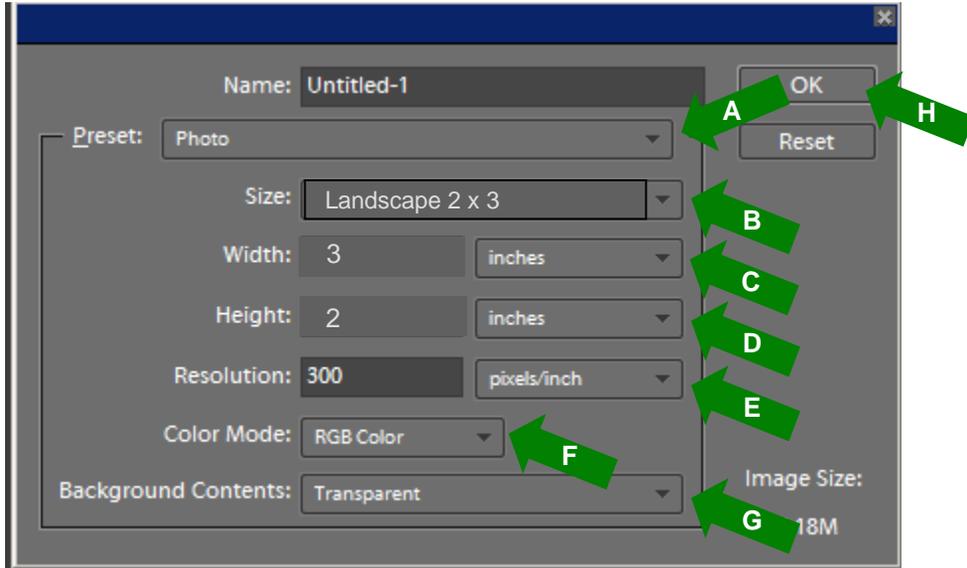


Figure One

- A. Select *Photo* from the drop-down box
- B. Select *Landscape 2x3* from the drop-down box
- C. The *Width* will be automatically set to 3 inches
- D. The *Height* will automatically be set to 2 inches
- E. The *Resolution* will reflect your default setting selected in Preferences. To change the resolution, highlight the number and type in the desired resolution value.
NOTE: I suggest using the resolution of the files you normally use for your images. Any resolution value will work but importing similar resolution files will help maintain the sizing scale.
- F. Make sure that **RGB Color** is selected for the Color Mode
- G. Make sure that **Transparent** is selected for the Background Contents
- H. Click the *OK* button to create the new blank file

Adding A Signature To A Photograph

By Jerry Koons

Step Three

- a) From the toolbox on the far left side of the canvas, select the *Text Tool* which is the letter T. The keyboard shortcut for activating the text tool is pressing the T key.
- b) Click on the blank canvas to establish the text starting point.

Step Four

- a) On the upper Option Bar, select the desired font, style, font size and color and type your name or desired text.
- b) Click on the layer thumbnail and then click on the *Move Tool* icon on the toolbox on the left side of the screen to exit the text tool.
- c) Click on the *Text Tool* icon again to activate the Text Tool for a second text entry and click on a different area of the canvas to create a starting point for the second text.
- d) Hold the *Alt* key down and type 0169 on the numerical pad located on the right side of the keyboard. NOTE: You must use the numerical pad instead of the numbers on the upper portion of the keyboard.
- e) Release the *Alt* key and the copyright symbol appears.
- f) Continue typing your desired text, such as the current year and your name.
- g) Click on the layer thumbnail and then click on the *Move Tool* icon *Move Tool* icon again to exit the text tool. Notice that the second text entry is on a separate layer.

Adding A Signature To A Photograph

By Jerry Koons

Step Four - Continued

Your copyright or name text should look similar to the one in Figure Two below except with your customized text and sizing. *You will have the ability to use either signature in future images because of the use of individual layers for the different text.*

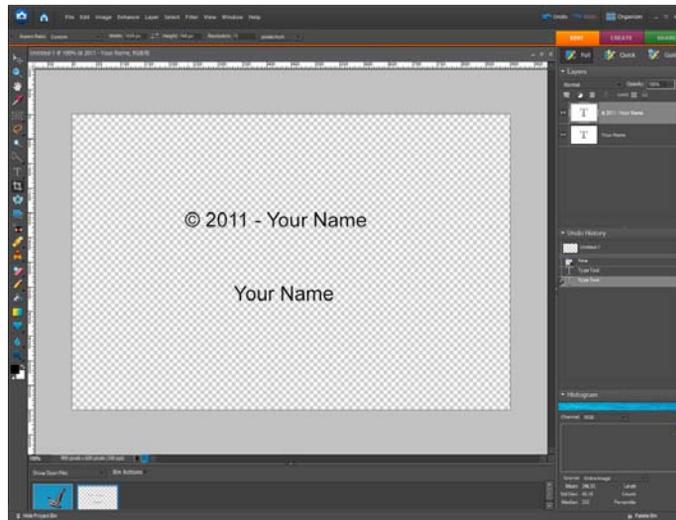


Figure Two

If editing the text color or size is necessary, double-click on the desired text layer thumbnail to highlight the text. The font, style, size and color can be edited from options on the upper option bar.

If the text itself needs to be edited, activate the *Text Tool* and click the cursor in the text area and edit as necessary.

To exit the Text Tool, click on the layer thumbnail and then click on the Move tool icon.

PLEASE NOTE: The sample in Figure Two has Ariel font, 10 point for the text size and black in color. This is a good starting point for your signature because it will need to be resized later. TT or TrueType fonts are designed to be easier to read and you should consider a font that is easy to read on your photograph. Script type fonts can be used but make sure they can be easily read.

Adding A Signature To A Photograph

By Jerry Koons

Step Five

a) Click on *File > Save As* and select Photoshop (*.PSD,*.PDD) for the saving format as shown in Figure Three – Arrow A.

b) Type your desired file name (I suggest “Signature”) into the File Name box and click OK to save the file. **NOTE:** Make sure that the desired drive and file directory have been selected as indicated by Arrow B before clicking OK.

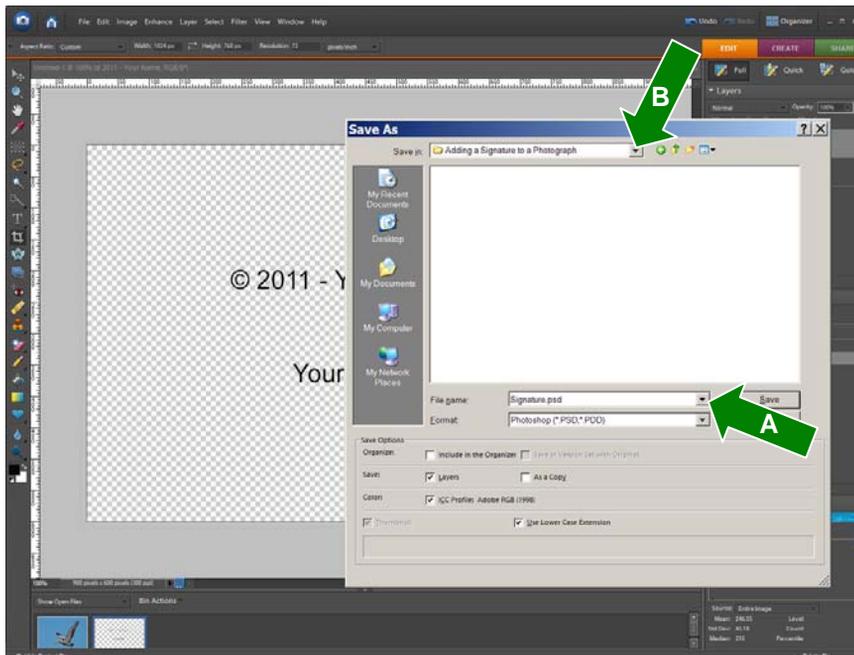


Figure Three

NOTE: It is necessary to save this signature file as a Photoshop file to maintain both text layers and the transparent background which is required for adding the signature to the target photo.

You have created and saved a signature file that can be imported into any photograph. The following steps will teach you how to import your signature and, if necessary, edit the font, font size and font color as well as display or hide it.

Step Six

Open your “target” photograph and make all necessary corrections before importing the signature.

Step Seven

Open the signature file, if it is not already open. Photoshop and Elements allow multiple files to be open/active within the program.

Adding A Signature To A Photograph

By Jerry Koons

Step Eight

- a) From the upper toolbar, click on *Window > Images > Tile* as shown in Figure Four (Arrow A) to have both images appear on the screen as shown in Figure Five.



Figure Four

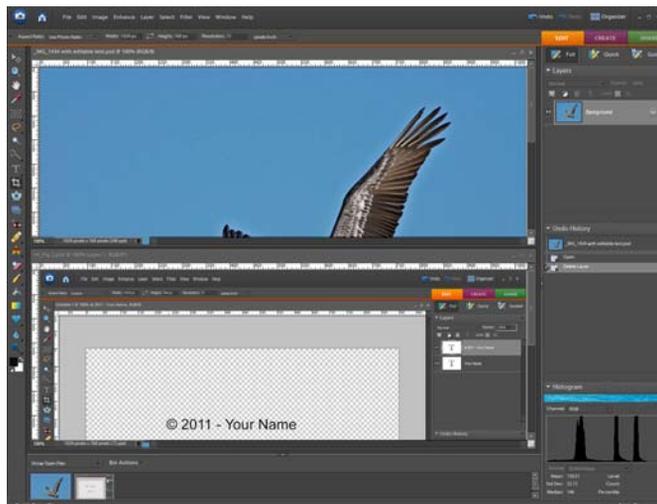


Figure Five

- b) Click on the title bar of the "Signature" file to make it the active file.
- c) Click on the thumbnail of the text layer you wish to use to make it the active layer
- d) Click-and-drag the highlighted text layer thumbnail onto the canvas of your photograph image and release the mouse to add the signature layer to the photo.

Adding A Signature To A Photograph

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Step Nine

Close the signature file without saving because it is no longer needed for this image.

Figure Six shows the target image maximized and with the added text layer.

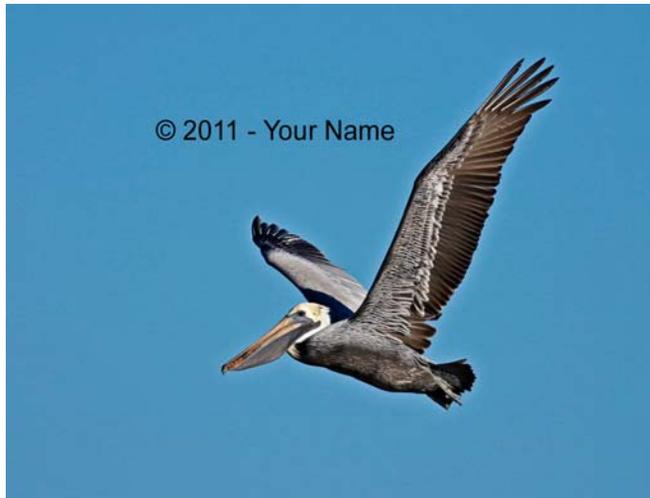


Figure Six

Step Ten

Click on the *Move Tool* icon to activate the Move Tool and drag the signature to the approximate desired location as shown in Figure Seven.



Figure Seven

Adding A Signature To A Photograph

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Step Eleven

If editing the text color or size is necessary, double-click on the desired text layer thumbnail to highlight the text. The font, font style, size and color can be edited from options on the upper option bar. Click on the text layer thumbnail to apply the changes.

A Color Option: If you wish to have your signature text color match a color in the image, as you click on the text color in the Options Bar, the Color Picker appears and if you move your cursor onto the image, the cursor changes to the eye-dropper icon. Clicking on the desired color will cause the Color Picker to display that specific color. Click OK on the Color Picker to change your text to your desired custom color match.

If the text itself needs to be edited, activate the *Text Tool* and click the cursor in the text area and edit as necessary.

To exit the text editor after editing, click on the layer thumbnail and then click on the Move tool icon.

Step Twelve

Drag the signature to the final desired location.

Step Thirteen - Optional

You can reduce the opacity of the text layer by clicking on the down-arrow and moving the slider or by a click-and-drag on the word "Opacity" and moving the cursor to the left.

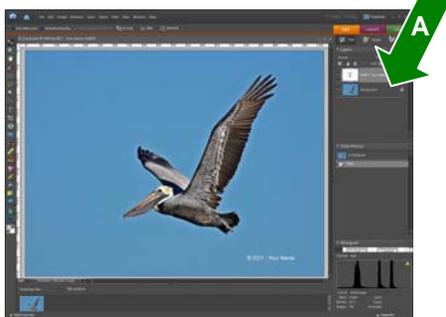


Figure Eight

Step Fourteen

Save the image. Save the image in your preferred file format such as a flattened JPEG or a PSD file retaining the layers but with a different name in either case.

Note that **if** you want the ability, in the future, to turn the signature display on and off, or edit the text wording, you must save the image as a .PSD Photoshop file with layers. The layer eyeball can be clicked to toggle the signature display on and off.