

## Create A Personalized Greetings Card

As photographers we often like to show others our work, particularly when there is an opportunity for it to be appreciated. One very good way to show them is by means of a greetings card; for Christmas, a birthday or, possibly, an anniversary.

Creating a greetings card is really quite easy. Follow the technique described below and then, if you wish, adapt it to your own style or method.

Once a suitable image has been identified, the first thing to do is to decide what size card to make: A5, A6 or perhaps a letterbox 21 x 10.5cm. Then a decision needs to be made on whether the image is to be borderless or inset with a white border.

This tutorial will demonstrate making an A6 borderless card in both landscape and portrait formats.

### Landscape Format

In Photoshop (or Elements) open the (landscape format) image to be used.

Crop the image to 14.8cm x 10.5cm (exactly  $\frac{1}{4}$  of A4 dimensions) as follows.

Select the Crop tool from the Toolbox and set the dimensions in the Options Bar, which is located just beneath the Menu Bar.



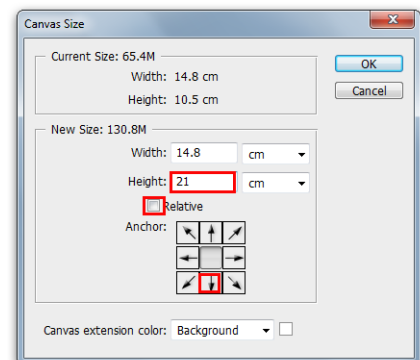
*Note: If an image is to be inset within the page, crop the image to the required size and then set the Canvas Size to 14.8cm x 10.5cm. Ensure that White is the background colour unless a coloured background is required.*

The front of the card is now basically ready.

To create the back of the card, the Canvas Size needs to be doubled in height.

Ensure the background colour is set to White.

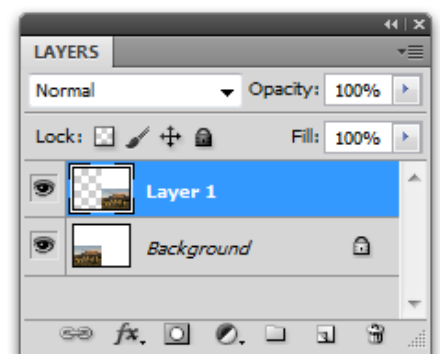
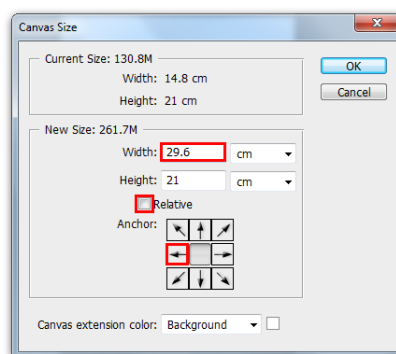
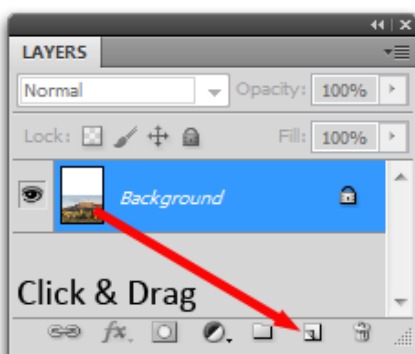
On the Menu Bar select: Image > Canvas Size. Ensure 'Relative' is unchecked, set the Height to 21cm and then select the Down Arrow Anchor, as shown here. This will ensure that the canvas will be extended above the image.



The image size is now 21cm x 14.8cm and the card is basically

created. However, it is recommended that the card is now duplicated to make an A4 image and 2 cards can be printed simultaneously.

With the Layers palette open, either drag the Background thumbnail to the 'Create a new layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers palette (below left) or type shortcut Ctrl + J. Next, from the Menu Bar select Image > Canvas Size, increase the canvas width to 29.6cm and click the left Anchor point (below centre). Click OK. Next, select the Move tool (shortcut v), hold down the shift key and drag the image to the right until the cards are side by side (below right). Holding the shift key will ensure the image moves only in a horizontal direction and does not drift vertically out of alignment.



The card can now be flattened (optional): Layer > Flatten Image.

If you wish to add text to the back side of the card, select the Text tool and type the text you want. Align the text in position on the back of one of the cards then flip the text, as follows:

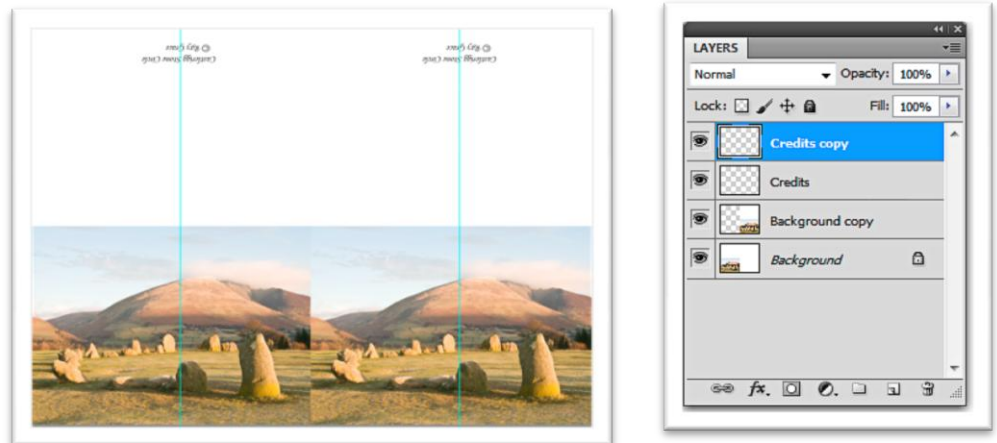
Ensure the text layer is active. From the Menu bar select Edit > Transform > Rotate 180°.

Duplicate the text layer (Ctrl + J), hold the shift key down and drag the duplicate layer to the other card.

The image can now be flattened but leaving the text layers intact will ensure that they are editable in the future if changes are required.

To print the card, the image should be rotated 90° to portrait format or the printer driver should be set to 'landscape' mode. Additionally, the Borderless option must be selected to ensure the cards are printed right to the edges.

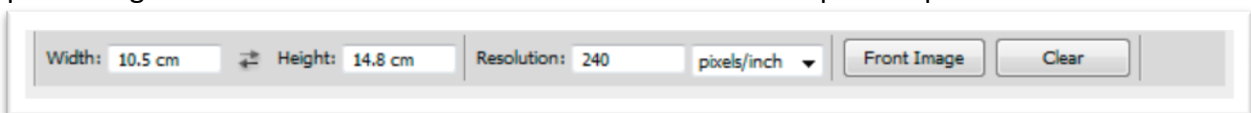
The completed card and associated Layers palette are shown here. The image has not been flattened in order to allow for future amendments. If the image is left in this orientation and the printer driver set to Landscape mode you should note that the image prints from left to right.



### **Portrait Format**

In Photoshop (or Elements) open the (portrait format) image to be used.

Crop the image to 10.5cm x 14.8cm. Set the dimensions in the Crop tool Options bar.



Note: If the image is to be inset within the card, crop to the required size then set the Canvas Size to 10.5cm x 14.8cm.

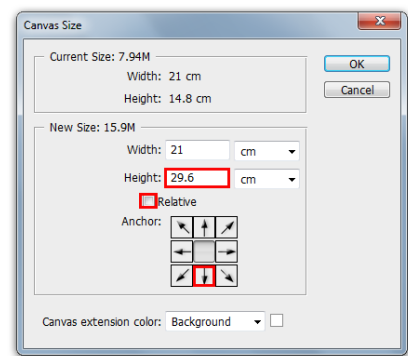
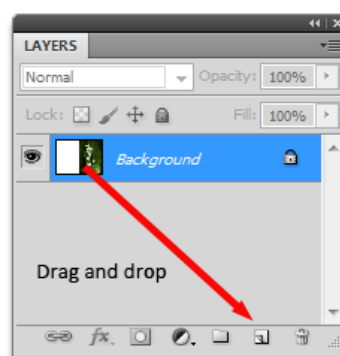
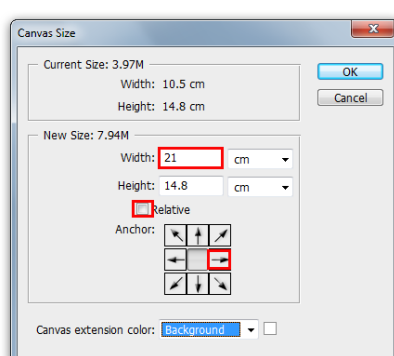
Ensure the Background colour is White. Increase the Canvas Size. Ensure 'Relative' is unchecked, set the Width to 21cm and click the Right Anchor arrow. (Below Left)

The card is now basically created. However, it is recommended that this be doubled to print 2 cards on an A4 page.

Duplicate the layer: either drag and drop the Background thumbnail to the 'Create a new layer' icon at the bottom of the layers palette (below centre) or type Ctrl + J.

Increase the canvas to double the height.

Ensure 'Relative' is unchecked, set the height to 29.6cm and click the Down Anchor point (below right).



With the upper layer active, hold down the shift key and drag the image upwards to fill the blank space. If you wish to add text to the back side of the card, select the Text tool and type the text you want. Align this to the required position on the back of one of the cards.

Duplicate the text layer: Drag and drop it onto the 'Create a new layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers Palette or type Ctrl + J. Drag the new layer to position it on the other card.

To print the card, ensure that Borderless is set in the printer driver.

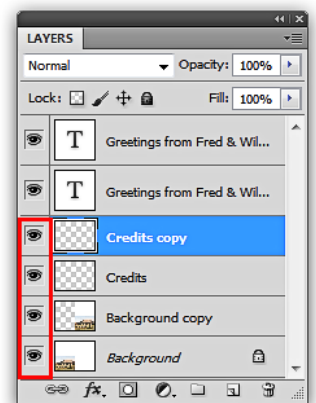
### **Additional Text**

The text on the reverse of the card is likely to be just credits; perhaps your name and possible a description of the picture on the front. However, it is likely that you might want a message to go inside the card or perhaps put some text on the front of the card. For these elements a little extra creativity can often make a significant difference.

**Text Inside The Card.** . Probably the best way to incorporate text on the inside of your card is to create that text on new layers on top of the image of your card rather than create a new document. Positioning the text on the inside of the card will depend on which orientation the card is; landscape or portrait.

**Landscape Format.** Type the required text in the white area above the picture on one of the cards. Rotate the text 180° (as was done with any text used on the back of the card), position it, duplicate that text layer and drag it to position on the other card. Disable all layers other than the newly created text layers (click the eye icons on the left of the thumbnails in the Layers palette) then print the document again ensuring the paper is flipped vertically before it is loaded into the printer.

The completed card and associated Layers palette are shown here. To print the inside of the card the layers bounded by the red box (shown on the right) should be disabled. Click the eye icon on the left of each layer. Note the guides to mark the centre of each card for text placement.



**Portrait Format.** It is easier to add text to portrait format cards as this is quite simply added in normal, upright orientation but this time the text should be positioned on the right-hand side, on top of the picture area. The image prints from top to bottom so, for portrait format cards the paper should be rotated horizontally before it is put back into the printer. As with the landscape format details above, all layers other than the newly created text layers should be disabled.

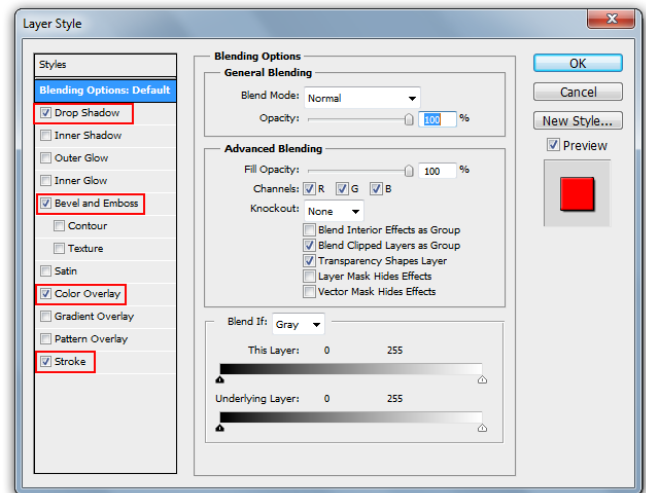
**Text on Front.** Putting text on the front of the card (additional greetings, the location the picture was taken etc.) can add significant embellishment and is an opportunity to add a touch of creativity; particularly if layer effects are applied. There is a whole host of embellishments that can be added to a layer using layer effects, some of which work particularly well with text.

It is important to note that layer effects only work on layers. That means they will not work on the *Background* so this will need to be converted to a layer. Double-click the *Background* thumbnail and, in the resulting dialog box apply a name of your choice or accept the option given and click OK.

Select the Type tool, select a suitable font and font colour then type the message on the front of the card.

With the Type layer active, click the fx icon at the bottom of the Layers palette – 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left. From the resulting dialog box select the top option: Blending options. The dialog box shown below will appear. Note the options down the left hand side. Click one and have a play with the settings till you get what is wanted.

The text below was created using the styles bounded in red.



The complete card is shown on the right with all layers visible.

Remember, when printing the card front and back, the inside text layers should be disabled and when printing the inside of the card the outer layers should be disabled.

### **Media Considerations**

To ensure the card stands correctly, a reasonably thick and stiff inkjet paper should be used. One recommendation would be Fotospeed's Platinum Matt. This is a bright white flat matt art paper with a smooth surface. Although it is no heavier than other good quality art papers, it is more calendared and therefore considerably stiffer than other inkjet art media.

A single-sided inkjet paper (like Platinum Matt) will be sufficient for normal requirements. The reverse side of matt inkjet media is capable of rendering text perfectly well without the need for a photographic inkjet surface. Resin-coated inkjet papers (lustre, satin, gloss etc.) are not suitable for printing on the reverse side. If a photo quality image is required for the inside of the card then double-sided media will be necessary. In this instance Fotospeed's Matt Duo is recommended as a good option. It is not as heavy as the Platinum Matt but it is a flat matt, smooth surface with an ink receiving surface on both sides. The Matt Duo paper has recently been upgraded and it is now slightly thicker than previous versions.

### **Folding Your Card**

An embossing stylus (shown below) is recommended as the best tool for folding the greetings card. The tool shown is double-ended with a different sized ball on each end for differing card thicknesses. Single ended tools are also available. This tool will ensure a straight consistent groove is marked in the card enabling accurate folding. A special jig for holding the card with grooves in it is available from hobby shops (and Ebay) but a good straight edge will be sufficient to guide the tool. The tools should be available from any good art or hobby shop for about £3.

