Perfectly Personal Word Art
Big Letter Mask Base – Photoshop Elements Transcript
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There are so many different kinds of elements that can be considered word art. Up to this point in the class we've covered more traditional paper pieces, but now for the remainder of this class, we're going to look at creating word art with a more artistic flair.

The first kind of word art we are going to focus on is creating big letter masks. These masks can be used for so many different things. You can clip photos to them, Or you can clip papers to them and use them as titles or instead of titles, you can use them as decorative accents. Another thing you can do is use them as an anchor for our main cluster or photo. In this lesson we're going to learn how to create the basic form of the big letter mask and in the following lessons we'll cover how to add to this basic mask to make it more artistic in nature. So let's jump on over to Photoshop elements and get started creating.

So here I am in Photoshop elements. I've already created a new document that is seven inches wide by five inches high at 300 pixels per inch. With a white background, press the letter D to reset the color chips to the default of black over white. Now before we get started making the mask, you're going to need to find the right font. In order for this technique to work, you're going to need to use a very bold font that is large and somewhat blocky in nature. I've decided to use the League Spartan font, which is a free font. You can find it at the font squirrel website. If you need help with downloading and installing that font, please see the manual for this lesson for more details on how to do that.

Now get the horizontal type tool. And in the tool options set the font to League Spartan bold, set the size to 175 points, set the alignment to center, and set the tracking to minus 110. Now on the document, click once and type the word that you wish to use. I'm using the word Sadie in all caps, but you can definitely use a different word from me. And then once you're done, click the checkmark to commit. Now, before we move on to the rest of the tutorial, let's talk a little bit about font size, caps or no caps, and tracking.

The settings I just used worked for this word and this font specifically. But if you're using a different font or even just a different word from me, you might need to adjust the font size, the tracking and whether or not you use caps. You see, because this is a mask, I would normally want all of the letters touching each other without any space in between. But for my word Sadie in all caps, I had to leave just the

smallest space between the capital I and the capital E in order for the I to even be discernible. Without leaving that space, the letter I disappears.

Also, your mask may work better for some words and less great for others. It's all in the combination of letters. If you don't have an issue with your word like I do with my letter I disappearing, then feel free to reduce your tracking a little bit more so the letters are closer together. Just make sure that each letter is still discernible. One last note about caps or no caps. Let me quickly show you one thing that can happen with overlapping letters. It's a bit of a pet peeve of mine when this happens. I'm not sure why it happens, but I'm guessing it has something to do with how the designer of the font puts the font together. Either way, you'll want to be watching for this because it won't work very well for the technique we're doing here. So using the same League Spartan font, I'm going to shift click below my word and type the same word Sadie, but in all lowercase letters.

As you can see where the E overlaps the I, instead of it being black on black, it's now showing the outline of the overlap with white. I'm not sure why this font only does this with the lowercase letters, but it does. However, be aware that some fonts do this for all of the letters. If the font you're using does this, change to a different font. Okay, let's get rid of this layer and get on with the tutorial.

So now get the move tool. And then press control A in windows or command A on a Mac to select all. Then in the tool options, click on the align vertical centers icon and the align horizontal centers icon and then press control D in windows or command D on a Mac to de-select. Now your basic big letter mask is ready to be saved. Let's go back to the slides and quickly cover our folder structure and some finishing thoughts before we move on to the next lesson.

So here is the folder structure we've been using. In your custom word art folder, create a new folder called big letter masks. In that folder, save this file as artistic letter mask base dot PSD. In future lessons we will be creating PNG files. But for now we need this base file as a PSD. Now remember, if the word or font you're trying to use isn't giving you the results you want, don't get frustrated. Try a different font or a different word. Play around with the tracking. The font size, caps or no caps, et cetera. Just make sure the letters are bold and easily readable. I know this lesson was pretty simple, but the fun part is just ahead. In the next few lessons, we're going to look at a few different ways we can take this simple type layer and make it more artistic in nature for using as a mask in our digital projects. I can't wait to see you there. This is Jenifer Juris with perfectly personal word art.