

FLAMING HOT FIRE TEXT

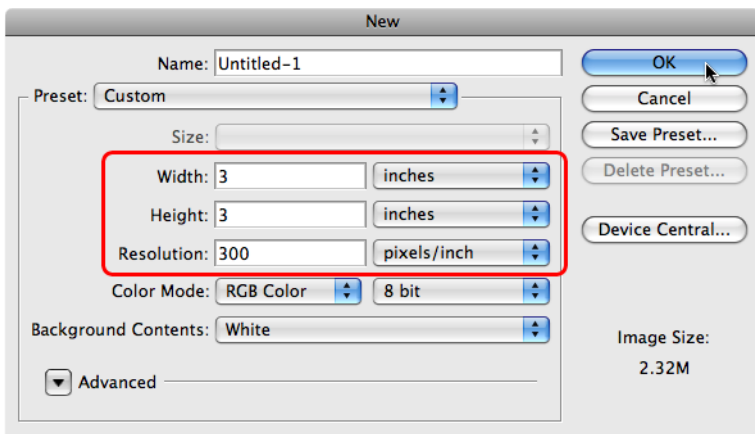
In this Photoshop text effects tutorial, we're going to learn how to create a fire text effect, engulfing our letters in burning hot flames. We'll be using Photoshop's powerful **Liquify filter** for most of the work on the flames themselves, but we'll also be taking a look at the **Wind filter**, using **adjustment layers** to colorize the flames, **layer styles** for adding color to our text, **layer masks** for blending the flames with the letters, and more! Here's the result we'll be working towards:



The final "fire text" effect.

Let's get started!

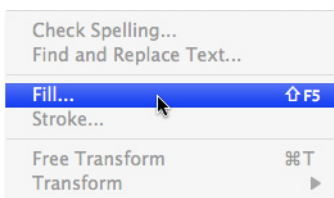
Step 1: Create A New Blank Photoshop Document



Create a new Photoshop document using the New Document dialog box.

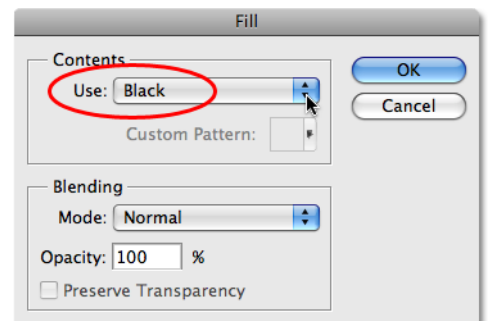
Let's begin by creating a new blank Photoshop document. Go up to the **File** menu at the top of the screen and choose **New**. Or, for a faster way to create a new document, use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+N** (Win) / **Command+N** (Mac). Either way brings up Photoshop's **New Document** dialog box. Enter in the dimensions you need for your effect. For this tutorial, I'm going to enter **3 inches** for my **Width**, **3 inches** again for my **Height**, and for the **Resolution** value, I'll enter **300 pixels/inch**. When you're done, click **OK** to exit out of the dialog box. Your new document will appear on your screen:

Step 2: Fill The New Document With Black



Since our flaming text probably won't look very impressive against a white background, let's fill our new document with black. For that, we'll use Photoshop's **Fill** command. Go up to the **Edit** menu at the top of the screen and choose **Fill**, or press **Shift+F5** to select the Fill command with the keyboard shortcut:

Go to Edit > Fill.



When the Fill dialog box appears, choose **Black** for the **Contents** at the top of the dialog box, which tells Photoshop that we want to use black as our fill color:

Choose Black at the top of the Fill dialog box.



When you're done, click **OK** in the top right corner of the dialog box to exit out of it. Your document will now be filled with solid black:

The background of the document is now filled with black.

Step 3: Select The Type Tool



We'll need some text to work with, and for that, we'll need Photoshop's **Type Tool**. Select it from the Tools palette, or press the letter **T** on your keyboard to select it with the shortcut:

Select the Type Tool.

Step 4: Choose A Font

With the Type Tool selected, you'll see that the **Options Bar** at the top of the screen has changed to show options specifically for the Type Tool. Choose whichever font you'd like to use for the effect. This fire effect tends to work best with serif fonts, so I'm going to choose **Times New Roman Bold**. Don't worry about the size of the font for now:



Choose a font from the Options Bar.

Step 5: Set Your Text Color To White



We'll use white as our initial text color, even though we'll be adding more colors later on. To quickly set your text color to white, press the letter **D** on your keyboard, which resets Photoshop's **Foreground and Background colors** to their defaults, making your Foreground color **black** and your Background color **white**, as we can see by looking at the Foreground and Background **color swatches** near the bottom of the Tools palette. The Foreground color swatch is the one in the top left. The Background color swatch is on the bottom right:

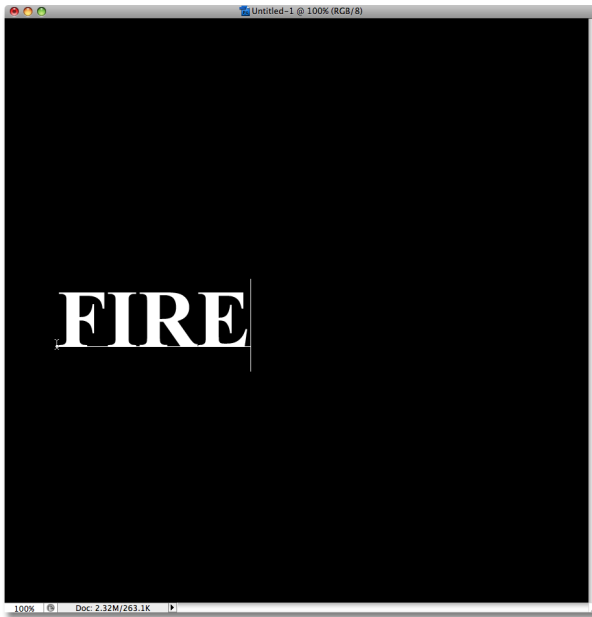
The Foreground and Background color swatches in the Tools palette.



The text color and Foreground color are one in the same in Photoshop. Changing one also changes the other, which means that in order to change our text color to white, all we need to do is change the Foreground color to white. At the moment, our Background color is set to white, with our Foreground color set to black, exactly the opposite of what we need. To swap them, making white the Foreground color, simply press the letter **X** on your keyboard. If we look at the two color swatches once again in the Tools palette, we can see that our Foreground color is now set to white:

Press "X" to swap the Foreground and Background colors.

Step 6: Add Your Text



With the Type Tool selected, a font chosen and your Foreground (text) color set to white, click inside your document and add your text. I'm going to type the word "FIRE", all in capital letters:

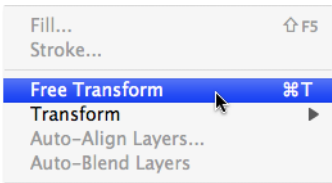
Add your text to the document.

When you're done, click on the **checkmark** in the Options Bar to accept the text and exit out of text editing mode:



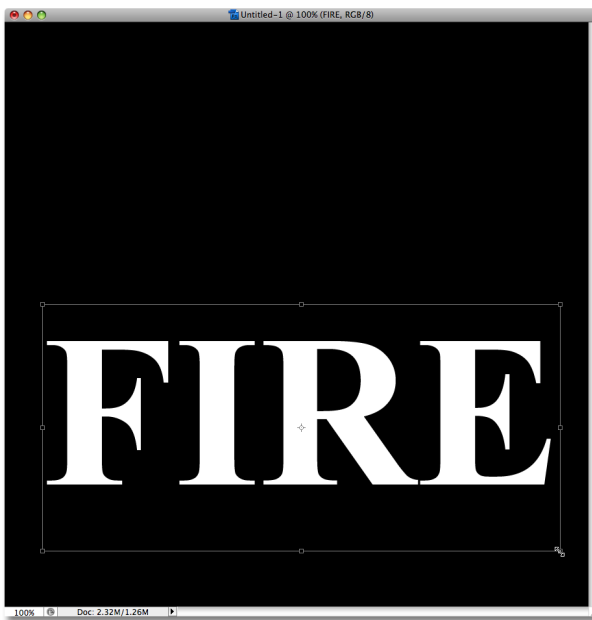
Click on the checkmark in the Options Bar to accept the text.

Step 7: Resize And Move The Text If Needed With Free Transform



My text is a little too small at the moment, so I'm going to resize it using Photoshop's **Free Transform** command, which I can also use to move the text. Go up to the **Edit** menu at the top of the screen and choose **Free Transform**, or press **Ctrl+T** (Win) / **Command+T** (Mac) to access it with the keyboard shortcut:

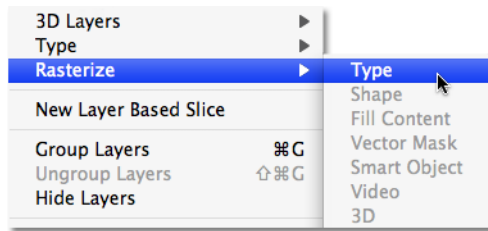
Go to Edit > Free Transform.



You'll see the Free Transform box and handles appear around the text in the document. To resize the text, hold down your **Shift** key, which will maintain the aspect ratio of the text as you resize it, then click on any of the corner handles (the little squares) and drag it inward or outward depending on whether you need to make the text smaller or larger. To move the text, click anywhere inside the Free Transform box and drag the text to a new location. I'm going to make my text larger and move it into the bottom center of my document, which is where you'll want to move your text as well. Press **Enter** (Win) / **Return** (Mac) when you're done to accept the transformation and exit out of the Free Transform command:

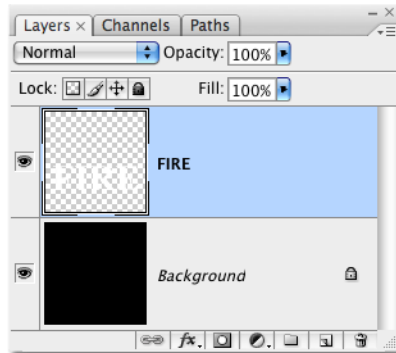
Resizing and moving the text with Free Transform.

Step 8: Rasterize The Text



Go to Layer > Rasterize > Type

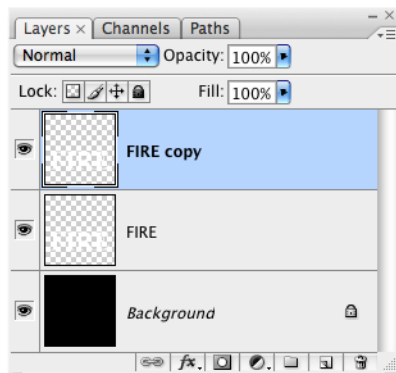
At this point, we've done all we can with our text while it's still text. To continue on with the next steps in our fire effect, we'll need to convert our text into **pixels**, which in Photoshop is known as **rasterizing** the text. Make sure you have everything spelled correctly before you proceed, since the text will no longer be editable once we've rasterized it. To convert the text into pixels, go up to the **Layer** menu at the top of the screen, choose **Rasterize**, and then choose **Type**:



Nothing will seem to have happened to the text in the document, but if we look in the Layers palette, we can see that the text layer, sitting directly above the Background layer, has been converted into a normal, pixel-based layer. We're now essentially working with an image that looks like text rather than actual text, although I'll still refer to it as the text layer to keep things simple as we go along:

The text layer in the Layers palette has been converted into a normal layer.

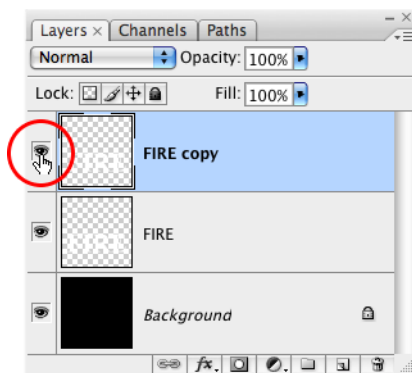
Step 9: Duplicate The Text Layer



To create the flames effect, we'll need to work on a copy of our text layer, which means we need to duplicate the layer. The easiest way to duplicate a layer in Photoshop is with a keyboard shortcut. First, make sure you have the text layer selected in the Layers palette (selected layers are highlighted in blue), then press **Ctrl+J** (Win) / **Command+J** (Mac). Once again, nothing will seem to have happened in the document itself, but we can see in the Layers palette that we now have a copy of the text layer sitting above the original (the copy has the word "copy" added to its name):

The Layers palette showing a copy of the text layer directly above the original.

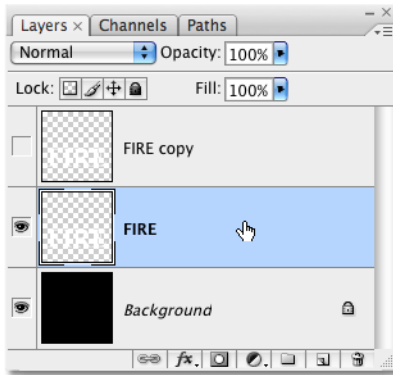
Step 10: Turn The Copy Off For Now



We've duplicated the text layer, but we're actually going to create the main fire effect on the original text layer, saving the copy for later. In fact, we don't even need to see the copy for the moment, so click on the small **eyeball** icon (officially known as the **layer visibility** icon) on the far left of the layer in the Layers palette. The eyeball will disappear from the Layers palette, and the layer itself will disappear in the document:

Hide the text copy layer by clicking on the eyeball icon on the left of the layer.

Step 11: Select The Original Text Layer

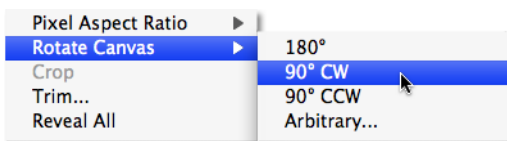


With the copy now hidden from view, click on the original text layer in the Layers palette to select it:

We're now ready to begin creating the fire text effect itself, which we'll do next!

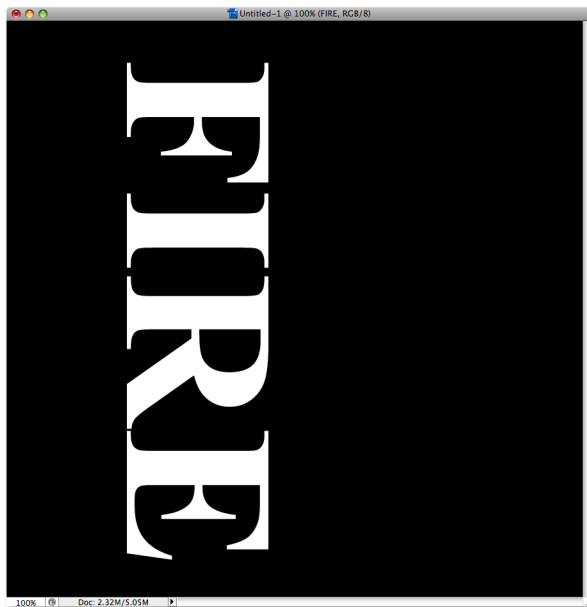
Click on the original text layer to select it and make it active.

Step 12: Rotate The Canvas 90° Clockwise



Go to Image > Rotate Canvas > 90° CW.

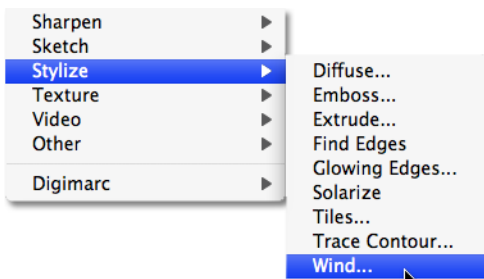
To create the flames for our fire text effect, we'll be using a few of Photoshop's filters, and the first one we'll be using - the **Wind** filter - only works from left to right (or right to left), which means that in order to use it, we'll need to rotate our image. Go up to the **Image** menu at the top of the screen, choose **Rotate Canvas**, and then choose **90° CW** (clockwise):



This rotates the image so that the text is now appearing along the left of the document:

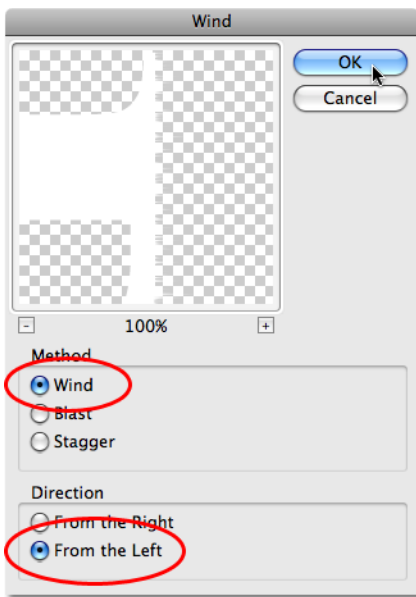
The text now appears along the left of the document.

Step 13: Apply The Wind Filter



We're ready to apply the Wind filter. Go up to the **Filter** menu at the top of the screen, choose **Stylize**, and then choose **Wind**:

Go to Filter > Stylize > Wind.



This brings up the Wind filter dialog box, which consists of a preview area in the top left and a few options below it. The options are divided into two sections, Method and Direction. Make sure that **Wind** is selected for the **Method**, then down at the bottom, set the **Direction** to **From the Left**:

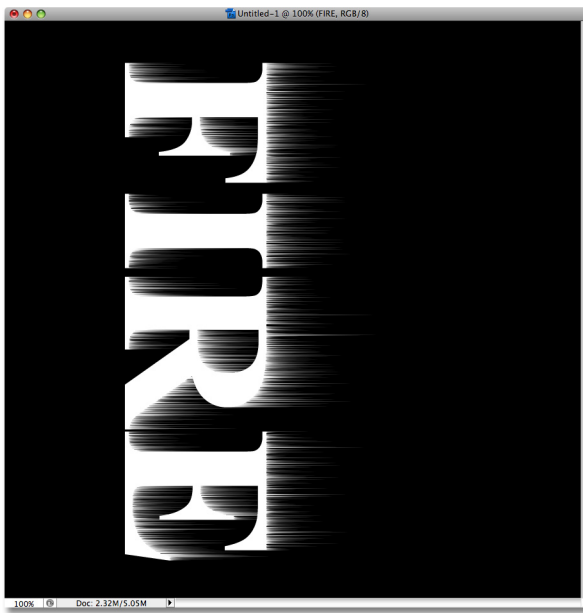
Set the Method to "Wind" and the Direction to "From the Left".

Click **OK** when you're done to exit out of the dialog box and apply the Wind filter. They're a little hard to make out in the screenshot, but you'll see small streaks appearing from the letters extending out towards the right:



Small streaks appear from the letters after applying the Wind filter.

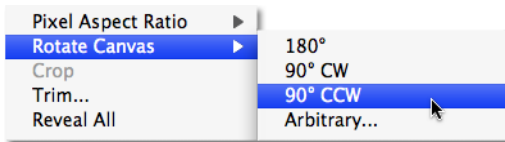
Step 14: Re-Apply The Wind Filter A Couple More Times



The streaks are too small and subtle after applying the Wind filter once, so let's re-apply it a couple of times. To quickly re-apply the last filter you used, simply press **Ctrl+F** (Win) / **Command+F** (Mac). Each time you press the keyboard shortcut, you'll apply the filter again. I'm going to press the keyboard shortcut twice to apply the Wind filter two more times to the text. This makes the streaks much longer and more pronounced:

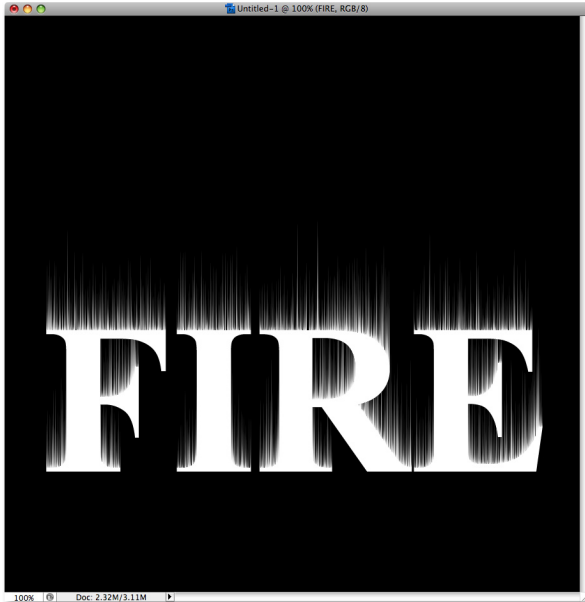
The streaks are now much more visible after applying the Wind filter three more times.

Step 15: Rotate The Canvas 90° Counterclockwise



Go to Image > Rotate Canvas > 90° CCW.

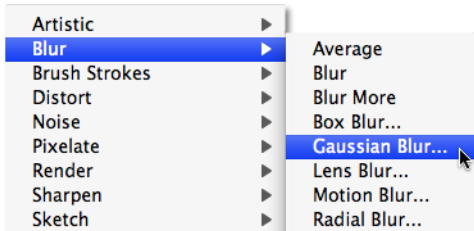
We're done with the Wind filter, so let's rotate our image back to the way it was originally. Go back up to the **Image** menu, choose **Rotate Canvas** once again, and this time, choose **90° CCW** (counterclockwise):



This rotates the image back to its original position:

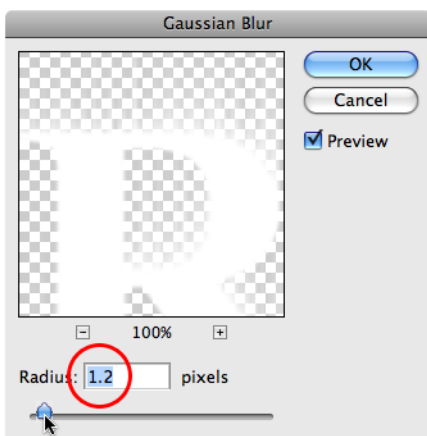
The image is now back to its original position.

Step 16: Apply The Gaussian Blur Filter



We need to soften the streaks up a little bit by applying a small amount of blurring to them. For that, we'll use Photoshop's **Gaussian Blur** filter. Go up to the **Filter** menu at the top of the screen, choose **Blur**, and then choose **Gaussian Blur**:

Go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur.



This brings up the Gaussian Blur dialog box. All we want to add is a small amount of blurring, so I'm going to enter a **Radius** value of about **1.2 pixels** down at the bottom of the dialog box:

Enter a Radius value of around 1.5 pixels in the Gaussian Blur dialog box.



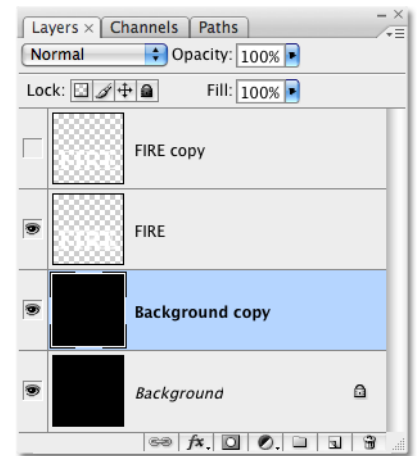
Click **OK** when you're done to exit out of the dialog box and Photoshop applies the blurring effect. Your streaks should now have a softer look to them:

The white streaks now appear with a soft blur.

Step 17: Duplicate The Background Layer

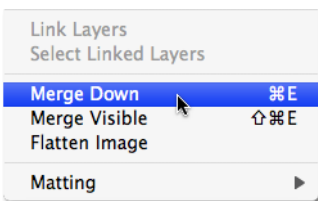
Click on the Background layer in the Layers palette to select it. Then use the same keyboard shortcut we used earlier, **Ctrl+J** (Win) / **Command+J** (Mac), to duplicate the Background layer. You'll see a copy of the Background layer, named "Background copy", appear above the original in the Layers palette:

The Layers palette showing a copy of the Background layer sitting above the original.



Step 18: Merge The Text Layer With The Background Copy Layer

If you look at the text layer in the Layers palette, you'll see a **preview thumbnail** to the left of the layer's name which shows us a small preview of the contents of the layer. Notice how most of the thumbnail is filled with a checkerboard pattern? That checkerboard pattern is how Photoshop represents transparency, which means that our text is currently surrounded by nothing but transparency. We need to fill all that transparent area with black. To do that, we'll merge the text layer with the copy of the Background layer we just created.

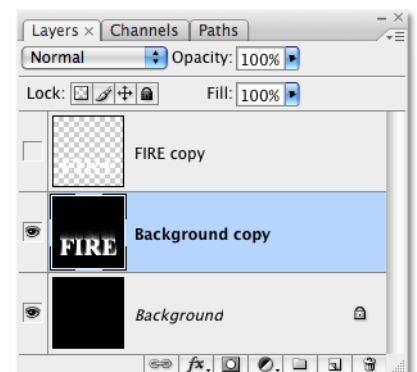


To merge the two layers together, first click on the text layer in the Layers palette to select it. Then go up to the **Layer** menu at the top of the screen and choose **Merge Down** near the bottom of the list of options:

Go to Layer > Merge Down.

This merges the text layer with the Background copy layer directly below it:

The text layer and the Background copy layer are now merged into one.



Step 19: Rename The Merged Layer “Flames”



Unfortunately our merged layer, which contains our text, has kept the name “Background copy”. It’s not a huge problem but it could make things confusing for us, so let’s rename the layer. **Double-click** directly on the layer’s name and rename it “Flames”:

Rename the merged layer “Flames”.

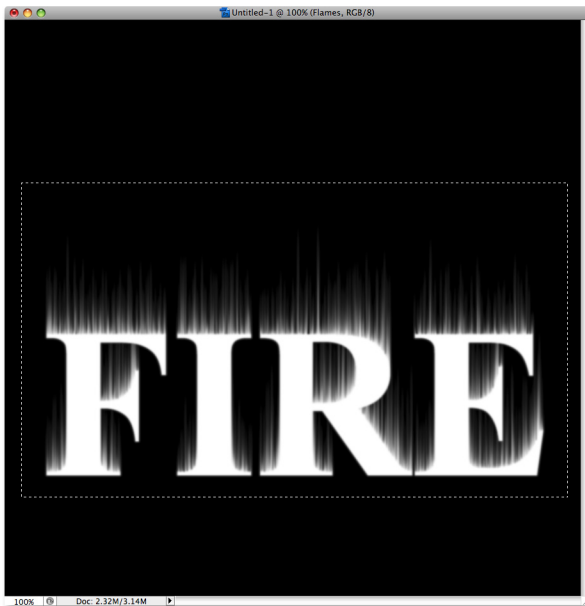
Step 20: Draw A Rectangular Selection Around The Text

In a moment, we’re going to bring our image into Photoshop’s **Liquify** filter, a very powerful (and fun) filter used for warping and twisting pixels. Unfortunately, its power comes at a price. Depending on the size and complexity of the image you’re working on, the Liquify filter can, on occasion, slow your computer down to a crawl, especially if you’re working on an older system. In our case here, we’re not working with anything terribly complex so we shouldn’t run into any problems, but one way to limit how much work Photoshop has to do is to limit how much of the image actually opens inside the Liquify filter.



So how to we do that? We simply drag a selection around the area that we want to work with! First, we’ll need the **Rectangular Marquee Tool**, so either select it from the Tools palette or press the letter **M** on your keyboard to select it with the shortcut:

Select the Rectangular Marquee Tool.

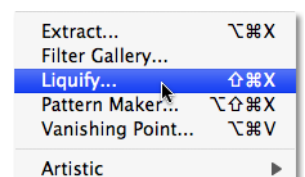


Then, with the Rectangular Marquee Tool selected, simply click and drag a selection around the text, including the white streaks that we created with the Wind filter. Make sure to leave extra room above the text for our flames. Your selection should look something like this:

Drag a rectangular selection around the text, leaving extra room at the top for the flames.

Step 21: Apply The Liquify Filter

With the area that we want to work with selected, go up to the **Filter** menu at the top of the screen and choose **Liquify**:



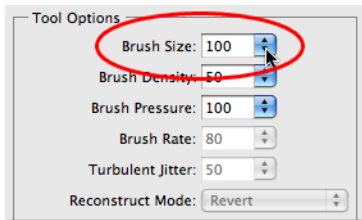
Go to Filter > Liquify.

This brings up Photoshop's massive Liquify filter dialog box, which consists of some tools along the left, a very large preview area in the center, and a lot of potentially confusing options on the right. If you've never used the Liquify filter before, there's no need to panic. For this effect, all we need here is one tool, one option, and the preview area. Everything else, we can safely ignore.



First, select the **Forward Warp Tool** from the very top of the list of tools along the left:

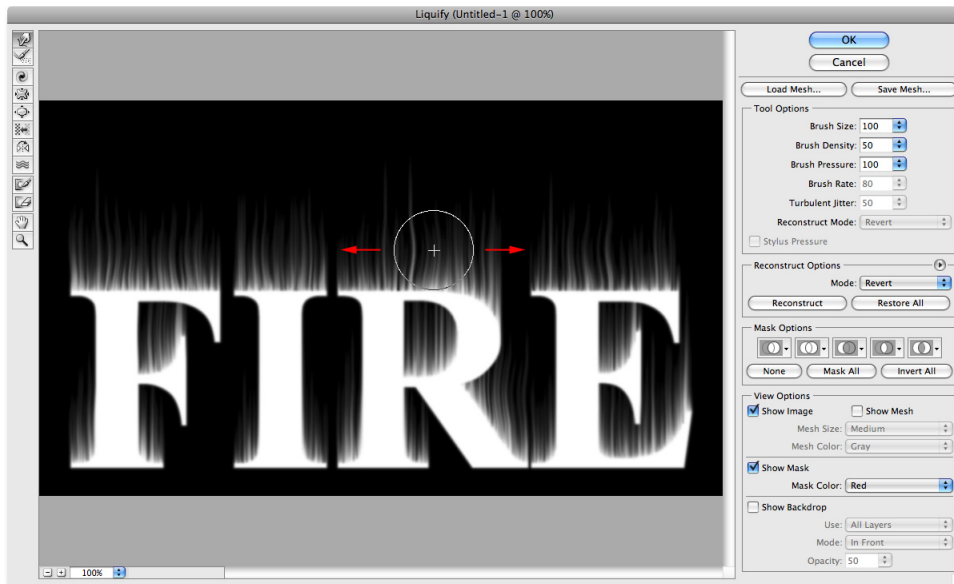
Select the Forward Warp Tool in the top left corner of the dialog box.



Next, over on the right of the dialog box, you'll see a section called **Tool Options**, and the very first option in this section is **Brush Size**. This is where we can change the size of the brush we're using, and it's the only option we need for this effect. Start with a medium size brush. The default brush size of **100** should work fine:

The Brush Size option on the right of the Liquify dialog box.

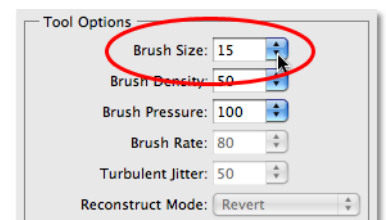
The first thing we'll do is give our white streaks more of a wispy look to them. Click inside the streaks at different spots and drag your mouse a short distance either left or right to gently warp the streaks and give them some subtle, random curves. Just click, drag a short distance and release your mouse button, then click and drag again in a different area. Try not to click inside the letters themselves for now. Just warp and wiggle the streaks. Don't forget to include the streaks in the middle and bottom sections of the letters. When you're done, you should end up with something similar to what I have in the screenshot below:



Click and drag inside the white streaks with the Forward Warp Tool.

Go back over to the Brush Size option on the right of the dialog box and choose a much smaller brush size. I'm going to set mine to around **15**:

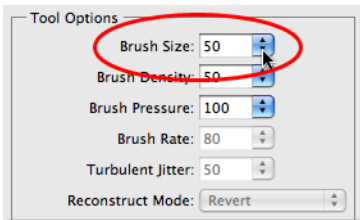
Select a much smaller brush size.



This time, click directly inside the letters and drag your mouse upward to create the shapes of little flames shooting out from them. You can drag straight up for some of the flames, but for others, try to drag on more of an angle to add more variety. Wiggling your mouse a little as you drag upward will also help create more interesting looking flames. If you make a mistake, press **Ctrl+Z** (Win) / **Command+Z** (Mac) to undo your last brush stroke, then continue on. If you need to undo several steps, press **Ctrl+Alt+Z** (Win) / **Command+Option+Z** (Mac) as many times as you need. When you're done with the tops of the letters, do the same thing with the bottom of the letters, as well as any other areas that look like they could use some flames shooting out of them. Don't spend too much time thinking about where your next flame should go, since fire should look random and chaotic, not planned and controlled. You should end up with something like this:



Click inside the letters and drag upward to create small flames shooting out of the letters.



Finally, let's create some larger flames. Go back over to the Brush Size option and choose a larger size brush. I'm going to set my brush size to **50**:

Select a larger brush size.



Once again, click directly inside the letters and drag upward, this time creating larger flames. Just as we did with the smaller flames, try to add some variety by dragging upward at different angles and wiggling your brush to bend and twist the shapes. Again, don't forget about the bottom and middle sections of the letters. When you're done, your final result should look something like this:

Create a few larger flames with the larger size brush.



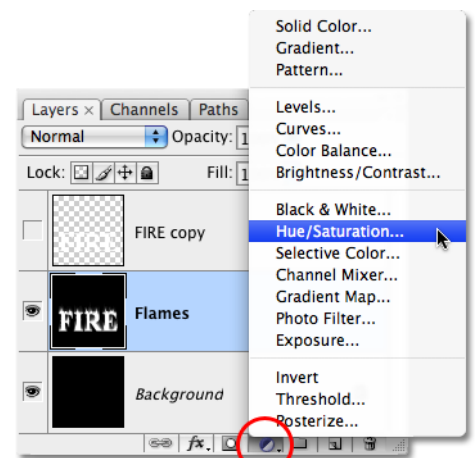
Click **OK** to exit out of the Liquify filter dialog box. There may be a brief pause while Photoshop applies the effect to the document, but when it's done, your text should be engulfed in a blaze of unrealistically white fire:

We'll add some much needed color to our flames next!

Our liquified flame effect.

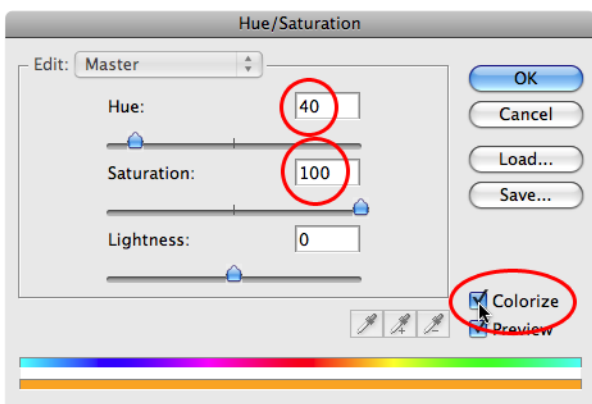
Step 22: Add A Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer

Let's add some color to our flames. For that, we'll use a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Click on the **New Adjustment Layer** icon at the bottom of the Layers palette, then select **Hue/Saturation** from the list that appears:



Select a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer from the bottom of the Layers palette.

This brings up the Hue/Saturation dialog box. First, select the **Colorize** option in the bottom right corner of the dialog box. Then, in the center of the dialog box, set the **Hue** value to around **40** for a warm yellow/orange color, then crank the **Saturation** value all the way up to **100** to really boost the color's intensity:



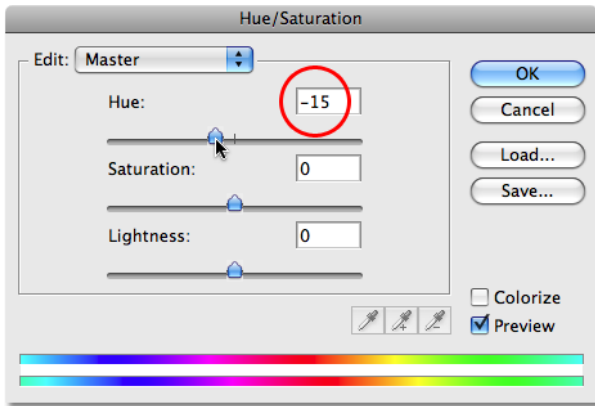
Colorize the flames with a bright yellow/orange color.

Click **OK** to exit out of the Hue/Saturation dialog box. Our flames are starting to look much better, but we're not quite done yet:

The flames now appear warmer with a yellowish orange color.



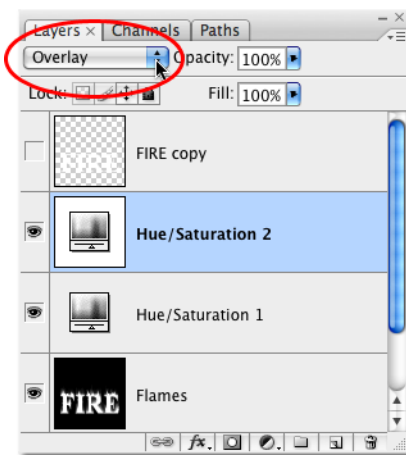
Step 23: Add A Second Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer



We'll add one more color to our flames using a second Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Click once again on the **New Adjustment Layer** icon at the bottom of the Layers palette and select **Hue/Saturation** from the list. This time, don't select the Colorize option. Just set the **Hue** value to around **-15** for a deeper orange color. Click **OK** when you're done to exit out of the dialog box:

Set the Hue value to around -15 in the second Hue/Saturation dialog box.

Step 24: Change The Blend Mode Of The Adjustment Layer To Overlay



Go up to the **Blend Mode** option in the top left corner of the Layers palette (it's the drop-down box that by default is set to "Normal"). Change the blend mode for the second Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to **Overlay**:

Change the blend mode of the second Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to Overlay.

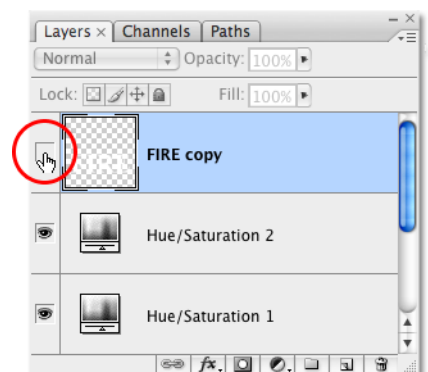
This adds a more realistic color combination to our flames, with the lighter areas keeping the bright yellowish orange color from the first Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and the darker areas now appearing with a deeper, richer shade of orange:



The flames now appear with much more natural colors.

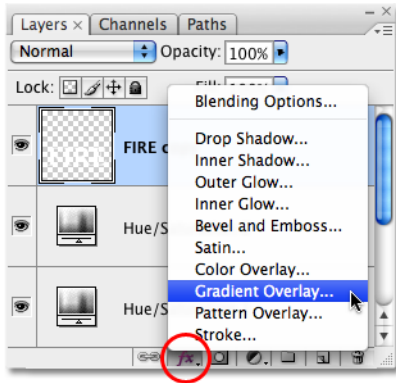
Step 25: Select And Turn On The Text Copy Layer

At this point, we're done with our flames. We'll finish off our effect by working on the text copy layer that we created way back at the beginning of the tutorial. Before we can work on it though, we'll need to turn it back on since it's currently hidden from view. First, click on the text copy layer in the Layers palette to select it. Then click on the **layer visibility** icon (the empty square) on the far left of the layer to turn the layer back on in the document:



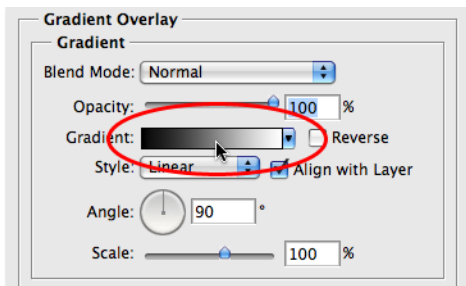
Select the text copy layer, then click on the layer visibility icon.

Step 26: Add A Gradient Overlay Layer Style



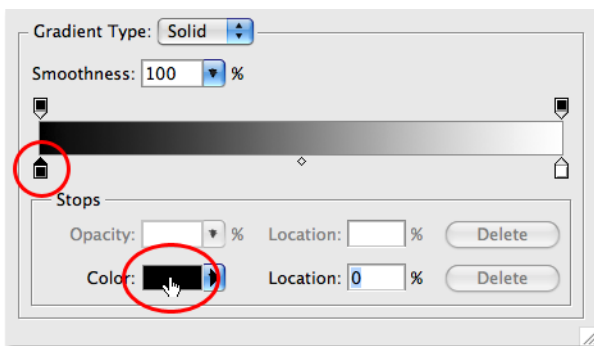
Let's add some color to our text. With the text copy layer now selected and visible, click on the **Layer Styles** icon at the bottom of the Layers palette and choose **Gradient Overlay** from the list that appears:

Click on the Layer Styles icon, then select Gradient Overlay.



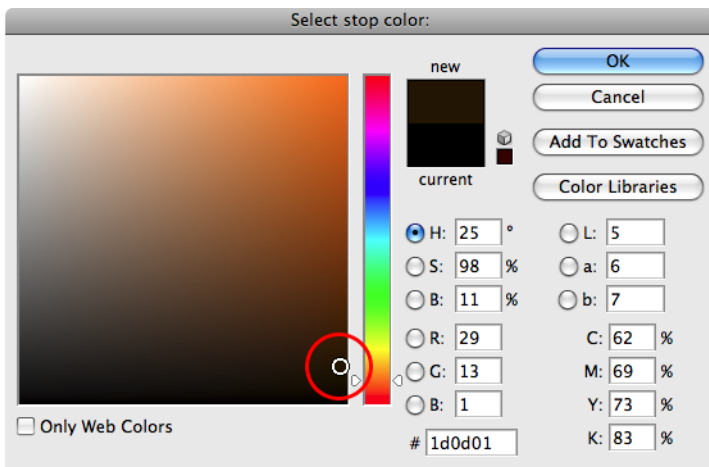
This brings up Photoshop's **Layer Style** dialog box set to the Gradient Overlay options in the middle column. Click on the **gradient preview area** in the center of the options:

Click on the gradient preview area.



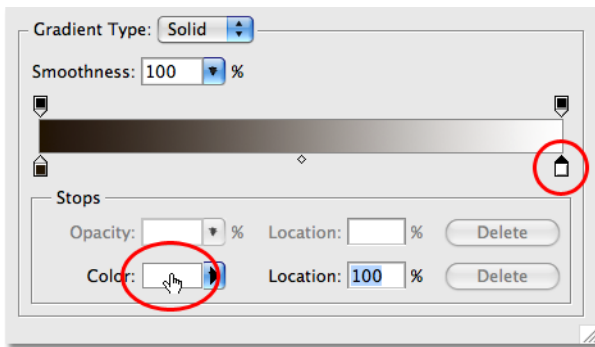
This brings up Photoshop's **Gradient Editor**. In the bottom half of the Gradient Editor is where we can create our own custom gradient. You'll see a thin horizontal bar showing a preview of the current gradient colors, with a small **color stop** directly below it on each end. Let's change the color on the left of the gradient. Click on the color stop on the left to select it, then click on the **color swatch** at the bottom of the dialog box:

Click on the color stop on the left, then click on the color swatch to change its color.



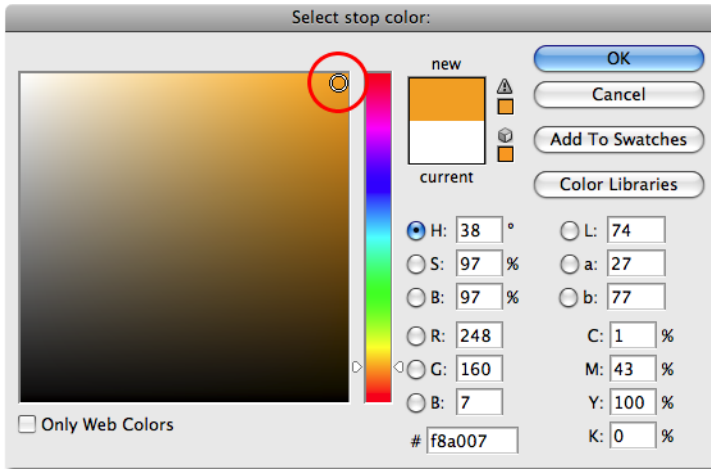
This brings up Photoshop's **Color Picker**. Choose a dark orange/brown color, which will be used for the bottom of our letters, then click **OK** to exit out of the Color Picker:

Choose a dark orange/brown color for the left side of the gradient.



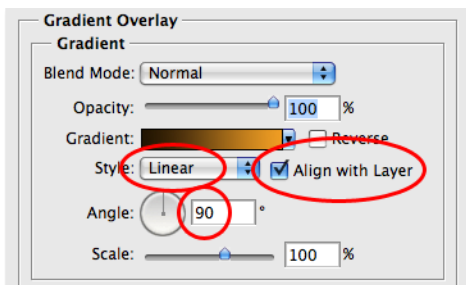
Back in the Gradient Editor, click on the **color stop** below the right side of the gradient preview bar to select it, then click again on the **color swatch**:

Click on the color stop on the right, then click on the color swatch to change its color.



When the Color Picker appears, choose a bright orange color which will appear at the top of our letters. Click **OK** when you're done to exit out of the Color Picker, then click **OK** to exit out of the Gradient Editor since we've now chosen our colors for the gradient:

Choose a bright, saturated orange color for the right side of the gradient.



At this point, the only dialog box open on your screen should be the Layer Style dialog box. You'll see that the gradient preview area is now showing the new colors we selected. Make sure the **Style** option is set to **Linear** and that the **Align with Layer** option is selected. Also, make sure the **Angle** of the gradient is set to **90°**:

Click on the gradient preview area.

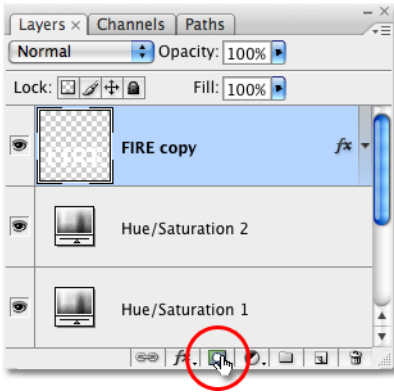
Click **OK** when you're done to exit out of the Layer Style dialog box. Our custom gradient is now applied to our text:



Everything is now looking much more colorful.

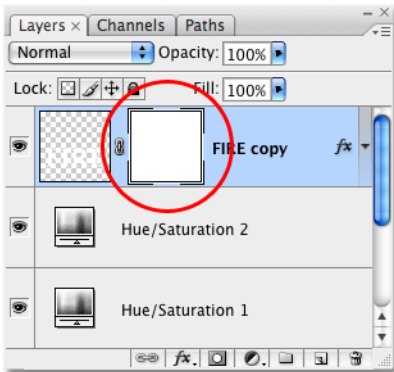
Step 27: Add A Layer Mask To The Text Layer

At the moment, it looks like our text and the flames are two separate things (which of course they are). It looks like the text is sitting in front of our document and the flames are burning away behind it. That's fine if that's the effect you want, but what I want is for it to look more like the letters themselves are on fire, which means we need a way to blend the text and the flames together. The reason it looks like the text and the flames are separate is because we can clearly make out the sharp edges of the letters in front of the flames. Let's finish things off then by removing some of those sharp edges. We'll do that using a **layer mask**.



With the text layer still selected, click on the **Layer Mask** icon at the bottom of the Layers palette:

Click on the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers palette.



This adds a layer mask to the text layer. We can't see it in the document itself, but if we look in the Layers palette, we can see that a **layer mask thumbnail** has appeared on the text layer:

A layer mask thumbnail appears on the text layer.

Step 28: Select The Brush Tool



Grab Photoshop's **Brush Tool** from the Tools palette, or quickly select it by pressing the letter **B** on your keyboard:

Select the Brush Tool.

Step 29: Set The Foreground Color To Black

To remove some of the sharp edges from the text, we'll need to paint over them on the layer mask with black, which means we need to set our **Foreground color** to **black**. Make sure you have the layer mask selected in the Layers palette (the layer mask thumbnail should have a white highlight border around it). Click on it to select it if it doesn't). Press the letter **D** on your keyboard to quickly set your Foreground and Background colors to their defaults. This can be a bit confusing, but



when you have a layer mask selected, the default Foreground and Background colors are actually the *opposite* of what they are normally (see Step 5). Your Foreground color will become white and your Background color will become black (if they're not already). We need to swap them, which we can do by pressing the letter **X** on the keyboard. As we can see in the **color swatches** in the Tools palette, the Foreground color is now set to black:

The Foreground color swatch in the Tools palette showing black as the current color.

Step 30: Paint Away Some Of The Sharp Edges Of The Letters

With the layer mask and Brush Tool selected and black as our Foreground color, use a small, soft edge brush to paint away some of the sharp edges of the letters, especially along the tops but also in different areas along the bottom and in the middle. The easiest way to resize your brush is with the **left and right bracket keys** (the [and] keys to the right of the letter P on the keyboard). Pressing the left bracket key makes the brush smaller each time you press it. The right bracket key makes the brush larger. To soften the brush edges, hold down your **Shift** key and press the **left bracket key** a few times. Each time makes the brush edges softer until you reach 0% hardness. Holding **Shift** and pressing the **right bracket key** makes the brush edges harder. Again, you'll want to use a small, soft edge brush for this. As you paint, the edges will disappear revealing the flames underneath, giving the illusion that the letters themselves are on fire:



Paint away some of the sharp letter edges to reveal the flames underneath.



If you make a mistake, press the letter **X** on your keyboard to swap the Foreground and Background colors, making **white** your Foreground color. Paint with white over the mistake, then press **X** to swap the colors again and continue painting away the edges. Here's what my effect looks like after making my way around each letter. The text itself now looks as if it's on fire after blending the edges with the flames:

The letters themselves now appear to be on fire after blending the flames with the text edges.

If you notice the same problem I'm seeing, where the very bottom of the text appears to be slightly higher than the flames, creating an orange outline around the bottom of the letters, simply press the letter **V** on your keyboard to quickly select the **Move Tool**, then press the **down arrow key** on your keyboard once or twice to nudge the text down until the letters and the flames line up.

And with that, we're done! Here is my final "fire text" effect:



The final "fire text" effect.

And there we have it!

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