EZ Composite - You'll work with Layers which is easier than you might think. Once you've mastered this tutorial, use what you've learned to make Newsletters, Flyers, Post Cards, or even a Poster.

1. The first thing you need to do is determine the finished SIZE of your project. Then choose the images you'd like to include. You'll save time if you make a rough drawing of the layout. For this example, I'm making an 5 x 7 Post Card. You'll also save time by resizing your images to the approximate final size.

2. Click on "File" > "New". This brings up a dialog box where you will need to enter the dimensions and resolution of your finished document. Ideally, the "resolution" you enter should match the resolution of your images but it isn't critical as Photoshop will automatically match resolutions when dragging into a new document. Just make sure your new document is the correct resolution for printing.

3. Now bring your selected photos into Photoshop. Use the File Browser or Go to "file" > "open" and locate all the images you want in your document.

4. Once you have all your images open, click/hold on the title bar of each image and move them close together so you can see all your images. Have the "new document" at the bottom of the stack. You might need to resize the image boxes in order to see everything at the same time. (My new document is the White square below the images).

Fig 1

5. Next, click on the "move" tool and then click *inside* your first image. Then **click, hold and drag** this image onto the "new doc". Don't let go of the mouse until you see at least one of two things..... A black line around the new document and/or a little icon that looks like an arrow with a document attached that has a plus sign in it. On a Mac, I believe it's similar. (Fig 2)


Fig 2

NOTE: If you forgot to reset the "color space" of an image, you'll get a warning dialog box. Assuming that your document is correct, let the images be converted to that space.

TIP: Use Free Transform to resize images as necessary by Pressing Control/Command and "T". Then Press Control/Command 0 (zero) and your document will reduce allowing you to see the complete bounding box.

6. Repeat Step 5 until all your images are on the blank document. Don't worry about their position now. You can change that later. When done, **close all original images** as they are using valuable RAM.

7. Click on the "Move" tool. Go to the top Menu Bar and click on "Auto Select Layer". This will help with positioning.
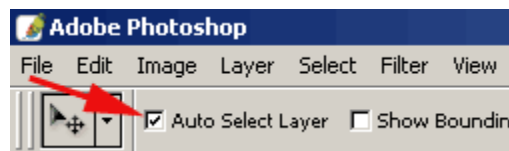
8. Open your "Layers" palette and note that you now have a layer for each of your images and one for the new blank document (background). Click on each image in your document while looking at the Layers Palette. Notice that the corresponding layer becomes "active" (turns blue). This is because we have "Auto Select Layer" checked.

On your Document, use the "Move" tool to click and drag your images into position on the blank background. If you would like an image to "overlap" another image but would it like to go "under" rather than "over" the other image (or vice versa), then go to the Layers palette and click/drag that layer into a position either over or under another layer. (When you drag a layer, you know it's in position when you see a black line between the layers). (Fig 4)
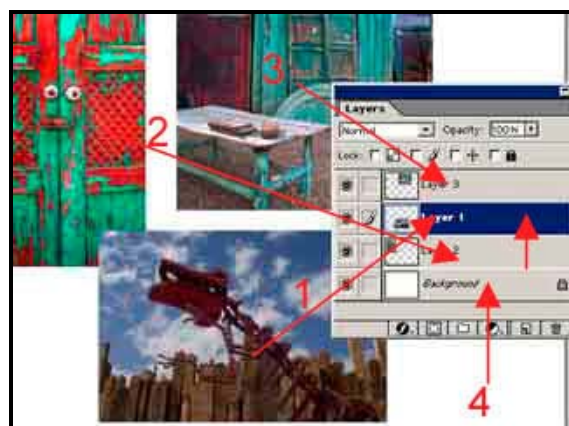

Fig 4

9. Once you have your images arranged, you are ready to add some text to your composite if you would like. Click on the "Text" tool and then click once anywhere in your document. I say "anywhere" because you can easily move the text later, so it doesn't matter where you start. Once you click on the image, look over in the Layers palette and note that a new layer has popped up. Text automatically creates its own layer. (Fig 5)

Type what you'd like. Don't worry about the Font or Size just yet, either. You can change that easily later.

Fig 5

10. When finished typing, Click on the check mark on the Text options bar located at the top of your screen. (Fig 6)

Fig 6

11. EDITING TYPE: First double click on the "T" on the type layer. Next; look over at your document and notice that the text becomes "highlighted" (active). **Once highlighted**, you can change the Font, Size and Position. Here's How:
To reposition text, move your cursor just outside the text until you see a little black arrow with a "four direction" icon. Click/hold right there. Then move your mouse to re-position the text. Let go of the mouse. Leave the text Highlighted.

To edit the Font and Size: Make sure the text is still highlighted. Go up to the top tool bar. Here you will see the Text Options. "Highlight" the field (font box or size box) you want to change by clicking and dragging across field.

When a field is highlighted and the text in the document is highlighted, you can then use the "arrow keys" on your keyboard to scroll through sizes or fonts. This is a very quick way to see and choose fonts and sizes! (Fig 7)
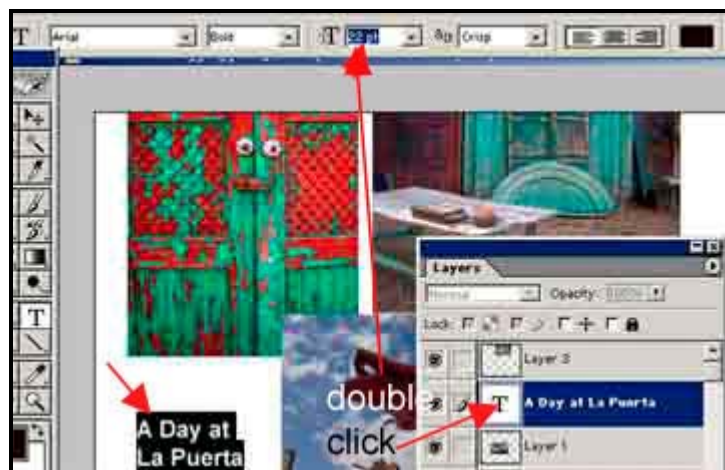

Fig 7

Once you have everything as you'd like it to be, click on the "Check Mark" on the Options Bar up top. As a final step, you can add some borders to your composite such as in my example at the beginning of this tutorial. You could also add a drop shadow or border to each image. I save the image with all the layers. I can then use it as a "template".