Stencil Letters

For this assignment you will begin to learn the basics of how to create a stencil, how to place bridges in weak areas, and how to cut the stencil pieces as complete shapes. This assignment is meant to be an introduction to a larger stencil project.

Before we can cut more complicated stencils we must understand the basics of what makes a strong useable stencil.

Basic Stencil vocabulary -
1. Shapes - A closed area of space. The black shapes will be cut out and open to receive paint.

HELLO

2. Bridge - A thin strip of material that breaks apart larger shapes. Or, a bridge can be used to hold in material to protect negative spaces such as the center of an O shape.

HELLO

For this project your bridges must be a MINIMUM of .2" wide.

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For this assignment you will be using Adobe Photoshop to design a word that has between 3-5 letters, place bridges (minimum .2") and print your letters.

After you have printed your letters you will be tracing / transferring the shapes, leaving the bridges intact, on to a piece of heavyweight glossy paper and then using a razor blade to cut out the shapes. The open areas of the letters will be where you apply paint to create our stencil letters.

Step 1: Open a new document in Photoshop.
The document should be in landscape (wider than it is tall) and
measure 10" x 8" resolution 150 ppi

Step 2: Use the type tool in Adobe Photoshop to type a 3-5 letter word.

Step 3: Press CNTRL + Enter to release the type tool - Change to font to a font that you like. Don't use a font that is too complicated. Keep it rather simple right now.
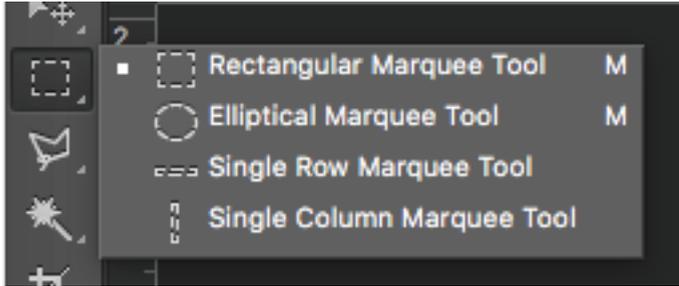
Recommended Font to use -
Arial

Step 4: With the move tool scale your type so it fill most of the 10" x 8" artboard.

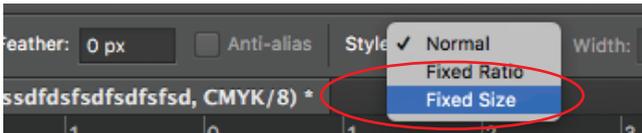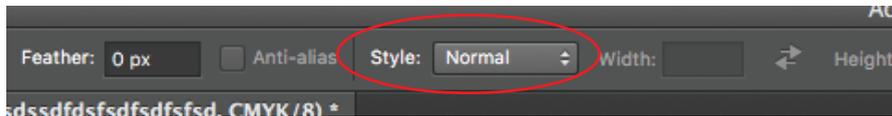Step 5: Open the layers palette > Right click on the type layer > Rasterize

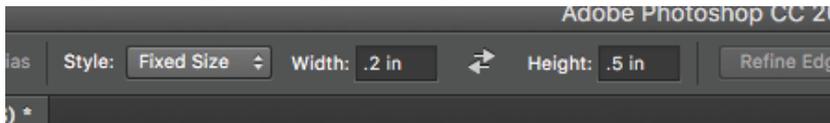This will allow you to edit the type.

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Step 6. Select the Rectangular Marquee Tool.

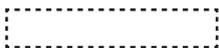At the top of the screen - change the STYLE from Normal to Fixed Size.

Type in .2 in for the width. TIP - your default measurements might be in pixels.
If you type an in. after the number your computer will use inches rather than px.

This will give you a skinny, tall selected area.

If you type in .5 in for the width and .2 in for the height, this will give you a wide, flat selected area.
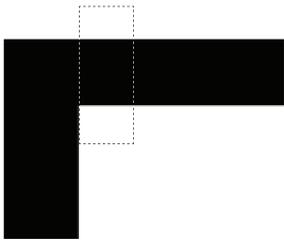
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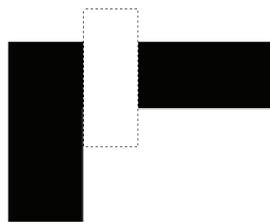Step 7:
Begin placing bridges to...

Break apart large shapes into smaller individual shapes.

Place bridges where there are weak areas that may break or tear when you are cutting your design out.

Place bridges to hold in negative spaces, for example inside the O.

Place a selection marquee at the corner.

Press Backspace or Delete.

CNTRL + D to deselect.

You can use the arrow keys to move your selected area a little Rt. or Lft. > Up or Dwn.

After you have finished creating all your bridges and have checked them.

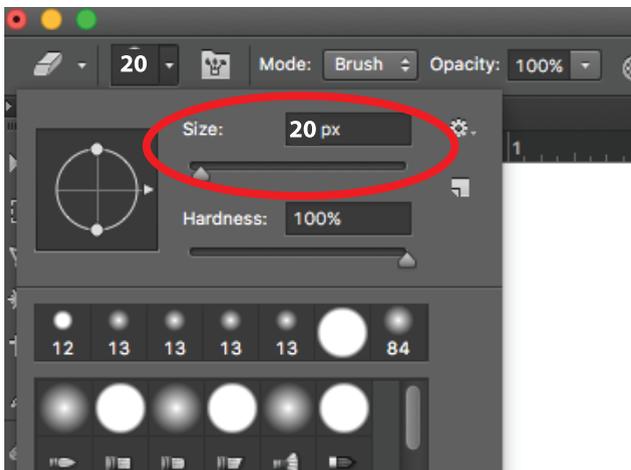**Print our your letter stencil to the black and white printer.**

Stencil Letters

The Eraser Technique

There is another way to do the same process. This technique is a little less accurate, but is a lot faster.

You can use the eraser tool to create your bridges.

After you have created your type and rasterized it you can...

Step 1: Select the eraser tool. In the upper left corner, open the eraser options.

Set the size to 20z px. This is the same as .2 inches

Step 2: Hold down the Shift key to make straight lines. Erase out where you want to place bridges.

After you have finished creating all your bridges and have checked them.
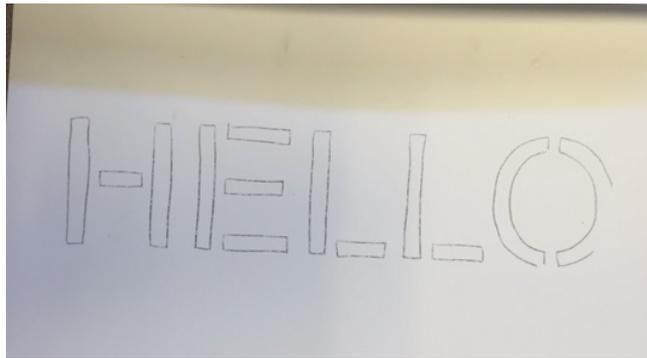
Print our your letter stencil to the black and white printer.

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- Have the instructor check your design to make sure that none of your bridges are missing, or that your design has weak parts.

Step 10: Staple or tape your print to a piece of heavyweight glossy paper.

Step 11: Use a piece of graphite paper / carbon paper to trace your stencil design onto the heavyweight paper.

Step 12: Use an X-acto razor to cut out your shapes.

Step 13: Use paint to apply in to open areas to see what your design looks like.