

photokaboom

Learn Photography

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Privacy, Etc.](#)

[Ask Jim](#) | [SarasotaPhotoLessons.com](#)

Menus

Photoshop Elements > Workflow > First Steps

- [1 - Mac Users](#)
 - [2 - Downloads](#)
 - [3 - Open Photoshop Elements](#)
 - [4 - Geography of the Expert Section](#)
 - [5 - Open a Photograph](#)
 - [6 - Four Locations](#)
 - [7 - Make a Background Copy Layer](#)
 - [8 - Active Layer](#)
 - [9 - Zoom & Fit Screen](#)
 - [10 - Make a Levels Adjustment Layer](#)
 - [11 - Save as a PSD](#)
 - [12 - Save as a JPEG](#)
 - [13 - Close the Photograph](#)
 - [14 - Close Photoshop Elements](#)
-

1 – Mac Users

When you see Ctrl below, press the Command key (Cmd) instead.

2 – Download

You can download the entire tutorial [here](#) (PDF).

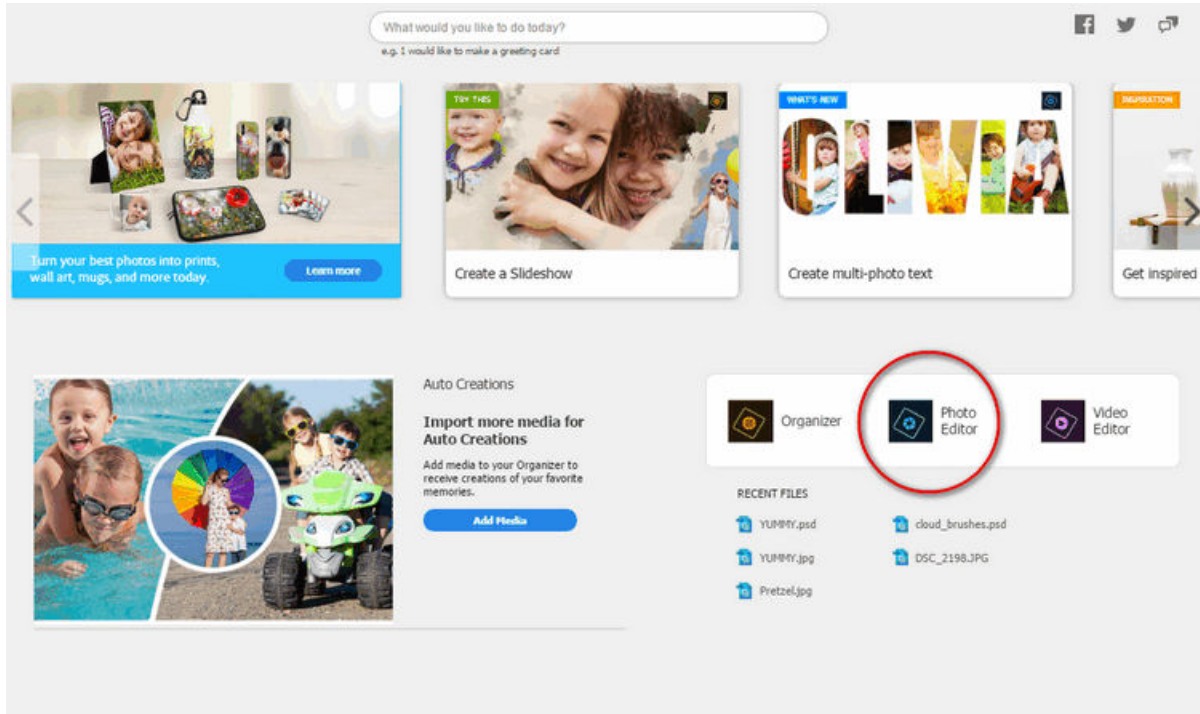
3 – Open Photoshop Elements

Open Photoshop Elements by clicking on its icon on your:

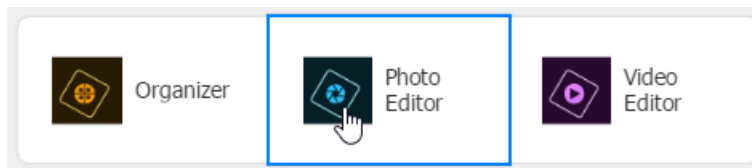
- Desktop.
- Taskbar (Windows).
- Dock (Mac).

The icon for Photoshop Elements is blue.

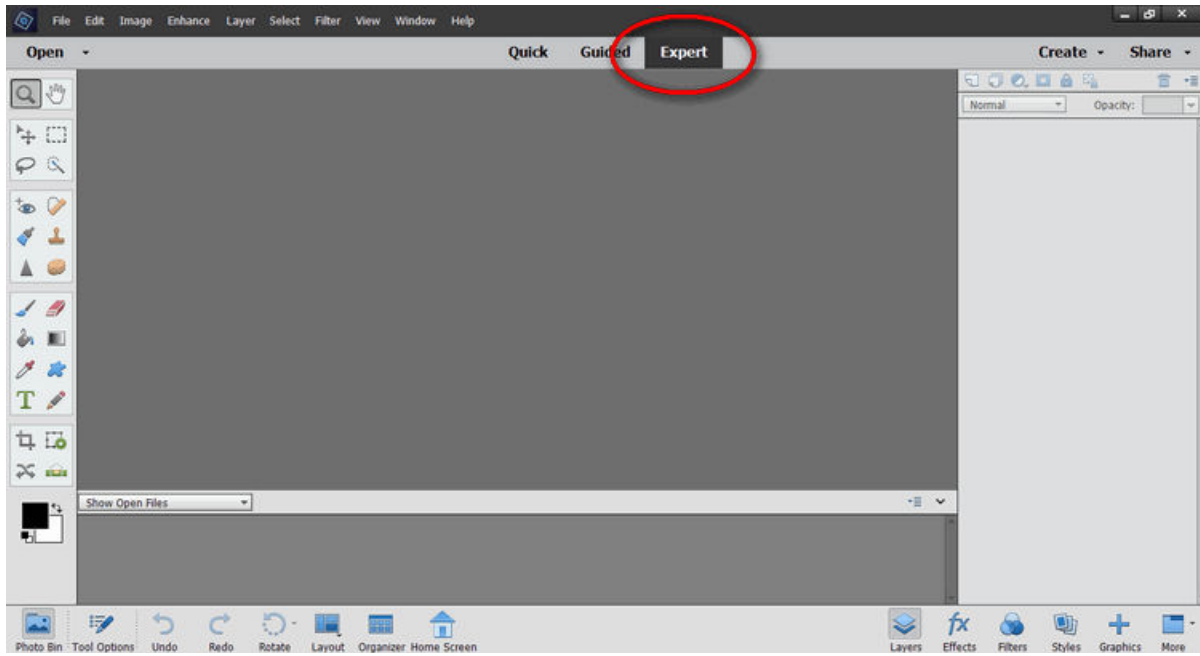
The Home Screen appears.



In the lower-right corner of the Home Screen (**red circle above**), click the Photo Editor icon.



Click the Expert button.

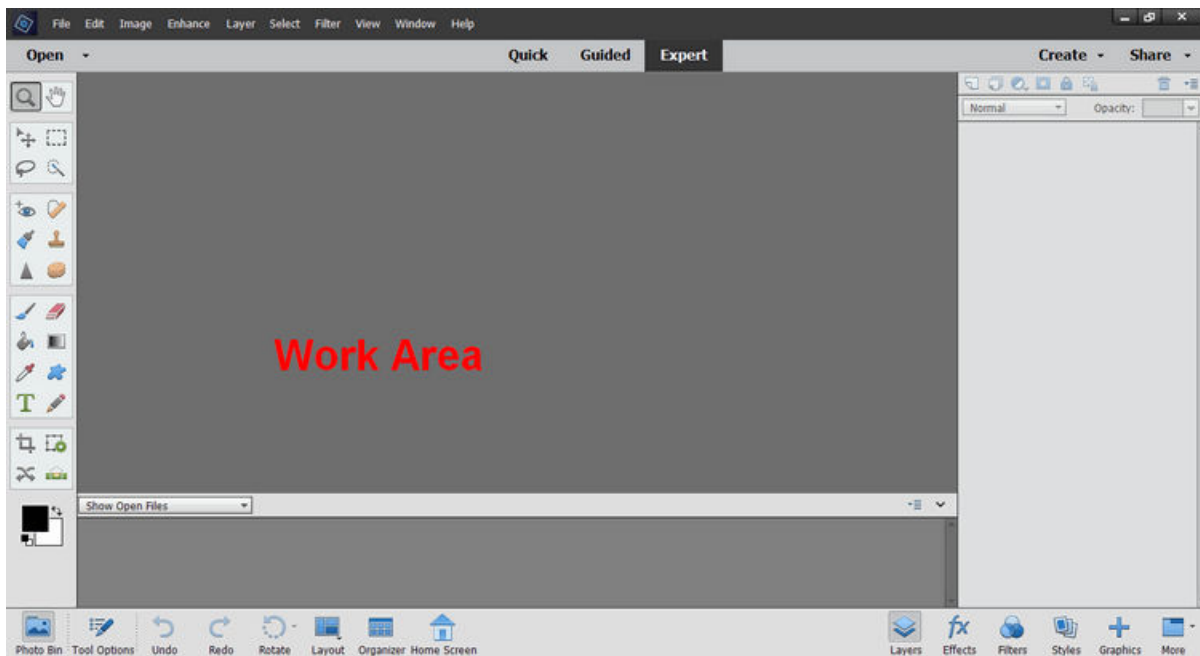


Let's look at what's in the Expert section.

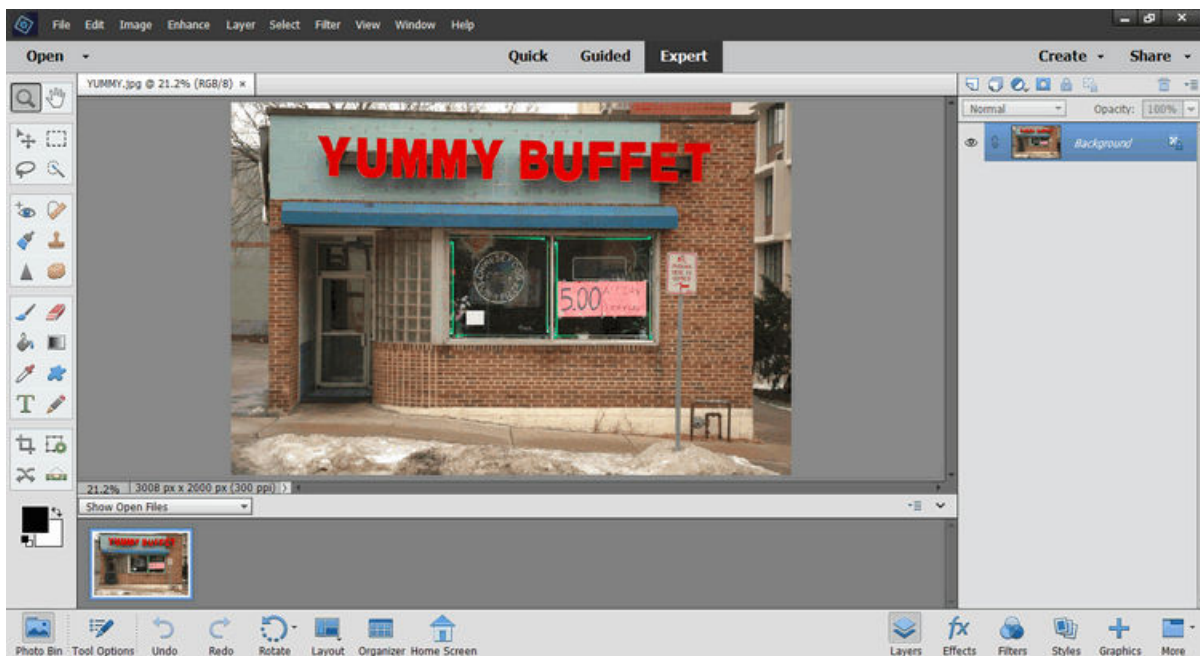
4 – Geography of the Expert Section

Work Area

The work area is in the middle.

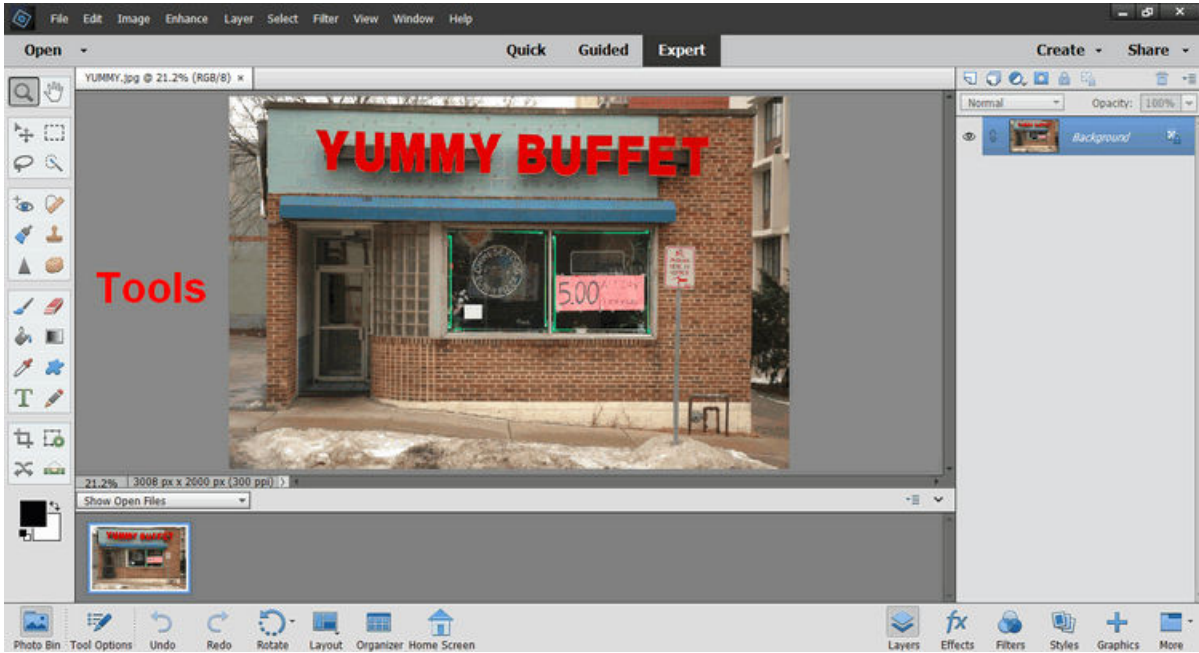


This is where your photographs appear.

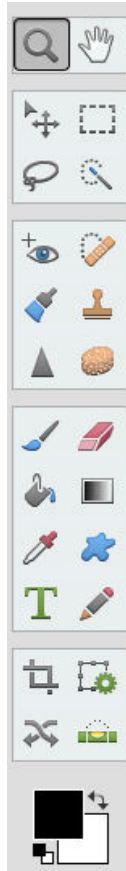


Tools

The editing tools are on the left side.



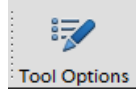
Here they are up close.



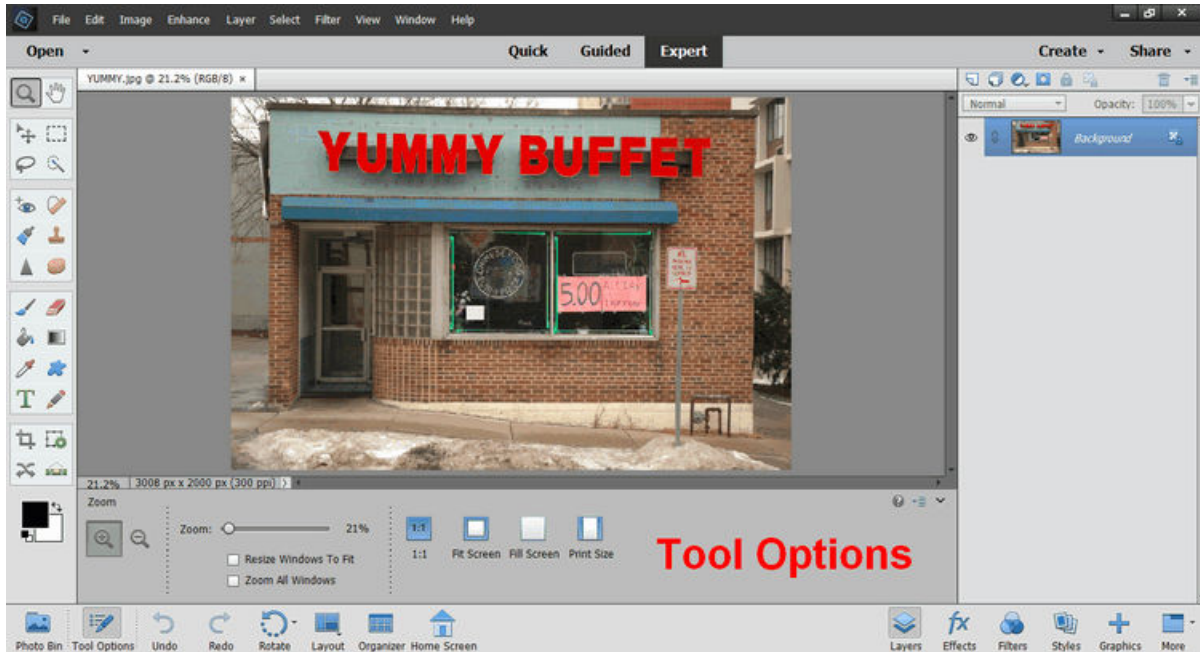
Tool Options

Tools have options.

In the lower-left corner of your screen, click the Tool Options icon.



Tool Options appears at the bottom of your screen.



Layers

In the lower-right corner of your screen, click the Layers icon.



The layers appear on the right side.

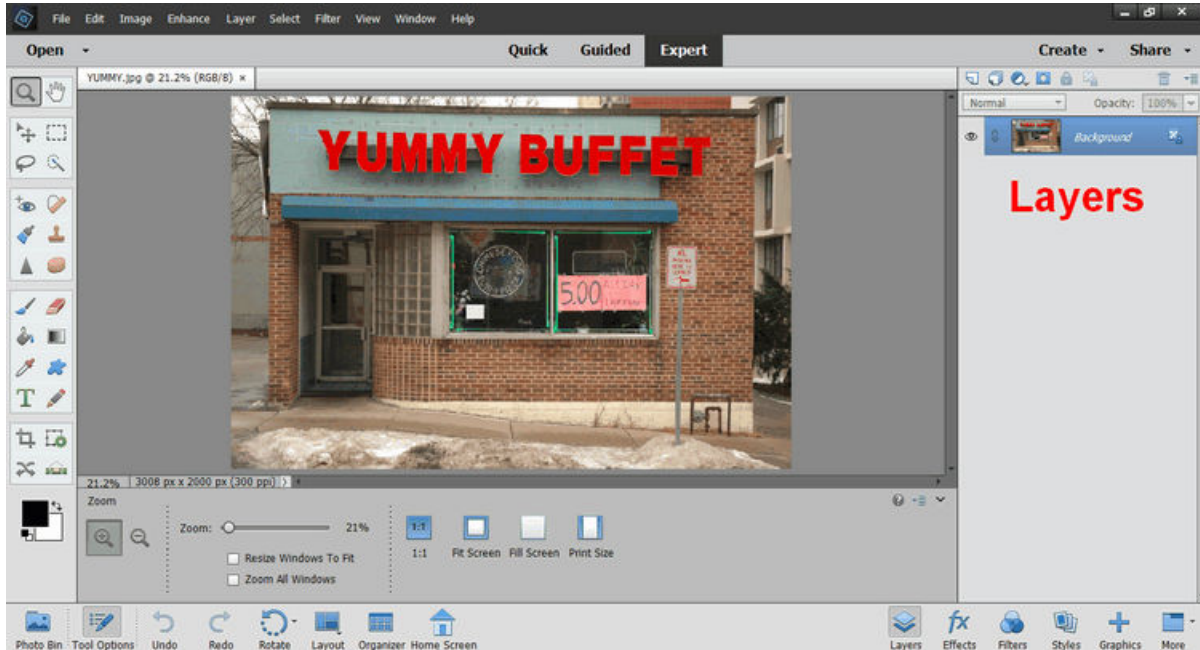
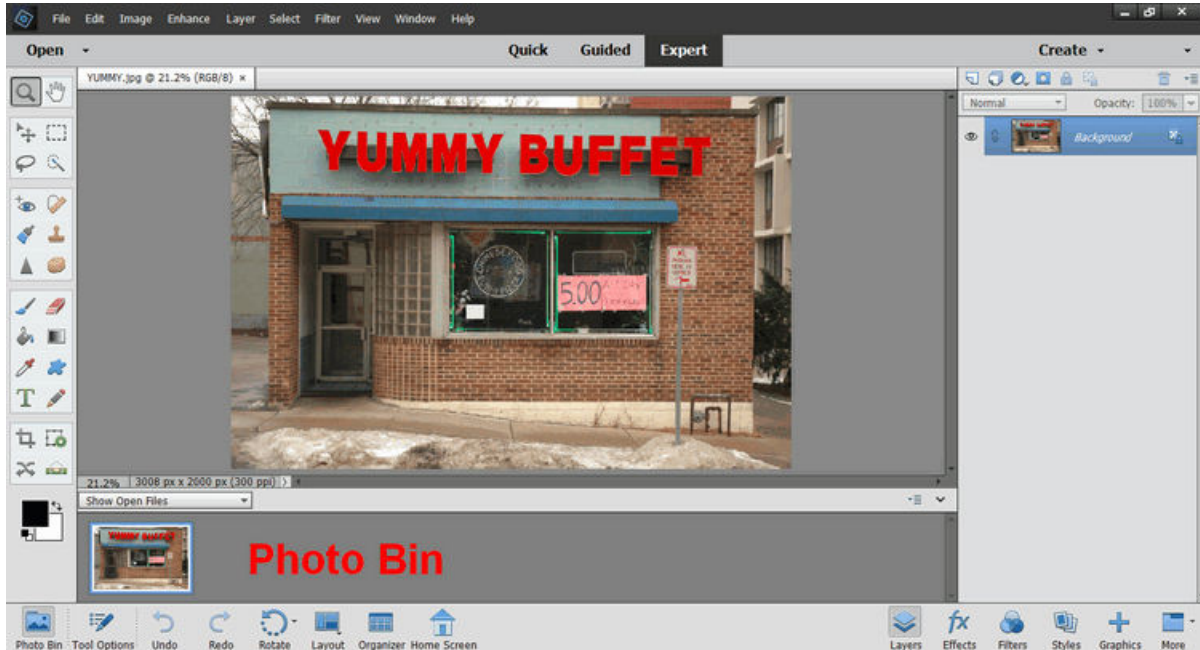


Photo Bin

In the lower-left corner of your screen, click the Photo Bin icon.

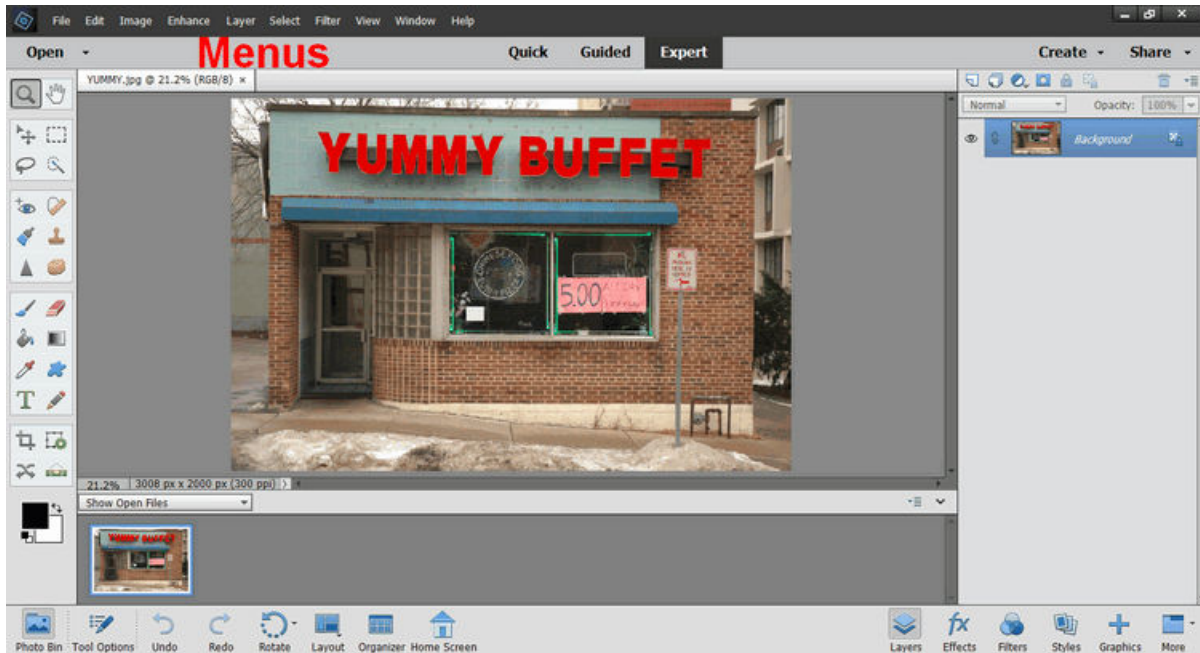


The Photo Bin appears at the bottom of your screen.



Menus

The menus are located at the very top of your screen.



The Windows menus are below.

The Mac menus are almost identical.

File Edit Image Enhance Layer Select Filter View Window Help

Let's open a photograph.

5 – Open a Photograph

If you're taking a class with this writer—you were asked to place photographs in a location based on your computer type.

Click the computer type that you're using in class:

- [Laptop User](#)
- [School Computer User](#)

Laptop Users

If you're using a laptop in class, you placed photographs in a folder on your laptop's Desktop.

Do the following.

- 1) At the top of your screen, go to File > Open.
- 2) Look for Desktop on the left side of the Open window.
- 3) Open Desktop.
- 4) Look for your photograph folder.
- 5) Open your photograph folder.
- 6) Select a photograph.*
- 7) Click Open in the lower-right corner of the Open window.

* If you don't see thumbnails of your photographs, do the following.

Windows

- a) Open the View Menu icon in the upper-right corner of the Open window.
- b) Select *Large icons*.

Mac

- a) At the top of the Open window, open the View menu.
- b) Select *as Icons*.

School Computer User

Or, if you're using a school computer, you placed photographs on a flash drive.

Do the following.

- 1) Plug in your flash drive.
 - 2) At the top of your screen, go to File > Open.
 - 3) Look for your flash drive on the left side of the Open window.
- Typically, the flash-drive name may be No Name or the name of its manufacturer.
- 4) Open your flash drive.
 - 5) Select a photograph.*
 - 6) Click Open in the lower-right corner of the Open window.

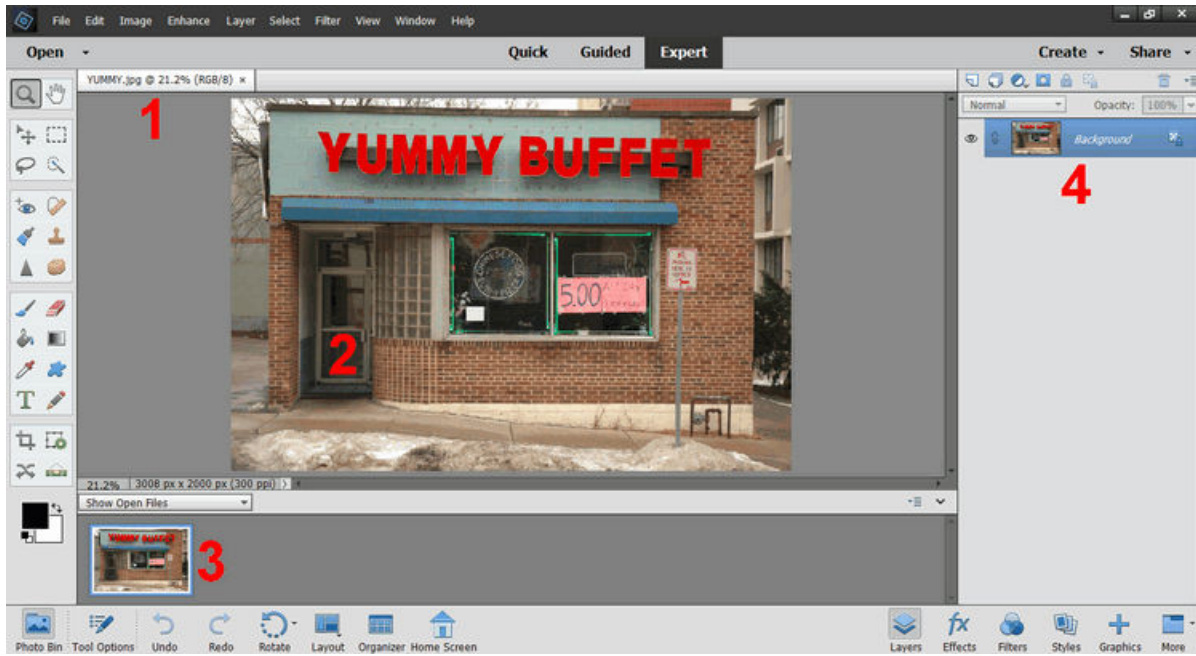
* If you don't see thumbnails of your photographs, do the following.

- a) Open the View Menu icon in the upper-right corner of the Open window.
 - b) Select *Large icons*.
-

6 – Four Locations

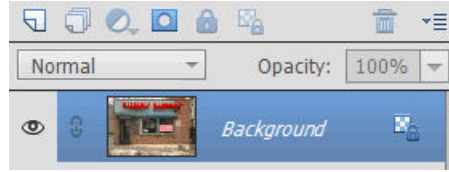
Your photograph appears in four locations:

- Tab (1)
- Work area (2)
- Photo Bin (3)
- Layers stack (4)



7 – Make a Background Copy Layer

The Background layer is in the layers stack.



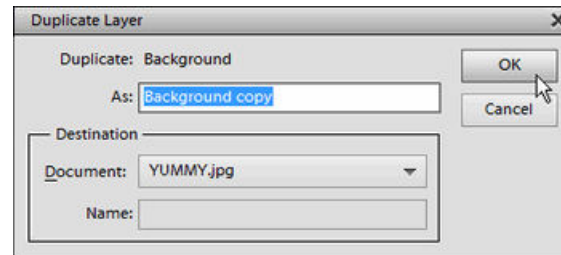
You need to make a copy of the Background layer.

You'll edit the copy—while the Background layer remains untouched.

Do the following.

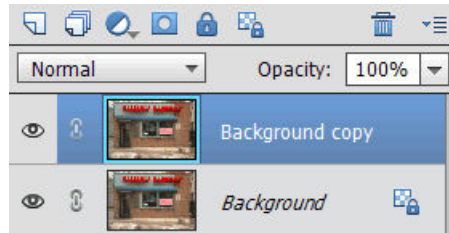
- 1) At the top of your screen, go to Layer > Duplicate Layer.

The Duplicate Layer window appears.



- 2) Click OK in the Duplicate Layer window.

A layer called Background copy appears.



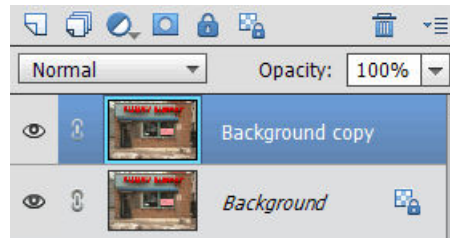
8 – Active Layer

Note how the Background copy layer is a darker blue.

That means the layer is **active**.

If you do something—the something will happen to the active layer.

Click on a layer to make it the active layer.



9 – Zoom & Fit Screen

Bigger & Smaller

You can make your photograph bigger and smaller by using the keyboard shortcuts below.

Bigger	Ctrl +
Smaller	Ctrl –

Fit Screen

To make the photograph fit the screen, press Ctrl + 0 (zero).

More

We'll go over [Navigation Basics](#) in class.

Ooops!

If you inadvertently move the scroll wheel on your mouse, your photograph may become immense or miniscule.

Press Ctrl + 0 (zero).

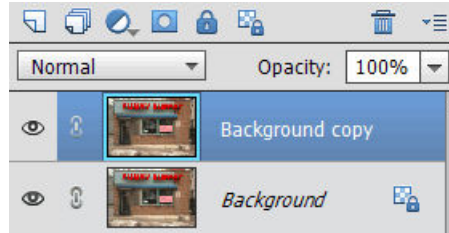
10 – Make a Levels Adjustment Layer

You can adjust the exposure and contrast of your photograph with a Levels adjustment layer.

99% of all photographs are improved by adjusting their levels.

Do the following.

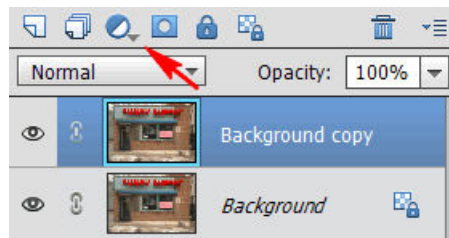
1) If the Background copy layer isn't active (dark blue), click the Background copy layer.



2) Look above the layers.

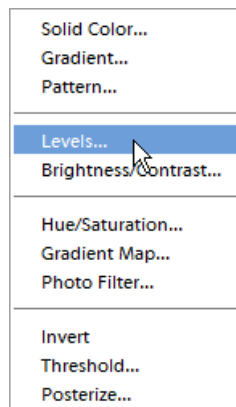
Look for the icon that's a half black, half white, circle.

The icon is called *Create a new fill or adjustment layer*.



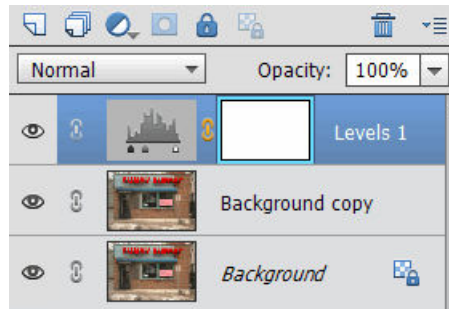
3) Click the icon and select Levels.

Levels is the fourth item on the list.



Two Things Appear

A Levels adjustment layer appears in the layers panel.



A Levels window appears.

Levels Window

Shadows

Click and hold on the Shadows slider (1).
Move it to the right to darken shadows.

Midtones

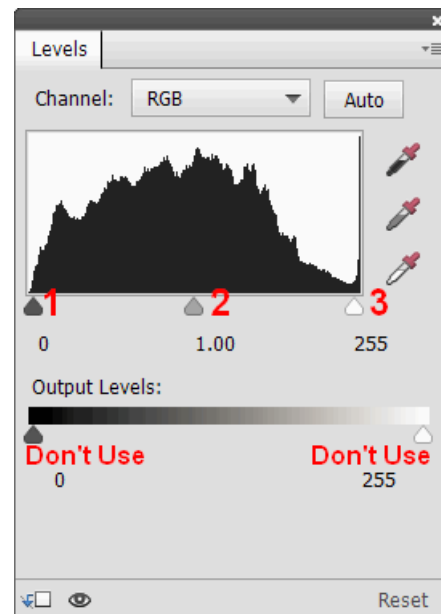
Click and hold on the Midtones slider (2).
Move it to the right to darken the midtones.
Go left to lighten the midtones.

Highlights

Click and hold on the Highlights slider (3).
Move it to the left to brighten highlights.

Caution

Don't use the two Output Levels sliders.



Three Other Things in the Levels Window

Compare

You can turn Levels off by clicking the eye icon in the lower-left corner (1).

Click Levels on and off to get a sense of your improvements to the photograph.

When Levels is off, the eye icon has a diagonal red line through it.



Reset

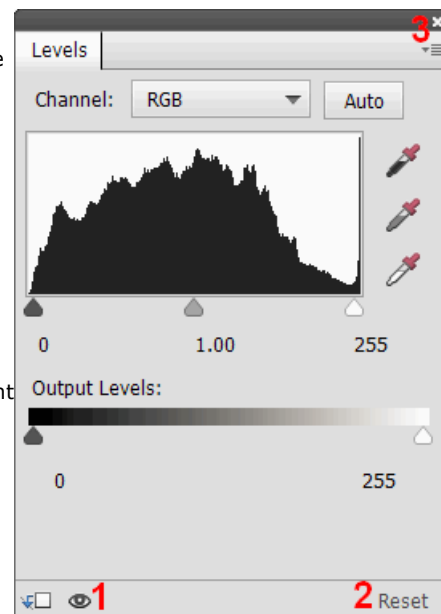
If you want to start over, click Reset in the lower-right corner of the Levels window (2).

Levels goes back to its default values.

Close the Levels Window

To close the Levels window, click the tiny x in the upper-right corner (3).

With a Mac, the x is in the upper-left corner.

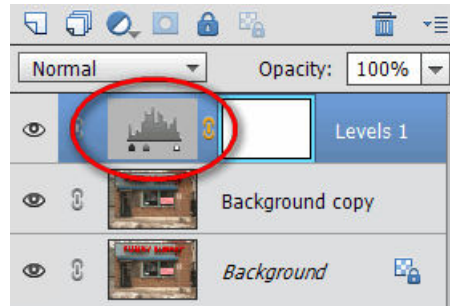


Reopen the Levels Window

You closed the Levels window.

Later, you decide to change the Levels.

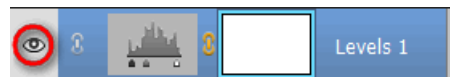
Double click the histogram icon (red oval) in the Levels adjustment layer to reopen the Levels window.



A Second Eye Icon

There's a second eye icon in the Levels adjustment layer.

Click the eye icon to turn the Levels layer on and off.



11 – Save as a PSD

Do the following to save your work.

- 1) At the top of your screen, go to File > Save As.
- 2) Click Save.

Your work is saved as a Photoshop file.

After you've saved the file once—when you press Ctrl + s—the file is saved automatically.

Be sure to press Ctrl + s periodically to save your work.

12 – Save as a JPEG

Two Advantages

A Photoshop file has two advantages:

- 1) It keeps all the layers for later editing.
- 2) It's lossless.

You can edit and save it—repeatedly—without any loss in quality.

Two Disadvantages

A Photoshop file has two disadvantage:

- 1) You can't send it to a lab to be printed.
- 2) You can't e-mail it.

You need a JPEG file.

Save as a JPEG

Do the following.

- 1) At the top of your screen, go to File > Save As.
- 2) In the format box, change Photoshop to JPEG.
- 3) Change the name of the file.

If you don't your original file may be overwritten by the edited file.

Let's say your file is DSC-1234.

- a) Click at the **end** of the file name.

DSC-1234•

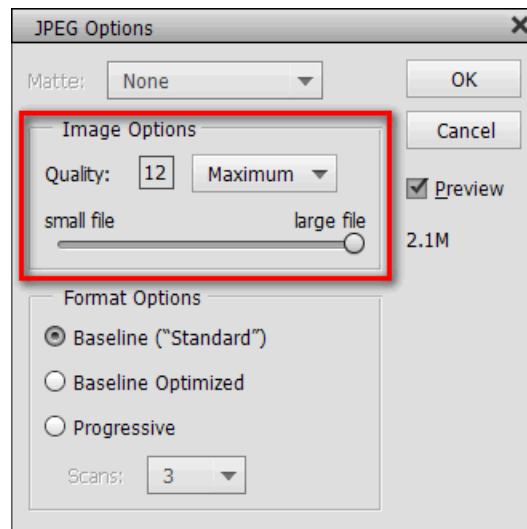
If you see **.jpg** at the end—make sure you don't disturb this file extension.

DSC-1234•.jpg

- b) Press the **dash key (-)** on your keyboard and append a word—such as **edited**.

DSC-1234-**edited**.jpg

- 4) Click Save in the lower-right corner of the Save As window.
- 5) The JPEG Options window opens.
- 6) Set the Quality to 12.



- 7) Click OK.

Three Versions

You now have three versions of your photograph on your computer:

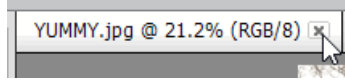
Original	DSC_1234.jpg
Photoshop file	DSC_1234.psd
Edited version	DSC_1234-edited.jpg

You may not see the file extensions—.jpg and .psd—on your computer.

13 – Close the Photograph

Above the work area, click the tiny x on your photograph's tab.

With a Mac, the x is on the left side of the tab.



14 – Close Photoshop Elements Windows

At the top of your screen, go to File > Exit

Mac

At the top of your screen, go to Photoshop Elements
> Quit.

[photokaboom.com](http://www.photokaboom.com) © 2000 - 2019 [Jim Beecher](#)