



Adobe Photoshop

Colorful Glowing Text Effect in Photoshop

Step 1 – Choosing a Background

For the best results with this effect, you'll want to use a dark background. The background should have a hint of color, and should avoid from being too dark (*such as pure black*). I'll use a dark violet (#120612).

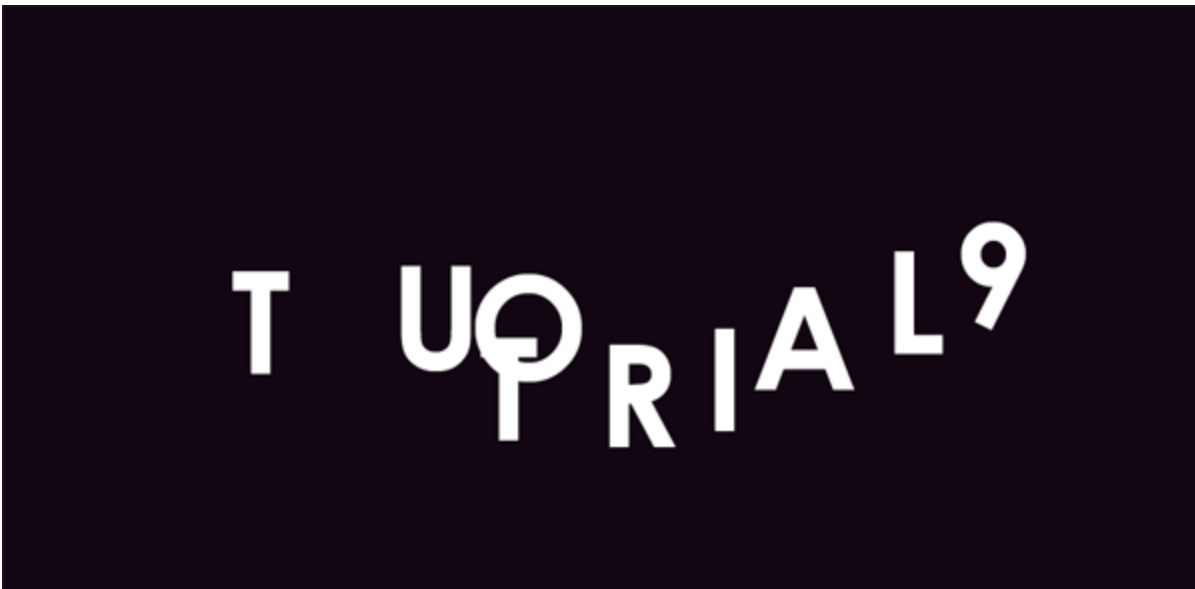
Just to get this out of the way, as you may notice throughout this tutorial, there are LOTS of different ways to go about accomplishing this effect – *this is just the way I found to be most convenient*.

Step 2 – Setting the Type

We'll be setting the type in a not-so-traditional way, which will allow us to get a special layering.

Using the [Type Tool](#), type whatever it is you'd like to apply the effect to, **BUT only type one letter per layer**. That is, *you need to type a letter, apply the text, then create a new type layer with your next letter*. When all is said and done, **you should have a separate layer for each letter**.

Your image probably looks something like this (*Quick Note: Type used below is Century Gothic*):



Well, that leaves something to be left desired.

Rather than wasting too much time trying to get things aligned perfectly, let's handle it all in a quick step. **Select the Move Tool**. Create a selection around the first letter (**Ctrl + Click the Layer Thumbnail in the Layers Palette**).

Next, **Select ALL of the Type Layers** (**Click the Bottom Type Layers name, hold shift, then click the top Type Layers name**). Now, in the **Options bar**, **Click "Align Bottom Edges"** – the icon that looks like this

A dark purple rectangular background with the word "TUTORIAL 9" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are widely spaced, with significant gaps between each character.

T U T O R I A L 9

Deselect everything (**Ctrl + D**), and now start moving your individual letters so that they slightly overlap one another.

A dark purple rectangular background with the word "TUTORIAL 9" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are now tightly packed and overlap, creating a more cohesive and modern look.

TUTORIAL 9

Step 3 – Add a Gradient

Create a new Layer above your type layers. Using the Gradient Tool, and a *White to Transparent* gradient, fill in the work area so that the Gradient is not TOO OPAQUE, or TOO TRANSPARENT where it overlaps with the text, but fades nicely in that area. The gradient should move from top to bottom – Top being the most opaque (*Hold Shift to make a perfectly straight gradient*).

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Step 4 – Cutting out Letters

Imagine that we're making shaped-cookies. It's a stretch, but stay with me. In a way, this gradient will serve as our 'dough', while the letters will be our 'cookie cutters'. Those individual type layers created earlier are tools we can use to create shapes from the gradient.

Let's go through it step by step and see if it makes more sense. Create a selection of the layer contents for your first letter (**Ctrl + Click the Layer Thumbnail in the Layers Palette**). Now, **Select the Gradient Layer** (By "Select", I mean click the layer – do not select the layer contents. We want the selection of the first letter to remain). **Copy (Ctrl + C) and Paste** so that you've created a copy of the gradient *in the shape of the letter*. If you were to disable ALL of the layers except for this new layer you just created, and the background, you'd now have this:



It's really a lot simpler than it sounds. Repeat this process for the rest of the letters, always making sure to selecting the gradient layer (*the dough*) prior to cutting out your layer. When you're finished, put away all your letters and gradient layers (*delete them, or hide them*).

The word 'TUTORIAL 9' is displayed in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The letters are a light gray color and are semi-transparent, allowing the dark purple background to show through. The text is centered horizontally and vertically within the frame.

Step 5 – Just Add Color!

You may want to name all of your individual layers, that way you don't lose track of which letter is which, but perhaps you've got a manageable number and that's not necessary.

Create a [new layer](#) above all your 'gradient-letters'. Grab the [Paint Bucket Tool](#), and a bright color (*I'm starting with #7fff5d*). Create a selection of your first *gradient-letter* (*Ignore any messages you may or may not see about no selection being shown*), and fill in that selection with your selected color on the new layer. **Set this layers Blending Mode to Screen.**

The word 'TUTORIAL 9' is displayed in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The letters are a light gray color and are semi-transparent. The first letter 'T' is now filled with a bright green color (#7fff5d) and is set to the 'Screen' blending mode, making it appear as if it's glowing or layered on top of the other letters. The text is centered horizontally and vertically within the frame.

Repeat this process for the remaining letters (*each color on a new layer*). Try using the same colors more than once every now and then.



Step 6 – Merge

When you’re sure that the type is set correctly, ***Merge all of your gradient-letters (Select the layers, then Ctrl + E).*** Then, ***Merge all of your colors into one layer (Make sure the blending mode is still set to screen).*** You should now have two layers – one with the plain gradient layers, the other with the colors for the letters. We didn’t have to do this, it’s just easier to manage.

Step 7 – Getting the Glow

Duplicate your *gradient-letters* layer (Not the color layer). Apply a Gaussian Blur ([See our Filters Tutorial](#)) with value of **1-3** on this layer.



Repeat this step (Duplicate & Blur) on your Color layer. Set this layer to *Lighten* or *Screen* (use best judgment). Depending on the saturation and intensity of your colors, you may choose to duplicate the color layer a second time.



Step 8

Using the [Eraser Tool](#), and a soft brush, go back and erase parts of the colored layers so that the type appears to fade from color to a ghostly white.



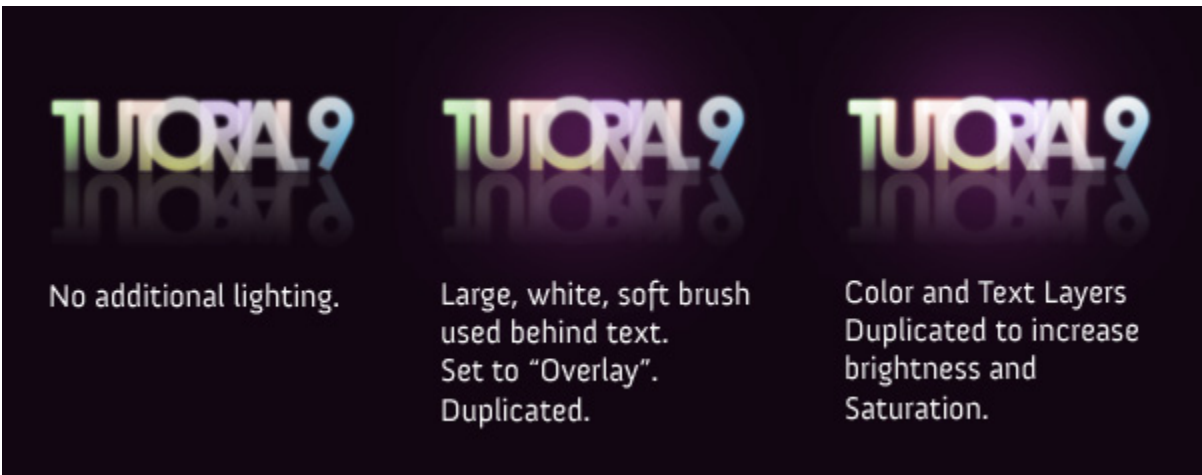
Step 9 – Reflect

Select ALL of the layers being used for the text effect, then **Duplicate** them. Merge the duplicated version into one layer. Use the trendy **Surface Reflection Technique** shown in our [5 Essential Reflections for Photoshop Tutorial](#) to mirror your type.



Step 10 – Adjust as Needed!

From here on out, I'll let you play on your own with the effect. I'd recommend playing with lighting effects in the background — simple things like adding some highlights behind the text... though you certainly could go all out. **Here are some additional steps I took to improve upon the effect:**



Playing with additional blurs can also add a bit of liveliness to the text. Try Duplicating a layer, and applying a motion blur to see how that works out for you!

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