

Bone Chilling Alphabet Skull.

01. In Photoshop, create an 8.5x11 in document in portrait orientation. Set it to RGB as we're dealing with an onscreen piece, and name it 'Alphabet Skull'.

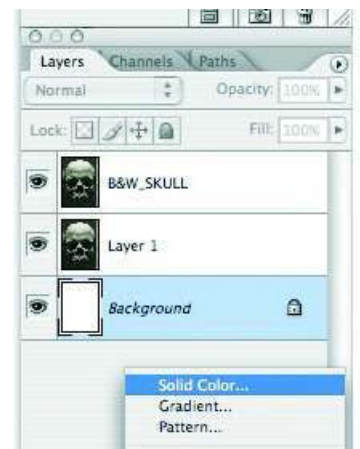
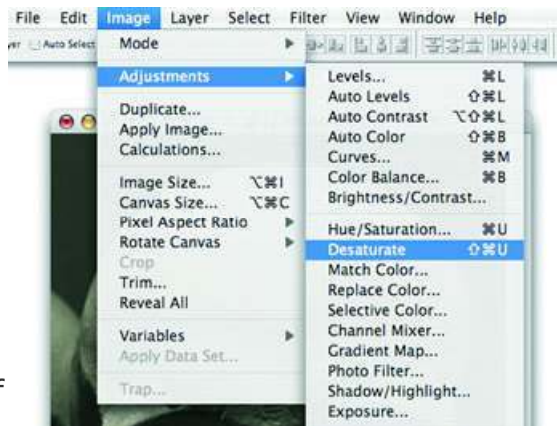
QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

02. Now find the skull photo you'll base the image on: it's important that this has a good amount of black, white and grey.

03. Drag the skull image onto the new document and resize it using the Free Transform tool (Cmd/Ctrl + T) so that it fits the space neatly. When you're happy with where the skull is placed, duplicate the layer (Cmd+ J) and name the new layer 'B&W Skull'.

04. You should now have three layers: the white background layer, the skull layer you first imported, and the duplicated layer. We're going to need a black background for the piece, so click on the background layer, then click on the half-white, half-black circle at the bottom of the Layers palette, and select the Solid Color option. Fill the layer with black.

05. Now we need to make the 'B&W Skull' layer black and white: hit Cmd+ U and desaturate the layer. You may also want to tweak the skull's levels to make the black a 'true' black .



06. Add a mask to the 'B&W Skull' layer by clicking the Layer Mask button (it's the icon featuring the circle inside a square at the bottom of the Layers palette).

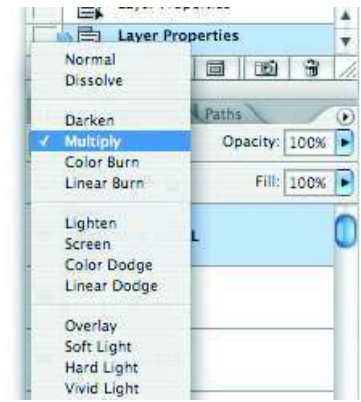
06. Add a mask to the 'B&W Skull' layer by clicking the Layer Mask button (it's the icon featuring the circle inside a square at the bottom of the Layers palette).

07. Select the white box that appears on the 'B&W Skull' layer once you've created the layer mask by clicking on it, then grab the Brush tool (B) and set it to around 250 pixels. Paint around the skull to mask off the bits we don't need. This doesn't have to be exact – it just helps you concentrate on the central bit alone. Set the layer's opacity to 50%.

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14. Eventually the piece is covered. Now for the simple step that will transform it completely. Go to your 'B&W Skull' layer, set its opacity to 100% and bring it to the top of your layer stack, either by dragging it or by selecting the layer and hitting Cmd/Ctrl + Shift +]. Now change the blending mode to Multiply.



15. Once the image is multiplied over the top, it may require some additional tweaking. Play with the levels (Cmd + L) to get more contrast; you may also decide to add some extra black by simply painting straight onto a new layer above the multiplied piece.

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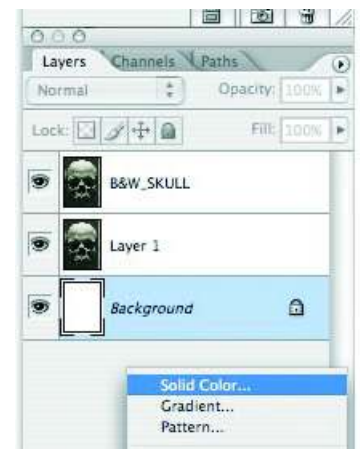
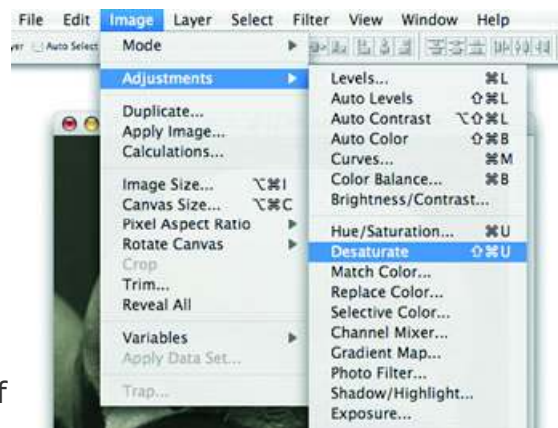
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08. Now we need some type. Create a new 8.5x11 document as you did in Step 1, and name the document Type. Select the Type tool (T) and draw a box the size of your canvas. For this project I used the traditional 'greeking' phrase that begins 'Lorem Ipsum'. If you'd rather have something more varied, go to lipsum.com and hit the 'Generate Lorem Ipsum' button – this generates a page of dummy text. Select the type and copy and paste it into your document.

09. Highlight your text and choose a typeface. I've used Blackmoor, as I thought it suited the piece. Also, ensure that your text is all uppercase, as this results in a more solid fill. If you've imported dummy text then cap it up by selecting the type, clicking the little circle in the top-right of the Type panel, and selecting All Caps.

10. We need to flatten the text so that it becomes pixels, rather than live type. Duplicate the

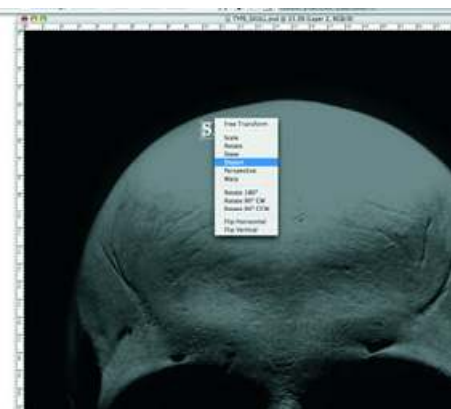
'Type' layer as in Step 4, and name it 'Flat Copy'. Then create a new layer (Cmd+ Shift + N). Select the new layer and the 'Flat Copy' type layer and merge them (Cmd + E). Hide the other type layer by clicking on the eye icon, and you have yourself text as pixels.

11. Now we need to make the text white on a black background: in your 'Flat Copy' layer, hit Cmd + I to invert it. Then create a black background, as you did in Step 5. This is what you'll be using to cover the skull.

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12. Now the fun begins: use the Marquee tool (M), select one of the words from your type page, and copy and paste it onto the skull page. Move it to where you want to begin – it's best to start near the top then work down. We're going to use the Distort tool. A

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quick way of getting to this is: once the word is in the right place, hit Cmd to bring up Free Transform. While that's selected Ctrl + click, and a menu will appear with some transforming options. Select Distort: this will give you a box with four corners.

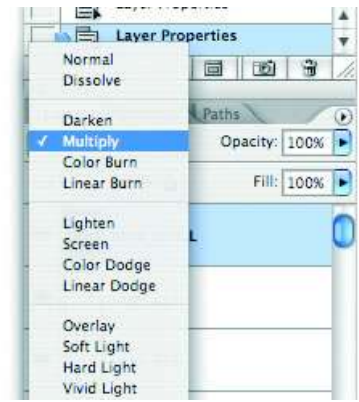
13. Pull the corners of the bounding box so that the text fits onto

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the skull. It's as though you're placing the text onto a 3D sculpture, so look carefully at the way the skull is. Repeat this text until the skull is covered in type. This takes a while, but stick with it – the end result is cool.

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