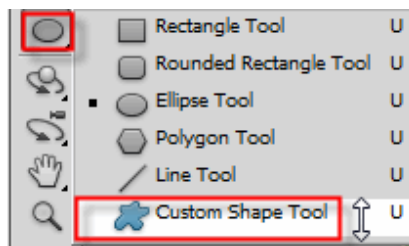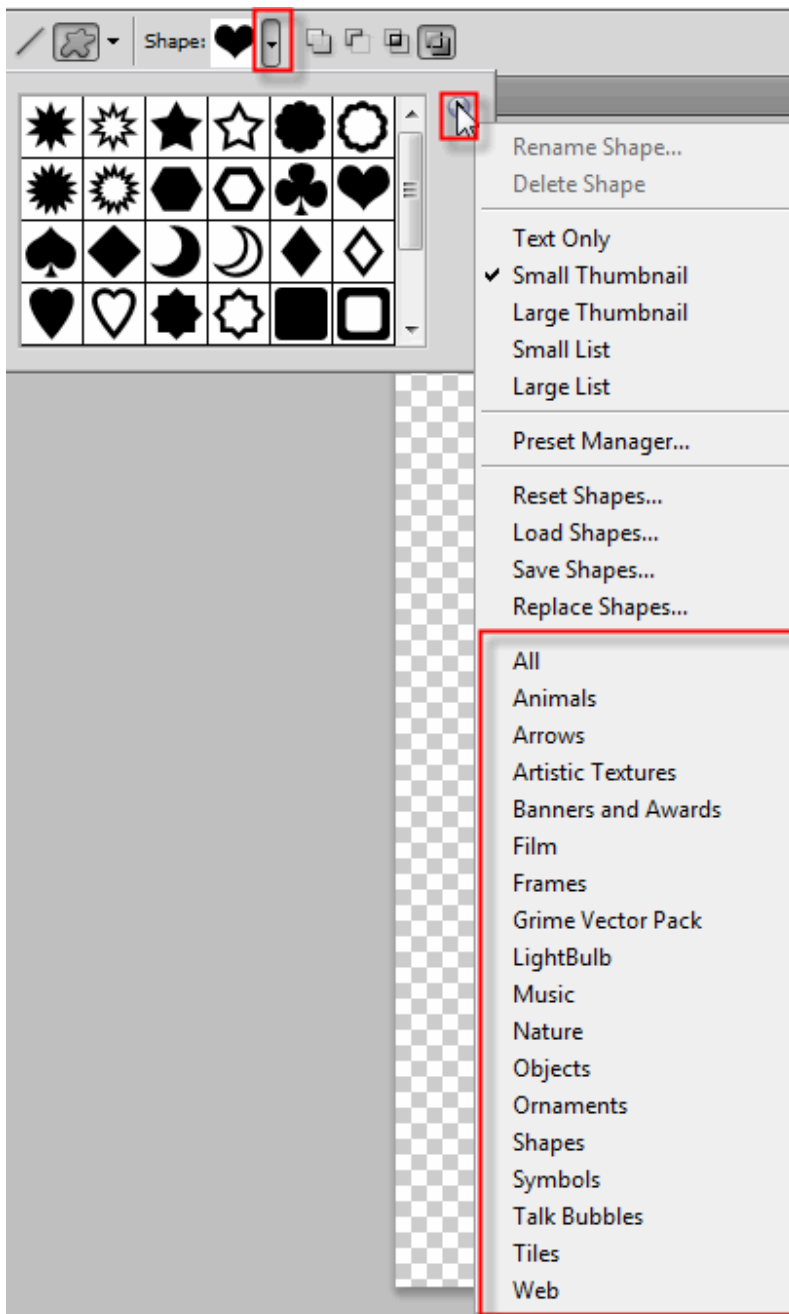**Custom Shapes As Text Frames In Photoshop**

I used a background for this activity. Save it and open in Photoshop:

Select Photoshop's Custom Shape Tool [   ] from the Tools panel. In the custom shapes options panel click the arrow to open the custom shape categories. Select a category and find a shape you want to use. I used the heart shape. For this activity use a shape of your choice.
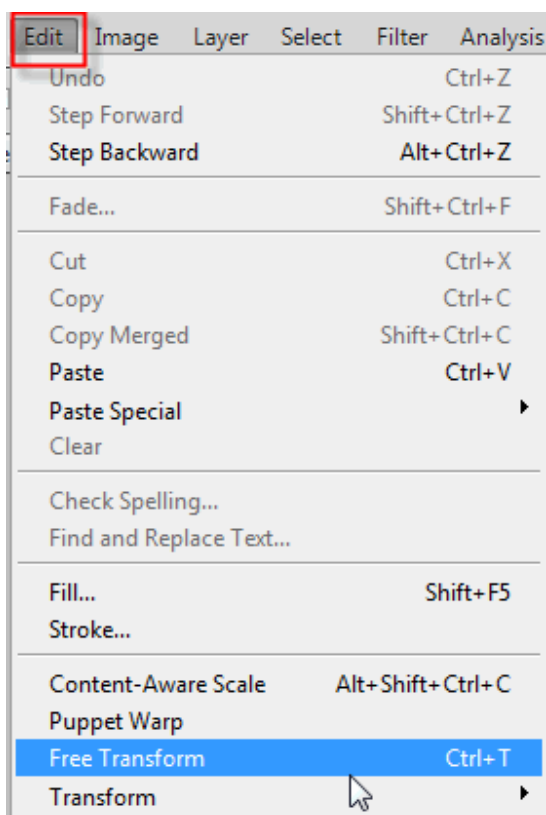
Near the far left of the Options Bar is a row of three icons, each one representing a different type of shape you can draw. Photoshop gives you a choice of drawing normal shapes, paths, or pixel-based shapes. To use a shape as a container for your text, you want to draw a path, which is essentially an outline of the shape. You'll be placing your text inside the outline. Click on the middle of the three icons to select the Paths option:

With the Paths option selected in the Options Bar, click inside your document and drag out your shape. You'll see your shape appearing as a thin outline as you drag. You can hold down your Shift key as you drag to force the shape to keep its original appearance while you're drawing it. If you need to reposition the shape as you're drawing it, hold down your spacebar, drag the shape to where you need it in the document, then release your spacebar and continue dragging. Here, I've drawn my heart shape in the top right section of the image:
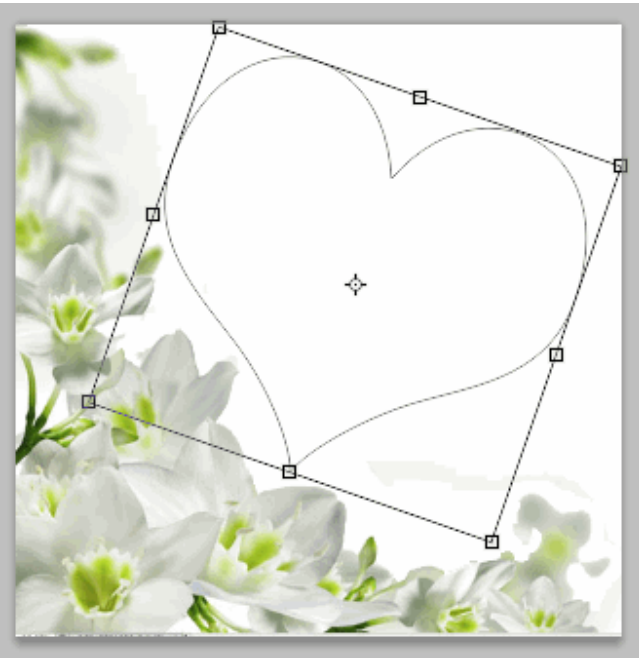
If you need to reshape or rotate the path (the shape outline), or move it to a different spot, the easiest way to do it is by going up to the Edit menu in the Menu Bar along the top of the screen and choosing Free Transform Path.
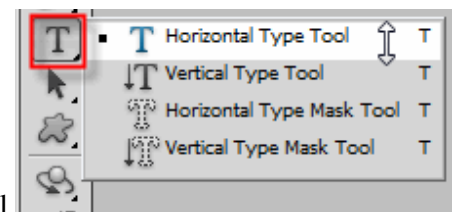

This places the Free Transform Path handles and bounding box around the shape. To reshape it, simply click on any of the handles (the small squares) around the bounding box and drag them. To resize the shape, hold down your Shift key and drag any of the four corner handles. To rotate it, move your cursor anywhere outside the bounding box, then click and drag with your mouse. Finally, to move the shape, click anywhere inside the bounding box and drag.

Rotate your heart shape a little so the curve down the left side flows better with the layout of the flowers:
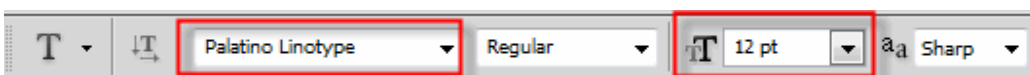
Press Enter when you're done to accept the changes and exit out of the Free Transform Path command:

Now that you have your path, you're ready to add our text. Select the Type Tool from the Tools panel.
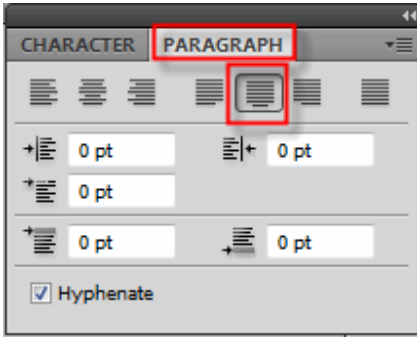
Select the font you want to use for your text in the Options Bar. For my design, I'll use Palatino set to 12 pt:
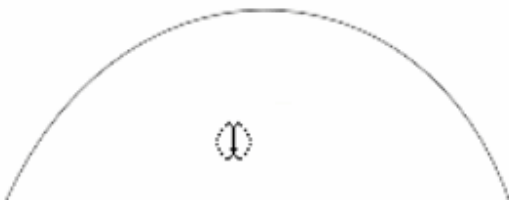

Choose a color for your text by clicking on the color swatch in the Options Bar:

Click on the Character / Paragraph panel toggle icon to the right of the color swatch in the Options Bar to open the Character and Paragraph panels which are hidden by default. Select the Paragraph panel by clicking on its name tab at the top of the panel group. With the Paragraph panel now open, click on the Center Justify option to select it. This will make it easier for the text we're about to add to fill the entire width of the shape. When you're done, click again on the toggle icon in the Options Bar to hide the Character and Paragraph panels since we no longer need them:

To add the text move the Type Tool's cursor anywhere inside the shape. You'll see a dotted ellipse appear around the cursor icon, which is Photoshop's way of telling you that you're about to add our text inside the path:

Type in some text. I am using a nursery rhyme from The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes (I. Opie and P. Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford University Press, 1951, 2nd edn., 1997), p. 375.)
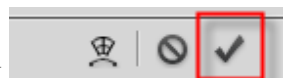
The rose is red, the violet's blue,

The honey's sweet, and so are you.

Thou are my love and I am thine;

I drew thee to my Valentine:

The lot was cast and then I drew,

And Fortune said it shou'd be you.

When you're done adding your text, click on the checkmark   in the Options Bar to accept it and exit out of Photoshop's text editing mode.

Here is my finished product: