How to
CREATE ROUGH, WEATHERED GRAPHICS.

One complaint many designers make against working on the computer is that everything is too clean. Graphics and type created electronically sometimes look too *perfect*—sharp, crisp and sanitized.

Some artists will go as far as printing out artwork, enlarging it on a photocopier and scanning it back into the computer to get a rougher, more organic appearance. Books could be written on all the techniques that designers have developed to create unique textures and effects with their office copier.

This issue covers a few techniques you can use to roughen up logos or type in Adobe Photoshop. Use the techniques covered here as a start into your own experimenting.

ROUGH TYPE

This approach simulates the roughening effect of photocopying a graphic several times. We do this by blurring the shape, adding noise and darkening the shape again.

Step 1

Step 1

Open the graphic you want to roughen.

This effect works best with black and white artwork. If the graphic you want to work with is in color, convert it to a grayscale image before applying this technique (Choose Grayscale from the Mode menu).

Note: To open work created in Adobe Illustrator or Aldus FreeHand, save your artwork in an Illustrator 3.0 EPS format.

Step 2

Copy the graphic to memory for future use.

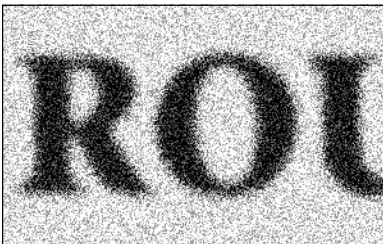Choose All from the Select menu [,A]; Copy from the Edit menu [,C]; None from the Select menu [,D].

We will use this copied graphic again in Step 5.
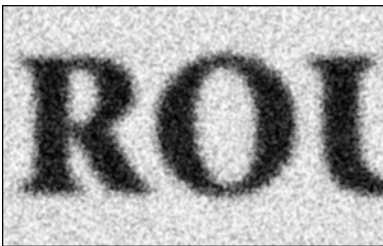
Tip: Use keyboard shortcuts to speed up your work.
     [,A]= Command-a (Macintosh); Ctrl-a (Windows).

Step 3

Step 3A

Step 3B



Step 3C

Apply Blur and Noise filters.

Blurring and adding noise both randomize the edges of your graphic. We will increase the contrast in Step 4 to blow out the background noise we've added.

A: Choose Blur ➢ Gaussian Blur from the Filter menu.
Enter a radius amount and click "OK." Experiment with different values to achieve the look you want. In the example to the left we've used a setting of 4 pixels.

B: Choose Noise ➢ Add Noise from the Filter menu.

Play with different values. The example to the left uses a value of 128.
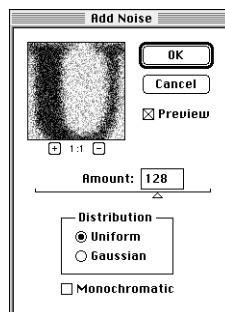
C: Choose Blur ➢ Blur More from the Filter menu.
Adding a final blur softens the edges and smooths the grain.

## Step 4

Add contrast with the Levels command.

A: **Choose Adjust ➢ Levels from the Image menu.**
You will be presented with the Levels dialog box. In Levels, you can make gradual adjustments to the brightness, contrast, and midtones of an image.
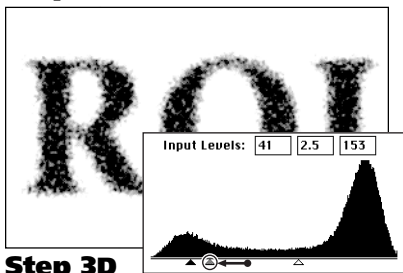
In this step, we will focus on the sliders that control shadow or highlight areas. Levels is the primary tool used for simulating the effects of a photocopier.

Increases shadows
Increases highlights
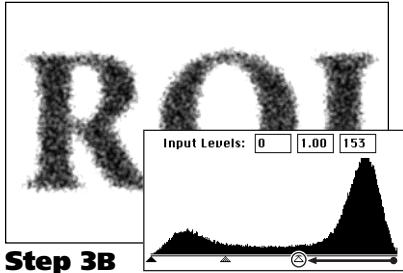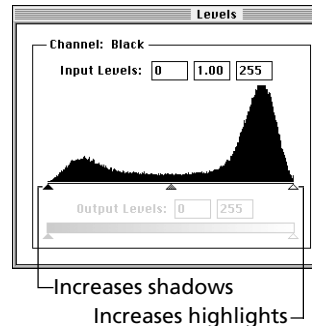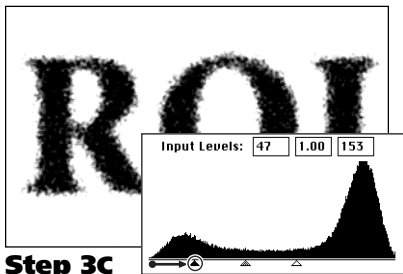
B: **Increase the highlights to blow-out the background.**
Drag the white highlight triangle to the left until the background becomes white.
Tip: With the background gone, you can decide how far to increase the highlights. (See examples at bottom of page).

C: **Increase the shadow to darken your graphic.**
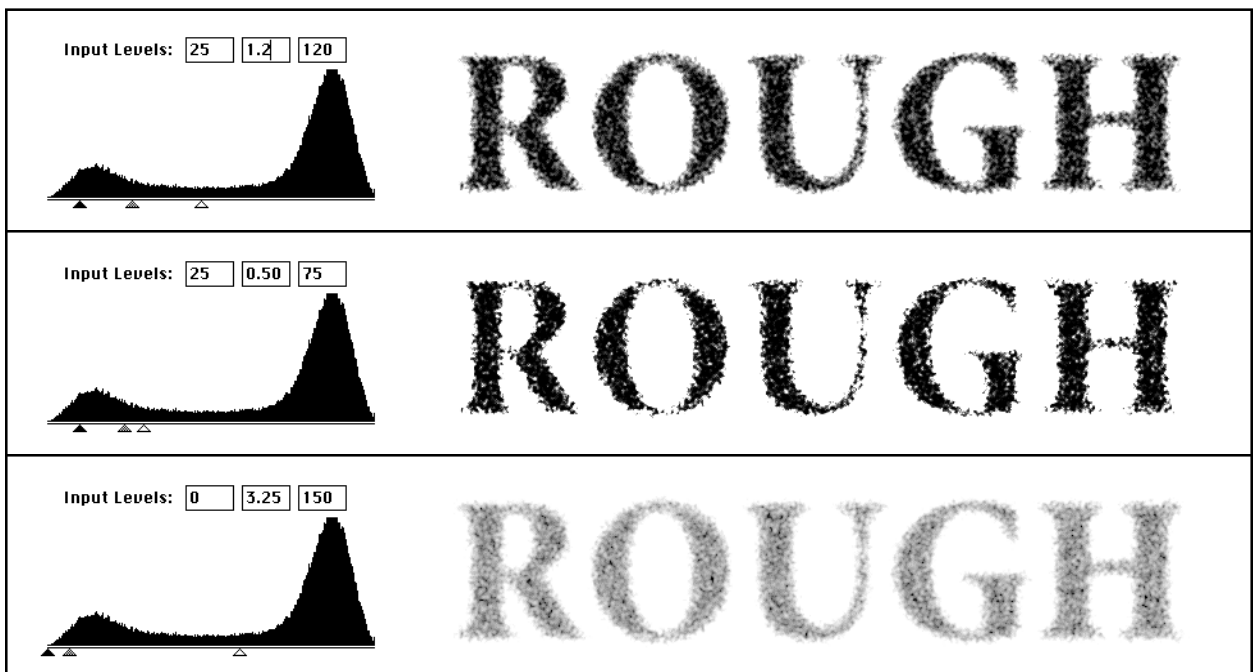Drag the black shadow triangle to the right. You can decide how dark you want the graphic.
Tip: You can also choose not to darken the shadows.

D: **Adjust the midtones.**
This step is optional. You can also drag the middle gray triangle to lighten or darken your graphic's midtones. In this example, we've lightened the texture by dragging to the left.
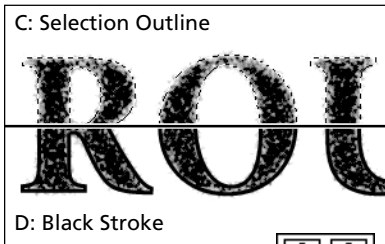
E: **Experiment...**
The chart below shows the results of a variety of settings. Experiment to see the types of effects you can create. Click "OK" in Levels to apply your effect.

Step 3B
Input Levels: 0 | 1.00 | 153

Step 3C
Input Levels: 47 | 1.00 | 153

Step 3D
Input Levels: 41 | 2.5 | 153

Input Levels: 25 | 1.2 | 120

Input Levels: 25 | 0.50 | 75

Input Levels: 0 | 3.25 | 150

Step 4A-B

C: Selection Outline

D: Black Stroke

Step 4C-D

**Step 4E (TWO PASSES)**

Step 5

Stroke the edges and repeat Steps 3 & 4.

As with a photocopier, this technique gets more interesting when you apply it several times. Stroke the edges of your graphic to keep them clearly defined throughout the process.

A: Click on the Quick Mask mode icon.
We will paste the copy of our graphic we made in Step 2.

Note: These settings are different from Photoshop's default. Double-click on the Quick Mask icon and make sure "Selected Area" is checked.

┌─ **Color Indicates:** ─
○ Masked Areas
◉ Selected Areas
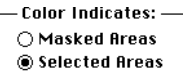
B: Choose Paste from the Edit menu. [,V]
The original graphic is pasted onto the mask channel.

C: Click on the Standard mode icon.
The graphic is converted to a selection.

D: Stroke the outline with a black line.
Set your foreground color to black; choose Stroke from the Edit menu; enter the line weight (3 pixels here); click OK. Choose None from the Select menu to deselect the outline. [,D]

E: Repeat Steps 3-5 several times.
Have fun. Play with different settings.

Tip: Just as with a photocopier, it can be difficult to remember how you got a particular look. When working on a final job, make note of the settings you use.

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