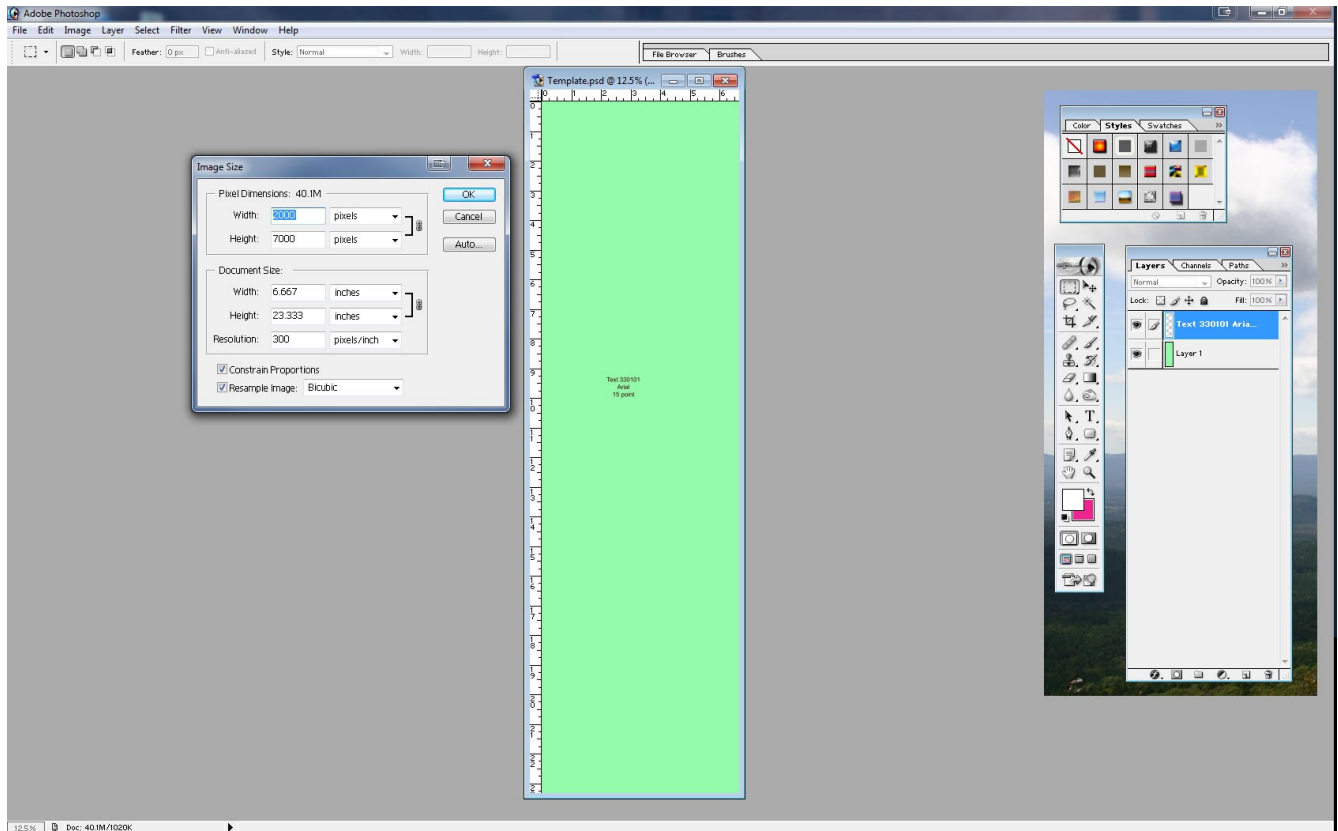


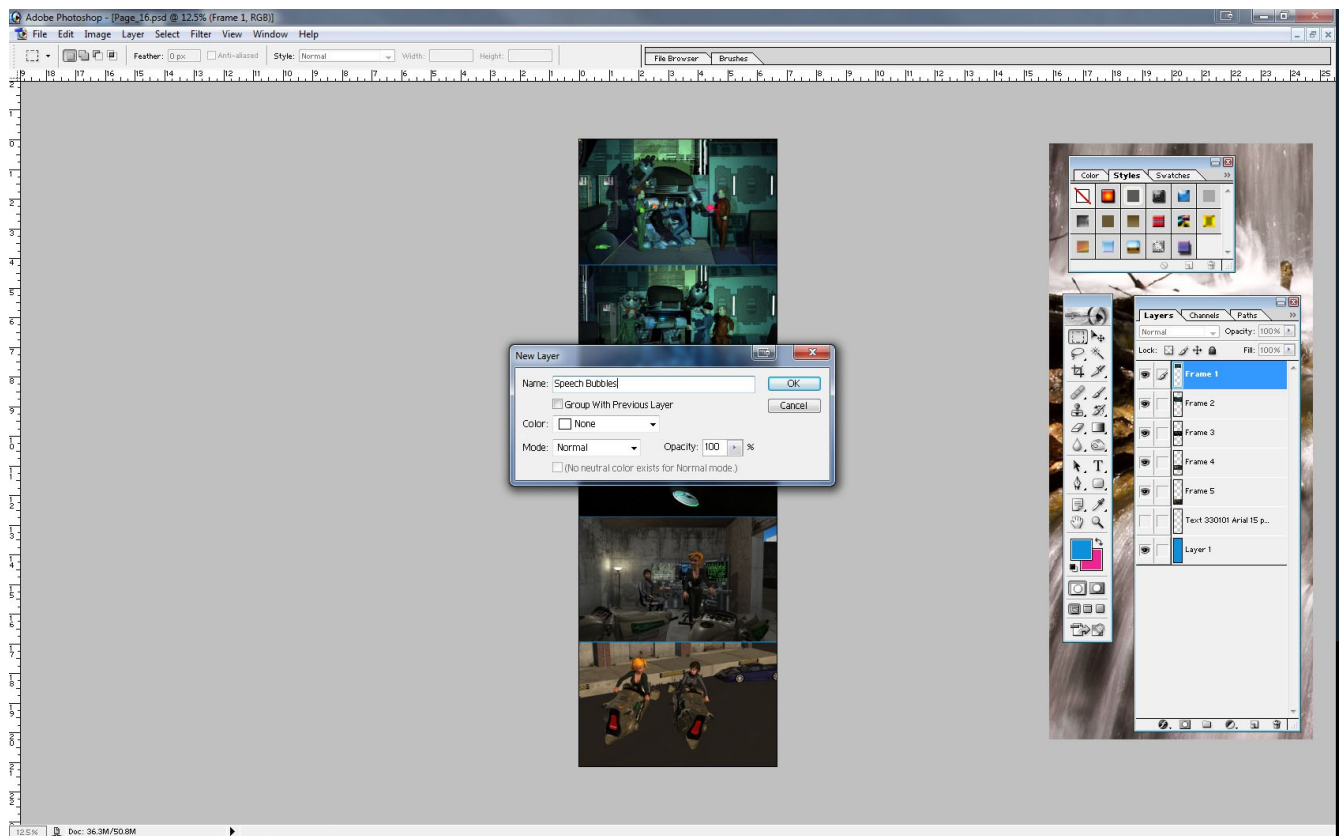
Speech Balloons – How I Do It...

I've had a number of people ask me how I do the speech balloons on my “Girls From T.N.A.” strip on Renderosity. This is not really a tutorial; actually it's more of a demonstration on how I put together one of the pages on the T.N. A. series.

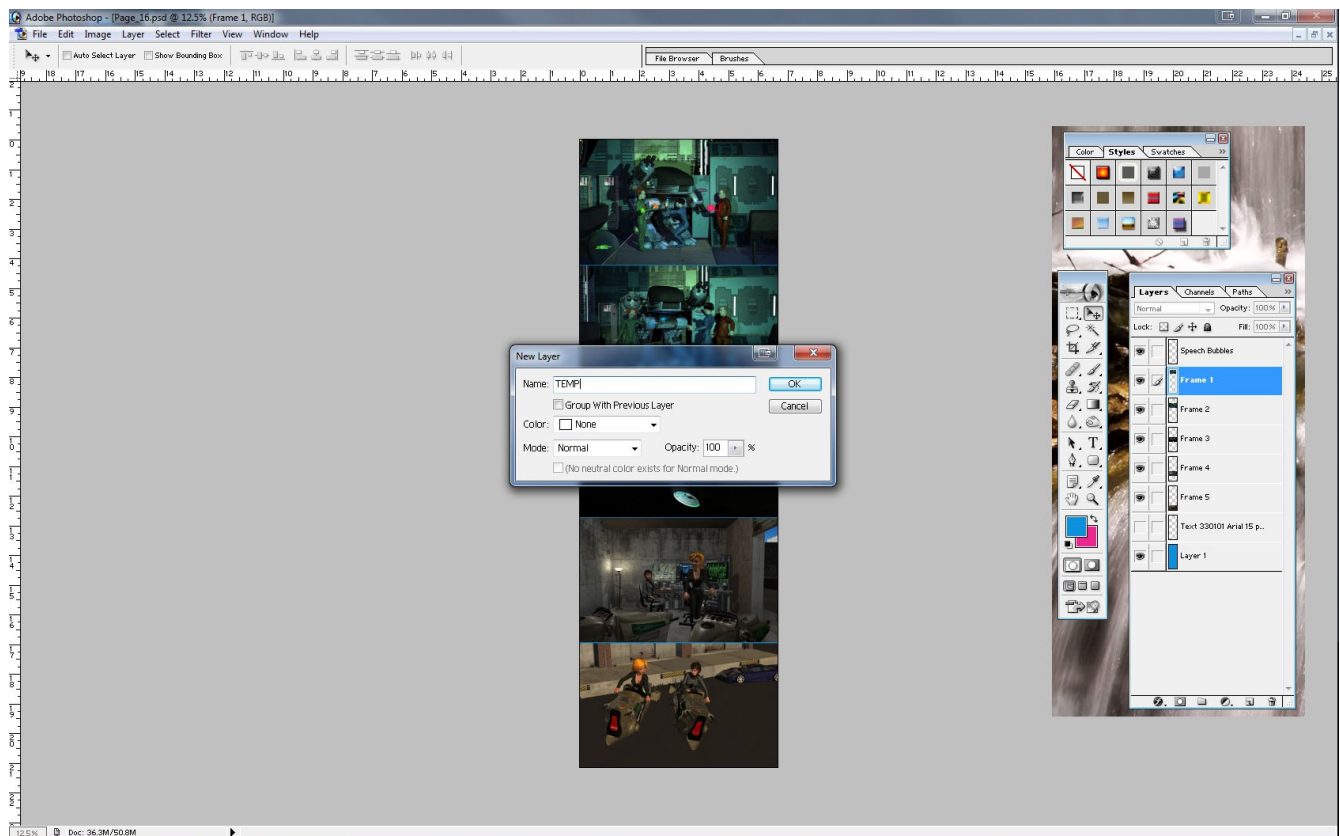
I'm not going to go through creating all of the panels for each page - that's beyond the scope of this demonstration, but I will show you my process when creating the speech balloons. So let's get started...



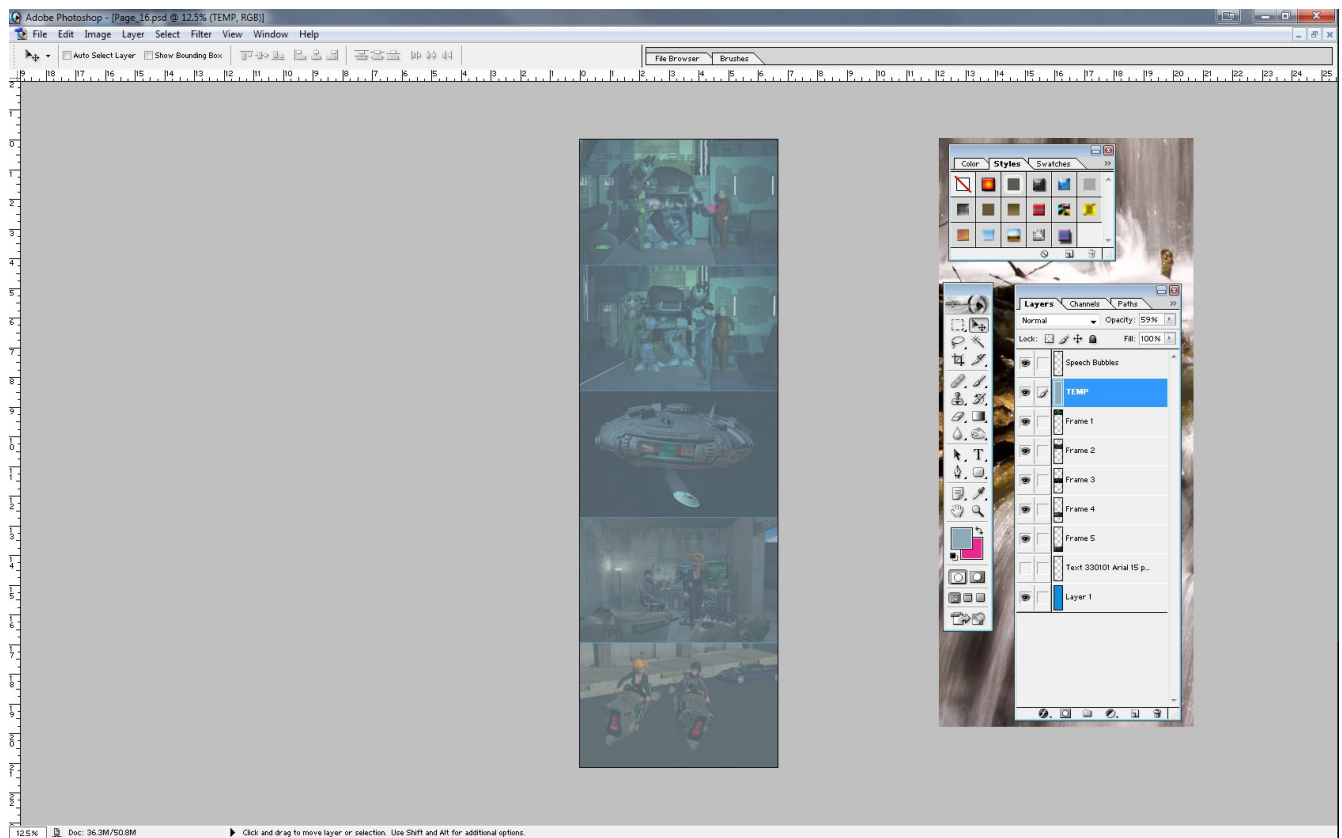
Here I've opened up the template for one of the pages in the Adobe Photoshop 7.0. The template is 2000 x 7000 pixels. As a general rule I create the pages at twice the resolution they will be uploaded (normally 1000 X 3200-3500 or so). I have cut and pasted the Photoshop palettes, into this image as they are actually on a separate monitor.



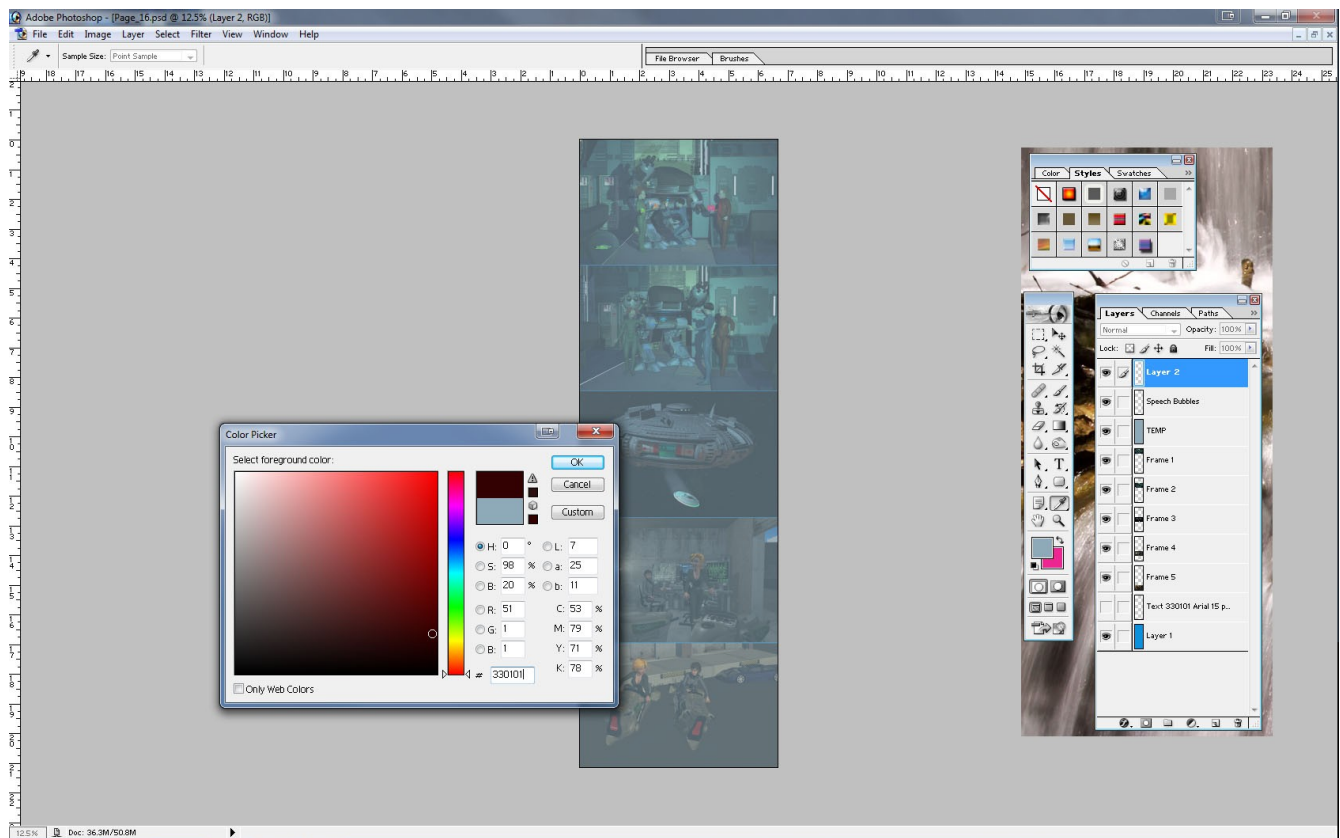
In this image I have already placed all of the frames into the page and numbered them beginning from the top frame one through frame five. I am getting ready to open up a new layer above frame one and it will be called “speech bubbles.” This is the layer where we will create our speech bubbles or balloons.



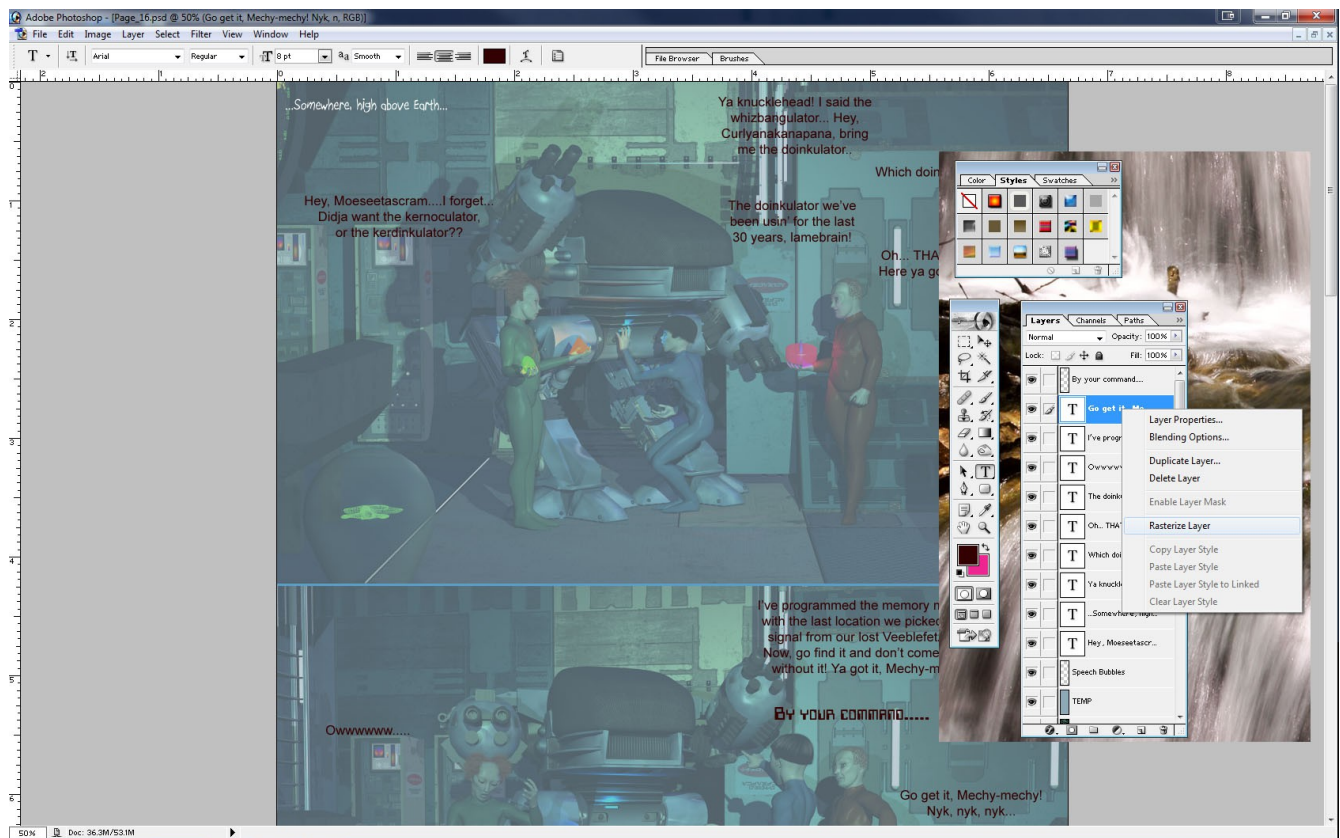
The next step will be to create a temporary layer above frame one, but below the speech balloons layer. For my Girls From T.N. A. series, I use a dark red color for the dialogue, and the temporary layer will provide a background to put the speech on. As you can see, dark text would not show up very well against the darker backgrounds of the images. I'll fill the temporary layer with a light color and reduce its opacity so we can see the images through it.



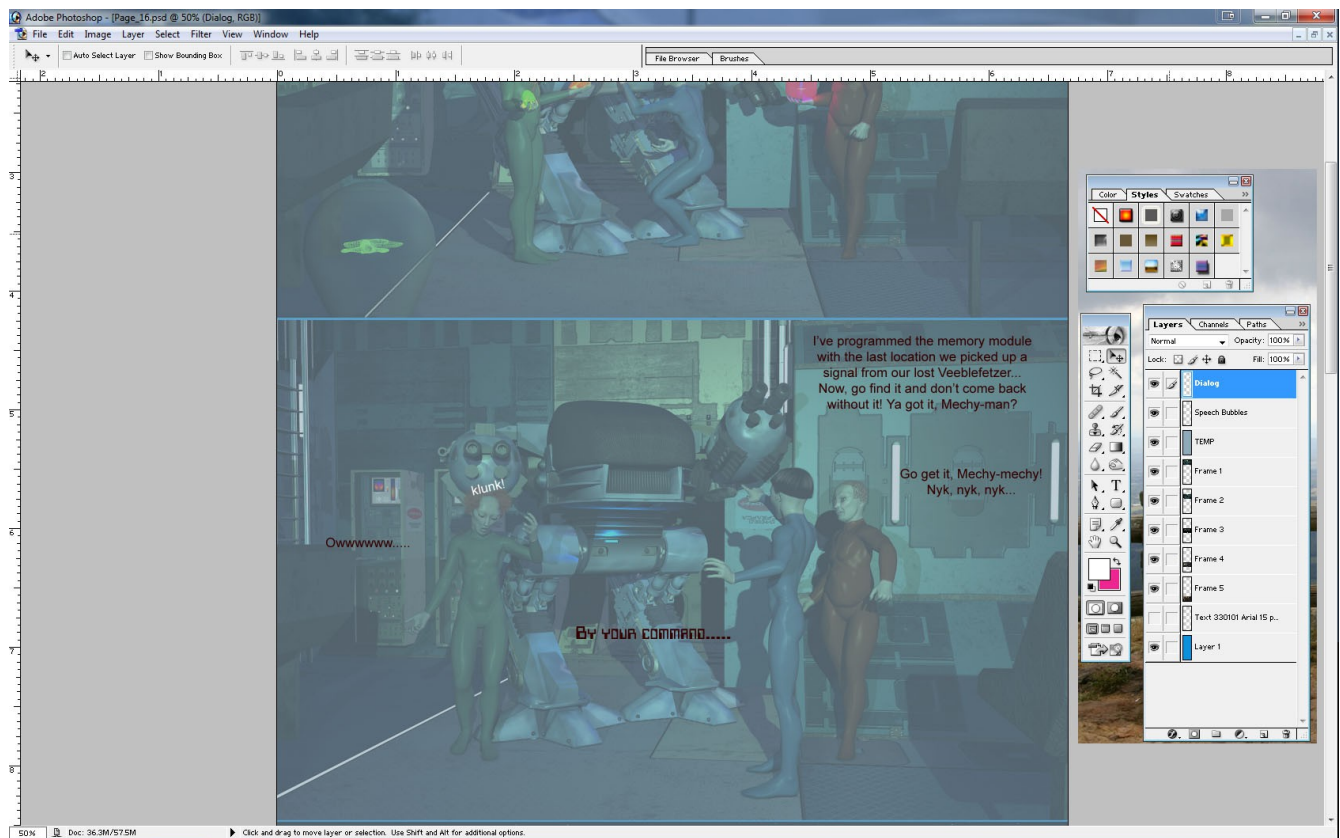
Here, I've added a light blue gray tone to the temporary layer and reduced its opacity to 59%. This gives me a temporary background that my text will show up against.



Now it's time to start typing in our text for the dialogue. For my girls from T.N. A. series, I use a dark red color for the dialogue text. On the Photoshop color picker, the hex code for the text I use is 330101. I have added a another layer on top of the speech bubbles layer to begin typing on.

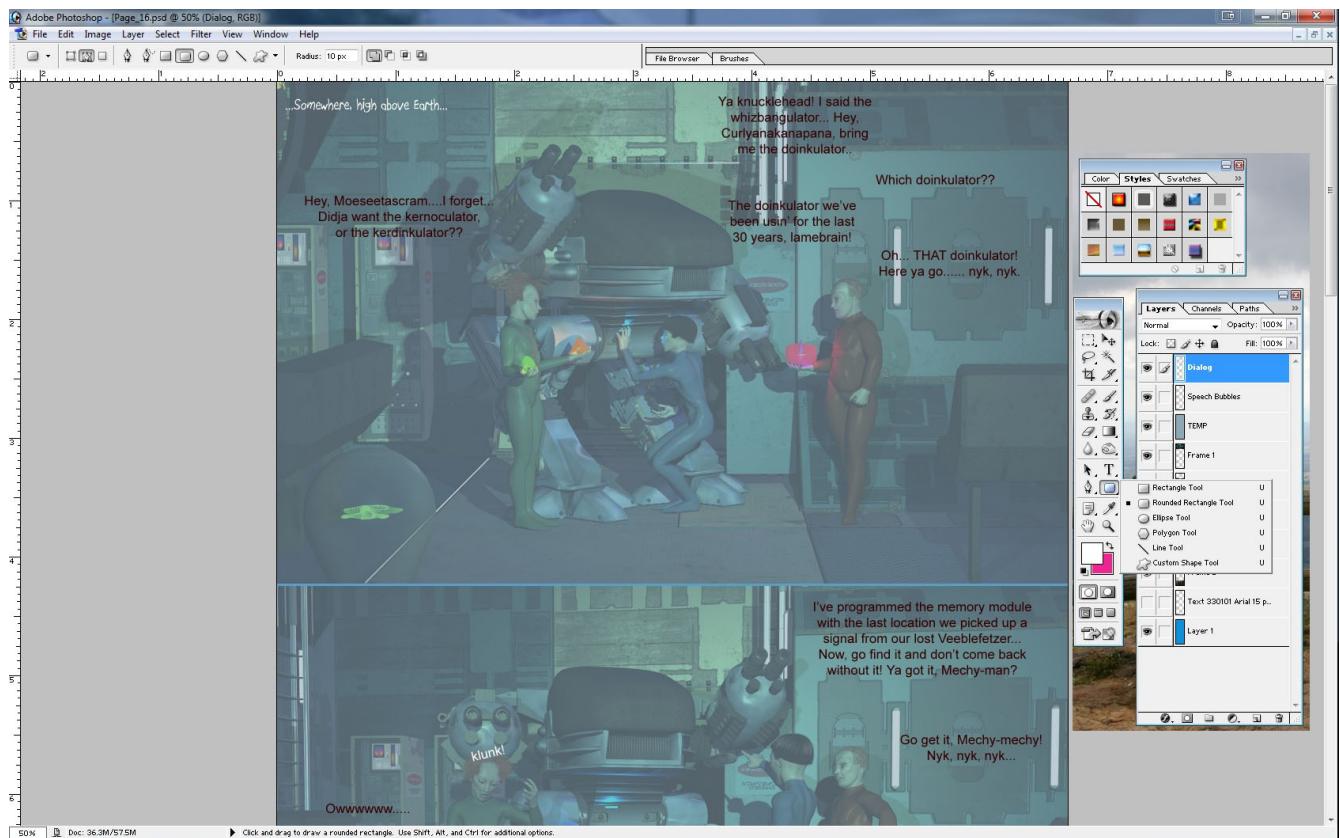


As you can see we now have several text layers. I keep each quote on a separate layer until I have them all positioned where I want them. When you're satisfied with your text go ahead and rasterize the layers. The next step will be to merge all of the text layers together. I usually rename it "dialogue". This layer will also contain any narrations - for instance the "somewhere high above the earth" text in the first panel.

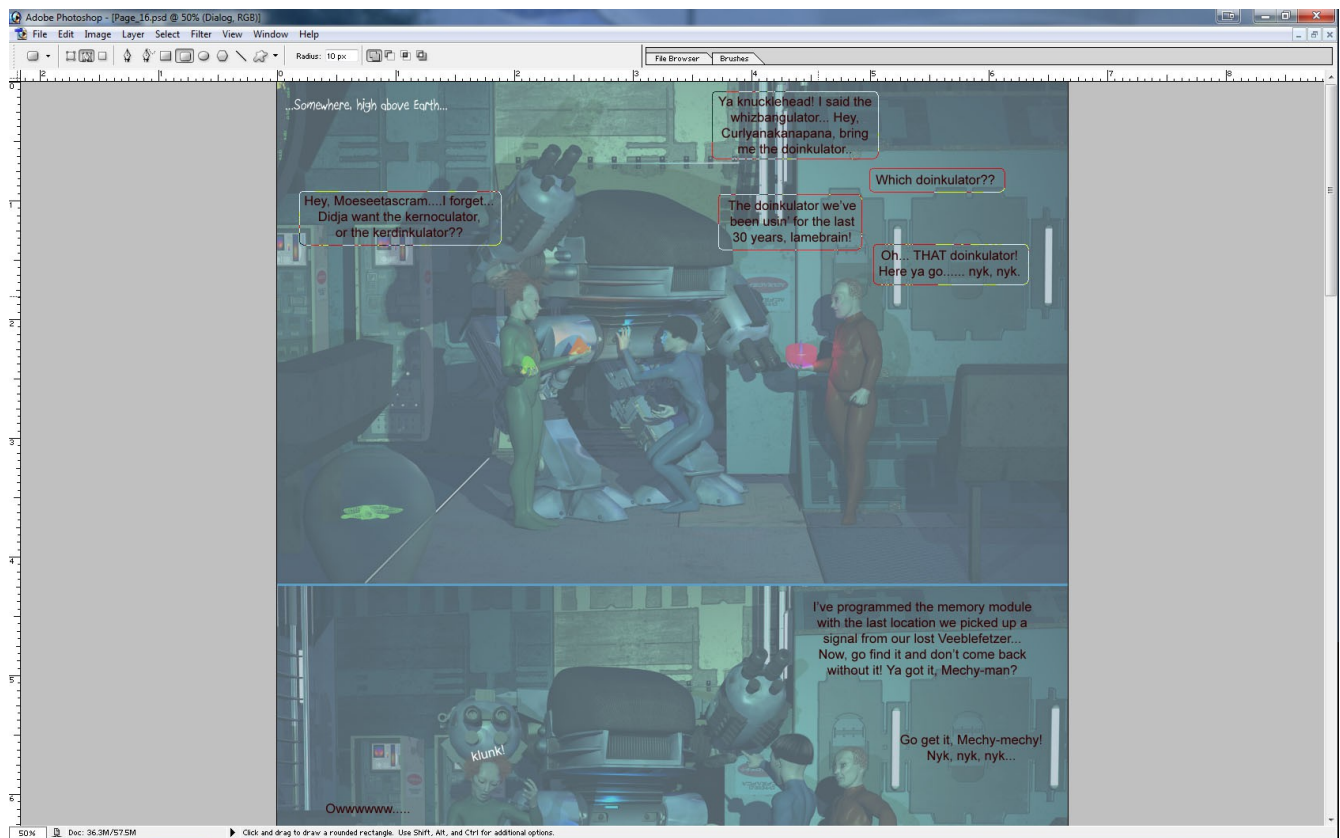


Here, all of the text layers have been merged into one called dialogue. Now we're ready to begin laying out the speech bubbles.

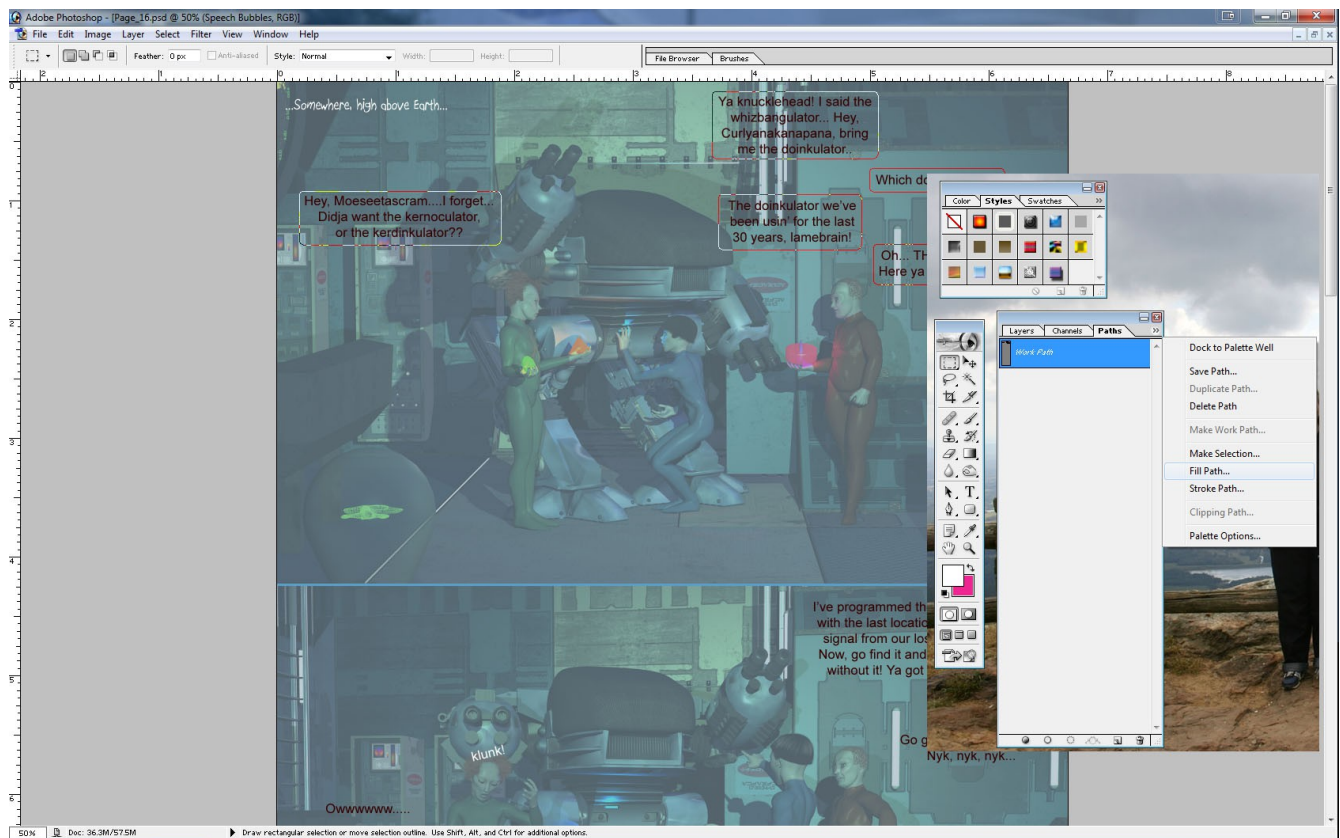
As a general rule, I do not use pre-made speech bubbles I manufacture my own from the shape tools in Photoshop. I find this to be a little bit more flexible than using pre-made speech bubbles. In the next few images I will show you how I do this.



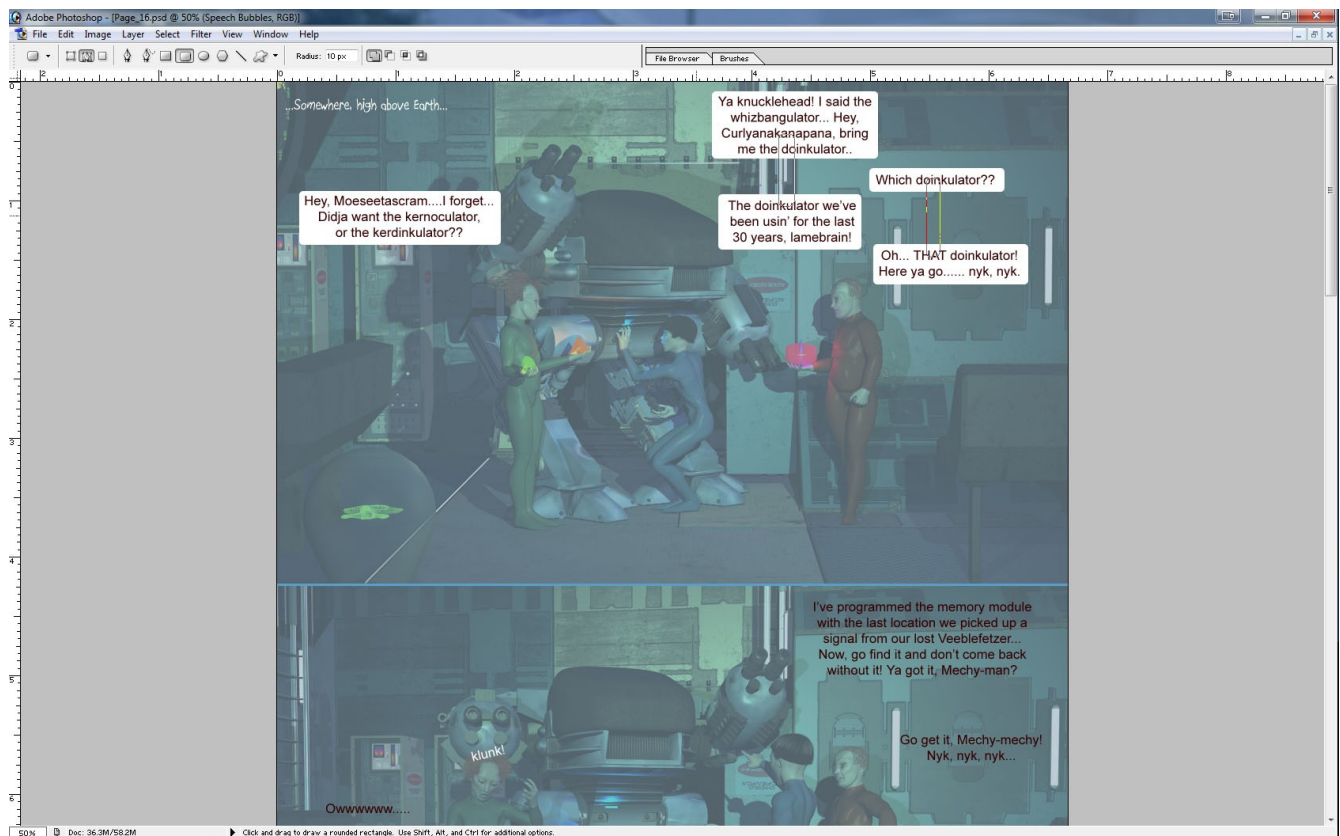
In the Photoshop tools palette, go to your shape tool. I generally use the **rounded rectangle** tool for the basic speech bubbles. As I said before, I like using this method because it allows you to create custom speech bubbles of differing sizes according to each character's quote.



In frame one, I have begun creating the outlines for the speech bubbles for the speech of the three alien stooges. It takes a little bit of practice knowing exactly where to begin and end the rectangles as you drag them, but the nice thing about doing it this way is that if you don't like the shape you can do a Ctrl-z to clear it and start over.

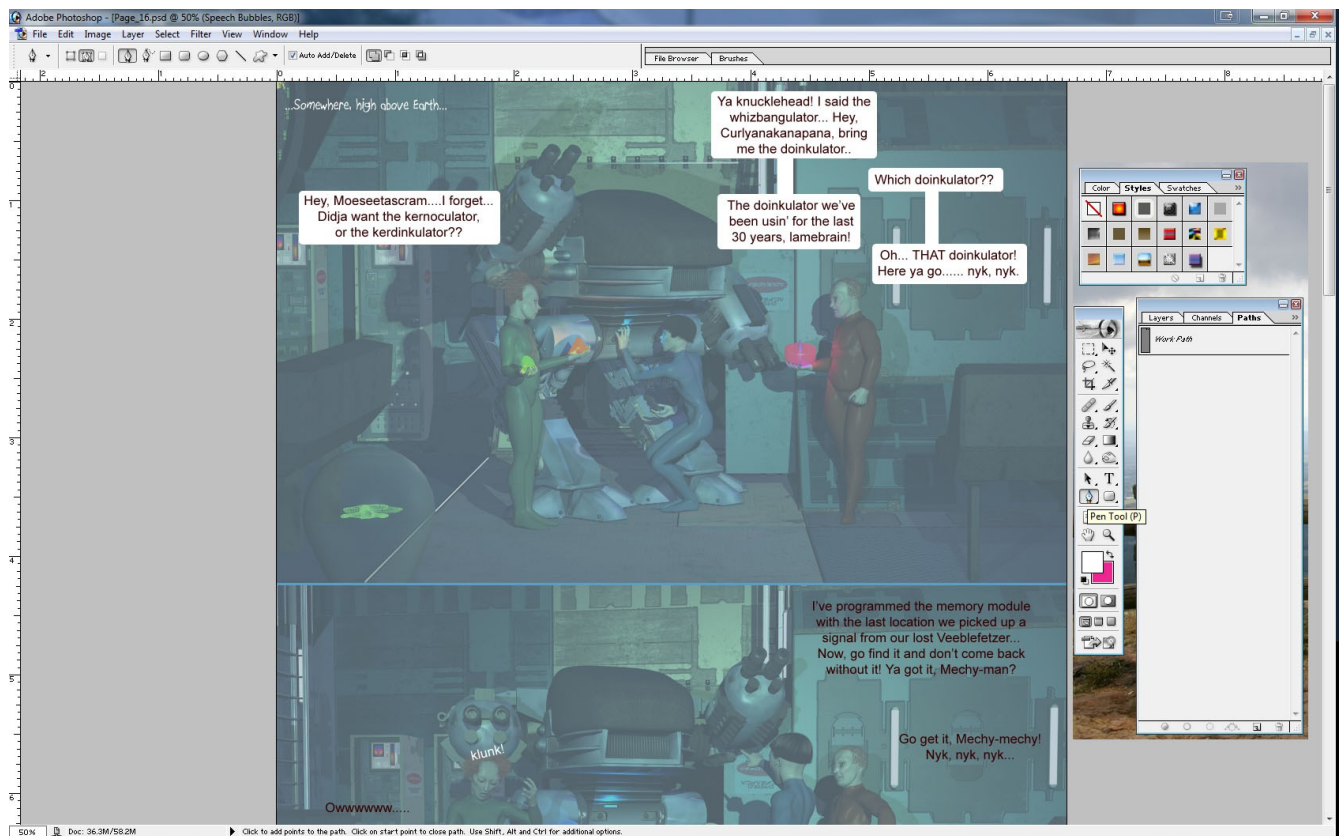


I usually use a pure white color (Hex FFFFFFFF) for the speech bubbles themselves. Any light color would work equally as well. To fill the shapes in your Photoshop palette, select fill path. In the "fill path" dialogue box that comes up use foreground color; mode normal; opacity one hundred percent.

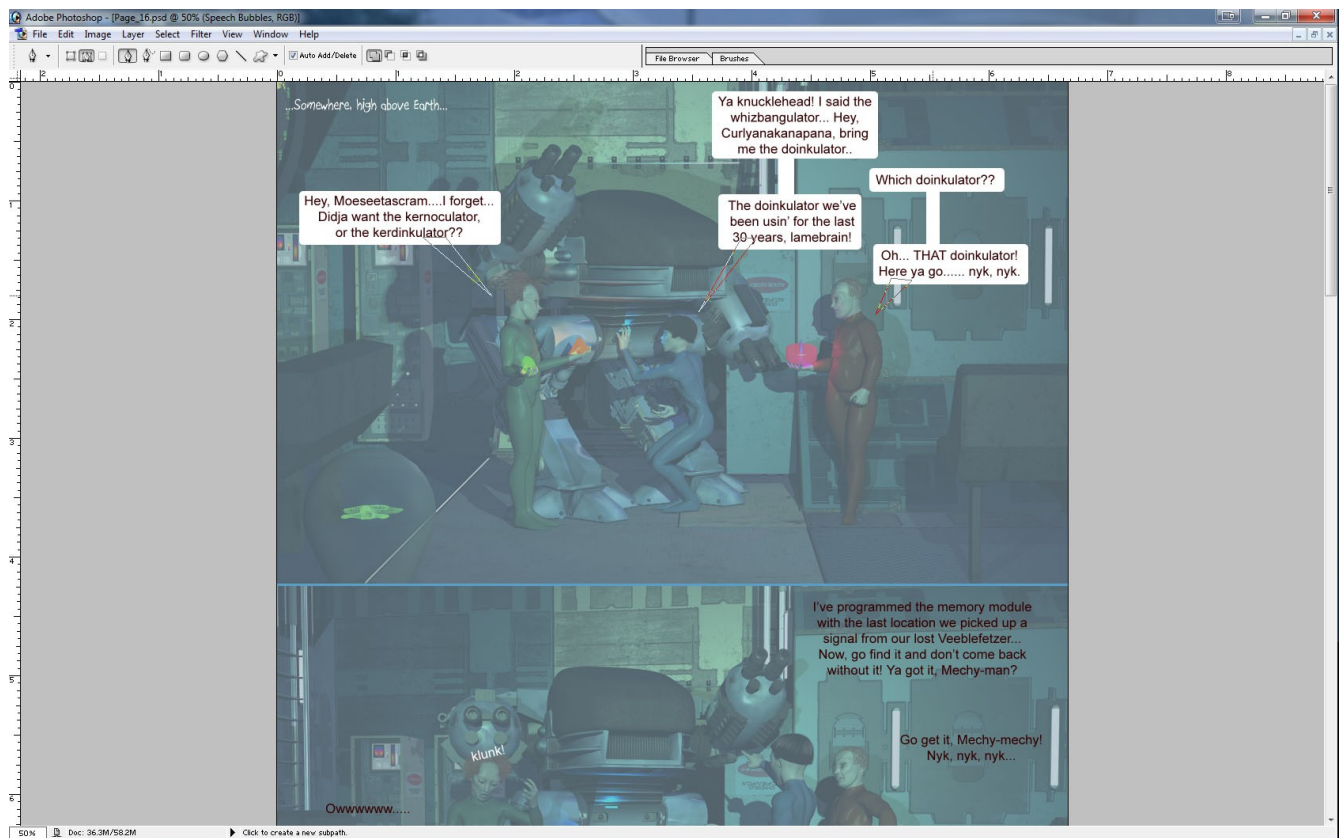


In this image you see the result. In this situation I have two characters whose speech is interacting, and each character actually has two speech balloons that need to be connected to indicate it's the same character speaking. This is simple to do with another rounded rectangle joining the two speech balloons as shown in this image. Here, the Moe character's lines are on the left, and the Curly character's lines are on the right. These connector rectangles will be filled in the same manner as the previous speech bubbles.

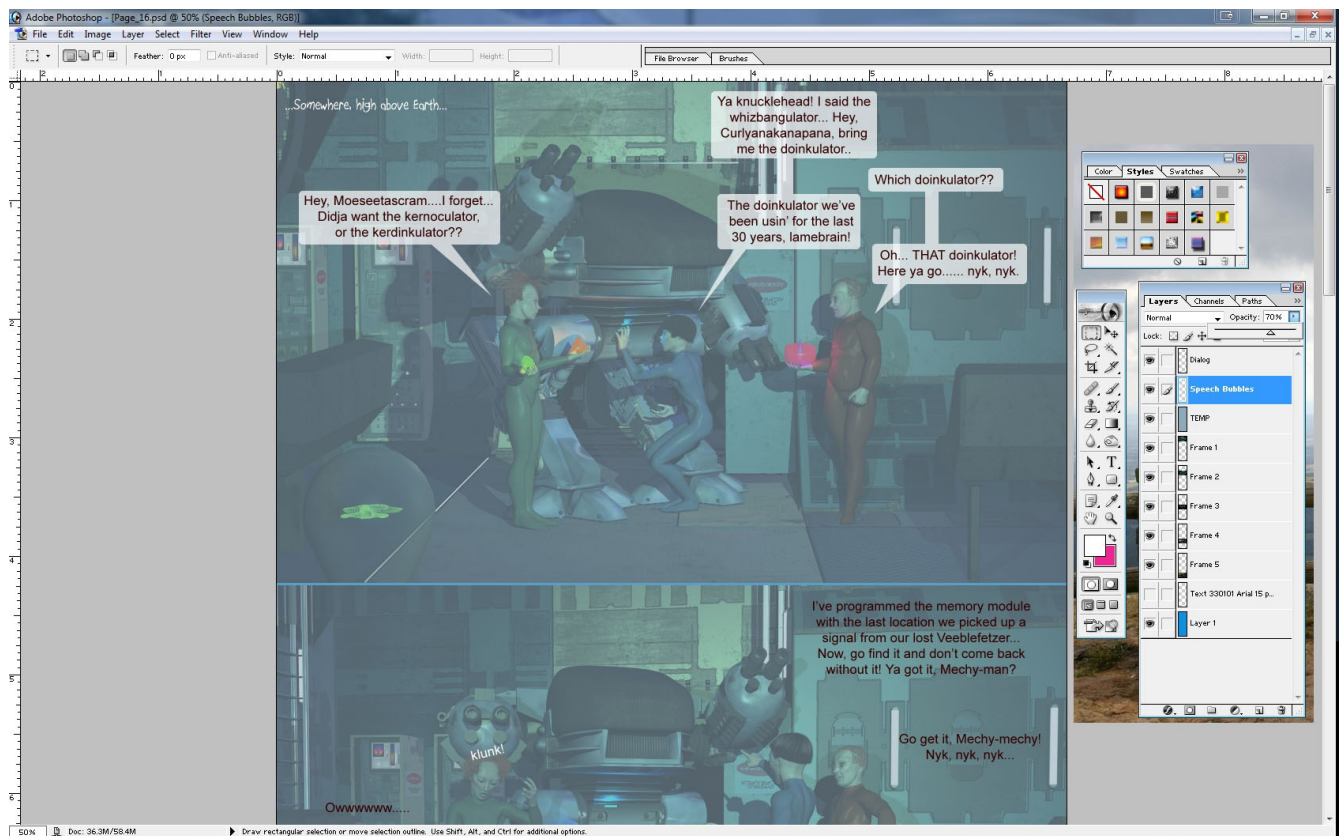
Now, we need to add pointers so we know which character is saying what. Follow along, I will demonstrate in the next images.



This is actually very simple to do, and your pointer can be precisely pointed to the desired character. You have a lot more control than if you used a pre— manufactured speech bubble. In your Photoshop tools palette, select the pen tool.

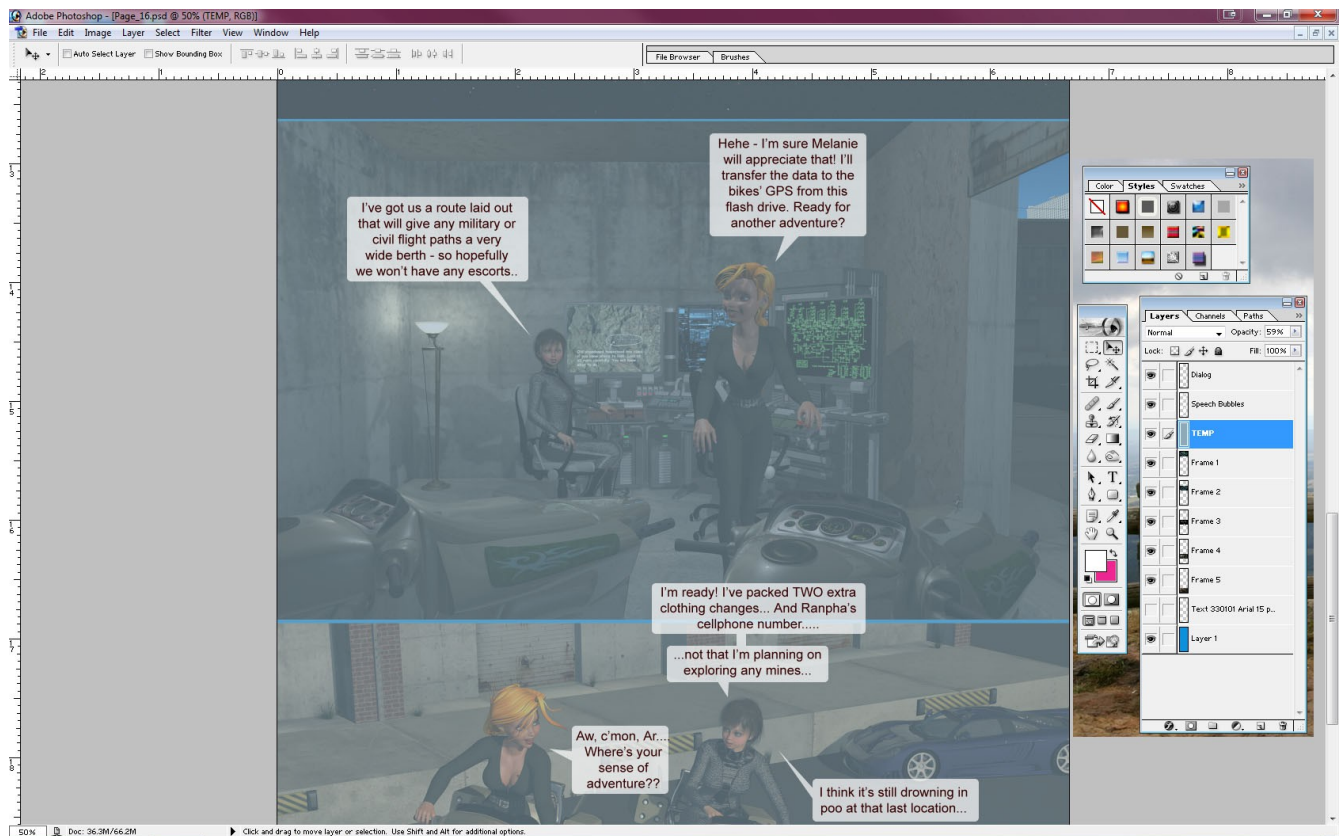


Using the pen tool, it is an easy matter to create triangles of varying sizes pointed to the various characters who are speaking. From here, we simply fill the triangles with the background color the same way we did the main rectangles.



In this image we see pretty much the finished product. The speech bubbles connecting lines and pointers are all in place. On my T.N. A. series, I like to give the speech bubbles a little bit of a "see-through" appearance. To me, it blends in a little bit better, and is less visually shocking than leaving them pure white and opaque. I create all my speech bubbles on the speech bubbles layer in Photoshop. I usually reduce the layer opacity to 70% as shown in the image above.

I will go through the entire image adding text and speech bubbles to each frame in exactly the same manner as I did with this first frame. The important thing to remember is when you type in your text, keep it **above** the speech bubbles layer.



The last step in the process is to delete the temporary layer we used to make the text show up against the background. Simply grab the TEMP layer, and drag it to the little trash can icon below, or you can simply hit the delete key.



Here's a look at what the final product should look like. As you can see the text is easily readable, there is good contrast with the speech bubbles, and get the speech bubbles are slightly transparent and not as visually shocking as they would be if they were pure white.

I hope you enjoyed this little demonstration I hope you will find it useful in your own artwork. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to email, sitemail, or FB me!

Happy creating!