

Creating the Illusion of Depth and Dimension

*Creating depth and dimension is easy if
you follow a few simple guidelines and
try a few a tricks of the trade*

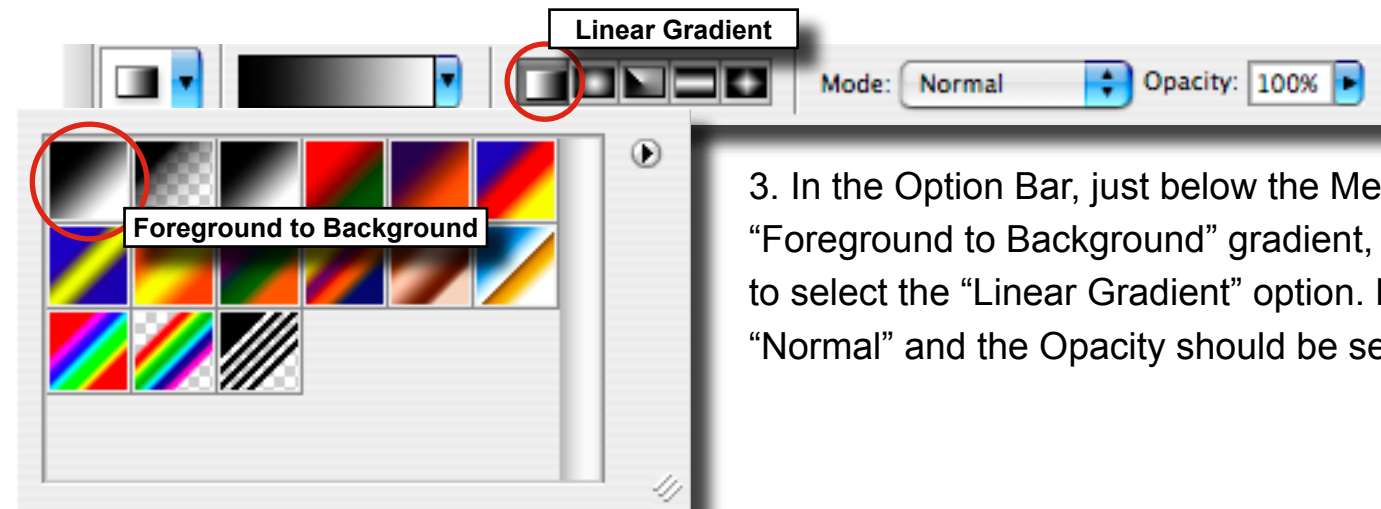
In this exercise, you will create a simple design that utilizes a number of techniques to create the illusion of depth. Follow the instructions exactly, and then apply what you have learned to creating your own design.

Creating a Gradient

One way to create the illusion of depth is to use Photoshop's Gradient tool to make a smooth transition from dark to light. Follow the steps below:

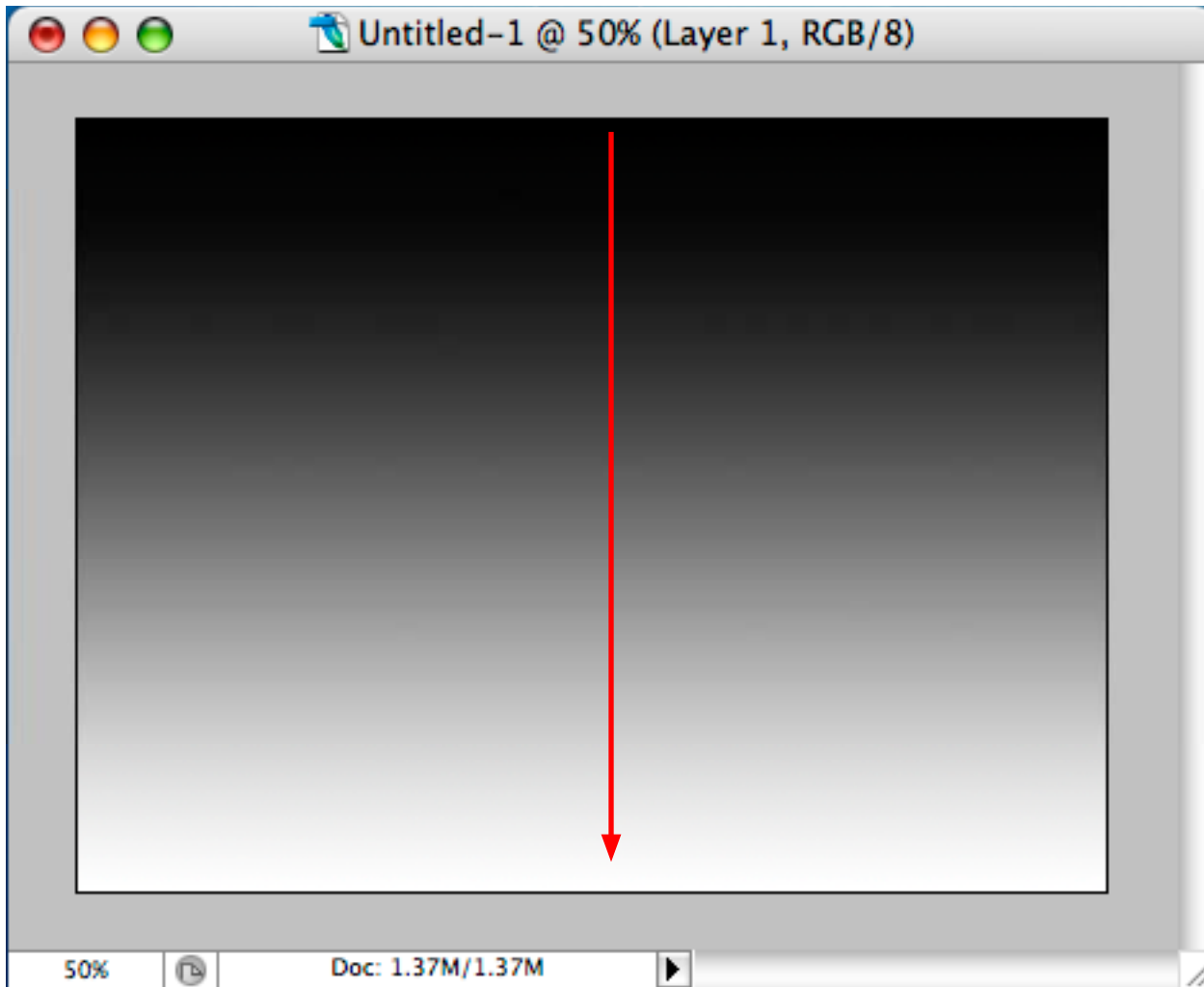
1. Choose the "Gradient" tool from Photoshop's tool box. If you see a bucket, you are looking at the "Fill" tool. Click and hold down the mouse key to expand the tool to see the Gradient tool.

2. Make sure the color picker is set to a black foreground and a white background as shown here. To do this quickly, just press the "d" key on your keyboard. This sets the color to the default.



3. In the Option Bar, just below the Menu, select the "Foreground to Background" gradient, and make sure to select the "Linear Gradient" option. Mode should be "Normal" and the Opacity should be set to 100%.

Creating a Gradient



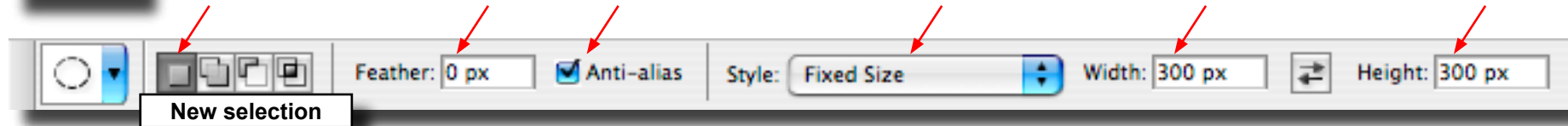
4. Create a new document 800x600 pixels. Go to Menu>File>New. Select the 800x600 option from the pull down menu. Color should be RGB and the background should be white.

5. With the Gradient Tool active, click and hold down the mouse key near the top of the canvas and drag down to the bottom as indicated by the arrow. Release the mouse key. You should see a gradient that looks like the one indicated on the left.

Creating a Sphere

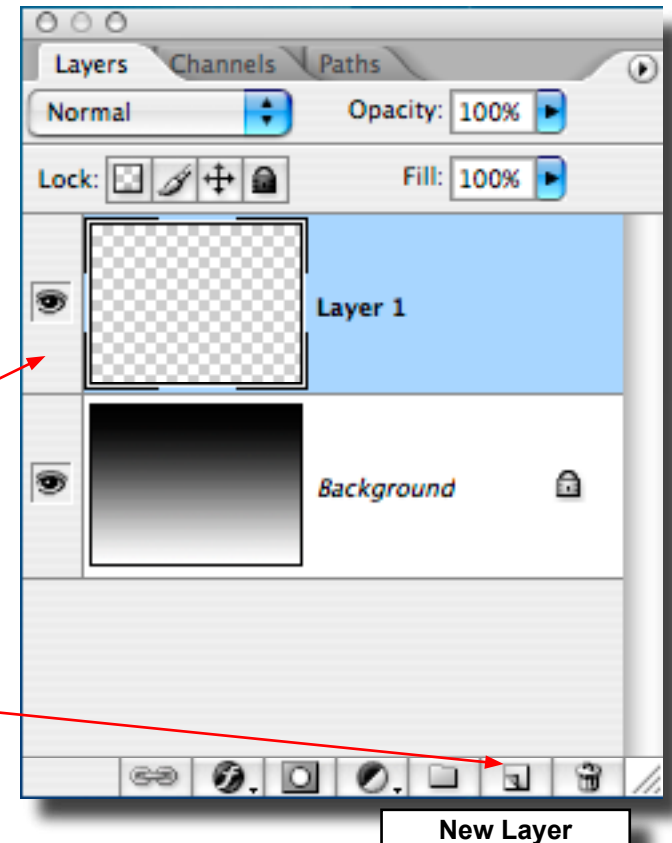


6. To create a sphere, begin by choosing the “Elliptical” Marquee tool from the tool box. Once again, if you see a different marquee tool, click and hold down the mouse to see the other tools available.

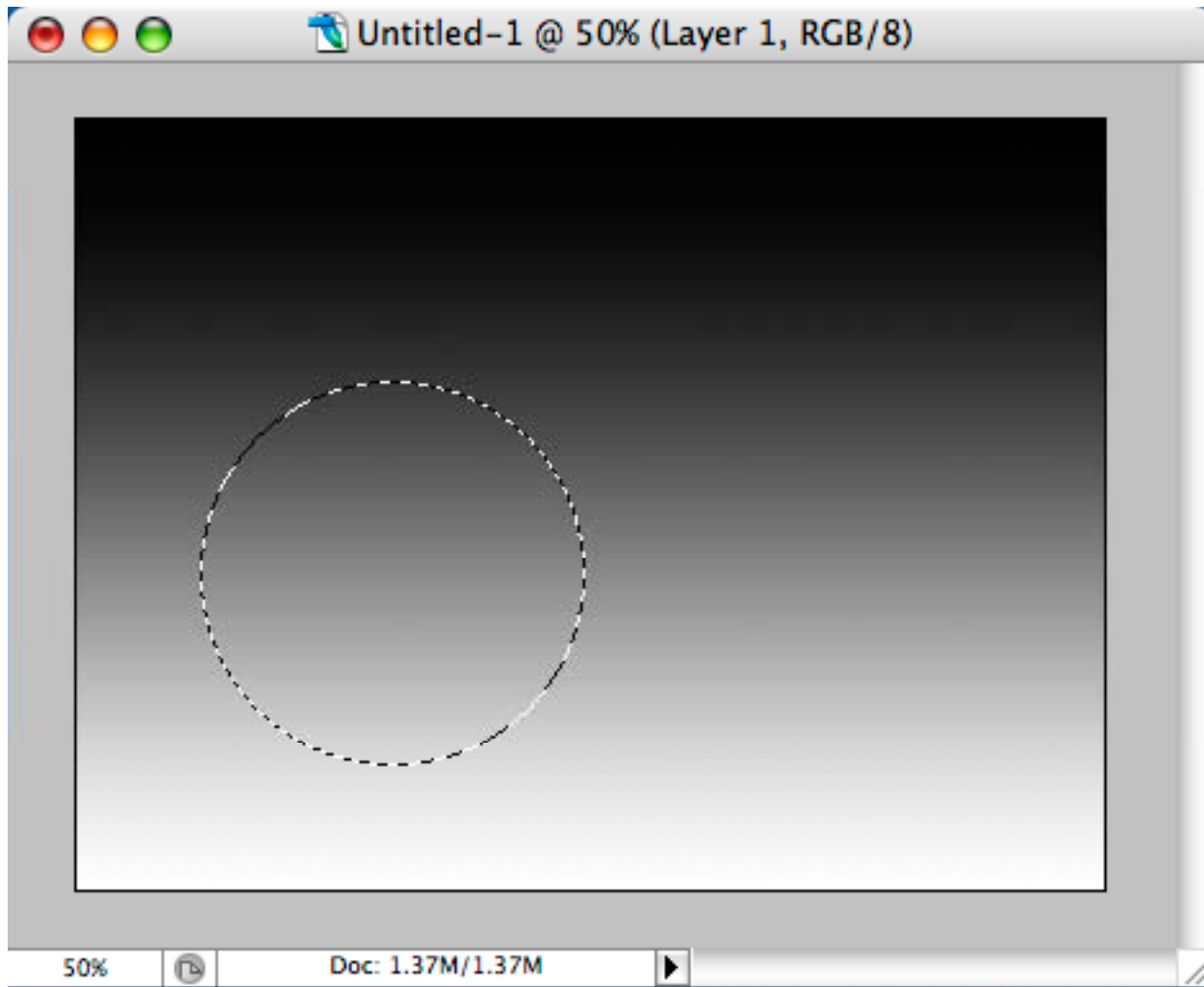


7. In the Option Bar, make sure to choose the “New Selection” Option; set the Feather to “0”; click “Anti-Alias”; Change the Style to “Fixed Size”; and set the Width and Height of the new selection to “300x300 pixels” as shown above.

8. The sphere will be in a new layer of its own so you can move it around or modify it. To create a new layer, click the New Layer button at the bottom of the Layer Palette.



Creating a Sphere



9. Click the mouse on the canvas to create a new selection 300x300 pixels. You can move the selection by using the up and down arrow keys or moving the mouse inside of the selection and dragging.

You are now ready to paint the selection with a gradient.

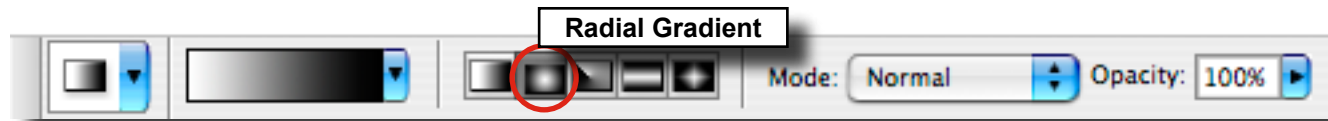
Creating a Sphere



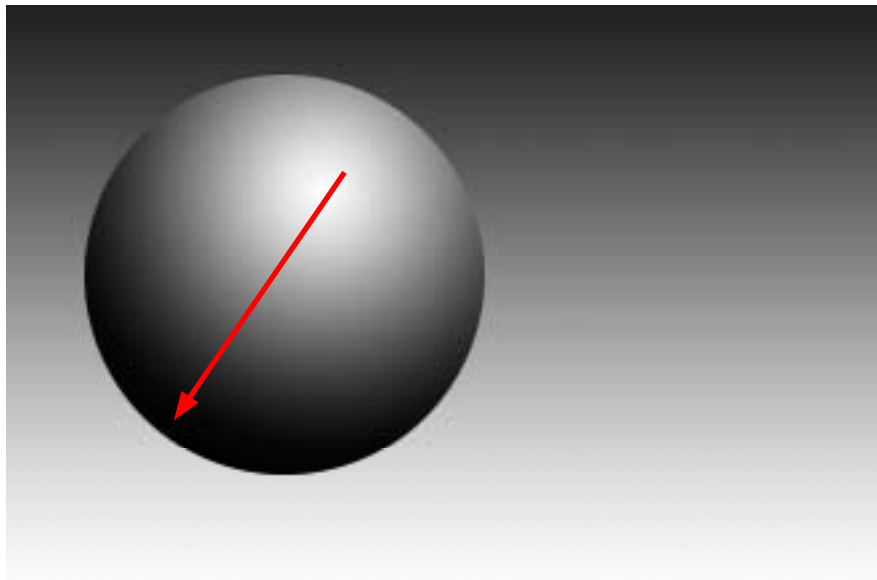
10. You will use the same Gradient tool that use to create the background, except this time the gradient colors will be reversed and you will use a “Radial Gradient” instead of a Linear Gradient. To reverse the colors, change swap the foreground/background colors from Black/White to White/Black. You may do this by pressing the “Switch” button next to the color picker or by just pressing the “x” key on the keyboard.



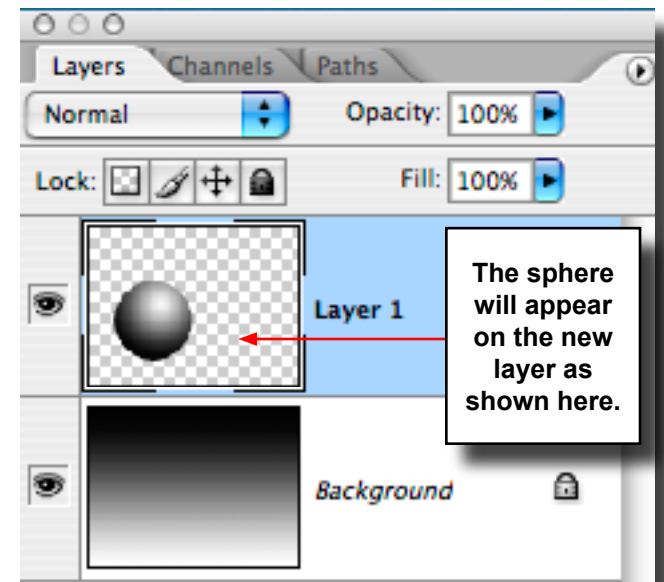
Foreground/Background switched from Black/White to White/Black



11. Leave the Gradient as a “Foreground to Background” and change the type of gradient to “Radial.”

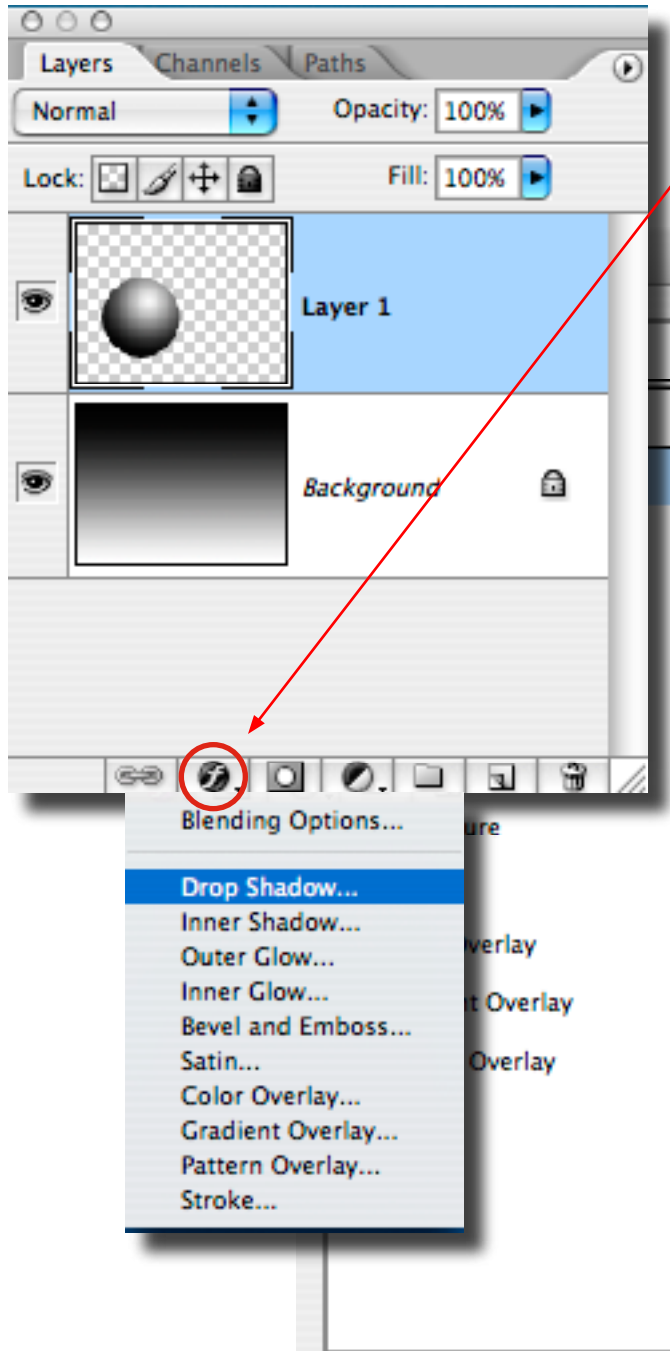


12. With the Gradient Tool active, click inside the new, elliptical selection and drag from near the top right to the bottom left as indicated by the red arrow on the left.

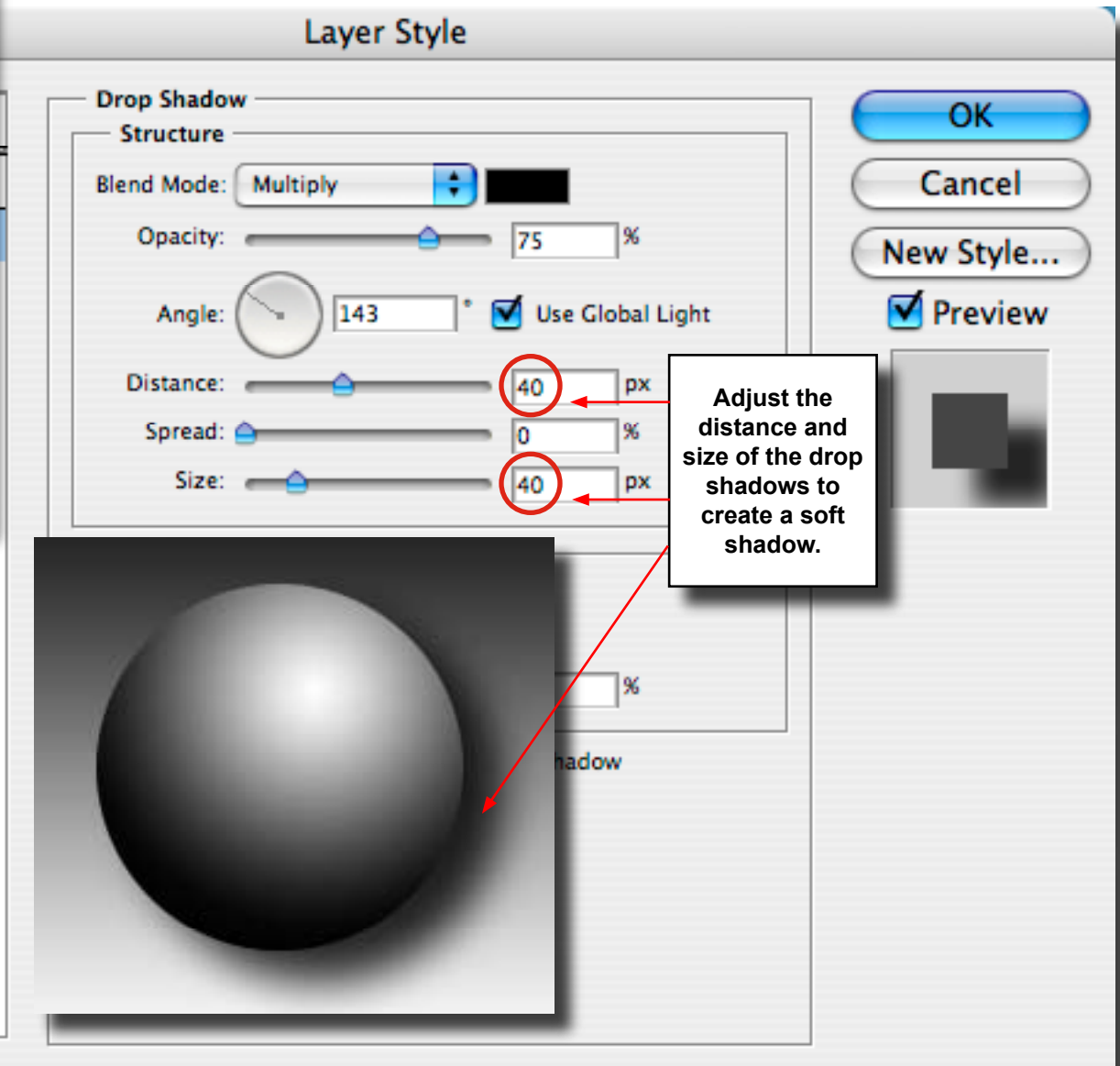


The sphere will appear on the new layer as shown here.

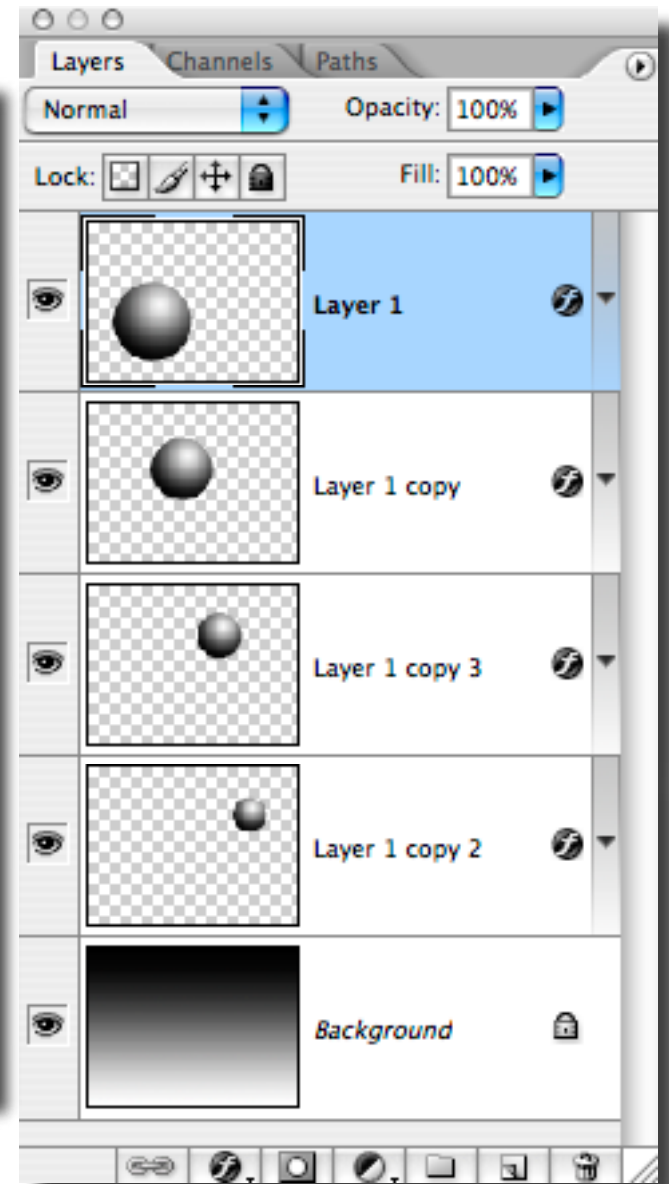
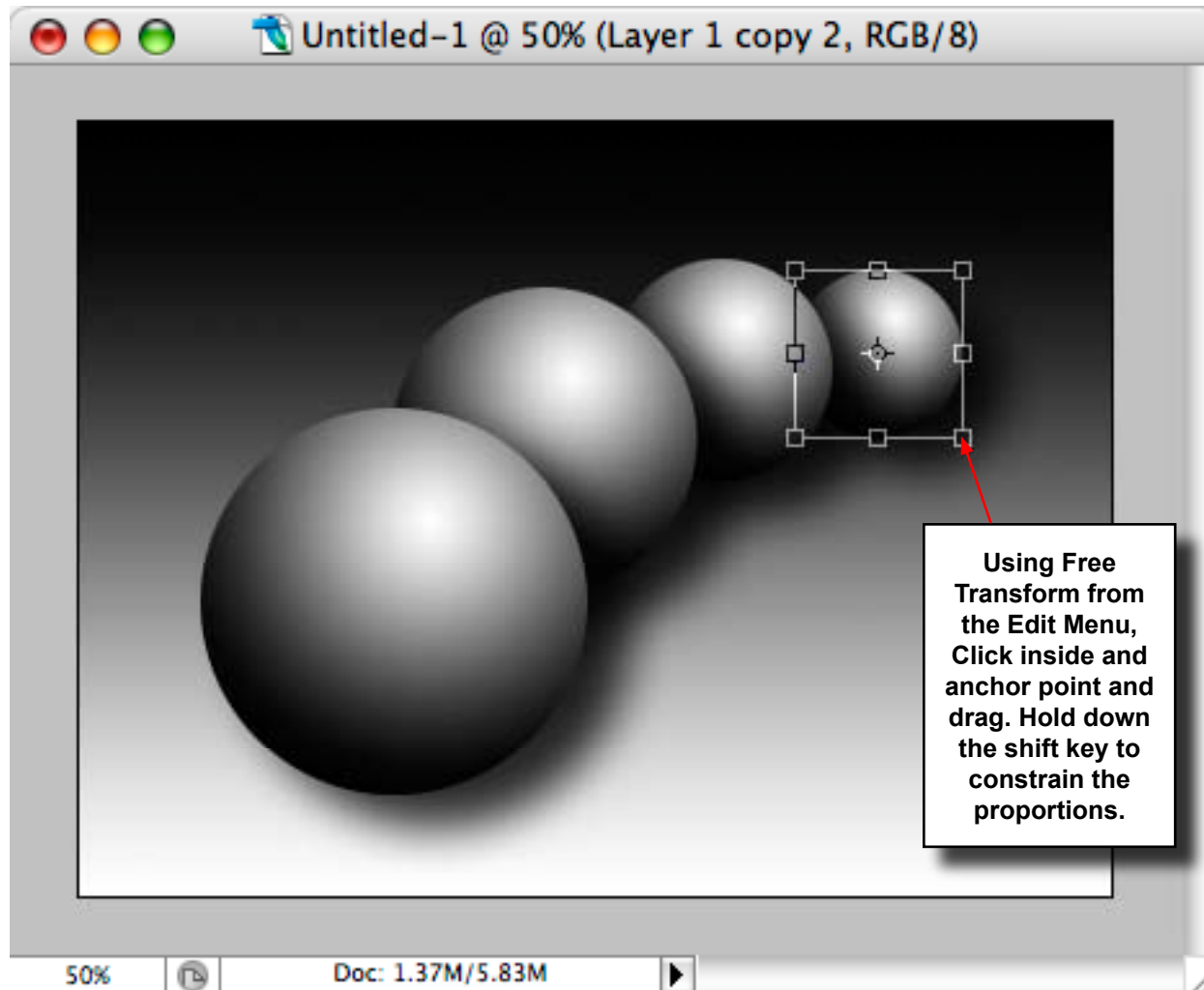
Adding a Drop Shadow



13. Adding a drop shadow will provide a greater illusion of depth. To add a drop shadow behind the sphere, click the “Add Layer Style” button at the bottom of the layer palette and choose “Drop Shadow...” Make adjustments to the Layer Style as shown below.



Duplicate and Resize the Spheres

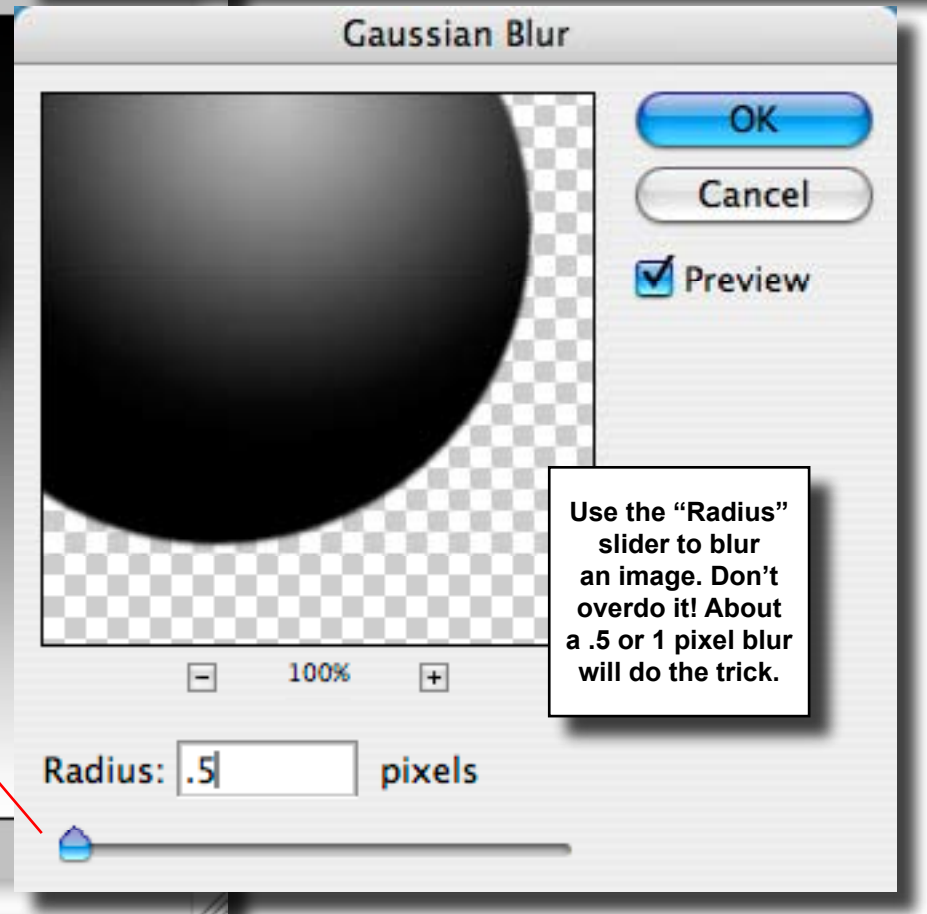
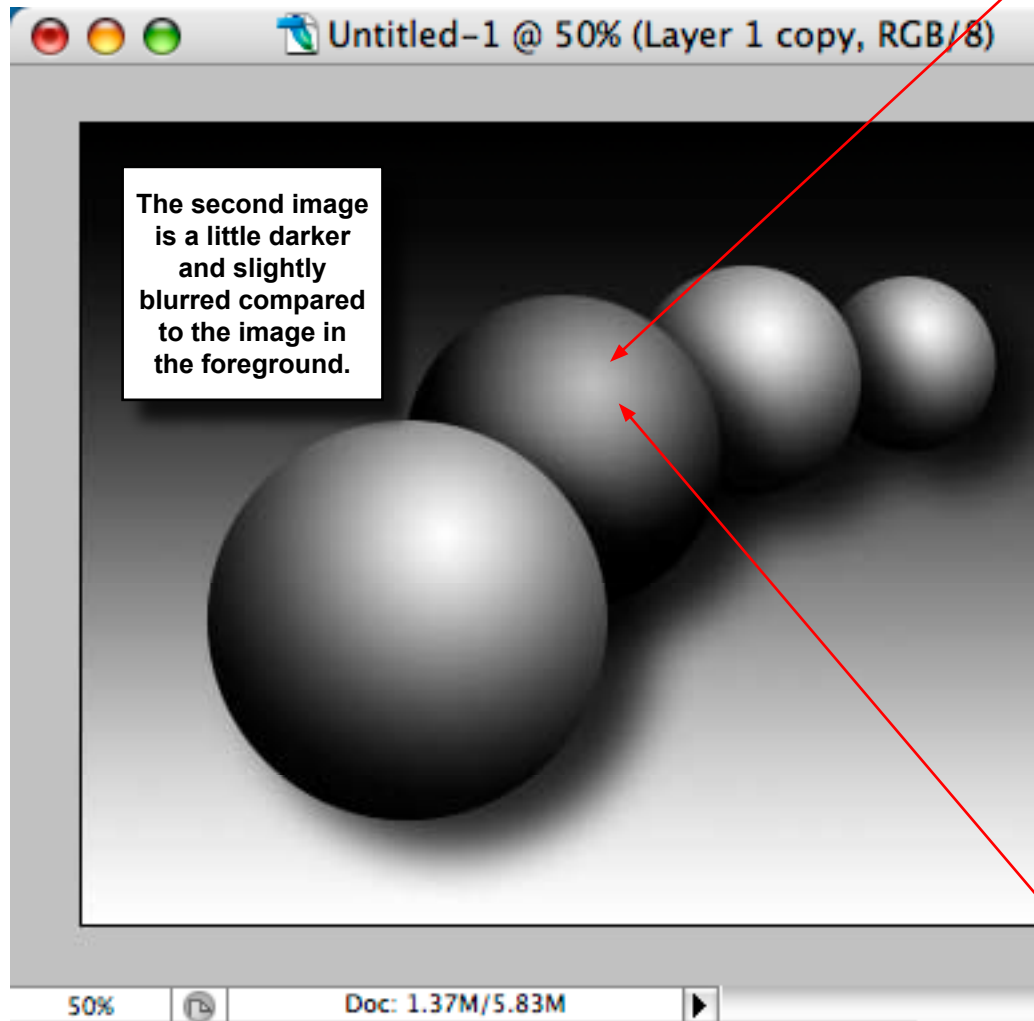
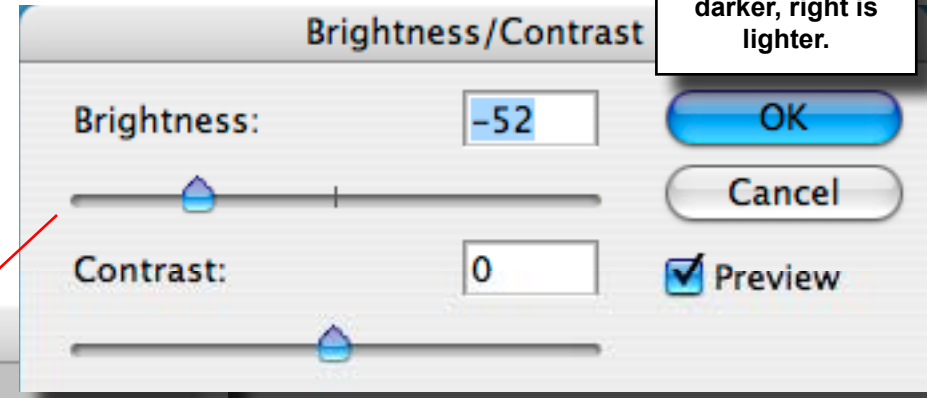


14. To make more spheres, duplicate the layer that includes the sphere you just painted. You can do this easily by pressing Command “J” (Control “J” on a PC). Or you can go to the Menu>Layer>Duplicate Layer. Resize the spheres by selecting the layer and going to the Menu>Edit>Free Transform. Hold down the shift key while you drag the anchor points to resize the image and constrain it to a perfect sphere.

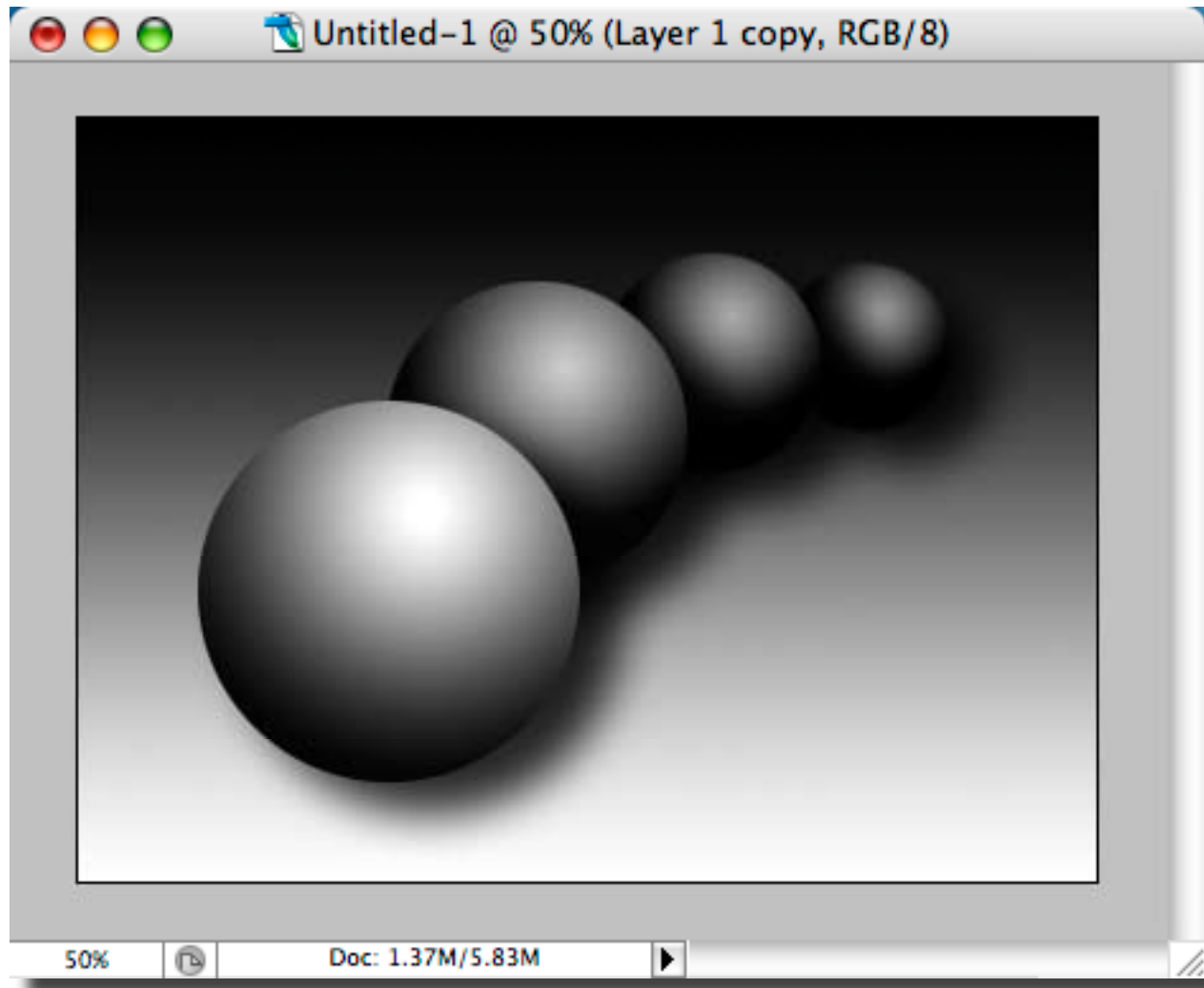
Darkening and Blurring Images

15. As images recede, they may be more blurred and fade into the background (get darker or lighter, depending on the color of the background). To make an image darker or lighter go to the Menu>Image>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast. To blur an image go to the Menu>Filters>Blur>Gaussian Blur

Change the Brightness by dragging the slider. Left is darker, right is lighter.



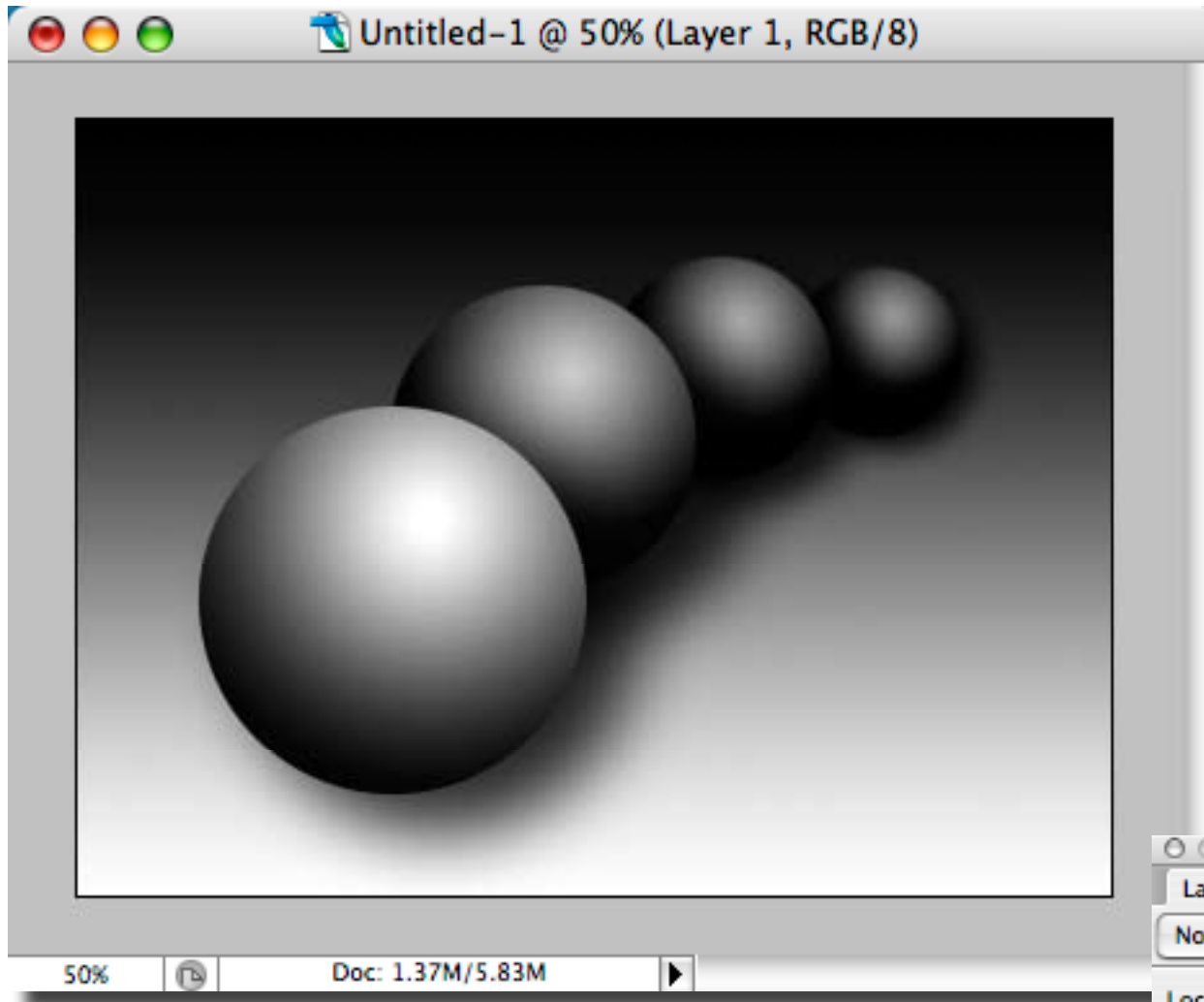
Darkening and Blurring Images



When you are finished, the images should get progressively darker and more blurred as they recede from view. Remember, if your background is light...the images should get lighter as they recede from view. Less contrast creates the illusion of depth.

Only one more step!

Adjusting Drop Shadows



16. You may also want to adjust the drop shadows to change on each image. The closer an image is to a surface, the sharper and less spread out the shadow will be. To adjust the drop shadows, open the effects by clicking on the Layer Styles symbol in the layer and double clicking the "Drop Shadow" style.

