

How to Create Transparency in InDesign CS5

Subject Descriptors: InDesign CS5, Transparency, Frame, Background Image, Inset Spacing, Effects, Opacity, Soften Edges, Gradient Feather, Drop Shadow, Inner Shadow, Outer Glow, Inner Glow, Bevel and Emboss, Satin, Basic Feather, Directional Feather

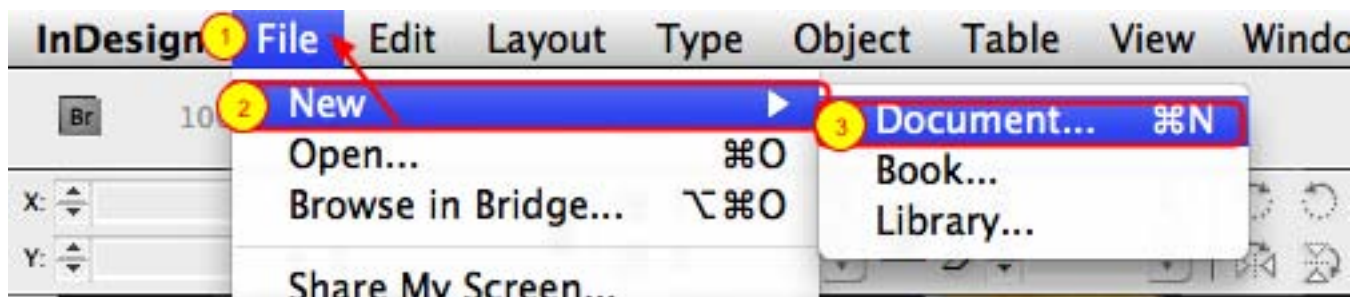
Application (Version): Adobe InDesign CS5 - Windows

Task Description: Learn how to use transparency in InDesign CS5

Tutorial Date: 3 June 2009, by Virginia Smith. Updated 29 June 2010

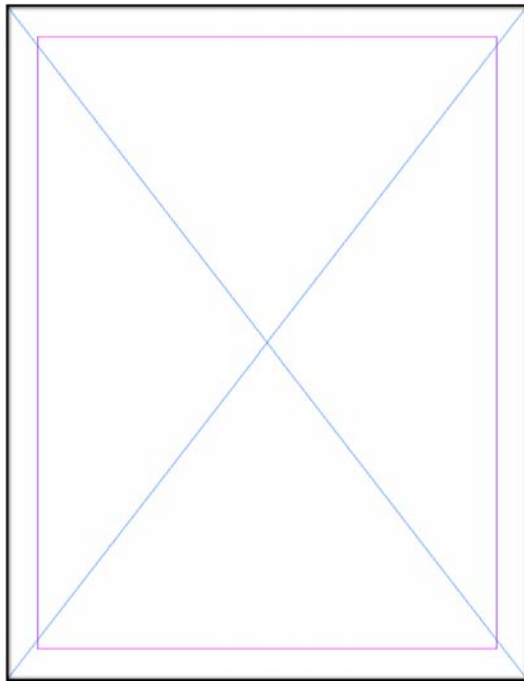
Adobe InDesign CS5 takes some lessons from Photoshop in the way of transparency effects. Those effects we've come to know and love—such as Bevel and Emboss, Inner Shadow, Inner Glow, Outer Glow, and Satin—have now made their way into InDesign CS5.

Create a New InDesign Document



Either create a new InDesign document or open an existing document and navigate to a blank page or blank area of a page so that you can create a text frame.

Create a Large Frame for a Background Image



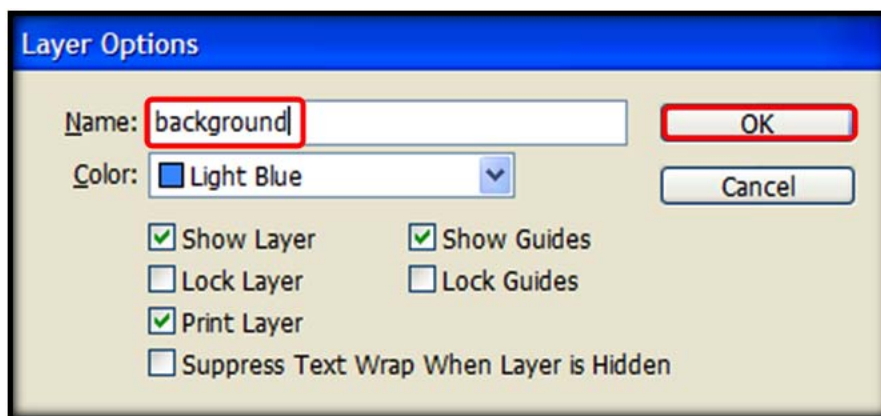
We want to have an image in the background so we can place text frames on top it. Select your **Rectangle Frame** tool (F) and create a large frame that fills most, if not all, of your page. Of course, if you're going to go to the edge of the page and take this document to press, you'll probably want to bleed the image (frame) off the page. If this is what you want, you'd create a page with a bleed area when you create a new document (click the **More Options** button in the **New Document** dialog).

Place a Large Background Image



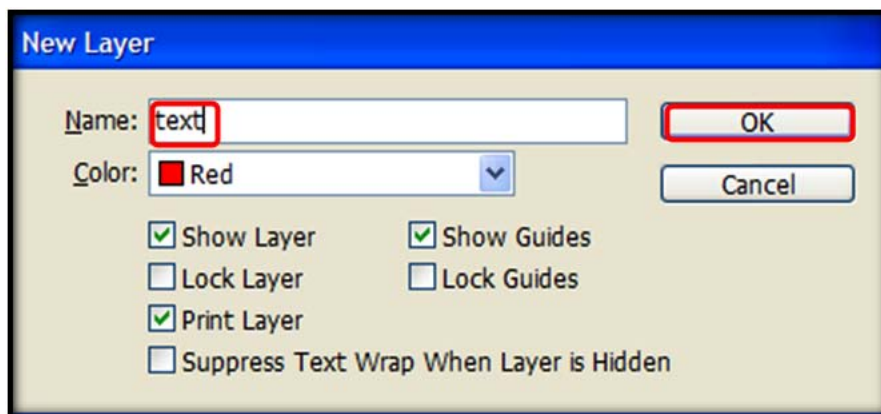
You can either drag and drop or **File>Place** your image into the frame we created. If you use the **Place** command without a frame selected, you'll notice that InDesign now shows you a preview thumbnail of the next image about to be placed.

Background Image on Its Own Layer



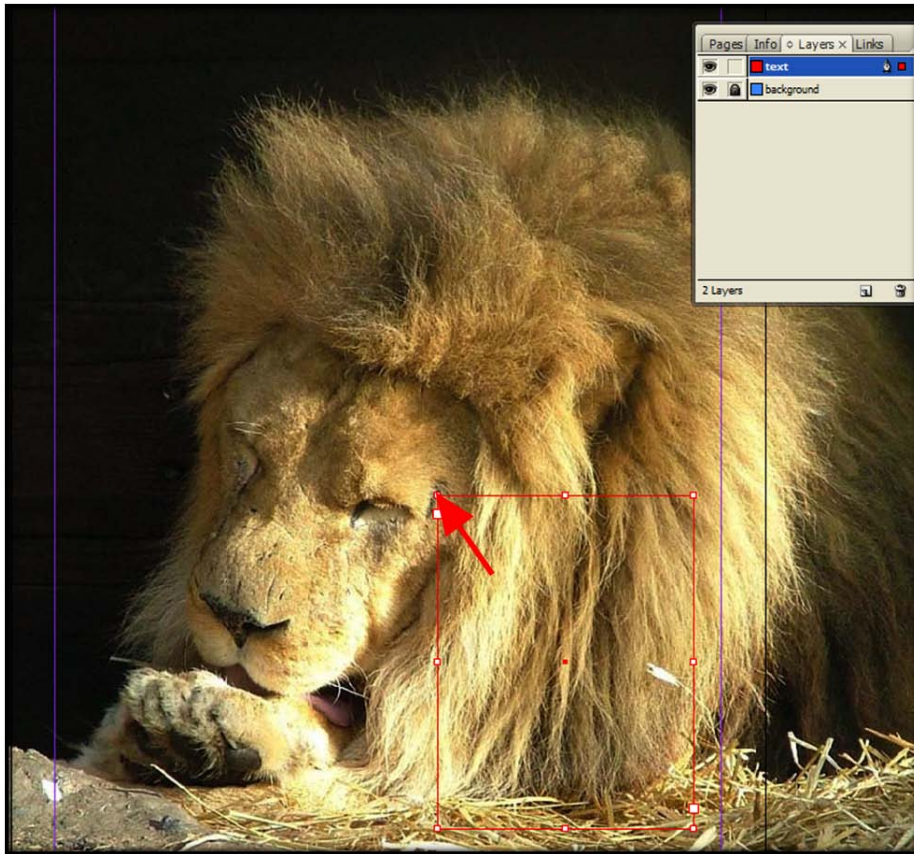
This step is one that will make it easier for you to work on top of the image you've just placed. What we're going to do is put it on its own background layer. Bring up your **Layers** panel (**Windows>Layers**), double-click on **Layer 1**, rename it "background" and click **OK**.

Lock the Background Layer; Make a Text Layer



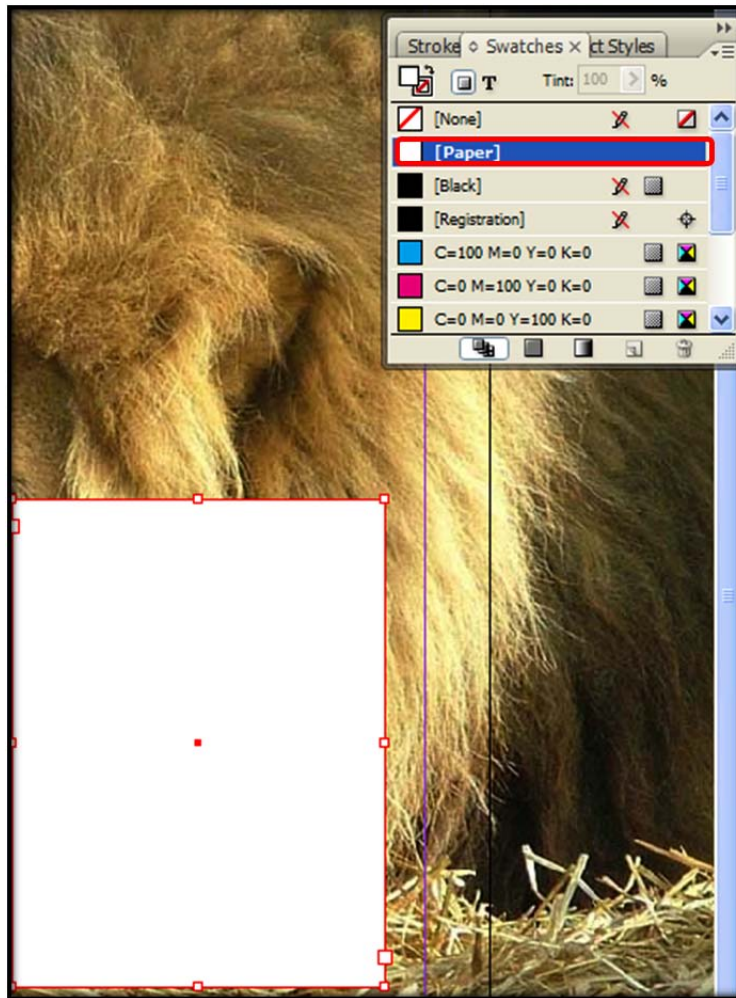
Next we need to lock our background layer and create a new layer on top so that we can place our next frame. In the **Layers** panel, click on the little box to the right of the Eye icon to lock the background layer. Now right click on "background" and click the **Create New Layer** icon at the bottom of the **Layers** panel. Name it "text" and click **OK**.

Create Your Text Frame



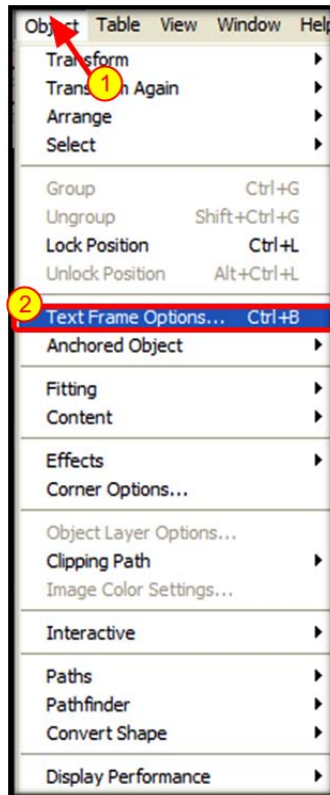
Grab the **Type tool** (T) and drag out new text frame on top of your image where you want to place your text.

Fill Your Text Frame with White

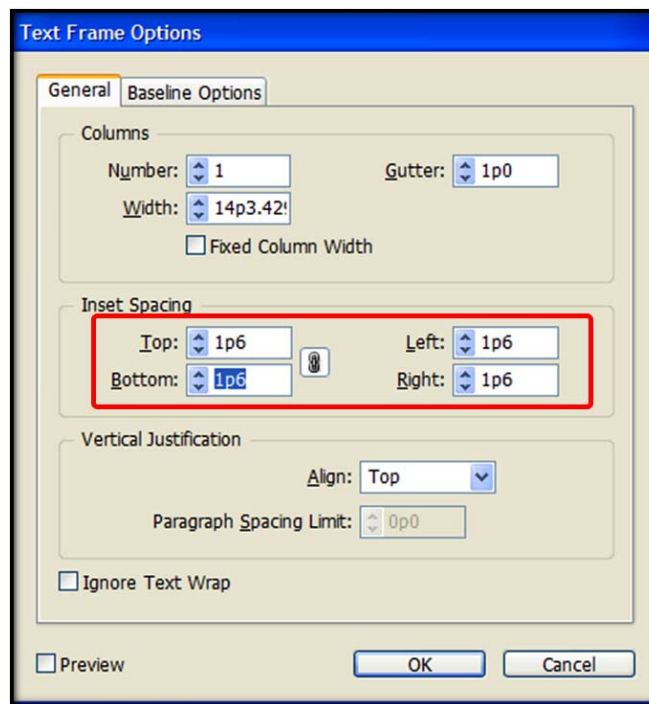


Bring up your **Swatches** panel (**Window>Color>Swatches**, or press **F5**). Because we created the frame with our **Type** tool, InDesign defaults to the insertion point, expecting you to begin typing; but we want to fill the frame with white, so we need to select the frame as an object. Simply switch to your **Selection** tool (V), click the **Fill** icon at the top of the **Swatches** panel, and then click **Paper** to fill your frame with white.

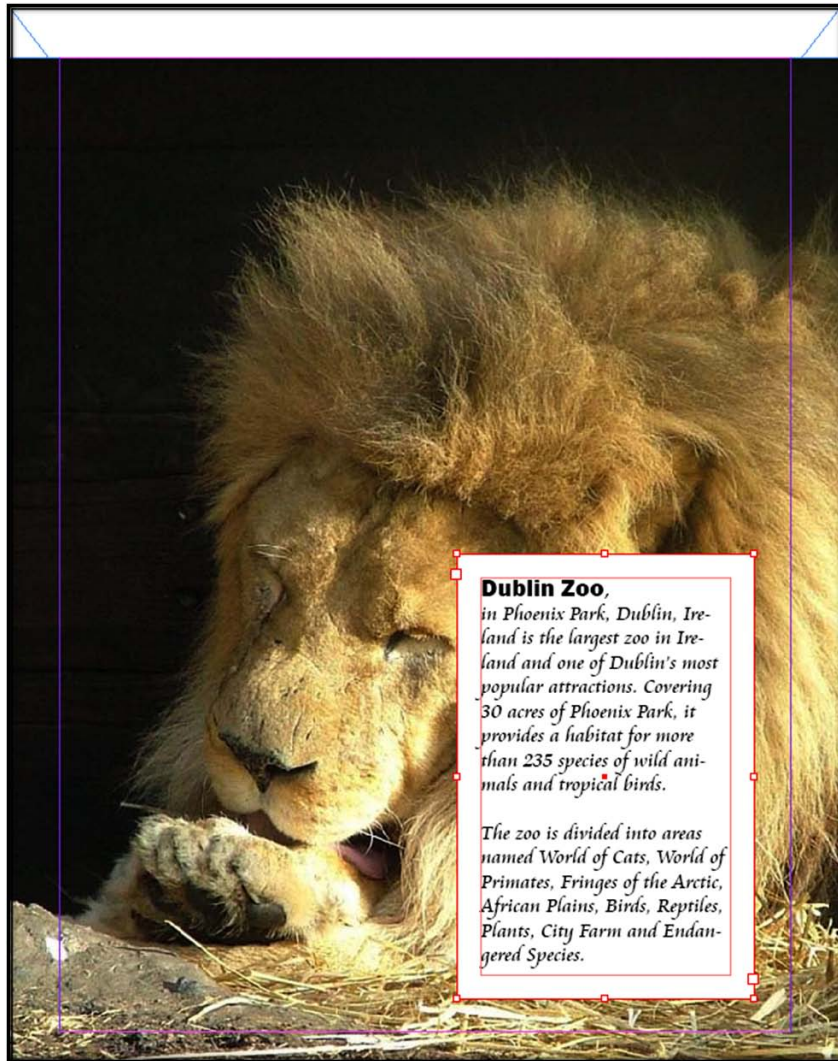
Give your Text Room



By default, InDesign will flow your text to the edges of the frame but we don't want that for our effect, so we need to create an inset on our text frame. With your text frame still selected, choose **Text Frame Options** from the **Object** menu.

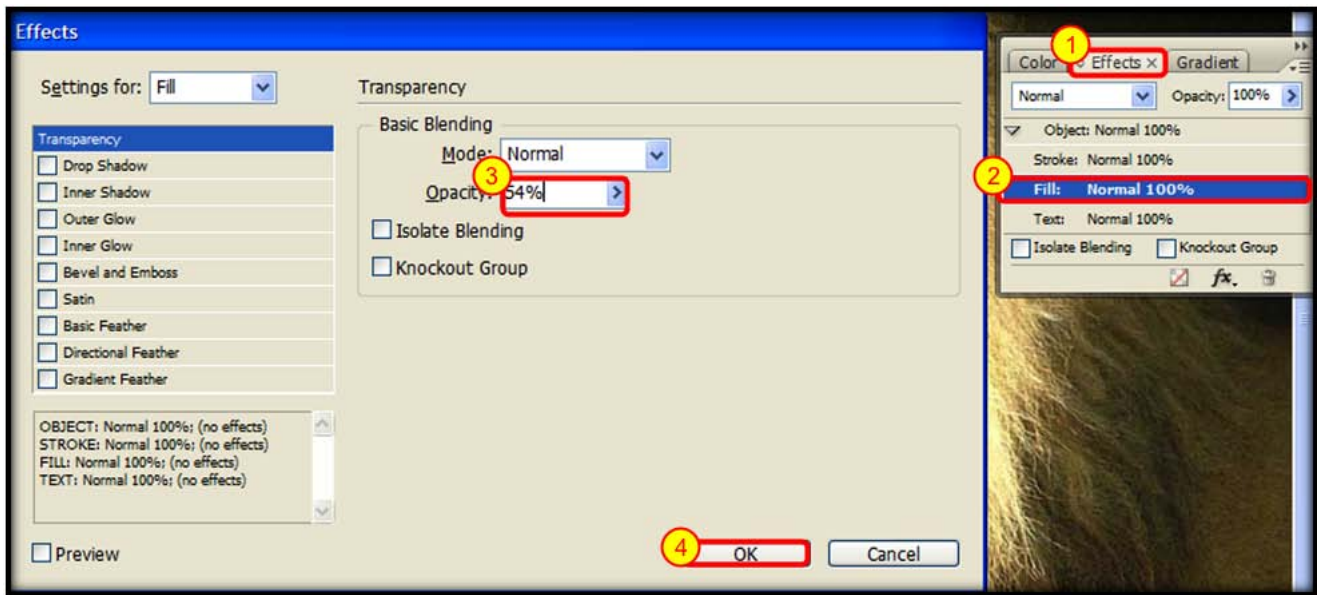


Set your **Inset Spacing** to at least "0.25 in" and click **OK**.



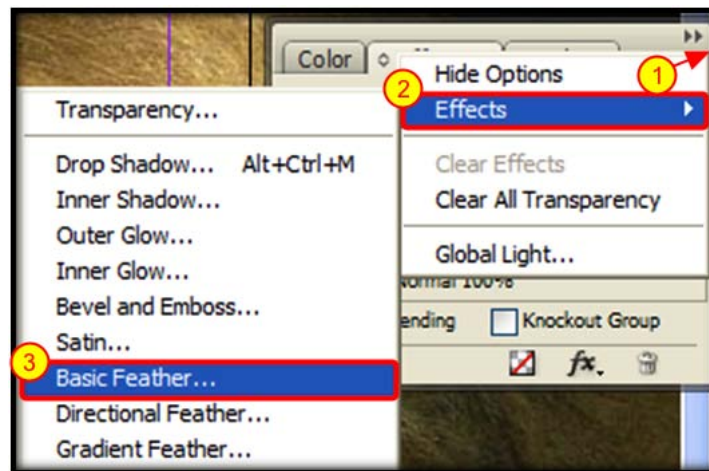
Double-click the **Selection** tool in the middle of your text frame to switch to the **Type** tool. At this point you can start typing or place your text.

Create Effects

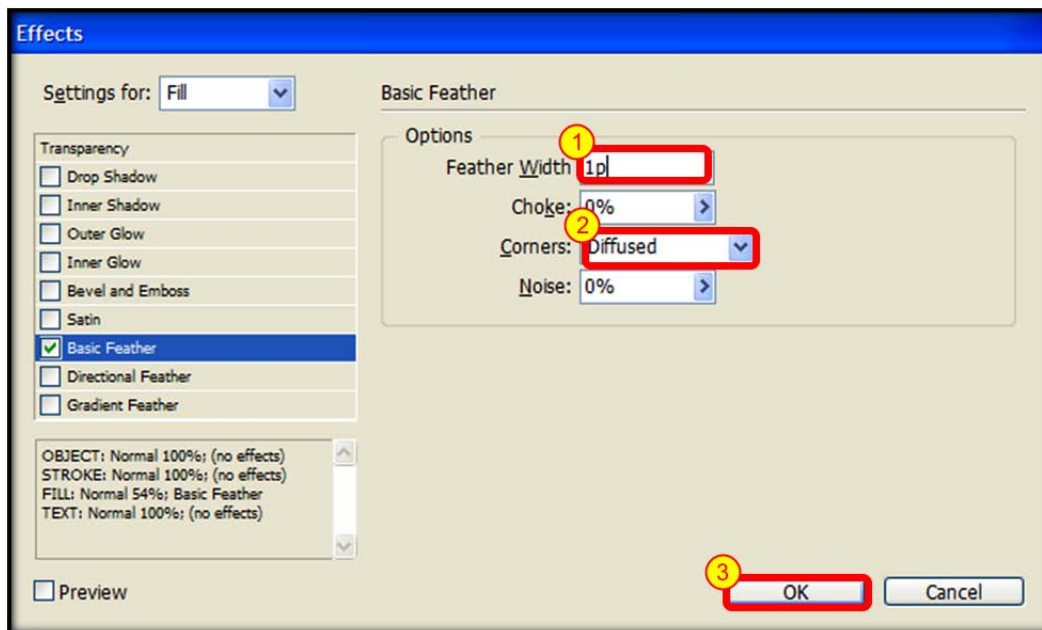


First, we'll try lowering the opacity of the white in our text frame. Unlike previous versions of InDesign, you can do this without lowering the opacity of your type. Switch to the **Selection** tool and go to the **Effects** panel (**Windows>Effects**). It's on **Object** by default, so click on **Fill** and lower the **Opacity** (we used 54%).

Soften the Edges

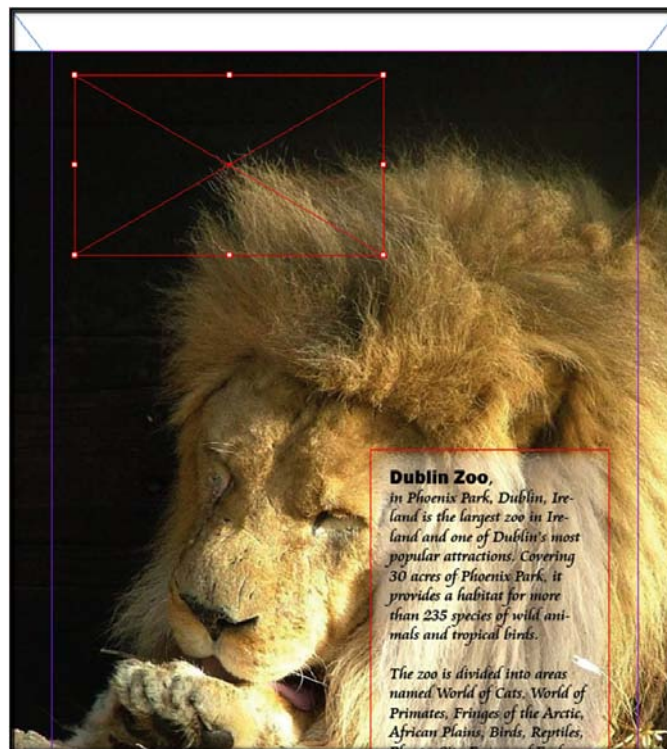


We could stop here, but the edge of the frame has a hard edge, and depending on your design, you may want a soft edge. Click on the flyout menu at the top-right of the **Effects** panel, and choose **Effects>Basic Feather**.



Since you already had **Fill** selected in the **Effects** panel in the previous step, it will already be set to **Fill** in the **Settings For** pop-up menu. This may be fine, but you can also choose **Object**, **Stroke**, or **Text** from the menu to change the feathering for each individual attribute. Click **OK** when it looks the way you want.

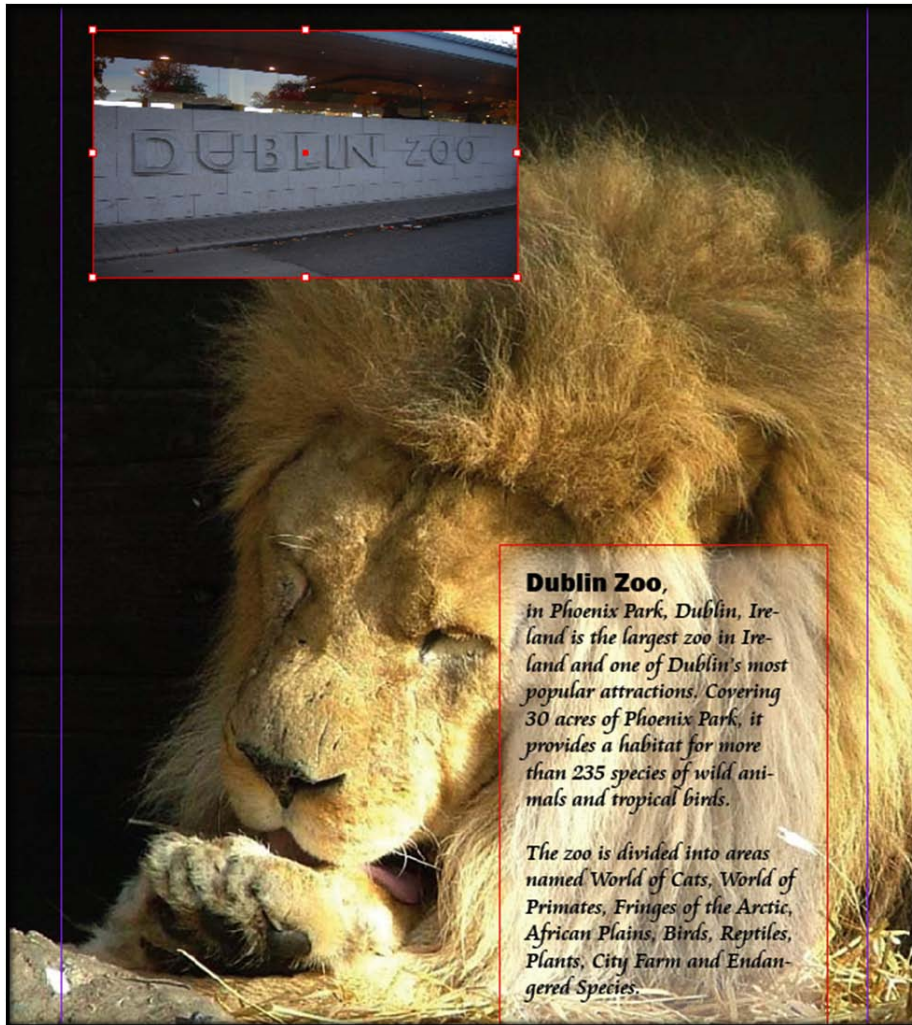
Transparency in Text and Objects



Here's an additional feature that was one of the most requested in InDesign since transparency was introduced: the ability to have an object or text go from opaque to transparent. And now we can do just that. Start by using your **Rectangular Frame** tool (F) to create another frame on top of your

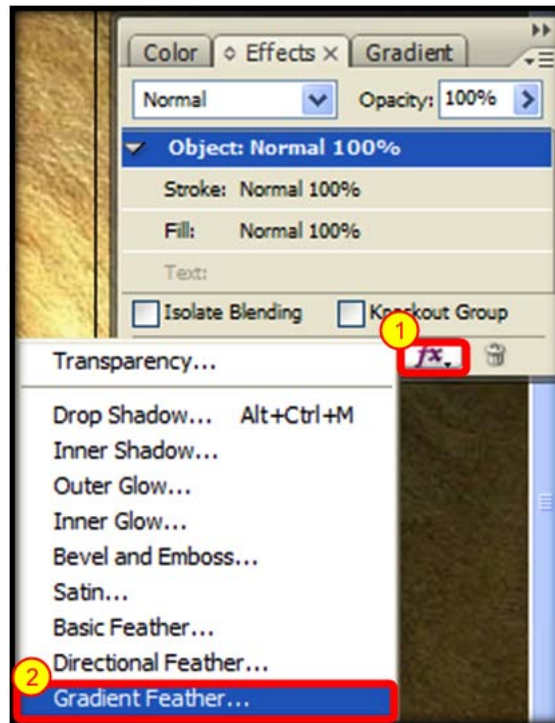
background image.

Place Another Photograph

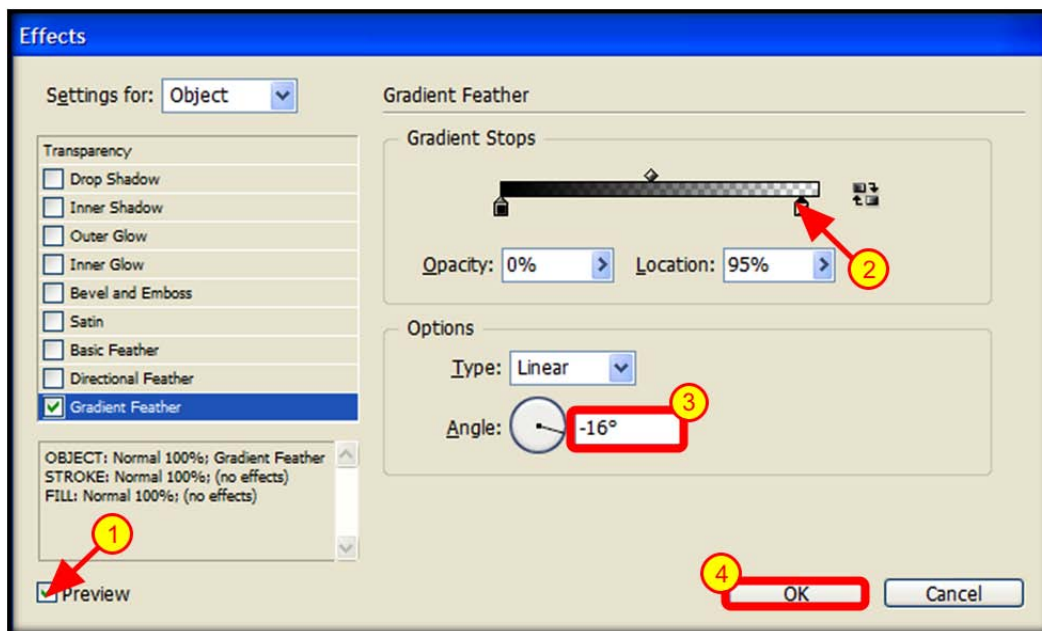


To paste into this frame, press **Alt+Ctrl+V** or right click and select **Paste Into**. Then fit the contents to the frame by either pressing **Alt+Ctrl+E** or right click on the frame and select **Fit Content to Frame** under **Fitting**. In this frame, we're going to place a smaller shot of the entrance to the Dublin Zoo.

Apply a Gradient Feather

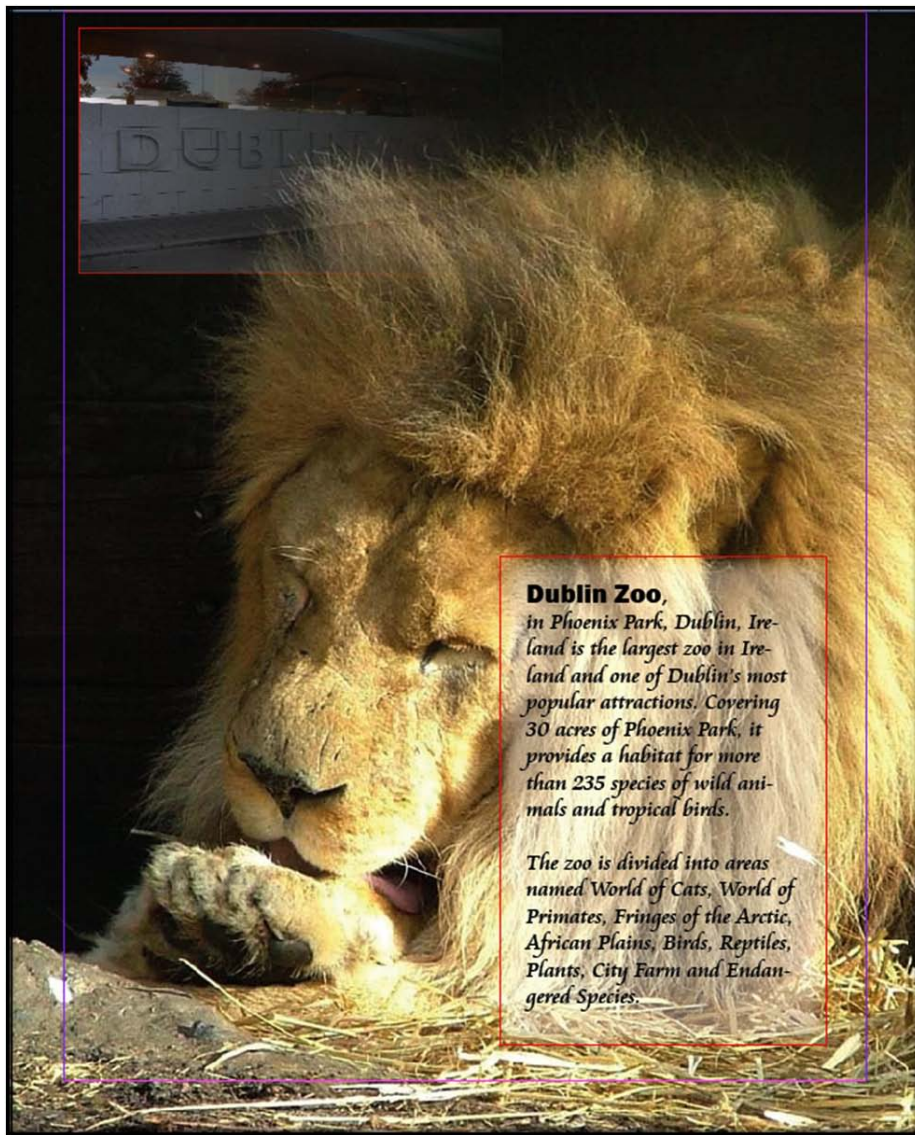


Now click on the *fx* icon at the bottom of the **Effects** panel and choose **Gradient Feather**.



You can control the direction of the gradient feather as well as the amount of transparency applied to your edge by dragging the **Gradient Stops** (as shown). You can also choose a linear or radial gradient. Click the **Preview** box so you can see what's happening and once you have your desired effect, click **OK**.

*Note that **Gradient Feather** can also be applied to vector artwork and text frames too.



Dublin Zoo,

in Phoenix Park, Dublin, Ireland is the largest zoo in Ireland and one of Dublin's most popular attractions. Covering 30 acres of Phoenix Park, it provides a habitat for more than 235 species of wild animals and tropical birds.

The zoo is divided into areas named World of Cats, World of Primates, Fringes of the Arctic, African Plains, Birds, Reptiles, Plants, City Farm and Endangered Species.