

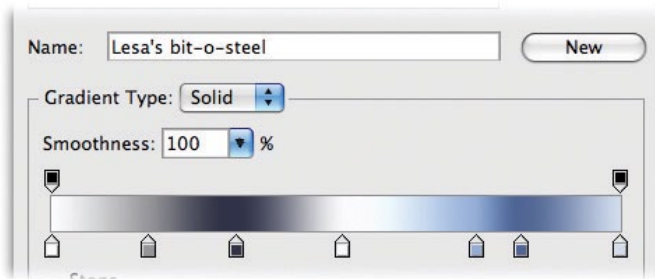
Classic Metal Text

When it comes to text effects, the oldest and most classic (and perhaps overused) effect is that of shiny metal, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1:
Top: This bright, shiny look is comprised of two Type layers and four well-placed layer styles—that's it! The best part is that the text remains editable so you can play around with fonts, text size, and layer styles for hours (or until the snacks run out).

Bottom: The hardest part of creating metal text is editing the gradient. But as long as your color stops resemble these, you're golden—or, more appropriately, chromed.



In days of old, this kind of effect wasn't very forgiving; if you didn't get it right the first time, you had little choice but to start over. Now the whole thing can be done with layer styles, leaving the Type layer intact so you can experiment with fonts and sizes after you're finished. The most complicated part is editing the gradient, as you'll see in the following steps:

1. Create some text with the Type tool.

It's best to pick a nice, thick font so the letterforms have enough surface area to really show off the metal effect. The example in Figure 1 made using the font Capitals set to 130 points.

2. Add a Gradient Overlay via the Layer Styles menu.

To create the look of shiny metal, you need to add a blending of colors atop the text; a gradient overlay is just the ticket. Click the tiny *fx* button at the bottom of the Layers panel and choose Gradient Overlay from the pop-up menu.

3. Edit the gradient.

Click the gradient preview and, in the Gradient Editor, edit the color stops so that they resemble what's shown at the bottom of Figure 1. (If you're feeling frisky, you can experiment with adding more stops.) Don't close the Layer Styles dialog box just yet.

4. Add a gradient stroke.

Click the Stroke checkbox on the left side of the Layer Styles dialog box and choose Gradient from the Fill Type pop-up menu.

5. Load the Metals gradient set.

From the Presets menu, choose Metals and click the swatch named Silver (hover your cursor above any swatch to see its name). For more on loading gradients, see page 363.

6. Apply a bevel and emboss to the stroke.

Click the "Bevel and Emboss" checkbox on the left side of the Layer Styles dialog box and choose Stroke Emboss from the Style pop-up menu.

7. Change the Technique pop-up to Chisel Hard.

This setting really makes the edges of the text look more like steel. Increase the depth to about 350 percent and change the Gloss Contour to Ring Double (it looks like two steep hills). *Now* you can close the Layer Styles dialog box.

8. Adjust the text's kerning, if necessary (to learn about kerning, see page 605).

The next step involves duplicating the Type layer to create yet another stroke, so you'll want to get the text just right before proceeding. If there's too much space between the letters, fix that now.

9. Duplicate the Type layer and drag it below the original.

Press ⌘-J (Ctrl+J on a PC) to duplicate the Type layer with all the layer styles attached. In the Layers panel, drag the duplicate layer (with its entourage of styles) below the original Type layer.

10. Remove all the formatting except the Stroke layer style from the duplicate layer.

With the duplicate layer selected in the Layers panel, drag both the gradient overlay and the bevel and emboss layer styles to the trash can at the bottom right of the Layers panel.

11. Change the Stroke layer style to solid black.

In the Layers panel, double-click the duplicate layer's Stroke layer style and, in the resulting Layer Styles dialog box, choose Color from the Fill Type pop-up menu. Make sure the color is set to black (it will be unless you've changed it).

12. Adjust the size and opacity of the stroke.

You don't want this final stroke to be so big that it takes away from the beautifully shiny metal text. Reducing the opacity also helps it remain subtle. In Figure 1, the stroke size was set to 8 with an opacity of 70 percent.

13. When everything looks good, click OK to send the Layer Style dialog box on its merry way.

Voilà—you've got yourself some shiny, metallic text. But just because you know how to do this doesn't mean you *should*; you are hereby given permission to use this technique twice a year—at most.