A layer style is one or more effects applied to a layer or layer group. You can apply one of the preset styles provided with Photoshop or create a custom style using the Layer Styles dialog box. The layer effects icon appears to the right of the layer’s name in the Layers palette. You can expand the style in the Layers palette to view or edit the effects that compose the style.

Layer Style Presets
With the second layer selected Styles text. When the style is clicked on from the Styles panel it will link to that layer and you then can see the effect.

What are Layer Styles?
Layer styles are effects in Photoshop whether you realize it or not. Well how easy you ask? If you go to Window > Styles (Layer Style Presets) this panel has preset styles to started with, simply click on a style and notice the effects added to the layer.
Effects can easily be adjusted after applying them, making them non-destructive in nature.

The other option of using Styles is through the Effects options in the Layers Panel.

When you left click on the Fx icon a drop down menu will appear. Then select a type of Effect which will then give you a dialog to enter the settings of that option.

**Style Types**

- **Drop Shadow** - Adds a shadow that falls behind the contents on the layer.
- **Inner Shadow** - Adds a shadow that falls just inside the edges of the layer’s content, giving the layer a recessed appearance.
- **Outer Glow and Inner Glow** - Add glows that emanate from the outside or inside edges of the layer’s content.
- **Bevel and Emboss** - Add various combinations of highlights and shadows to a layer.
- **Satin** - Applies interior shading that creates a satiny finish.
- **Color, Gradient, and Pattern Overlay** - Fills the layer’s content with a color, gradient, or pattern.
- **Stroke** - Outlines the object on the current layer using color, a gradient, or a pattern. It is particularly useful on hard-edged shapes such as type.

Let's start with the Drop Shadow type and the dialog of choices that come with it.

**Layer Style Dialog And Settings**

Below is the Drop Shadow dialog, so let’s look at what options are available to work with the Drop Shadow effect.

We’re going to be looking at all of the options in a Layer Style dialog. But we’re going to skip blending modes until later.

If you would like information now about blending modes then checkout this site for more information "How to Understand Blend Modes in Photoshop."
Let's look at the rest of the dialog in the Layer Styles panel;

To do this download this psd file to your computer. style example file <-- Right click and choose > SaveTargetAs

See if you can create the same look as what I have, if not I will walk you through the process.

- **Opacity** - Using the slider or you can enter a number in the box - 100% is opaque and 0% is totally transparent. As you can see above the default is 75% which works really well. If you add any percentage higher than that the shadow becomes a hard shape and no longer a shadow. Sometimes you'll need to take the value down to somewhere between 50% or 60%.

- **Angle** - is very easy to understand. Where is the light coming from (direction of the line is pointing and that will tell you where the shadow will be

**Distance** - Specifies the offset distance for a shadow or satin effect. You can drag in the document window to adjust the offset distance. I've set the distance farther than usual so it's easier to see.
Everything you ever wanted to know about Layer Styles

Spread - Expands the boundaries of the matte prior to blurring.

Size - Specifies the radius and size of blur or the size of the shadow.

With Size set at zero above you can see it looks like a second layer of text, very clean. Below the Size is set to 40 px and you can just tell what it is.
Contour - With solid color glows, Contour allows you to create rings of transparency. With gradient-filled glows, Contour allows you to create variations in the repetition of the gradient color and opacity. In beveling and embossing, Contour allows you to sculpt the ridges, valleys, and bumps that are shaded in the embossing process. With shadows, Contour allows you to specify the fade.

The first choice is called "Linear" this is the default and works great for most things, but sometimes you'll need something else. Below I've chosen "Cone" to change the contour.

There also is the choice of Adding/Resetting>Loading/Replacing Contours using the submenu.
Everything you ever wanted to know about Layer Styles

If you left click on the Contour a **Contour Editor** will open up and allow you to change the shape to your imagination.

**Noise** - Specifies the number of random elements in the opacity of a glow or shadow. Enter a value or drag the slider.

**Layer Knocks Out Drop Shadow** - Controls the drop shadow's visibility in a semitransparent layer. Basically if you uncheck this option the shadow will be on top of the text instead of below.
Anti-alias - Blends the edge pixels of a contour or gloss contour. This option is most useful on small shadows with complicated contours.

Usually Anti-alias

Look at the difference in the first column of pixels in the image below this creates a more consistent looking shadow.

So let's take a look a some actual uses of these setting with some different text tutorials. Starting with the Chrome effect to text.