

The Poser 8 Alphabet by Don Albert

The Poser Alphabet is the first human figure alphabet designed entirely in three dimensions. This design continues a tradition begun by the scribes and illuminators in the middle ages of forming people into letter-forms to decorate manuscripts and scriptures.

Each pose set forms a letter or number when viewed from front and center. When seen from other angles the poised figures appear as fluid acrobatic or dance-like configurations. All poses are meticulously crafted, entirely in the round.

The set consists of the entire Roman alphabet in capital letters, Arabic numerals, and several punctuation marks, plus several alternate letters for frequently used characters.

All poses will snap to position. Each letter is made of 1-3 figures. Library icons show pose sets with all figures. Poses are named to designate each letter, position, and character.

"A left Ryan" and "A right Alyson" designate which one is in which place for which letter. Alternate letters are designated with double letters, A2, B2, C2, and so on.

These alpha-figures were created from nude models to better display the human form in this function. See the product display images to see how you can add clothing and props. Adding clothing can obscure some of the points of contact between the figures. In most cases it is pretty easy to bend or twist a limb for a better view.

This version of the P8 3D figure alphabet is my latest, following those for Poser 3, Poser 4, and Poser 6 figures and for Victoria 3 and Michael 3. This is my best yet. The contact and forms are smoother and there are some newer designs. There are more alternates than before.

These figure-letters were created with Poser 8 and the Ryan and Alyson characters on a Macintosh.

Spelling Lesson

How to make words with the Poser alphabet characters

There are two methods for making words. One is to compose the entire word within the Poser Studio Window (PSW). The other is to piece together single letters in an image editing program (IEP) such as Photoshop or Paintshop Pro.

Composing in the PSW is more challenging and uses more memory, but can retain a true perspective. Patching letters together is easier, but displays the word all from the same perspective. Each has its technical and artistic advantages which are a matter of personal preference. I use both methods depending on what effect I want.

Composing in the Poser Studio Window

1. Think of the word you want to create. Add the figures and apply the poses for the first letter.
2. After setting the first letter, adjust the PSW to the proportion and camera setting you want. You may change those as you go. Work with the Front Camera initially as it is easiest to see the spacing of the letters. Try using other cameras after setting up your word.
3. Wait until you have composed the entire word before adding clothes and props.
4. Add the next set of figures and poses. Each pose set you apply will snap to the zero X and Z positions position. It is necessary then to move the second letter set to the right. Select the first figure's hip in the second letter (with Inverse Kinematics turned OFF for both hands and feet) and move the figures to the right with the Parameter Dials or Posing Tools. Then move the second figure. you can attach one figure to another and move both at the same time. SYP8RMFD... See your *Poser 8 Reference Manual* for details. Adjust the camera as needed.
5. Continue this process until your spelling is complete. This method works better for shorter words and names. By placing successive letters further back along the Z-axis it is possible to fit in more letters and create a nice perspective. See the sample below.
6. Adjust your camera as you go to make it all fit. Save your final camera setting to a Library section for later reference and use. Applying different light sets can have dramatic effects on your composition.
7. Once you have your word finished... SAVE! Now add the hair, clothes, and props.

All poses were designed with nude and barefoot figures. Adding shoes will require some adjustment of the figure position along the Y-axis, especially for boots and high heels.

Fitting some types clothes, like long dresses, can be difficult with certain poses. Adjustments of clothes and hands touching other figures may be necessary.

9. When all figures are posed, dressed, and propped, SAVE again before you render. Render your word scene.

An example of this method is shown below where I posed 20 figures to spell my name. Notice by the ground grid how the figures recede making the letters seem smaller. The main camera was used for this one. You can achieve the appearance of Initial Caps this way, too. This image is from the Poser 4 alphabet.



Composing in an Image Editing Program

1. Follow the same steps as before to build a single letter. Rather than adding more letters to the PSW, render and save this letter as a single PSD, JPG, or PNG file. Use the same color background for all letters. It is easier to extract the figures and re-combine them this way. You can change color or add a background later.
2. Save your first letter. Use this file as a *starter template* for the next letter. This maintains your camera and light settings. Save your camera and light settings for the word on which you are working. Create the successive letters in the same way until you have them all. Store them all in the same folder, named after your word.
4. Once you have all of your letters rendered, open the first letter in your IEP and save and name the file after your word. (I work with Adobe Photoshop, so my instructions will relate to that program. However, the procedures are similar to other IEPs.)
5. Expand the canvas size horizontally to fit your word. You can add more space later or crop if there is too much space. Slide your first letter all the way to the left.
4. Open the next letter. Select all of the background, then select the inverse. Copy, then close. You can also select what you want in various ways and save it as a clipping path to import or paste into your other file.
5. Go back to the main image and paste. The next letter comes in as a unit with no background as a new layer. Slide it into position. If you add horizontal rules just under the feet of the figures it is easier to place them in the proper relation to one another. If you use a ground (prop), it can help align the images.
6. Bring in successive letter images as new layers. Name the layers after the letters for easier use. Adjust the positions until satisfied. SAVE. Then save the file. Preserve your original IEP file with layers intact to change later if necessary. JPGs will flatten all layers into one layer.

The ALPHABET image at the top of this document was composed in this manner.

A way to achieve some perspective using the Front Camera is to angle some letters along the Y-axis. For instance if you wanted to spell out the word SEVEN, you would set the middle letter, V, as 0° on the Y-axis. S could be rotated $+18^\circ$ and the N rotated -18° . The first E would be rotated $+9^\circ$ and the second E rotated -9° .

Notes on Props, Cameras, Lights, and Shadows

1. Use the Front Camera for straight-on perspective and to eliminate shadows. Use the Main Camera to get more perspective and to show shadows.
2. Angling the Main Camera along the Y-axis and staggering the Z-position of the figures is another way to fit in more using only the PSW. Words do not have to be seen from front and center to still be read. Angling the cameras can give interesting effects.
4. Using colored lights with all-white material and nude figures makes for very dramatic effects.
5. Props can be added to enhance your image. The hands are holding on and supporting other figures in most poses, so free hands are not many. If you bring in a hand-held prop, you will need to change the hand pose for that prop. Props can also be used to form or re-form letter parts, even eliminating one figure from the pose set. Try combining poses from different letters to see what you get.

Changing Figures

This alphabet was designed with Poser 8's Ryan and Alyson base figures. Poses do not swap seamlessly between genders. If you want to switch out figures and have 2 females or 2 males, apply the pose and adjust the Y-axis of the hip. You may also need to tweak hand/arm positions of the substitute figure. Figures with conforming clothes usually require some manipulation of the clothes to make them fit in the more extreme positions.

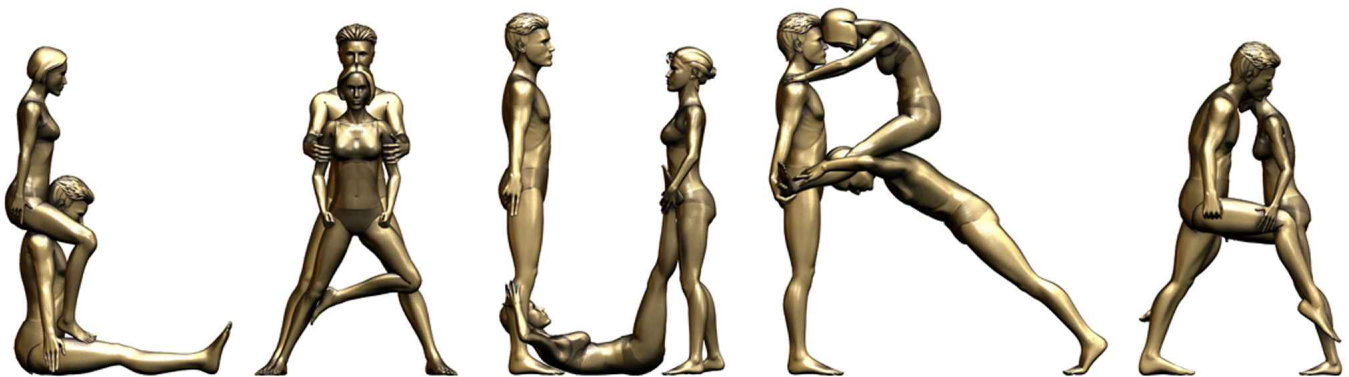
File Management

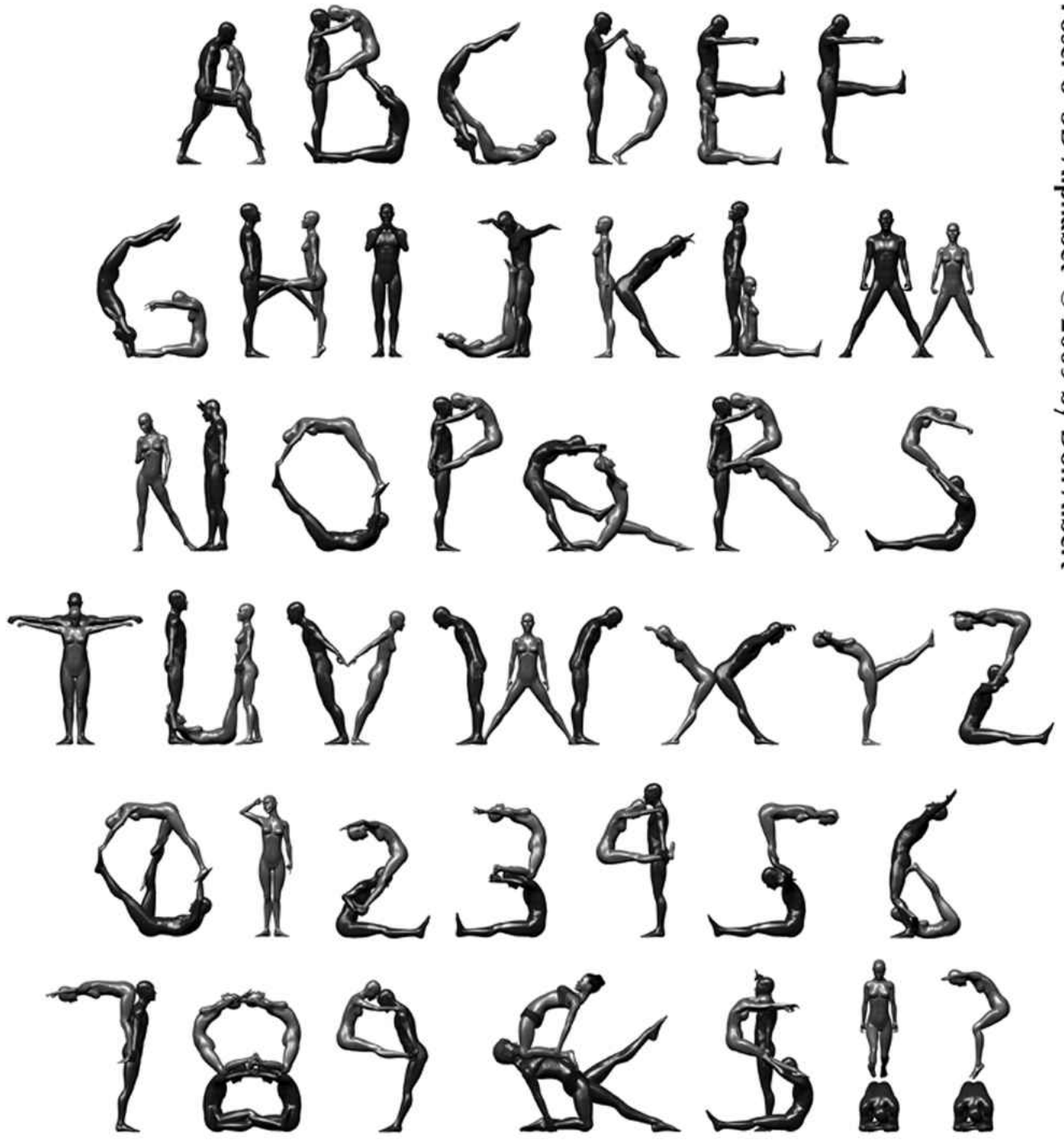
When setting up words, especially when all figures are in one scene or there are a lot of clothes, use the Low or Reduced Resolution figures to include more figures, using less memory.

Copyright © September 2009 by Don Albert, all poses, text and images. No files contained herein may be sold or in any way redistributed, without permission. Violators will be scheduled for DNA resequencing. Acceptance and use of files are considered "as is." The owner offers no responsibility for files once uploaded to the WWW and thence downloaded or otherwise received by the Consumer.

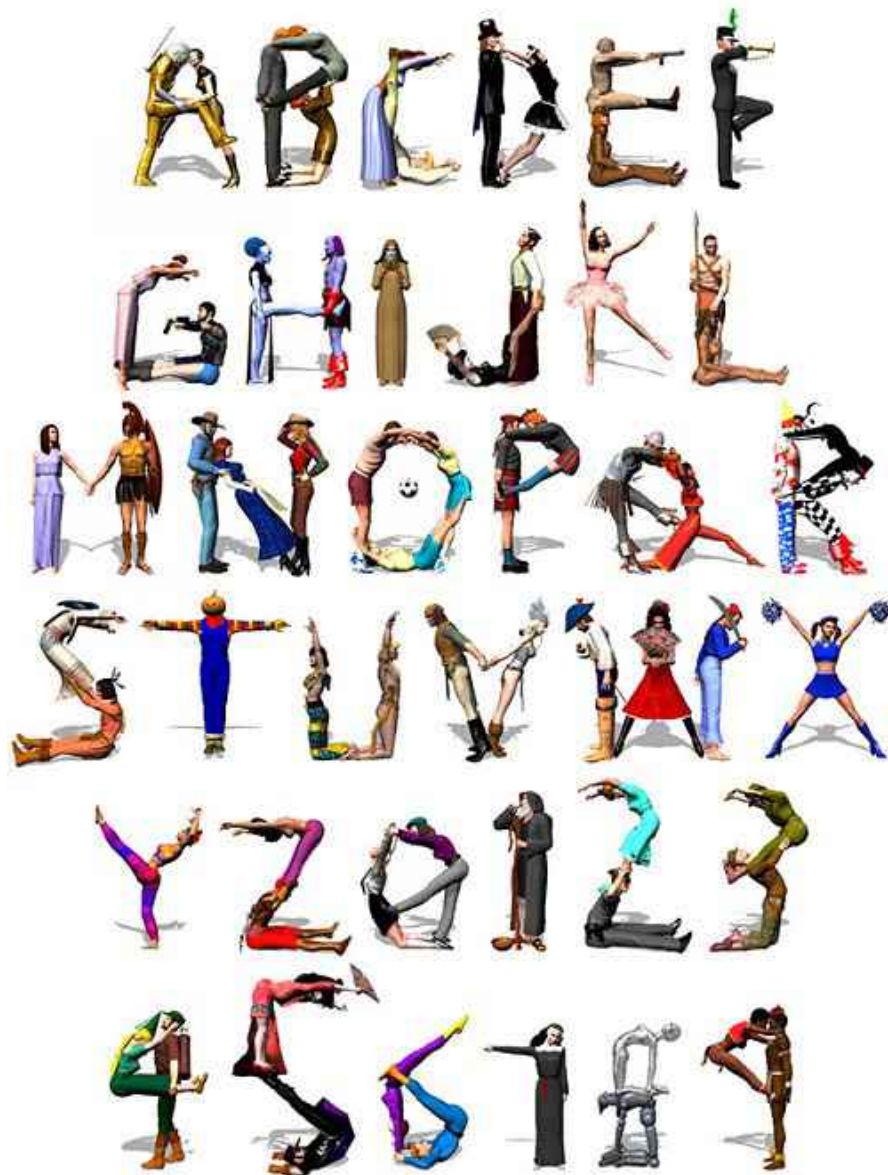
No figures or props are included with this pose set. Clothed characters are shown for display purposes only.

Shown below are samples of the 2nd composition method. The last 2 pages display complete alphabets. The first is a composite of the primary characters of this alphabet. The last image is a composite of the Poser 4 alphabet showing each letter and numeral outfitted in a variety of clothing to give you an idea of the possibilities.





Poser 8 3D Alphabet © 2009 by Don Albert



Poser4 3D Figure Alphabet © 2003 Don Albert