Quick Start for Custom Fonts

This package is intended to act as an easy introduction to creating custom fonts for new custom font users. The accompanying zipped folder contains all the necessary resources and Gimp plug-ins to create and use a custom font. If you enjoy the process, or find it useful, you can always download the full set of Custom Font Tools and delve into the mystery a little deeper.
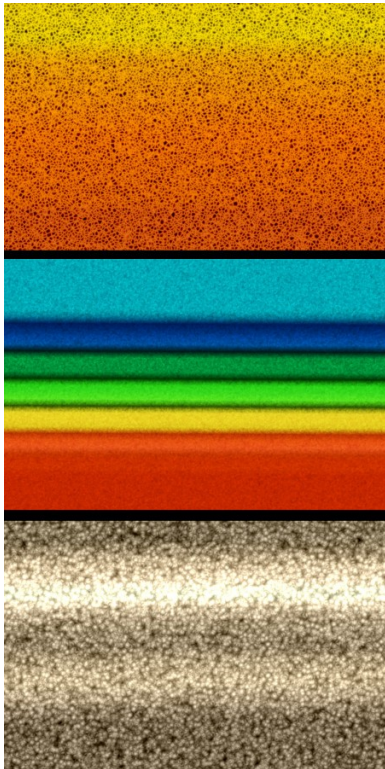
The Resources folder contents:

BP Diet Caps White Base - a Gimp xcf file that contains plain character layers and kerning paths.

Gravitas Caps White Base - another Gimp xcf file that contains plain character layers and kerning paths.

Three-Textures – a Gimp xcf file that contains three texture layers for you to use.

Custom_Font_Face_Maker_v003 – a py file Gimp plug-in that can be used to apply a texture layer to each character in the White Base file.
Custom_Font_Sheen_N_Shine_v004 – a py file Gimp plug-in that can be used to apply a shine effect to the characters.
Custom_Font_Paragrapher_009 - a py file Gimp plug-in that can be used to display these characters in Gimp images.

What exactly is a custom font?

A custom font file is a set of transparent Gimp layers containing character images – not text layers. There is no rule about how many characters a custom font should hold but each layer should be named with a single character followed by .png (apart from the space character which by convention has the name space.png). The space character is mandatory.

The advantage of using a custom font is that the characters can be given any colour and/or texture – not just a plain colour as with a standard Gimp text font.

A custom font file can also optionally include kerning paths to modify the spacing between pairs of letters that otherwise might appear unnaturally far apart or too close together. This spacing is taken from the actual width of each character layer. Kerning path pairs are simply a pair of points created with Gimp's path tool to provide a mechanism for using alternative widths between the named characters. [There is a global kerning mechanism, using a path with a single character name followed by .png, that applies spacing to all following characters. Kerning pair paths take preference over global kerning paths.]

Before you begin you will need to open the zip file and extract the files. Save the White Bases and the Three-Textures files to a convenient folder on your computer and save the Custom Font plug-ins to your user plug-in folder. When you next open Gimp you will be able to locate these from the Filters>>Custom Font>>Tools menu option.

The resource folder contains two prepared custom font files ready for you to play with; although they are both upper-case only base custom fonts, they have a fairly wide set of other characters and include a number of upper-case kerning paths.

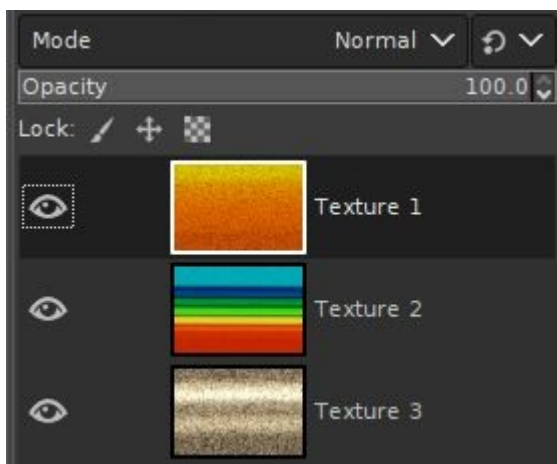**Getting started: Decorating the font face**

Open one of the White Base resources in Gimp using

File>>Open

and navigate to the folder that you saved the resource to.

Open the textures file (or any other image file that you wish to use).

Click on the layer that you want to use as the decorative face for the new custom font to make it the active layer
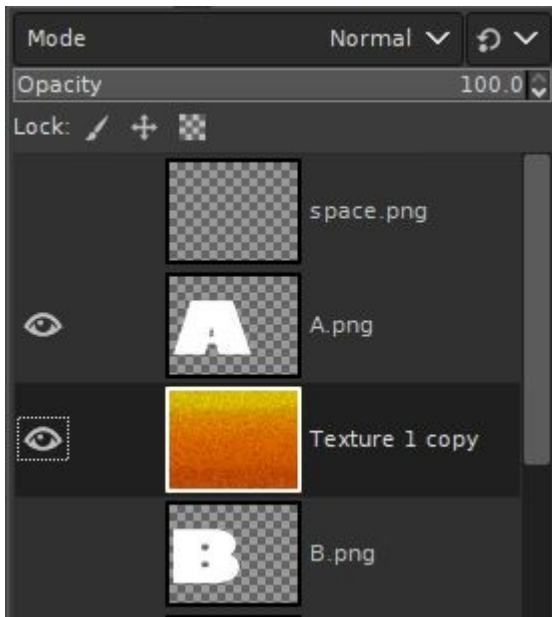

and copy it using

Edit>>Copy.

Return to the Custom Font White Base image and paste the texture as a new layer into the layer stack with

Edit>>Paste as>>New Layer in Place.

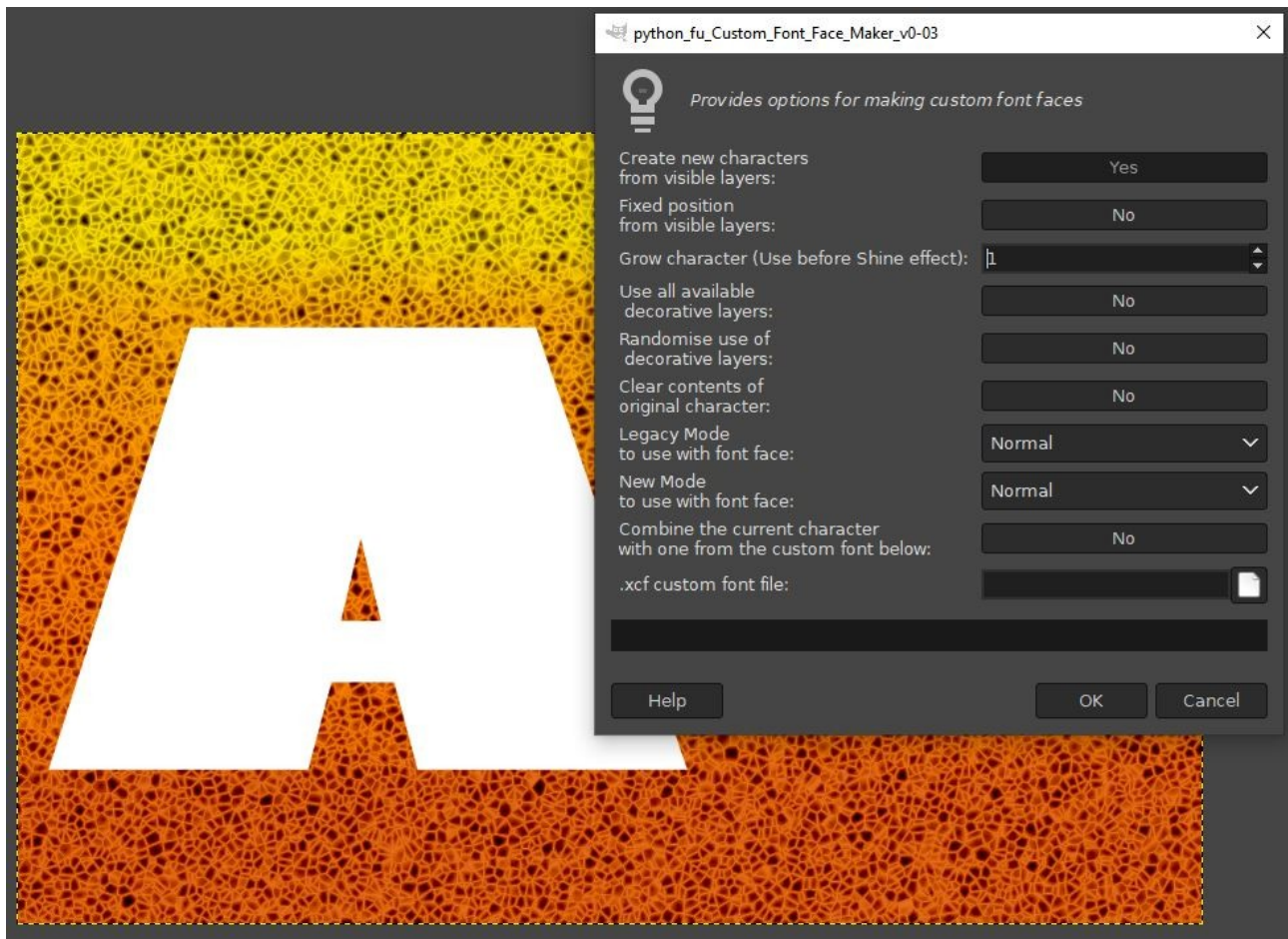Expand the canvas size to fit around all layers with

Image>>Fit Canvas to Layers

[NB If you are using your own image as a texture make sure that it is the same size or, bigger than, the dimensions of the custom font white base image.]
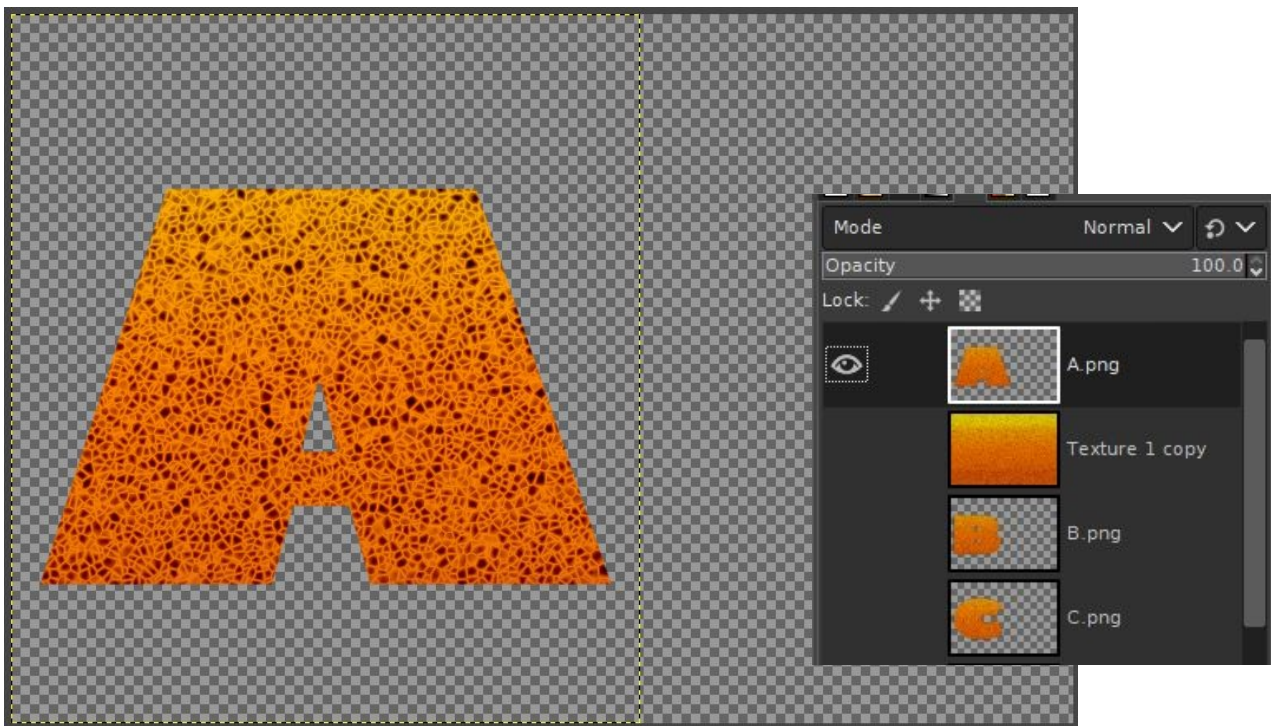
Call up the FaceMaker filter dialog via

Filters>>Custom Font Tools>>Custom_Font_Face_Maker_v003

Use the settings shown in the screen shot.

Click on 'OK' and let the filter do its work, cycling through the character layers and pasting the new image onto each character. (Takes roughly two and a half minutes for these 85 layers on my machine.)
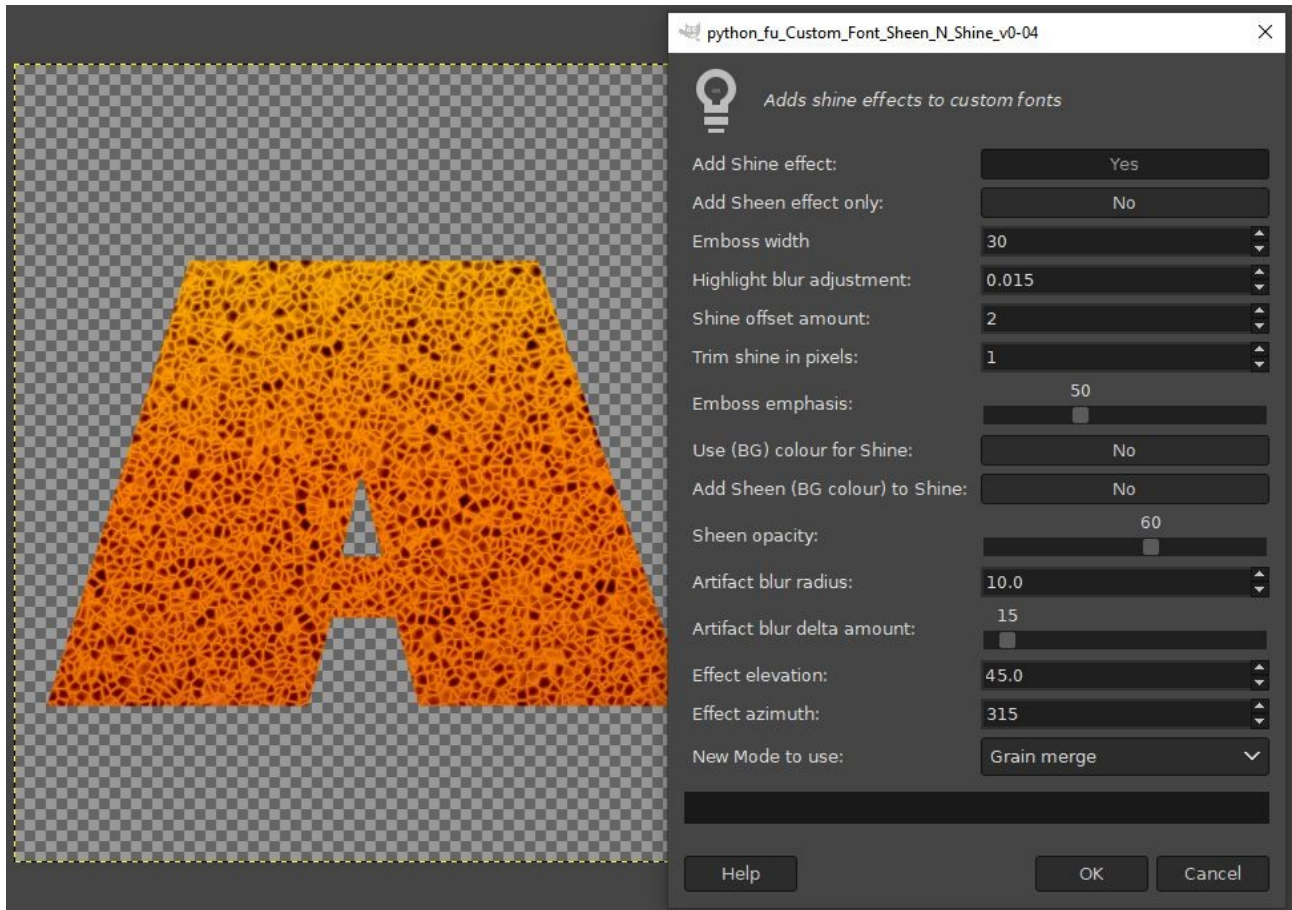
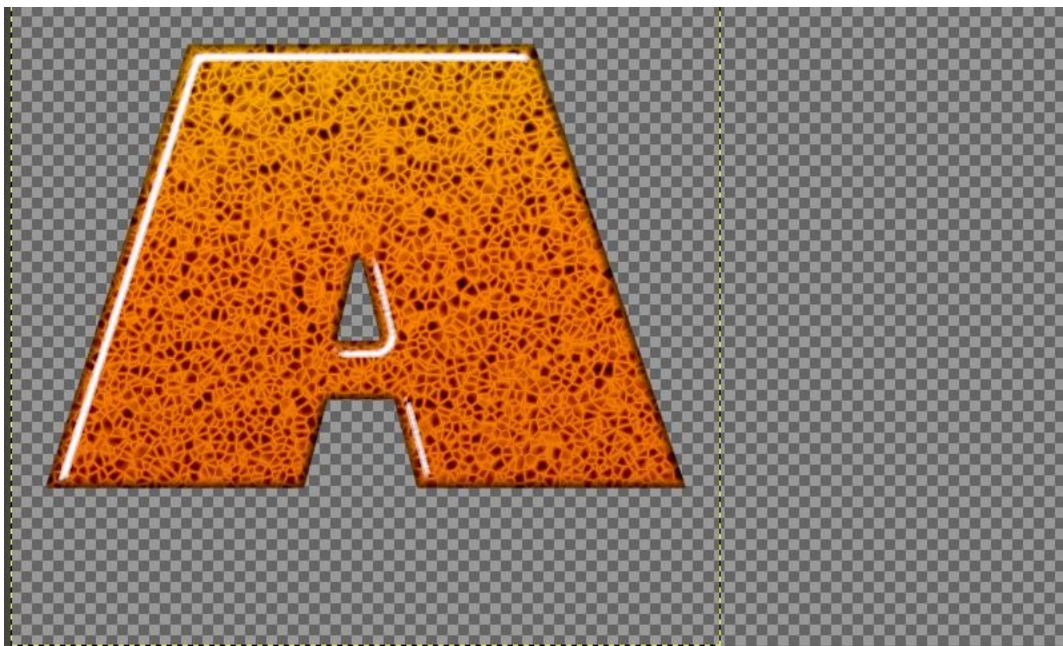**Adding a (little) bit of bling: The Shine Effect**

You can add a faux gloss effect with Custom_Font_Sheen_N_Shine_v004. Call up the filter dialog:

Filters>>Custom Font Tools>>Custom_Font_Sheen_N_Shine_v004

Use the values shown in the screen shot below:

Click on 'OK' and wait for the filter to do its job (about eight minutes on my machine).

All you need to do now is save the custom font with a new name

File>>Save As…

 and it will be ready to use.

Using the Custom Font: Custom_Font_Paragrapher_009

This plug-in is a simple custom font writer that was meant for displaying small amount of texts such as in birthday greetings, cards or verses. It has various other options, for you to explore if you wish, but it is a useful tool in showing the effect of kerning.

First the message as it would be displayed without using kerning paths:
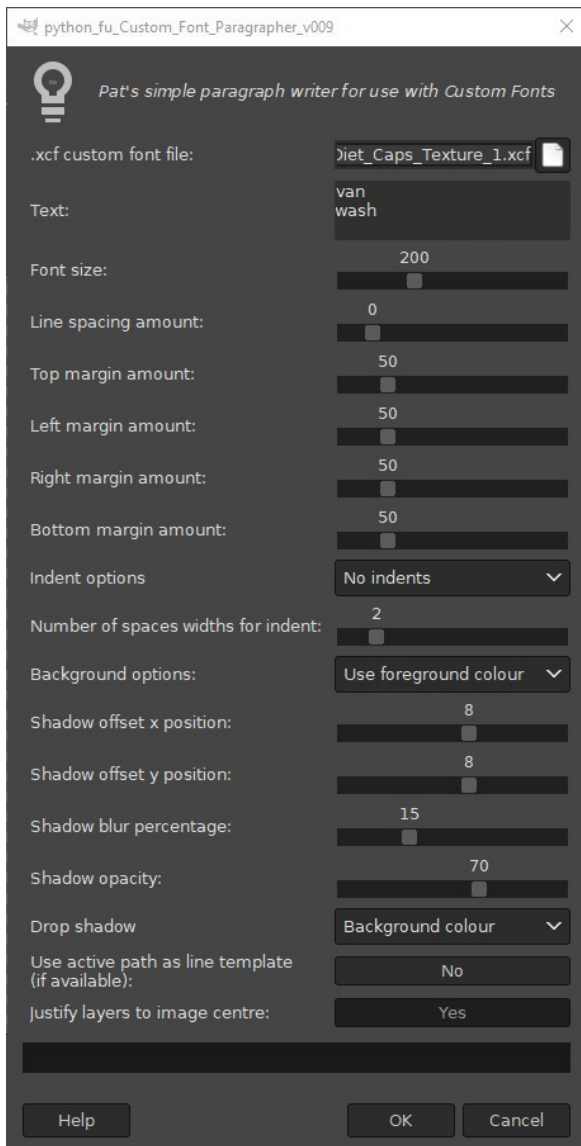

The image in Paragrapher using the custom font kerning paths:

To use some of Paragrapher's features create a new image 1000 x 600 pixels in size. Set your colours with a light green as the foreground and a dark orange or brown as the background. Call up the filter dialog:

Filters>>Custom Font Tools>>Custom_Font_Paragrapher_009

Use the settings shown below:

(You can enter the text as lower-case since Paragrapher will automatically convert it to upper-case.)
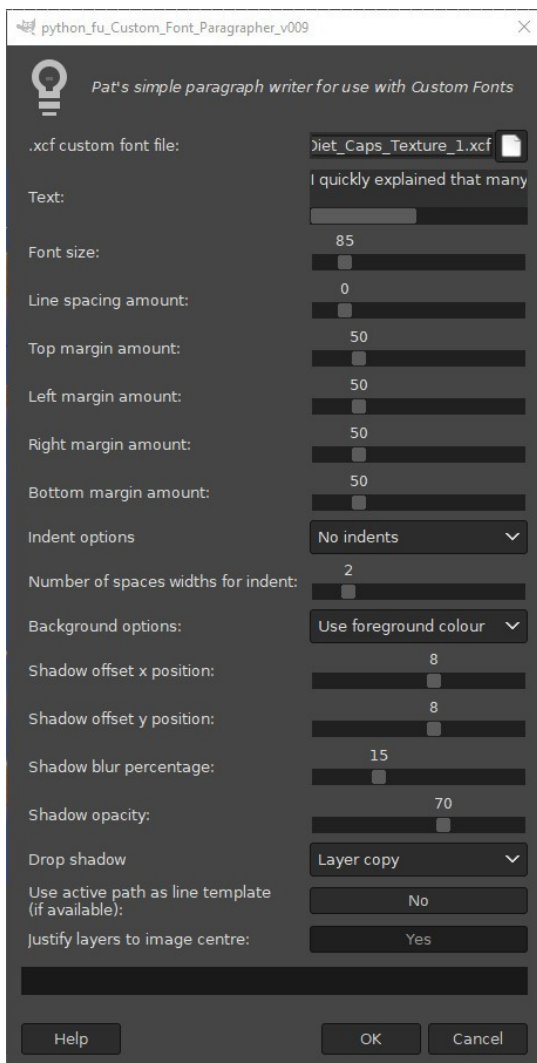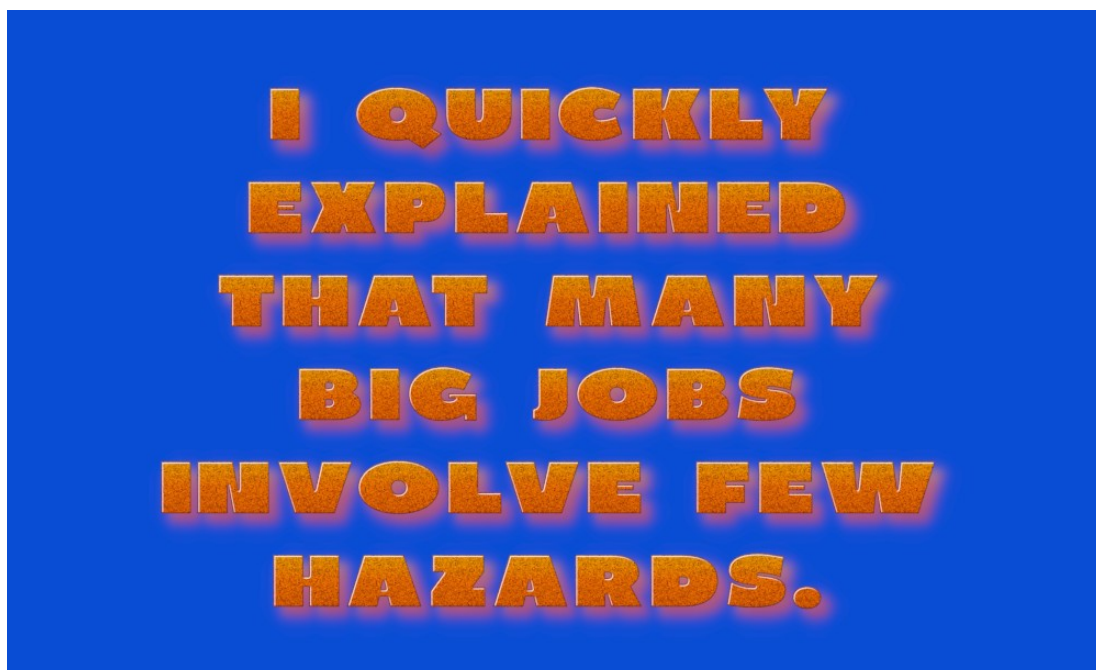
And the output:

Paragrapher uses the settings to display each line of text as a separate layer. The layers can be further manipulated – if required.

One final example using the dialog settings shown below with the same image dimensions as before and with a blue as the foreground colour for the background option:

Paragrapher automatically adjusts the height of the image to fit any additional space required when creating the layers of character lines.

Where to go from here?

If you would like to investigate the wonderful world of custom fonts a little more then the next step is to download the full Custom Font Tools pack.

[Custom Font Tools link](#)

There are utilities and more plug-ins for adding various effects to decorative font faces as well as other tools for creating custom fonts from scratch.

The pack also contains a guide that provides an overview of the tools and has links to specific tool guides on GimpLearn.