

# Teaching Basic Photoshop

A Six Week Course for Teaching New Learners

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All digital resources, including a copy of this document and the individual weeks can be downloaded from:

<http://www.glittermouse.co.uk/teaching-basic-photoshop.html>

# Course Overview

This document is designed to guide teachers through delivering a basic six week block that gives a simple but solid understanding of the purpose, generation and management of digital graphics in Adobe Photoshop. It assumes the learners have no existing knowledge of digital graphics but may also provide good revision for those with some experience.

It is broken into a suggested schedule of two 90 minute - 2 hour classes over six weeks, assuming independent study periods and practice alongside classes, but this may be adjusted flexibly.

Week	Class 1	Class 2
<b>1:</b> Introducing the Pixel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ What are Pictures for?</li> <li>→ Visual Language</li> <li>→ Simple Design Activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Preparing Images for web/print</li> <li>→ DPI/file types</li> <li>→ Data and file size on disc</li> <li>→ Pixel/Vector Graphics</li> <li>→ Reproduction of images in MS Paint</li> <li>→ Introduce basic tools</li> <li>→ Introduce basic Keyboard Shortcuts</li> <li>→ Save work appropriately</li> </ul>
<b>2:</b> Layers and Masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Photoshop files: Multiple layers</li> <li>→ Photomontage Activity</li> <li>→ Select and Transform</li> <li>→ Opacity</li> <li>→ Layer blend mode</li> <li>→ Eraser</li> <li>→ Saving As and Working Stages</li> <li>→ Legal and ethical use of images</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ The Brush Tool</li> <li>→ Photoshop Keyboard Shortcuts</li> <li>→ Introduction to Mask Tool</li> <li>→ Mask Tool Activity</li> <li>→ Photomontage using Mask Tool</li> </ul>
<b>3:</b> Brush as Pixel Pusher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Creative use of Brush Tool</li> <li>→ Painted Cityscape Activity</li> <li>→ Use of Keyboard Shortcuts</li> <li>→ Grouping layers</li> <li>→ Revise work stages/file formats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Complete painted Cityscapes</li> </ul>
<b>4:</b> The Camera Never Lies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Photo Editing</li> <li>→ Image Adjustments</li> <li>→ Different Selections</li> <li>→ Clone Tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Black &amp; White and 'Ruined' Photos Activities</li> </ul>
<b>5:</b> Beyond the Pixel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Vectors</li> <li>→ Pen tool</li> <li>→ Shapes</li> <li>→ Logo Tracing Activity</li> <li>→ Image as Text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ MINI CREATIVE BRIEF:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create own ID brand vector logo OR</li> <li>• Children's book illustration OR</li> <li>• Own series of creative photos</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>6:</b> Steps to a Creative Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Planning a Portfolio</li> <li>→ Creating an Online Presence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Assessment of Completed Portfolios</li> <li>→ Ending the course</li> </ul>

# Week 1: Introducing the Pixel

Class 1	Class 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ What are Pictures for?</li><li>→ Visual Language</li><li>→ Simple Design Activity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Preparing Images for web/print</li><li>→ DPI/file types</li><li>→ Data and file size on disc</li><li>→ Pixel/Vector Graphics</li><li>→ Reproduction of images in MS Paint</li><li>→ Introduce basic tools</li><li>→ Introduce basic Keyboard Shortcuts</li><li>→ Save work appropriately</li></ul>

## Class 1:

### → What are Pictures for?

This could be approached in the form of an open class discussion, asking learners to share their ideas as the teacher facilitates the discussion and writes them on them board. Don't discourage any suggestions but be clear that the discussion eventually swings round to the fact that images are primarily used for **Communication**. Students should be clear that the picture must be appropriate for the purpose, just like we choose our words carefully to make sure we correctly communicate our meaning when speaking. Encourage learners to think of examples where images are used for communication (emoticons/emojis, warning signs, road signs, packets, posters, advertising, scientific diagrams, instructions in products, weather forecasts, etc, etc, etc...) Students should be aware that the main platforms for visual communication are **web** and **print** formats.

### → Visual Language

Continue the discussion. Once we realise that images are forms of communication, we can introduce the term **Visual Language**. Ask the group to suggest different visual elements that make up this language, just like a verbal language is built using letters, words, sentences and paragraphs. There are many of these but the five basic formal elements that students must learn are:

- Line
- Colour
- Tone
- Shape
- Texture

Make sure students take notes of these.

Other visual devices may include: Pattern, Proportion, Scale, Form, Composition, etc.

### → Simple Design Activity

Introduce this practical activity by asking students if they know how most digital images are formed. What can you see if you zoom in too closely on a picture? **The pixels**

#### Example Pixelation:



3508 x 2480 pixels, 300 dpi



592 x 344 pixels, 96 dpi

Distribute sheets of graph paper and ask students to design small images (not more than 10 x 10) that communicates three given ideas (examples below) by shading in whole squares, as if they were pixels. Use colours if possible as it allows them to practice using all the visual language previously discussed, but use normal pen/pencil if none are available.

- Joy
- Love
- Anger
- Cold
- Heat
- Nature

Ask students to share their designs with the group and point out how they have used visual language. Ask them to discuss strengths and weaknesses in their designs.



## Class 2:

### → Preparing Images for web/print

Introduce the session with a quick recap. Continue the group discussion format and ask learners to identify the two main platforms for visual communication (web and print) they must be clear that there is an important difference in the way we prepare files for each of these purposes in industry.

**WEB:** *Small files* for fast up and download times, (most monitors don't display very high quality images anyway and people will get frustrated with a website that takes a long time to load files)

**PRINT:** *Large files* for best possible quality and to avoid pixelation. Remember that you can always reduce file sizes further if needed but once the data is removed, it cannot be put back in!

### → DPI and File Types

The main ways students should be aware of for adjusting the quality and file size of an image are resolution and file format. You can ask if the group knows about this but it will probably need to be presented in a lecture style delivery. Make sure they take notes.

The **resolution** of an image, also known as dpi or Dots Per Inch, tells us how many pixels there are in the image. *Compare this to how many squares they could use on their graph paper in the design activity and return to the picture of the lotus, with examples of 300 and 96 dpi.* Students should be taught to work at a **minimum of 300 dpi** as standard and that images should always be at least this resolution for **print**. For **web**, images can be saved to as few as **71 dpi**, rendering them much smaller files and quicker for download to consumer screens.

**Images size** (the physical width and height) and the **colour depth** (bits of data per pixel) can also affect the file size.

**File formats** also affect the quality and size of the image. Some formats compress images by removing data. These are called 'lossy' as they 'lose' quality and this can be a big problem with progressive saves. It is called 'generational degradation' when an image file loses quality over time following multiple saves. Some file formats are more widely compatible than others.

There are a great many different file formats but students should be basically aware of the following:

- **JPG or JPEG** (Joint Photographic Experts Group) lossy compression and generation degradation. Very widely compatible. (JPEG 2000 uses lossy and lossless compression but is mostly used in cinematography)
- **TIFFs** (Tagged Image File Format) can be lossy or lossless, depending on the technique chosen for storing the pixel data. Some offer relatively good lossless compression. Not always widely compatible.
- **GIF** (Graphics Interchange Format) is most suitable for storing graphics with few colours, such as diagrams, shapes, logos, and cartoons because the compression is more effective when large areas have a single colour, and less effective for photographic images. Due to its animation capabilities, it is still widely used to provide image animation effects.
- **BMP** (Windows bitmap) handles graphic files in the Microsoft Windows OS. BMP files are normally uncompressed, so large and lossless. They are widely accepted in Windows programs.

- **PNG** (Portable Network Graphic) PNG is still well-suited to storing images during the editing process because of its lossless compression.
- **PSD** (Photoshop Document) Always use this when you are saving work in stages during editing in Photoshop. It is Adobe's own file format expressly developed for use in the Adobe Suite; you only need to think of other file formats when making a final save. Some publishers will request PSD file formats. You will not be able to use it on web.

**Example Generation Degradation:** (Images available in PDF)



→ **Data and file size on disc**

Students should be made aware that large, high quality file sizes, though necessary for many applications, take up a lot of space on file. Hard discs getting full can slow PC processing time and prevent work being saved at all. It's good to get in the habit of backing up data to an external hard drive and to delete files that are no longer required (e.g. working stages of finished projects)

→ **Raster/Vector Graphics**

We will not be introducing vector graphics just yet, but now is a good time to inform students that there is an alternative to pixels when working in digital graphics. Vectors (as opposed to Rasters – the name for files using pixels) allow the computer to store images as a series of equations, as opposed to fixed blocks of colour. This means they can be expanded and reduced with a great deal more flexibility as the computer can calculate the relationship between different points and generate a smooth line. The Pen and Shape tools in Photoshop use vectors and we will use them in week 5.

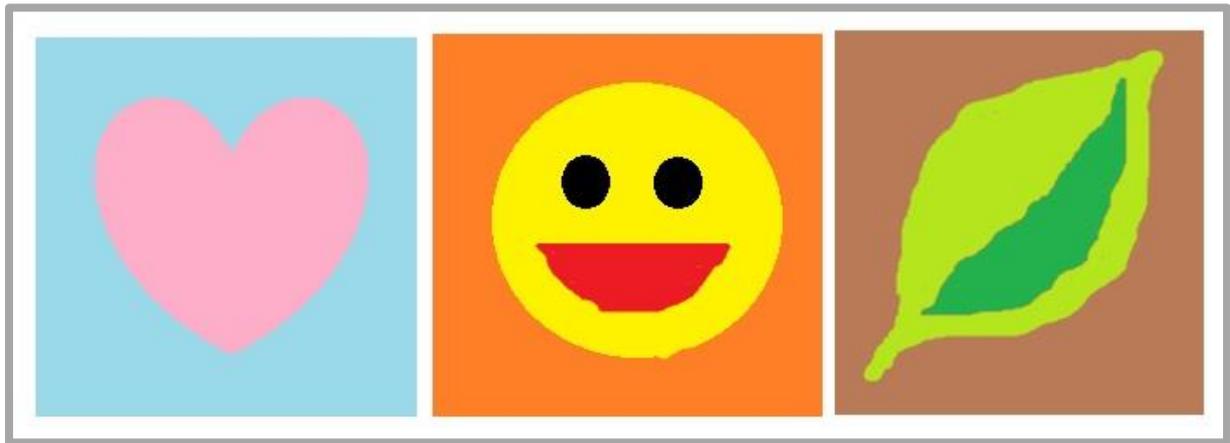
→ **MicroSoft Paint Activity**

Return to the design activity of the last class and ask students to recreate their designs digitally. They might work freehand or using the shape tools. Use this to demonstrate the basic tools and keyboard shortcuts (outlined below) as well as to make an appropriate save.

→ **Introduce basic tools:** Brush, Pencil, Eraser, Select, Colour picker, Shape, Transform

→ **Introduce basic Keyboard Shortcuts:** cut (ctrl x), copy (ctrl c), paste (ctrl v), save (ctrl s), undo (ctrl z)

→ **Save work appropriately:** to correct folder, with clear file name, as correct file type



Extension: Students can go on to complete other communications from the list given.

Encourage them to share and discuss their work when they have finished.

## Week 2: Layers and Masks

Class 1	Class 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Photoshop files: Multiple layers</li><li>→ Photomontage Activity</li><li>→ Select and Transform</li><li>→ Opacity</li><li>→ Layer blend mode</li><li>→ Eraser</li><li>→ Saving As and Working Stages</li><li>→ Legal and ethical use of images</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ The Brush Tool</li><li>→ Photoshop Keyboard Shortcuts</li><li>→ Introduction to Mask Tool</li><li>→ Mask Tool Activity</li><li>→ Photomontage using Mask Tool</li></ul>

### Class 1:

#### → Photoshop files: Multiple layers

Recap in a group discussion what you did in the previous week. Explain that essentially, one fundamental difference between Photoshop and MS Paint is that Photoshop operates using **layers**. These allow us much greater flexibility in terms of manipulating and editing existing images (photographs), as well as in creatively constructing or generating our own images.

#### → Photomontage Activity

Ask students to open a new Photoshop file and save this to an appropriate folder with a clear name. Provide them access to a series of images, either to download from a website, or on a memory stick. The photos should have a related theme; cityscapes or natural forms are good starting points.

Ask them to choose 3 images from the provided set and open these in Photoshop. Demonstrate how to include all three images in one file and how to toggle the **visibility** of layers on off, as well as how to **reorder** them. Demonstrate creation of **new layers** and how to **delete** them. Demonstrate the following and ask students to make their own creative image showing how they have used each tool:

#### → Select and Transform

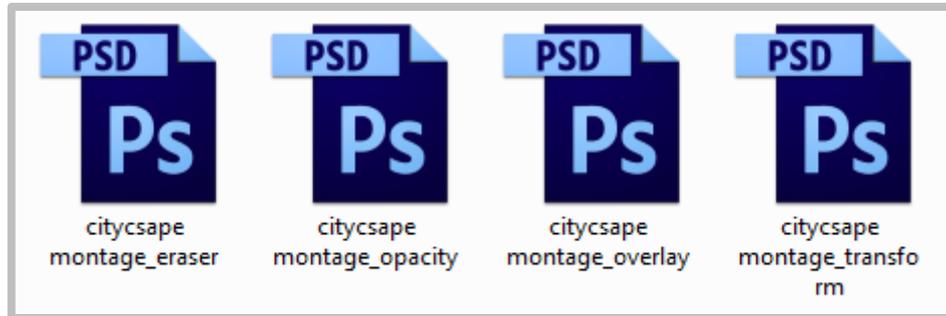
#### → Opacity

#### → Layer blend mode

#### → Eraser (Demonstrate how to adjust the different brush sizes etc.)

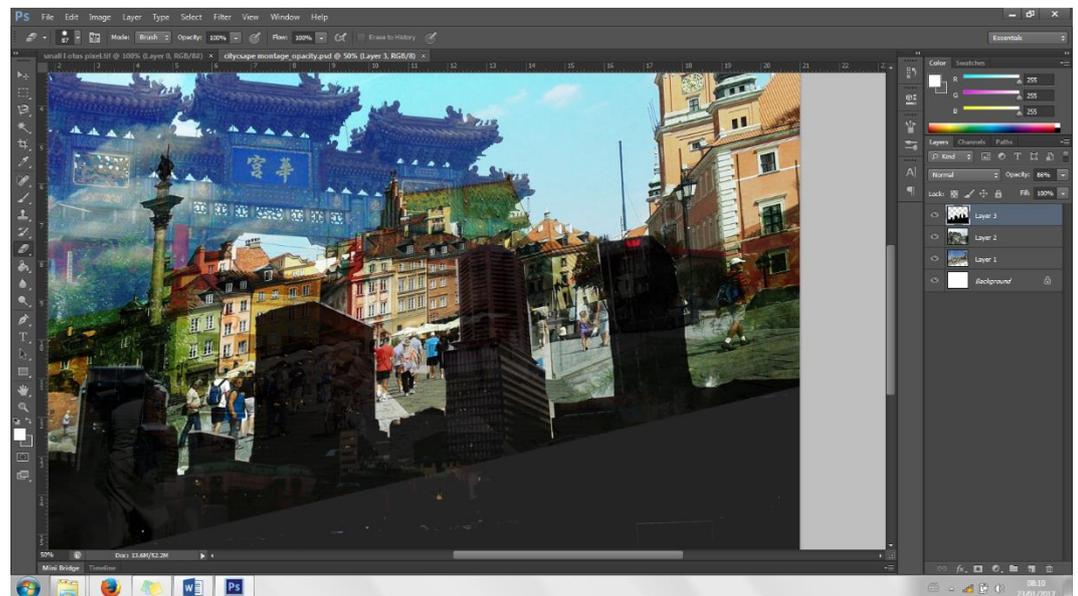
## → Saving As and Working Stages

As they are working, as students to **Save As** each time they make a new change and to name the file appropriately. For example, their folder may look like this:



## Final Outcome:

Ideally, students will finish the exercise with an image that individually demonstrates creative use of all the tools. This is a quick visual example but should not be taken as a specific aim! Ideally, each student's work will be very different!



## → Legal and ethical use of images

End the class with a quick group discussion on the source of the images. You provided these but ask students to talk about where they might source images for their own work in the future. They may take their own photographs, they may be provided by the client or they might use an online source. Introduce students to the concept of **copyright** and explain that they must be careful to observe copyright law. You could discuss questions of software piracy as well as theft of other artist's work.

It may also be appropriate to discuss what their images are communicating in relation to issues of equality and diversity. Don't overlabour these point but it is important that students consider such things.

## Class 2:

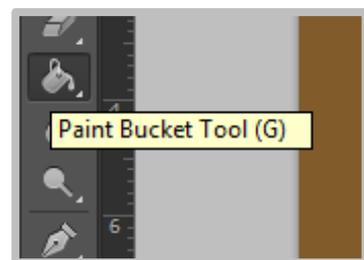
Now students have some experience working with layers and some basic options, we can begin to introduce greater flexibility in editing. This is a good stage to introduce the use of graphics tablets if they are available, to encourage students to develop the manual dexterity required to use the tools creatively and intuitively.

### → The Brush Tool

Begin by asking students to again recreate their earlier designs. Remind them to start their new files with a setting of 300 dpi. Demonstrate how to access the **colour palette selection tool** and **paint bucket**, as well as how to load and swap between the **foreground and background colours**. Then show students how to use the **brush tool**. Show them how to adjust the **size, hardness and opacity**.

### → Photoshop Keyboard Shortcuts

Introduce the keyboard shortcuts for the following tools and demonstrate how to identify new shortcuts by hovering the mouse over the menu item.



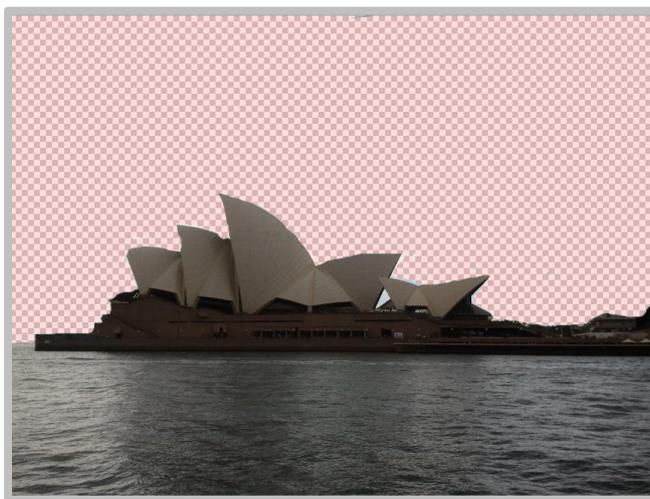
Tool	Keyboard Shortcut
Brush	B
Foreground/background colour toggle	X
Colour picker	I
Paint bucket	G
Eraser	E



### → Introduction to Mask Tool

Ask the students how they 'cut' into the layers they were working with in their photomontage images. This should encourage them to identify the eraser tool. Explain that this is limited in terms of correcting errors and potential future use of the image; the eraser deletes the pixels. When they are gone, they cannot be retrieved. Introduce the Mask Tool, which allows more flexibility in 'cutting' the image, as well as retaining the visual data for potential future use.

Demonstrate this with one of the cityscape images. Show them how to activate the **visibility of the mask layer** in the channels tab and how to **deselect the RGB channels** to assess the accuracy of the masking brushwork. Demonstrate use of the foreground and background colours to correct and fine tune the masking brushwork. Remind them to use the keyboard shortcut (x) to make this process smooth.



### → Mask Tool Activity

Ask the students to practice this with one of the provided source images. Remind them to make appropriate decisions when saving files and working stages.

### → Photomontage using Mask Tool

Ask the students to create a new photomontage using 3 of the source images; they can add these into their existing masked image file. Ensure they use the mask tool instead of the eraser this time. Check they are appropriately saving work.

If you have time, it is good to end the session and consolidate learning by facilitating a group discussion where learners share their finished images and constructively criticise each other's work by suggesting **strengths** and **areas for improvement**.

## Week 3: Brush as Pixel Pusher

Class 1	Class 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Creative use of Brush Tool</li><li>→ Painted Cityscape Activity</li><li>→ Use of Keyboard Shortcuts</li><li>→ Grouping layers</li><li>→ Revise working stages and file formats</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Complete painted Cityscapes</li></ul>

### Class 1:

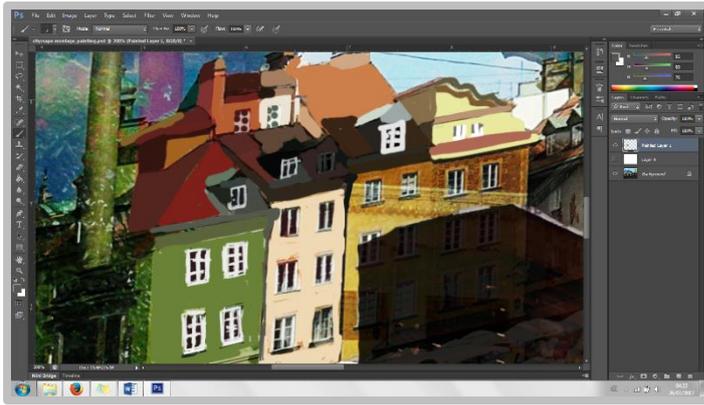
#### → Creative use of Brush Tool

Now students have some practice working in layers and using the brush, as well as using basic keyboard shortcuts, it is possible to introduce this as more creative tool. Recap the learning so far in a short group discussion and then demonstrate a few additional features, especially the **brush mode** and **flow**. You may wish to allow students some time to practice with these.

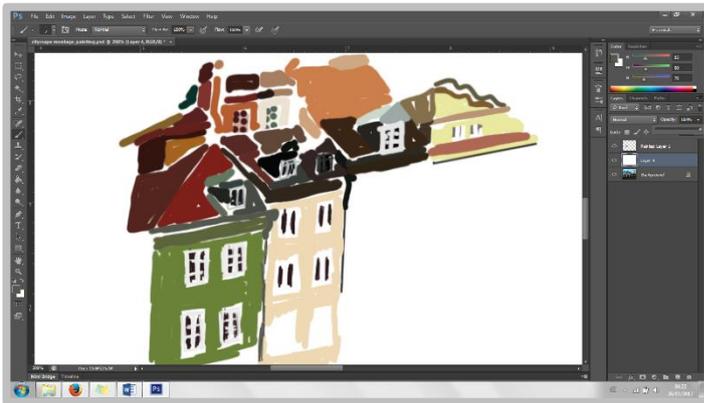
#### → Painted Cityscape Activity

Ask students to open their cityscape photo montages and to save a copy. Demonstrate how to merge layers (you could then point out the difference in the saved file sizes to reinforce this learning). Ask them to open a **new layer** and to drag this above the cityscape image. Their task is now to use the brush to recreate a version of this composition by 'painting'.

→ **Use of Keyboard Shortcuts:** Demonstrate especially how to quickly pick colours during the process by using the 'i' and 'b' shortcuts and explain that swapping back and foreground colours can also be useful. The 'behind' mode on the brush settings can be employed quite effectively at this stage. If you have not already done so, make sure students are aware of the undo shortcuts on the key board ('z' to toggle one step back, 'ctrl + alt + z' for multiple stages) → **Grouping layers:** Encourage students to start new elements in new layers and explain that this helps promote flexible editing. Ask them to try and remember to use a new layer for each new part of the painting. Demonstrate that these can be easily managed by **grouping** for swift navigation and layer management. You can also show them how to edit the **layer name**. → **Revise working stages and file formats:** Ask students to tell you what they should remember about saving their work, Bring the conversation round to use of **working stages** logical **file names** for each progressive save and appropriate **file formats**.



Painting over the Photomontage (detail)



Painting with photomontage deactivated

## Class 2:

### → Complete painted Cityscapes

In the second class of the week, give students the time in a workshop session to complete their paintings. Some students will need all this time, some will finish early. When students finish early, keep them engaged and practicing by setting them one or more extension activities such as:

- **Extension 1:** Zoom into an area of your original painting and produce a second, abstract composition. Do this three times to create a mini-series.
- **Extension 2:** Return to your original photomontage and add two new layers. Edit these creatively.
- **Extension 3:** Return to the folder of provided images and create a new photomontage. Complete a second painting.

Allow time to complete the session with a group discussion. Ask students to share their work and to explain to the class what they think is one of their main strengths and one of the main things they think could have gone better. Encourage students to give each other feedback and to share their ideas about strengths and things that could be improved but make sure this is done in a supportive way. Students should only point out a weakness in another's work if they can suggest a practical improvement.

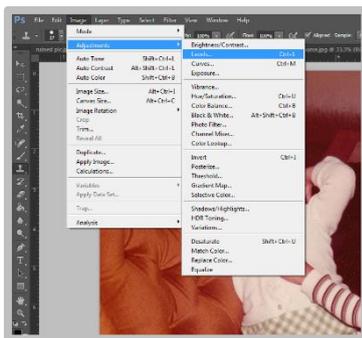
# Week 4: The Camera Never Lies

Class 1	Class 2
→ Photo Editing → Image Adjustments → Different Selections → Clone Tool	→ Black & White and 'Ruined' Photos Activities

## Class 1:

Now your learners understand how layers work, are beginning to be familiar with the Photoshop interface and menu systems as well as being practiced with some basic creative tools, we can begin introducing them to some of the methods used to adjust photographs.

### → Photo Editing



### → Image Adjustments

Demonstrating on an old photograph to give a context, introduce them to the basic adjustment menu and make sure to cover:

- Exposure
- Levels
- Colour Balance
- Hue and saturation



### → Different Selections

Using an image that features simple shapes with clear edges, demonstrate the different selection tools (especially the **additive** and **subtractive** modes). You can also demonstrate how to **invert** the selection and use of selections to mask off areas for **controlled brushwork**. Show students how to **deselect** too.



### → Clone Tool

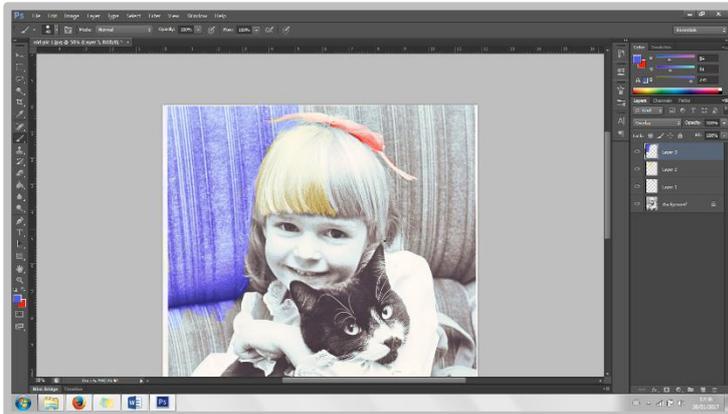
Simple repeat patterns are excellent sources for introducing the clone tool. Demonstrate the tool and allow students to practice in a workshop session.

## Class 2:

Begin Class 2 with group discussion and a recap on the tools they have used so far. You can then set them two activities to practice the skills they have learned in a workshop session.

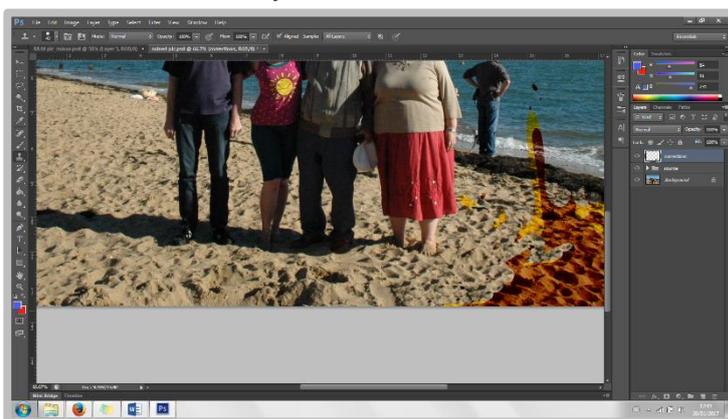
### → Black & White and 'Ruined' Photos Activities

- **Black and White Activity**



Students are given a black and white source image. Their task is to **colourise** it appropriately using the **brush tool** and the **overlay mode**. Encourage them to use separate layers for each colour. Explain that they could use the **selection tool** around edges for speedy painting. Recap **layer management**; grouping and renaming. Encourage them to remember **working stage** saves.

- **'Ruined' Activity**



Students are provided with a photo that has some damage. They must 'repair' the image using the clone tool. Try and find a source image that has different textures so they can practice working with each. Continue to promote good **layer management** and **saves**.

Introduce each of these activities with a brief discussion asking students to suggest which tools would be the most appropriate for the desired outcome. Use this to suggest the preferred tools. Some students will need an entire session (about 45 minutes per image would be right), some will finish early. When students finish early, keep them engaged and practicing by setting them one or more extension activities to practise skills such as:

- **Extension 1:** Draw a flower and use the **clone tool** to create a repeat pattern
- **Extension 2:** Select your own black and white image from a legal source and apply unnatural colours with the **overlay mode** to make a modern-style image
- **Extension 3:** Use the **selection tools** to 'cut' the sky out of one of the cityscape images instead of using the mask tool

Allow time to complete the session with a group discussion. Ask students to share their main strengths and areas for improvement.

## Week 5: Beyond the Pixel

Class 1	Class 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Vectors</li><li>→ Pen tool</li><li>→ Shapes</li><li>→ Logo Tracing Activity</li><li>→ Image as Text</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ MINI CREATIVE BRIEF:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create own ID brand vector logo OR</li><li>• Own book cover illustration OR</li><li>• Own series of creative photos</li></ul></li></ul>

### Class 1:

In week one we mentioned that most digital images, and certainly all photographs are **Raster** images, which means they are made from pixels. We also mentioned an alternative that is much more flexible for rescaling without losing quality. These are called **Vector Graphics** and provide an alternative to pixels when working in digital graphics. Vectors allow the computer to store images as a series of equations, as opposed to fixed blocks of colour. This means they can be expanded and reduced with a great deal more flexibility as the computer can calculate the relationship between different points and generate a smooth line. The Pen and Shape tools in Photoshop use vectors. One benefit of vectors is that they allow saved transparency, which can be far more flexible than a default white background. Inform students to take care with file formats when saving as standard image file formats (such as Jpg) with rasterise the image so they will become uneditable as vectors. Saving as PSD or AI (Adobe Illustrator) file formats will preserve editability.

#### → Vectors

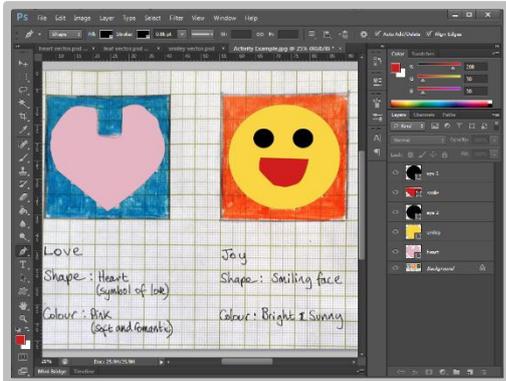
Demonstrate use of these tools by tracing over your own examples of the simple shapes designs from week 1. You can work with your existing Photoshop files but if students do not yet know how to scan images, now would be a good time to teach this. You could demonstrate using their original designs on graph paper and work with these instead. This step may not be necessary though, if your students are already comfortable with using a scanner.

#### → Pen tool: Make sure you cover:

- Shape/path selection, fill and stroke settings
- Changing the colour of a shape layer
- Linking back into the last anchor point of an incomplete shape
- Reactivation of anchor points on a 'finished' shape (ctrl + click)
- Adding or deleting anchor points (hover mouse)
- Moving existing anchor points (ctrl + drag)
- Adjustment of line curve using vector arms (alt + click)

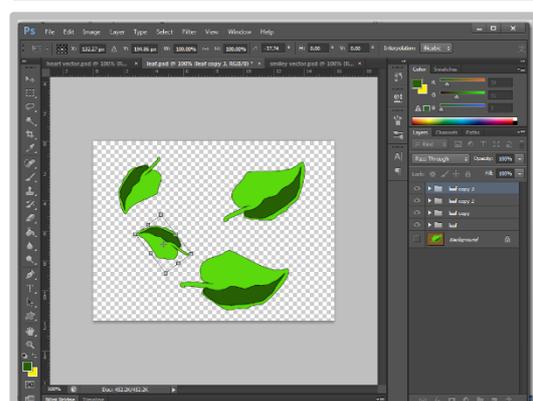
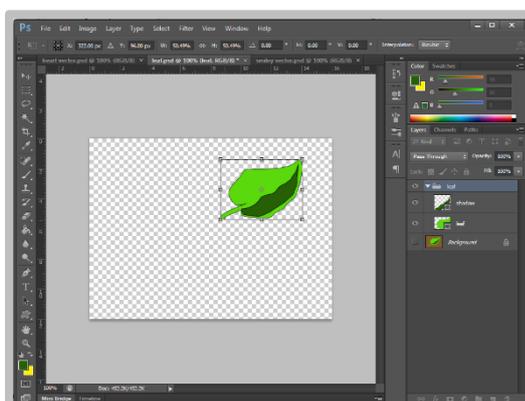
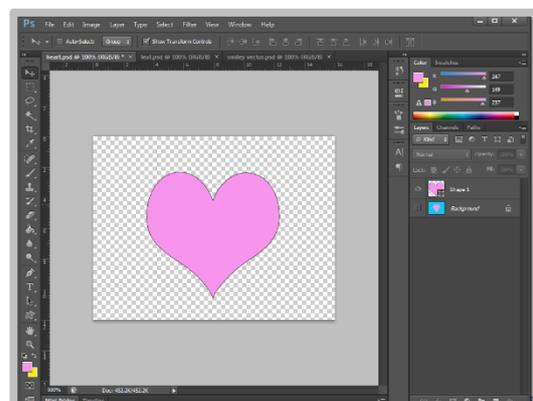
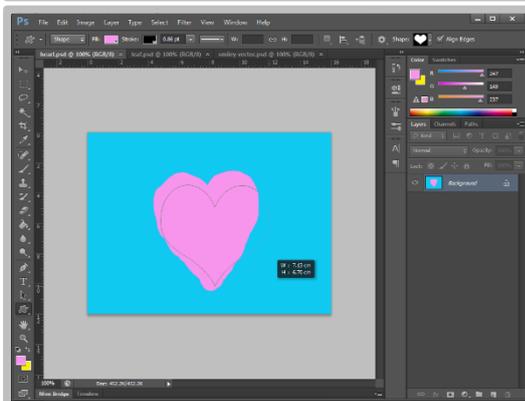
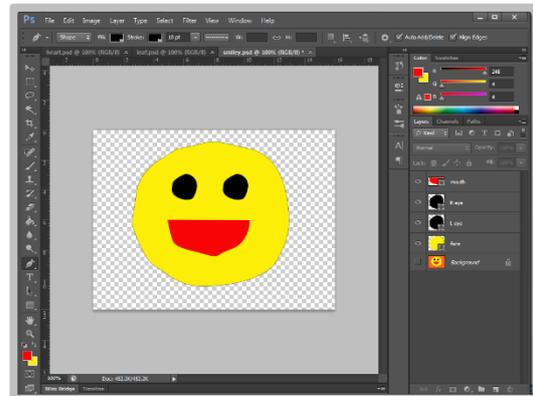
→ Shapes:

Show students how to select different shape sets. Recap good layer management at this point and conduct a group discussion on the importance of **renaming** layers and how to **group** them. Using a grouped set of layers, demonstrate **resizing**, **copying** and **transforming** multiple layers.



→ Logo Tracing Activity

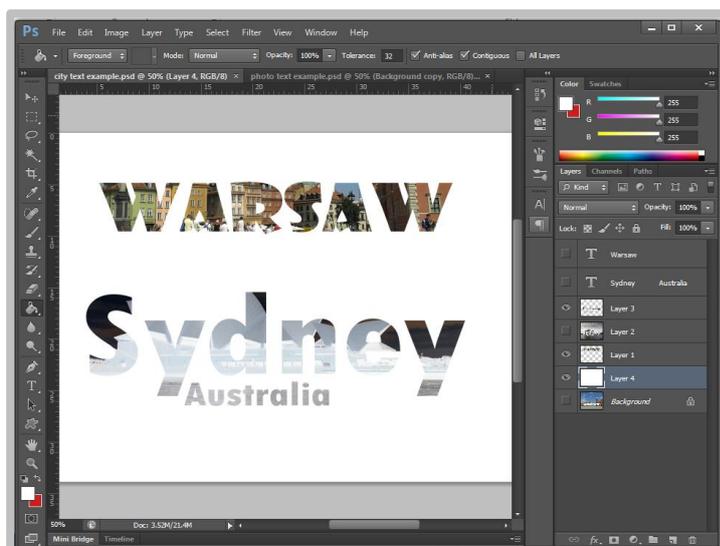
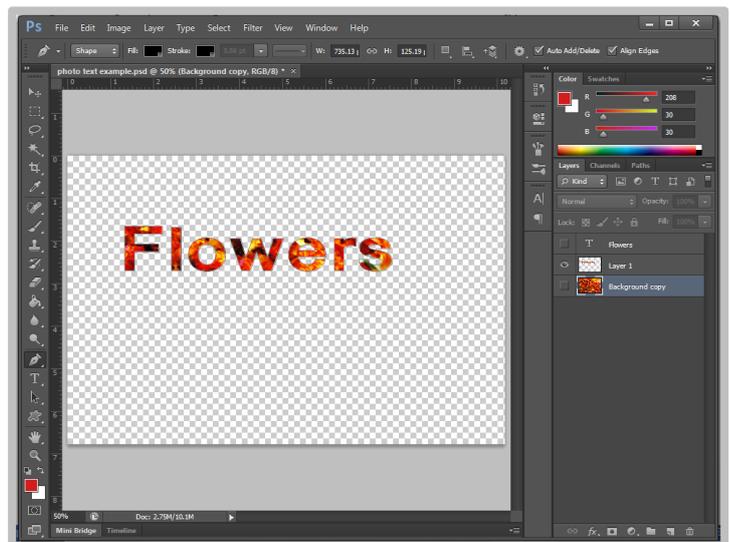
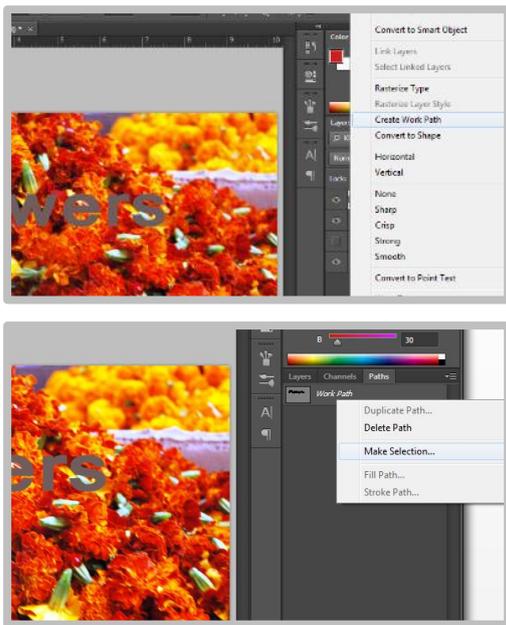
Ask students to follow your demonstration and create vector logos from their simple designs. Get students to practice resizing the original, raster (pixelled) image and resizing the new vector to see the difference in quality.



## → Image as Text

Demonstrate to students how to select and use a font (text is a vector tool) to create a work path and selection, which can then be used to cut from a photograph to generate creative text:

- Open a photo
- Select, and create a text layer
- Create a work path by right clicking and selecting from the pop up menu
- Navigate to the Paths menu
- Right click the work path layer and choose to make a selection
- Activate the photo layer to transfer your selection, then cut or copy and paste.



## → Image as Text Activity

Ask students to return to the cityscapes source images and select one or two. Their task is to create graphics using the name of the city and the photographic image:

## Class 2:

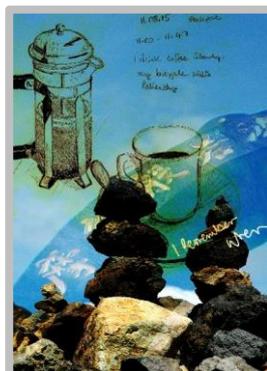
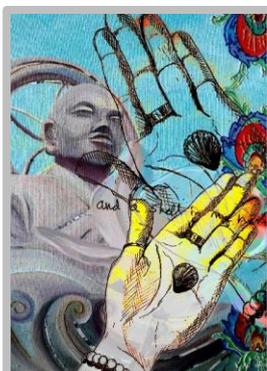
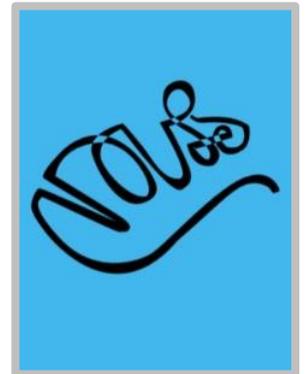
### → MINI CREATIVE BRIEF:

As you move to the end of the course, it is good practice to give students some creative freedom to put their new skills into practice in a less prescribed way. Give them some loose themes to choose from and ask them to generate a creative response. This will give them some practice in ideas management and creative problems solving, as well as giving them the opportunity to decide for themselves how best to utilise the programme to meet their needs. You can run this as a work simulation by giving them a deadline and asking them to pitch their ideas to a panel if it is appropriate to their situation and you have the flexibility with your time to allow for this.

### Creative Brief Ideas:

Students should choose only one of these to begin with but you may find particularly advanced students are able to manage two and you could set another for homework or an independent practice session. If you have time, it would be ideal for their skills development if they could create all three!

- Create a 'brand logo' that communicates your own identity. You might use initials or your whole name. Try and include things that represent your interests or values. Sketch this out roughly, then generate a final outcome in vector graphics.
- Create an illustration for a publication of one of your favourite stories when you were a child. You may need to begin by sketching your idea out on paper first and scanning this in to work on digitally. Think carefully about your audience. How will you use appropriate visual language (see week 1!) for your young readers?
- Create your own series of creative photos on a topic that interests you. You could choose fashion photography or natural forms and landscape, pet portraits, a favourite sport or hobby or urban scenes. Make sure you use appropriate and legal sources if you are unable to take your own photographs. You could also include scanned drawings or patterned overlays to be really creative! Your series should include a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 final digital images.



## Week 6: Steps to a Creative Career

Class 1	Class 2
→ Planning a Portfolio → Creating an Online Presence	→ Assessment of Completed Portfolios → Ending the course

### Class 1:

#### → Planning a Portfolio

Portfolios are essential supplements to the standard CV when seeking employment in the creative industries, be this freelance, as a paid art worker or when commissioning an agent. These can take the form of 'hard' copy folders and mounted page layouts when visiting for interviews in person, or they may be digital themselves, either web based or presented on a CD.

A good portfolio should:

- Demonstrate a wide range of skills
- Start and end with the applicants strongest pieces
- Be focussed to the job role or career aims

Conduct a group discussion that covers this content and then ask students to **make a list** of three pieces of work they have created over the course they think best represents their strengths. They should then compile these in to a folder titled 'portfolio' and make sure the files are of good quality with logical file names and appropriate formats.

#### → Creating an Online Presence

In the current climate of the creative industries, an online presence is really important. There are lots of simple tools for creating portfolio sites (Wordpress, Blogspot, Weebly to name but a few.) There are also sites set up to provide artist's portfolio profiles that operate a bit like general social media. If you have time, it may be useful to get students to do a little research into what works for them, otherwise, find one that works for *you* and demonstrate how to build a simple free webpage.

For the purposes of this teacher training course, we will use [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com)



## Class 2:

### → Assessment of Completed Portfolios

There are two ways you could run the assessment based upon your group dynamics, the resources and equipment you have available and what is easiest for you to schedule:

#### Group Presentation Session

Students present their portfolios to the group using their websites and a projector or a large display screen. Get them to talk about the work they have selected, as if they were in a job interview and then move on to discuss the decisions they made about designing their webpage. Open the discussion up into questions and feedback from the rest of the group.



#### Individual Tutorials

If it is not practical for the group to meet together or you feel it would be easier to manage, you could make individual appointments with each member of your class and ask them to present their portfolio pages to you. You could run the sessions as mock interviews to help them develop these skills. Ask them to explain their decisions in terms of selecting work and designing their pages. Ask them if they think there is anything they might improve.

## Ending the Course:

Before you end the course, make sure that students have a clear plan for how they can take their studies, or their job search forward. It is good practice to ensure they have had a discussion with you about next steps and that they know how they can contact you for further advice in the future, should they need it.