Week 2: Layers and Masks

Class 1	Class 2
→ Photoshop files: Multiple layers → Photomontage Activity → Select and Transform → Opacity → Layer blend mode → Eraser → Saving As and Working Stages → Legal and ethical use of images	→ The Brush Tool → Photoshop Keyboard Shortcuts → Introduction to Mask Tool → Mask Tool Activity → Photomontage using Mask Tool

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:
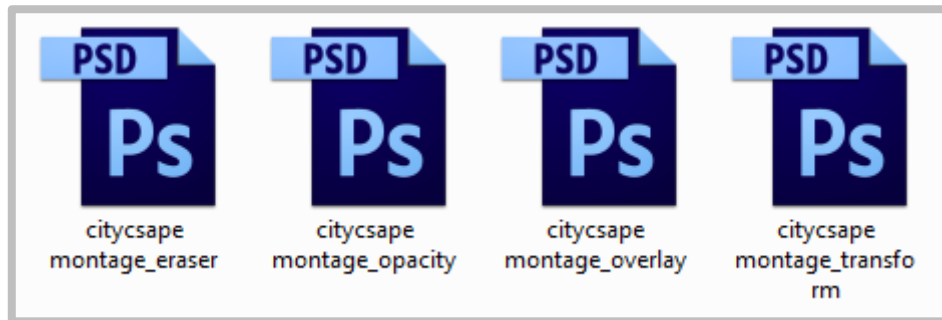
→ Select and Transform
→ Opacity
→ Layer blend mode
### → Eraser (Demonstrate how to adjust the different brush sizes etc.):

→ 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!
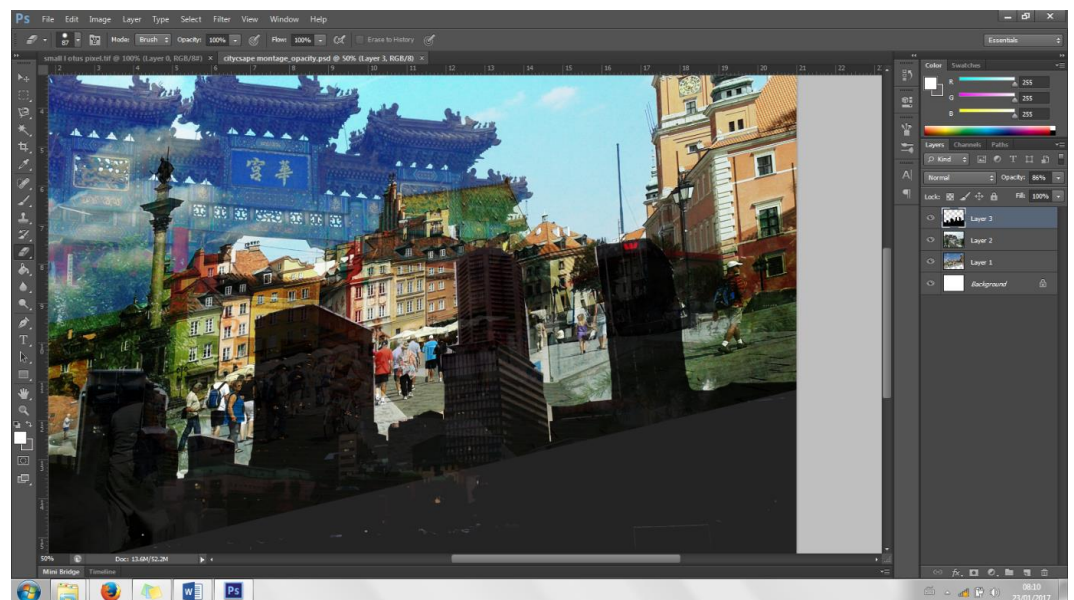
→ Legal and ethical use of images

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. <u>Demonstrate</u> 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 <u>demonstrate</u> how to identify new shortcuts by hovering the mouse over the menu item.
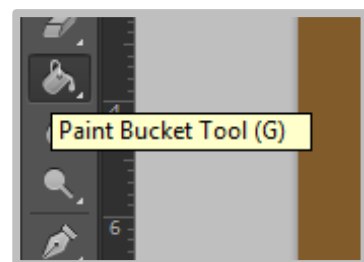

Tool	Keyboard Shortcut
Brush	B
Foreground/background colour toggle	X
Colour picker	I
Paint bucket	G
Eraser	E
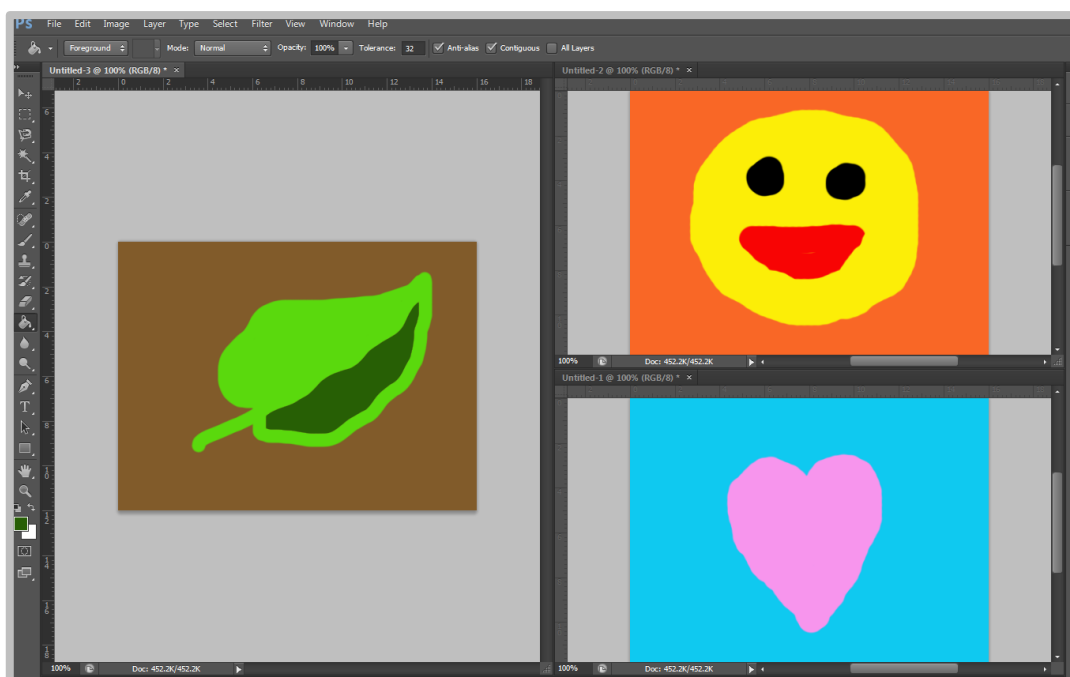
→ Introduction to Mask Tool

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.

<u>Demonstrate</u> 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.
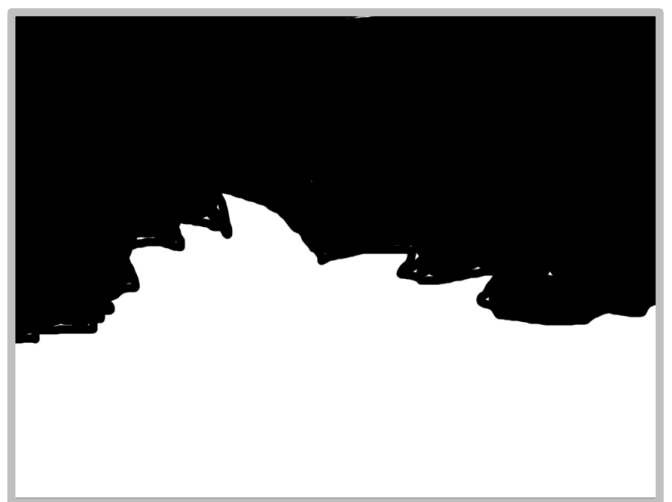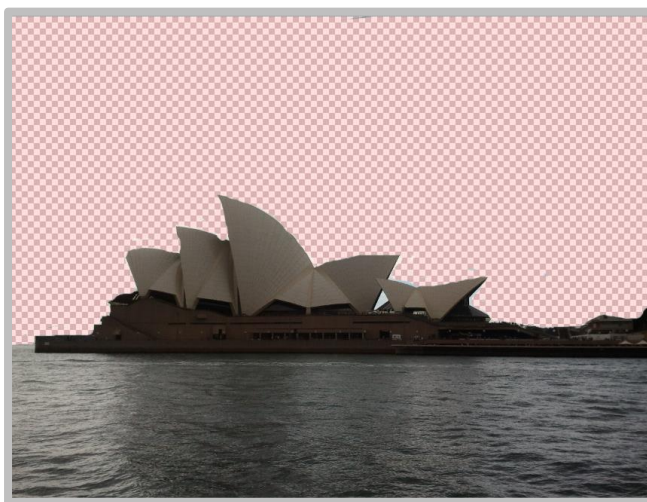
→ Mask Tool Activity

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 <u>group discussion</u> where learners share their finished images and constructively criticise each other's work by suggesting **strengths** and **areas for improvement**.