Photoshop Workshop

Participants will learn to create an image through selecting, copying and pasting one image into another.

Skills include

1. Selecting DPI for desired output.
2. Overview of Photoshop tools
3. Using a range of selection tools to create an accurate selection
4. Copying and pasting a selection into a new image
5. Working with layers
6. Using painting tools to create shadows
7. Flattening layers.

DPI

An image's quality (resolution) is measured in dots per inch (DPI). This is the industry measurement, however the resolution may also be described as Pixels per inch (PPI) or Pixels per centimetre (PPC).

If you are intending to print your document it must be at least 300 DPI at print size. Images that are to be displayed on a computer can be reduced to 72 DPI.

You can decrease an image's DPI without loss of quality but cannot increase the resolution and add quality. All you will do is add pixels to the original quality.

At 300 DPI the image is quite clear.

At 72 DPI the clarity of the image has decreased.

Overview of Photoshop tools

The floating toolboxes on the side may be moved, closed or added to through the "Window" menu. The small grey dotted lines at the top of the tool panels are the anchor points that you click an d drag to move the panels to another location.

For this exercise you will need the layers, navigator and swatches.

The side toolbar contains the main image editing tools. These are grouped in sets of tools, each separated by a line. The top set are selection tools, the second are painting tools, the third are vector tools including the pen and text tool, and the bottom set allow 3D manipulation of objects. Below this are the colour tools, with a foreground and background colour. The final tool is a selection tool that will be very useful when creating accurate masks. All tools with a small black triangle have additional tools hidden. To access these click and hold on them.

Using a range of selection tools to create an accurate selection

The top tool allows you to move a selection or layer.

The Marquee tool allows you to click and drag to make a rectangular or circular selection. Holding the shift key when dragging will constrain the proportions, forcing the selection into a circle or square. Note- the circular option is accessed by clicking and holding on the icon to bring up additional tool options.

The lasso tool allows you to click and drag to create a selection of any shape. Additional lasso tools are a polygon lasso tool that will create a marquee with straight edges. To use this click and move the mouse- the line will follow, click to create another anchor point and drag again, etc, until you return to your starting point. The magnetic lasso tool will snap to an objects edges as you trace around them.

The magic wand tool selects pixels of the same colour that are next to each other. The sensitivity of the tool is set through adjusting the Tolerance, which is found on the toolbar when the tool is selected. To add to a selection using the wand tool, hold down the Shift button.
To subtract from a selection, hold the Alt key when you use the tool.

The quick selection tool allows you to paint a selection in.

The crop tool allows you to draw an area within your image that you can then crop to.

The eyedropper is a tool that lets you match colours within your image

Using a range of selection tools to create an accurate selection

Some images are very easy to crop. Images such as the fire hydrant with an empty background require very little work. For these, simply use the wand to select all the white through either holding down the shift key to add to selection, or select the background then go to the Select menu, and select similar. Then go to the select menu and select Inverse.

For a more complex mask, use the wand or the magnetic lasso tool to create an approximate mask, then us the masking tool at the bottom of the toolbar to toggle a mask on and off. When on, the masked area will be transparent and the unmasked area will be red. You can now zoom in for increased accuracy and paint a mask in place or rub out areas using the rubber tool. When either of these tools is selected, the options for the tools are available at the top of the workspace. These options will allow you to modify tool size and style. You will have to return from this view to get your flashing marquee before you can copy and paste it.

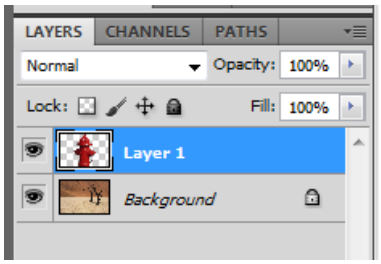
If you are a more confident user, you can also use the pen tool to draw around the selection and convert the line to a selection.

Copying and pasting a selection into a new image

Once you have your selection you need to copy it and then past it into the new image. It is a good idea to feather the selection before you do this. Go to the Select menu, go to modify, then feather. The default of 5 pixels is usually fine. This will soften the edges of the image allowing it to sit into the new background.

Working with layers

When you paste into another image, you are pasting a new layer. It is important that you are aware of working with layers, as you need to swap between these as you attempt different tasks.

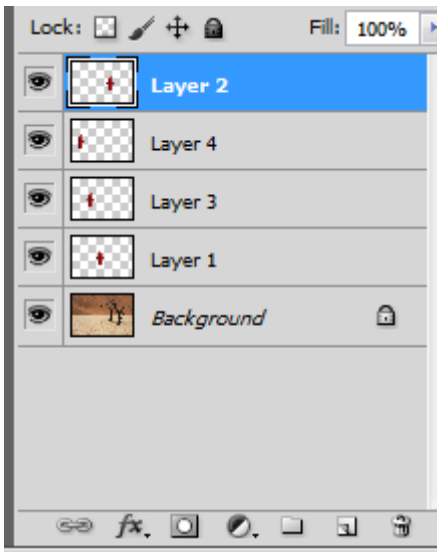


The layers are located on the right of the window. If they are not open, you can open layers in the windows menu. The eye allows you to see or hide layers. The Opacity option allows you to make layers transparent.

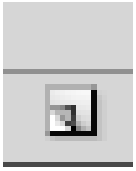
One of your first tasks will be to resize the pasted object, and reposition it on your background image. To resize- go to Edit and locate Transform and scale. There are also options such as free transform, rotate etc. When resizing, SHIFT will constrain proportions. When you are done, select any tool and you will be prompted to apply your changes.

Using painting tools to create shadows

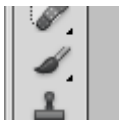
The new object now needs to sit in the environment. Often shadows will achieve this. To create shadows, you need to make a new layer under the object. The layers window for my image now shows 4 copies of the fire hydrant, each in its own layer.



To create a new layer, select the new layer icon on the bottom of the layers window. This will be placed above the selected layer. We need it under the hydrants. If it is not, select it and drag it down until it is between the background and layer 1 (or the object needing a shadow).



With the new layer selected, go to the paint tool and paint black shadows under the objects. Don't worry that it will be too dark. We will fix this soon.



Your image should have changed from the image on the left to something like the image on the right.

Now use the opacity slider on the layers to reduce the dense black to allow the sand texture to show through.

Flattening layers

The final stage is to reduce the image to a single layer. To do this go to the layers menu, then select Flatten Image.