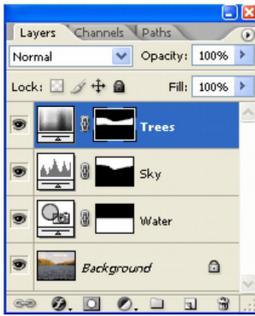


# Introduction to Layer Masks

[nyfalls.com/articles/photoshop/adjustment-layers-masking](http://nyfalls.com/articles/photoshop/adjustment-layers-masking)

*These principles apply to any reasonable quality image editor, although the exact instructions here apply to Photoshop only.*

Adjustment Layers (see Lenscope, February 2016) come paired with Masks. A Mask is an instruction that tells the layer what parts of the image will show the adjustment, and what parts will not (masked parts).



With a combination of an Adjustment Layer and a Mask you have the control to change the look of just one section of the image, like giving a beach ball on a beach scene more saturation, but leaving the rest of the scene alone (masked from the effect).

*[Or lightening the eyes of your subject if they're in shadow. - Ed.]*

## Painting A Mask

Masking is handled in most photo retouching software (Photoshop, PaintShop Pro, Acorn, Affinity Photo) the same way: using a black and white canvas to control the mask. The masking canvas matches the size and shape of the layer it applies to. It can either be black, white or shades of grey. You can paint these shades on the mask any way you like, you just need to understand what each shade does.

- **White:** Anything on the layer this mask is attached to will show through on the image where there is white. *White = Unmask/Show.*
- **Black:** Anything on the layer this mask is attached to will not show through on the image where there is black. *Black = Mask/Hide.*
- **Grey:** Anything on the layer this mask is attached to will show through as transparent on the image depending on how dark the grey is. The lighter the shade of grey, the more of the attached layer will show through. The closer the grey is to black, the less will show through.

You can fill a mask completely with one shade, or you can use the Paintbrush, Pencil, Eraser, Fill Bucket, Gradient, or other tools to paint where you wish on the mask canvas. When you change the shade of the mask, the Layer it is attached to either appears or disappears accordingly, where you make the change to the mask.

## Adjust The Sky

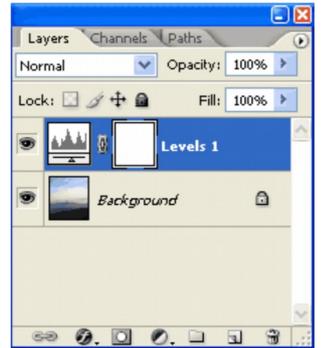
To darken the sky in a landscape shot and leave the rest of the image alone, you would apply a new Brightness Adjustment Layer and adjust for the sky, and then use a mask to prevent the adjustment from showing on non-sky parts. In the mask, the portion of the canvas containing the sky will be white (allowing the change to show through) and the portion containing the land will be black (blocking the adjustment from showing through).

In this image, the sky is slightly washed out and I prefer to have it darker. If I darkened the whole image, I'd be making the mountains in the bottom half too dark and would lose detail.



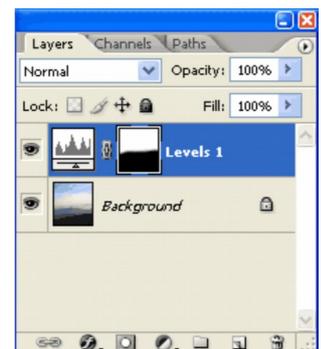
Apply a Levels Adjustment layer (named Levels 1) and adjust the levels to darken the sky. The mask attached to this adjustment layer is all white, this effect is applied to the whole image and my mountains are now too dark.

The top layer (Levels 1) is a Levels Adjustment layer (you can tell by the icon). The attached mask (which is all white) tells Photoshop to apply the adjustment to the whole image.



Use a large, soft-edge paintbrush, set to pure black, and paint over the mountains with the mask canvas selected. This hides the effect of the Adjustment Layer in those areas, which returns the mountains to their original tone.

Notice the bottom half of the mask is now painted black. It is masking the Levels adjustment layer from the mountains so it only shows in the sky. ■



## Further Reading:

<http://nyfalls.com/articles/photoshop/adjustment-layers-masking/>  
<http://www.graphics.com/article/three-ways-use-adjustment-layers-adobe-photoshop>  
<http://design.tutsplus.com/articles/a-basic-guide-to-photoshop-cs4-adjustment-layers--psd-4381>  
<http://photographypla.net/introduction-exposure-adjustment-layers-photoshop/>  
<http://digital-photography-school.com/beginners-introduction-using-layers/>

<http://blog.kozzi.com/photography/photoshop/tutorial-an-easy-introduction-to-layer-masks/>  
<http://digital-photography-school.com/editing-eyes-3-photoshop-steps-to-eyes-that-pop/>  
<http://phlearn.com/color-brighten-sharpen-eyes-photoshop>  
<https://www.ephotozine.com/article/brighten-eyes-in-photoshop-elements-12592>

## Altered Reality/Creative examples

<http://photoshoptips.net/2006/07/25/layer-masks/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA8TgyTruV8>  
<http://www.digicamhelp.com/processing-photos/advanced-editing/an-introduction-to-layer-masks/>  
<http://photographypla.net/layer-masks-in-photoshop/>

## Welcome to our New Members and Visitors

Please welcome new members and Visitors to the Peninsula Camera Club. New Members are especially invited to take part in the special "Education Nights" where more experienced members provide a great understanding of photography and photographic processing with specific information, hints and tips galore designed especially to help you gain more from your photography—not to be missed !

**A special welcome to our visitors.** We hope you enjoy the meetings and develop a love and passion for photography. One of the aims of our club is to encourage, foster, develop and advance skills and promote the enjoyment of photography. If we can help you in any way or you have any questions, would like to know more about the club or would like a membership form please feel free to ask any member of the club.

## Peninsula Camera Club

**Life Members** Dr. Peter Marendy, Ken Peters, Brad King, Lyn King, Peter Edwards, Glenn Rossiter, Dave Lamb, Peter O'Brien, & John Taylor

## Other Club Officers

Catering Convenor - June Hill & Robyn Paul  
Raffle Convenor - Sheila Crisp