



Selections Primer for Photographers

What is a Selection?

- A way to isolate a portion of an image so you can edit: move, copy, adjust tonality or hue, sharpen, paint or otherwise modify it while leaving the rest untouched.

Masked vs. selected area

- The active area is called the 'selection' the rest of the image (the inactive portion) is called the mask.
- A selection will work with only the active layer.
- A selection can be created on one layer and edited on a different one.
- Feathering: The amount of smoothing along the transition between selection and mask. Can be hard or various degrees of softness

Basic Selection Tools

Tool Options Bar

- Each tool has specific parameters that can be set via its tool options bar
- Feathering
 - › Measured in pixels
 - › 0 = hard edge
 - › resolution of image determines setting
- Anti-alias
 - › Smooths jagged edge effect
 - › Check box to apply



Marquees

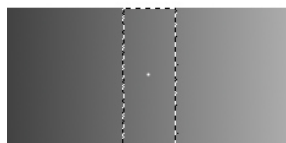
- For selecting rectangles, ovals, circles, squares
- Click and drag

Lassoes

- Freeform lasso most useful for photographic selections
- Closing a selection indicated by small 'o' by cursor
- Magnetic lasso senses edges
 - › Sensitivity determined by settings in tool bar
 - › Often results in 'choppy' selections

Magic Wand

- Tolerance Setting
 - › number of pixels
- Contiguous Setting
 - › Adjacent or complete
- Sample All Layers



Color Range

- Based on foreground color
- Eyedroppers add or subtract
- Fuzziness
 - › Similar to tolerance
- Low fuzziness setting with added clicks usually best choice
- Partially Selected Pixels
 - › Editing effect will reflect degree to which pixels were selected



Quick Selection (CS3)

- Automatic selection based on clicking and dragging through a range of colors

Extract Filter

- Highlight edges to extract an area
- Erases unselected area permanently

Pen Tool

- Produces precise vector paths
- Paths can be converted to selections

Refine Edges (CS3)

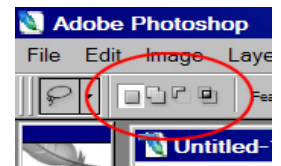
- Uses a dialog box to refine and view previously made selections

Selection Brush (Elements 5)

- Works similar to extract filter in PS

Refining a Selection

- Use Add, Subtract, Intersect
- Transform selection



Select Menu

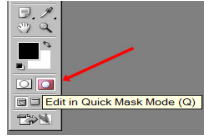
- Deselect / Reselect
 - › Use 'cmd/ctrl D' keyboard shortcut
- Inverse
 - › Selects the opposite of current selection.
- Border: Creates a selection of just the perimeter to width determined in options box
 - › Useful for removing halos
- Smooth: rounds sharp edges of a selection
- Expand: Enlarges selection perimeter by chosen number of pixels
- Contract: Shrinks selection by chosen number of pixels
- Grow: Spreads selection to similar colored adjacent pixels
- Similar: Spreads selection over entire image
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Selections Primer for Photographers

Quick Mask

- Use painting tools (brushes)
- Lower opacity for partial selection
- Toggle back and forth with selection view



Hiding a Selection

- Use 'cmd/ctrl H' keyboard shortcut to toggle visibility of 'marching ants'

Moving a Selection

- With the marquee tool active place the cursor inside a selection. Click and drag to move the selection mask. If the move tool is active instead, the contents of the layer will be moved rather than the selection. You can move a selection within the same picture or even to another file.
- Alternatively, use the Edit commands (cut, copy & paste) just as in a Word document.
- Selections pasted from either within the same image or brought in from a different image will appear on a new separate layer

Saving a Selection

- Choose Select/Save Selection to attach a permanent copy of selection to file.
- Can be loaded at a later date

Selection Tips

Tip 1

- Make a selection in several steps using different tools
- See 'Refining Selections'

Tip 2

- Try the automated tools first (Magic Wand, Color Range, Quick Selection)

Tip 3

- Sometimes it's easier to select the opposite of what you want and then invert the selection

Tip 4

- To better see your selection, toggle the quick mask mode (Q). Quick mask helps preview feathering

Tip 5

- Use Full Screen Mode (F) when making selections near the edge of an image. When using the Lasso tool go outside the frame to make sure edges are selected.

Making Complex Selections Using Channels & Masks (Photoshop only)

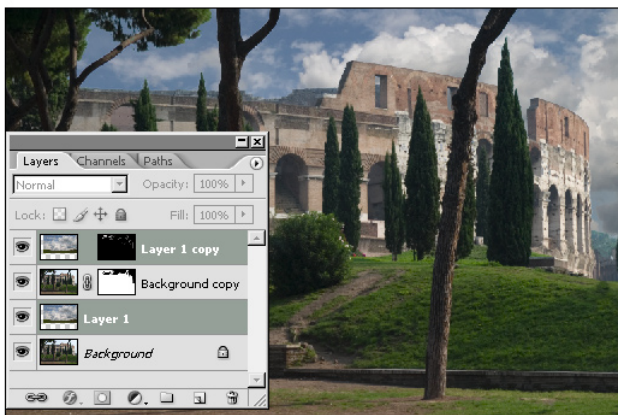
1. Go to the channels palette. Find which has the most contrast at the edges you wish to select by alternately clicking each channels name. The area you want selected will eventually be white; the unselected will be black.
2. Copy channel. (Drag channel to page icon)
3. The intent in these next steps is to create a mask by making the selection area whiter and the rest blacker. From the Image pulldown menu choose 'Apply Image' In the dialog the channel should be automatically set to the one you chose. Change the blending mode to Overlay and click OK. Depending on your image the Apply Image command may need to be repeated several times to increase the contrast.
4. Type ctrl / cmd L to open the Levels dialog. Use the white eyedropper to click in the light gray areas and the black eyedropper in the dark gray areas.
5. If necessary use the lasso tool to select large areas and use Edit / Fill with black or white.
6. Also if needed zoom in and use the paint brush with black and white to refine the mask filling in the necessary areas. The 'eyeball' of the RGB composite channel can be toggled to help view the image.
7. Ctrl / Com. Click on the channel thumbnail to load the mask as a selection. (Or drag the new channel to the Load Channel as Selection Icon at the bottom of the palette).
8. Go to the layers palette and duplicate the background layer. With the selection still active add a layer mask to this layer. The mask will be shown in white.
9. Create a new layer between the two existing layers either by dragging in a background from a different image or making a blank layer and filling it with color.
10. Reselect the selection, click on the layer mask on the top layer and apply a small Gaussian Blur
11. Click on the image thumbnail and use Dodge, Burn & Desaturate tools as needed.



Selections Primer for Photographers

Changing a Sky (Photoshop)

1. Open both the image that is getting a new sky (we'll call that the main image) and the image that contains the replacement sky.
2. Duplicate the background layer of the main image. Make the background layer the highlighted layer.
3. Drag the background layer of the replacement sky onto the main image. It should come in between the 2 existing layers. If not move it below the background copy. Rename this layer 'sky'
4. Close the replacement sky image.
5. On the background copy layer, select the area to be replaced. In the example I'm using I used the magic wand set to non-contiguous; tolerance of 32. Use the subtract lasso to deselect any unwanted areas.
6. Select the inverse. so that the area to be replaced is NOT the selection.
7. Create a layer mask on this background copy layer.
8. Go to the Select pulldown menu and choose 'Reselect'.
9. From the same menu choose Modify / Border.
10. From the dialog choose a border of 6 pixels for an average high resolution image.
11. Duplicate the sky layer
12. Make the sky copy layer active and add a layer mask.
13. Move this layer to the top of the layer stack.
14. Set the blending mode of this layer to 'darken'
15. Activate the layer mask of the sky copy layer by



clicking on the layer mask thumbnail. It will now have a 1 pixel border around it. With a soft brush and the foreground color set to white, clean up any edge halos that remain. It's helpful to zoom in to a higher magnification to do this final step.

Changing a Sky (Elements)

1. Open both the image that is getting a new sky (we'll call that the main image) and the image that contains the replacement sky.
2. Duplicate the background layer of the main image. Make the background layer the highlighted layer.
3. Drag the background layer of the replacement sky onto the main image. It should come in between the 2 existing layers. If not move it below the background copy. Rename this layer 'sky'
4. Close the replacement sky image.
5. On the background copy layer, select the area to be replaced. In the example I'm using I used the magic wand set to non-contiguous; tolerance of 32. Use the subtract lasso to deselect any unwanted areas.
6. Go to the Edit pulldown and choose 'Delete' to remove the unwanted areas.
7. Duplicate the sky layer
8. Move this layer to the top of the layer stack and make sure it is the active layer.
9. If necessary, go to the Select pulldown menu and choose 'Reselect'.
10. From the same menu choose Modify / Border.
11. From the dialog choose a border of 6 pixels for an average high resolution image.
12. Select 'Inverse' from the select pulldown menu.
13. Delete the selection.
14. Set the blending mode of this layer to 'darken'
15. On the background copy layer, use the eraser tool set to a soft brush to clean up any edge halos.