

We know that some of you are just getting your feet wet with the digital darkroom. If that's the case, don't be put off by this article. If it seems over your head, that's fine. It should be. After all, many of you don't even own Adobe Photoshop yet. And some of you who already have Photoshop are just getting started using it.

This article serves two purposes:

First, for those students who have been working with Photoshop for some time, we know you're probably chomping at the bit to get started with some of the more advanced techniques. This article will give you some ideas about how to use Photoshop with your images or with some of the Totally-Free Photos that you get in each Unit. If you feel like playing around with the techniques, go for it!

Second, for those of you who are not yet Photoshop wizards, this article will give you an idea of the kinds of things that you can do once you get your feet wet. Just give the article the once over, don't worry about the details. And, remember that you'll start learning Photoshop in the very next Unit. For now, just savor the possibilities. We'll be teaching you all the "how to" stuff in this Course.

One of the great things about using Photoshop is having the ability to combine multiple pictures into a single composite image. In Unit One, I showed you how I created a composite from three existing images that you received with your Unit One Totally-Free Photos. Now, I'm going to show you yet another way to creatively combine images. Remember, if any, or all of this is new to you, don't worry. By the end of this course, you will understand all of the steps that I am explaining here, and hopefully, be applying these techniques to your own creative images and visions.

Here are the three images that are used for this composite: (you received the first two with the Unit 2 Totally-Free Photos).

1. A 4" x 6" color print (#28) I'll call "Clouds"
2. A photographic print border (#31) I'll call "Border"
3. My signature and the title of the print (you'll have to provide your own)

I am going to demonstrate one way to insert your own photo into the Border image using a method that "groups" layers.



*Totally-Free Photos #28 "Clouds."*



*Totally-Free Photos #31 "Border."*

Start by launching Photoshop then Open the "Border" image(#31) in the "Free Photos Unit 2" folder via the menu command:

**File>Open\*>Desktop>"digital photo course" folder>"free photos Unit 2" folder>#31**

*\*In the Open dialog box select Desktop in the pull-down menu at the top. Locate and select the folder "digital photo course" by double-clicking it. Locate and select the folder "Free\_photos\_Unit 2" by double-clicking it. Locate and open "#31" by double-clicking it.*

For this technique to work, we're going to have to create a new black "image area" on a separate layer.



Click on the icon to create a new layer.

So we'll start by creating that new layer. In the Layers Palette click the "New Layer" icon at the bottom of the Layers Palette.

*Note: If Layer Palette is not visible, go to **Windows>Layers**.*

Now you should see another layer appear named "Layer 1."

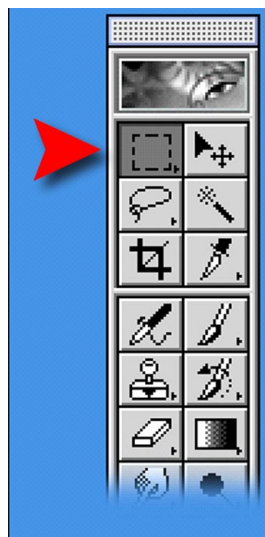
In the toolbox select the Marquee tool by clicking it once.

Check to see that the feather value is set to "0" in the Marquee tool options.

If the Options are not visible go to menu command:

**Window>Show Options.**

With the Marquee tool selected, click and drag your cursor from the upper left of the black insert to the bottom right corner. You should now see the marquee or "marching ants" on or close to the edge of the black insert.



Rectangular Marquee Tool

Don't be concerned if you don't match exactly the first time. We are going to adjust the selection with Menu command: **Select>Transform Selection**. With this control we can go ahead and "grab" any side, or corner, with our cursor and drag any side of the selection and make it match the existing insert exactly. Double-clicking inside the selection will commit your transformation.

*Tip: To insure your accuracy Zoom in to 200% or 300% when adjusting your selection. You can do this during the transform selection process by **Command + (+)**(Mac) or **Control + (+)** (PC) to zoom in or **Command + (-)** or **Control + (-)** (PC) to zoom out. To navigate your image you can temporarily access the "Hand" tool by pressing the space bar. This way you can drag your enlarged image around on your Desktop.*

Now we are going to fill the selection with black. Make sure the default colors are loaded in the color picker at the bottom of the toolbar (foreground: black; background: white).

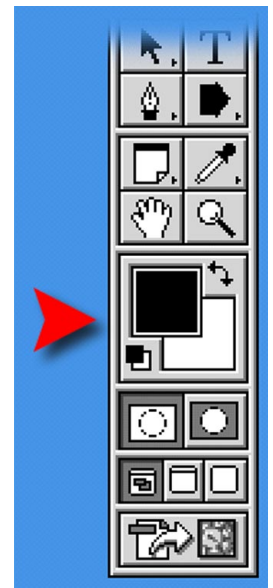
If not, to reset the color picker to the default colors quickly and easily, press the "D" key on your keyboard.

To fill the selection with the foreground color (in this case, black) use key command *Option-Delete*.

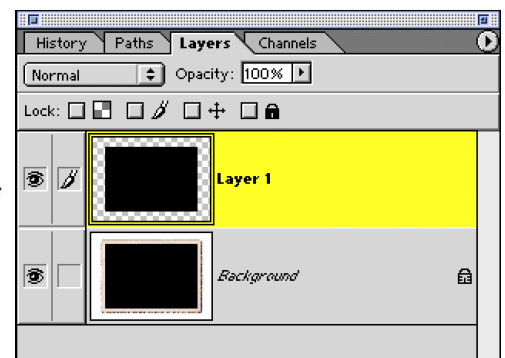
Or the Menu command:  
**Edit>Fill>Foreground Color.**

To deselect the selection use the key command **Command-D** (Mac) or **Control-D** (PC)

Or the menu command:  
**Select>Deselect.**



Default foreground/background colors: black/white



Layer 1 active

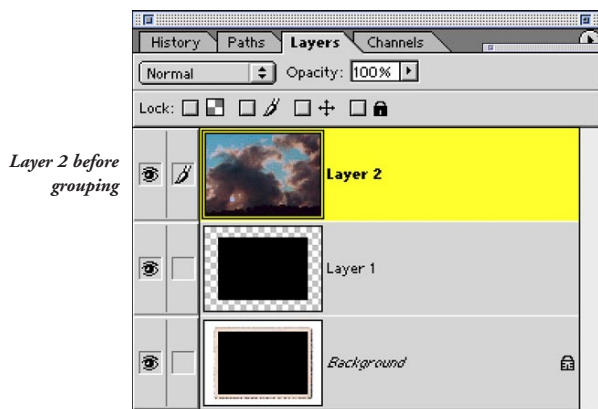
Now you should have two layers, the Background layer with the print border and another layer with a black rectangle which matches the existing black shape.

Open the "Clouds" image (#28):  
**File>Open>Desktop>"digital photo course" folder>"free photos Unit 2" folder>#28.**

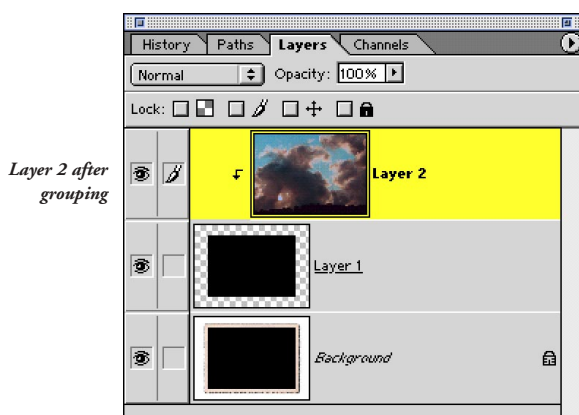
In the layers palette of the "Clouds" photo, click and drag the background layer onto the "Border" image work area. When a thick black border appears release the mouse. You now should have three layers in your layers palette. Here's the fun part. We're going to merge the "Clouds" layer with the black rectangle that you created. Make sure that the

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“Clouds” layer is above the rectangle in the Layers Palette, (If not, click and drag it up to the top of the stack.)



With the “Cloud” layer active go to menu command: **Layers>Group with Previous.** (PC: *Control-G*); (Mac: *Command-G*).



Notice how Layer 2 is now shifted to the right with an arrow pointing downward. This indicates the two layers are grouped together. When grouping layers, the underlying black rectangle layer defines which part of the cloud layer is visible.

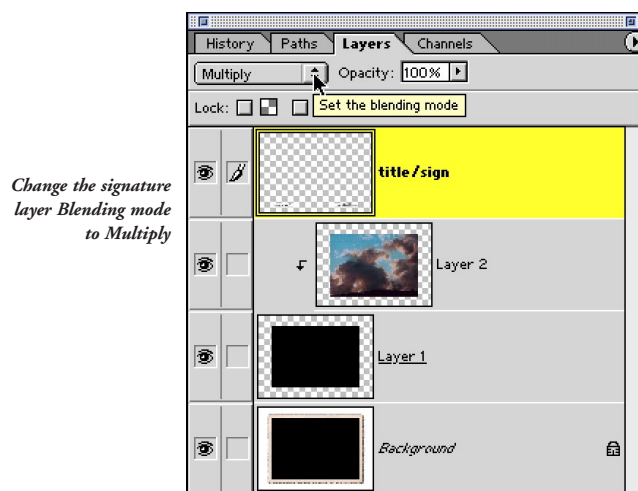
Select the “Move” tool and move the clouds around to see the different composition possibilities. No matter where you move the picture, the black insert you created acts as a mask for the layer above it. In order to see the entire cloud image we’ll have to reduce it.

Go to menu command **Edit>Transform>Scale** and reduce the size of the cloud shot by dragging the corner in towards the center. Be sure to hold down the Shift key while dragging, this constrains the proportions of your re-sized image and eliminates image distortion.

If you start to see the underlying black layer you’ve reduced your image too far. Just drag a corner out from the center to enlarge your image enough to cover the mask. When you’re satisfied with the size hit Enter (PC) or Return (Mac). You can still move the image layer with the Move tool or separate the two layers by going to menu command **Layer>Ungroup.**

The last part of this project involves adding my signature to the bottom of the print. For this part, I took a piece of white paper and drew a 5 x 7 inch rectangle to use as a guide then signed the title of the print and my signature with a black marker in approximately the place I wanted them to appear on my finished piece. The 5 x 7 guide was helpful for two reasons: first, it helped me keep the art straight on the scanner surface; secondly, it allowed me to scan at 100% (actual size) so only minimal re-sizing was necessary. Despite the fact that the signature is really just a gray scale image (black and white) I chose to scan this element in RGB in order to maintain a common color mode. After scanning, I opened the file in Photoshop and adjusted the levels to increase the contrast and cropped any excess white background. I then added the signature image to the composite image by dragging the signature layer onto our composite image work area. What about that white background? We’re going to “hide” the white with the Blending mode function in the Layers palette.

With the signature layer active (in the composite) change its Blending mode from Normal to Multiply. In Multiply mode the white background disappears making it possible to place your signature and title anywhere on the page. I chose to place them both in the border area of the print.



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Now you could have accomplished this by simply finding an image that would fit exactly within the confines of the black within the border. But by using the “Group with Previous” command you can move and re-position your insert image without distorting or cutting it. Try replacing the cloud image with one of your own images. Have fun.

