

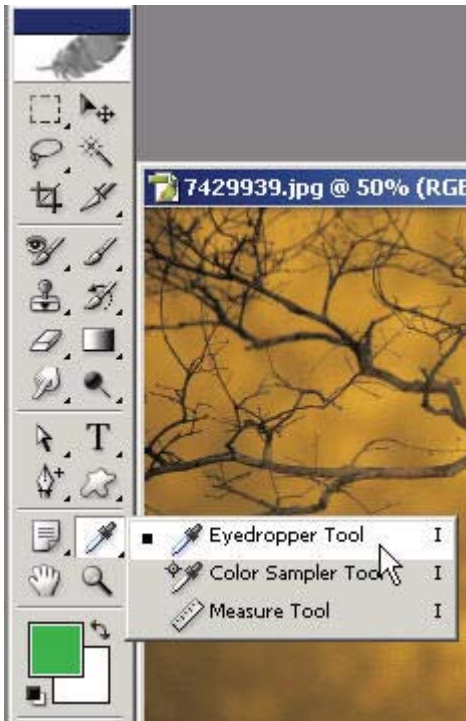
INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS

LAYER MASKING

I

Information Sheet No. PS818

To start this layer mask tutorial, use the eyedropper tool to get a sample of any color in your document (like an open photo).



Click and the sample will now become the foreground color that you can work with.

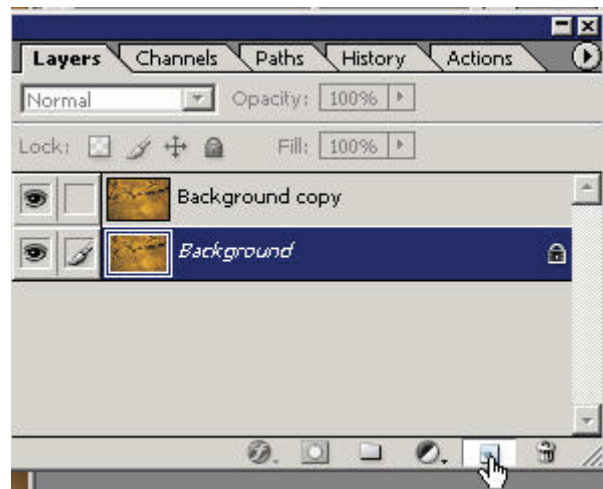


For this educational tutorial, get an eyedropper sample to get your new foreground color in the color picker. Now drag the background layer of this photo to the new layer icon.

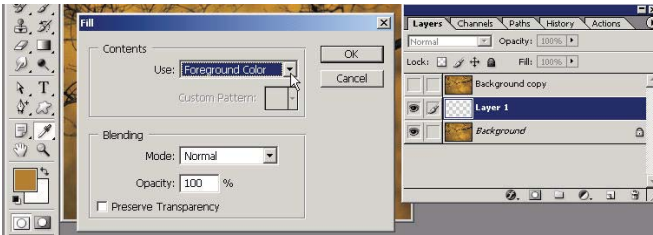


This will duplicate the layer so you can change some pixels on.

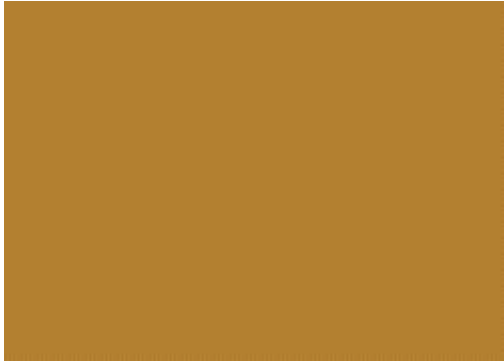
Switch back to the background layer by clicking on it so it's highlighted in the layers palette. Now press the new layer icon to create a new and blank layer above the background layer.



Now you can 'fill' this new layer with your foreground color several ways in which I teach. For now go to Edit: Fill and choose the default foreground color and press OK. This will fill the layer with the new color you have chosen from the eyedropper tool.



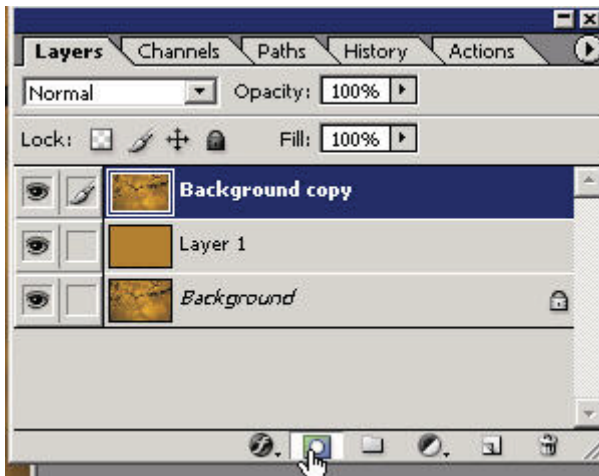
Now this blank layer is filled with your foreground color.



Select the original copy you made in the layers palette which should be above the fill layer.

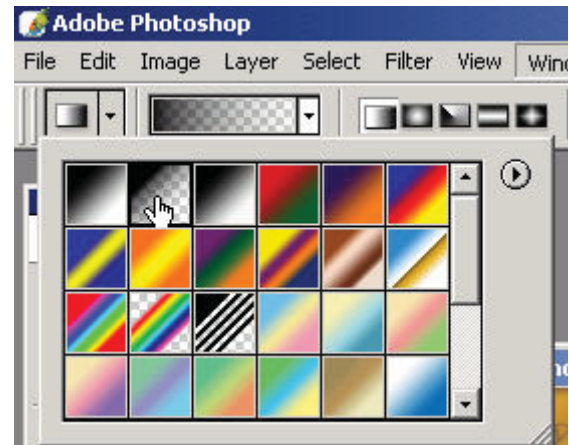
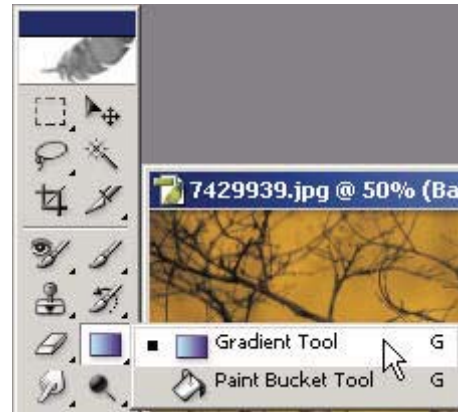


Now click on the new layer mask icon.

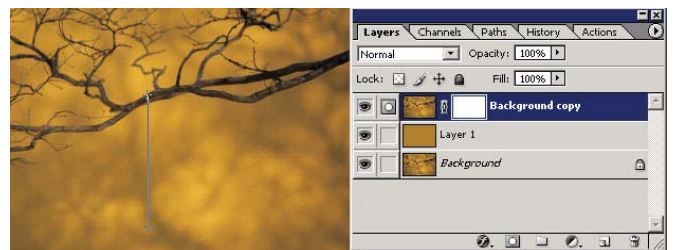


What you are going to do is simply 'hide' pixels by using the layer mask; they're still there just hidden. By hiding some of the pixels on this layer you can let the layer beneath blend into this layer.

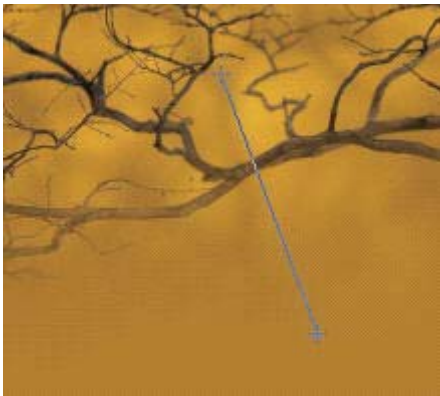
Grab your gradient tool with black as the foreground color and choose foreground to transparent as shown.



Now simply drag up with the gradient tool from the bottom at a slight angle towards the top (about 3 screen inches worth). Because you are on the layer mask, these pixels will now be hidden.



In case you didn't know it you are now learning my secret weapon (the gradient **layer mask**).



This is the #1 technique that professionals use in graphic design. It's used in 90% of all movie posters (so that should say something). Any beginner can create professional results by mastering this process.

Go to the channels palette and view the **layer mask** channel.

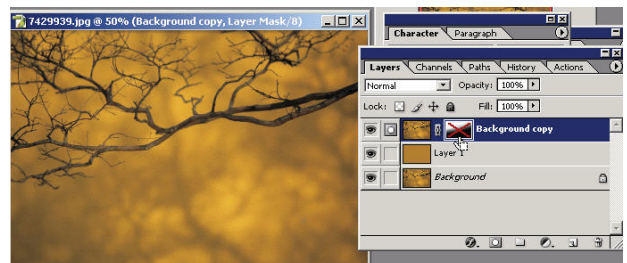
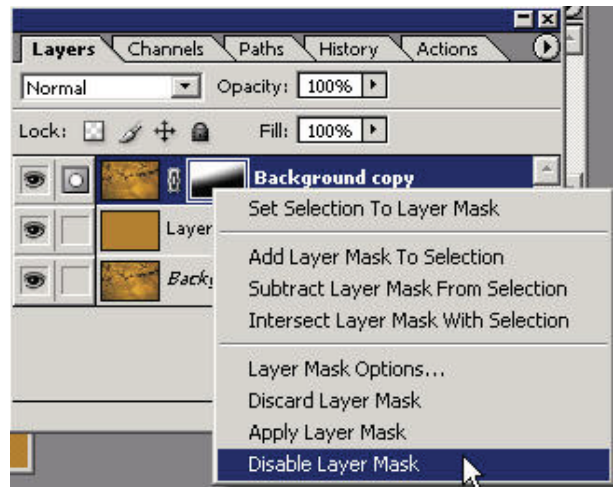


Once again you can see the black area is the area that you have masked or hidden and the white is the area that is left. The red you see is the rubylith. You can click on and off with the \ key. Or you can turn the eye off in the channels palette to turn the rubylith on and off.

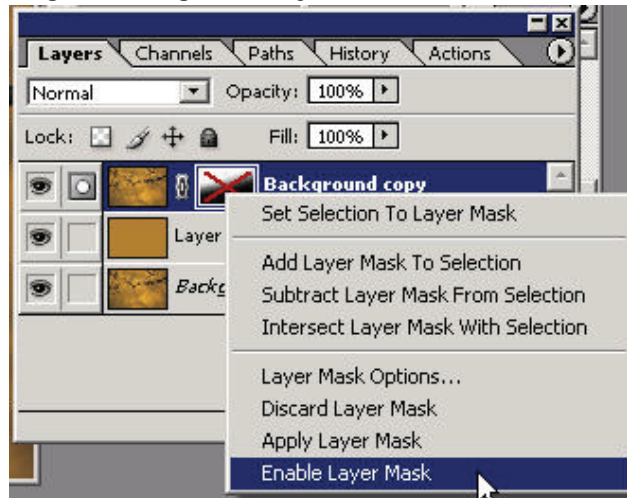
When you are done looking in the channels palette make sure that you reselect the RGB image composite to keep working on the document and layer.



When you right click on the layer mask you have many options to choose from. Try disable layer mask. This will turn the layer mask off with an X in the icon and will bring all your hidden/blended pixels back. This is so much better than erasing (using the layer mask).



Right click again and you can "re"-enable it.



Remember that when using layer masks, if you want to keep hiding pixels you must make sure that the layer mask icon itself is highlighted in the layer. Otherwise you'll think you're hiding pixels and instead you're on the layer itself instead of the layer MASK. It will take plenty of experience to get used to this. Choose a darker spot with your eyedropper tool.

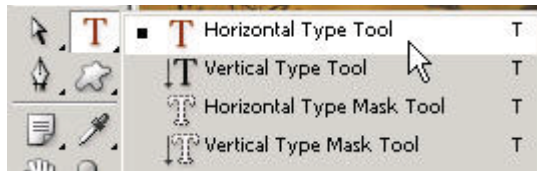


Now select the fill layer in the layers palette to make it the "active" layer. Press alt backspace to fill this layer with your new chosen color.



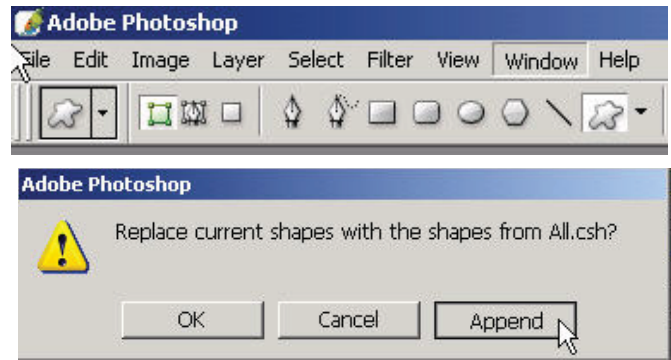
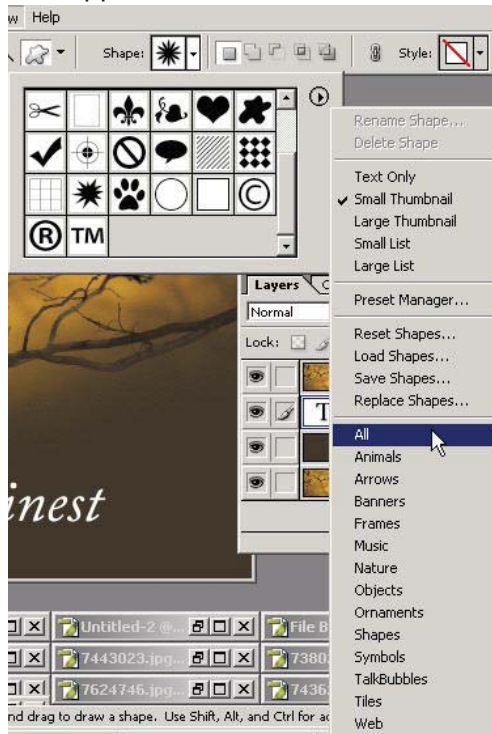
Now we're getting into design serious. By combining different techniques here you can get a feel for how easy it is to create some nice work (where you're headed).

Grab your type tool and just enter some complimentary text that you think would fit with the image you've chosen.

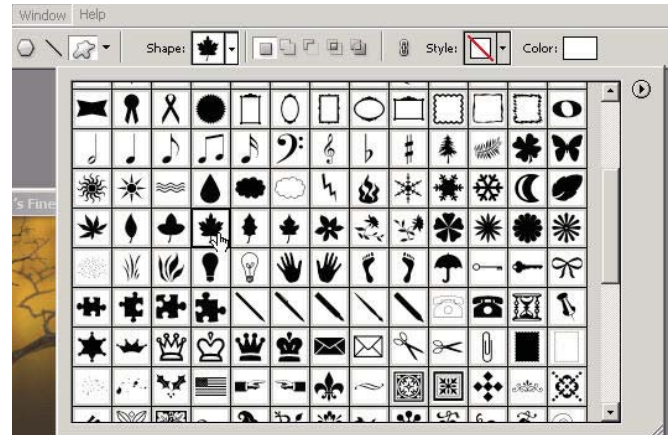


Combining a few more things here, go to the Shapes tool (U) and choose a shape.

You can also use the fly out menu to add All and then choose append.



This will "load" all of the default shapes for you to choose from.



You can have all kinds of fun playing around with these shapes but it's really cool when you deliberately start to put together a "design". It's then that the individual components start "adding up".

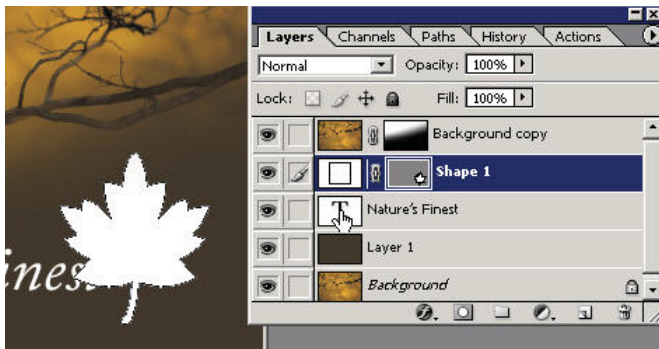
To make things simple, just keep the option on shape layers.



Now drag across with your chosen shape to the size you think it should be.

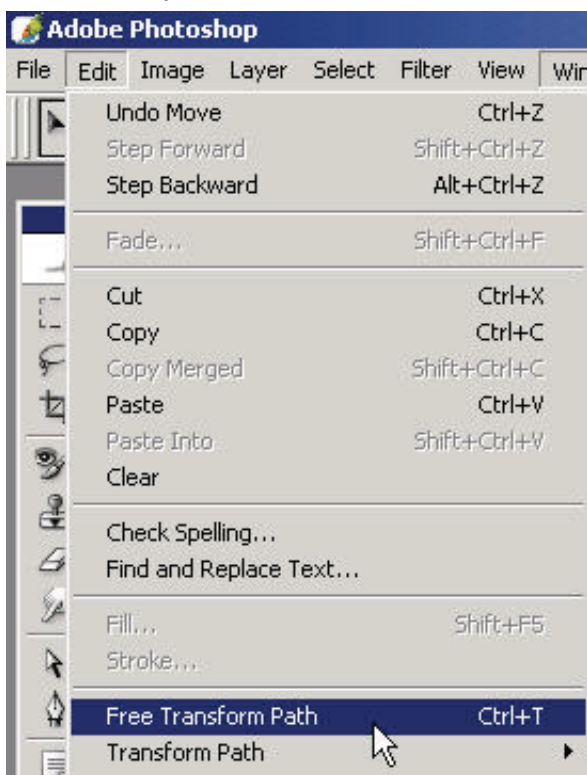


Remember that it will fill with your foreground color.



If you want to change the color of the shape layer just click the color picker on the upper right in the options bar.

Remember that you have lots of tools at your disposal. Go to Edit: Free Transform Path (it is recognized as a Path because as I said in another tutorial shapes can be edited as paths).

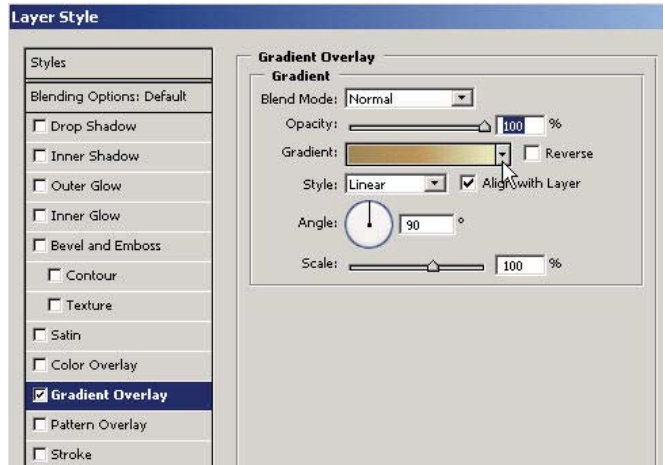


Now hold the Ctrl key and angle your object in to the center as shown.

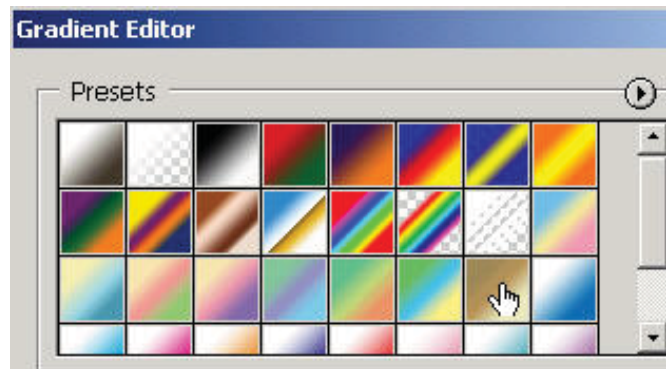


To add some more pizzazz to your shape layer you can go to the blending options/layer effects and do some

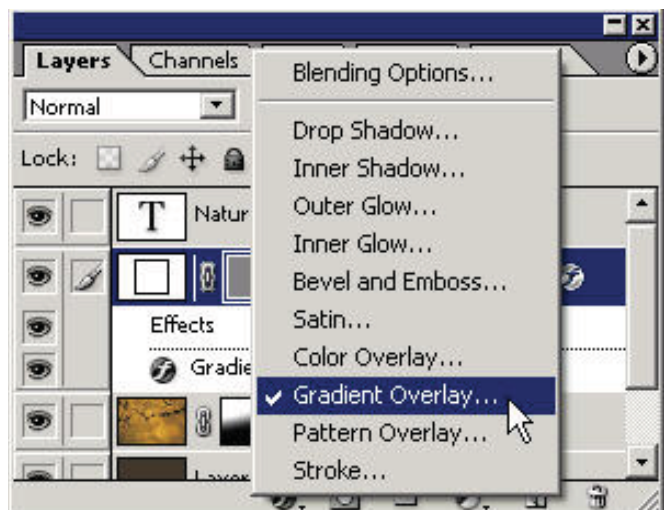
fun stuff. Try a gradient overlay and choose one that is close to your color theme. You can also change the angle or scale of the gradient which will apply to the layer.



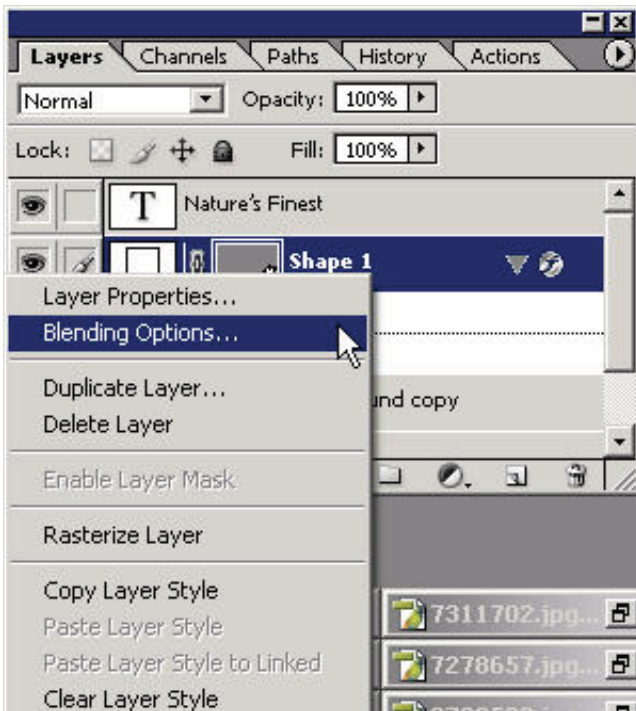
You can also create your own custom gradients. This demonstration tutorial uses a custom made gradient.



Here is the shortcut to getting the gradient overlay effect.



You can also get there via right clicking on the layer and choosing blending options.



Here is the result of just a few of these basic Photoshop skills (with an emphasis on the ever-important layer mask) put together.



The fun has only just begun. It gets exciting when YOU start harnessing all of the Power that lies in Photoshop with your creativity and new knowledge of Photoshop. Just wait until you see what you can do with the layer mask in your designs!