

# Sky Overlay Tutorial

Program Requirements: Photoshop CC

Instructor: Ms. Yurkovich Course: Photography

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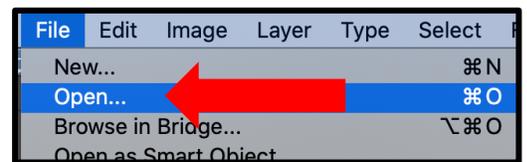
This is an overlay method that allows you to insert a new sky into your photo. It works really well on photographs that have soft blends in their backgrounds and is a great way to add some pizzazz to your image.



Before

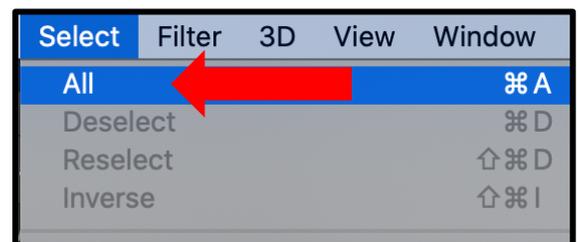
After

1. Open Photoshop by double clicking on the Photoshop icon. Open the file by going to **File > Open** and navigating to your photo, *Sky Switch 1.jpg*. Click **Open** and your file will appear in Photoshop. Repeat the process and open the second file *Sky 80.jpg*.

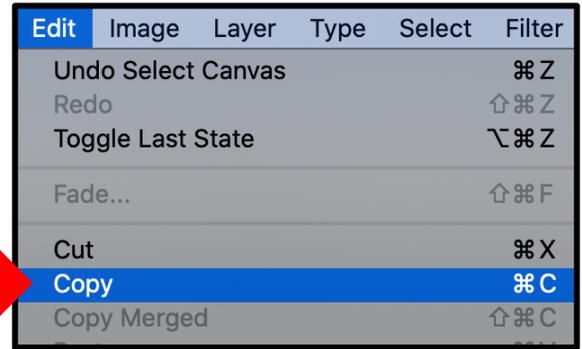


2. **Don't forget to crop e' edit!** - The first thing you need to do before you ever add overlays to a photo, is put your main photo through workflow, in other words, crop and edit you photo before you begin. Add any adjustment layers or filters that you see fit, **before** adding the overlay. In this example photo the image has already been cropped and edited for you so it is ready to go and there is no need to put it through workflow, but don't forget this important step for you own photographs!

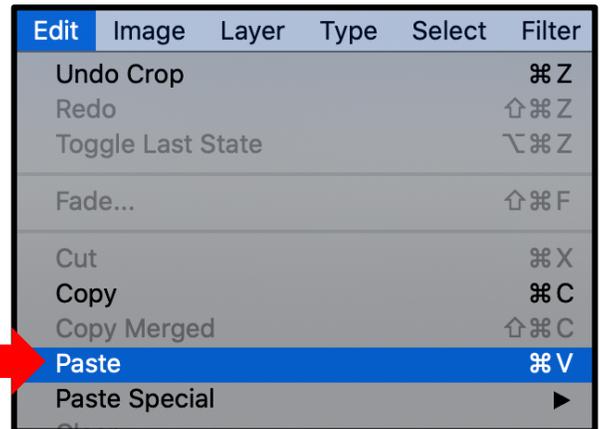
3. The first thing we need to do after cropping and editing our image is to get both images (our main photo and thte sky) into the same file. To do this we will need to copy and paste the sky file on top of the main photo. Click on *Sky 80.jpg* and go to **Select > Select All**.



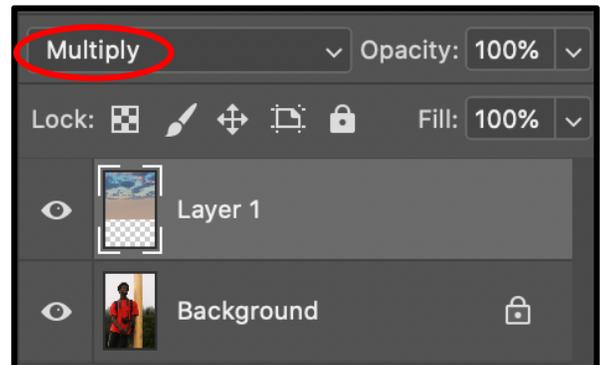
4. You'll know that the entire image has been selected when a dashed line that looks like marching ant appears around your entire image. Once the dashed line has appeared go to *Edit > Copy*.



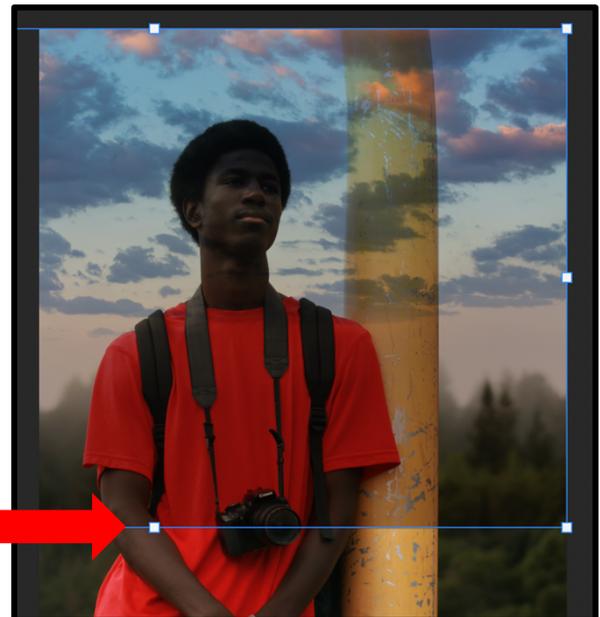
5. Switch over to the *Sky Switch 1.jpg* file by clicking on the tab with that name on it. Now go to *Edit > Paste* and now the new sky appears on top of the portrait.



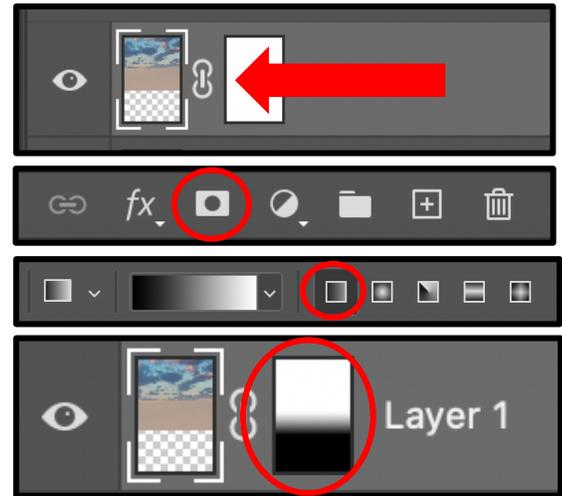
6. On the *Layers Palette*, located in the bottom right hand corner, make sure to click on the word *Normal*, this is the blending mode for the sky layer. When you click on *Normal* the blending mode menu will appear. Select *Multiply* from the list. (*Important note:* Depending on the specific photos you are working with you may choose a different mode that better suits your images.)



7. We will need to resize the sky so that it fits neatly on top of the main photo and covers all of the sky, so go to *Edit > Free Transform*. Click on the handles that appear and resize the sky to fit. (Tip: If you hold down *shift* and grab the white handles around the image, it will only change one dimension of the photo at a time.) When you are happy press *Enter or Return* on your keyboard to lock in the smoke's position.



8. Add a mask to your smoke layer by clicking on the icon at the bottom of the *Layers Palette* with the white rectangle with the dark circle inside of it. You will see a white rectangle pop up next to the rainbow thumbnail of *Layer 2*. Click on this white rectangle.



9. Select the *gradient tool*  by clicking on it or pushing *G* on your keyboard. The default gradient goes from black to white and should be a smooth straight transition. It shows a preview of the gradient in the far upper left-hand corner of your screen. Click a little above the tree line in the photo and drag your cursor down to a little below the lowest point of the sky. This will make a smooth fade between the new sky and the trees in the main photo. When you release the mouse, the fade will appear and you will notice that the layer mask for Layer 1 is now filled with a white to black gradient. If you don't like how your gradient looks, try again. Keep playing with it until you like it.

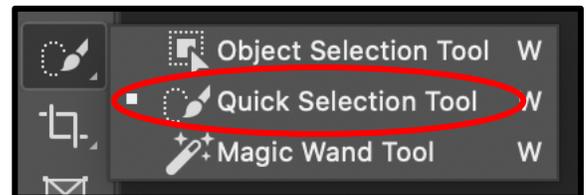


Before

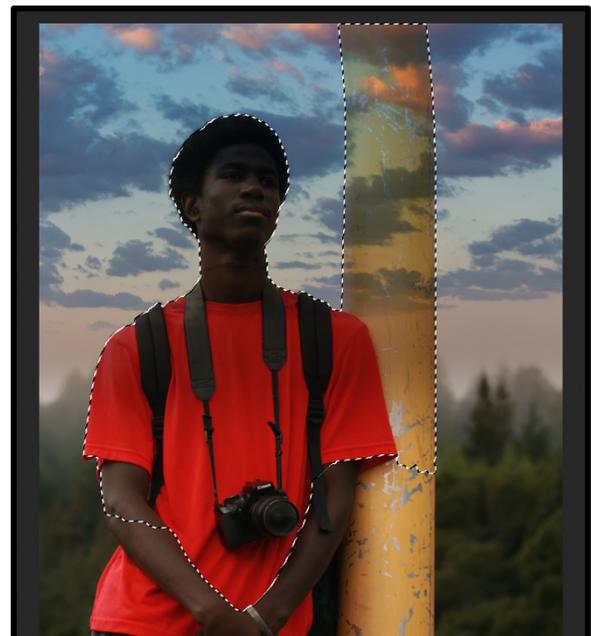


After

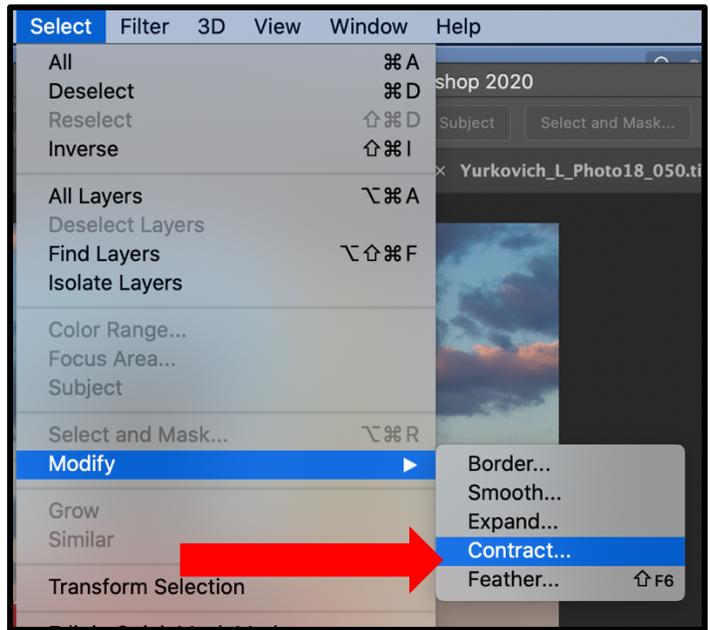
10. Now that the tree line is dealt with, it's time to put the sky behind our model. Select the *Quick Selection Tool*. This tool is hidden under the Magic Wand, so press *W* on your keyboard and click on the tool that lights up. When a menu of three tools appears, be sure to select the *Quick Selection Tool*.



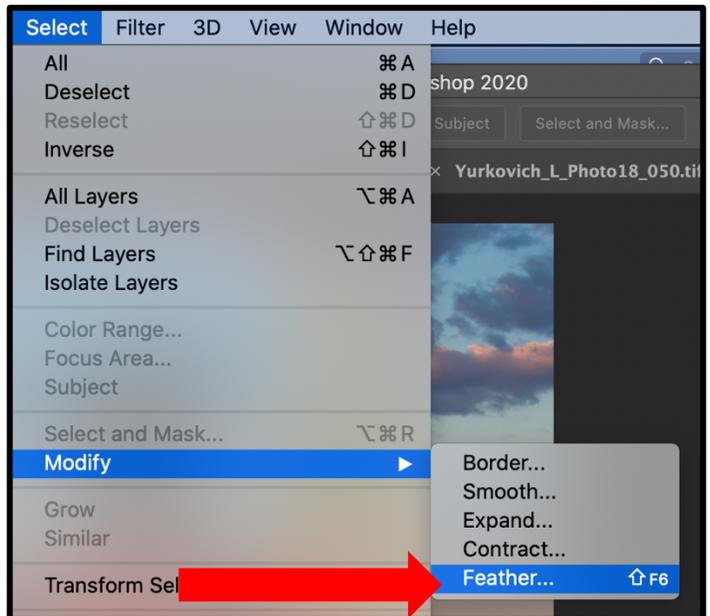
11. The Quick Selection Tool is a smart brush that selects similar things, making it easy to select our model. Click on the *Background Layer*. Click and drag the brush along the model and the yellow pole until they are completely selected.



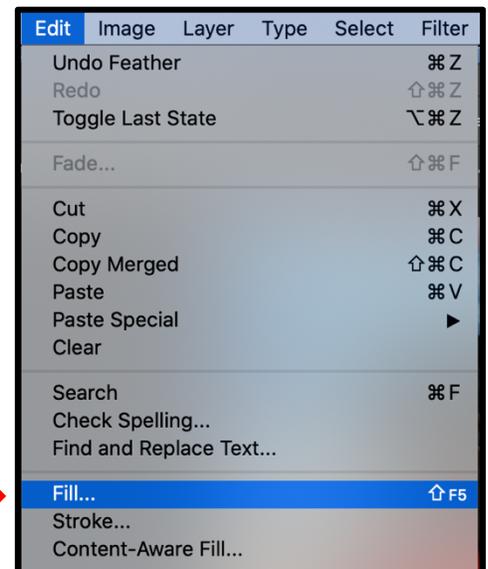
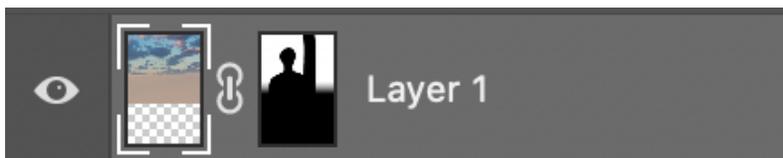
12. We need to soften the edge of our selection so that it slowly blends at the edges and makes our sky believable rather than fake looking. The way that we do that is by contracting our selection a bit and then feathering it. Go to **Select** at the top menu and choose **Modify** then **Contract**. When a window pops up type in **10 pixels** (this is how much we want our selection to contract or get smaller). Press **okay**.



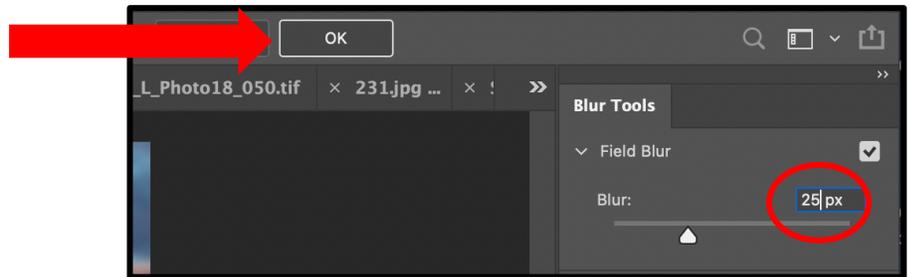
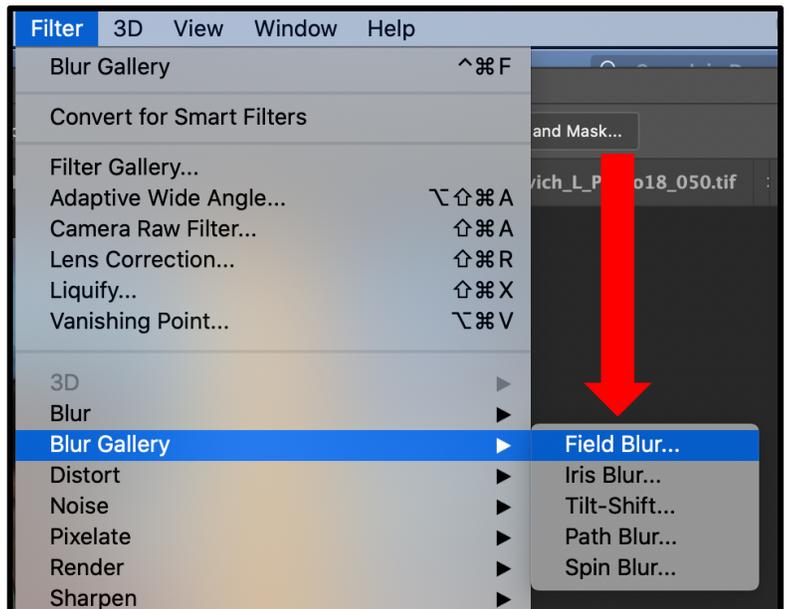
13. Now we need to feather our selection a bit. Feathering a selection means that we are adding a fade to the edge of our selection so it softly blends in. Go to **Select** at the top menu and choose **Modify** then **Feather**. When a window pops up type in **10 pixels** and press **okay**.



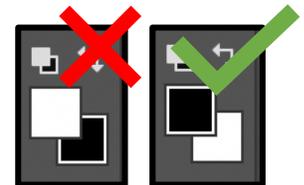
14. Click on the layer mask for **Layer 1**. Go to **Edit** from the top menu and click on **Fill**. When a new window pops up choose **Black** for the **Contents** and hit **Okay**. Your sky should not be behind your model! You're almost done, but there are a few more things we need to do to make our sky a bit more believable.



15. Looking at the photo, you probably noticed that the trees in the background are a bit blurry, so our sky looks a bit fake being really sharp and clear. We need to give our sky some blur so that it looks real and authentic. Click on the colorful preview thumbnail of the sky for Layer 1. Now go up to the top menu and choose **Filter** then **Blur Gallery** and choose **Field Blur**. A new palette will open in the upper right hand corner of your screen. Change the slider to **25** or until you think that it is suitably blurry. Click **Okay** in the upper right hand corner of the tool bar.

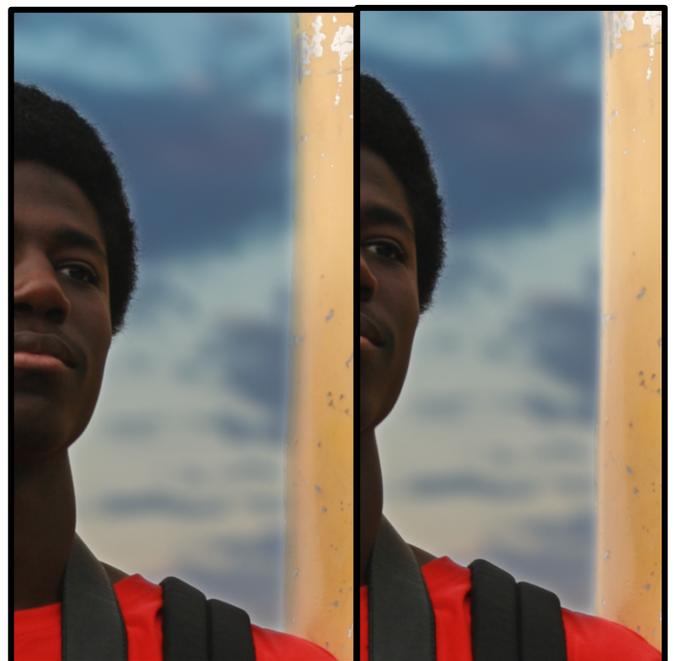


16. All in all, our image is looking pretty good! The only issue is that the left edge of the yellow pole is a bit soft and blurry. Don't worry! That's an easy fix. Select the **Brush Tool** from the tool bar or click **B** on your keyboard. Press **D** followed by **X** on your keyboard to set your colors as black on top and white on bottom.



17. Click on the layer mask for Layer 1. Now paint along the edge of the yellow pole until you have got an edge that is believable. If you make a mistake switch your colors from white to black by pressing **X** on your keyboard and paint over your mistake. Adjust the size and hardness of your brush as needed to get the edge you want. This is our final step before saving our image!

18. Time to save it and turn it in! Go to **File > Save As**. When the window pops up asking you where you want to save your file click on **Save on Computer**. Rename your file, so you can easily find it later and make sure you take note of the location you are saving it on. Change the **Format** to **TIFF** and then click **Save**. Now turn in your file on **Network Server**!



Before

After

## *Next Steps for Your Sky Photos*

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Now that you've finished the example photo, time to apply your new skills to your own photos. Look through the folder of *Sky Overlays*. Use any of the overlays that you want on your own photos.

a. *Magical Sky Expectations:*

- i. Take 2 photos that use either daylight, sunsets, or sunrises.
- ii. Edit your photos in Photoshop. Crop your photos and add adjustment layers to improve your image.
- iii. Follow the tutorial and add *a DIFFERENT sky overlays* to both photos that you have taken. Add any additional overlays that you want! DO NOT use SKY 80.jpg that you used in this tutorial on your own photos.
- iv. Turn in copies of your photos on the in class network as well as the sample photo you did for this assignment.