

ADVANCED BLENDING TECHNIQUES – PHOTOSHOP TUTORIAL

By Kim Hill

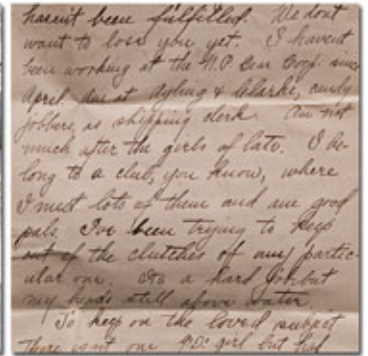
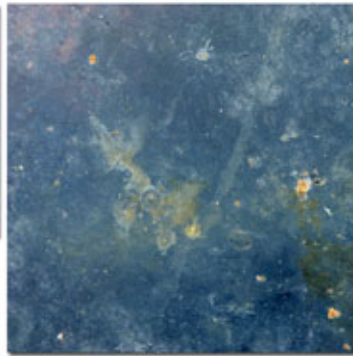
If you have any questions regarding this tutorial, feel free to contact me at kim@cgsentials.com

This tutorial will teach you how to blend your digital scrapbook papers and photos into one seamlessly blended layout. This tutorial was written in PSCS2, however the techniques should be easily applied in most versions of Photoshop, including Photoshop Elements. If using PS Elements, be sure to review the layer masks tutorial and download the action as you will need it near the end of this tutorial.

First, open up the photos and digital papers you want to blend together. I'll be using 4 images in all as shown below.



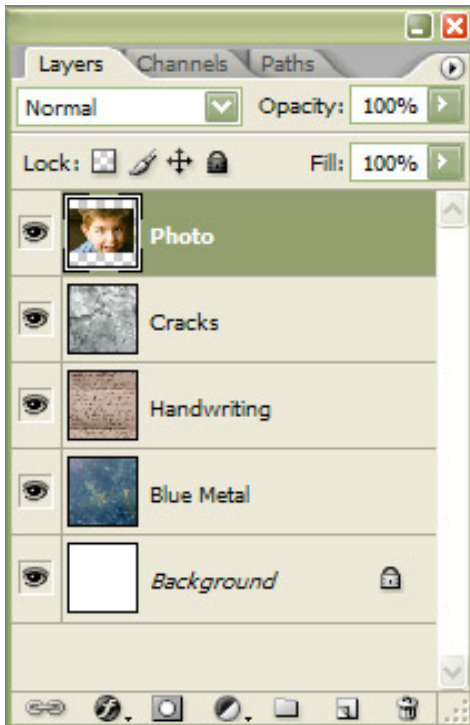
Photo



Various texture papers from
www.cgsentials.com

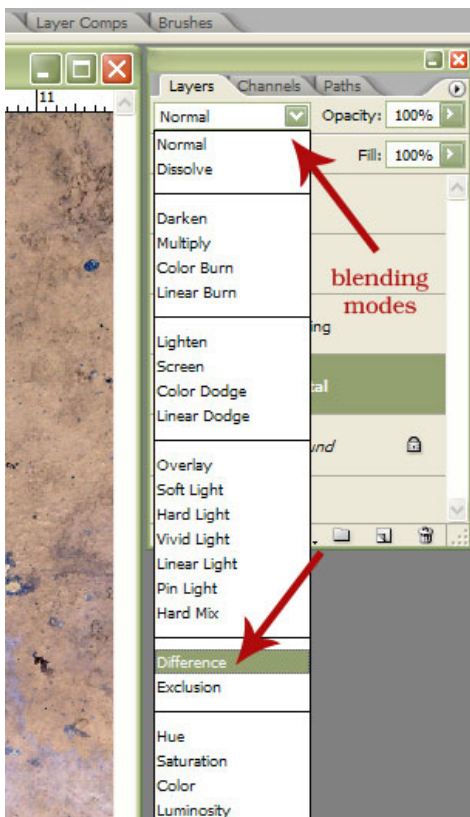
Create a new canvas that is the size you want your finished layout. I will be making my 12x12 inches at 300 dpi.

Drag each of the images onto the new canvas (or copy and paste them). Place them in any order you wish, with the photo layer being the top most layer. You may find that you will rearrange the paper layers to yield different end results, so feel free to experiment with that. I've labeled each of my layers so you will know what order I chose to put them in. There really is no right or wrong way - just do what looks good to you. Here is what your layers palette will look like:

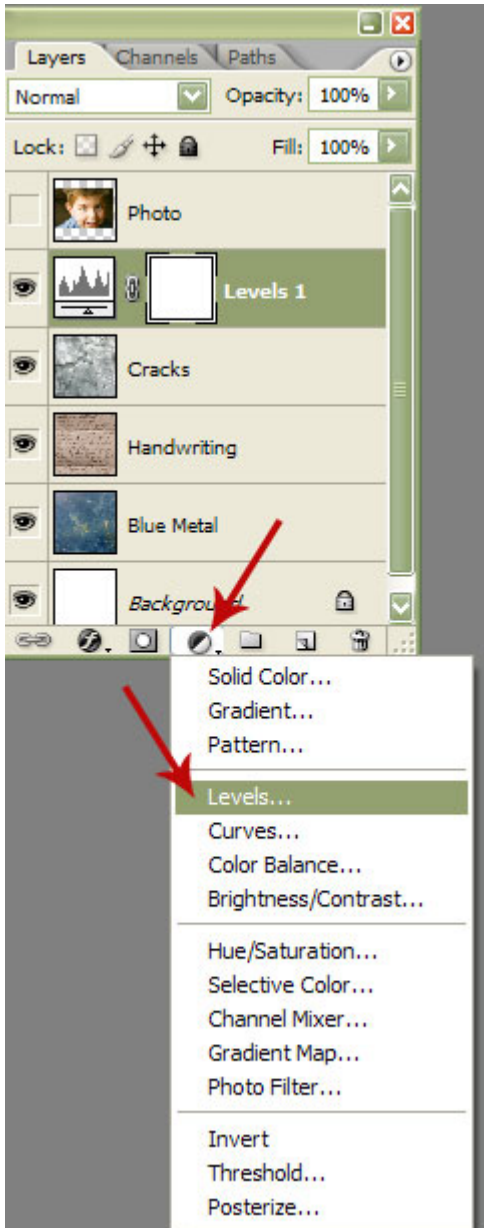


Now we will change the blending modes for each of the layers. This will alter the final look so that the colors you start with may not necessarily look the same when you are done. But it's all good. 😊

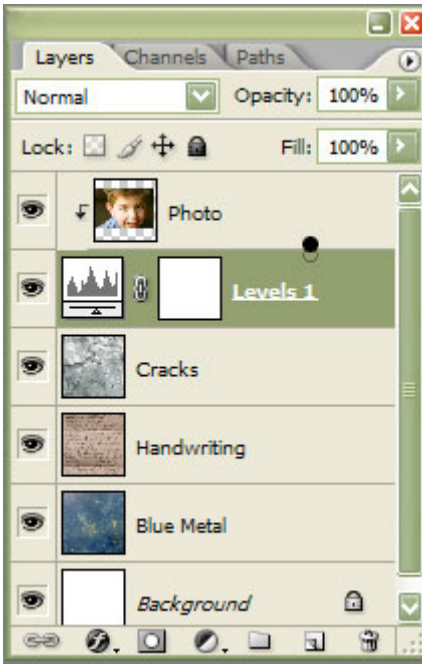
Go to the first layer above the background (this is my Blue Metal layer) and set the blending mode to DIFFERENCE. I'm turning off the visibility on the other layers so you can see what happens. You'll see that my blue paper now has turned a bizarre shade of brown.



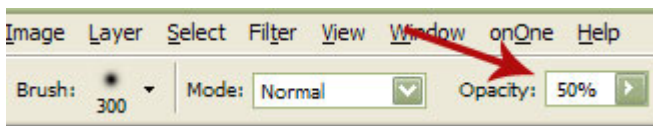
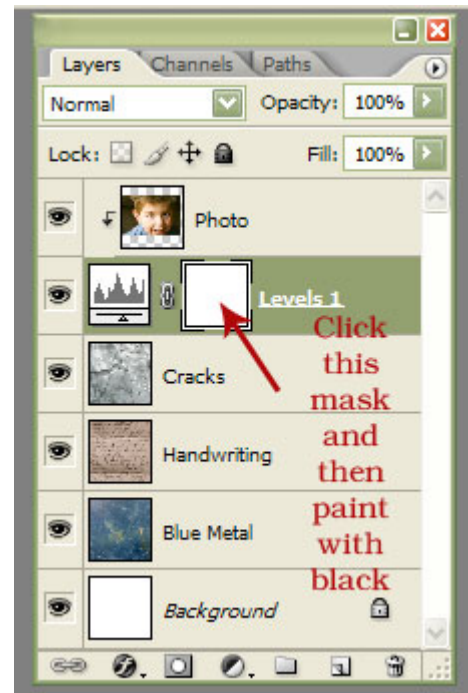
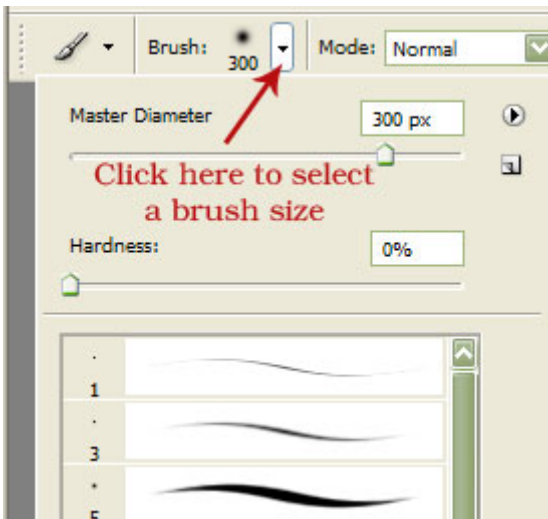
Now we're going to create an adjustment layer with mask right below the photo layer. To do that, click on the half-moon icon at the bottom of the layers palette and select LEVELS, then click OK.



Now you can group your photo with the levels adjustment layer by pressing CONTROL-ALT-G simultaneously and hovering your mouse on the line between your photo and the levels layer. You'll see a double circle appear. When you see that, click your left mouse button.



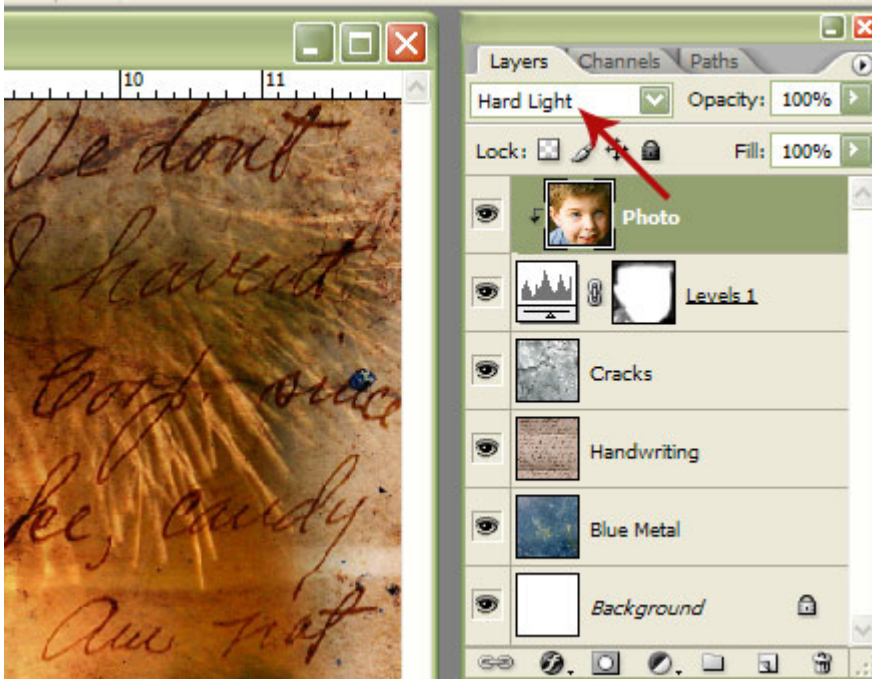
To blend the photo with the other layers, you will paint away some portions of the photo using black paint on the white mask that is linked to the levels layer. So get a soft paint brush and set the opacity to 50% and set the paint color to black. Click your mouse on the white mask to activate it and then start painting to remove portions of the photo, revealing the other papers.



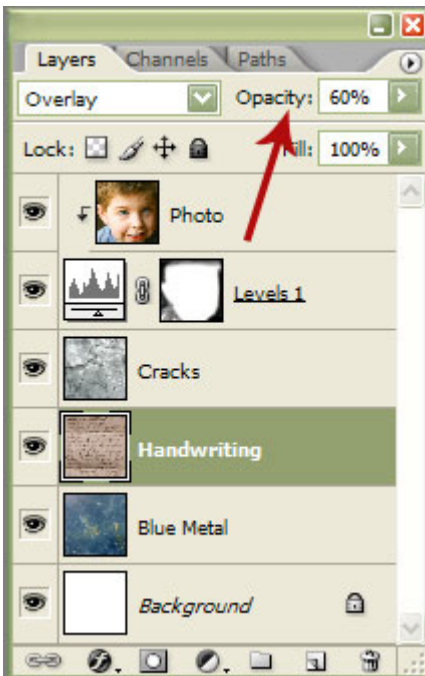
If you make a mistake and paint away too much of your photo, just switch your paint color to white and paint back over the mistake to reveal the original image again.

Now that you've removed the unwanted portions of your photo, set the blending mode to COLOR BURN (or

scroll through the other blending modes til you find one that you like better). You'll notice the other papers showing through the photo.

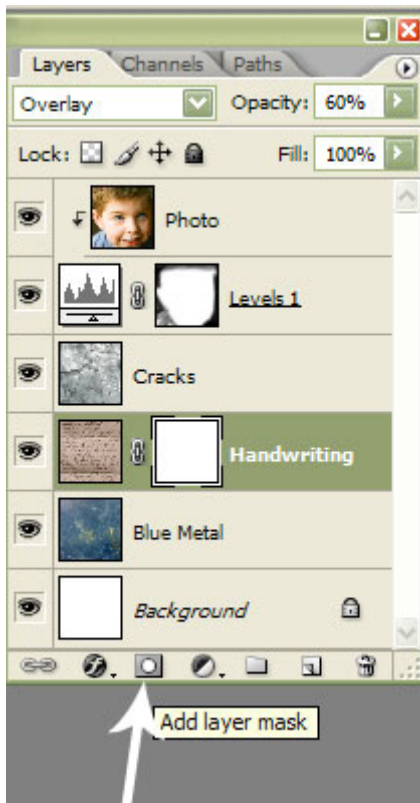


You may find that some of your background papers are too overwhelming in some areas of your image. With mine, the words are too dark and distracting. So now I'm going to lower the opacity of the handwriting layer until it looks better. Here, I've lowered it down to 60% opacity in the layers palette.



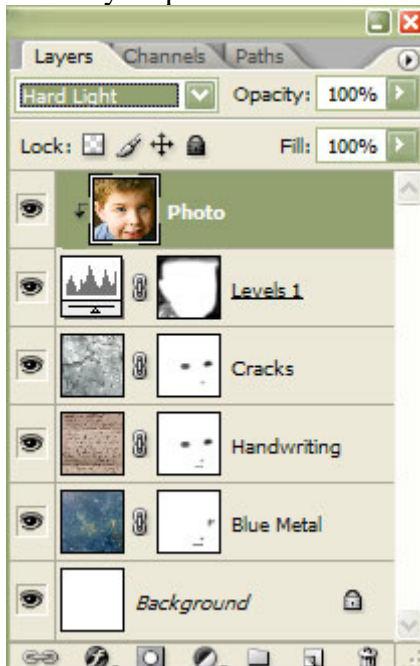
We're getting there, but the writing is still distracting on his eyes and teeth.

So I'm going to add a layer mask to the handwriting layer and then use black paint on the mask to remove the distracting words. To add the mask, first click on the handwriting layer and then click on the small square/circle icon at the bottom of the layers palette.



Now select your soft paint brush and leave the opacity at 50%, using black paint, and paint on the mask where you want to remove any distracting parts from the handwriting paper.

Repeat for the other paper layers by adding a mask to each layer and then brushing away any distracting areas. Your layers palette will eventually look like this:



And here is the final blended outcome. You can use as many photographs as you want. I chose to use just one for simplicity of the tutorial. But the concept is the same regardless of how many images you choose to use. Have fun!!!



