BLEND PHOTOS TO CREATE A MOVIE POSTER

In this tutorial, I show you how easy it is to blend images like a movie poster with Photoshop! We'll start by moving both of our images into the same document and positioning them where we need them. Then we'll blend the two images together using a layer mask. We'll help the images blend seamlessly together by adding a texture, converting the effect to black and white, and then colorizing it with our own color. And finally, we'll boost the contrast to create our final "movie poster"effect. I'll be using Photoshop CC but every step is fully compatible with Photoshop CS6.



Here's what the final result will look like when we're done:

Let's get started!

The final "movie poster" effect.



Step 1: Open your images

To begin, open the images you want to blend together. Here's the first image I'll be using:

The first image.
Photo credit: Adobe Stock.



And here's my second image. Both images were downloaded from Adobe Stock:

The second image.
Photo credit: Adobe Stock.

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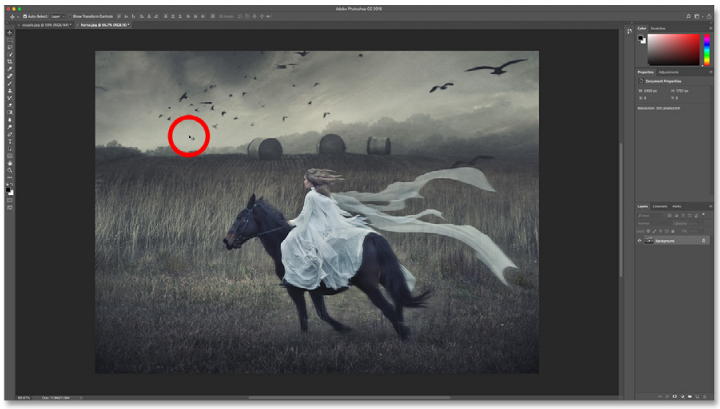
Step 2: Move both images into the same document

At the moment, each image is in its own separate document. We need to move them into the *same* document. And the easiest way to do that is to drag an image from one document to another.



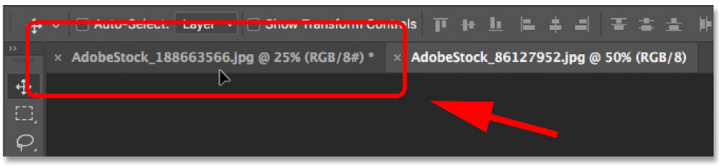
Select the **Move Tool** from the Toolbar:

Selecting the Move Tool.



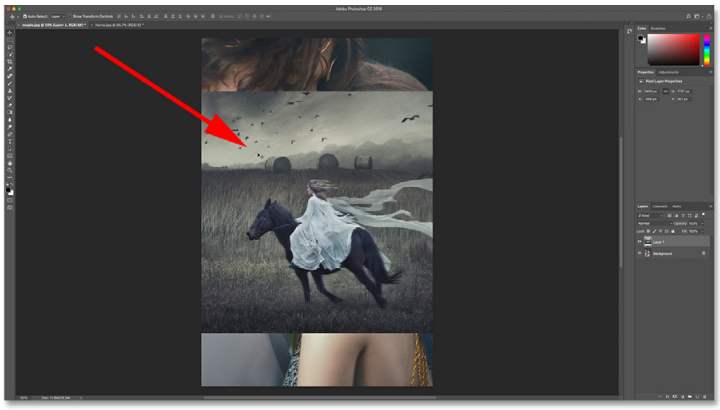
Click on your image:

Clicking on the image with the Move Tool.



And then drag it up and onto the **tab** of the other document. Keep your mouse button held down and stay on the tab until Photoshop switches to the other image:

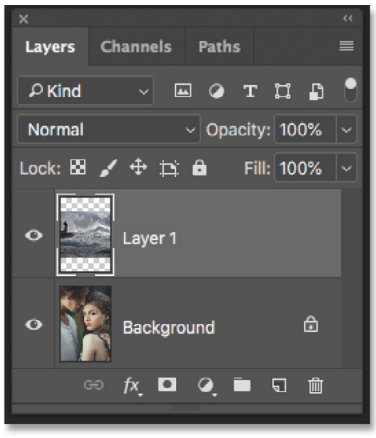
Dragging the image onto the other document's tab.



Then press and hold your **Shift** key and drag down into the document. Release your mouse button and Photoshop drops the image into place. The Shift key centers the image within the document:

Holding Shift and dragging from the tab into the other image.

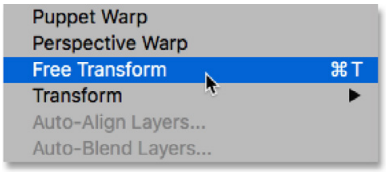
If we look in the **Layers panel**, we see both images, each on a separate layer, now in the same document:



The Layers panel showing both images.

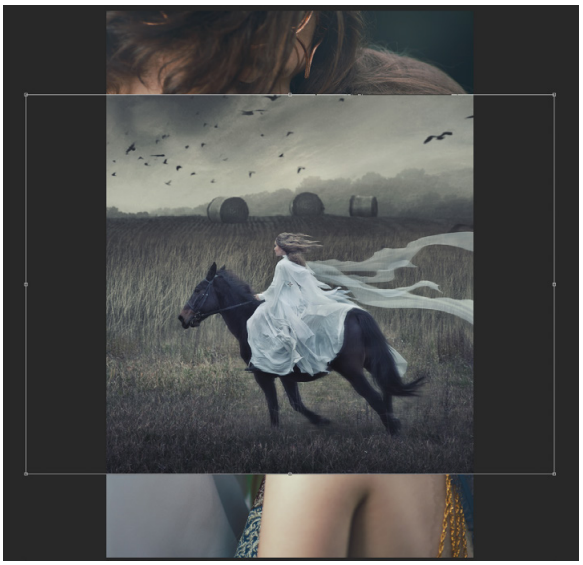
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Step 3: Resize and move the image



Going to Edit > Free Transform.

At the moment, my horse image is too wide to fit within the other image, so I need to resize it. And I also want to move it from the center down to the bottom. I can do both of those things with Photoshop's Free Transform command. To select it, go up to the **Edit** menu in the Menu Bar and choose **Free Transform**:



This places the Free Transform box and handles around the image:

The Free Transform handles appear around the image.

Resizing the image



Hold Shift+Alt (Win) / Shift+Option (Mac) and drag the corner handles to resize the image.

To resize it, press and hold your **Shift** key, along with the **Alt** (Win) / **Option** (Mac) key, as you click and drag any of the corner handles. The Shift key locks the aspect ratio of the image, and the Alt / Option key lets you resize the image from its center:

Moving the image

Then, to move the image down to the bottom, I'll click inside the Free Transform box and I'll drag it into place. Hold your **Shift** key as you drag to make it easier to move straight down:



Holding Shift and dragging the image down to the bottom.

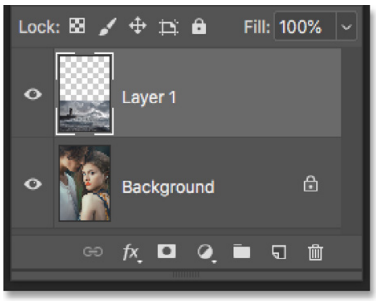
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To accept it, press **Enter** (Win) / **Return** (Mac):

The image has been resized and moved into place.

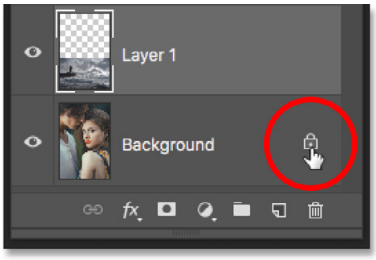
Step 4: Move the other image (optional)



I also want to move the other image higher up in the document. But in the Layers panel, we see that the image is currently sitting on the **Background layer**, and Photoshop won't let us move an image while it's on the Background layer:

The image of the couple sits on the Background layer.

Unlocking the Background layer



To fix that, in Photoshop CC, click on the **lock icon**. In Photoshop CS6, press and hold **Alt** (Win) / **Option** (Mac) and double-click on it:

Unlocking the Background layer.

Moving the image

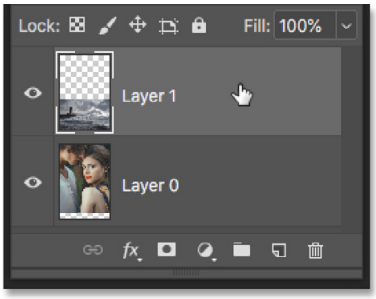
Make sure "Layer 0" is selected, and then with the Move Tool still selected, click on the image and drag it up and into place. Again, hold **Shift** as you drag to make it easier to drag straight up:



Dragging the original image higher up in the document.

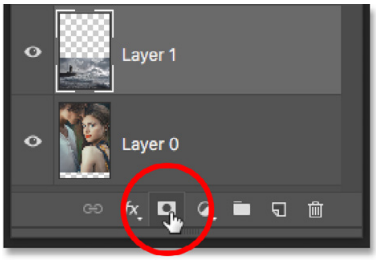
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Step 5: Add a layer mask



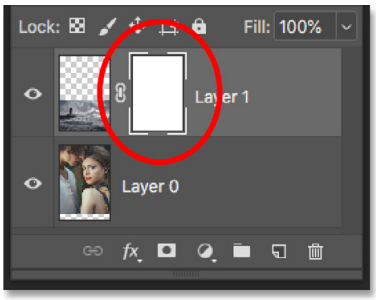
Once the images are in place, we can blend them together. And we'll do that using a layer mask. Back in the Layers panel, click on the image on the top layer to select it:

Selecting the top layer.



Then click the **Add Layer Mask** icon:

Adding a layer mask.



A **layer mask thumbnail** appears on the top layer:

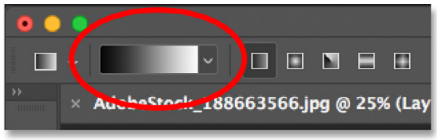
The layer mask thumbnail.

Step 6: Draw a black to white gradient on the mask



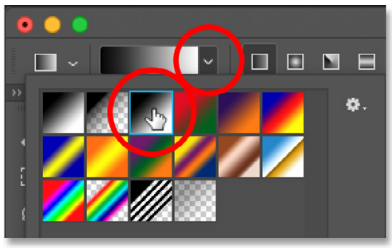
In the Toolbar, select the **Gradient Tool**:

Selecting the Gradient Tool.



Then in the Options Bar, make sure the **Black, White** gradient is selected:

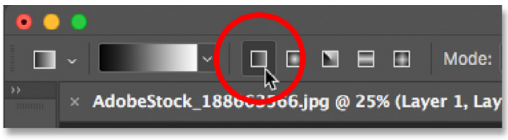
The gradient swatch showing the Black, White gradient.



If it isn't, click on the arrow next to the gradient swatch, and then double-click on the Black, White gradient's thumbnail (third from the left, top row) to select it:

Selecting the Black, White gradient.

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Setting the gradient type to Linear.

Also in the Options Bar, make sure that the gradient **type** is set to **Linear**:



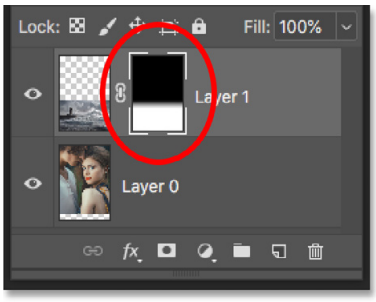
Drawing a gradient to blend the two images together.

Then, click in the document and drag out a black to white gradient across the spot where you want the two images to blend together. In my case, I'll click just below the top of my horse image to set the starting point for the gradient. Then, to create a smooth transition between the two images, I'll drag down to the top of the hill:



The images now blend where the gradient was drawn.

Release your mouse button, and Photoshop draws the gradient on the layer mask and blends the images:



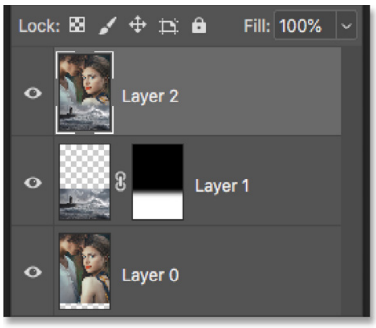
The layer mask thumbnail showing the gradient.

Back in the Layers panel, we see our gradient in the layer mask thumbnail. You can learn more about layer masks, and other ways to blend images in Photoshop, in my blending images tutorial:

Step 7: Merge the layers

Next, we need to merge the two layers onto a new layer above them. Make sure the top layer is still selected. Then, on a Windows PC, press **Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E** on your keyboard. On a Mac, press **Shift+Command+Option+E**. This merges both layers onto a new layer:

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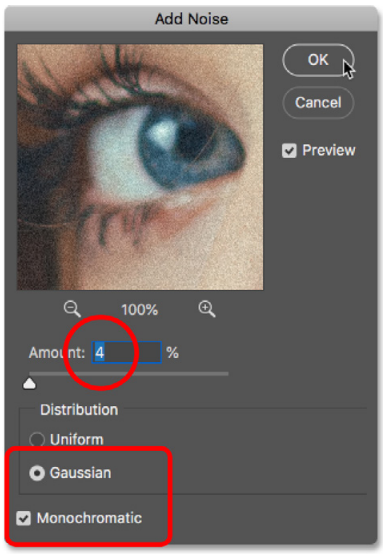
The images have been merged onto a new layer.

Step 8: Add noise



Going to Filter > Noise > Add Noise.

To help the images blend more seamlessly together, we'll add a subtle texture. Go up to the **Filter** menu, choose **Noise**, and then choose **Add Noise**:



The Add Noise filter settings.

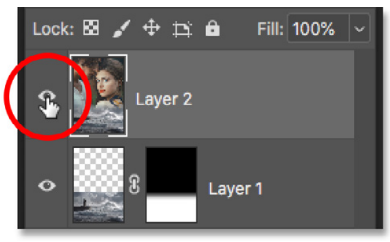
In the Add Noise dialog box, set the **Amount** to around **2 to 4%** depending on the size of your images. Choose **Gaussian** and **Monochromatic**, and then click OK:



The noise creates a texture across both images.

If I zoom in closer, we see how the texture helps to unify the two images:

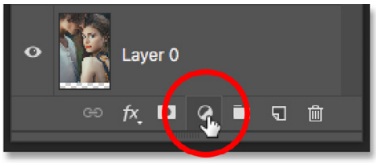
You can toggle the texture on and off to compare the results by clicking the **visibility icon** for the merged layer in the Layers panel:



Toggle the noise on and off with the visibility icon.

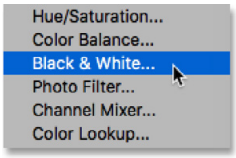
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Step 9: Convert the images to black and white



The only problem at this point is that the colors in the images don't match. Let's fix that by converting the images to black and white, and then colorizing them with our own color. In the Layers panel, click the **New Fill or Adjustment Layer** icon:

Adding a new fill or adjustment layer.



Then choose **Black & White** form the list:

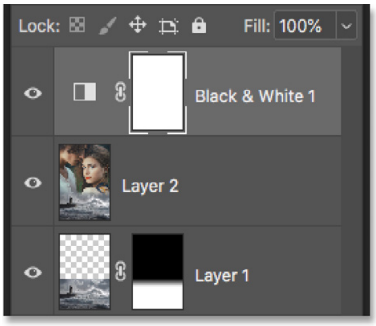
Choosing a Black & White adjustment layer.



This instantly converts the images to black and white:

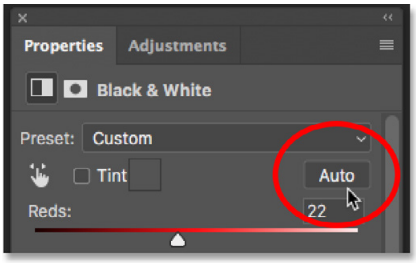
The initial black and white conversion.

Customizing the black & white conversion



In the Layers panel, we see the new Black & White adjustment layer:

The Black & White adjustment layer.



And the controls for the adjustment layer appear in the **Properties panel**. To customize the black and white version, start by clicking the **Auto** button:

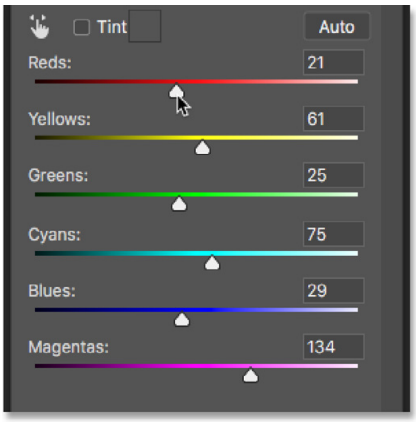
Clicking the Auto button.

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Photoshop will choose its own settings for the effect:

The Auto black and white conversion.



To customize it further, click and drag the **color sliders** to adjust the brightness of different parts of the image based on their original color. For example, dragging the Reds slider will lighten or darken any areas that contained red. Dragging the Yellows slider will affect areas that contained yellow, and so on:

Use the color sliders to create your own custom black and white version.

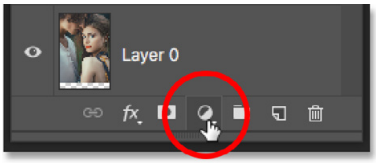


Continue dragging the sliders until you're happy with the results:

The custom black and white version.

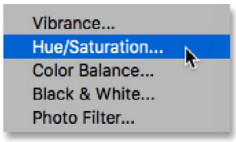
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Step 10: Colorize the effect



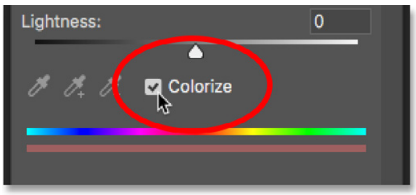
So now that we've removed the original colors, let's colorize the effect with our own color. And the easiest way to do that is with a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Back in the Layers panel, click again on the **New Fill or Adjustment Layer** icon:

Clicking the New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon.



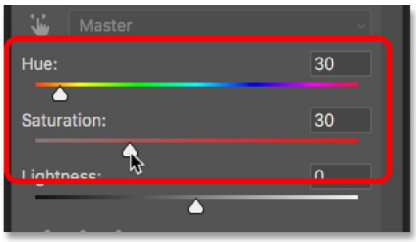
And then choose **Hue/Saturation**:

Adding a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer.



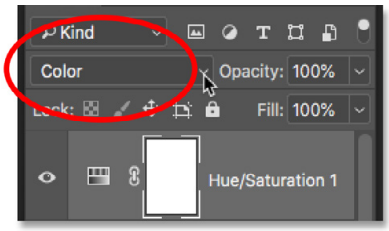
In the Properties panel, select the **Colorize** option:

Clicking "Colorize".



Choose a color by dragging the **Hue** slider. I'll set my Hue value to 30. Then set the intensity of the color with the **Saturation** slider. I'll again set mine to 30:

Choosing a color and saturation value with the sliders.



Once you've chosen your color, go back to the **Layers panel** and change the **blend mode** of the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to **Color**. This way, we're affecting only the colors in the image, not the brightness values:

Changing the blend mode to Color.

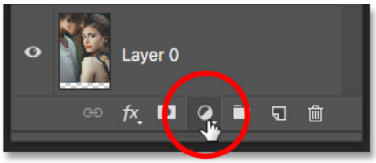


And here's the result:

The result after colorizing the effect.

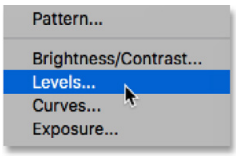
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Step 11: Increase the contrast



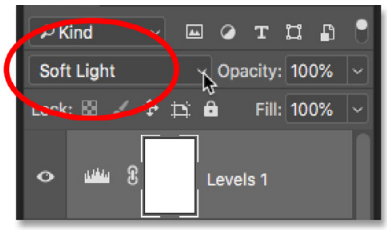
Clicking the New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon.

Finally, if you need to boost the contrast in the effect, click again on the **New Fill or Adjustment Layer** icon in the Layers panel:



Adding a Levels adjustment layer.

And this time, choose **Levels**:



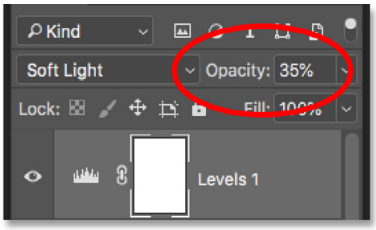
Changing the blend mode to Soft Light.

Change the **blend mode** of the Levels adjustment layer from Normal to **Soft Light**:



The result after changing the blend mode to Soft Light.

This instantly increases the contrast:



Lowering the opacity of the Levels adjustment layer.

If the contrast is too strong, just lower the **opacity** of the Levels adjustment layer to fine-tune the results. I'll lower mine to 35%:

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The final “movie poster” effect.

And here, after lowering the opacity, is my final result:

And there we have it! That’s how to easily blend photos like a movie poster with Photoshop!

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