

How to create a mask with an image and text or how to make text look like it's floating through clouds.

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Open an image of a cloudy sky (or any image of your choice) in Adobe Photoshop. Make any adjustments to the image you desire such as cropping, contrast, etc. Save your image in the native Photoshop format.



Now add your text. Large text works best. Small text will be busy and hard to read. Make sure the text is set to 100% black. Use the Move tool to position the text where you think it should go.

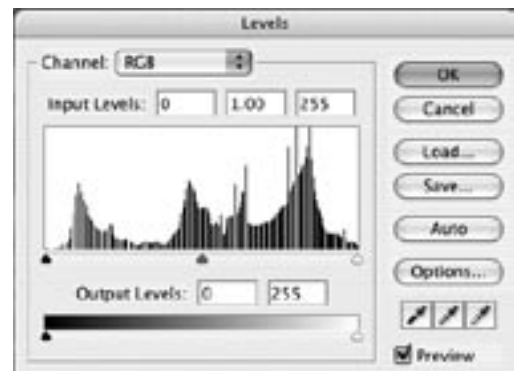
Now make a duplicate of your clouds layer. Click on the Clouds layer in the Layers palette (NOT in the image window) and choose Layer > Duplicate Layer from the Layer menu or the Layers Palette menu, or simply drag the layer to the New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers' Palette.

You should now have three (3) layers: the original cloudy sky image, the duplicate cloudy sky image, and the text layer. The names of the layers may not be the same as the ones pictured here.

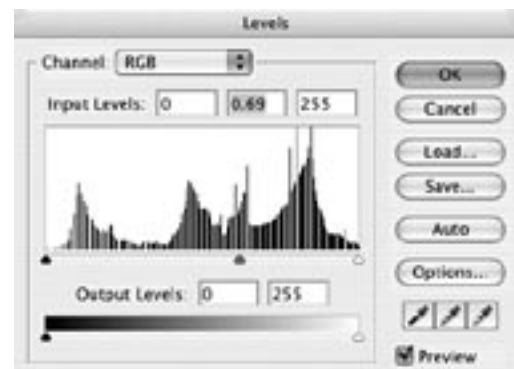
In the Layers Palette, (if you don't see it, choose it from the Window Menu) drag the duplicate clouds above the text. Note: make sure you do this in the Layers palette, NOT in the document window! The text will no longer be visible. Make sure the duplicate clouds layer is active, and choose "Levels" from the Image >

Adjustments submenu. Note: the location of this menu may be slightly different in older versions of Photoshop, but you are looking for a dialog box called Levels.

In the Levels dialog box, you will see two (2) rows of sliders (little triangles); three (3) sliders for Input Levels and



two (2) sliders for Output Levels. Drag the middle INPUT Levels slider to the right to darken the image. At this point you are working blind, but keep in mind that the darker image will show inside the letters, so you need good contrast. You can always return to Levels and make the image lighter or darker by dragging the same slider to the left (for lighter) or the right (for darker). Click "OK" to close the Levels dialog box.



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Using the Layers palette, make certain the layers are in the correct order. The darkened clouds layer should be at the top of the Layers palette (in front), the text should be in the middle, and the original lighter clouds layer should be at the bottom (backmost) in the Layers palette.



Make certain the darker Clouds layer is active (click on it in the Layers palette) and choose “Create Clipping Mask” (it was called “Group With Previous” in older versions) from the Layer menu or Layers Palette menu. Note: do NOT choose “Group Layers” found in the newer versions of Photoshop.

Choosing “Create Clipping Mask” creates a mask between the darker clouds layer and the text layer directly below it. This makes the dark layer visible only where it overlaps the text. The rest of the dark layer is masked (hidden) allowing you to see through to the original, unaltered clouds layer. The text itself is completely hidden. It serves only as a mask.

If necessary, click on the darker clouds layer and make it lighter or darker using the middle slider in the Levels dialog box again. If you need to reposition the text, first click on the text layer in the Layers palette, then choose the Move tool and drag the text in the document window.



PDF Workflow Tools

Adobe . . . Adobe says its Acrobat 7.0 Professional is perfect for printing organizations that need a feature-rich prepress environment to ensure projects print quickly and accurately. The software has the ability to convert color to CMYK, add printer parks to pages, preview output before printing and flatten transparency. Adobe works with partners such as Xerox, Heidelberg, HP and Agfa to ensure that their PostScript 3-enabled devices can properly handle PDF files and produce the best output possible. www.adobe.com

Agfa . . . According to Agfa, its Apogee X Prime prepress workflow system is designed to accommodate the throughput and functionality requirements of smaller commercial shops that are looking for an affordable solution: Apogee X Prime features include PDF creation, preflighting, imposition, rendering, trapping and proofing. www.agfa.com

CAD-KAS says PDF Editor 2.3 is “the most comprehensive PDF post-editing tool on the market.” Features include the ability to add, change, delete and move text, add, delete, move and edit pictures, add and delete graphics, add new pages, change page order, delete, extract and rotate pages. www.pdfeditor.net

callas software . . . pdfColorConvert is a plug-in for Adobe Acrobat 6 and 7 that enables users to convert RGB/Lab data and spot colors used in a PDF document into CMYK. What makes it unique is . . . if a user doesn't know how the PDF file was made and cannot determine the information needed to configure pdfColorConvert's input settings, the software can identify the PDF file type and specifications automatically, then can use its Automatic Best Guess feature to choose an output profile. www.callassoftware.com

More PDF Workflow tools will be highlighted in coming issues . . .