

## Memorandum

To: Professor Carolyn Patterson  
From: Zoe Behrman  
Date: October 26th, 2022  
Subject: Writing Assignment #3: Instructions

I attached my Writing Assignment #3 response “How to Blur the Background of a Photo in Adobe Photoshop” to this message. I targeted this document towards a general audience unfamiliar with how to use Adobe Photoshop. The purpose of this document is to provide basic instructions for the audience’s personal or professional use. I have also attached the completed basic usability survey with a write-up reflection on the results.

Please let me know what you think of my assignment. I am looking forward to reviewing your feedback.

# How to Blur the Background of a Photo in Photoshop

## Introduction

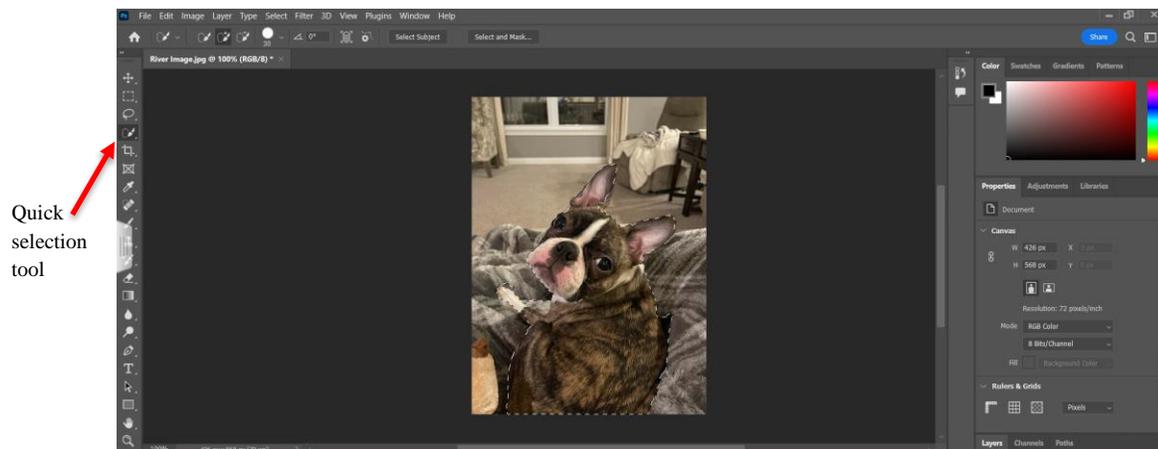
Adobe Photoshop is a useful tool to edit and enhance photos, but it can seem intimidating for those unfamiliar with the software. Adobe Photoshop differs from other design software because it primarily focuses on changing photos that have already been taken, rather than creating an entirely new product. Although many smartphones have the option to automatically blur the background of a photo using the “portrait mode” feature, occasionally you may take a photo and decide later that you would like to add a blurred background. These instructions detail the basic steps of how to blur the background of a photo in Adobe Photoshop.

**Note:** To be able to effectively use these instructions, make sure you are using the most updated version of Adobe Photoshop (Photoshop 2022). Click [this link](#) to purchase and download the most up-to-date version of Adobe Photoshop.

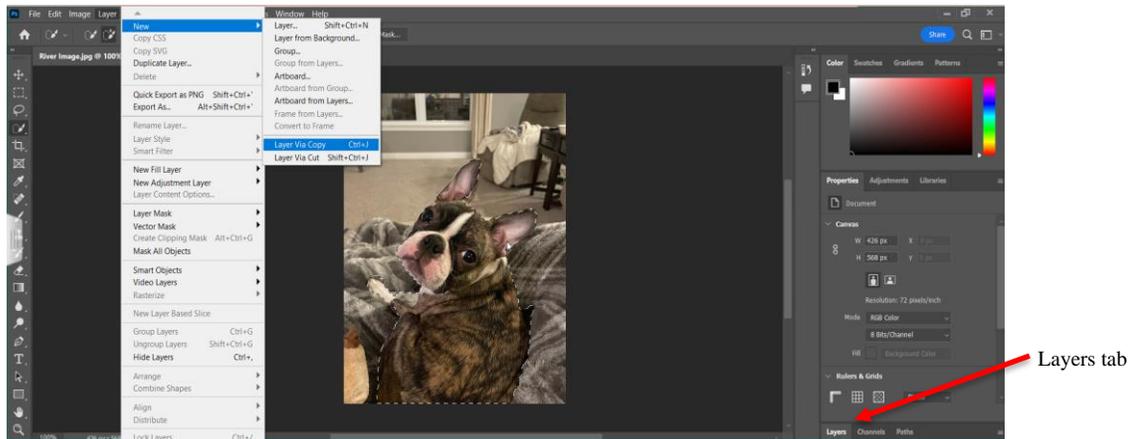
## Instructions

1. **Open photo in Adobe Photoshop.** Launch Adobe Photoshop 2022 on your computer. Under the blue “New file” button, click “Open” and select the photo that you would like to edit.
2. **Select your subject.** On the left side of the screen, right click on the “quick selection tool” (shown below). From the choices in the dropdown menu, click the “object selection tool” option. Click on the subject that you would like to remain unblurred in the photo.

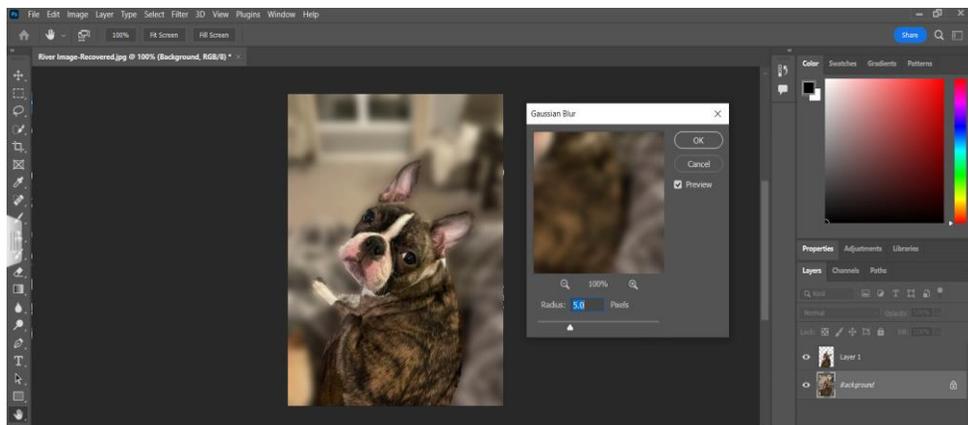
**Note:** The entire subject should be bordered by a dashed line (shown below). If the “object selection tool” does not capture your entire subject, you can manually add in the missing parts of the subject using the “quick selection tool.” Click on the “quick selection tool” and click on the missing parts of your subject to add it in.



3. **Add a new layer.** Select the “Layer” menu in the upper left corner of your screen. Click “New” and select “Layer Via Copy” from the dropdown menu (shown below). On the right side of your screen, you should now see two layers under the “Layers” tab. You may need to scroll to view both layers.



4. **Clean up the subject of the photo.** Under the “layers” tab on the bottom right portion of the page, deselect the eye icon (which should now appear as a blank square) on the background layer to view only the subject. Check that only the subject is present in the new layer. If there are parts of the background in the new layer, click on the eraser tool on the left menu bar and drag the cursor over the parts that you do not want to be included in the subject.
5. **Blur the background layer.** Click on the box icon next to the background layer to edit (which should now appear as the eye icon). Click again on the background layer to apply a filter. In the upper left corner of the page, click the “Filter” tab, then the “Blur” option. From the dropdown menu, click “Gaussian Blur.” Use the slide scale to choose your desired blurriness for the background.



6. **Save the photo onto your computer.** Now that the background of the photo has been blurred, click on the “File” tab in the upper left corner of the page. In the dropdown menu, select “Save As...” and choose the desired name and location to save your photo to your desktop.

## **Conclusion**

Now that you are able to blur the background of your photos, you can use this technique for photos of friends, family, or pets to make your pictures look professional and aesthetically pleasing.

## Basic Usability Survey – How to Blur the Background of a Photo in Adobe Photoshop

1. Briefly describe why this document is used.

This document is used as a tutorial on how to learn how to blur backgrounds in Photoshop.

2. Evaluate the *content*:

- Identify any irrelevant information.

None

- Indicate any gaps in the information.

None

- Identify any information that seems inaccurate.

None

- List other problems with the content

Couldn't find the object selection tool at first; used the quick selection tool instead

3. Evaluate the *organization*:

- Identify anything that is out of order or hard to locate or follow.

It is a bit hard to see the tool being pointed out in the first picture (maybe add an arrow to show it more clearly).

- List other problems with the organization.

None

4. Evaluate the *style*:

- Identify anything you misunderstood on first reading.

None; writing flowed well and made sense

- Identify anything you couldn't understand at all.

None

- Identify expressions that seem wordy, inexact, or too complex.

First sentence of conclusion could be reworded.

- List other problems with the style.

None

5. Evaluate the *design*:

- Indicate any headings that are missing, confusing, or excessive.

None

- Indicate any material that should be designed as a list.

None

- Give examples of material that might be clarified by a visual

Could add more pictures.

- Give examples of misleading or overly complex visuals.

None; again, could just highlight specific tools with arrows to be able to see them more clearly.

- List other problems with design.

Could make “note” sections more prominent (larger text, put a box around it, etc.)

6. Identify anything that seems misleading or that could create legal problems or cross-cultural misunderstanding.

None

7. Please suggest other ways of making this document easier to use.

Could include a link on how to get Adobe Photoshop if not already downloaded.

## **Basic Usability Survey – Results**

This survey was incredibly valuable in finding areas of growth for my set of instructions. The specific modifications I made to my document based on this survey were:

- Added boxes around the notes to make them more prominent on the page.
- Included a link on how to purchase and download Adobe Photoshop in the first note.
- Added an arrow and caption under the photo in Step 2 to better show where the quick selection tool is located on the screen.
- Added an additional image under Step 5.
- Rephrased my conclusion to make it more concise and effective.