Chapter 6 Photoshop CIB Masks & Channels Essential Notes and questions

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Use the information below and from the book to answer all questions

Submit your answers/this document via our class website for a grade

. 1.What is the benefit of using a quick mask?

**. 2**What happens to a quick mask when you deselect it?

**. 3**When you save a selection as a mask, where is the mask stored?

**. 4**How can you edit a mask in a channel once you’ve saved it?

**. 5**How do channels differ from layers?

**Photoshop masks** isolate and protect parts of an image, just as masking tape pro- tects window panes or trim from paint when a house is painted. When you create a mask based on a selection, the area you haven’t selected is *masked,* or protected from editing. With masks, you can create and save time-consuming selections and then use them again. In addition, you can use masks for other complex editing tasks—for example, to apply color changes or filter effects to an image.

In Photoshop, you can make temporary masks, called *quick masks*, or you can create permanent masks and store them as special grayscale channels called ***alpha channels*.** Photoshop also uses channels to store an image’s color information. **Unlike layers, channels do not print. You use the Channels panel to view and work with alpha channels.**

A key concept in masking is that black hides and white reveals. As in life, rarely  
is anything black and white. Shades of gray partially hide, depending on the gray levels (255 is the value for black, hiding artwork completely; 0 is the value for white, revealing artwork completely).

Mastering masks can help you work more efficiently in Photoshop. These tips will help get you started.

**• Masks are nondestructive, which means that you can edit the masks later without losing the pixels that they hide.**

**• When editing a mask, be aware of the color selected in the Tools panel. Black hides, white reveals, and shades of gray partially hide or reveal. The darker the gray, the more is hidden by the mask.**

**Working with channels**

Just as different information in an image is stored on different layers, channels also let you access specific kinds of information. Alpha channels store selections as gray- scale images. Color information channels store information about each color in  
an image; for example, an RGB image automatically has red, green, blue, and composite channels.

**To avoid confusing channels and layers, think of channels as containing an image’s color and selection information; think of layers** as containing painting and effects.

**ABout alpha channels**

If you work in Photoshop very long, you’re bound to work with alpha channels. It’s a good idea to know a few things about them.

**• An image can contain up to 56 channels, including all color and alpha channels.**

**• All channels are 8-bit grayscale images, capable of displaying 256 levels of gray.**

**• You can specify a name, color, mask option, and opacity for each channel. (The opacity affects the preview of the channel, not the image.)**

**• All new channels have the same dimensions and number of pixels as the original image.**

**about masks and masking**

Alpha channels, channel masks, clipping masks, layer masks, vector masks— what’s the difference? In some cases, they’re interchangeable: A channel mask can be converted to a layer mask, a layer mask can be converted to a vector mask, and vice versa.

Here’s a brief description to help you keep them all straight. What they have in common is that they all store selections, and they all let you edit an image nondestructively, so you can return at any time to your original.

**• An alpha channel—also called a *mask* or *selection*—is an extra channel added to an image; it stores selections as grayscale images. You can add alpha channels to create and store masks.**

**• A layer mask is like an alpha channel, but it’s attached to a specific layer. A layer mask controls which part of a layer is revealed or hidden. It appears as a blank thumbnail next to the layer thumbnail in the Layers panel until you add content to it; a black outline indicates that it’s selected.**

**• A vector mask is essentially a layer mask made up of vectors, not pixels. Resolution-independent, vector masks have crisp edges and are created with the pen or shape tools. They don’t support transparency, so their edges can’t be feathered. Their thumbnails appear the same as layer mask thumbnails.**

**• A clipping mask applies to a layer. It confines the influence of an effect to specific layers, rather than to everything below the layer in the layer stack. Using a clipping mask clips layers to a base layer; only that base layer is affected. Thumbnails of a clipped layer are indented with a right-angle arrow pointing to the layer below. The name of the clipped base layer is underlined.**

**• A channel mask restricts editing to a specific channel (for example, a Cyan channel in a CMYK image). Channel masks are useful for making intricate, fringed, or wispy-edged selections. You can create a channel mask based on a dominant color in an image or a pronounced contrast in an isolated channel, for example, between the subject and the background.**