Creating Animations

Animations can be created within Photoshop. For example, you can create time lapse photography, YouTube videos, QuickTime movies and animated logos. The animating process involves setting the changes in separate layers then turning layers on or off in frames that can be inserted in a TIMELINE panel.

Time Lapse Photography

A popular photographic effect is to take photos of the same place at different times of the day to show the changes in activity and light that have occurred. For example, photos of a city can be taken at intervals through the day which capture the daytime activities, rush hour and the lights coming on at sunset.

A   Loading the Sample Photo

A sample photo has been prepared for you. The exposure of the photo will be altered to simulate the sun going down.

1   Load Photoshop or close the current files and select OPEN from the WELCOME screen or FILE menu.

2   Access the PS SUPPORT FILES, open the CHAPTER 35 folder and open the file:

Time Lapse

3   Set the workspace to ESSENTIALS and the VIEW to FIT ON SCREEN.

4   We could open multiple copies of the photo taken at different times and drag each into the one file, but altering the exposure will be adequate to demonstrate the animation process.
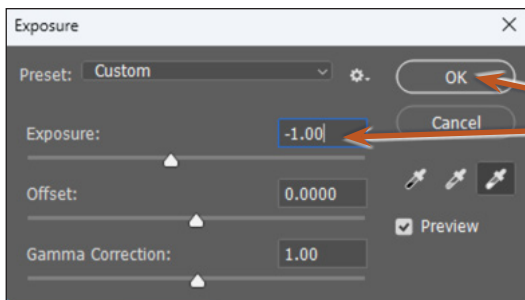
B   Creating the Layers
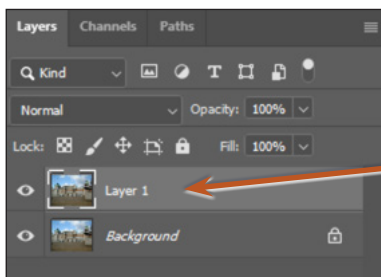
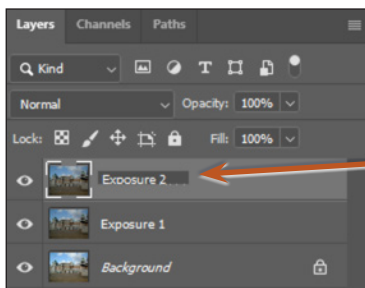1   In the LAYERS panel press CTRL+J or COMMAND+J to duplicate the layer.
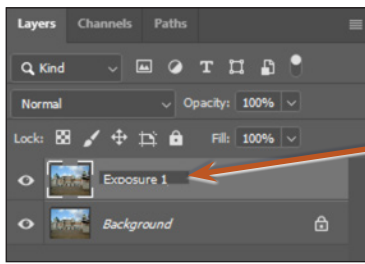
2 Rename the new layer:

Exposure 1
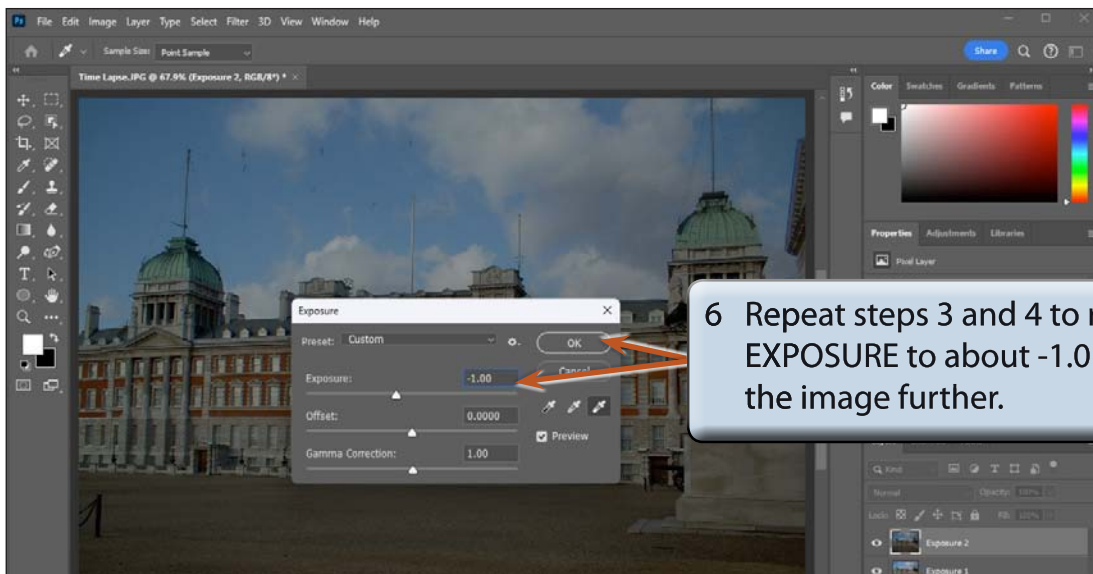
and press <enter> or <return>.

3   Display the IMAGE menu, highlight ADJUSTMENTS and select EXPOSURE.
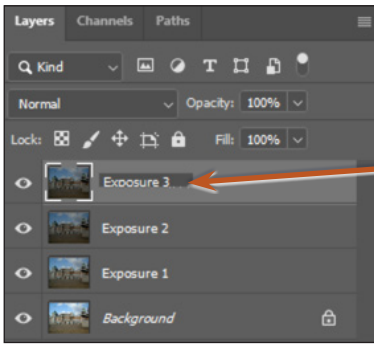
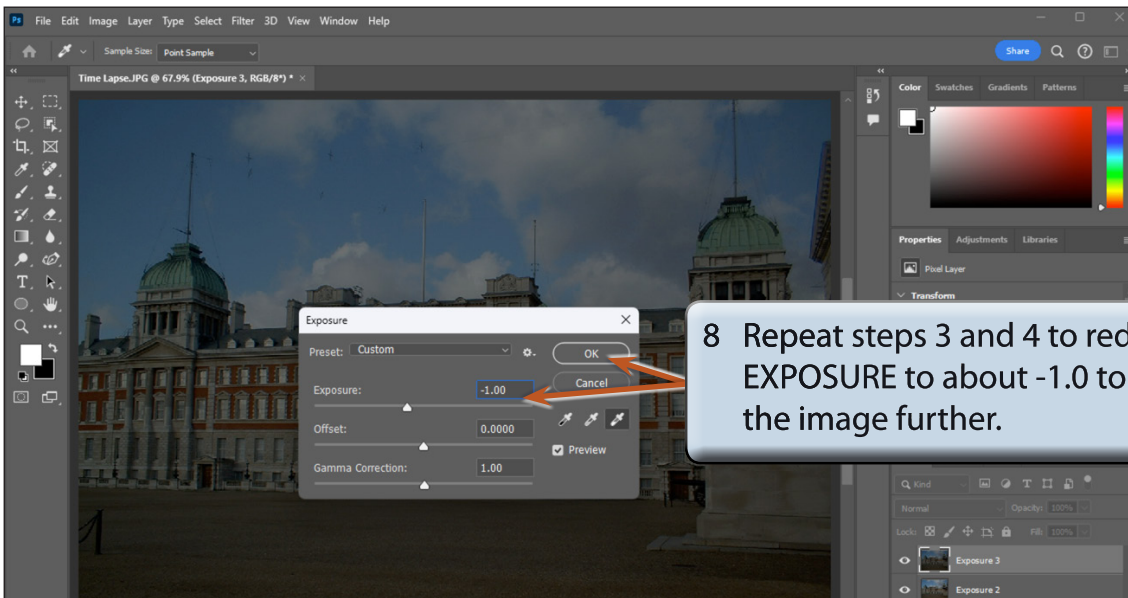4 Reduce the EXPOSURE to about -1.0 and select OK to darken the image.

5 Press CTRL+J or COMMAND+J to duplicate the EXPOSURE 1 layer and rename the new layer:
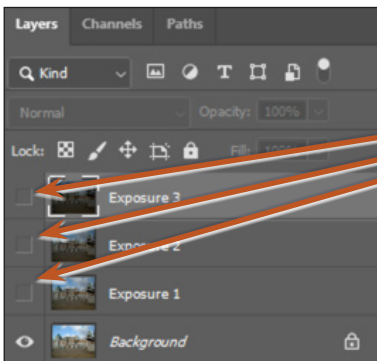
Exposure 2

6 Repeat steps 3 and 4 to reduce the EXPOSURE to about -1.0 to darken the image further.

7   Press CTRL+J or COMMAND+J to duplicate the EXPOSURE 2 layer and rename the new layer:

Exposure 3

8   Repeat steps 3 and 4 to reduce the EXPOSURE to about -1.0 to darken the image further.

9   Turn off the visibility of the three EXPOSURE layers in the LAYERS panel.

10   Use SAVE AS from the FILE menu to save the file in your STORAGE folder as a PHOTOSHOP file under the file name:
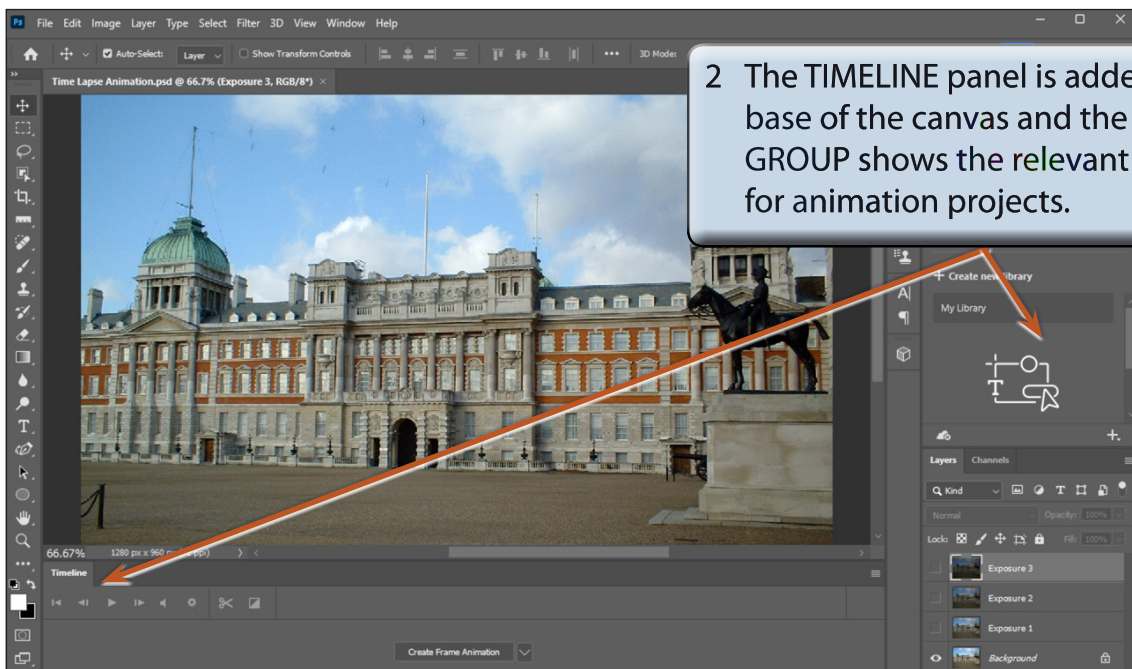
Time Lapse Animation

C   Opening the Motion Workspace

Frames are used to create the animation. These are inserted in the TIMELINE panel which can be quickly added to the screen using the MOTION workspace.
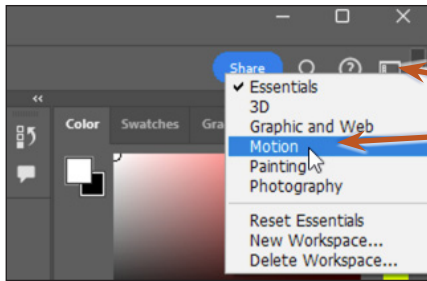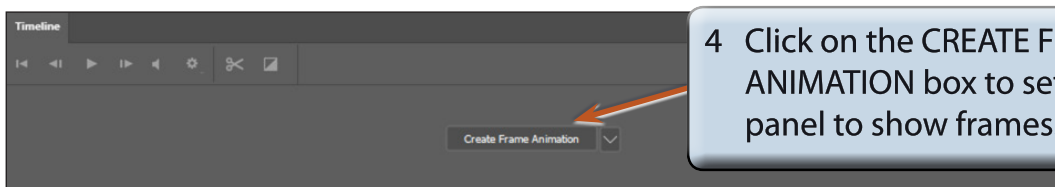

1   Click on the WORKSPACE icon in the OPTIONS BAR and select MOTION.

2   The TIMELINE panel is added to the base of the canvas and the PANEL GROUP shows the relevant panels for animation projects.
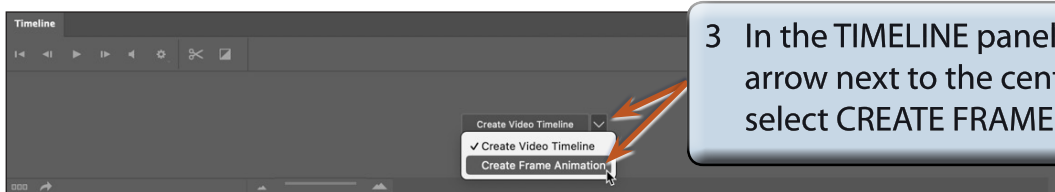
3   In the TIMELINE panel click on the arrow next to the centre box and select CREATE FRAME ANIMATION.

4   Click on the CREATE FRAME ANIMATION box to set the TIMELINE panel to show frames.