

Adjustment Layers

Adjustment Layers are one of Photoshop's most valuable features. They allow you to adjust images without altering the original. Photoshop provides a large selection of Adjustment Layers. In this chapter you will look at the BRIGHTNESS/CONTRAST layer, the LEVELS layer, the GRADIENT MAP layer and the SOLID COLOUR layer

Brightness/Contrast layers

One of the most common problems when taking a photo is incorrect exposure. Photos that are over-exposed have too much light in them. Photos that are under-exposed are too dark. An BRIGHTNESS/CONTRAST layer allows you minimize these effects.

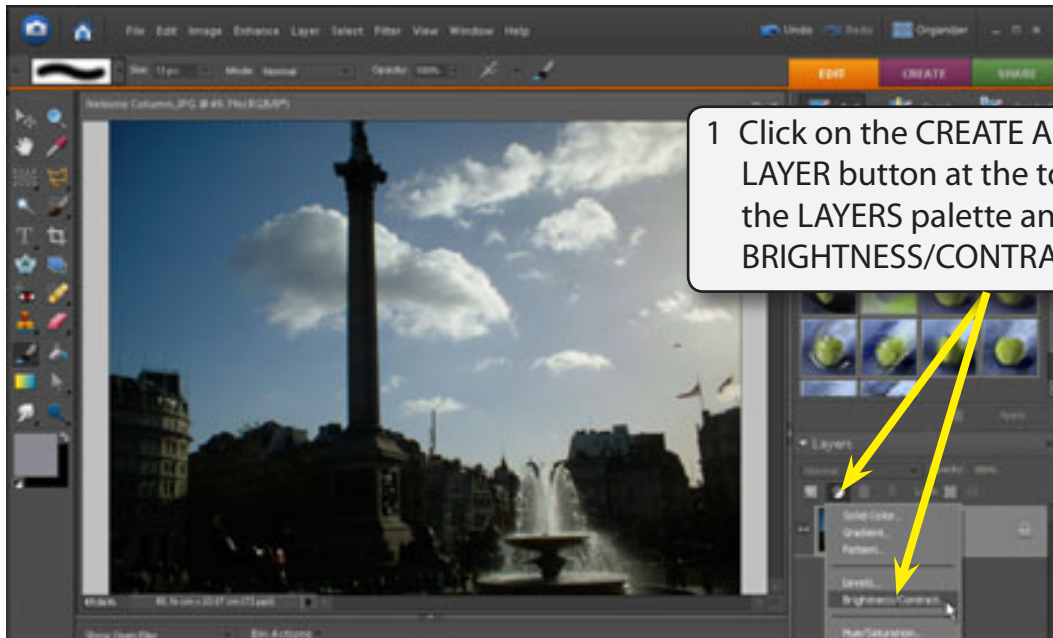
A Loading the Sample Photo

A photo that is under-exposed has been prepared for you and it will need to be adjusted so that the buildings in it can be more clearly seen.

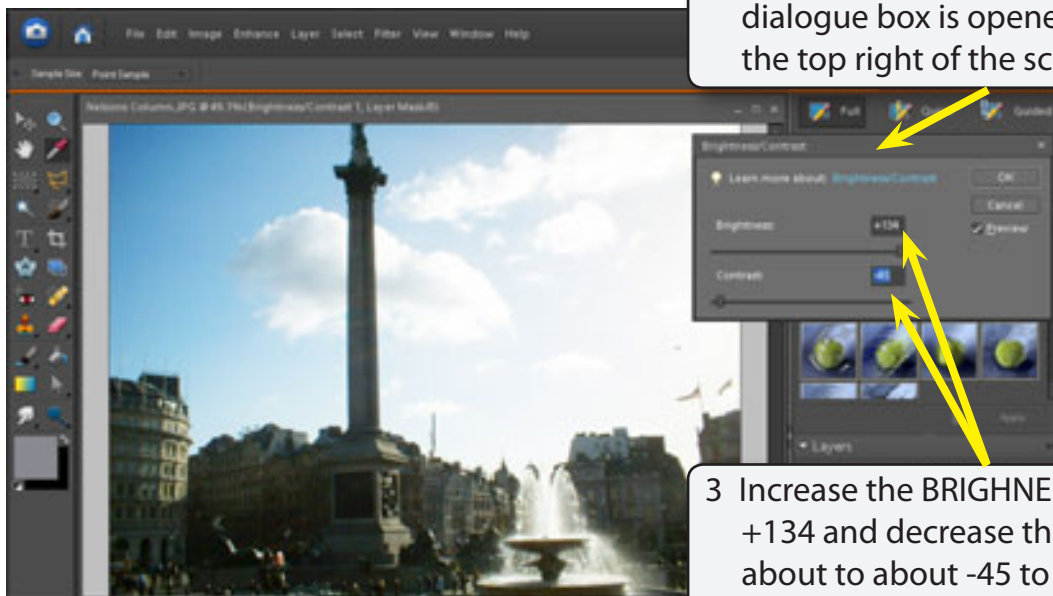
- 1 Load Photoshop Elements or close the current file.
- 2 Display the FILE menu and select OPEN.
- 3 Access the PSE6 SUPPORT FILES, open the CHAPTER 15 folder and load the NELSON'S COLUMN file.
- 4 Press CTRL+0 or COMMAND+0 to set the view to FIT ON SCREEN.
- 5 The photo is too dark to see the buildings clearly.

B Inserting the Brightness/Contrast Layer

The BRIGHTNESS/CONTRAST LAYER is added on top of the background layer and it will not alter that layer in any way.



1 Click on the CREATE ADJUSTMENT LAYER button at the top of the LAYERS palette and select BRIGHTNESS/CONTRAST.



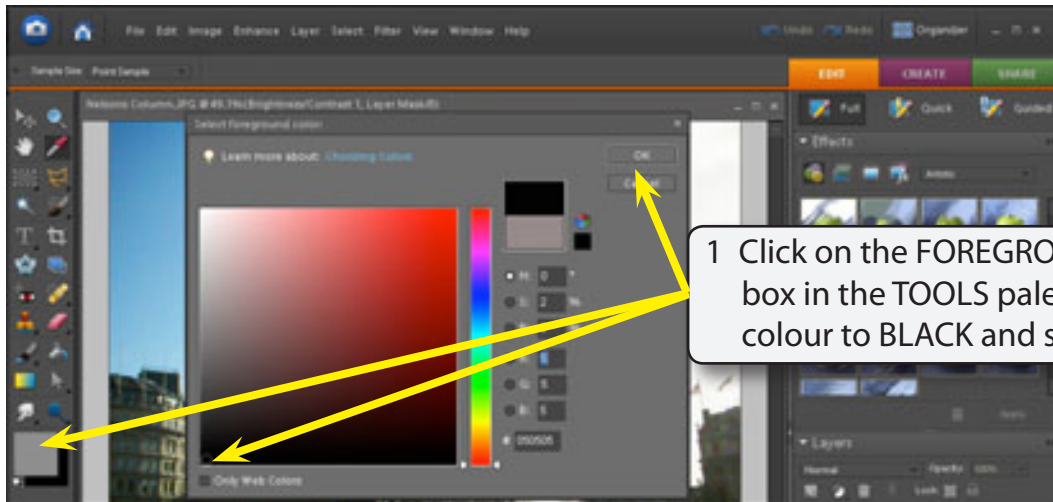
2 The BRIGHTNESS/CONTRAST dialogue box is opened, move it to the top right of the screen.

3 Increase the BRIGHTNESS to about +134 and decrease the CONTRAST about to about -45 to view the buildings more clearly.

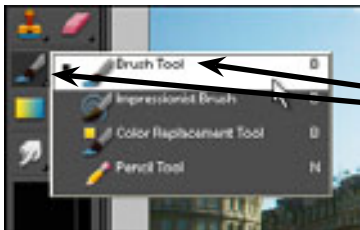
4 Select OK to accept the change.

C Displaying Part of the Background Layer

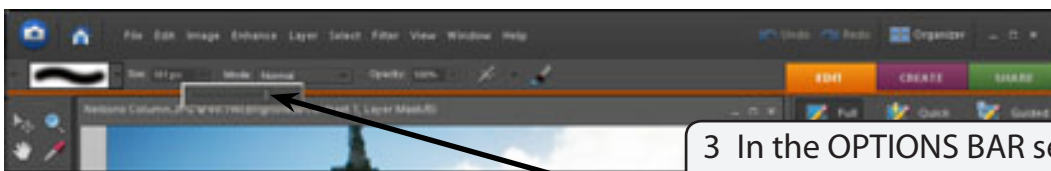
Unfortunately the sky and the fountain are now over exposed and do not look natural. When you create an ADJUSTMENT layer a MASK is included in the layer. This allows you to paint over parts of the background photo that have better exposure.



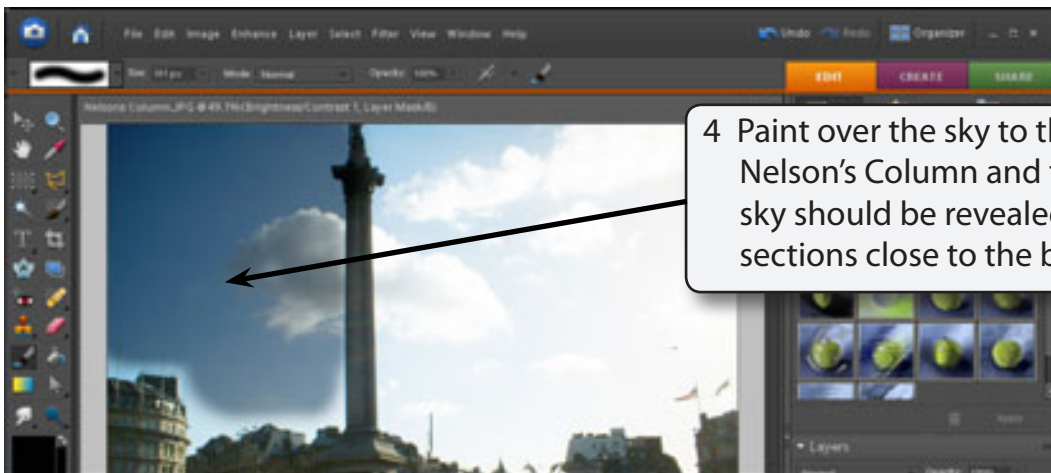
1 Click on the FOREGROUND COLOUR box in the TOOLS palette, set the colour to BLACK and select OK.



2 Select the BRUSH TOOL from the TOOLS palette.



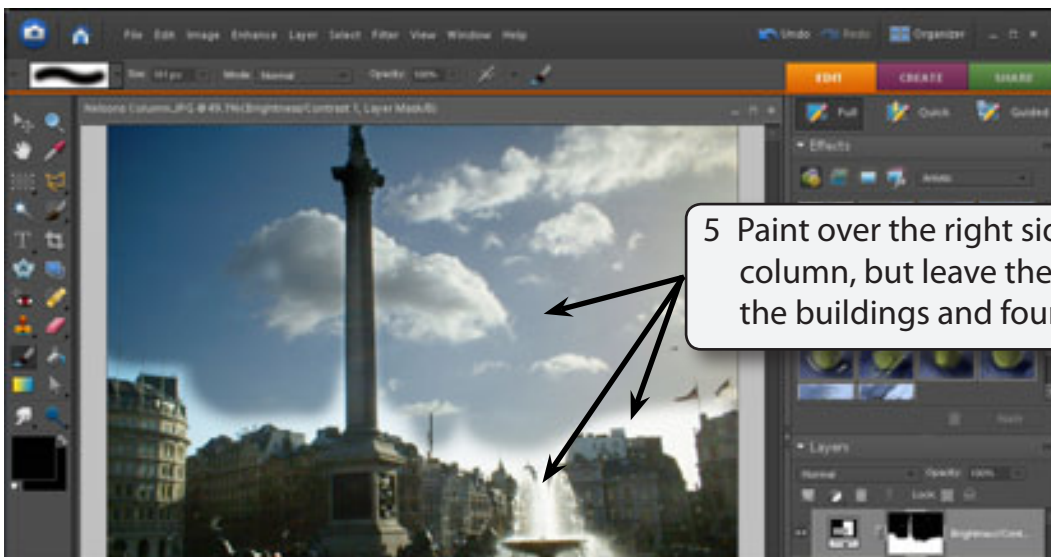
3 In the OPTIONS BAR set the BRUSH SIZE to about 100 px then click on the BRUSH arrow again to close the brush slider.



4 Paint over the sky to the left of Nelson's Column and the original sky should be revealed. Leave the sections close to the buildings.

NOTE:

- i You can use the [key to reduce the brush size for painting close to the column.
- ii You can use the UNDO command if you make a mistake with the painting.



5 Paint over the right side of the column, but leave the areas close to the buildings and fountain.