Teens and Technology 2012

Using READ™ Design Studio to create dynamic programming and marketing materials

ICfL Idaho Commission for Libraries

Tutorial #4

Gimp Basics One – Removing a Background with a Mask

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INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

Created by Idaho Commission for Libraries

GIMP Basics One

This tutorial covers how to open a saved image, remove the background, and save the file so that it remains open for future editing.
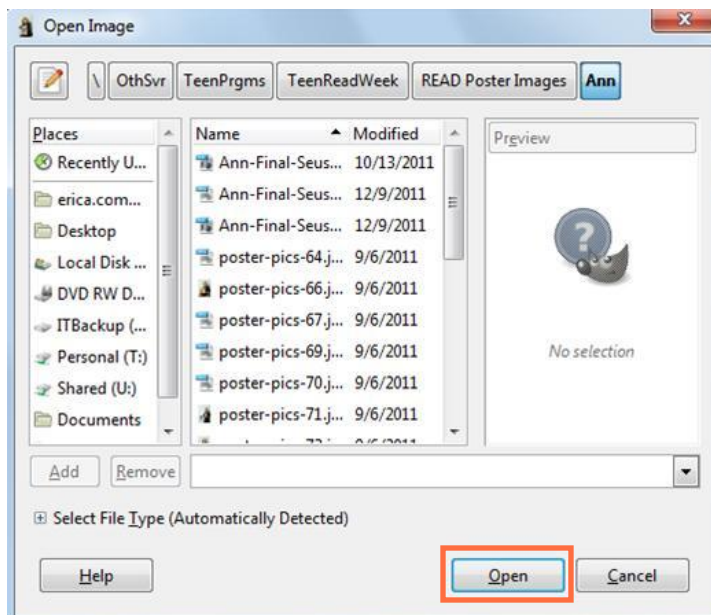
Opening an Image

Step 1: Click File>Open.
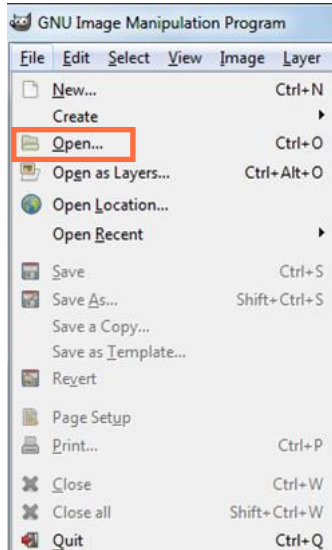
**Step 2:** Navigate to the location of your image files.

Step 3: Select the image you want and Click Open.

💡 **Tip:** Depending on the settings of your computer, you may get a dialog box that opens and asks you to convert the image to RGB. Select Convert and check the box that says "Don't ask me again."

GIMP Basics One

Your screen should look something like this:

One layer called "Background"
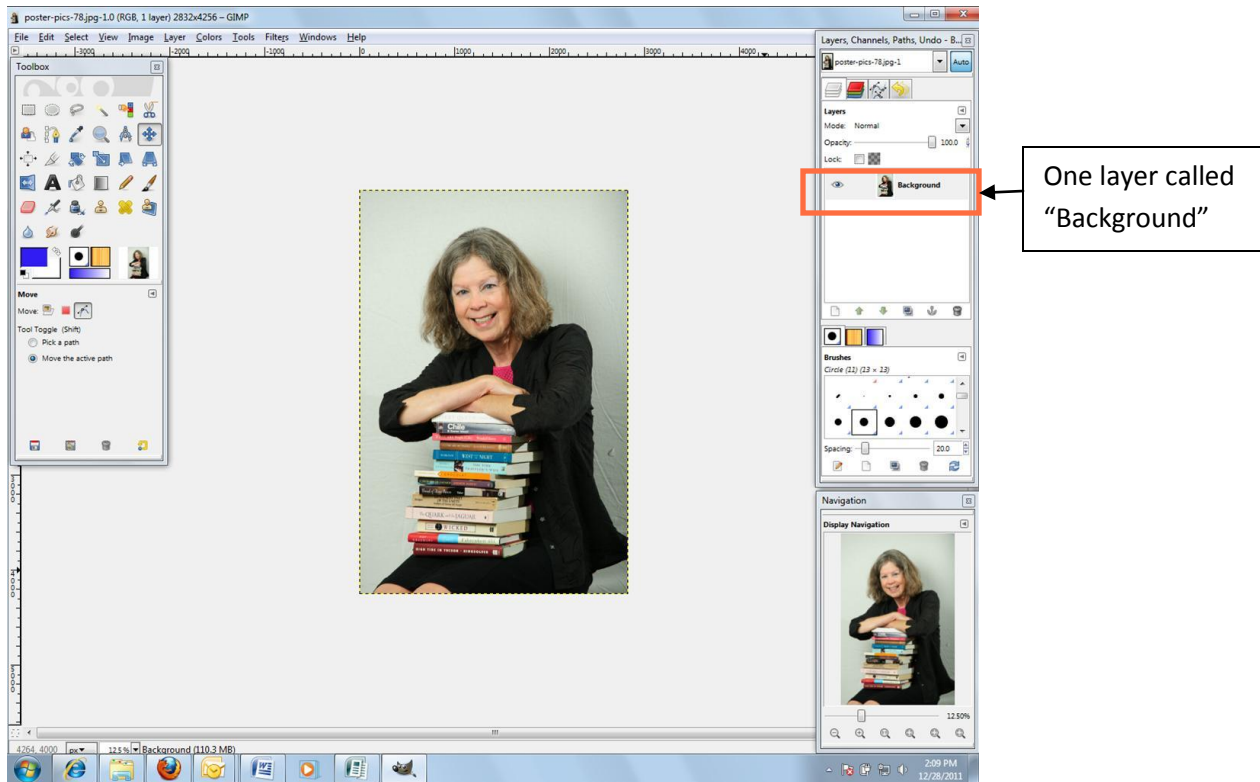
Naming Layers

Let's do one more step before we work with your image and extract the background.

To make it easier to keep track of the different layers we will start by renaming the first layer of the image.

Step 1: Double Click on the **Background** layer (see above) and rename it **Original Image**.

Step 2: Click Enter to accept the changes.

Step 3: Click on Create Duplicate Layer.

Step 4: Rename the duplicate layer **MASK** using the same method as above.

Step 5: Select **Original Image** layer.

Step 6: Click on the **Eye Icon** to hide this layer. The eye icon disappears.

 Tip: You will not see any change to your screen!

Using Intelligent Scissors to Make a Selection

You are now going to use the scissors tool to select specific areas of the image so that we can apply something called a **Mask**. The mask enables us to hide what we don't want and show what we do want on the READ poster. We will go into more detail on masks later, but for now it is important to understand that masks are a way of "removing" parts of an image by hiding them, not deleting them.

Step 1: Click on the **Mask** layer to make it the active layer.

Step 2: Use the Navigation dialog box tools to zoom in and fill the screen with your image.

Step 3: Choose **Intelligent Scissors** on the Toolbox.
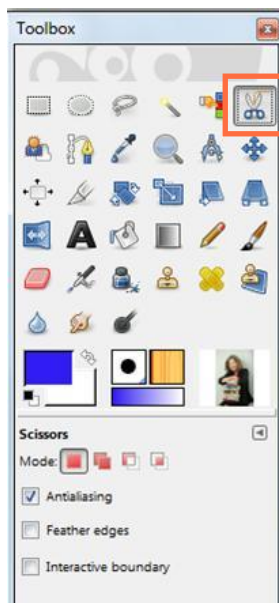
Step 4: Place the pointed edge of the cursor on the edge of your photo and click to set a point.

You are going to use the scissors to draw a line as close to the edge of the photo as you can in order to select the parts you want to keep. You do this by clicking to set the point, moving the cursor to another area and clicking to set another point. Keep moving around the image **in the same direction** until you have selected the entire image you want to keep.

Tip: If you need to refine the line you created you can click on the line using the Scissors tool and it will create new points on the line.

Tip: Click on the starting point to complete the line around the image.

Your image should look something like this:

Tip: The Intelligent Scissors are smart enough to follow the color of the edge somewhat as you click on the image. You can see how important it is to have a contrasting background when you take your photos as you complete this task!

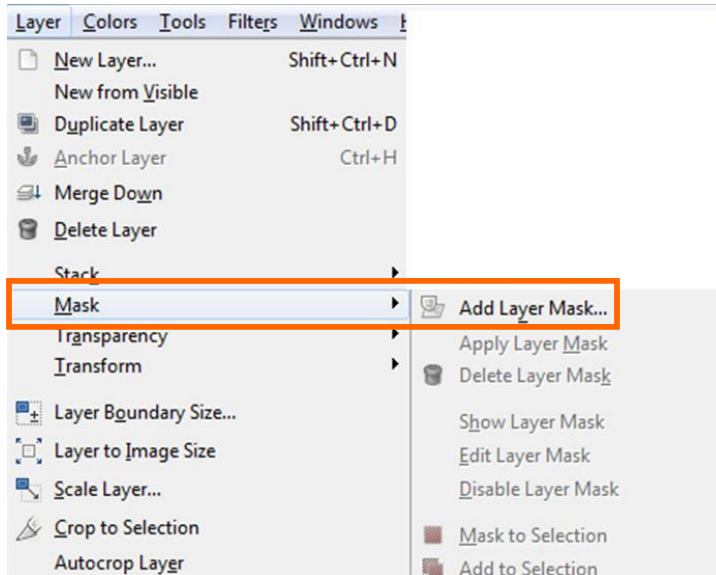**Step 5:** Hit **Enter** to accept this selection. The dots will change to "marching ants."

Step 6: Go to **Select** > **Invert**. This inverts the selection you created using the scissors. You will not see any changes to the image yet.
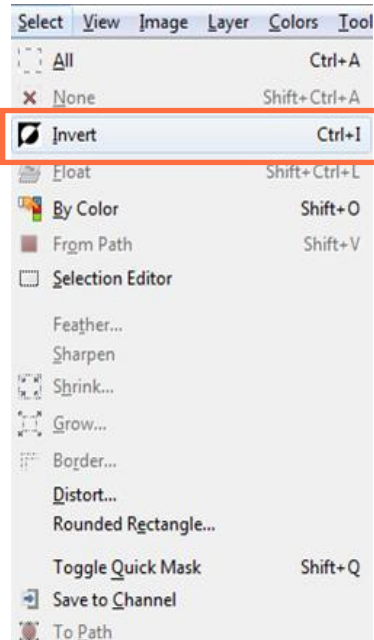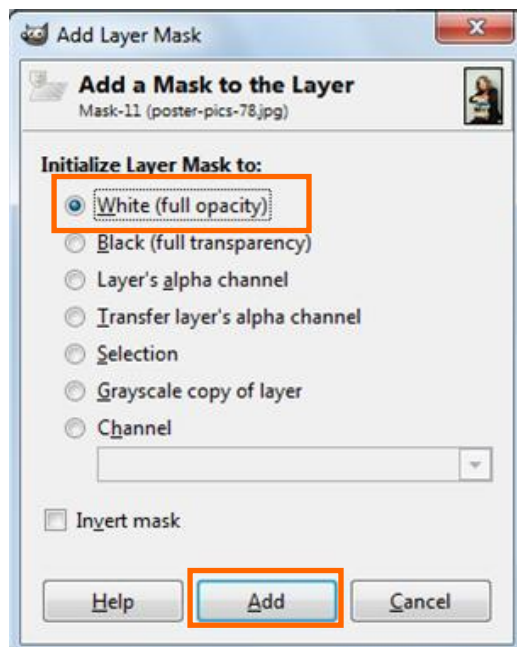
Adding a Mask to an Image

Step 1: Choose **Layer** > **Mask** > **Add Layer Mask**.

 Tip: A new dialog box will open.

Step 2: By default **White (full opacity)** is chosen. This is the selection you want.

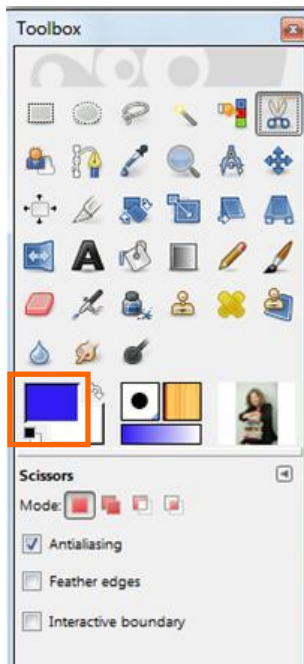**Step 3:** Click **Add**. You still do not see any changes! Don't worry!

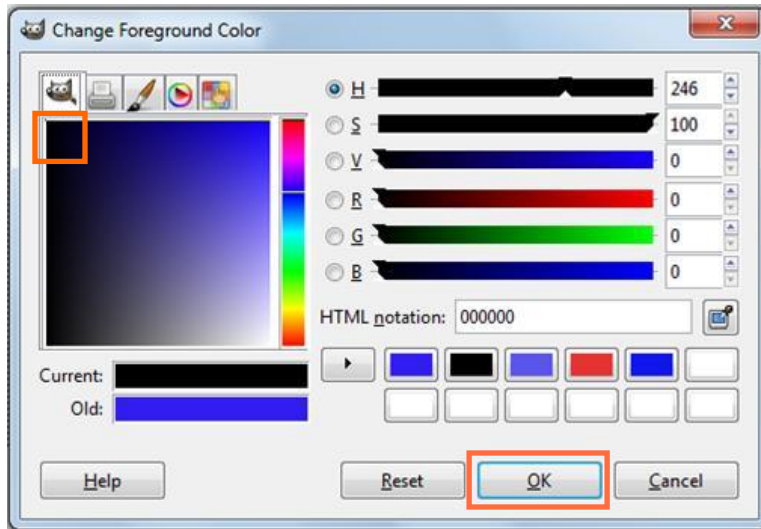**Step 4:** In the toolbox select the **Bucket Fill** tool**.**

Step 5: Click on the **Foreground and Background Colors** box in the toolbox area.

Tip: A new dialog box will open and we will use it to change the foreground color to black.

Step 6: Click and drag the pointer to the top left corner to select black.

Step 7: Click **OK**.

Step 8: Using the **Bucket Fill** tool, click on the **Background** (in this case the white sheet area) of the image. This hides the background and displays it as a checkerboard. **YOU WILL NOT SEE A BLACK BACKGROUND**.
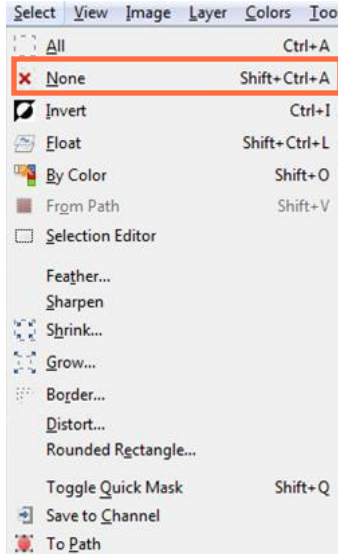
Your image should look something like this:

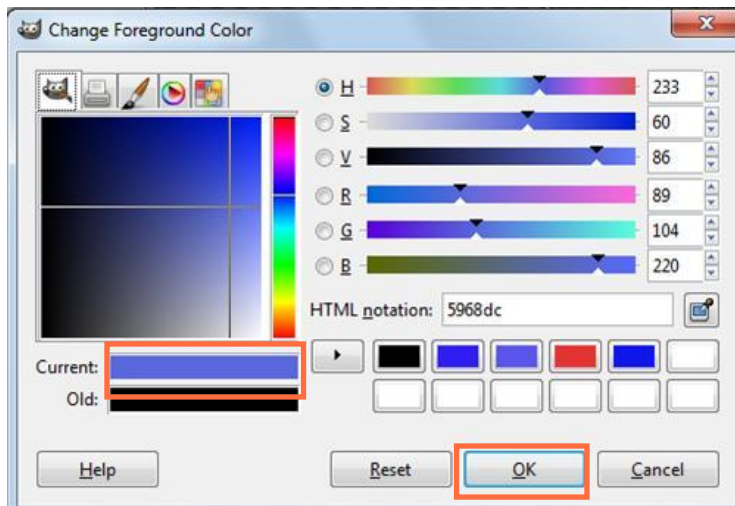 **Tip:** The marching ants are still on the image.

Step 9: Choose **Select** > **None**. The marching ants should disappear from the image.

Step 10: On the Layer dialog box, Click **Create a New Layer** and rename it **Fill.**

Step 11: Click on the **Foreground and Background Color** area in the toolbox and a new dialog box opens.

Step 12: Drag your cursor over the colored boxes to choose a color to use for the fill color. Click **OK**.
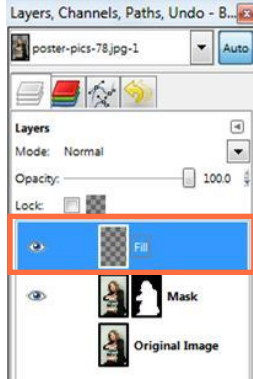
 Tip: You will want to choose a color that has a similar color to the background of the poster you will be using later. This will allow you to see what the photo will look like on that color background as you refine the edges.

Step 13: Select the **Bucket Fill** tool from the toolbox

Step 14: Select the **Fill Layer**. (It turns blue when it is the active layer.)
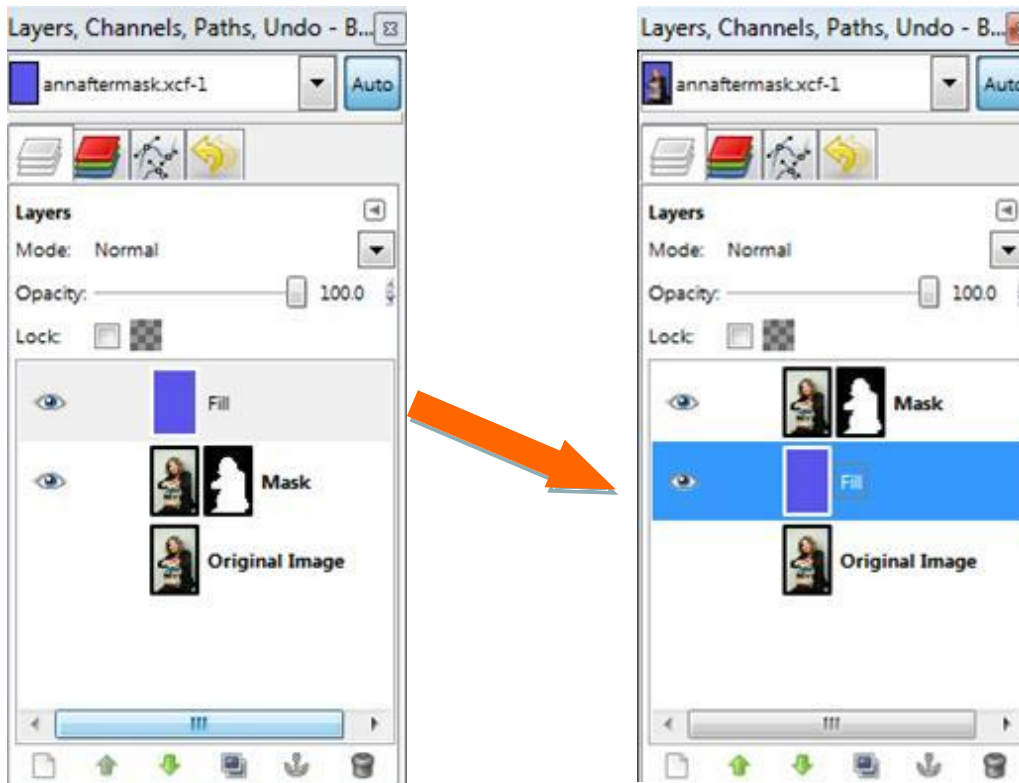

Step 15: Click the **Bucket Fill** on the checkered background to fill with the chosen color.

Tip: Your image will disappear. Don't worry we just have to change the orders of the layers to make your image visible and continue working.

Step 16: Click on the **Fill** layer and drag it below the **Mask** layer.

Your image should now look something like this:

The Intelligent Scissors do a pretty good job of cutting out the image, but we still need to refine the edges and clean up some areas that were missed. We will do that in the next tutorial.