

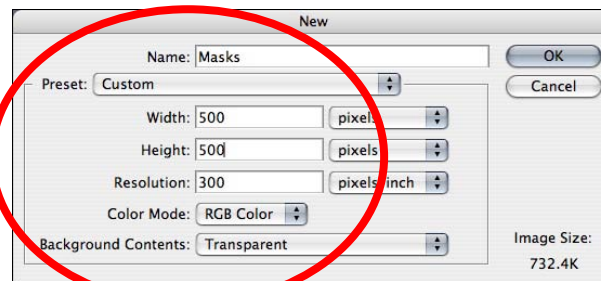
## Creating Masks

Layers are one of the most fundamental aspects of Photoshop Elements. They allow you to break a drawing up into small selections which makes detailed drawings much easier to manage. In this Chapter you will use layers to create masks. Masks are covers that you place over things. In Photoshop if you cover something with a mask then make part of that mask transparent you can just show parts of photos or images. This technique is called creating CLIPPING GROUP LAYERS where one layer clips the contents of another.

### Creating a Transparent Layer

Layers basically fall into three types. One with a white background, one with a coloured background and another with a transparent (or clear) background. In this case a transparent layer will be used.

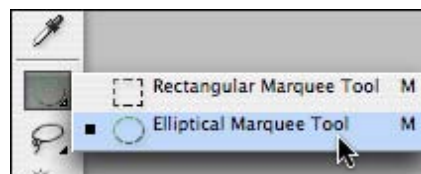
- 1 Load PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS and click on the NEW button, or close the current file and start a NEW file.
- 2 Call the file MASKS, set the WIDTH and HEIGHT to 500 pixels and set the BACKGROUND CONTENTS (layer type) to TRANSPARENT.
- 3 Select OK and a page with a speckled background will be created. This represents a transparent page.



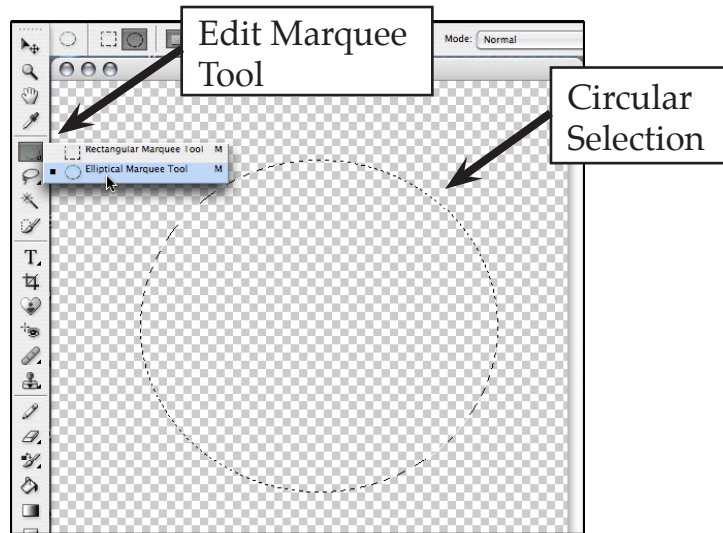
### Drawing a Circular Selection Area

The ELLIPTICAL MARQUEE will be used to draw a circle in the screen. This will be filled and then become a window to view other pictures.

- 1 Set the EDIT MARQUEE TOOL in the TOOLS palette to the ELLIPTICAL MARQUEE TOOL.



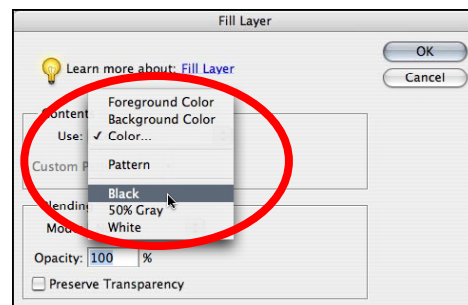
- 2 Drag a circular selection on the screen.



## Filling the Selection Area

The selection area can be filled with a background colour. In this case we will fill it to black.

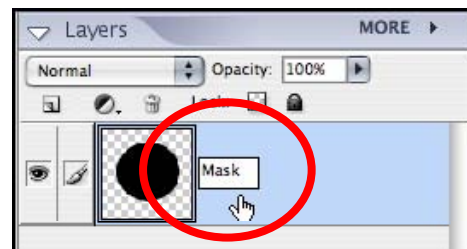
- 1 Display the EDIT menu and select FILL SELECTION.
- 2 Set the USE box to BLACK.
- 3 Select OK and the circular selection should be filled to black.
- 4 Click outside the circle to deselect it.



## Naming the Layer

It is good practice to name layers so that you know what they refer to, particularly when you start creating more detailed documents.

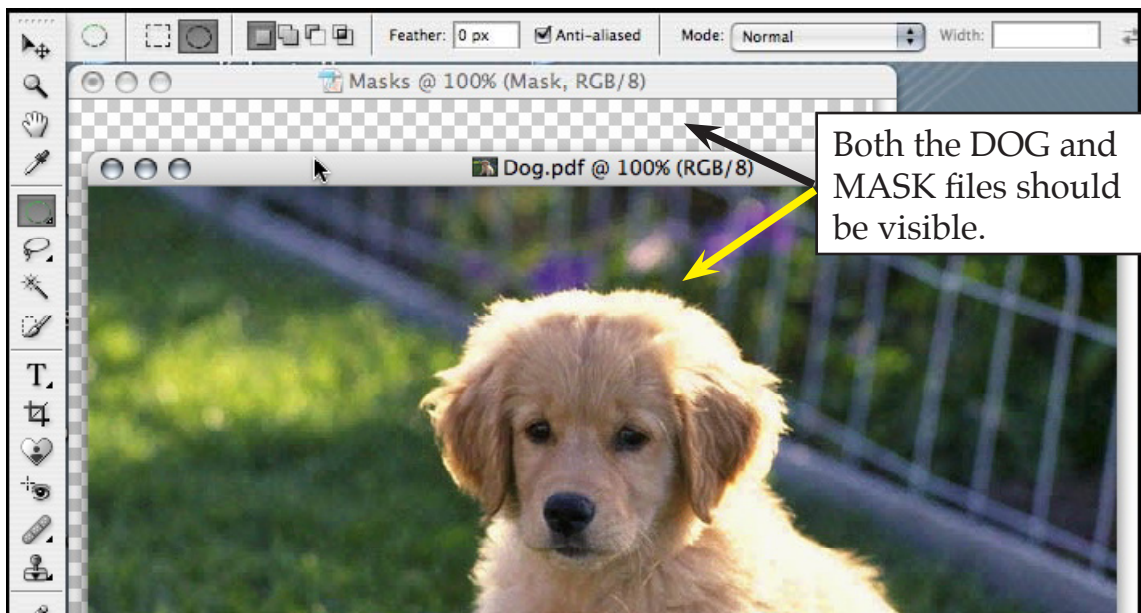
- 1 Double click on the LAYER 1 label in the LAYERS palette to highlight its name.
- 2 Enter the name: Mask



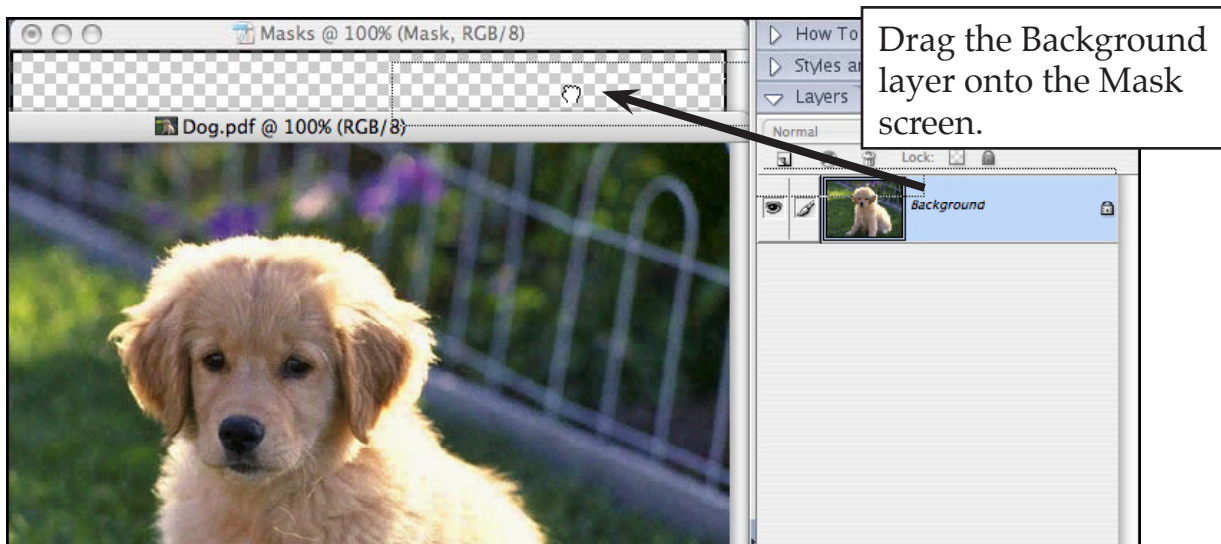
## Adding a Background File

We will use a picture of a dog to act as the background image.

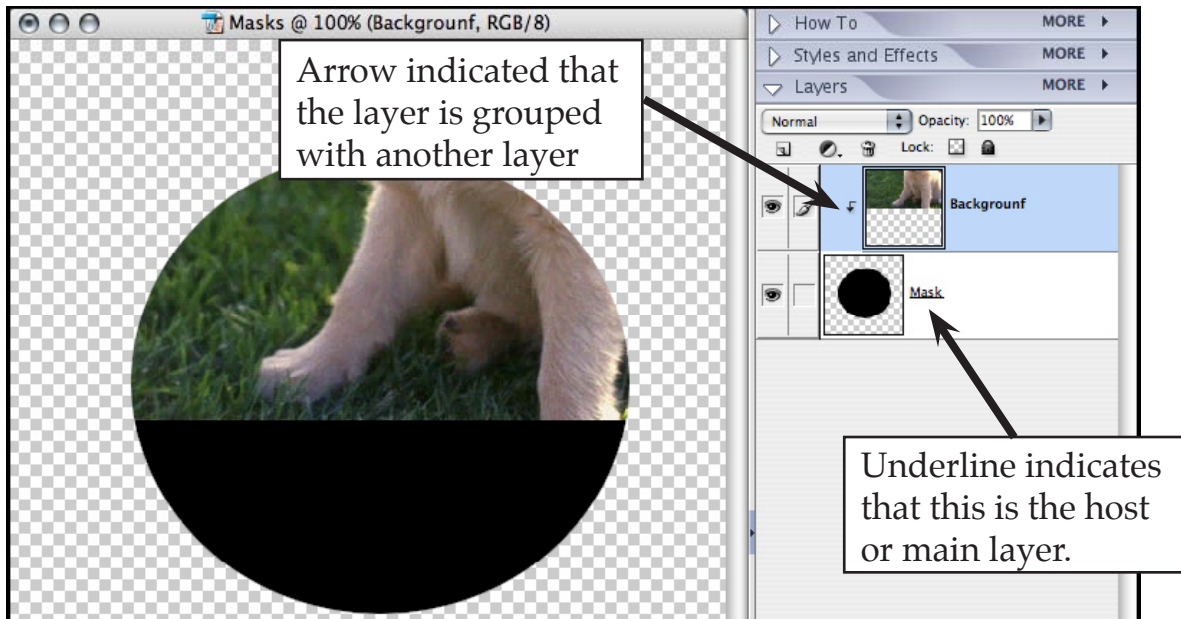
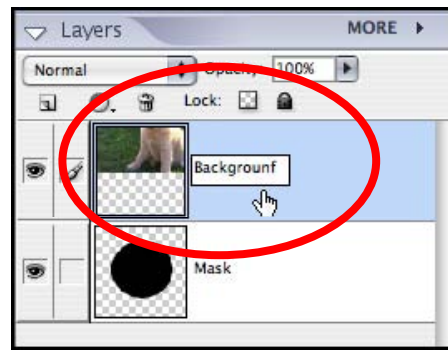
- 1 Display the FILE menu and select OPEN.
- 2 Access the PSE SUPPORT FILES, open the CHAPTER 2 folder and open the DOG file.
- 3 Move the DOG window so that you can see both the MASK and the DOG files.



- 4 Move the mouse over the BACKGROUND layer name in the DOG file and drag it onto the MASK file.



- 5 A layer should be added below the MASK layer. Name the new layer BACKGROUND.
- 6 With the BACKGROUND layer still selected, display the LAYER menu and select GROUP WITH PREVIOUS to combine the BACKGROUND layer with the MASK layer.
- 7 An arrow will be added to the BACKGROUND layer and it will be indented to indicate that it is combined with the MASK layer. The MASK layer is underlined to indicate that it is the host layer.



- 8 You will notice that you can now see part of the dog through the FOREGROUND layer. The background can only be seen where pixels have been drawn in the transparent layer.
- 9 Select the MOVE TOOL from the TOOLS palette and you should be able to drag more of the dog into view in the circle as shown in the diagram at the top of the next page.