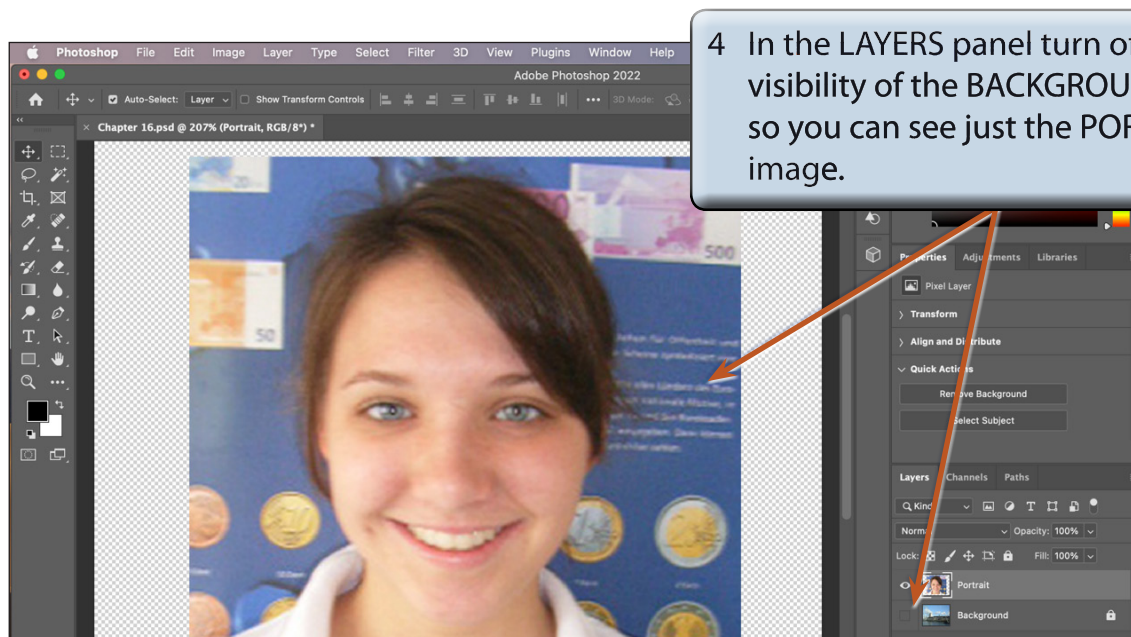# Refining Selections

Selecting part of a photo and inserting the selection into another document is one of the most common tasks that Photoshop is used for. It is important that the selection is highly accurate, but areas such as hair are always difficult to select. In Module 1 you selected an object in a photo and used the SELECT AND MASK dialogue box to refine the selection. In this chapter a picture of a girl will be removed from one background and placed on another using the tools from within the SELECT AND MASK dialogue box .
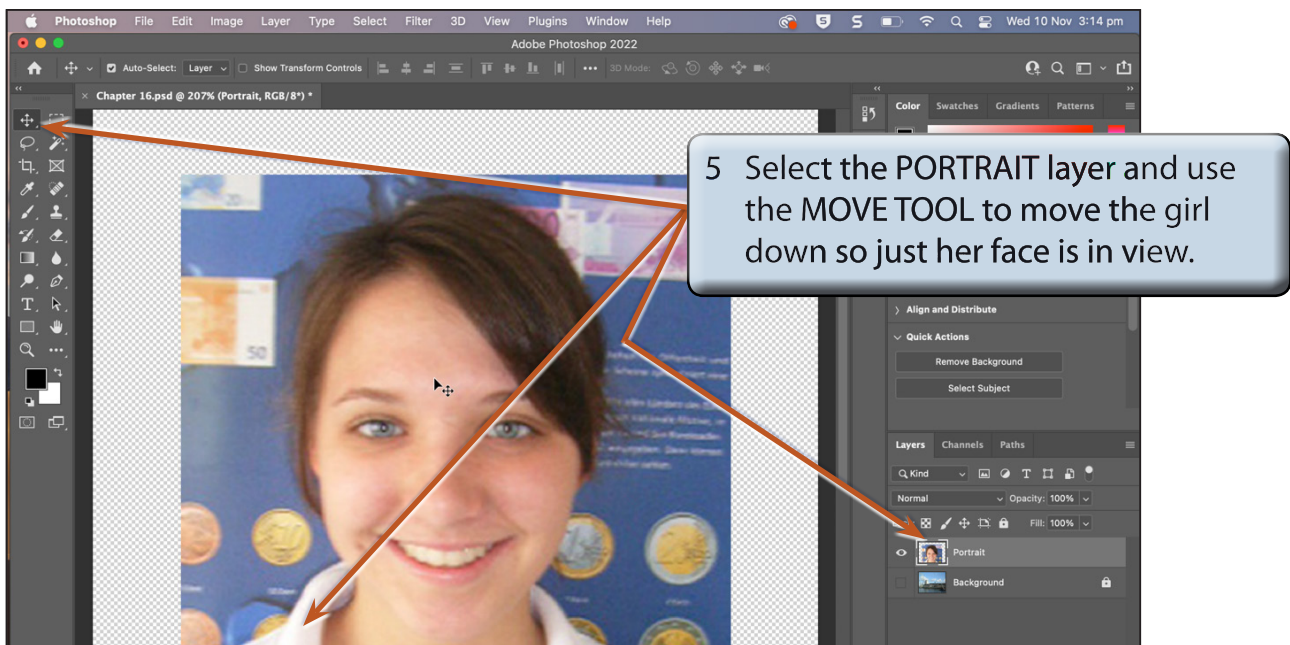
Loading the Sample Photo

A photo of a girl has been prepared for you and she will be placed onto a more interesting background.

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

2   Access the PScc SUPPORT FILES, open the CHAPTER 16 folder and load the CHAPTER 16 file.

3   The photo of the girl is in one layer and the new background is in another layer.

4   In the LAYERS panel turn off the visibility of the BACKGROUND layer so you can see just the PORTRAIT image.

5 Select the PORTRAIT layer and use the MOVE TOOL to move the girl down so just her face is in view.
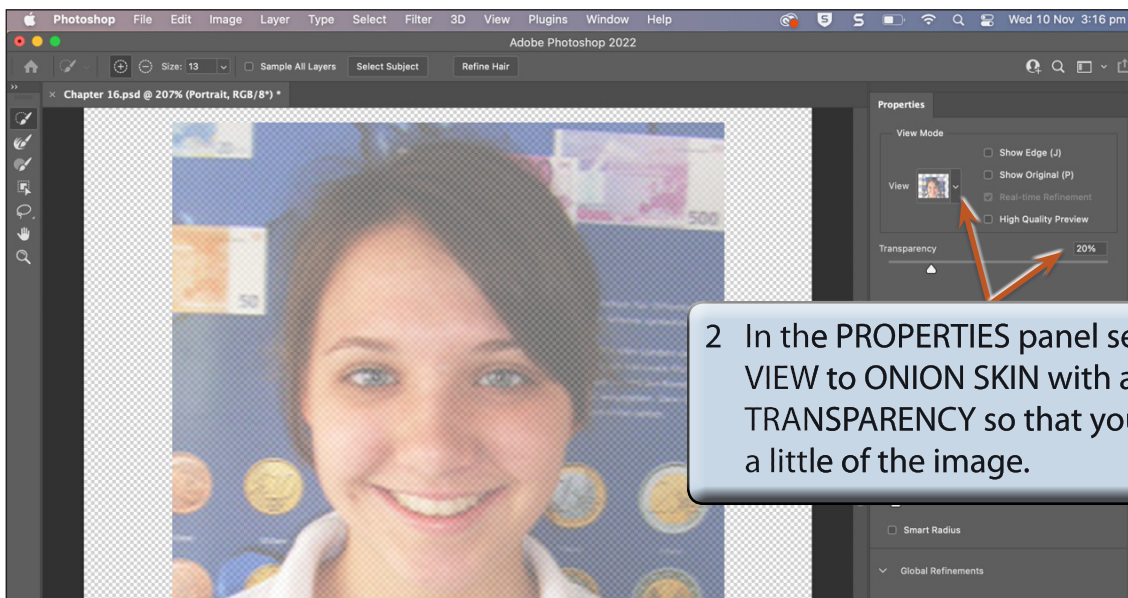
The Select and Mask Dialogue Box

In this case the selection of the girl will be made within the SELECT AND MASK dialogue box. You could use any of selection tools such as the OBJECT SELECTION TOOL or the QUICK SELECTION TOOL to select the girl first as you have done previously then open the SELECT AND MASK dialogue box and it is personal choice which method you wish to use.
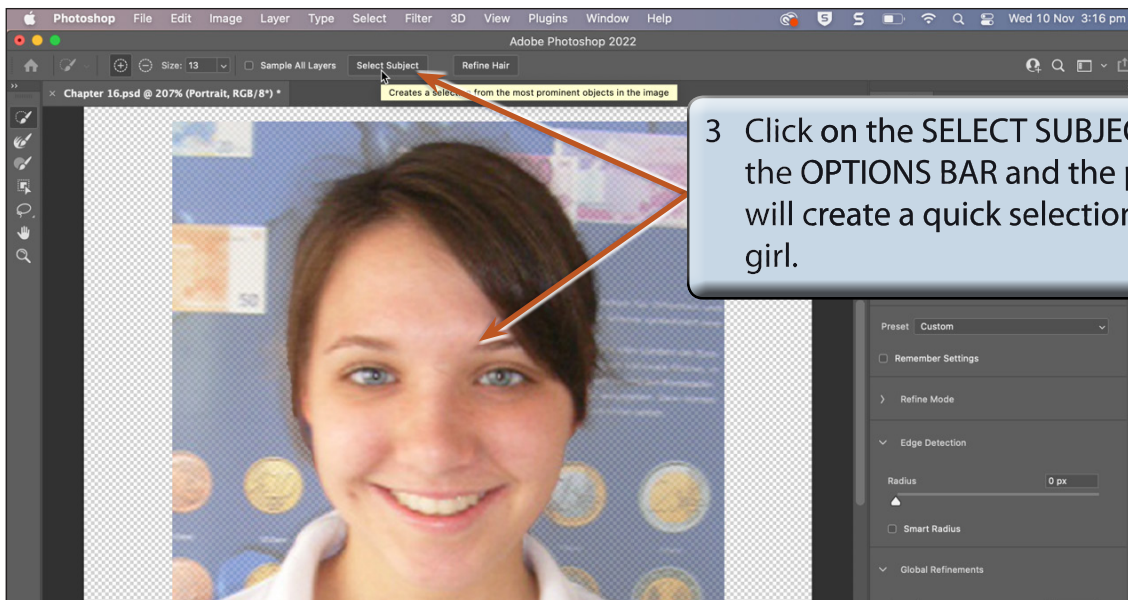
A Selecting the Girl

1 Display the SELECT menu and choose SELECT AND MASK to open the SELECT AND MASK dialogue box.

NOTE: If a selection tool is selected from the TOOLS panel, the SELECT AND MASK icon is displayed in the OPTIONS BAR and it can be used to open the SELECT AND MASK dialogue box.

2 In the PROPERTIES panel set the VIEW to ONION SKIN with a 20% TRANSPARENCY so that you can see a little of the image.
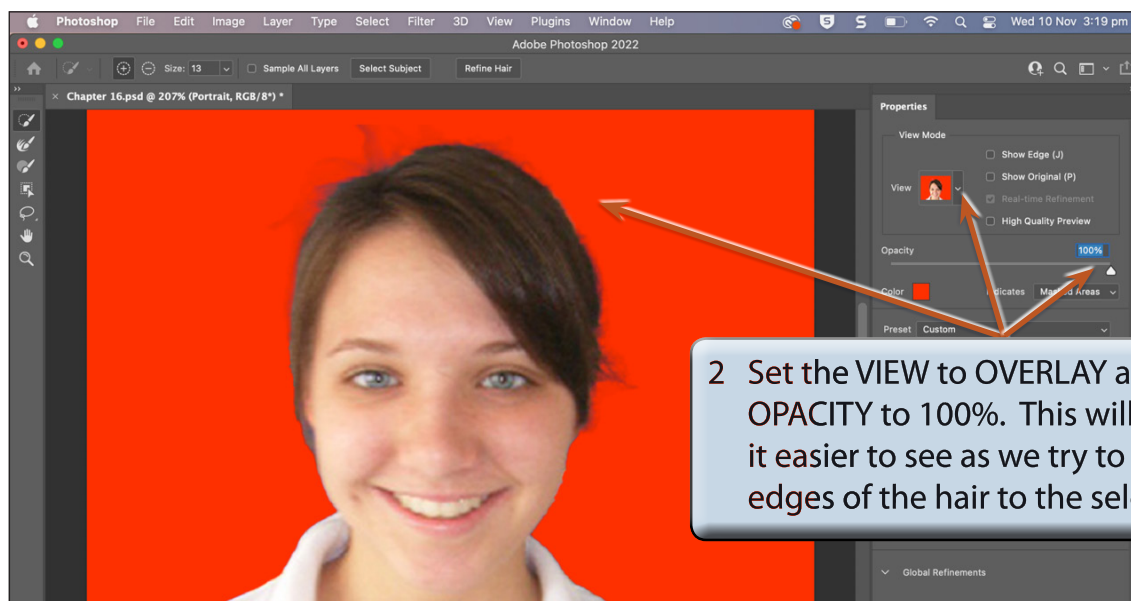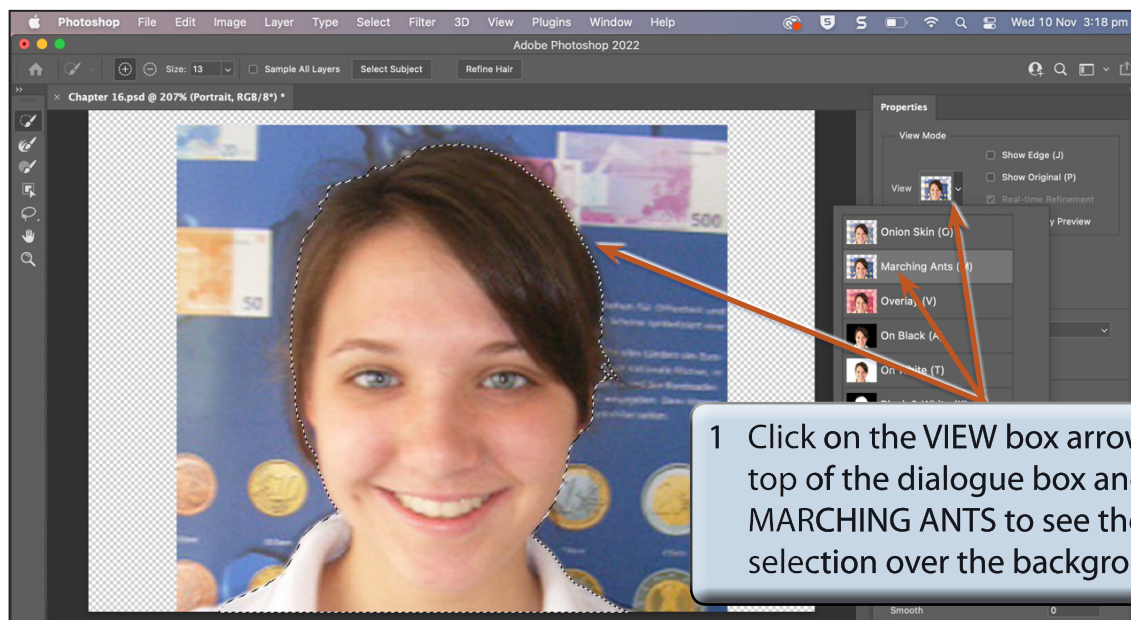

3 Click on the SELECT SUBJECT icon in the OPTIONS BAR and the program will create a quick selection of the girl.

NOTE: It may be difficult to see the selection, but the selection does not need to be accurate at this stage.

B   Refining the Selection

The difficult to select areas such as the hair can be refined.

1 Click on the VIEW box arrow at the top of the dialogue box and select MARCHING ANTS to see the initial selection over the background.

2 Set the VIEW to OVERLAY and set the OPACITY to 100%. This will make it easier to see as we try to add the edges of the hair to the selection.

NOTE: The program does a fairly good job of selecting the subject over a detailed background, but some refinement is needed to improve the selection.