

Photoshop Blend Modes Explained - Jan 14, 2014

Learn the fundamentals of how Photoshop blend modes work and the best ways to use them to improve, enhance and creatively manipulate your images. The Program will cover what blend modes are, explain the basic blend modes, cover the most used blend modes for photographers and explain some blend modes to creatively enhance your images.

What are blend modes?

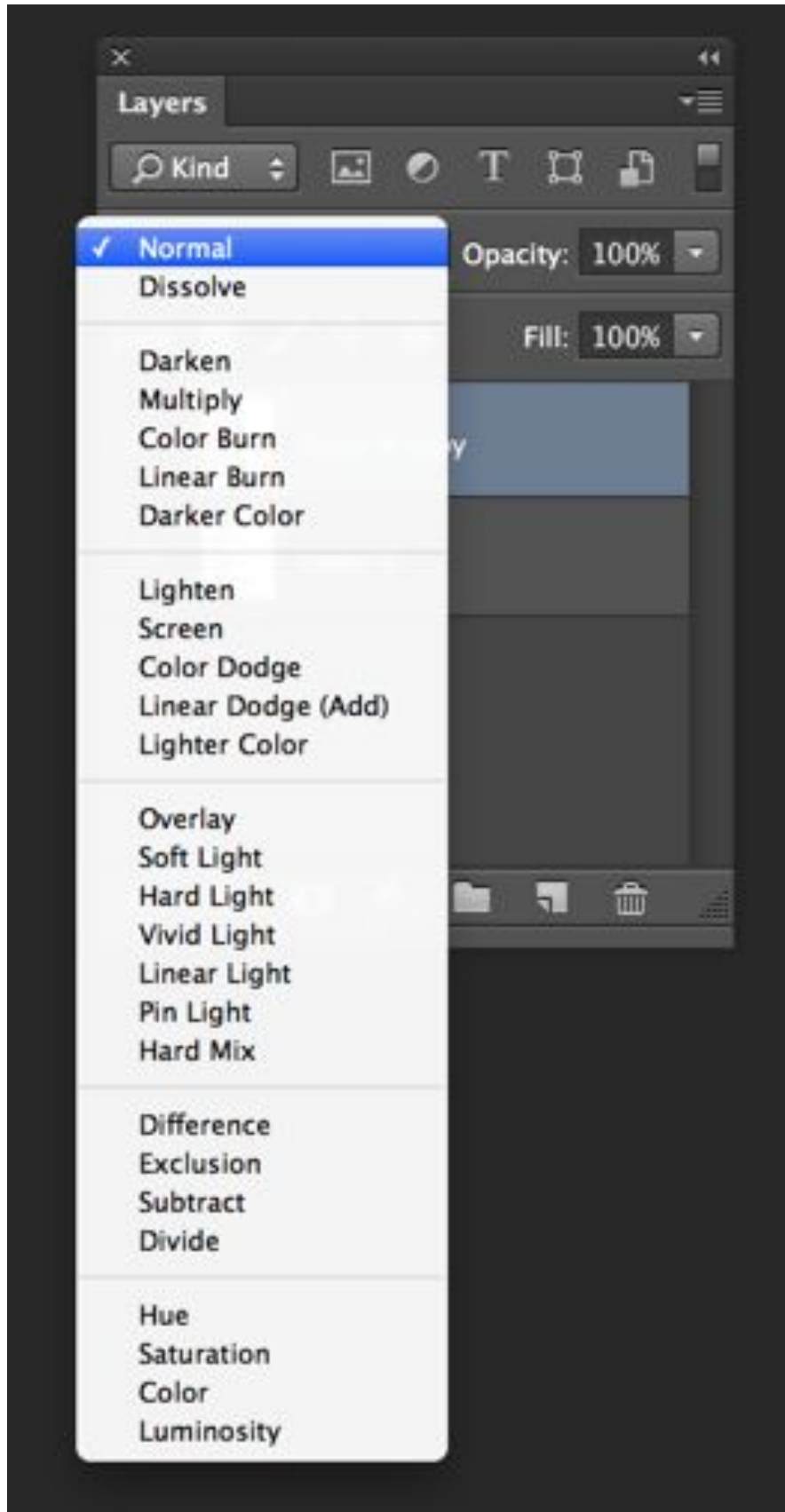
Basically it's a way of combining pixels in Photoshop, You can do this numerous ways in Photoshop using layers, brushes, styles. All these elements use blending modes. Today we will focus on using layers.

In layers, it is a way to combine two different layers to create different kinds of affects.

Location of Blend Modes
Pull Down Menu
within
the Layers Palette.



Blend Mode Pull Down Menu



For layers, the blend mode menu is separated into different blending categories, where each group of blend modes has certain characteristics. Each group has a common function but each blend mode in that group does something a little different.

Darken Modes Effect the darkness of the image

Lighten Modes Effect the lightness of the image

Contrast Modes Effect the Lightness and Darkness of the image

Comparative Modes can invert your image, etc

Composite/Color Modes effect the colors of your image



Darken Modes

Lighten Modes

Contrast Modes

Comparative Modes

Composite Modes
(Hue, Saturation, Luminosity)

We will go over each category briefly and demonstrate with some of the more commonly used modes.

Darken Blend Modes

With the Darken Blend Modes we are comparing two layers and then making the underneath layer darker based upon the top layer. We are basically using the dark areas of the top layer and blending those into the underneath layer.

Most common used is the MULTIPLY blend mode - it darkens the dark areas of both images.

COLOR BURN - darkens or burns based upon top layer.

LINER BURN - Stronger than COLOR BURN

DARKER BURN - Similar to Darken but applied to all channels.

Basically with the Darken Blend Modes, if white is in the top (blended Image) layer, it will disappear and the dark areas of the top image will darken the underneath image.

Photoshop Darker Blend Modes demonstrations - MULTIPLY:

Showing Black Logos with white background on an image, such that the white background disappears.

1. Add the Logo image on it's own layer on top of base image
2. Change Blend mode of the logo to MULTIPLY, the black letters will be superimposed on the base image without the white background showing.

Darkening certain parts of image by using a duplicate copy of a layer and changing top layer blend mode to MULTIPLY then use a mask to selectively choose what areas are darkened.

1. Duplicate the Layer
2. Change Blend mode to MULTIPLY
3. Add a Black Mask to the Layer
4. Use a soft Paintbrush (10% opacity) to paint White (on the Black Mask) over areas you want Darkened

Add Drama to a Portraiture:

1. Duplicate the Layer
2. Desaturate the Blend Layer (Image/Adjustment/Desaturate)
3. Change Blend mode to MULTIPLY
4. Add a White Mask to the Blend Layer
5. Use a soft Paintbrush to paint Black (on the White Mask) over areas that may be too dark

Lighten Blend Modes

With the Lighten Blend Modes we are comparing two layers and then making the underneath layer lighter based upon the top layer. We are basically using the light areas of the top layer and blending those into the underneath layer.

LIGHTEN - Shows brighter areas of top layer.

SCREEN - Most common Lighten Blend Mode, Overall brightening of image.

COLOR DODGE - A Lot more brighter than LIGHTEN

LINEAR DODGE - Stronger SCREEN

LIGHTER COLOR - All lighter Colors of top layer showing through

Basically with Lighter Blend Modes, if black is in the top (blended Image) layer, it will disappear and the light areas of the top image will lighten the underneath image.

Photoshop LIGHTEN Blend Modes demonstrations:

Showing White Logos with black background on an image, such that the black background disappears.

1. Add the Logo image on it's own layer on top of base image
2. Change Blend mode of the logo to SCREEN, the white letters will be superimposed on the base image without the black background showing.

Lightening Center of Image:

1. Duplicate the Layer
2. Change Blend mode to SCREEN
3. Add a Black Mask to the Layer
4. Use a soft Paintbrush (10% opacity) to paint White (on the Black Mask) over areas you want lightened (i.e., center of image)

Contrast Blend Modes

OVERLAY - Uses the best of SCREEN and MULTIPLY Blend Modes into one blend mode, lights are lighter and darks are darker - leaves everything that is neutral alone.

SOFT LIGHT - Lesser intense OVERLAY Blend Mode

HARD LIGHT - More dramatic Overlay

VIVID LIGHT - Harsh contrast - Color Brun and Color Dodge

LINEAR LIGHT - Like VIVID LIGHT but more dramatic

PIN LIGHT - Blends darken and lighten together

HARD MIX - Flat color, Posterized

Photoshop CONTRAST Blend Modes demonstrations:

Sharpening an image using High Pass Filter and OVERLAY Blend Mode:

1. Duplicate the Layer
2. Goto Filter/Other/High Pass
3. Use 3 to 10 Radius, just so an embossed image is visible (no color) click OK
4. Change Blend Mode to OVERLAY
5. If sharpened too much lower the blend layer's opacity

Dodge and Burn Using OVERLAY Blend Mode

1. Add a Blank Layer
2. Fill Layer with 50% grey
3. Change Blend Mode to OVERLAY
4. Use a soft Paintbrush (10% opacity) to paint with Black (Burn) or White (Dodge)

Use SOFT LIGHT Blend Mode to add Highlights to Portraits:

1. Add a Blank Layer
2. Change Blend Mode to Soft Light
3. Use a soft brush to paint white in areas that need lightened
4. Add a mask if necessary

Comparative Blend Modes

(Not Commonly Used)

DIFFERENCE - Blends the Blend Layer's color with the Base Layer color depending on the brightness of the image

EXCLUSION - Not as harsh as DIFFERENCE

SUBTRACT - Depends on the color of each Channel. Subtracts the Blend Layer color from the Base Color

DIVIDE - Same as SUBTRACT but Divides instead.

Color/Composite Blend Modes

HUE - Combines the Hue color of the Blend Layer with the Saturation and Luminance of Base Layer

SATURATION - Combines the Saturation of the Blend Layer with the Hue and Luminance of Base Layer

COLOR - Combines the Hue and Saturation of the Blend Layer with the Luminance of Base Layer (A way to change the overall color of an image)

LUMINANCE - Combines the Luminance of the Blend Layer with the Hue and Saturation of Base Layer

Photoshop COLOR Blend Mode demonstrations:

To Change the overall color of an image while maintaining the Luminance of the image:

1. Add a blank layer above the Base Layer
2. Fill the blank layer with the desired color (set your foreground color to the desired color (instead of black or white) then use the fill tool
3. Change Blend mode to COLOR

To Add Eye shadow to a Portraiture:

1. Add a Blank Layer
2. Change Blend Mode to COLOR
3. Use a soft brush to paint the desired eye shadow color around the eye lids
4. Add a mask if necessary