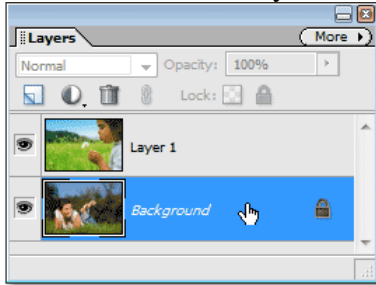


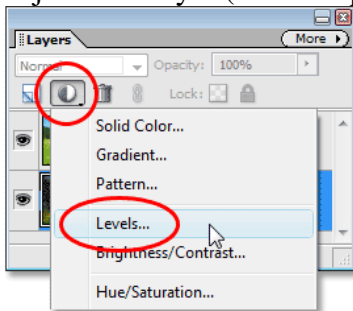
Elements doesn't support masks directly but the effect can be mimicked by utilising the masks associated with adjustment layers. There are a variety of adjustment layers, but any can be used as it's not going to be used to make an actual adjustment.

### Step 1 - Add an adjustment layer between the two layers to be blended

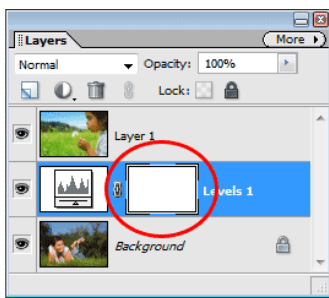
Click on the lower layer to select it:



Then click on the **New Adjustment Layer** icon at the top of the Layers palette and choose a **Levels** adjustment layer (for example) from the list:

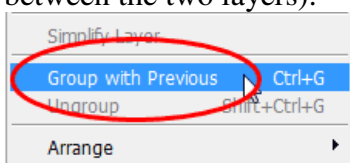


When the Levels dialog box appears, just click OK in the top right corner to exit out of it. Notice that the adjustment layer contains a layer mask filled with white (circled):

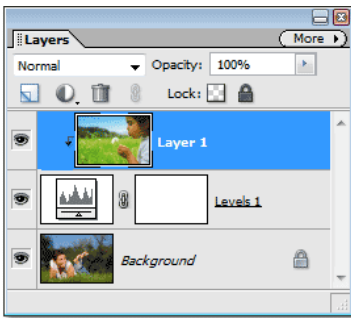


### Step 2 - Link adjustment layer to layer above

Select the top layer (Layer 1 in this example), then go up to the **Layer** menu at the top of the screen and choose **Group with Previous** (or use the keyboard shortcuts **Ctrl+G**, or **Alt+Click** on the border between the two layers):



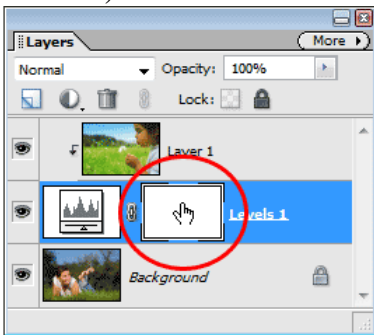
In this example, "Layer 1" is now indented to the right, with a small arrow pointing down at the adjustment layer:



Grouping the layers in this way makes the mask affect the top layer only.

### Step 3 Blend in the layers

Click on the layer mask thumbnail to select it (a white highlight border will surround it when its selected).



Filling the mask with black will hide the top layer completely (The easiest way to do this is to first click on the mask thumbnail in the Layers Palette then hold down the Ctrl key while pressing the letter I to Invert the mask colour). Painting with white will selectively reveal the lower layer. Painting in shades of grey will vary the extent of the reveal. Remember to paint on the mask, not the layer!

You can get a better idea of the mask by holding down the Alt key and clicking on the mask thumbnail in the Layers Palette. Viewing the mask in this way makes it easy to spot small defects. Another advantage is that you can use Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur To soften the mask edges, if required.

To get back to the normal view, simply click on the image thumbnail in the Layers Palette.

You can turn the mask on and off by holding down the Shift key while clicking on its thumbnail.

To add a selection to a mask, make the selection as normal, Alt-click on the mask, then using the paint bucket tool and a grey-tone colour, click within the 'marching ants'. De-select to remove the 'ants'.

### Possible Uses:

- blend two exposures of a high-contrast scene (as above)
- selectively apply filters (duplicate layer, apply one/more filter, and then use a mask to 'erase' some the effects)
- remove colour from some parts of the image (duplicate layer, remove color from it, and then use a mask to restore the color to some areas)