Adding Reflections To Sunglasses With Photoshop

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Adding reflections to sunglasses with Photoshop

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In this tutorial, we'll learn how to add a reflection to the lenses of a pair of sunglasses, using a few simple layer blending and layer mask techniques. We'll also learn how to add a reflection to a transparent layer, by using a layer mask to hide the reflection in the areas where the sunglasses are not present. We'll finish off by learning how to add a reflection to the frames of the sunglasses, using a few simple layer blending techniques.

Adding reflections to sunglasses with Photoshop

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Adding reflections to sunglasses with Photoshop

Step 1: Select One Of The Lenses

To add a reflection to the lenses, we'll first need to be able to work on one of the lenses by itself. So, to isolate the lenses from the rest of the sunglasses, for this, we'll use a tool called the Magnetic Lasso tool. Select the Magnetic Lasso tool from the toolbox. The Magnetic Lasso tool is hidden in the same area as the other Lasso tools. To see the Lasso tools, hold down the mouse button on the Lasso tool for a few seconds, and a fly-out menu will appear. Select the Magnetic Lasso tool from the fly-out menu:

Selecting the Magnetic Lasso tool from the Photoshop toolbox

With the Magnetic Lasso tool selected, click and drag around one of the lenses to create a selection outline around the lens. As you drag, the Magnetic Lasso will place points around the lens to keep the selection outline "attached" to the edges of the lens. If you make a mistake, you can press the Backspace or Delete key to undo the last point you placed, or you can simply click anywhere outside the selection area to start over. When you've completed the selection, you can close the selection outline by clicking on the first point you placed, or you can close the selection outline by double-clicking anywhere outside the selection area. Once the selection outline is closed, the Magnetic Lasso will automatically add a new selection to the lens. If you don't want to add a new selection, but instead want to add to the current selection, then before you begin dragging around the second lens, first hold down the Shift key on your keyboard. When you do, a small "+" will appear in the cursor, letting you know that you're now adding to the current selection area:

Selecting one of the lenses with the Photoshop Magnetic Lasso tool

Step 2: Create A New Black Layer

With the lenses selected, we'll add a reflection to the surface of the lens using a simple color-blend layer. Click on the Create a new layer icon at the bottom of the layers palette:

Clicking on the Create a new layer icon in the layers palette

Step 3: Fill The Selected Area With Black On The Black Layer

With the lenses still selected, we'll fill the selected area with black. Since we added a new layer from the layers palette, when the new layer appeared, it was automatically selected by Photoshop, so we're now working on the new layer. Fill the selected area with black by pressing the keyboard shortcut Alt/Option-Shift-Backspace (Mac/PC). Photoshop will fill the selected area with black:

Filling the selected area with black

Step 4: Add A Layer Mask To The Black Layer

Select the layer that's sitting just above the layer that we filled with black, and click on the Add a layer mask icon at the bottom of the layers palette:

Clicking on the Add a layer mask icon in the layers palette

Step 5: Add A Reflection To The Lens Using Photoshop's Gradient Tool

Photoshop's gradients can be used to create a smooth blend between two or more colors. In this tutorial, we'll be using Photoshop's gradients to add a reflection to the lenses of the sunglasses. We'll be using the Gradient tool to create a gradient that's black on the left, and transparent on the right. We'll then use the gradient to create a gradient mask, which will hide the reflection in areas where it's not needed. Select the Gradient tool from the toolbox:

Selecting the Gradient tool from the Photoshop toolbox

With the Gradient tool selected, we'll need to choose the gradient we want to use. We'll need to open the Gradient Editor to do this. To open the Gradient Editor, first click on the gradient preview bar in the options bar at the top of the screen. The gradient preview bar shows the current gradient that's being used by the Gradient tool. When you click on the gradient preview bar, the Gradient Editor will appear:

Clicking on the gradient preview bar in the options bar to open the Gradient Editor

Step 6: Create A Gradient Using Black

In the Gradient Editor, we'll create a gradient that's black on the left, and transparent on the right. We'll start with a black-to-white gradient, and then we'll make the white part transparent. We'll first need to make sure that we're working with the foreground and background colors set to their default values, black and white. To do this, we'll press the keyboard shortcut D. Then, we'll need to make sure that we're using the foreground color for the gradient. We'll do this by clicking on the Foreground-to-Background gradient preset, which is the first gradient in the list. We'll find it in the Basics section of the gradient presets. Once we've selected the Foreground-to-Background gradient preset, we'll need to make it transparent. We'll do this by clicking on the Edit button in the Gradient Editor. This will open the Gradient Editor's Preset Manager. We'll find the Edit button in the Preset Manager's upper-right corner:

Clicking on the Edit button in the Gradient Editor's Preset Manager

Step 7: Make The Gradient Transparent

Clicking on the Edit button will open the Gradient Editor's Gradient Name dialog box. We'll use this dialog box to name our new gradient preset. We'll name our gradient "Black-to-Transparent". We'll then click on the OK button to close the Gradient Name dialog box, and we'll return to the Preset Manager. We'll now see our new gradient preset, "Black-to-Transparent", in the Preset Manager's list of gradients. We'll select our new gradient preset by clicking on it, and we'll then begin the process of making it transparent. We'll do this by clicking on the Transparency tab in the Gradient Editor's Gradient Type and Smoothness options:

Clicking on the Transparency tab in the Gradient Editor's Gradient Type and Smoothness options

Step 8: Add An "Inverse Gradient" Layer Mask

Let's start with a reflection in the eyeglass lenses on the left. We'll add an "inverse" gradient to the layer mask that's sitting on the layer that we filled with black. To add a layer mask, we'll first need to make sure that we're working on the layer that's sitting just above the layer that we filled with black. We'll then click on the Add a layer mask icon at the bottom of the layers palette:

Clicking on the Add a layer mask icon in the layers palette

Step 9: Select The Layer Mask's Thumbnail

Photoshop's layer mask thumbnail is the small preview image that's sitting to the right of the layer's thumbnail. We'll need to make sure that we're working on the layer mask thumbnail, so we'll need to select it. To select the layer mask thumbnail, we'll simply click on it:

Selecting the layer mask thumbnail in the layers palette

Step 10: Select The Gradient Tool With A White As The Foreground Color

We'll now select the Gradient tool from the toolbox. We'll also need to make sure that the foreground color is set to white. To do this, we'll simply press the keyboard shortcut D:

Selecting the Gradient tool from the Photoshop toolbox

Step 11: Drag Out A White-To-Black Gradient On The "Inverse" Layer Mask

We'll now drag out our gradient. We'll want our gradient to be a "linear" gradient, so we'll need to make sure that we're using the Linear gradient option in the options bar. We'll also need to make sure that the Reverse option is not selected. We'll also need to make sure that the Dither option is selected, so we'll need to make sure that it's selected. We'll also need to make sure that the Transparency option is selected. We'll now drag out our gradient. We'll want our gradient to be a short one, so we'll want to drag it from the left side of the lenses to the middle of the lenses. We'll want our gradient to be at an angle, so we'll want to drag it at an angle. We'll want our gradient to be at an angle that's similar to the angle of the lenses. We'll want our gradient to be at an angle that's similar to the angle of the lenses. We'll want our gradient to be at an angle that's similar to the angle of the lenses