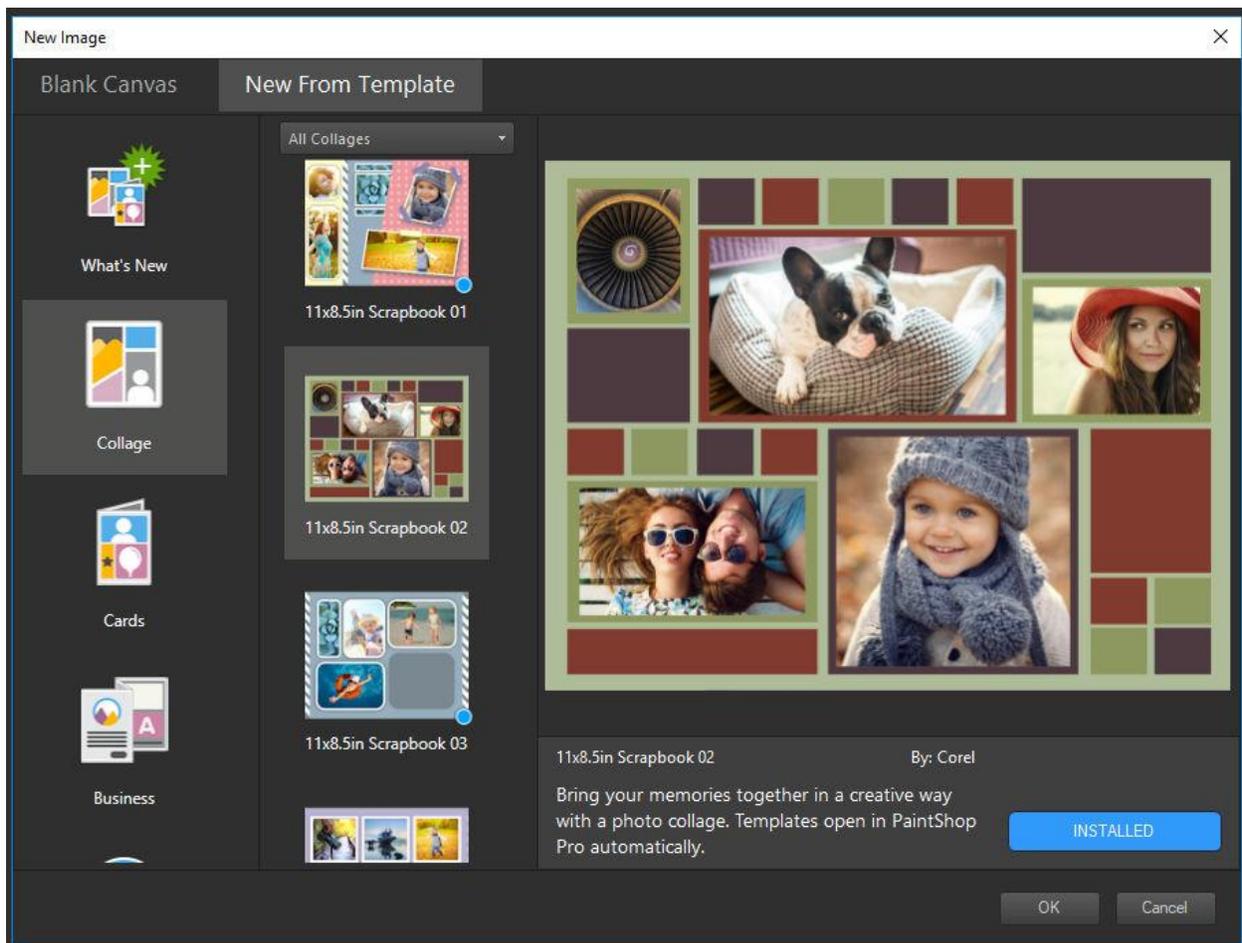


How to Make Collage Templates in PaintShop Pro

Masks are a wonderful tool for creating collages to showcase your photos. The techniques in this tutorial demonstrate how to create a variety of shapes to use as photo cutouts. These shapes can be selections, or they can be created from vector objects. Each shape is placed on its own layer and made into a mask. Then, once your masks are ready, it's a snap to insert photos into each one.

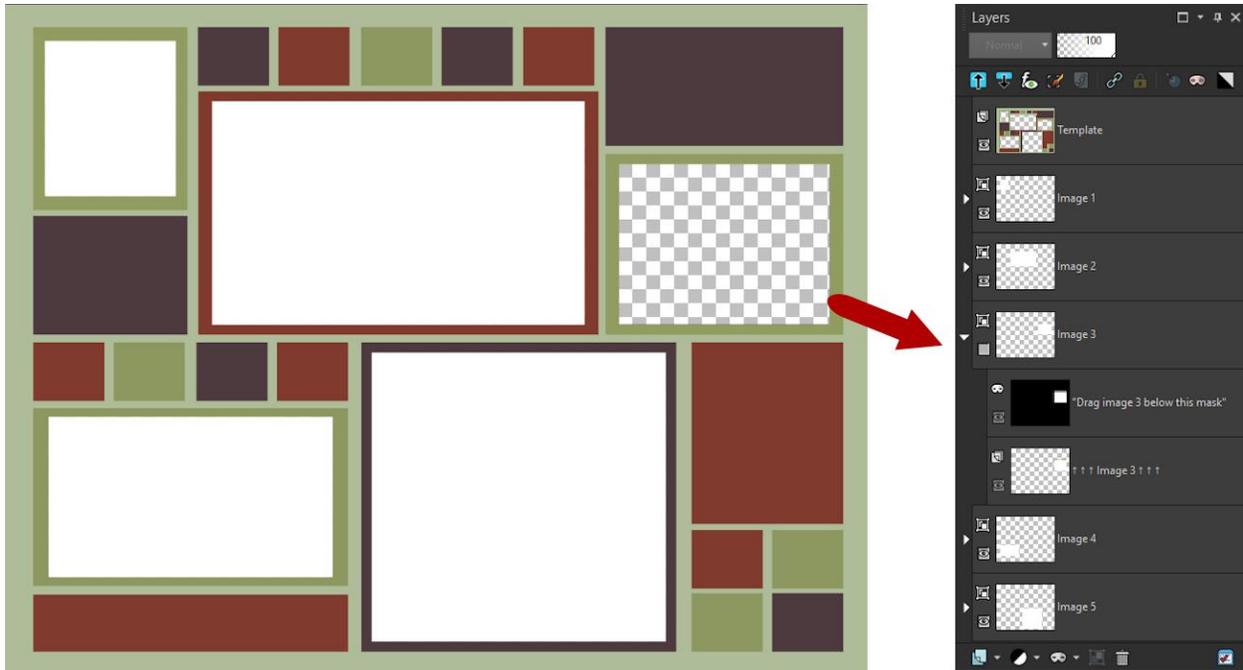
Let's start by investigating an existing collage. Go to **File > New From Template**, choose the **Collage** category on the left, and scroll about halfway down to find the free template called **11 x 8.5 inch Scrapbook 02**. If you don't have this one installed, click **Download**. Then click **OK** to open the template.



The template frame is a letter-sized image, with transparent cutouts to hold five photos.

Let's have a look at the components of the template, in the **Layers** palette.

- The top layer contains the template frame, with its decorative squares and rectangles, and cutouts to insert your photos.
- The five layers below that are the masked layer groups that will each contain one collage photo.



If you click the **Visibility** (eye) icon to turn off the visibility of a layer, it's easier to see how the template is set up with its transparent photo cutouts.

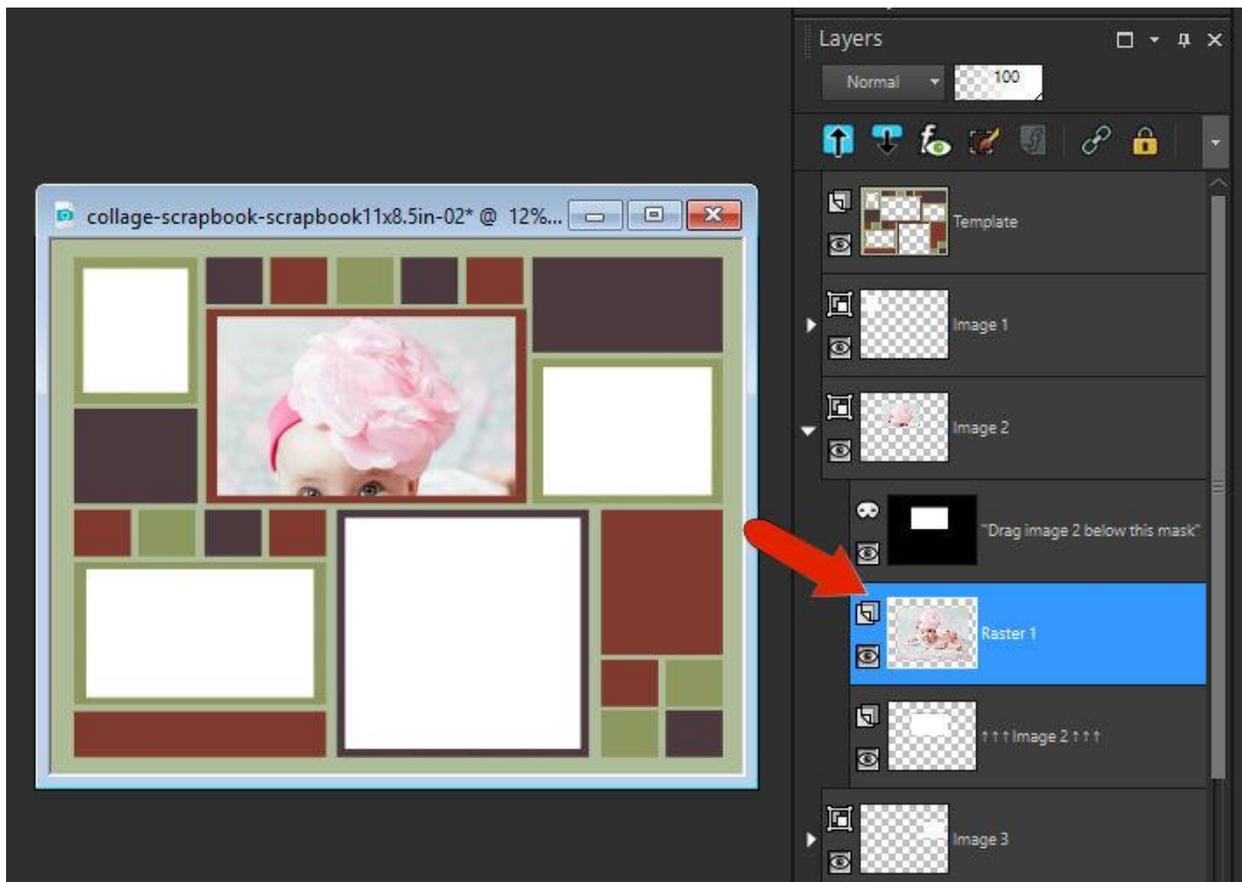
Now open a photo that you want to bring into this collage. We are going to use this baby photo and we want to place it in the large rectangle cutout in the middle of the template.



In the **Layers** palette, find the layer that contains the mask group for this photo cutout, which is the **Image 2** layer in this template. Expand this layer group and you will see instructions “drag image 2 below this mask”.

Click on the Image 2 layer in the Layers palette to make it the active layer. To add your photo into the cutout:

- Drag and drop your photo directly into the **Layers** palette above the **Image 2** layer; or
- Copy your photo (**Ctrl + C**) and paste as a new layer (**Ctrl + V**). As long as you have the **Image 2** layer active, when you copy and paste as new layer the photo will be placed in the right order.

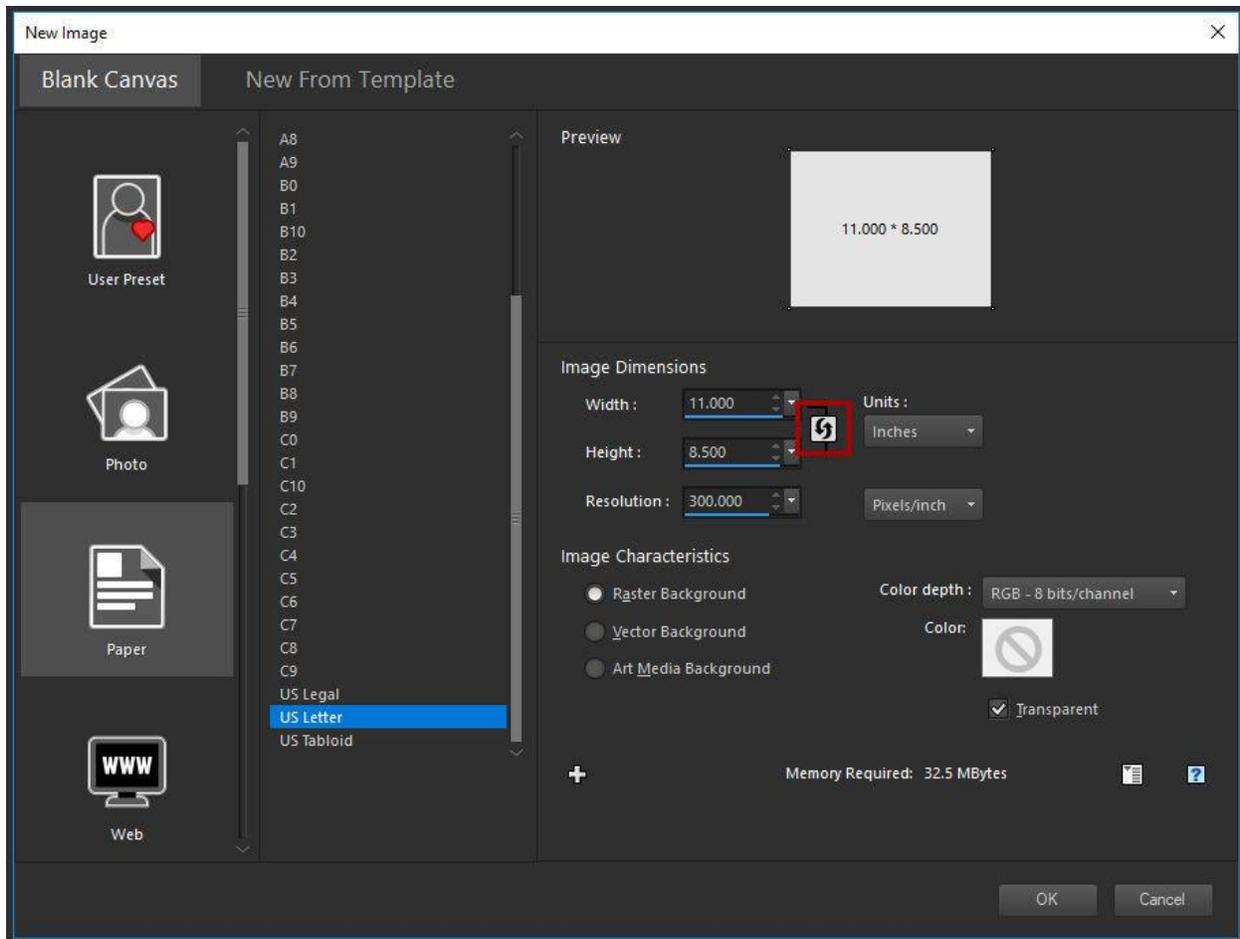


Now you can use the **Pick** tool to resize, move, or rotate the photo so that it fits inside its spot. Thanks to the mask, your photo will be contained within the cutout, even if it is larger.

Creating a Collage Template

Now that we've seen how collage layers work, we'll now create a collage template from scratch. We will use a few different shapes as examples, so we can demonstrate how to create shapes with the **Selection** tool, **Preset Shape** tool and **Pen** tool.

Go to **File > New**, choose the **Paper** category on the left and scroll down to find US Letter (or whatever size you would like to use). Click on the **Switch width and height** icon to change to landscape orientation

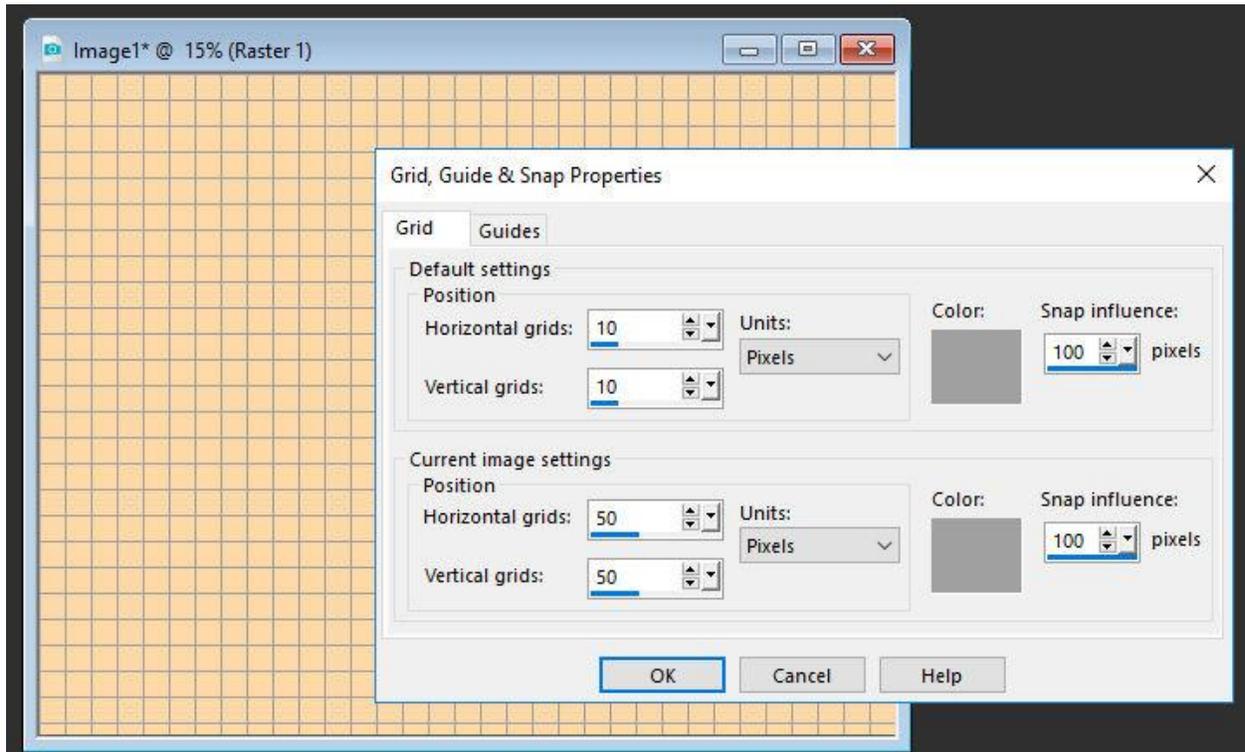


Choose a color in the **Materials Palette** and activate the **Flood Fill** tool to fill the image. In this example we're using a light-yellow color.

To make it easier to line up the photo cutouts, there are two tools you can use: **Grids** and **Guides**.

- To turn on the grid, go to **View > Grid**.
- To adjust the grid spacing, go to **View > Grid, Guide and Snap Properties**.
- Under **Current Image Settings**, increase the **grid spacing** to **50 pixels** for both horizontal and vertical.

- You can also change the grid color if you need more contrast against your image background color.

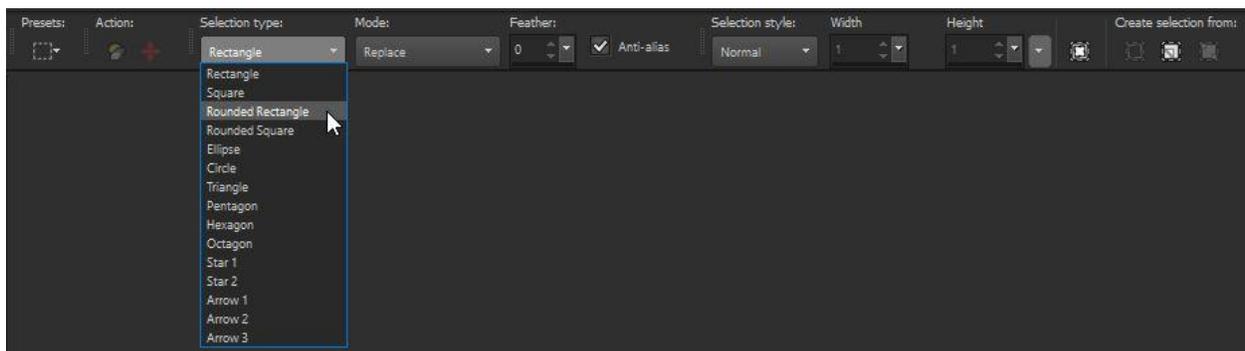


If you prefer to use **Guides** instead of a grid, first go to **View > Rulers** to make sure the rulers are visible. To draw out a guide, just click and drag from one of the rulers onto the image. If you right-click on a Guide line marker on the ruler, you can adjust the position of the guide, change its color, or delete it.

For either grid lines or guides to be useful for positioning, go to **View > Snap to Grid** or **View > Snap to Guides** to make sure that grid and guide snaps are on. Snapping will align your brushstrokes and image elements precisely to the nearest grid line or guide.

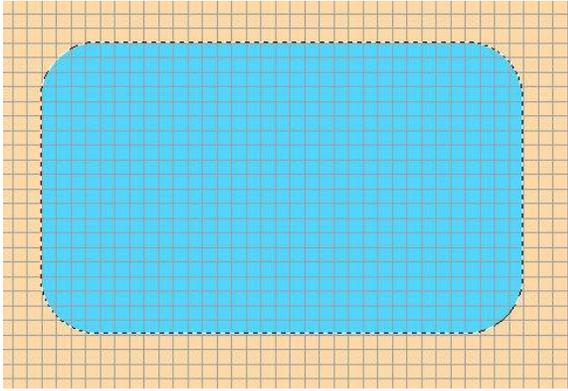
Creating the Photo Cutouts

We'll start by using the **Selection** tool to create the photo cutouts. The default selection shape is a rectangle, but for the first shape, change the **Selection Type** to **Rounded Rectangle**.

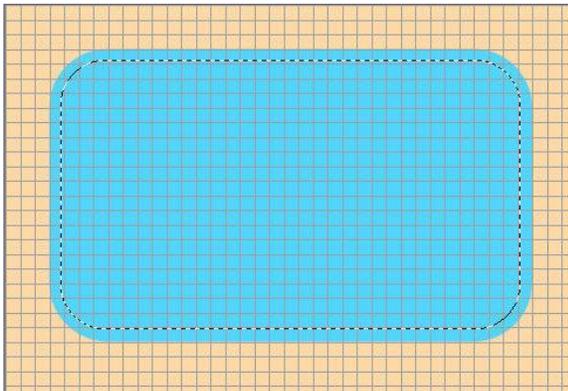


Start three grid spaces from the top left corner and draw out the rectangle to be horizontal. Keep the selection marquee active for the following steps.

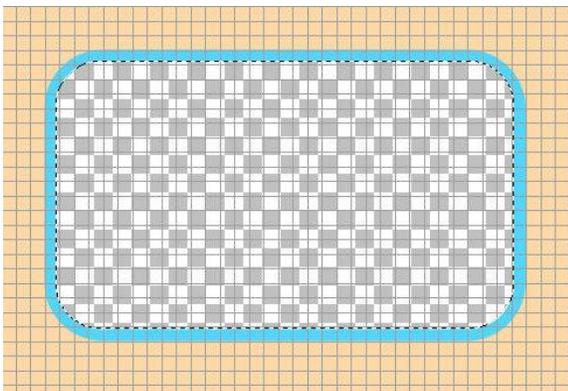
Before cutting out this shape, we'll paint a frame that will surround the photo. Choose a blue color and flood fill this rectangle.



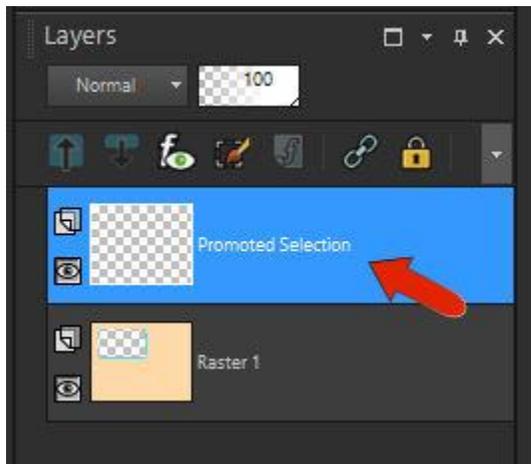
Now we'll shrink the selection to get the rectangle that will hold the photo. Go to **Selections > Modify > Contract**, set the **Number of pixels** to **40** and click **OK**.



Now press the **Delete** key to cut out this selected area from the collage frame layer.

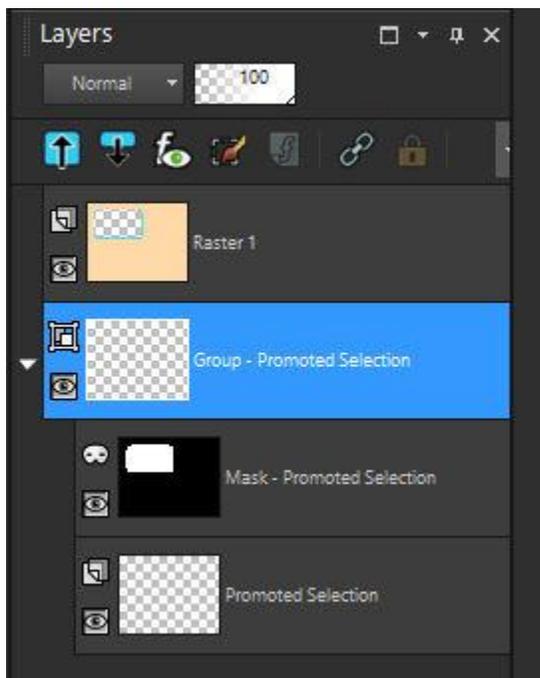


The selection area (defined by the selection marquee) now will become the photo cutout. Go to **Selections > Promote Selection to Layer**, and a new layer with this shape is created at the top of the **Layers** palette. The shape can't be seen because the entire layer is transparent.



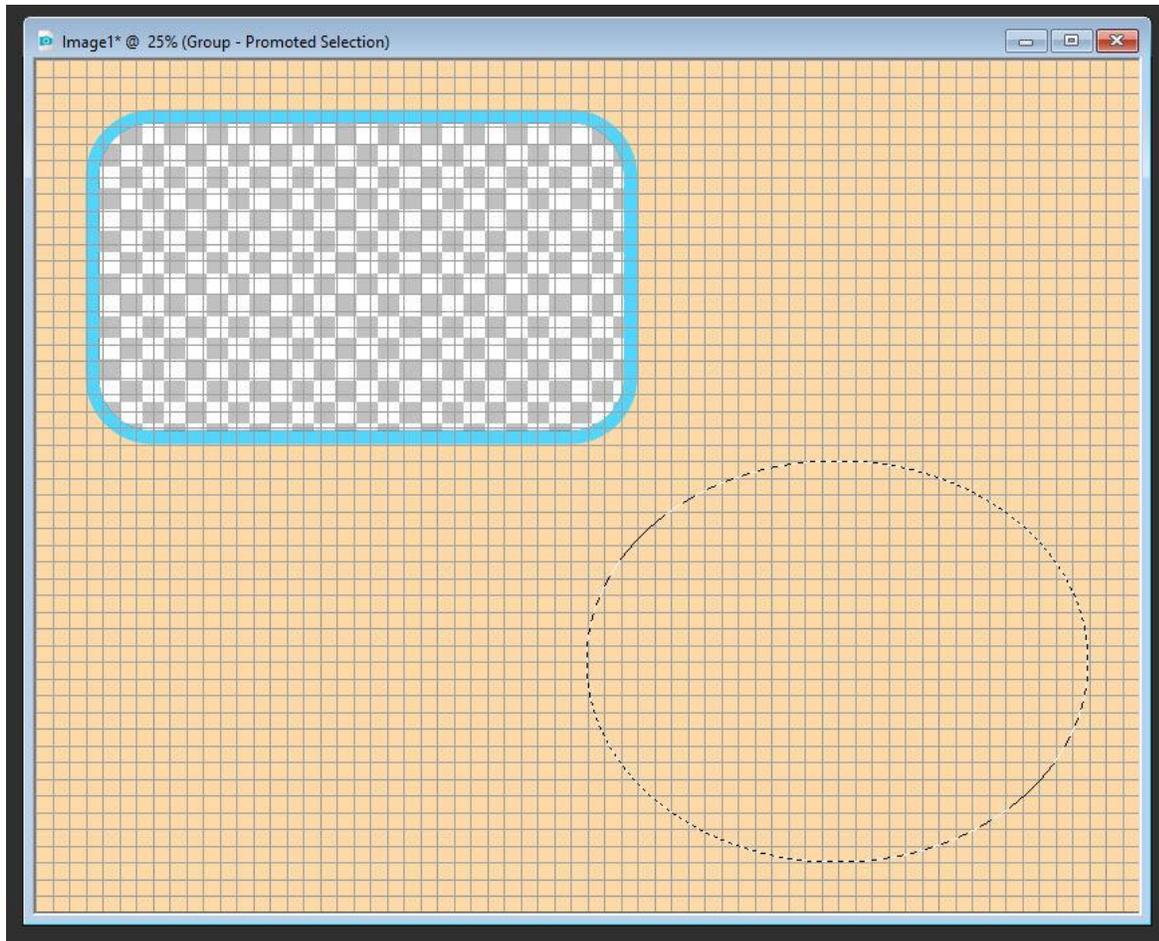
Click the **New Mask Layer** icon at the bottom of the **Layers** palette and choose **Show Selection**. Now the cutout shape can easily be seen.

Drag this entire mask layer group below the frame layer. Press **Ctrl + D** to clear the selection marquee (or go to **Selections > Select None**).



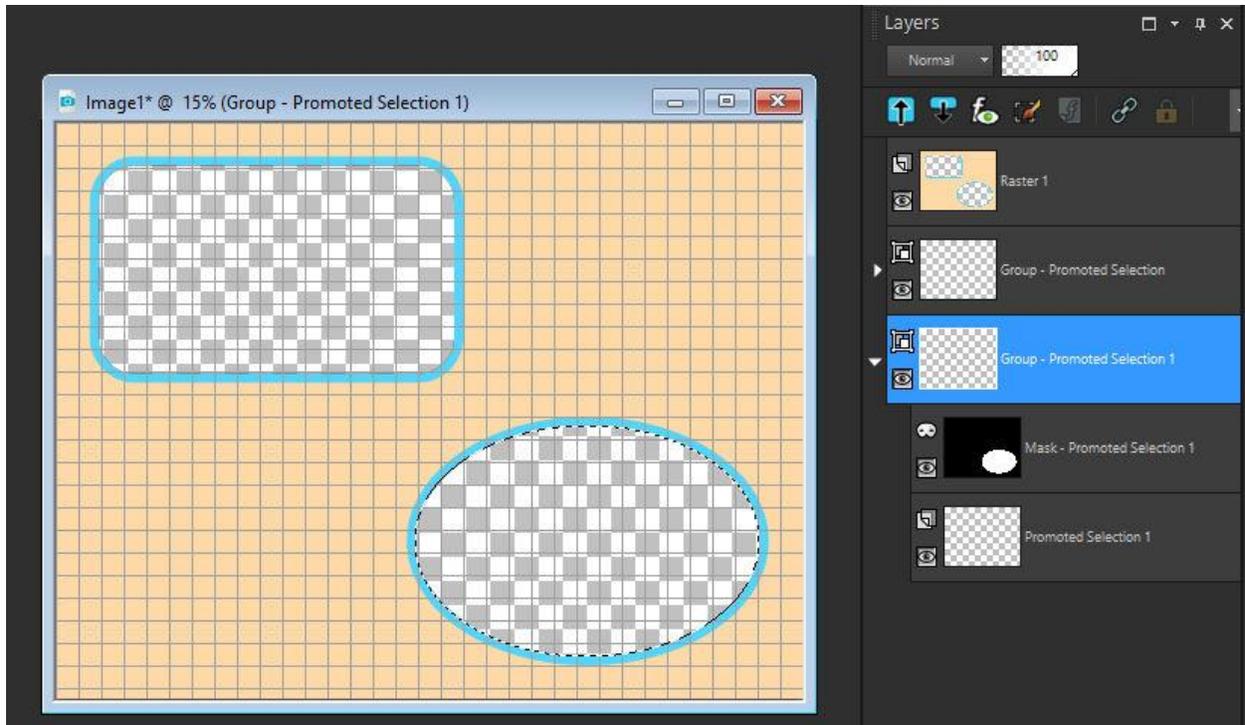
For the second cutout shape, make the frame layer active again by clicking on it in the **Layers** palette.

With the **Selection** tool still active, change the **Selection Type** to **Ellipse**. Click to place the center in the lower right corner and drag outwards to create your ellipse shape, keeping it 3 grid squares away from the right and bottom edges of the image.



From here the steps are the same as for the rectangle:

- Activate the **Flood Fill** tool and fill the ellipse with blue
- Go to **Selections > Modify > Contract**, set the **Number of pixels** to **40** and click **OK**
- Press the **Delete** key to cut out this selected area from the collage frame layer
- Go to **Selections > Promote Selection to Layer**
- Go to **New Mask Layer > Show Selection**
- Drag this entire mask layer group below the frame layer
- Press **Ctrl + D** to clear the selection marquee

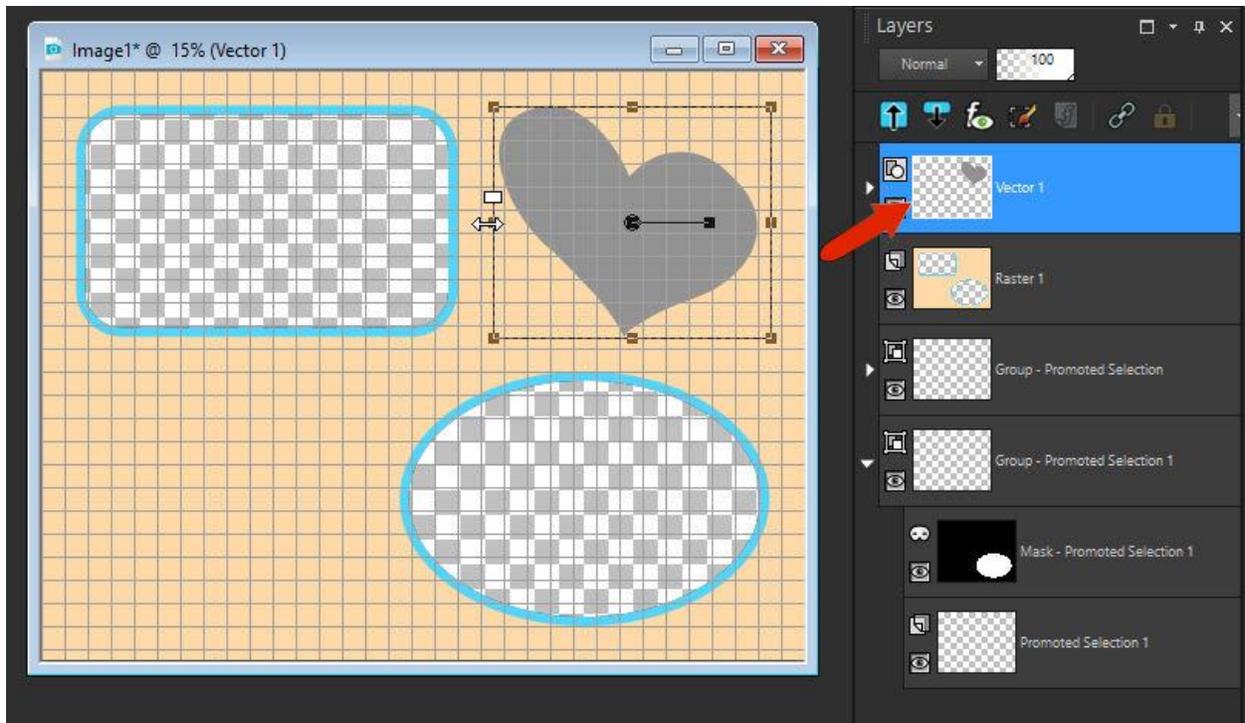


For the next cutout we are going to use a Preset Shape.

- Make the frame layer active again by clicking on it in the **Layers** palette.
- Activate the **Preset Shape** tool in the **Tools** toolbar.
- In the **Property** bar, click on the **Shape list** dropdown and select the heart shape.
- Enable **Create as vector** and set the **Width** to **0**.



Drag your mouse outwards to draw the heart shape. You can resize and rotate it and adjust the position to keep the same 3-grid square border around the outside.

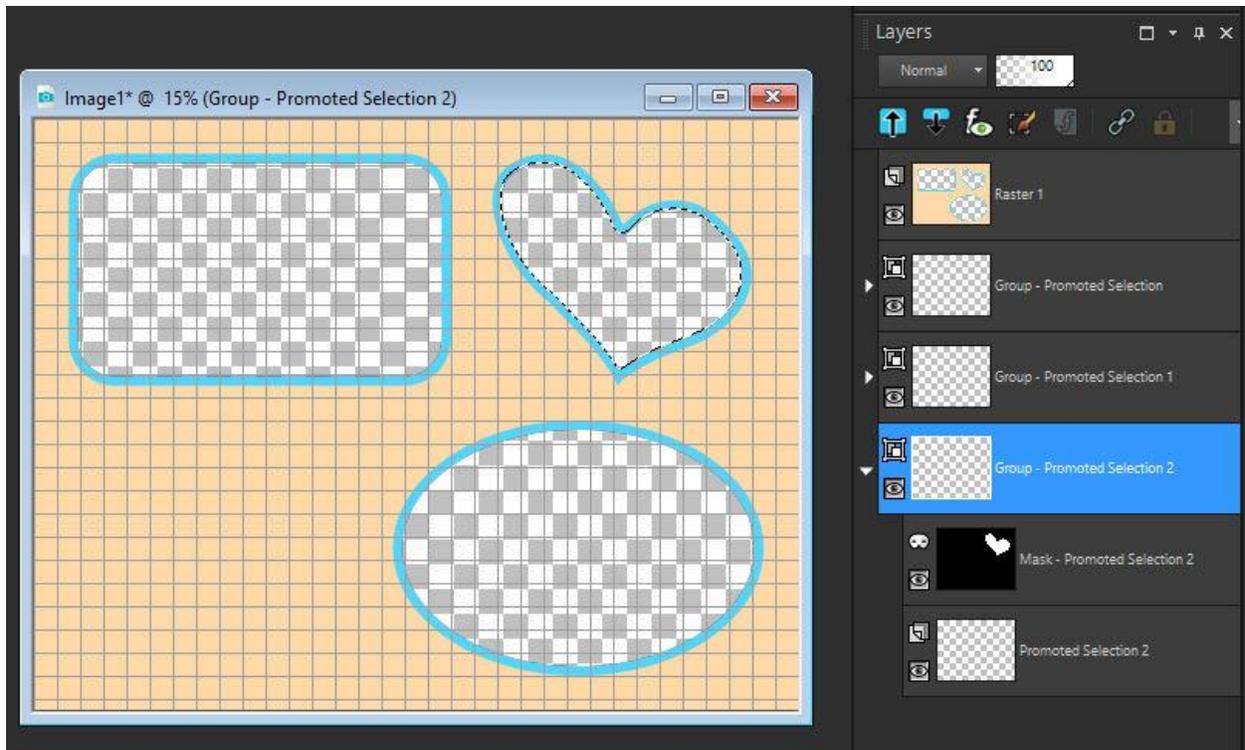


Next go to **Selections > From Vector Object** and this will select the heart. You won't be able to see the selection marquee while the **Preset Shape** tool is activated.

And because we want this vector object to move to the frame layer, right-click on its vector layer in the **Layers** palette and choose **Merge > Merge Down**.

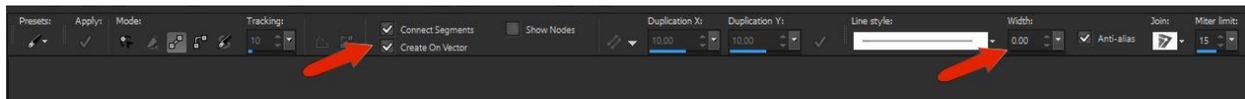
From here, the steps to create this cutout will be the same as before.

- Activate the **Flood Fill** tool and fill the heart with blue
- Go to **Selections > Modify > Contract**, set the **Number of pixels** to **40** and click **OK**
- Press the **Delete** key to cut out this selected area from the collage frame layer
- Go to **Selections > Promote Selection to Layer**
- Go to **New Mask Layer > Show Selection**
- Drag this entire mask layer group below the frame layer
- Press **Ctrl + D** to clear the selection marquee

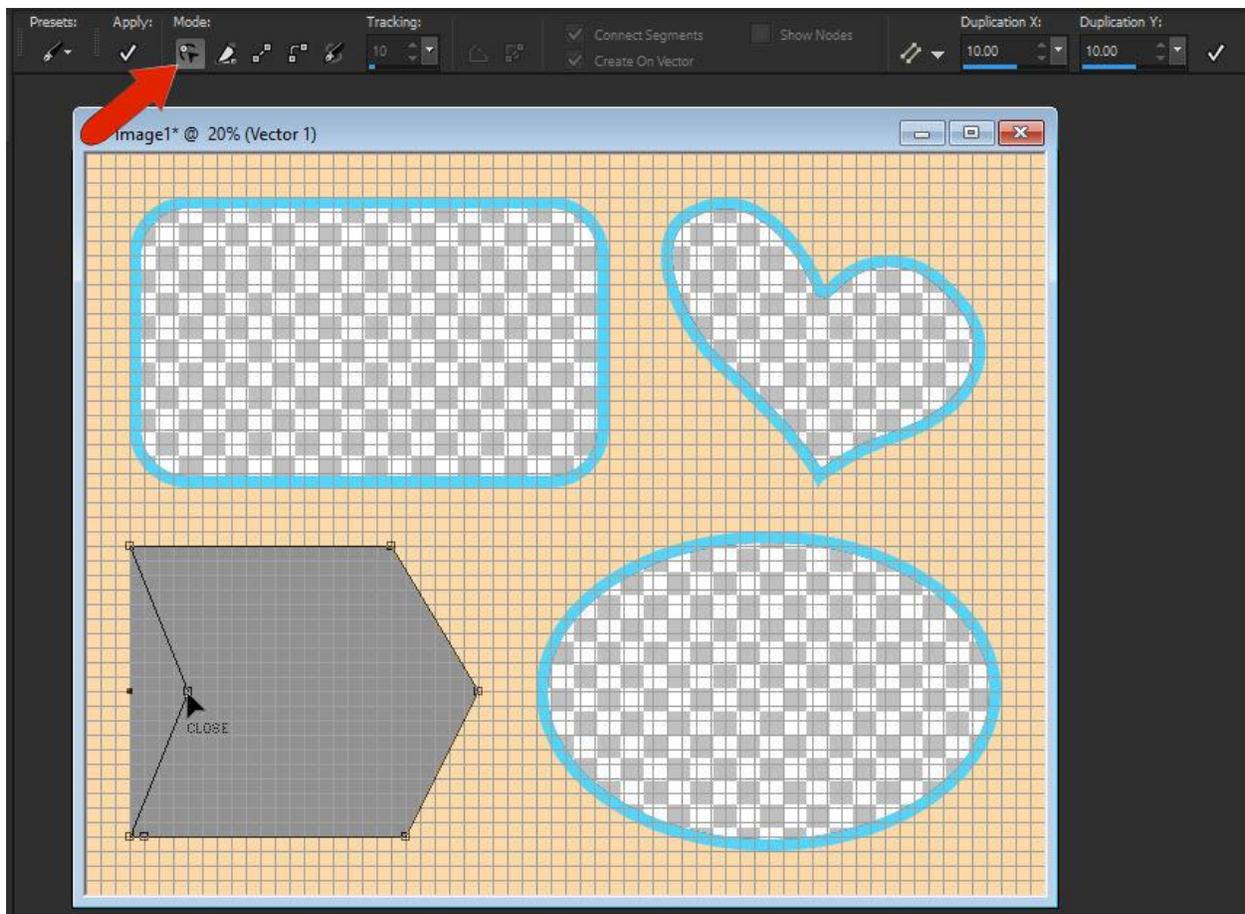


The final cutout shape will be a hand-drawn polygon.

- Make the frame layer active again by clicking on it in the **Layers** palette
- Activate the **Pen** tool in the **Tools** toolbar.
- Ensure **Connect Segments** and **Create on Vector** are enabled
- Set the **Width** to **0**



Now you can click and drag out connecting segments to form your shape. In the **Property Bar**, you can switch the **Mode** to **Editing Mode** if you want to make adjustments to your shape by dragging any nodes you want to relocate.



Once you are happy with your hand-drawn shape, the steps to create the photo cutout are the same as before.

- Go to **Selections > From Vector Object**
- Right-click on this new vector layer in the **Layers** palette and choose **Merge > Merge Down**
- Activate the **Flood Fill** tool and fill the heart with blue
- Go to **Selections > Modify > Contract**, set the **Number of pixels** to **40** and click **OK**
- Press the **Delete** key to cut out this selected area from the collage frame layer
- Go to **Selections > Promote Selection to Layer**
- Go to **New Mask Layer > Show Selection**
- Drag this entire mask layer group below the frame layer
- Press **Ctrl + D** to clear the selection marquee

Now your collage template is done and ready to fill with photos!

