

PHOTOSHOP GRADIENT TOOL

The Gradient Tool can be used to gradually darken an area. The most obvious use for this is to darken a sky from the top to help contain it within the image. By using this method you will get a smooth transition which would otherwise be virtually impossible to obtain by burning. It can also be used to reduce the effect of a burnt out or bland sky. When using a gradient it is important to apply it to a separate layer – this way you will have more control over it.

- Start by creating a new **Transparent Layer** by clicking on the **Create a New Layer** icon at the bottom of the **Layers Pallet** and rename it **Grad**. If the image consists of multiple layers, including any adjustment layers, if it isn't already move this new **Grad** layer to the top of the stack.
- Select the **Gradient Tool** from the Tool Box which you will find under the **Paint Bucket Tool**. You will now need to make sure that the **Foreground to Transparent** gradient is selected – you can do this by clicking on **Click To Edit The Gradient** in the Tool Bar Options along the top to open the **Gradient Editor** dialogue box. Select **Foreground to Transparent** from the icons, by hovering over them their names will be revealed, and click OK. In the Tool Bar Options set the **Opacity** to **70%** and **tick** the **Dither** and **Transparency** boxes, the **Reverse** box should be **unticked**. It is also important that the **Linear** option is chosen.
- Set the **Foreground** colour to Black by pressing **D** on the keyboard.
- Now, working on the **Grad** layer that was made earlier, run the tool down from the very top of the sky to a little below the horizon line. The effect of gradient will now be seen.
- Because the Opacity was set to 70% the Gradient will probably appear too dark and heavy. If this is the case it is very easy to lighten it by reducing the **Layer Opacity** down from 100%, in the **Layers Pallet**, until the desired effect is achieved.

As well as being able to darken a sky, this method can also be used to darken a foreground or darken the corners of an image by placing the Gradient accordingly. See also the **Dodging and Burning** Worksheet.

