



EduTrend Contents

W4C · DIGITAL ARTS · HIGH SCHOOL

Image Editing and Ethics

Edit non-destructively and debate when editing misleads

Ages 15–18

Level: Advanced

75 minutes

Individual and small
groups

Activity 05

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 05 · AT A GLANCE

Image Editing and Ethics

Students compare raster and vector images, then practise non-destructive editing with layers, adjustment layers and masks. In groups they review case studies of edited and generated images and draft an ethics code for editing in art, advertising and news.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- distinguish raster and vector images;
- edit images non-destructively with layers and masks;
- evaluate when editing changes meaning;
- justify an ethics code for image editing.

KEY WORDS

raster · vector · layer · mask ·
adjustment · non-destructive ·
manipulation · provenance · ethics

CURRICULUM LINKS

Art and design: digital media.
Media studies and citizenship:
media literacy. Computing: image
data.

1**EXPLORE**

Look and play

2**IMAGINE**

Generate ideas

3**PLAN**Sketch and
storyboard**4****MAKE**

Create digitally

5**REFLECT**Review and
critique**6****REFINE**

Edit and share

Materials (per student)

- Computers or tablets with a layer-based image editor (free options exist)
- A set of practice photos taken by students or free-licence images
- Printed case study cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Install and test the image editor.
- Prepare practice images with a clear subject.
- Prepare case study cards on art, advertising and news images.
- Demonstrate layers and masks yourself first.

SAFETY

Never edit or share images of real people without consent. Use free-licence images and credit them.

ACTIVITY 05 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Keep the original file untouched: non-destructive editing is a habit, not just a technique.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Show an original and an edited image side by side.	<i>“What changed? Does it matter?”</i>
10–20 min Raster and vector	Zoom into a raster photo and a vector logo; compare.	<i>“Why does one stay sharp?”</i>
20–45 min Edit	Students use adjustment layers and masks to improve a photo without changing the original pixels.	<i>“Can you undo any step?”</i>
45–65 min Ethics	Groups discuss case studies and sort edits into acceptable or misleading for each context.	<i>“Does the context change your answer?”</i>
65–75 min Code	Groups present a five-point ethics code.	<i>“Which rule matters most for news?”</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Produce a non-destructive edit of a photo with an editing log, and write a justified ethics code for editing in art, advertising and news.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The art and tech in brief

Raster images store colour for each pixel, so enlarging them can make them blurry. Vector images store shapes as mathematical paths, so they stay sharp at any size. Layers keep parts of an image separate; adjustment layers and masks change how pixels look without deleting the original data.

Many news organisations' codes forbid adding, removing or moving content in news photographs, while art and advertising allow more change. Provenance tools, such as Content Credentials from the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity, can record how an image was created and edited. Disclosure of AI-generated images is increasingly expected.

Common ideas to listen for

- "All editing is dishonest." Basic adjustments like exposure are widely accepted.
- "Vector and raster are the same." They store images in different ways.
- "If it looks real, it is real." Edited and generated images can look completely real.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use a guided checklist for three edits: brightness, crop and one masked adjustment.

Stretch

Research a published case of image manipulation and analyse its impact.

WORKSHEET 1

Raster or vector?

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Compare two image types.

Comparison

Feature	Raster	Vector
How stored		
When enlarged		
Best used for		
Example		

WORKSHEET 2

Editing log

Record each non-destructive step.

Log

Step	Tool or layer	Why
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

WORKSHEET 3

Our ethics code

Write five rules and justify them.

Five rules

How context changes the rules

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Distinguishes image types	Edits non-destructively	Justifies ethical judgements

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Image Editing and Ethics is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Digital Arts programme (high school, level: advanced). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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