Replacing the Sky in an image

(Without too much hassle)

First thing to decide is: - Would the picture suffer if you simply cropped out the sky?
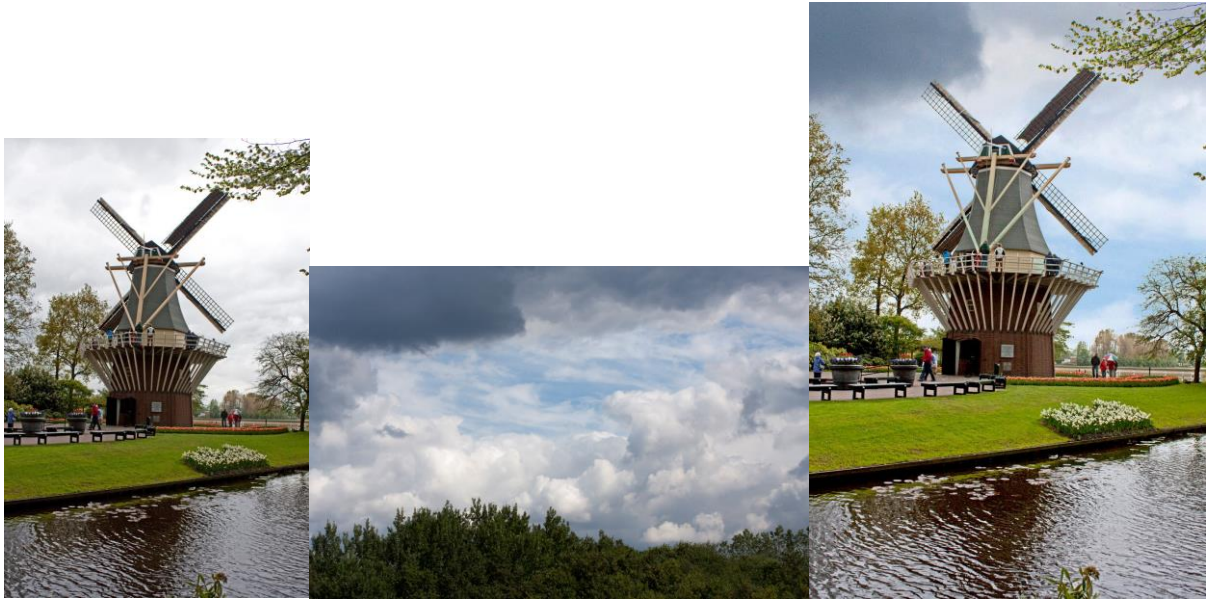

If you are determined to have a sky there are some simple fixes that can be made to one that doesn't have a lot going for it.

If possible make a selection of the existing sky and add a Levels Adjustment Layer to it, there could be more there than is initially visible.

Select this sky and add a Levels adjustment layer

Too complicated to select? Open your picture in Photoshop as well as one with a good deal of sky in it (You should ensure that you have a range of shots of skies both dramatic and mundane in you photographs). Ensure that your "Background" layer is selected and copy it by hitting Ctrl+J.   Using your Sky picture Copy all of your sky image by the usual pressing of the keys Ctrl+A to select all the image. Followed by Ctrl+C to copy it. You can then close down the sky image leaving your landscape on screen. Now use keys Ctrl+V to paste the sky into the landscape. It's not going to look great just now but if you are lucky you could be seconds away from

a big improvement. Click on Blending Mode where it says "Normal", click on dissolve then scroll down the dropdown list using the cursor triangle. Usually one of the modes in the second or third group give the best result. If you are lucky that's job done.

However, you may need to carry out a little more work. If your selected blending mode change doesn't work perfectly you need to add a layer mask to your sky layer and quickly paint out the parts of your sky layer that you don't need at 100% brush opacity until you get close to where the 'join' will be. Reduce the size of the brush to take you closer to the 'join' and paint more out. Now reduce the opacity to 10% for the brush and carefully brush over the area that the 2 layers now interface at. If this leaves a tell-tale halo there are 3 strategies to apply on their own or in combination. (1) Changing the opacity of the sky layer and or (2) adding a 'levels Adjustment layer' locked to just affect the sky layer. (3) Paint out even more where the join is, clouds etc don't always start just above the building-tree-or hill line. Experiment with these until you are satisfied with the results going back and painting parts of the mask back in using a low opacity (10%) brush.

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