

Colorizing Line Art Scans

Learn how to take your black and white line-art scans, bring them into Photoshop and add all the color you want.

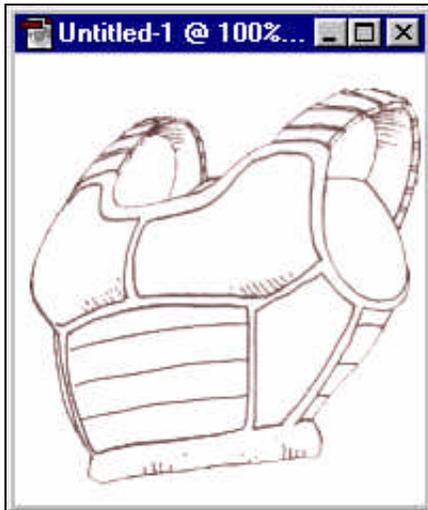
1



Once you've scanned your image, go to **Image >> Adjust >> Brightness/Contrast**. Increase the contrast until your images are pure black and white.

TIP: Scan in your image at a high resolution and do not scale it down when you get it on your computer. A larger image allows for easier coloring. Thick lines are your friends in this tutorial. Also, if you make mistakes along the way, sizing down the image after coloring it makes those mistakes much less noticeable.

2



Before you start, make sure your **Image Mode** is **RGB**. If your image is a GIF, select **Image >> Mode >> RGB**.

3

Now perform the following key actions on the image you want to color. Be sure to follow the order listed below:

Windows

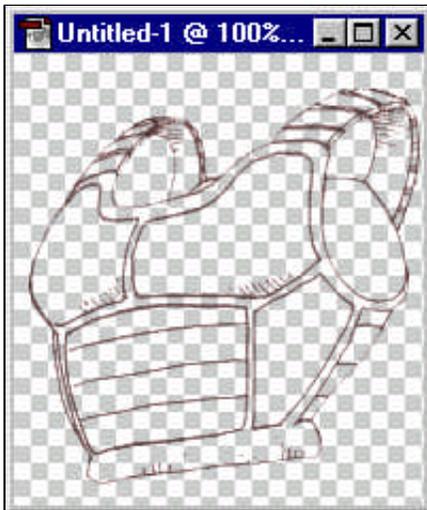
1. CTRL + ALT + I
2. CTRL + SHIFT + I
3. CTRL + J

MAC

1. CMND + ALT + I
2. CMND + SHIFT + I
3. CMND + J

This sends all the black lines of the image to a new layer with a transparent background.

4

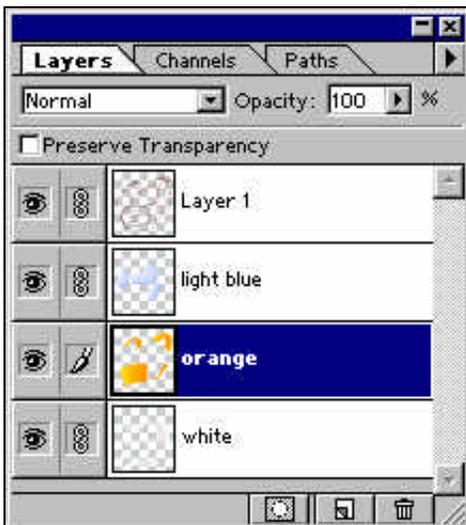


Delete the background layer. Now you're ready to add your color.

5

Using the magic wand tool, select the regions of a character that you want to color (**example:** all the portions of the image showing bare skin, if your image has skin). After you've done this, choose **Select >> Modify >> Expand** to expand your selection by one pixel.

6



Create a new layer and move it below the initial layer of your lines. Select your desired color and press **SHIFT+F5** to fill it.

7

At this point your lines might look a little sketchy. To help define them, select the lines layer (you may want to label it **Lines** or something similar to make your work easier) and press the **/ key**. Press the **D key** to reset your colors to the default black and white.

Now choose the paintbrush tool and select the largest brush you have. Paint the image with the paintbrush. You'll notice that only the lines are darkened. That's because you set the **Preserve Transparency** layer option when you hit the **/ key**. This ensures that the transparent parts of the layer remain transparent. You'll use this function later on as well.

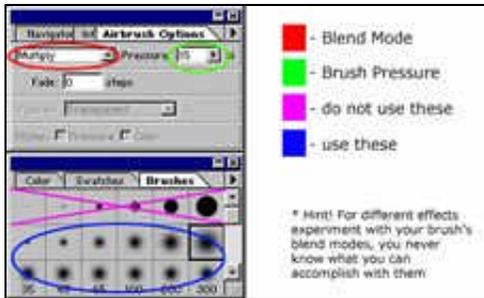
8



Select the line layer again and repeat Steps 5 and 6. Create a new layer for each new color you intend to use. (Using more colors makes it possible to be more specific with the shading later.)

9

Now that you have all your base colors in place you can shade them. (It helps to label the layers as you go. This makes it easier to create the shading effects later.)



Select the layer to which you want to add shades and highlights. Use the eyedropper tool to select that layer's color. Now press the **/ key** again to activate the layer's **Preserve Transparency** (if you want to go back later and add to the color, simply select the layer and press **/** again. This will deactivate **Preserve Transparency**). Select the airbrush tool and a medium-sized brush (I usually use 35 to 45). Double-click the airbrush tool. This should show the tool options in a window at the right of the screen. If you want to do your shading first (I recommend this), set the airbrush **Mode** to **Multiply**. (You should also lower the opacity if it's at default; I usually like to use about 20% pressure). Now you're finally ready to shade! Simply paint the areas of the color you think should be shaded; if they're on the outside of the color rim, you don't have to worry about accidentally coloring the background.

10

For the highlights the steps are basically the same. Just change the airbrush **Mode** to **Screen** instead of **Multiply**. Do the last two steps on every color layer applicable and make sure you change your foreground color to correspond to the layer's color. That's basic full-value coloring.

Here's a tack-on step to add a texture. (You can skip this step if you want to.) This will be easier if you have the Alien Skin Eye Candy or Xenofex filter sets. When adding a texture to your image it's a good idea to merge all your color layers. That way you'll have one layer for colors and another for lines.

I recommend first going to **File >> Save a Copy** to save this new PSD. Now return to the original and select **Window >> Show History**. In the **History** palette, undo all of your layer merging and save the image with a different name. This allows you to edit your original later.

Open up the new file you created with the two layers, select the color layer, and click the right-facing arrow on the side of the layers window. Select **Duplicate Layer**. This does exactly what the name says.

Select the new duplicate layer and your textures for that layer to check the Texture Effects to find a texture you want to create.

Now that you have your three layers (the original black lines, the new texture, and the base colors), select the texture layer and lower the opacity until you feel that enough of the original color seeps through. Lowering a layer's opacity makes the texture less intense so that it fades into the color layer underneath it. This adds depth and a hint of realism to a drawing.



That concludes the coloring tutorial. Sorry if some parts seem over simplified, but this tutorial is intended for use by all levels of photoshop users - be they Filter Philes or Scary Old Men.

This tutorial was submitted by [Cadmus](#).



This tip comes from
ScreamDesign.Com