FCPX: 3.4 COLOR GRADING

Color Correcting and Color Grading are usually the last things you do before exporting your video. Color Correcting is the process of achieving the correct, natural color of the image. This can be done by adjusting the luminance (exposure and contrast) and the hue (color). For more on Color Correction, see 3.3 COLOR CORRECTION. Color Grading, on the other hand, is the process of stylizing your corrected image to achieve a specific look that can affect the vibe of your image. You may notice that in romantic movies, colors seem to be warm and red, while in action and super hero movies, there is a lot of blue and teal. Our minds tend to associate certain emotions with certain colors, so Color Grading can be used very effectively to make your video more impactful.

Color Correction and Masking
Before you color grade, it is important that you properly prepare your image by Color Correcting and applying masks to areas that require more modification. To learn how to Color Correct, see 3.3 COLOR CORRECTION.
Decide the look that you are going for

Next, you will want to visualize colors that you are going for. As stated above in the introduction to this tutorial, color has a major impact on the feel and tone of your video. Take a look at videos related to the work you are producing for inspiration.

Colors tend to trigger emotions, which is why color grading is such an important part of the film editing process. After looking at other films for inspiration, you should have an idea of what the color palettes are for certain genres and moods.

Add or Remove Colors

The process of color grading involves adding and removing colors. When adding or removing color, it is important to do so on a new Color Correction layer. Here are some examples of before and after color grading for our example image.

Added warm colors (red) to achieve a romantic and dreamy look.

Added cool colors (blue) to achieve a suspenseful look.
Decreased saturation to create a sad “poor” look.

**Presets**

To achieve some of these looks faster and easier, Final Cut Pro X offers color presets.

To view these presets, go to the **Effects Browser**. Under **Looks**, you will find a variety of different color grades that you can apply to your clip.

You can modify these looks by going the Effects control under Video in the Inspector.