

# Color Changing

**Disclaimer:** Changing the colors in photos can be accomplished in many ways in Photoshop. When we are going to change the color of the sky, for instance, we might use Replace Color, Curves, Hue/Saturation, Color Balance, the Channel Mixer, or a combination of all of those to get it right. We might try some of them and go back to the original because it didn't work the way we wanted. So it's not a matter of just clicking a button to change the color, and every photo is going to be a little different. But understanding how the tools work will help you to get to what you want in the end. And sometimes, nothing helps and you have to cheat!



## Question:

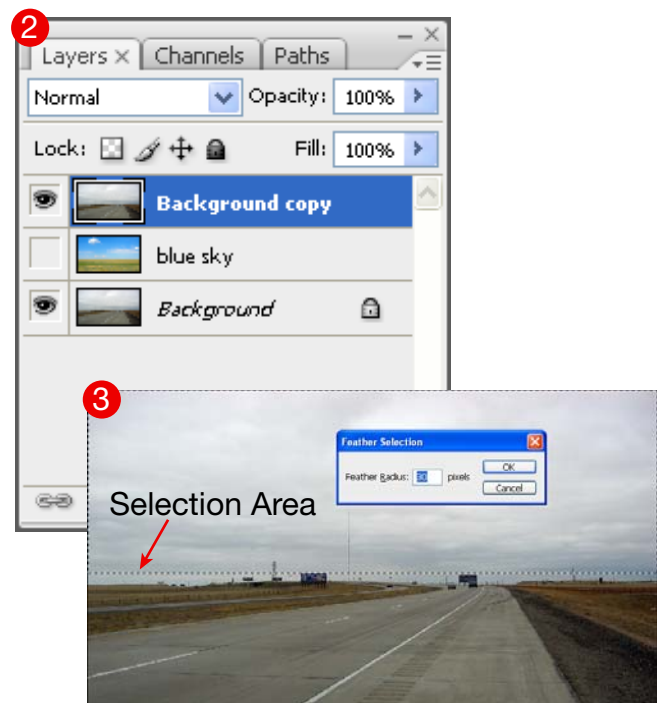
How can you select a single color in a photo and alter it to another color without changing anything else? (i.e. you want your white sky to be blue, or change red lipstick to purple)

## Answer:

We'll show you how to change colors using a few of Photoshop's tools--then we'll show you how to cheat!

## Instructions:

- 1 This photo has 2 layers. Look in the Layers palette and click the eyeball next to the blue sky layer. This will turn off the layer's visibility. We're going to ignore that layer for now.
- 2 Make a copy of the background by dragging and dropping the Background layer onto the New Layer icon in the Layers palette as shown in Image 2. This way we will always have the original to go back to in case we make a mistake. Drag the Background copy layer above the blue sky layer.
- 3 Now use the marquee tool (it's the second tool on the Tool palette--the dashed rectangle) and select the sky. Click and drag from the top left down to about the level of the top of the billboard and all the way over (as in Image 3).



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## Instructions:

**4** Go to Select/Modify/Feather and set the feather to 30 pixels. We want to change the color of the sky which is why we've selected it, but we don't want a hard line.

**5** Go to Image/Adjustments/Replace Color. Click the darkest part of the sky that appears in the selected area, then in the Replace Color dialog box, click the eyedropper with the plus sign next to it (shown in Image 5) and click the lightest part of the sky in the selection area. We're choosing the colors that we want to replace.

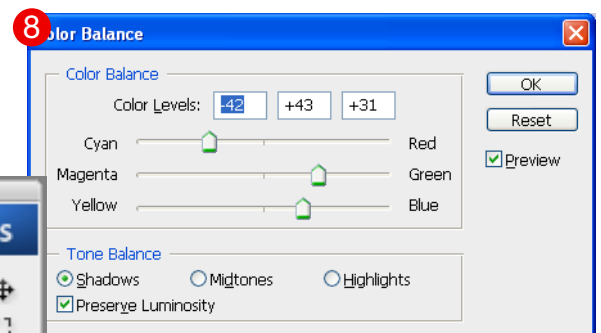
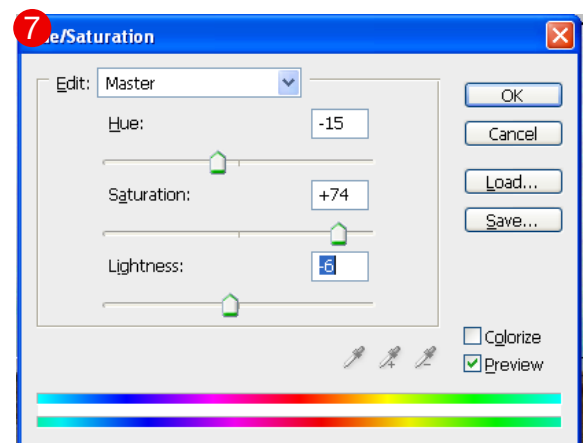
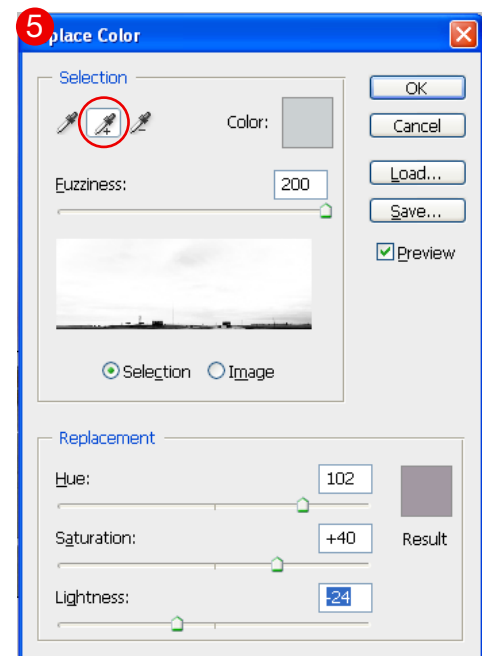
**6** Now set the Fuzziness to 200 and play with the Hue, Saturation, and Lightness sliders to experiment with what they can do and how they can change the colors of the sky. After you've seen what Replace Color can do, hit Cancel. Replace Color is very useful in some instances, but not really suited for this one.

**7** Next, go to Image/Adjustments/Hue / Saturation. Play with the sliders here too and see how they change the image (shown in Image 7). Hue/Saturation will make blanket changes to a whole image or an area selected--you don't have the option of selecting which colors you want to replace. Hit Cancel when you're done.

**8** Go to Image/Adjustments/Color Balance next and play with the Color Balance sliders and Tone Balance buttons to see how you can change colors this way (shown in Image 8). Hit Cancel when you're done.

**9** So these are all ways you can effect some color changes and there are several more, but none of them will make our cloudy sky a clear blue sky. So now we get to do the cheating part. As a note, if you're going to combine two photos, make sure they are similar enough that they won't look odd together. The blue sky photo we've chosen has roughly the same amount of sky as our original background.

**10** Press Ctrl+D to deselect your selection area. Choose the Magic Wand tool from the Tool palette (Image 10) and start selecting the different colors in the sky. Hold down Shift to add to your selection.



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**11** You should have the whole sky as a selection that goes roughly around all the billboards and antennas and stuff as shown in Image 11. If you were doing this seriously for something, you would refine this selection after you masked it, but that would take a lot of time we don't have. So we'll just use it like this.

**12** Now we'll invert the selection so that instead of all the sky, we have everything else selected. Invert the selection by pressing Ctrl+Shift+I.

**13** Make sure the Background Copy layer is the layer you're working on, and then click the Add Layer Mask button at the bottom of the Layers palette as shown in Image 13. Now show the blue sky layer by clicking the area indicated in Image 13.

**14** Now we've got a real blue sky! But the ground still looks like it's in a dreary day, so we'll fix that. Click the Background Copy layer where indicated in Image 13 so we can make some color and lighting changes to the road.

**15** Go to Image/Adjustments/Color Balance again and set the top slider to -12. This will add more Cyan to the road. Hit OK.

**16** That takes care of the color, now we'll make the lighting better. Go to Image/Adjustments/Curves and click on the middle part of the diagonal line. Then pull the line up and to the left a little. Notice the changes in the photo as you do this. Set the Output to 142 and the Input to 118 as shown in Image 16 to get the light about right, and you're done!

