

## Understanding Chroma Key

What is Chroma Key and what can it do for me in Producer?

You might not have heard of the expression 'Chroma Key', but chances are, you will know what it is. In the TV and Film industries, Chroma Key is known as 'Blue or Green Screen'. It is a method of replacing one colour with an image.

If you have ever seen Harry Potter fly on his broomstick, or an Imperial Cruiser cross the galaxy in Star Wars, you have witnessed the use of Chroma Key.

By placing an image, say Harry Potter on his broomstick, in front of a solid colour (a green screen) it is possible, using Chroma Key, to alter the final image and replace the solid colour with a separate scene. The finished result could show Happy Potter flying over Hogwarts or any other imaginary location.

For us, working in Producer, Chroma Key operates in exactly the same way. It is a very useful tool and can be used to create a range of different effects.

In this tutorial, you will use Chroma Key in its simplest form but, having learnt how to use it, you will be able to move on to create even more effects, limited only by your imagination.

The photo (top right) shows a Title Slide created in Producer. It is a combination of the three photos shown right. Each of these 'elements' is placed onto a separate Layer in Producer. The two top Layers have Chroma Key applied to them, which has the effect of making their backgrounds transparent.

In this tutorial, you will recreate this Title Slide.



O.K. Let's get started.

Begin by downloading the 3 images on the left.

Right click on each image and then select 'Save Picture As'

Once you have downloaded the 3 images, create a New Show in Producer with the screen set to 16x9 widescreen. Having done that, add a Blank Slide to the timeline.

Now drag each image onto separate Layers in that Blank Slide. (as shown below)

Image 1 on Layer 1

Image 2 on Layer 2

Image 3 on Layer 3

In Slide Options / Layer Settings / Layer Setup, with Layer 3 selected, set Scaling to Fill Frame.

Your preview screen should now look something like the image below.



We are now going to set the Chroma Key on Layers 1 & 2.

To do this, we need to select the colour we want to use as the Chroma Key setting.

In image 1 the colour will be black.

In image 2 (as the background has a slight gradient) we need to select a colour that is in the middle of the tonal range.

We will start with image 1.

In Slide Options / Adjustments / Editing Tools, with Layer 1 selected, click on Chroma Key.

This will open the Chroma Key Transparency window. As seen right.

This is where we set the colour we want to make transparent.

By default, Producer offers us black as our colour of choice, so we do not need to reset it on this occasion.

We will, however, need to 'fine tune' the Intensity settings.

I have selected the following settings.

Intensity Threshold - 17%

Intensity Drop-Off - 13%

I would suggest that you experiment with these settings. That way, you will get a better idea of how each setting works and what it does.

We are now going to repeat the process for Layer 2.

Remaining in Slide Options / Adjustments / Editing Tools, select Layer 2.



Once again, click on Chroma Key. The Chroma Key Transparency window will now appear and should look something like the image right.

This time we are going to set the Colour to blue. As the background on this photo has a slight gradient, click on Key Color to open the color selector.

Using the Dropper Tool, select a colour from the center of the image - somewhere in the mid-tone range of the blue background.

I used 43 105 154.

Now we need to 'fine tune' the Threshold settings.

Try adjusting these settings yourself, until the background becomes black and the subject - the girl on the right - remains unaltered tonally.

I used the following settings.

Hue Threshold - 0%

Hue Drop Off - 22%

Intensity Threshold - 15%

Intensity Drop Off - 10%

Color Suppression - 0%



Your show preview screen should now look like the image right.

All that remains now, is to set the caption in place.

Reduce the size of image 1 and position it in the lower left corner of the screen.

If you wish, you can animated the caption, using any effect you want, to add to the overall effect of the Title Slide.



