

Pixlr tutorial

Lesson 10: The Magic Wand tool

Pixlr's Magic Wand selects pixels based on tone and colour. When we click on an area in the image with the tool, Pixlr looks at the tone and colour of the area we clicked on and selects pixels that share the same colour and brightness values. This makes the Magic Wand exceptional at selecting **large areas of solid colour**. Its strength is its ability to select large areas of pixels that all share the same or similar colour and tone, making it perfect for things like selecting and replacing a simple sky in a photo, or for any image where the object you need to select is in front of a solid or similarly coloured background.

Tolerance

The Tolerance option tells Pixlr how different in tone and colour a pixel can be from the area we clicked on for it to be included in the selection. You can set the Tolerance option to any value between 0 and 255. The higher the value, the wider the range of pixels that Pixlr will select. A Tolerance setting of 255 will effectively select the entire image.

For example:

Set the Tolerance value to 32

- all pixels that are the same colour as the pixels we clicked **plus**
- any pixels that are up to 32 shades darker **or**
- 32 shades brighter.

Double the tolerance to 64

Pixlr should now select an area twice as large as it did last time, since it will include all the pixels that are between 64 shades darker and 64 shades lighter than the initial shade that was clicked on.

Tolerance of 0

We get a very narrow selection outline. Every pixel that's not an exact match to the specific shade that is clicked on is ignored.

Contiguous

With Contiguous selected, Pixlr will only select pixels that fall within the acceptable tone and colour range determined by the Tolerance option **and are side by side** to each other in the same area you clicked on. Any pixels that are within the acceptable Tolerance range **but are separated from the area** you clicked on by pixels that fall outside the Tolerance range will not be included in the selection.

Sample all Layers

Also by default, when you click on an image with the Magic Wand, it looks for pixels to select only on the layer that's currently active in the Layers panel. This is usually what we want, but if your document contains multiple layers and you want Pixlr to include all the layers in your selection, select the **Sample All Layers** option in the Options Bar. It's unchecked by default.

Anti aliasing

Pixlr can smooth out the edges of the selection by applying a slight blur to them, a process known as **anti-aliasing**.

Replace the background of an image

Image: yellow bear.jpg

- Select magic wand tool. Set tolerance to 38. Contiguous: ON
- Select the blue colour with the magic wand. Half of the blue will be selected.
- Change the tolerance to 96. Make sure the magic wand is selected. Hold the shift key as you click the rest of the blue in the image. All of the blue colour background should now be selected.
- Edit, Cut
- Select red as the main colour. Use the Paint Bucket tool to fill the background red.

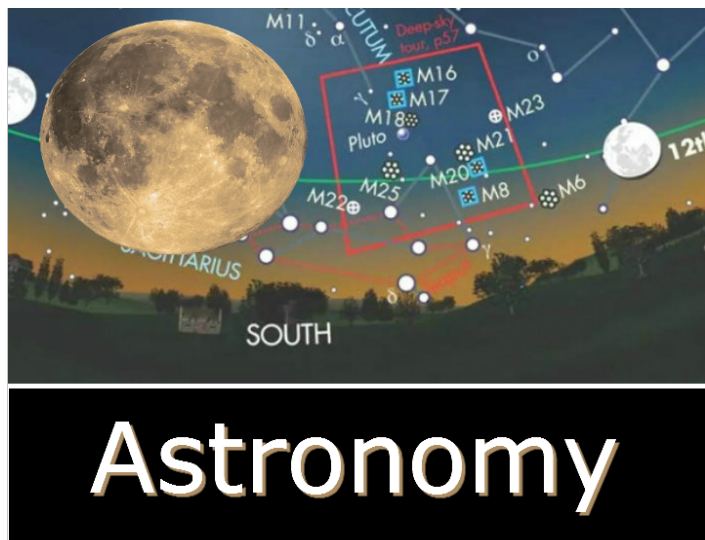


Completed image

Erase background

Full Moon.jpg

- Use the magic wand tool to select the black colour. Tolerance: 50 (See what happens when you increase the tolerance to 55 and above)
- Edit, Invert selection
- Edit, Cut. (The full moon is cut from the image)
- File, New image
- Select: Create image from clipboard and select: Transparent. Give the new image a title and save.
- Resize the moon. Edit, Free transform. Reduce the size of the moon and use the Move tool to move it to the upper left of the image. Change its layer name to moon.
- Add new background. Open image as layer: astronomy background.jpg. Move it to the top of the image. (the moon will be covered). Rename the layer to astronomy
- Move the moon layer above the astronomy layer – in the Layers Palette.
- Add new layer – Call it shapes.
- Add a shape below the image. Select the Shapes tool. Rectangle, Fill: Black, Border size: 5 Border colour: white
- Add new layer – call it text.
- Type – “Astronomy” into the shape. Style it as you wish.
- Flatten all the layers. Layer, Flatten image. This merges all the layers together
- Resize the image and save. Use the Marquee tool to select the image, Edit, Cut.
- File, New image – Create image from clipboard



Completed image

Select the area you don't want and then inverse the selection

Purpose: replace the blue sky with grey cloudy sky

Image: building with blue sky.jpg; gray sky.jpg

- Select the magic wand tool. Tolerance: 51: Contiguous: ON
- Select all the blue colour.
- Edit, Inverse selection. Edit, Copy
- New layer
- Unlock the background layer (double click the padlock). Hide this layer – deselect the checkmark
- Paste the building into the new layer
- Rename the layer to building
- Use the Move tool to position the building to the bottom of the image
- Open image as layer. Open the gray sky.jpg image
- This image will cover the building when you do this as it is the active layer. To place the building in front of the sky, move the building layer from the Layers Palette to the top of the palette



Completed image