

Color Selections

When in doubt about what makeup colors look best on you, choose different shades of brown. A prominent makeup artist named Bobbi Brown praises the use of brown and has made her living as a makeup artist using different shades of brown to make her clients appear beautiful yet natural looking. As you mature in your makeup application skills, you can then try other color families, such as red, fuschia, violet, and pink, but brown is a good starting color.

There are many variations of brown and there exist shades of brown that you would swear did not belong to the brown color family. Brick red is one such example; Berry Brown by Cover Girl is another. These colors mix dark brown with red and violet, respectively. Used as a contrasting shade to the other browns on your face, the effect of these alternative browns is dramatic and, used in combination with clear lip gloss, can look quite sexy.

Brown makeup complements brown or black clothing. If you want to standardize on a color of clothing, the best choice is black, but too much black can peg you as “monochromatic” in your fashion tastes. I recommend black shoes, black pants, black skirts, and off-black sheer stockings. The color choice for a top is up to you. A red turtleneck or tee shirt combined with black pants or a skirt looks great with brown eye makeup and a frost brown lip color.

Remember: When in doubt, choose a shade of brown. It’s a safe, effective, and natural-looking color choice.

Here is a recommended set of brown makeup items. In my opinion, mascara should always be a dark color, such as black or dark brown. Those who use blue or green mascara end up looking like hookers or drag queens. The suggested lipstick and lipliner are included as examples. Revlon has a more extensive selection of lipstick shades than L’Oreal, however, I have always found the scent of Revlon lipsticks to be quite “waxy” and offensive. L’Oreal products smell better and give the impression of feeling “richer” and creamier.

Suggested Items

- Revlon Eyebrow Pencil in Brown
- Revlon Overtime Eyeshadow in Spices
- Revlon ColorStay self-sharpening automatic eyelining pencil in Black Brown
- Sephora Clear Mascara
- Revlon Lashfull Mascara in Black
- L’Oreal Blush in Bronze
- L’Oreal self-sharpening automatic liplining pencil in Nude
- L’Oreal Lipstick in Brazil Nut



Frequently Asked Questions About Colors

What colors look good together?

After you have mastered all of the possibilities with brown and black, you can then try some of the other suggested color combinations in the chart below. Stay away from shocking bright reds, oranges, and pinks unless you have tanned skin. If you are going for a drag queen look, you may choose a silver or bright frost shade for your lips and use one of the browbone color suggestions for your entire eyelid.

Eyeliner	Eyeshadow	Blush	Lipstick
black	charcoal light grey silver (browbone)	brick red	brick red
dark grey	charcoal light grey silver (browbone)	brick red	brick red
dark brown	dark brown light brown light copper (browbone)	bronze	bronze or dark brown
medium brown	medium brown light brown light copper (browbone)	bronze or light brown	reddish brown
black or dark grey	dark violet mauve lilac (browbone)	plum	plum
dark grey	mauve rose lilac (browbone)	plum	fuschia
light brown	medium brown light brown light copper (browbone)	light bronze	nude

What's up with all of those "mod" colors, like Urban Decay and Revlon Street Wear? Is blue lipstick and blue nail polish for me? What about green?

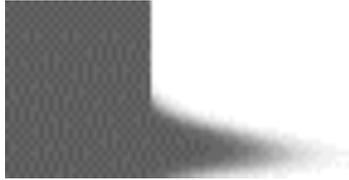
Take a look at your favorite female models and media personalities and imagine what they would look like wearing blue lipstick and blue nail polish. Most of them would look awful! A few might look really cool and hip if they wore the right clothes to contrast with the blue. Light orange would work, although fuschia (neon pink) would look better. Black goes with everything. Wearing blue with blue is boring. Lime green... probably not. Yellow? No way! Silver and gold glitter clothing would work and add a retro flavor to the look, but this is only for the daring.

The same holds true for the rest of the nonstandard color lipsticks and nail polishes. For a while, green was popular as an eyeshadow and nail color and then some fashion fool came up with the idea that green lipstick might look good. Unless you have a strong ethnic background or have high drag queen inclinations, don't count on it looking very good for everyday wear. If you want a color that will look good and will look really cool, try a shade of violet or wine. Match it with the right clothing ensemble and you will look fabulous. If you can't do it, then there's your answer concerning wearing blue or green.

Blending Techniques

When you do blending correctly, the result should look like a gradient of shades from one shade to another. For example, a black-to-white gradient would include all of the transitional shades of gray in between black and white.

There are two basic blending techniques: blending by brush and blending by sponge. Blending by brush requires a light stroke. Most makeup books will tell you to “BLEND, BLEND, BLEND!” without ever telling you how to blend. What ends up happening is the crossdresser blends the two colors together so well that they form a new, never-before-seen color that looks odd and defeats the purpose of blending.



Blending means making the transition from one shade to another look as smooth as possible, a “seamless transition,” if you will. In the diagram below, let us suppose a brush has swept across a block of gray-colored powder on top of a light-colored background. Note that there is obviously less of the gray color as the brush strokes to the right.



The goal of creating a seamless transition is to get both colors involved. Let us say the gray box is sitting next to a white box and we wish to blend these two colors together. After using your brush to stroke the first color into the direction of the second, you then reverse the process and use your brush to stroke the second color into the direction of the first. The result is a seamless transition between the two colors as the arrow in the diagram indicates.

The example above uses two “opposing” colors for illustrative purposes only. You would never use colors as extreme as these in your makeup color selections. Colors to be blended together are usually from the same color family, so blending a dark brown with a medium brown is easier and looks more appropriate than trying to blend red and pink, for example. Blending by brush is the preferred method for working with powders, such as eyeshadows and blush.

Blending by sponge requires an even lighter stroke than blending by brush because it is easy to wipe a color completely off of your face with a sponge. You would blend by sponge if you were working with liquids, such as liquid foundation and liquid concealer. A sponge will invariably soak up a bit of whatever it is you’re trying to blend so, to combat this, you may need to apply more liquid or use my “pat-and-stroke technique” when blending liquid foundation on your face.

The Pat-and-Stroke Technique

First, pat the sponge onto your face to allow the sponge to soak up a little bit of the liquid product (this technique is called “priming the sponge”). Next, stroke the sponge across your face. The sponge is now less likely to soak up any more liquid as you stroke it across your face. Stroking the sponge across your face without priming it first will more likely lift and pull the liquid product right off of your face. Repeat this procedure until the area is blended.

Never use a sponge to blend powders and never use a brush to blend liquids. The quality of the sponges and brushes you use will make a big difference in your resulting makeover. “Better” does not necessarily equate with more expensive. You can buy and use **Wunder** makeup sponges for \$3 for a pack of 50 or visit your local art supply store for an excellent assortment of six or seven art brushes that can be used as makeup brushes for about \$30.

Be sure that whatever colors you are blending stay on the areas you had originally placed them. The quality of the makeup products you use will also make a big difference in your resulting makeover. A good makeup job is a good optical illusion. You are hiding and correcting flaws to convey the image of having a perfect face. How well you do this is directly related to the years of quality experience you have in makeup application.