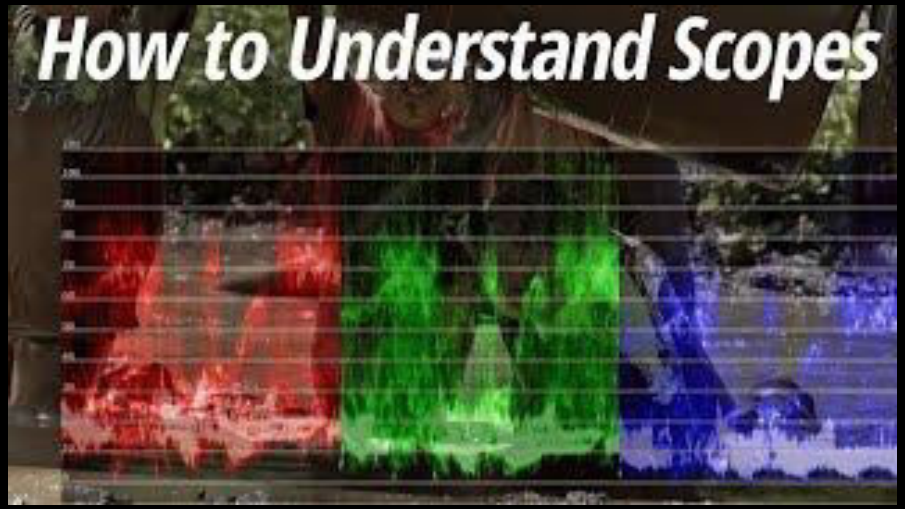
Premiere Pro Color Correction

Getting Your Shots Just Right

Bellwork

You were tasked to watch this video about ***How to Understand Scopes*** and list three new things you might have learned that you didn't know before from this video.

Discuss those three things with your neighbors and be prepared to share with the class.



Objective

Students will be able to:

- Understand the purpose of color correction in filmmaking.
- Learn how to use basic color correction tools in Adobe Premiere Pro.
- Apply color correction techniques to adjust and enhance the visual quality of footage.

What is color correction, and why is it important in filmmaking?

Color correction is the process of adjusting the colors in a video to make them look natural, balanced, and visually pleasing.

In filmmaking, it ensures that footage has consistent *white balance*, proper *exposure*, and accurate *colors* across all shots, so the visuals feel cohesive.

This step is essential because raw footage often has color issues caused by lighting conditions, camera settings, or environmental factors.

By correcting these issues, filmmakers can draw attention to important details, create a professional-looking product, and maintain the audience's immersion in the story.

Without color correction, a film can look unpolished or distracting, which can take away from its overall impact.

How does color affect the tone, mood, and storytelling of a film?

Color plays a powerful role in shaping the ***tone***, ***mood***, and ***storytelling*** of a film.

It can evoke specific ***emotions***, set the ***atmosphere***, and communicate underlying ***themes*** without a single word being spoken.

For example, warm colors like reds, oranges, and yellows often convey feelings of passion, warmth, or intensity, while cool colors like blues and greens can create a sense of calm, sadness, or mystery.

Directors and colorists carefully use ***color palettes*** to guide the audience's emotional response—think of how the muted tones in a dystopian film feel *bleak* and *oppressive*, while vibrant, saturated colors in a fantasy world feel *magical* and *inviting*.

By mastering color correction and grading, filmmakers can intentionally enhance these elements, ensuring their visual style aligns with the story they want to tell.

Color Correction vs. Color Grading

Color correction and ***color grading*** are two key steps in the post-production process that help make your footage look its best, but they serve different purposes.

Color correction is all about fixing problems with your footage to make it look natural and consistent.

This includes adjusting the white balance, fixing exposure, and balancing colors so the footage looks the way the human eye would naturally see it.

On the other hand, ***color grading*** is where you get creative, adding artistic style and mood to your film.

This might mean giving your footage a cooler, bluish tint for a dramatic feel or a warm, golden glow for a nostalgic vibe.

Think of color correction as making sure everything looks right, and color grading as adding the “wow” factor to enhance your story.

Showcase examples from films that use color correction and grading effectively.

Here are some iconic examples of films that showcase exceptional use of color correction and grading to enhance storytelling, mood, and tone:

These examples demonstrate how color correction and grading are essential tools for shaping a film’s visual identity, reinforcing its themes, and immersing the audience in its world.

Mad Max: Fury Road (2015)

Why It Stands Out: The film uses bold, hyper-saturated ***oranges*** for the desert scenes and contrasting ***blues*** for night sequences. This dramatic color grading amplifies the intensity and chaos of the story, creating a visually striking experience.

The Matrix (1999)

Why It Stands Out: The filmmakers used a *greenish* tint during scenes set in the Matrix to evoke a digital, artificial world, while real-world scenes feature more natural tones. This subtle yet effective grading helps distinguish between the two realities.


Original
Color Corrected

Joker (2019)

Why It Stands Out: The film's grading uses muted tones and a heavy emphasis on *greens*, *yellows*, and *blues* to evoke a gritty, melancholic atmosphere that mirrors the protagonist's psychological descent.

La La Land (2016)

Why It Stands Out: The vibrant and warm color palette captures the dreamlike and romantic essence of the story, while color grading transitions*(e.g., cooler tones during sad moments)* reflect shifts in emotion.

Moonlight (2016)

Why It Stands Out: The film's use of rich *blues* and *purples*, especially during nighttime scenes, creates an intimate and poetic mood. The grading also enhances the natural lighting to emphasize character emotion and growth.

Blade Runner 2049 (2017)

Why It Stands Out: The grading uses stark contrasts, *neon colors*, and deep shadows to reinforce the dystopian, futuristic world. Each scene has a distinct palette that reflects its emotional and narrative significance.

O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000)

Why It Stands Out: This was one of the first films to use digital color grading extensively. The filmmakers desaturated the colors to create a *sepia-toned*, Depression-era feel that evokes the period's dustiness and dryness.

The Grand Budapest Hotel (2014)

Why It Stands Out: Wes Anderson's signature style involves meticulous color grading with *pastel* tones and vibrant, symmetrical compositions. The grading enhances the whimsical, storybook quality of the film.

Remember!

Always try to get the correct exposure when you're filming, it will save you a lot of time in Post-Production!

Why Is It Important To Color Correct in Premiere Pro?

Color correction is essential in filmmaking because it ensures that your footage looks *natural*, *consistent*, and *visually appealing*.

When filming, different *lighting conditions*, *camera settings*, or *environmental factors* can cause colors to appear off, making the footage feel *unpolished* or *distracting*.

By color correcting in Premiere Pro, you can fix issues like poor *white balance*, *uneven exposure*, or *dull colors*, bringing your video closer to how the scene was meant to look in real life.

This process helps maintain a *professional standard*, keeps the *audience focused* on the story, and creates a foundation for more advanced techniques like color grading, where you can stylize your film's mood and tone.

Without ***color correction***, even great storytelling and cinematography can lose their impact.

Be Careful When Color Correcting

When color correcting in Adobe Premiere Pro, it's important to be careful because even small changes can significantly impact the look and feel of your footage.

If you ***overcorrect***, such as pushing the colors too far or making the image too ***bright*** or ***dark***, it can make the scene look unnatural or distract from the story you're trying to tell.

Poorly balanced colors can also make your footage inconsistent between shots, breaking continuity and pulling the audience out of the experience.

By using tools like ***scopes*** and adjusting settings gradually, you can ensure your corrections enhance the video while keeping it visually cohesive and true to your creative vision.

Always aim for subtle, balanced adjustments that feel natural and professional.

Benefits of Black and White

Making a film black and white can be a creative and practical choice, especially if you want to avoid the challenges of color correction.

Without the distraction of color, your audience focuses more on the composition, contrast, lighting, and emotion of each shot, which can enhance storytelling.

Black and white can create a timeless or dramatic aesthetic, making your film feel more artistic or stylized.

It also allows you to bypass the time-consuming process of balancing and correcting colors, particularly if your footage was shot in mixed lighting or with inconsistent white balance.

This simplicity can help you concentrate on other aspects of your film, like pacing, sound, and performance, while still delivering a visually striking final product.

Keep It In Color Versus Being a Punk

Color plays a powerful role in storytelling because it can evoke emotions, highlight key elements, and set the tone of a scene in a way that black and white can't always achieve.

By using color, filmmakers can subtly guide the audience's attention, differentiate characters or settings, and enhance the overall atmosphere.

For example, warm colors like red and orange can create a sense of warmth or tension, while cool colors like blue and green can evoke calm or unease.

While black and white can be used effectively in certain situations to give a timeless or artistic feel, color offers more tools to express mood and meaning in your film.

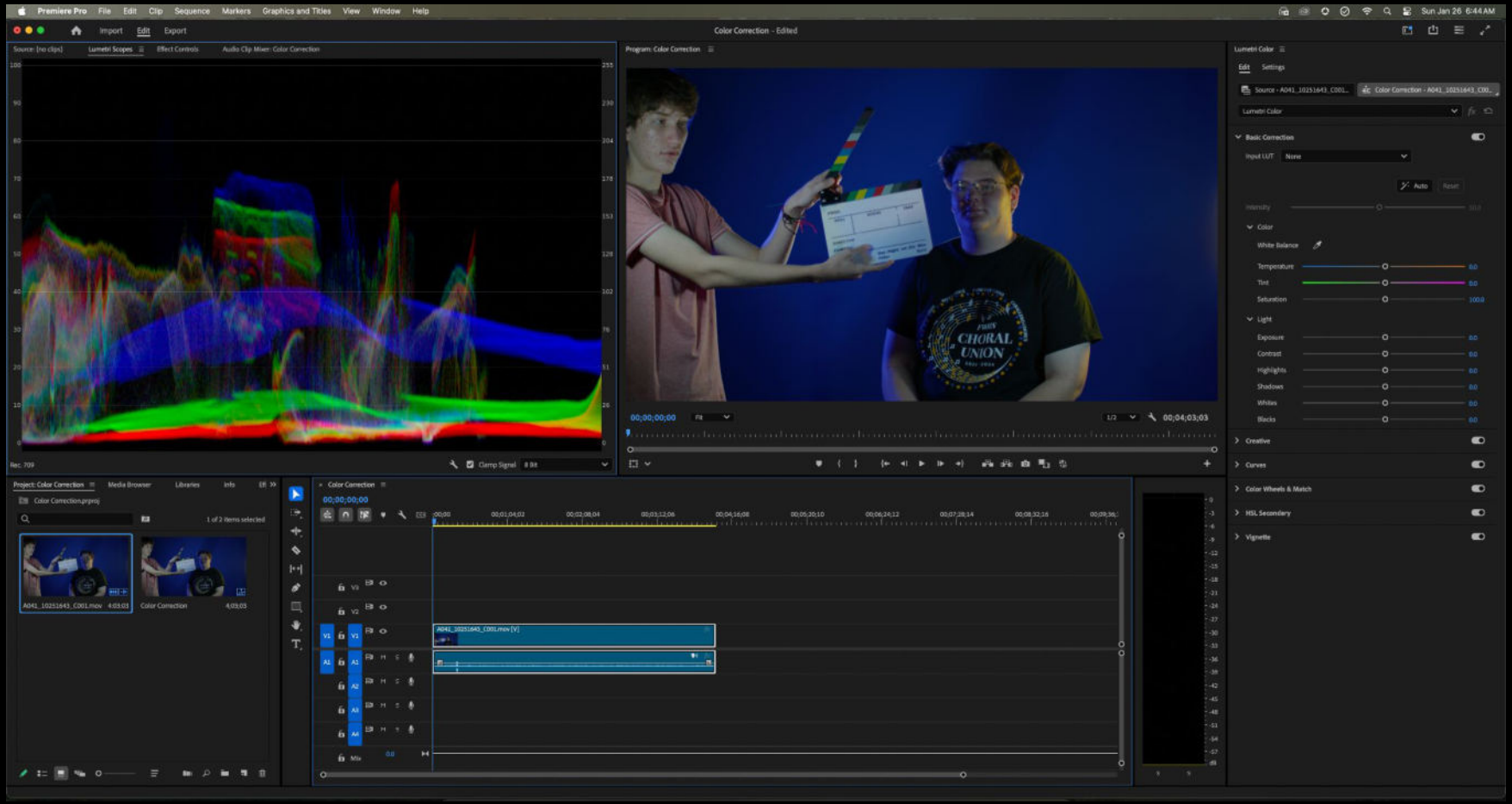
It helps viewers connect with the story on a deeper level and can make your visuals more vibrant and engaging.

Make Sure Your Clip Is Selected!

A better understanding of Premiere Pro’s Color Correction Adjustments

Getting the best shots

Premiere Pro's Color Workspace



Workspaces ➤ ***Color***

The ***Color*** workspace is where you will do your color correction. You use the options in the Lumetri Color Panel to adjust your colors.

A | Source Monitor/**Lumetri Scope**

B | Project Monitor

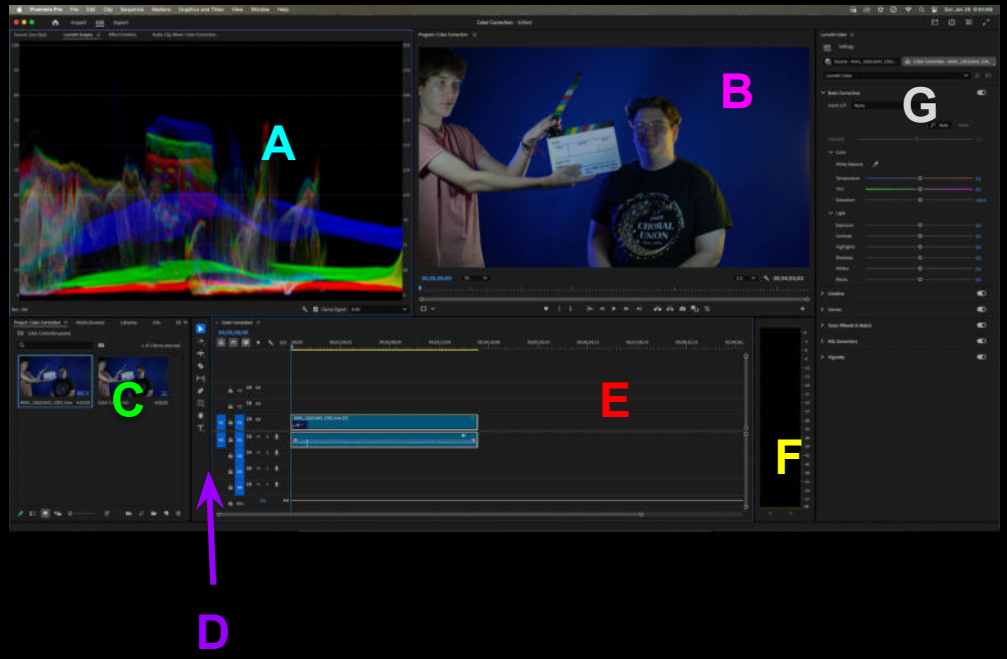
C | Projects Panel

D | Tools Panel

E | Timeline Panel

F | Audio Mixel Panel

G | Lumetri Color Panel



The Lumetri Scopes

What is the Lumetri Scopes?

The ***Lumetri Scopes*** are essential tools that help filmmakers accurately analyze and adjust the ***color***, ***exposure***, and ***contrast*** of their footage.

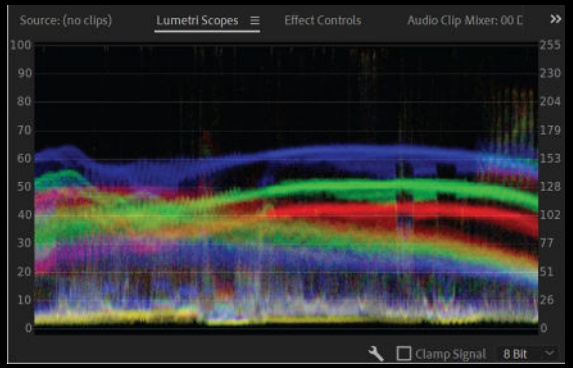
They display visual graphs that represent the brightness and color information in your video, helping you make precise corrections.

The ***Waveform*** shows the overall brightness levels, while the ***Vectorscope*** displays the *color balance* and *saturation*.

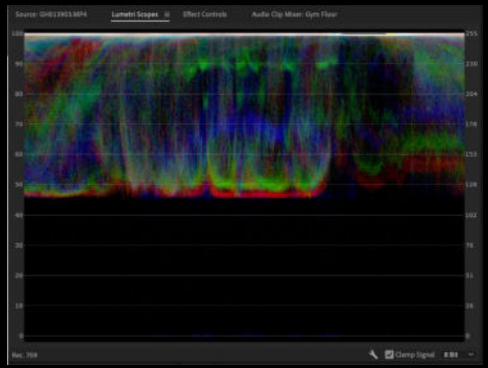
The ***RGB Parade*** breaks down the ***red***, ***green***, and ***blue*** channels, helping you ensure that each color channel is properly balanced.

By using these ***scopes***, you can make sure your footage is properly exposed, has accurate colors, and looks consistent, which is crucial for achieving professional-looking results and maintaining the visual integrity of your film.

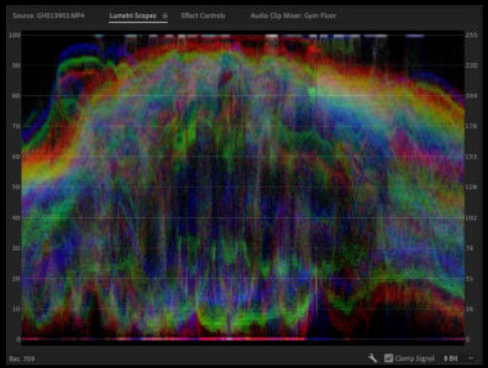
Reading the Lumetri Scopes



Underexposed



Overexposed

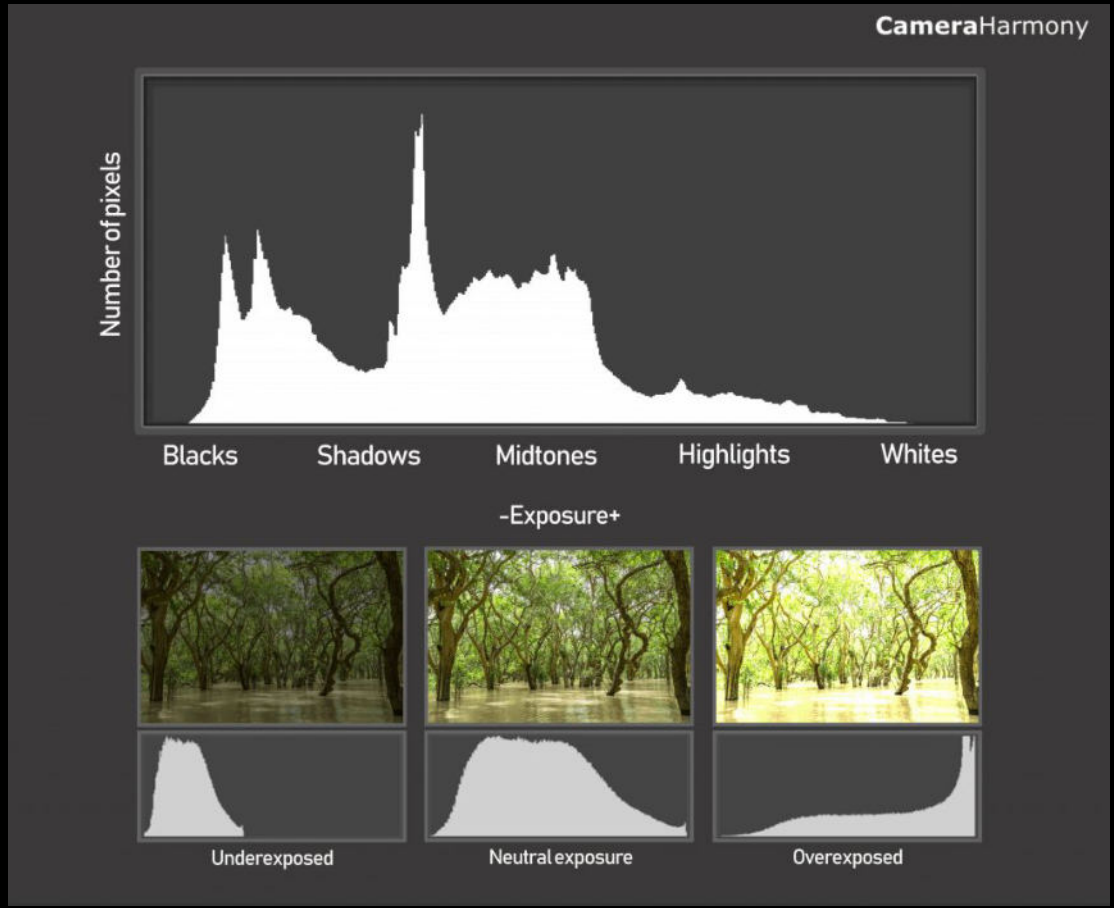


Properly Exposed

Histograms

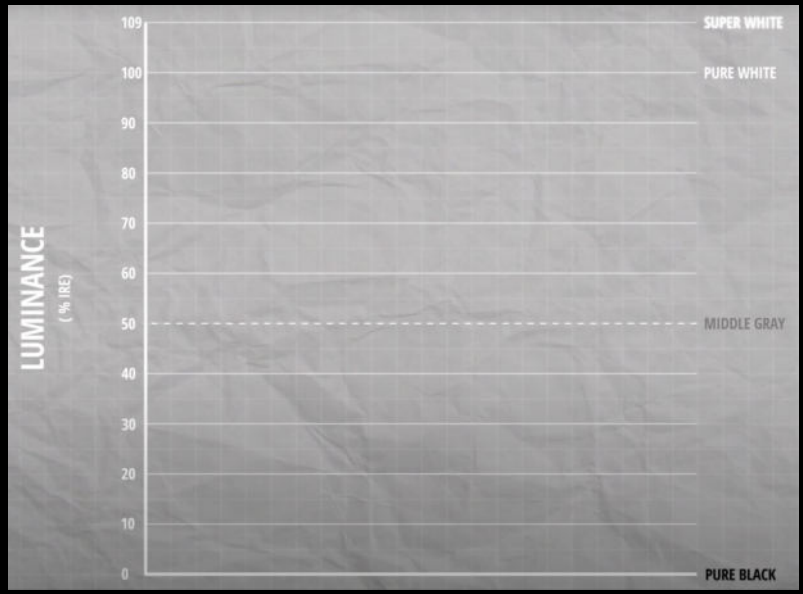
A histogram in video editing is a graph that shows the brightness levels*(exposure)* of your footage, from the darkest shadows on the left to the brightest highlights on the right.

It helps you see if your video is too dark, too bright, or properly balanced, making it easier to adjust for a professional-looking image.



How to Use Scopes

- Adjust ***Exposure*** with the Waveform:
  - Ensure the ***highlights****(upper part of the graph)* don't exceed **100** and the ***shadows****(lower part)* don't fall below 0.
  - Use the Lumetri Color panel's ***Exposure***, Highlights, and Shadows sliders to fix issues.
- Balance ***Colors*** with the ***RGB Parade***:
  - Check if the ***red***, ***green***, and ***blue*** levels are aligned. If one is higher or lower, use the ***Temperature*** and ***Tint*** sliders to correct it.
- Check ***Saturation*** with the ***Vectorscope***:
  - Look for balanced color distribution. If the graph is heavily skewed toward one direction, adjust ***Saturation*** or ***Vibrance*** to correct it.



Scopes may seem complex at first, but with practice, they’ll become a powerful tool for ensuring your footage looks polished and professional.

Color

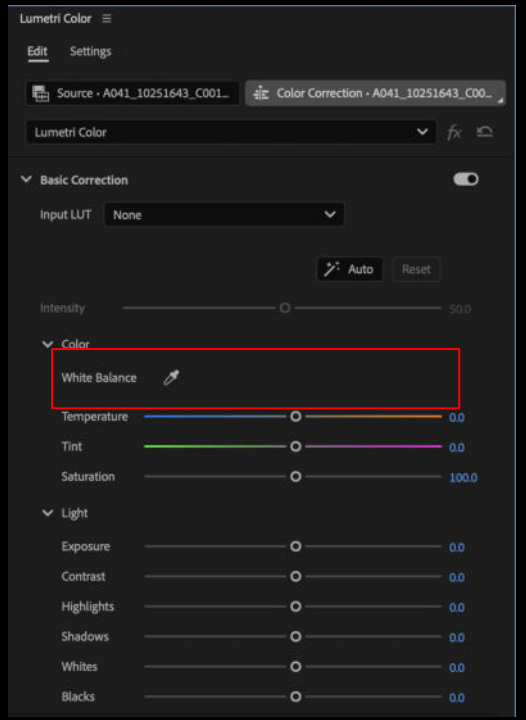
White Balance

White balance is a tool that helps adjust the color temperature of your footage to make sure whites appear truly white, rather than tinted with a color like *blue* or *orange*.

Every light source has its own *color temperature*, and sometimes, depending on the lighting in your scene*(like daylight, tungsten, or fluorescent)*, your footage can have a color cast that makes it look too warm*(yellow/orange)* or too cool*(blue)*.

The ***White Balance*** settings in the Lumetri Color panel allow you to fix this by adjusting the ***Temperature****(from blue to orange)* and ***Tint****(from green to magenta)*.

Correcting ***white balance*** ensures that the colors in your video look natural and true to life, which is essential for making your footage look polished and professional.



White Balance Tool

Sometimes, footage can have an unwanted color cast*(like looking too blue or too orange)* because of the lighting conditions when it was filmed. The ***white balance tool*** fixes this by adjusting the *Temperature*(*blue to yellow*) and *Tint*(*green to magenta*) sliders.

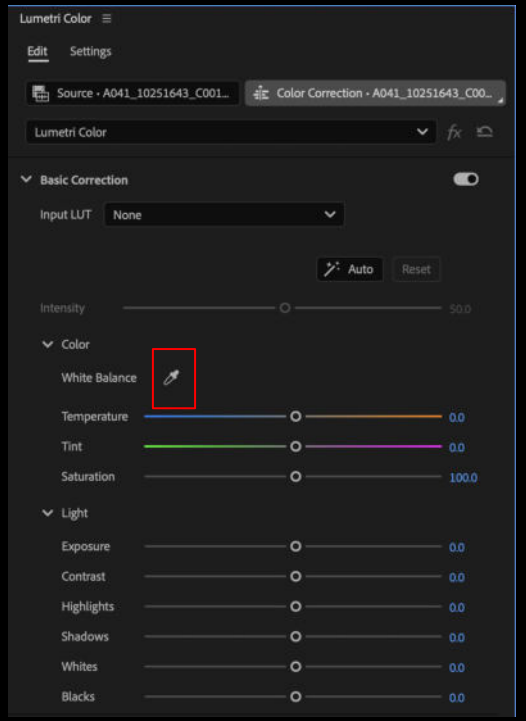
To use it, go to the ***Lumetri Color panel***, under the ***Basic Correction*** tab.

Select the ***White Balance Eyedropper Tool*** and click on a part of your video that should be neutral white or gray.

Premiere will automatically adjust the Temperature and Tint to make the colors more accurate.

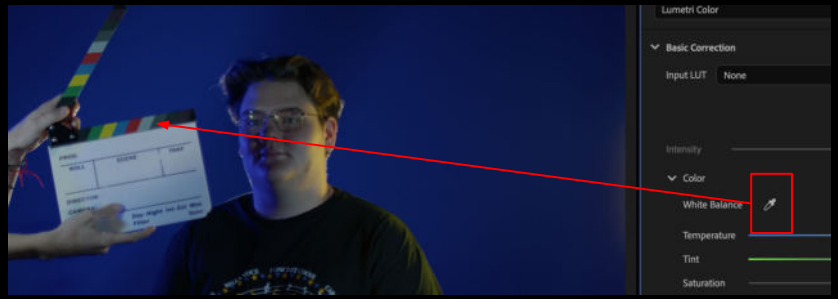
If needed, you can fine-tune the sliders manually to achieve the perfect balance.

This simple tool is key for making your footage look clean and professional.



Why We Use the Clapboard for Color Correction

We use the ***clapboard*** at the start of each clip because its white and black sections provide a consistent reference point for proper white balance and contrast during color correction in Premiere Pro.



By sampling the white or gray areas with the eyedropper tool in the Lumetri Color panel, you can ensure the colors in your footage are accurate and look natural.

Color Correction

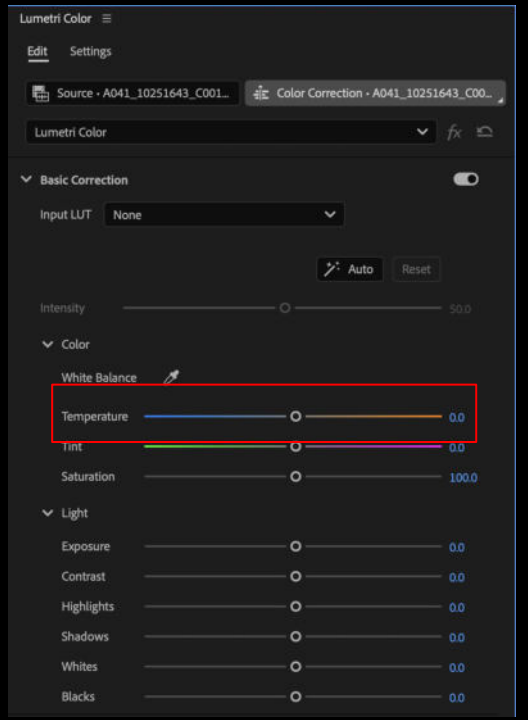
Example of the effect from just clicking the light grey on the color strip.

Temperature(Temp)

The ***Temperature*** slider adjusts the warmth or coolness of your footage, helping you correct or change the overall color tone.

Moving the slider to the right adds more ***warm tones*** like *yellow* and *orange*, while moving it to the left adds more ***cool tones*** like *blue*.

This is especially useful for fixing white balance issues—if your footage looks too blue or cold, you can warm it up, and if it looks too orange or warm, you can cool it down.

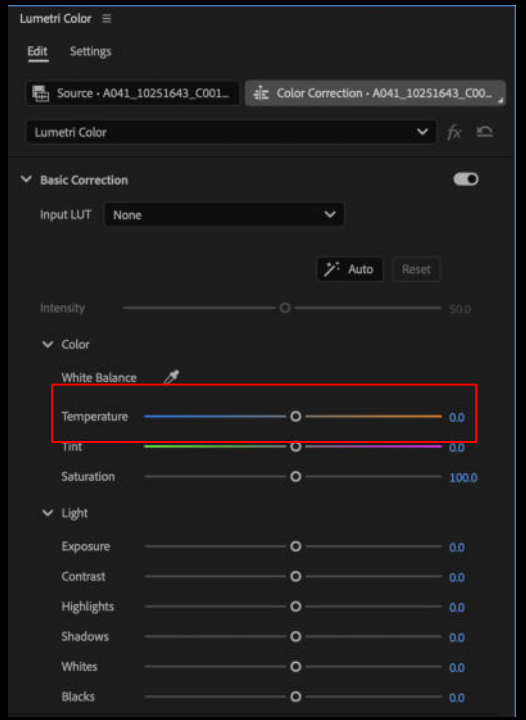


Temperature(Temp)

To use it, go to the ***Lumetri Color*** panel under the ***Basic Correction*** tab.

Use the eyedropper tool to select a neutral color in the footage*(like something* ***white*** *or gray)*, and then fine-tune the temperature slider until the colors look natural and balanced.

This step ensures that the lighting in your footage looks realistic and matches the mood you're aiming to create.



Temperature

Example of the effect of changing the Temperature.

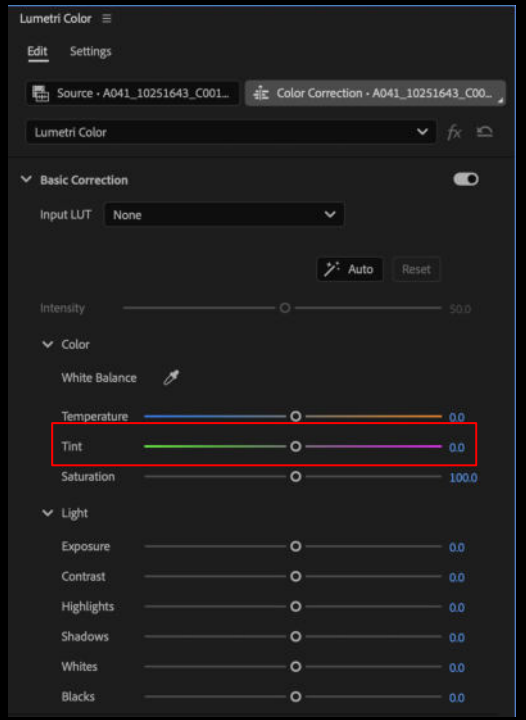
Tint

The ***Tint*** slider adjusts the ***green*** and ***magenta*** tones in your footage, helping to correct color balance issues.

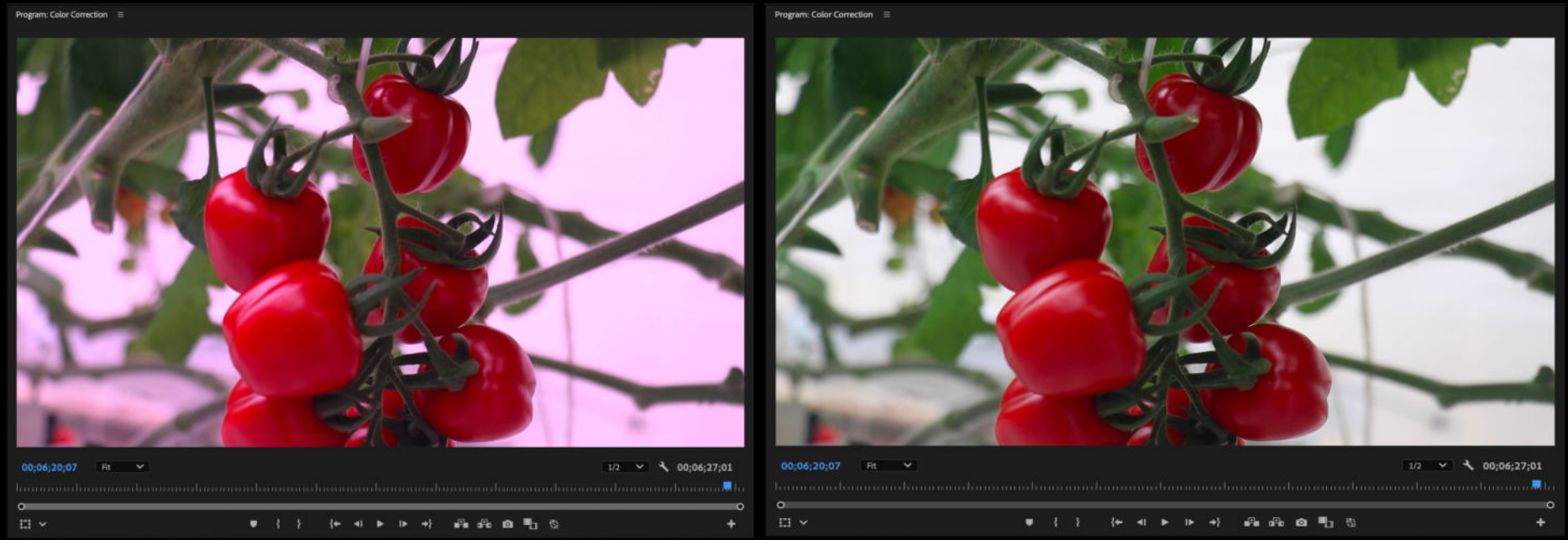
It's especially useful when your video looks too ***green*** or too ***magenta*** due to incorrect lighting or camera settings.

Moving the slider to the left adds more ***green***, while moving it to the right adds more ***magenta***.

This tool is most effective when used alongside the ***Temperature*** slider, which adjusts ***blue*** and ***yellow*** tones, to ensure your footage has realistic and pleasing color balance.



Tint



Example of the effect of changing the Tint.

Saturation

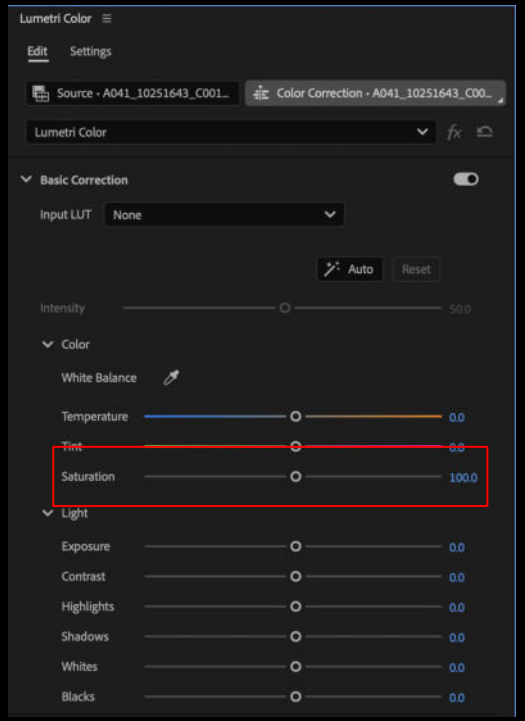
Saturation controls how *intense* or *vivid* the colors in your footage appear.

Increasing the ***saturation*** makes the colors brighter and more vibrant, which can make a scene feel *lively* or *energetic*.

Decreasing the ***saturation*** makes the colors more muted, and lowering it all the way creates a black-and-white *(desaturated)* look.

To use it, simply move the ***Saturation slider*** to the right to boost the vibrancy or to the left to tone it down.

Be careful not to ***oversaturate*** your footage, as it can make the colors look *unnatural*—find a balance that enhances your film while maintaining a realistic look.



Saturation

Example of the effect of changing the Saturation.

Light

Exposure

The ***Exposure*** slider adjusts the overall brightness of your video.

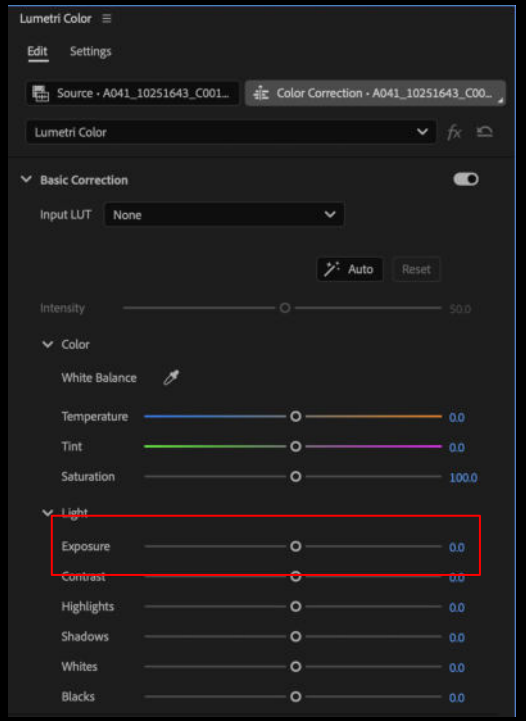
It's like turning a light up or down on the entire image.

Increasing the exposure*(moving to the right)* makes the video ***brighter***, while decreasing it*(moving to the left)* makes it *darker*.

It's a quick way to fix footage that's too dark or too bright, but you need to be careful not to overdo it—too much brightness can wash out details, and too much darkness can make parts of your video disappear.

Keep an eye on the ***Waveform scope*** to make sure your highlights*(the brightest parts)* don't go above 100, which causes clipping, and your shadows*(the darkest parts)* don't go below 0, which loses detail.

This helps create a balanced, polished look.



Exposure

Example of the effect from just adjusting the Whites slider to the right.

Contrast

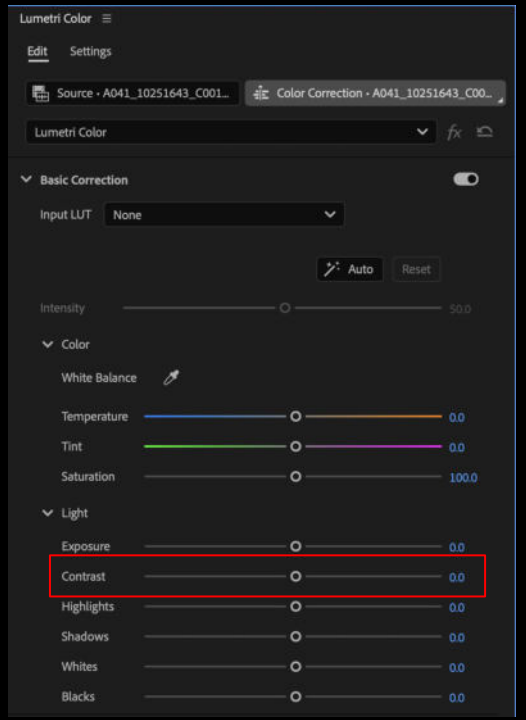
The ***Contrast*** slider adjusts the difference between the *brightest* and *darkest* areas of your footage.

Increasing the contrast*(moving the slider to the right)* makes the dark areas darker and the bright areas brighter, which can add *depth* and make your image "**pop**."

Decreasing the contrast*(moving the slider to the left)* reduces the difference between light and dark, giving your footage a softer, more muted look.

A good tip is to adjust contrast while keeping an eye on the ***Waveform Scope*** to make sure you're not losing important details in the shadows*(crushing blacks)* or highlights *(blowing out whites)*.

Balancing contrast correctly can make your footage look polished and visually appealing.



Contrast

Example of the effect of changing the Contrast.

Highlights

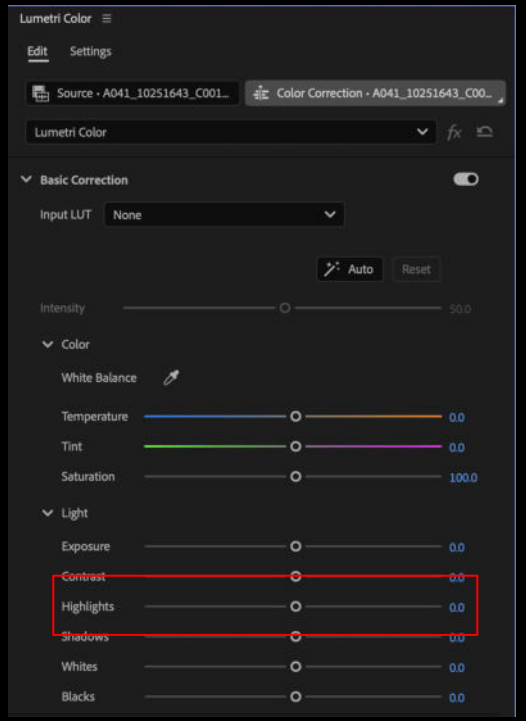
The ***Highlights*** slider is used to adjust the brightness of the lighter areas in your footage, such as bright skies, reflections, or well-lit parts of a scene.

Increasing the ***Highlights****(moving the slider to the right)* will make these areas brighter, which can add a sense of vibrancy or emphasis to the shot.

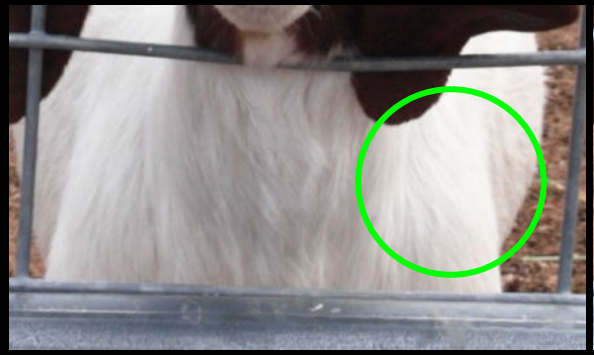
Decreasing the ***Highlights****(moving the slider to the left)* will darken those areas, helping to recover details that might be too bright or *"blown out."*

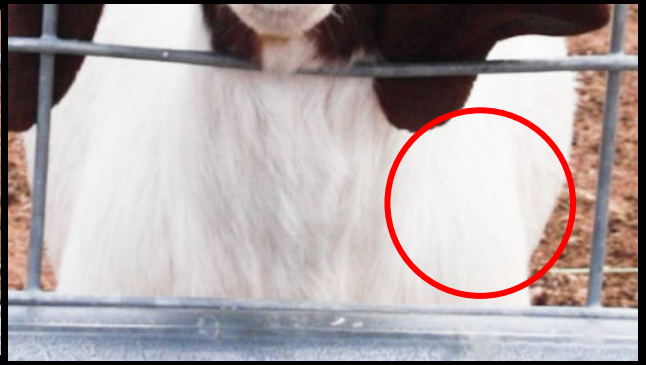
Keep an eye on the ***Waveform Scope*** to ensure the highlights don’t become overexposed*(clipping at the top of the graph)*.

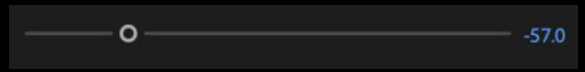
This tool is great for creating balance in your image while maintaining detail in the brightest parts of your video.

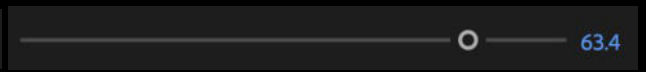


Highlights









Example of the effect of changing the Highlights.
Notice that when you go to the right, you start losing details in the brighter areas!
When you move the slider to the left, you start recovering some of the details while your image starts getting brighter.

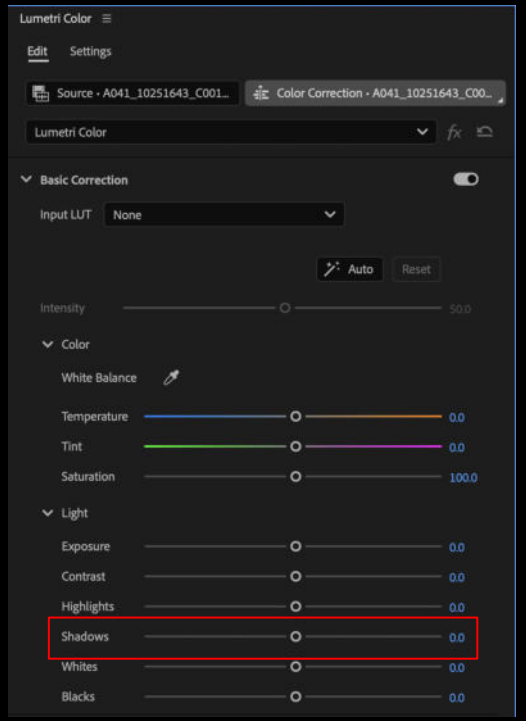
Shadows

The ***Shadows*** slider lets you adjust the darkest parts of your footage, like the deep blacks and dim areas.

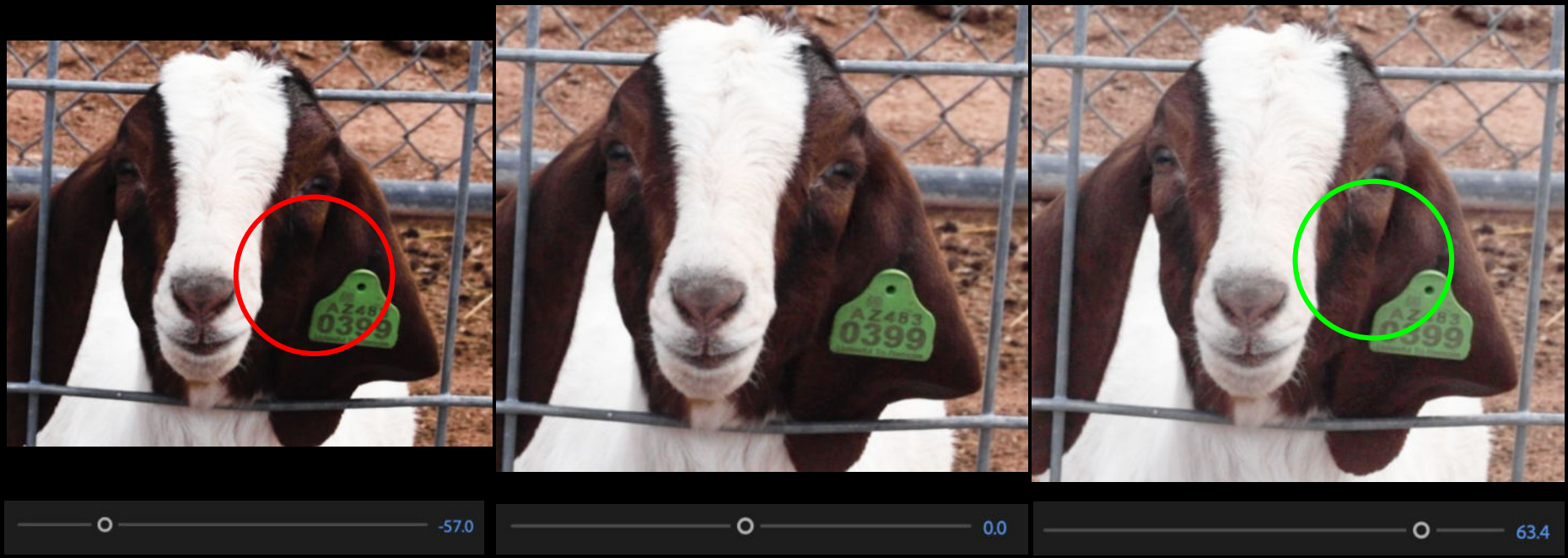
Moving the slider to the left makes the shadows darker, adding more contrast and depth to the image, while moving it to the right brightens them, revealing **details** that might have been hidden in the darker areas.

To use it effectively, first look at the ***Waveform Scope*** to ensure the shadows aren't too dark*(clipping to pure black)* or too bright*(losing contrast)*.

Adjust the slider until the shadows look natural and balanced, keeping in mind the mood you're trying to create—darker shadows can feel dramatic, while lighter shadows can make the scene feel softer and more open.



Shadows



Example of the effect of changing the Shadows.
*Notice that when you go to the **left**, you start losing details in the darker areas!*
*When you move the slider to the **right**, you start recovering some of the details in the dark areas.*

Whites

The ***Whites*** slider adjusts the brightest parts of your video, helping you fine-tune the highlights and bring out more detail in the brightest areas.

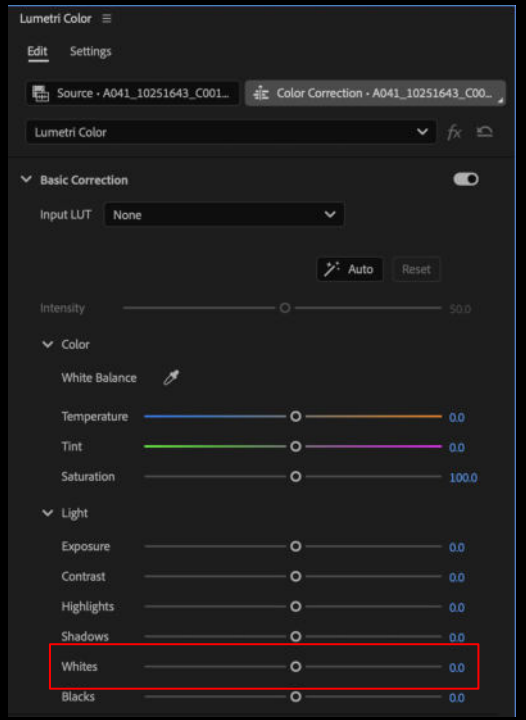
Increasing the Whites slider makes the brightest parts of the image brighter, which can add more contrast and make your footage pop.

Lowering it reduces the intensity of the highlights, which can help if the bright areas are too harsh or overexposed.

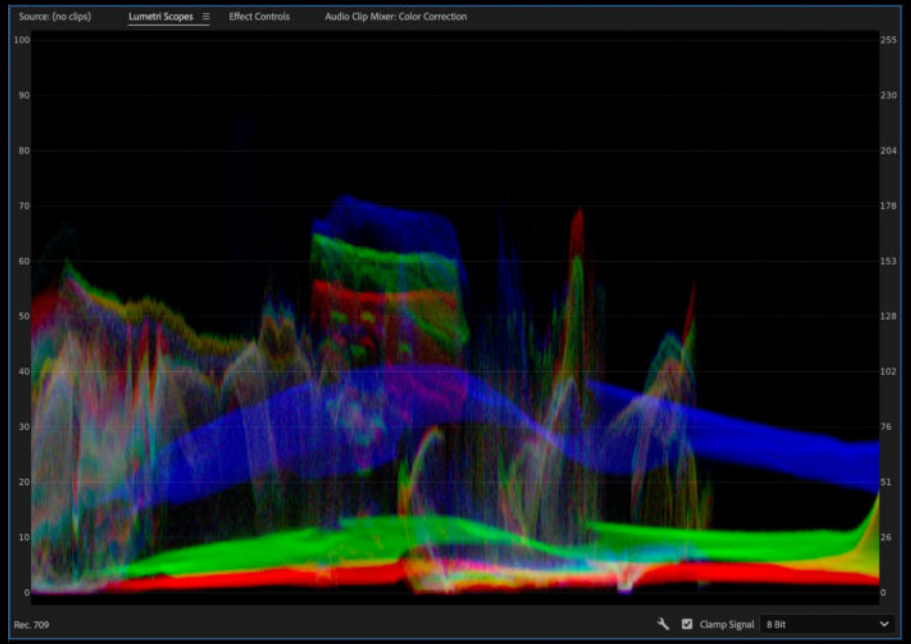
To use it, drag the slider to the right to brighten the whites or to the left to dim them.

Keep an eye on the Waveform Scope as you adjust—this ensures you don't *"clip"(lose detail)* in the highlights, which happens when parts of the graph hit the top of the scope.

This simple adjustment can make your footage look more balanced and professional.



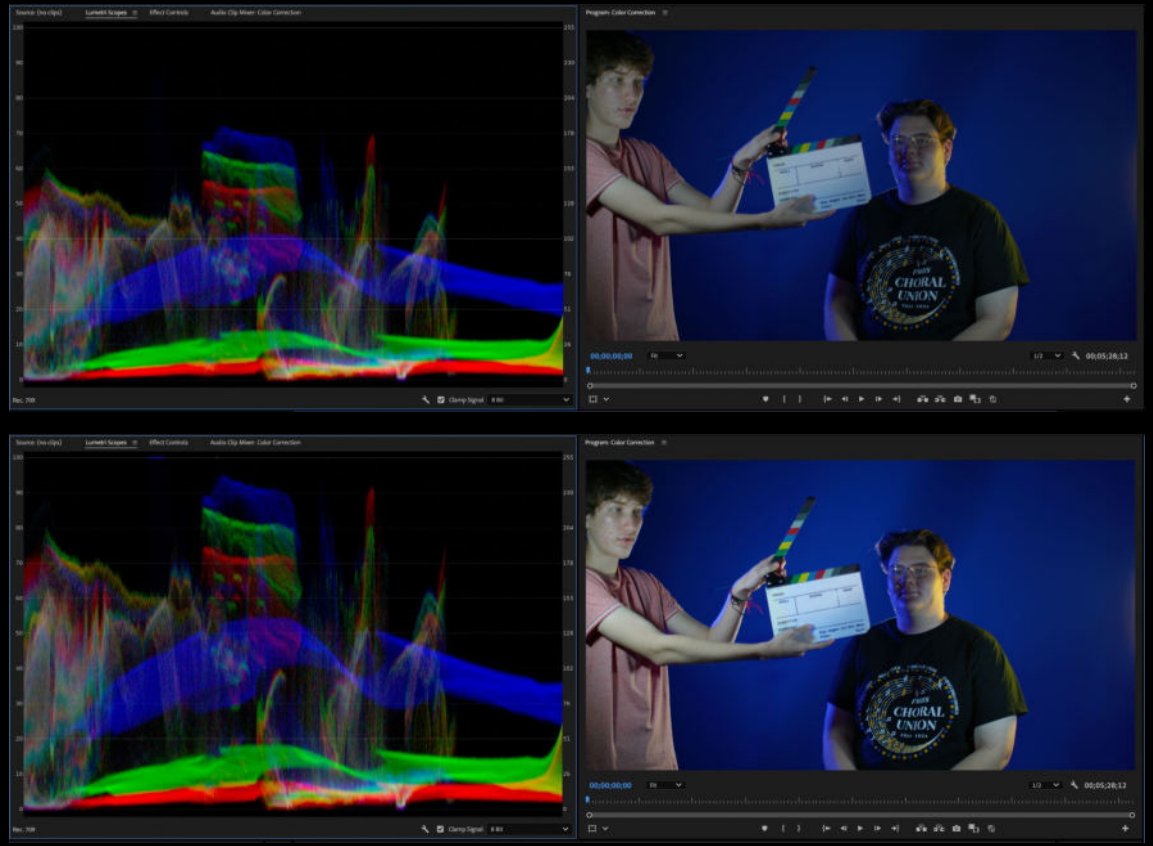
Whites



If the Lumetri Scopes is similar to the example shown here, it means your image is dark.

Bringing the ***Whites*** slider to the right will bring the waveform up towards 100*(don't exceed 100)*, which will help balance your exposure.

Whites



Example of the effect from just adjusting the Whites slider to the right.

Blacks

The ***Blacks*** slider controls the darkest parts of your footage, also known as the shadows or the deepest black tones.

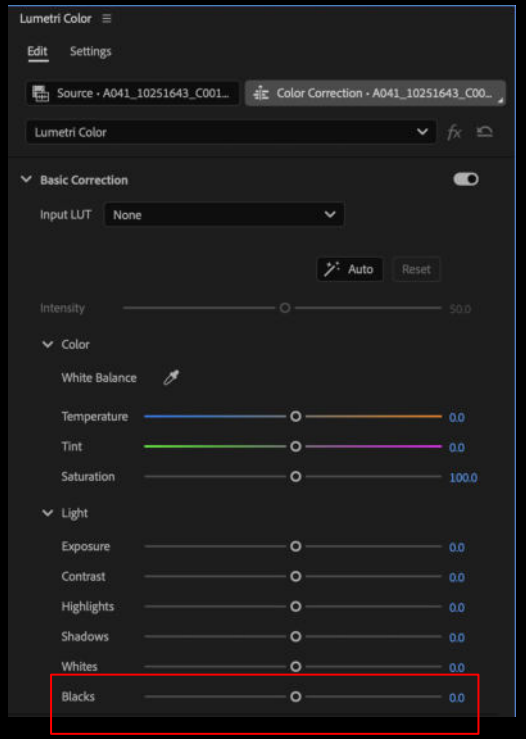
Adjusting this slider lets you set how dark the darkest areas of your video should be.

If you move the slider to the left, the shadows become *darker*, adding contrast and depth.

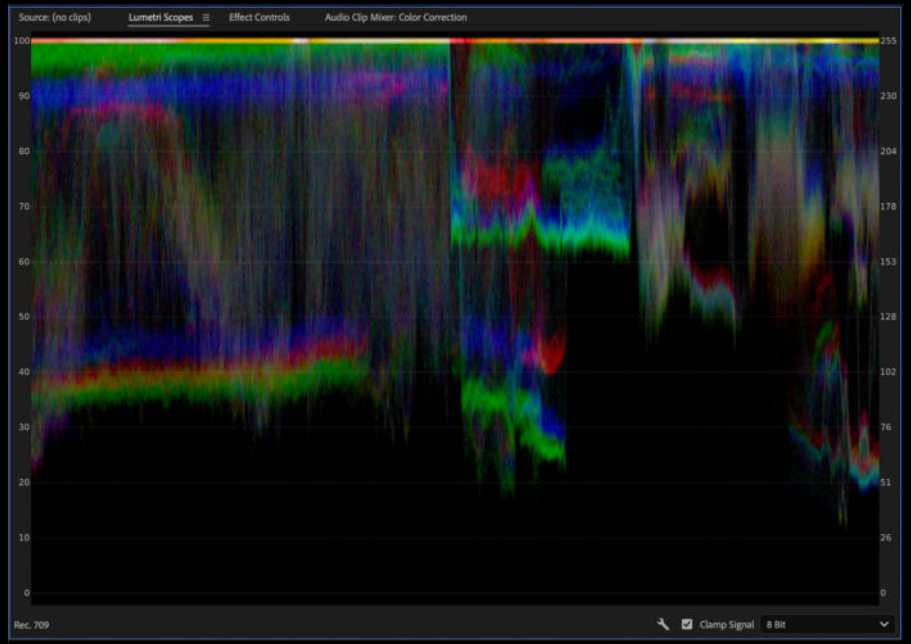
If you move it to the right, the shadows *lighten*, which can help recover detail in underexposed areas.

Look for the shadows dipping close to, but not crushing below, the 0 line on the waveform, as this ensures your blacks are rich but not losing detail.

This is a key step in making your footage look balanced and professional!



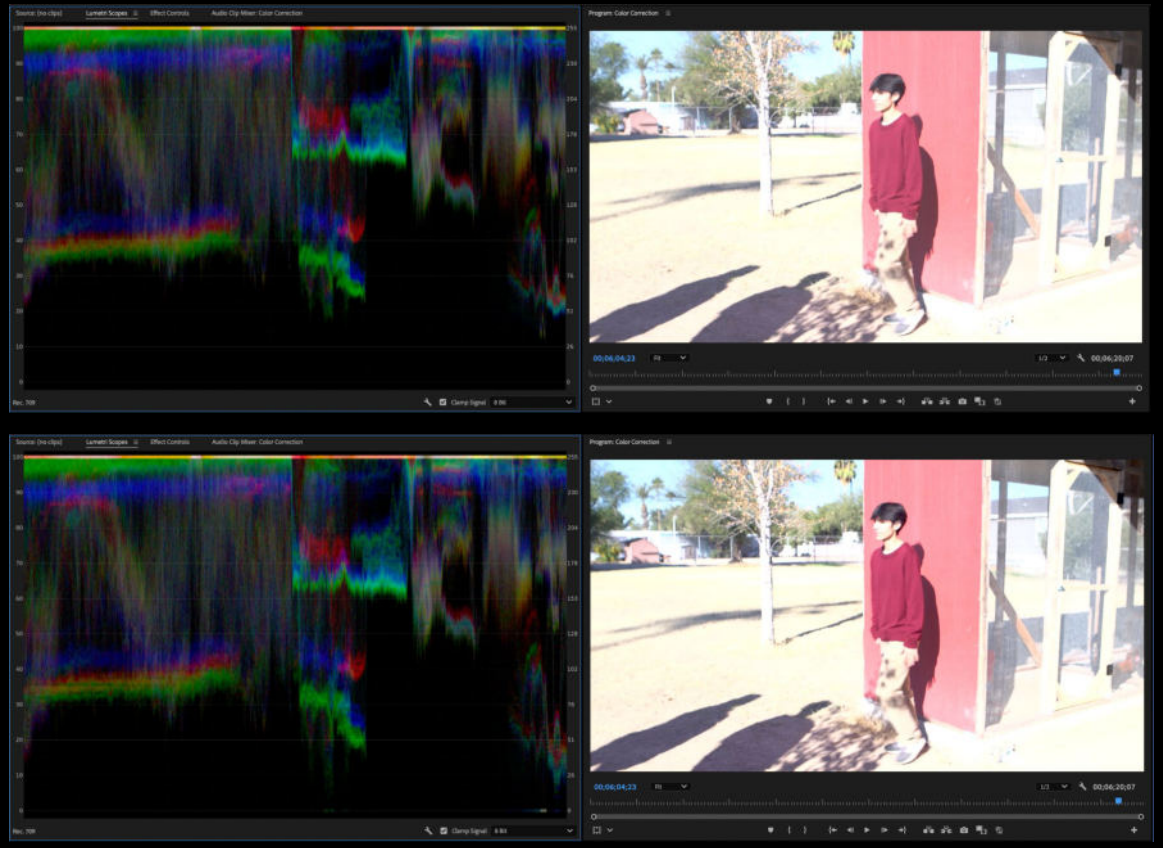
Blacks



If the Lumetri Scopes is similar to the example shown here, it means your image is too bright.

Bringing the ***Blacks*** slider to the left will bring the waveform down towards 0*(don't exceed 0)*, which will help balance your exposure.

Blacks



Example of the effect from just adjusting the Blacks slider to the left.

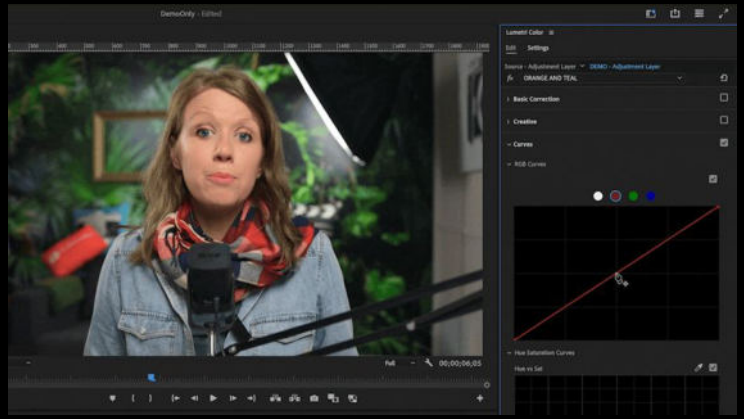
Curves

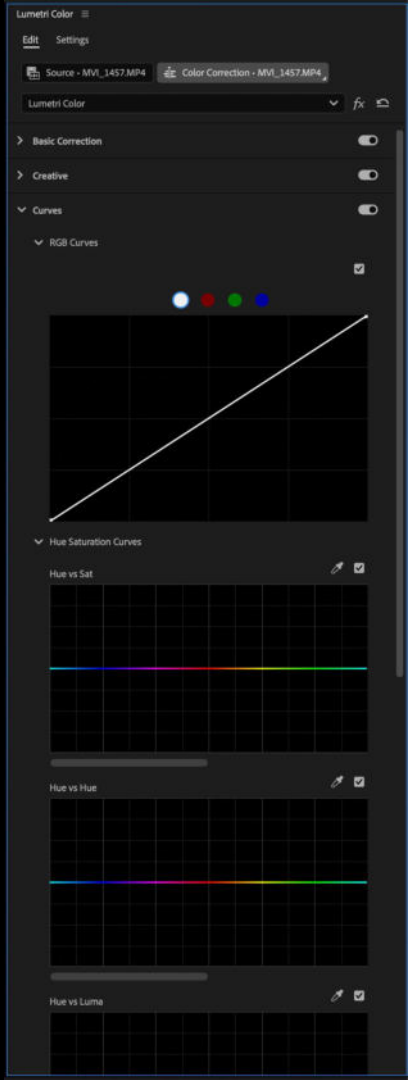
Curves

The ***Curves*** section is a powerful tool for fine-tuning the brightness and color of specific parts of your footage.

It works by using a graph where the horizontal axis represents the input*(your original footage)* and the vertical axis represents the output*(how it looks after adjustment)*.

By adding points to the curve and dragging them, you can control how bright or dark different parts of your image are.





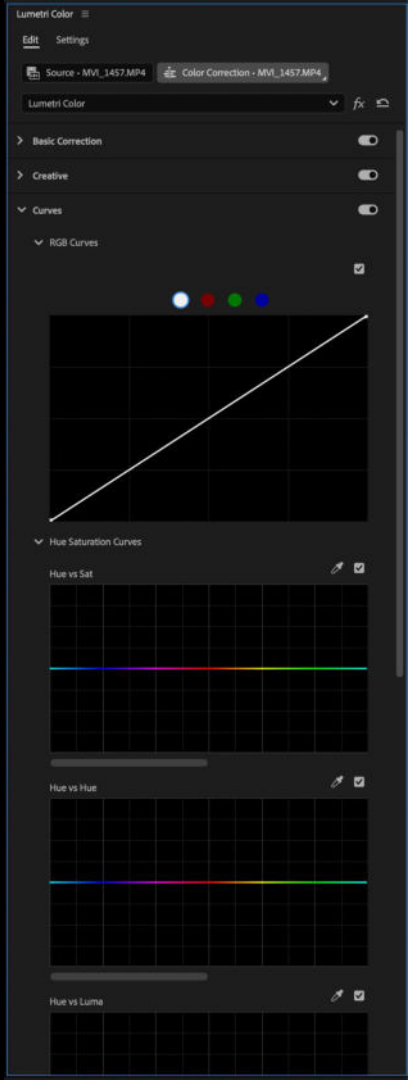
Curves

- ***RGB Curves***: Adjust the overall brightness and contrast.
  - For example, making an "S" shape on the curve increases contrast by brightening highlights and darkening shadows.
- ***Hue vs Saturation***: Adjust the intensity of specific colors.
  - For example, you can make reds more vibrant or tone down overly bright greens.
- ***Hue vs Hue***: Change one color to another, like shifting blue tones to teal.
- ***Hue vs Luma***: Adjust the brightness of specific colors.
- ***Luma vs Saturation***: Add or reduce saturation based on brightness levels, like toning down bright skies without affecting shadows.

Choose the adjustment type you need, and click to add points to the curve.

Drag these points up, down, left, or right to create subtle or dramatic changes.

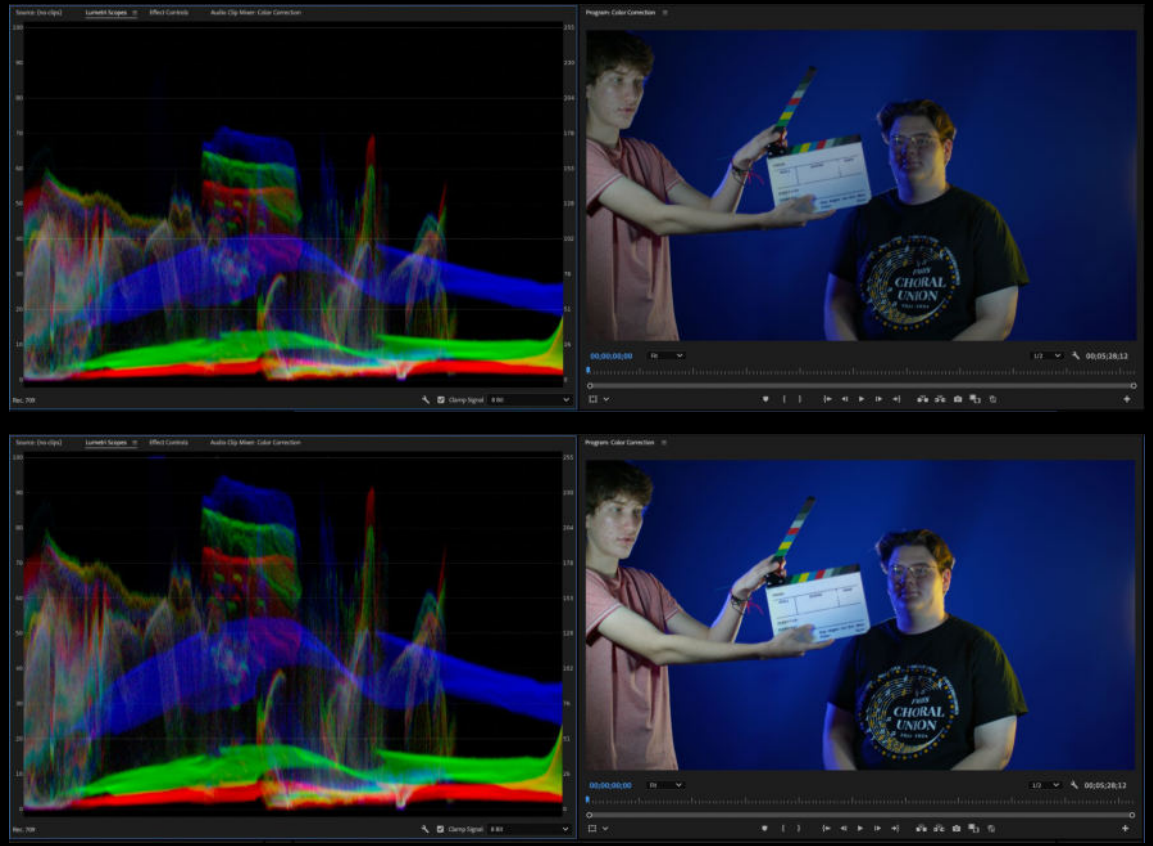
It’s great for precise, targeted edits that make your footage look polished and professional.




HOW TO USE
CURVES
IN PREMIERE PRO
Pr
RGB Curves

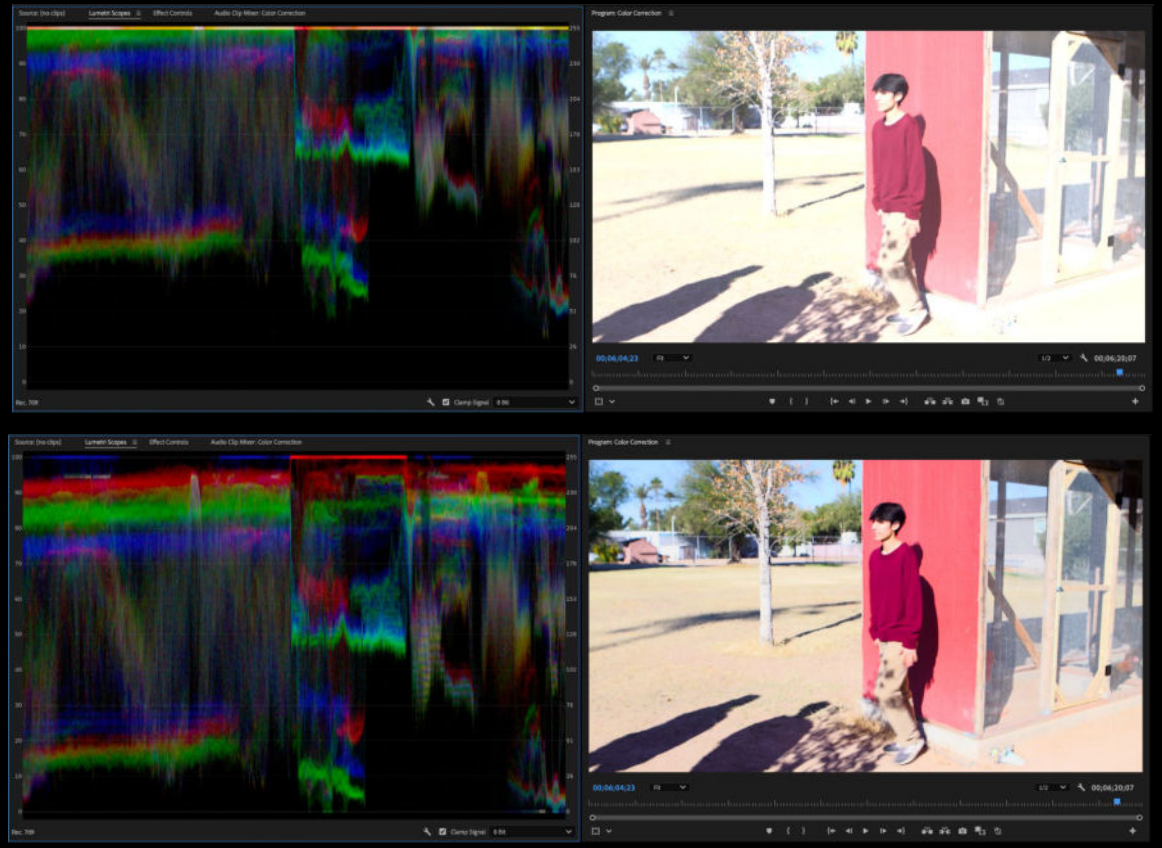
Examples of Corrections

Original Versus Color Corrected



Example of the effect from using all sliders.

Original Versus Color Corrected

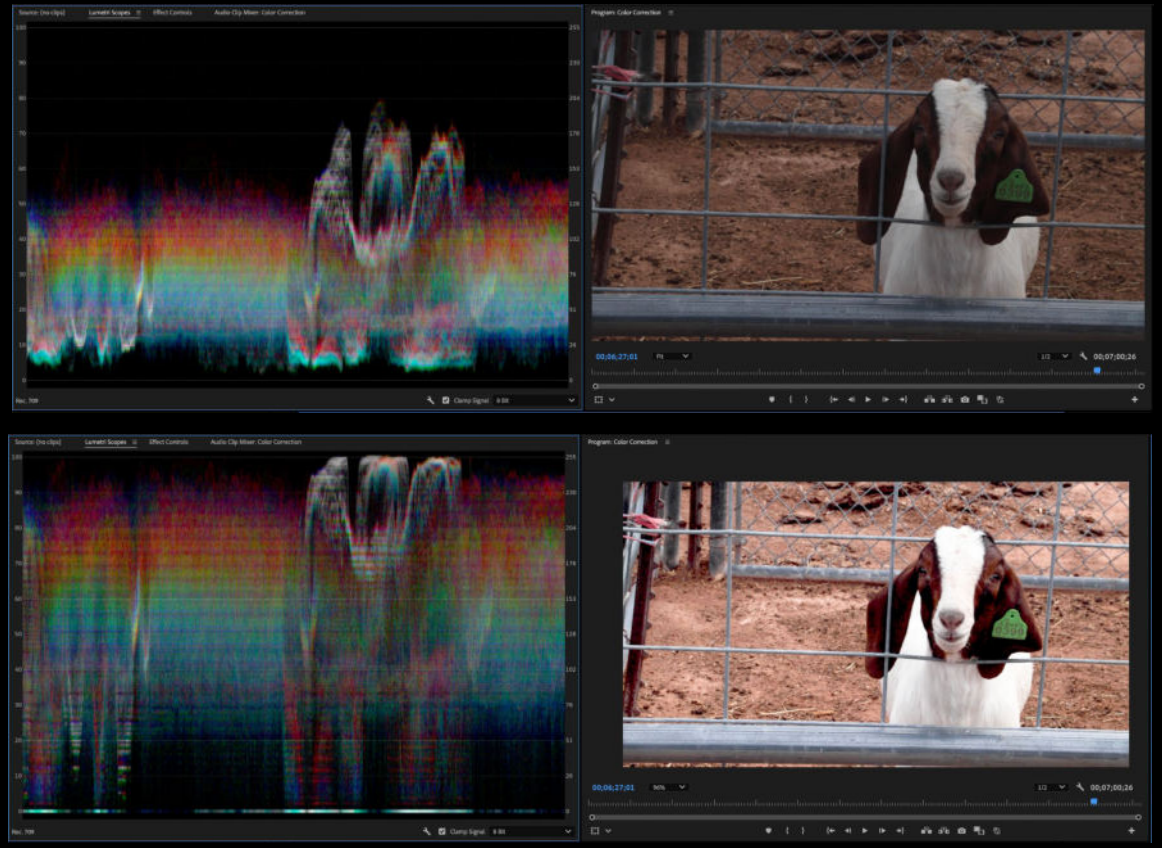


Example of the effect from using all sliders.

Original Versus Color Corrected

Example of the effect from using all sliders.

Original Versus Color Corrected



Example of the effect from using all sliders.

Color Grading

Should only be done with intent and after you've already done Color Correction

Creative Look Presets

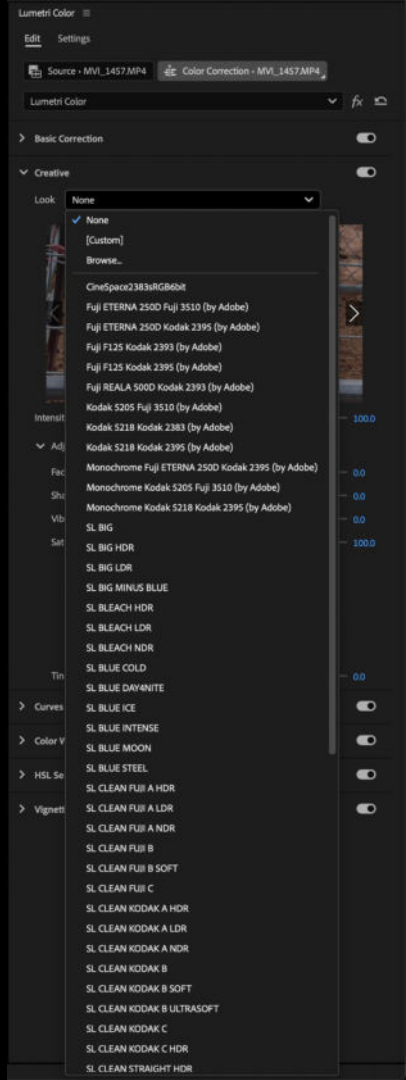
The ***Creative Looks*** options allow you to quickly add a unique style or mood to your footage by applying pre-made color presets, often referred to as "looks."

These presets enhance the visual tone of your video, like making it feel warmer, cooler, or more cinematic.

Click on the ***Look drop-down menu***, choose a preset from the list, and it will instantly apply to your footage.

You can adjust the ***Intensity slider*** to control how strong or subtle the look appears.

Creative Looks are great for quickly testing different styles or setting a consistent tone across your project, but remember they are customizable—feel free to tweak other color settings to make the look fit your vision perfectly.



Adjustment Layers

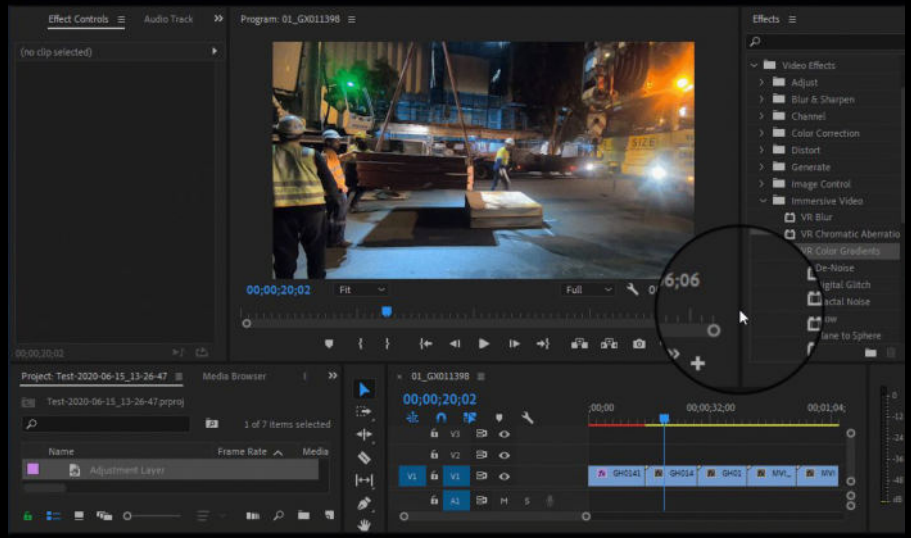
Allows you to make adjustments across multiple clips

Adjustment Layers

Putting an adjustment layer over multiple clips and either adding an effect or color adjustment on the adjustment layer will have it be in effect to all the clips that the adjustment layer is over.

You can right click in the Program Panel and click on **New** and then **Adjustment Layer**, or click on the **New Item** icon at the bottom right of the Program Panel and select **Adjustment Layer.**

If you have multiple areas that you need to fix but it's different changes, you need to have multiple adjustment layers.



Copy & Paste

Copying color corrections from one clip to another is a quick way to maintain consistency across your project.

Once you've applied and adjusted your color corrections to a clip using the ***Lumetri Color panel***, follow these steps:

1. ***Select the Clip with Corrections***: Click on the clip in the timeline that has the color corrections you want to copy.
2. ***Copy the Adjustments***: Press ⌘ + ***C*** to ***copy*** the clip.
3. ***Paste Attributes to Another Clip***: Select the clip you want to apply the corrections to, then ***right-click*** it in the timeline and choose ***Paste Attributes*** from the menu.
4. ***Confirm the Settings***: A dialog box will appear. Ensure ***Lumetri Color*** is checked*(along with any other effects you want to copy)*, then click ***OK***.
    a. Be careful with the other things checked when you paste effects from one clip to another. If the first clip had other effects on it, they will also be applied to the new clip, not just the color correction.

The same color adjustments will now be applied to the new clip.

This technique is especially helpful when working on a sequence with multiple shots from the same scene, ensuring a consistent look without needing to manually re-apply the corrections to each clip.

Conclusion

Think about the projects you've already made. What was the color like in it? How about the exposure? What are some takeaways from the lesson we had that would have changed those projects, that you will definitely use in the future?

Discuss with your neighbors and be prepared to share with the class.