Five Ways To Add Shading and Lighting in GIMP

Chapters

Chapter 1

Using Black and White

Layer Modes:

When I'm coloring a picture I'm doing one of these two things: I'm either coloring via a selection or I'm coloring something on a transparent layer with no background underneath; How I'm doing this effects the "exact" way I use black and white.
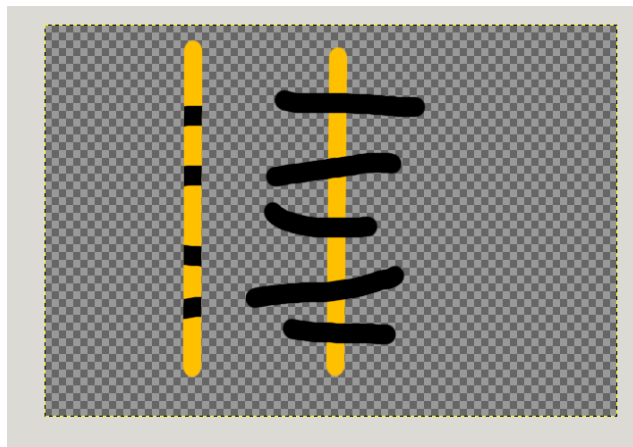
Via Selection:

If I'm coloring something that I have selected (like a line art or a solid base to an object) I will use normal for both black and white (when not using overlay – I'll get in to that later) ; The reason for this, is because with black and white the layer modes "Screen" and "Multiply" don't do anything different if an image is selected than from the "Normal" layer mode.
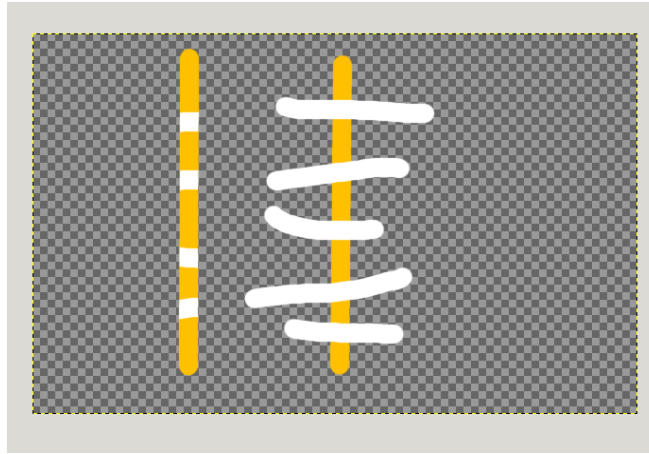
Freestyle

If I am coloring something freestyle (no selections) then I will use "Multiply" and "Screen" (when not using overlay); The reason I use these two layer modes is because when I'm coloring free style the color will not appear beyond where I want.

Here's an Example:

The Line where the black cuts off , I used a layer over it and did multiply layer mode; The line with the black lines not stopping I did a layer over it with normal. The same applies to Screen:
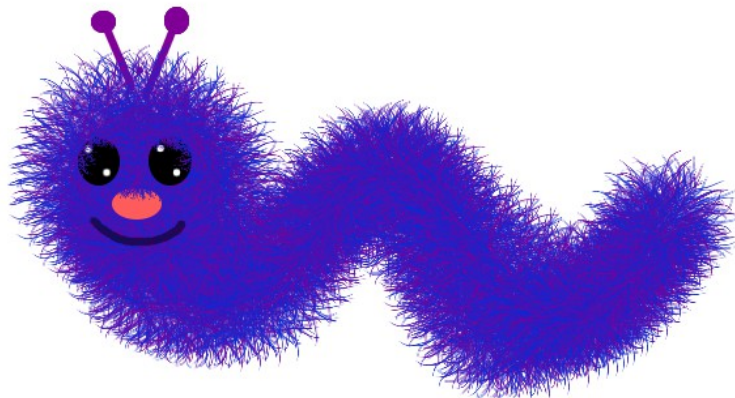

If these were selected, for the colors black and white the two layer modes are pointless, normal works just the same. - And if this had a background image of any kind it would apply behind it, that's why I use a transparent layer.

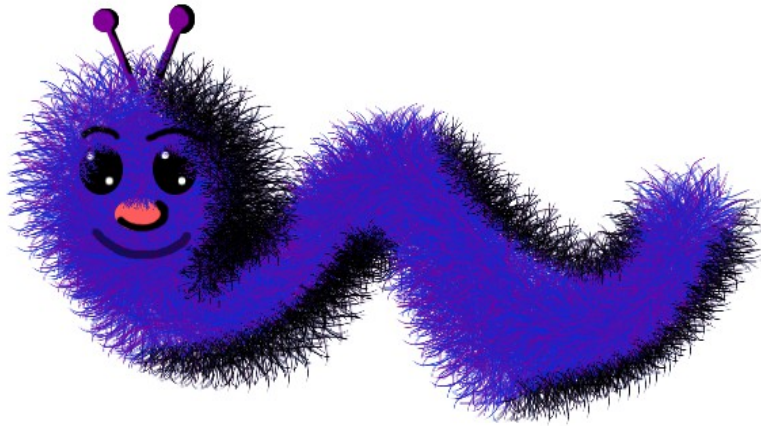Okay, now that I've said the layer modes, lets move on to make these look like shadows and lights!

Adding Lighting:

First you pick out which method you want to use with layer modes I'm going to go with Multiply-Screen Method.
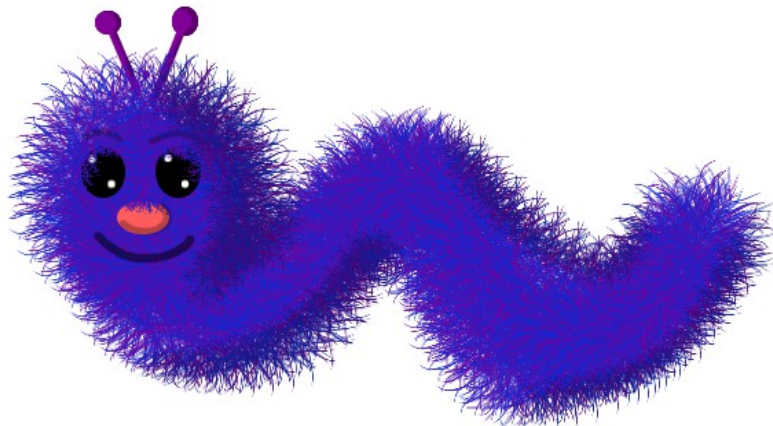
1: Go to the image that needs shading, if it's on a transparent layer make sure only what you want shaded is visible; I'm going to use this little caterpillar for this, I shall name him Carlos Caterpillar:

2: Make a new transparent layer over your image and make the layer mode "Multiply", get black and pick out where you want your shadows and add them.
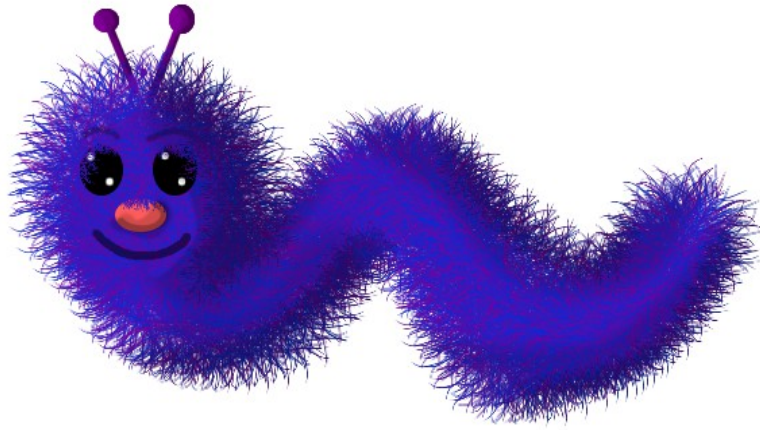

3: This doesn't look much like shading at this stage; To make it look like shading go over to the transparency bar for layers and turn it down until it's the desired depth you like.

Depending on the style and depth you're aiming for you can repeat this step on more layers.

I repeated with one more layer just to show you.
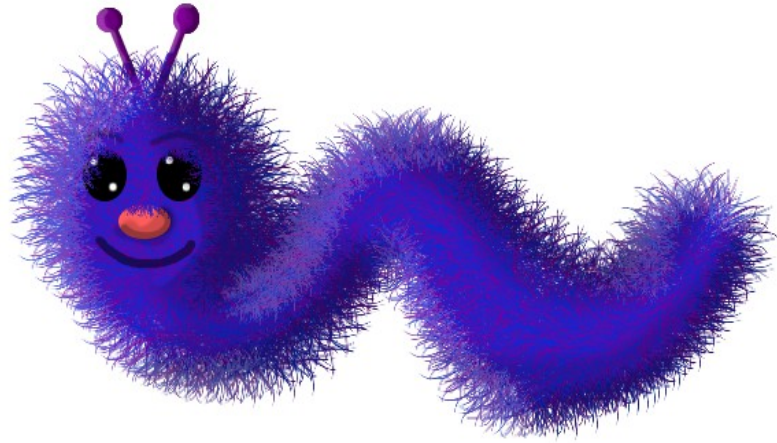
Next I'll move on to adding lighting:

All steps are the same except use Screen Layer Mode.

1: Go to the image that needs shading, if it's on a transparent layer make sure only what you want shaded is visible.

2: Make a new transparent layer over your image and make the layer mode "Screen", get white and pick out where you want your lighting to go and add it.

3: Like with the black the white doesn't look much like lighting at this stage, to turn down transparency again!

And with this method you're done! You can add more layers of either color with the method until you get the depth you want.
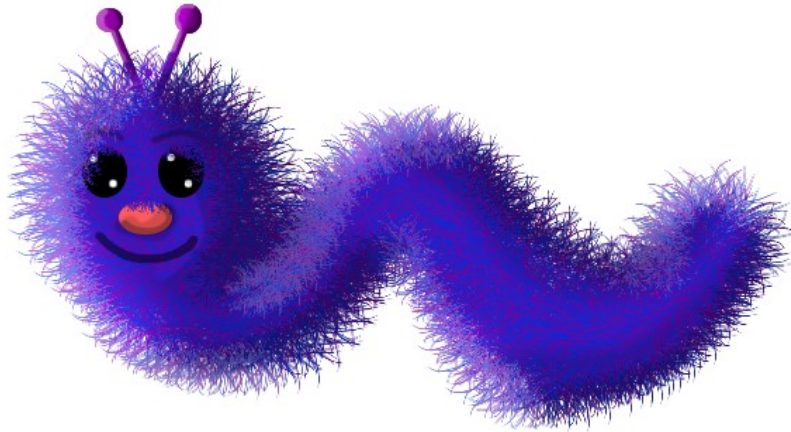
Chapter 2

Using Overlay

When shading I very often use overlay to make shadows or texture, I'll show you how to add more depth to Carlos the Caterpillar using overlay! - Note: The colors Red and Purple are actually the worse colors for overlay that I've noticed. - Ironically Carlos is purple...Yes I'm brilliant.!

1: Get your object you want to shade, see that it's on a transparent layer and the only layer/s that you want to shade are selected (just so we don't shade the wrong things!), and make the layer-mode "Overlay".

2: Next, select white for the lighting and add lighting where you want, and play with transparency until you like it.

You can add other colors and as many layers as you want.

I added a golden color on a new layer using overlay to show you!

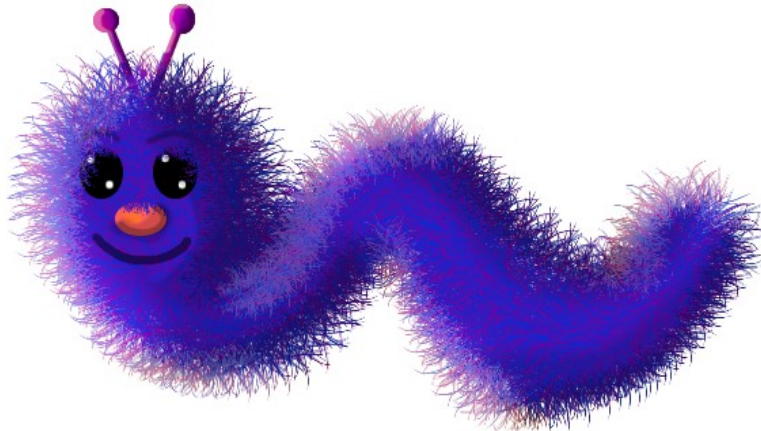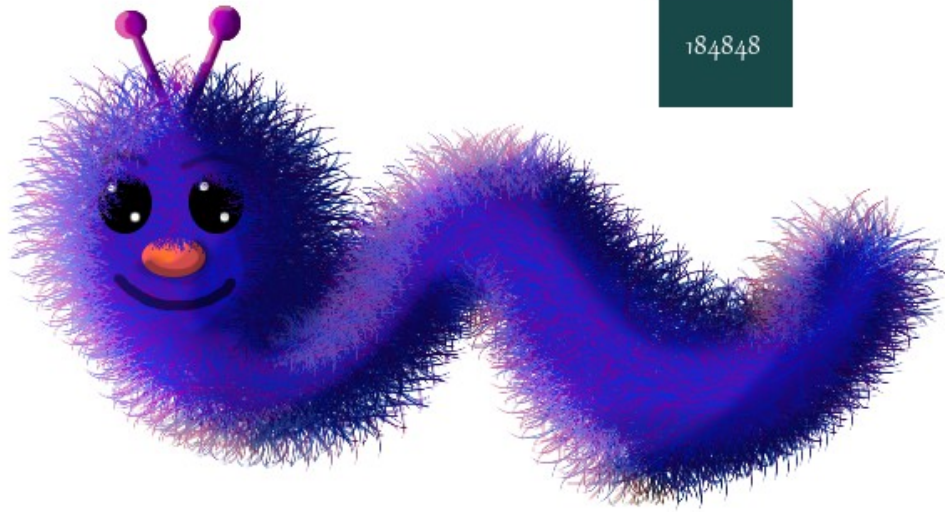Next Shadows. - Same steps only you're aiming for Shadows not Light.

1: Get your object you want to shade, see that it's on a transparent layer and the only layer/s that you want to shade are selected (just so we don't shade the wrong things!), and make the layer-mode "Overlay".

2: Next, select a color you want to shade with and add shadows where you want, and play with transparency until you like it.

I put the color and HTML notation to name it since I'm not sure what color that is to be honest...

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You can do this as many times as you want until you like it.

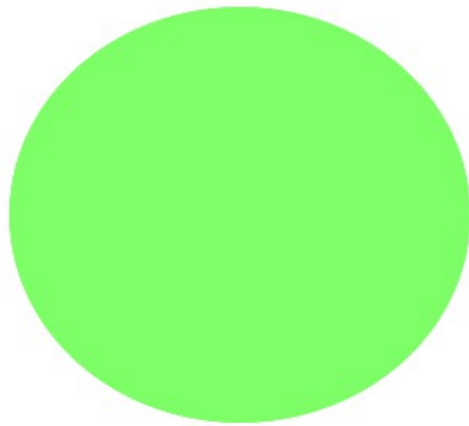And there's Carlos! Hi Carlos!

Chapter 3

Using Brush Modes

Using Brush Modes is a good way to use less layers but still get good shading depth.

The technique works by shading on the same layer as your object but using either: Normal, Multiply, Screen, or Overlay along with

turning the brush transparency down to layer the color over itself causing depth.
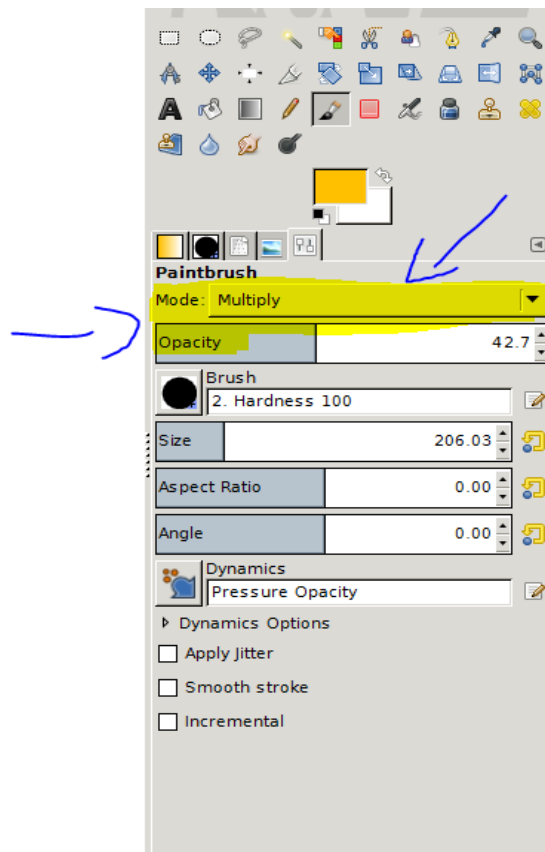
Here's how to do this technique.

I will be using a circle to show how to do a simple shading/lighting demonstration.

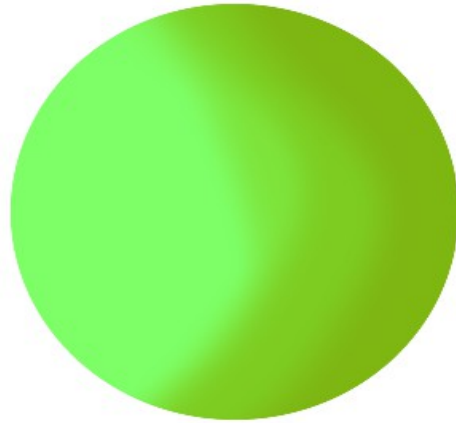**Step One:** Pick out a color to shade your object, I'll be using this circle:

I'm going to use multiply to start the shading process, and I picked out a golden color and turn the transparency down in the brush menu to 42 to give more range of depth when I repeat adding shadows.

Step Two: Add shadows where you want there to be on your object, when doing it you may repeat the shadings as wanted and/or needed
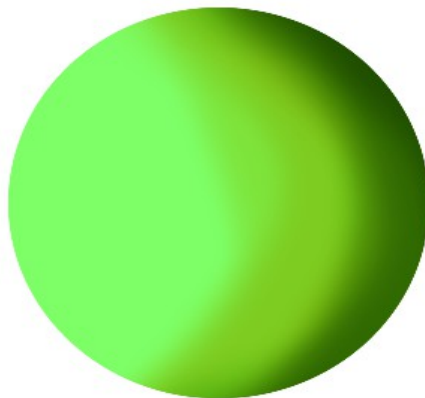
until you like them. - I did 3 shadow strokes.

Remember to be selected if it's a busy layer so you don't shade things other than what you want to; if it's a layer with one thing on it (like my circle) selection isn't needed just a transparent layer.

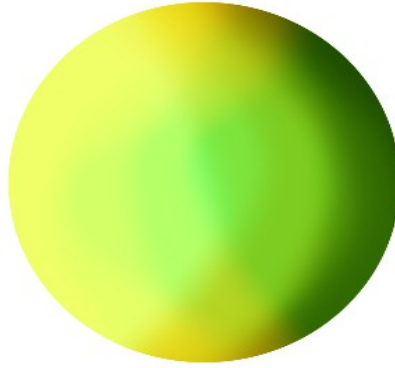Okay now lets add a little more depth.

Step Three: Get black and change the brush mode to overlay, and add some more shade on the far edge. - I still have my transparency down.

Now lets add some lighting.

Step Four: Get a lighter color to add lighting and change the brush mode to screen. I picked out orange.

Now add your lighting, you can go over it multiple times, I went over it 3 times.

I kept my transparency down the whole time so I had a bit more range, I suggest keeping it lower for more range often.

Okay lets just put a final touch of lighting and shade to this...

Step Five: Get white and keep layer-mode on screen and go over the edge, then get black put layer mode on multiply and go over on big shadow where the shade is.

Not the best artistic feat, but it gets the point across! This was all done on one layer, instead of ten or more. Depending on what you're doing this isn't fully ideal but it's a good technique nontheless1

Chapter 4

Using The Same Color With Multiply On A New Layer

A good way to add shading to images like cartoons is to shade with the same color as the base but use multiply on a new transparent layer over it. Some colors this doesn't work at all, I'm not sure if it's a bug in GIMP or some kind of scientific thing.

Some shades of Medium Blue, Cyan, Light Yellow, Standard Red, and Light Greens all are buggy with this and don't get darker. For these colors you'll have to get a color a little bit darker and shade with that one.

Not all blues are picky, you'll have to play with it a bit.

I'll use this example of a smiley face to shade using this technique. Notice that he's darker yellow.

Step One: Get your object you want to shade and make a new layer over it and set it to multiply.

Step Two: Get the base color of you object. - Use the "Color Picker Tool" if you don't have the color in your list of recently used colors. Now get the color and go over your object in the new layer you made that's set on multiply. You will notice in most cases the image will get darker.

Now there are 3 ways to add more depth from here.

1: You can keep making layers set on multiply to add depth

2: You can use the brush mode technique with the first shadow layer and use a lot less layers and still get depth.

3: You can overlay with black on a new layer and move transparency around until you like it.

I personally don't have a favorite way I go how I'm inspired, but I think the most efficient way if you have a slower computer/laptop would be using 2 most of the way then going with 3. Less layers means a faster GIMP.
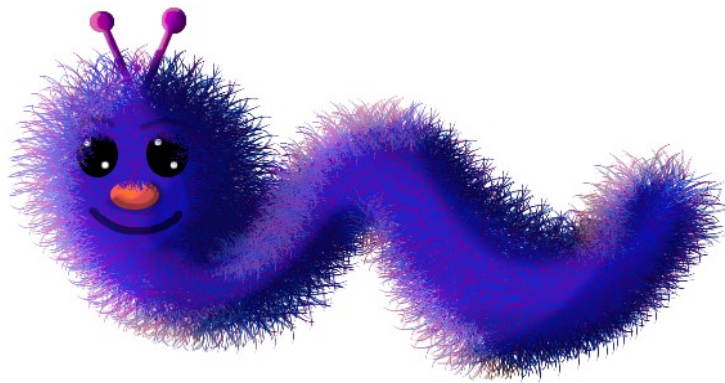
Chapter 5

Using a Gradient

The final way to add shade in this and atmosphere "Tutorial/Lesson" is using a Gradient.

When I'm coloring an image like an anime/manga image I'll add an overlay of black to white over image to add directional lighting to faces and clothes.

I shall show this briefly; Lets say hello to Carlos again!

<u>Here is Carlos before a gradient:</u>

Here is Carlos after I overlayed a black to white gradient going the direction of the lighting; So black staring at his "tail" and white at his

head.

<u>Now let me give Carlos a little background to show atmosphere.</u>

Okay so he's in a little background, now let me overlay a black to white gradient.

I overlayed the gradient, now there is more of a lighting direction indicated.

Now look what happens when I overlay another gradient.

I picked out yellow and purple and selected "FG to BG (HSV clockwise hue)".

Now there is color and atmosphere, it looks almost like it's sunset or sunrise because the overlaying colors give a glow to the image.

I do this often with images at the end to make them come together!

Just a little extra tip I added a lens flare but erased the "sun" part and just kept the flare circles and turned opacity down; Then made a new layer put white and smudged in a radial pattern and turned opacity down.

I hope this was helpful and informative for people. - God Bless!   ~ Firefly ~