

Level 1 Workbook

Every "Do it" exercise from Lessons 1.1–1.7, plus the Level 1 capstone brief, checklist and rubric — with checkboxes and a completion sign-off.

Learner name _____

Start date _____

Resolve version _____

How to use this workbook. Work through the lessons in order — each page mirrors that lesson's "Do it" section verbatim, with the scope or check the lesson asks you to confirm. Tick each box as you complete it. There's a notes strip on every page for what you saw on the scopes. Finish with the capstone (page 9) and the sign-off (page 10).

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1.1 Meet the image

Change exposure, contrast, saturation and white balance, and actually see what each one does to a shot.

Do it

- Drop the clip on a timeline and open the **Color** page.
- Find the **Primaries** palette. Move **only** exposure/lift-gamma-gain first: darken the shot until the face is too dark, then brighten it until it blows out, then settle it where the face looks right. Watch what "together" means.
- Now push **contrast** up and down. Notice the darks and brights moving apart and together.
- Push **saturation** to zero (black and white), then way up (sunburn), then back to something believable.
- Slide **temperature** warm then cool, then **tint** green then magenta, until neutral things look neutral.
- Reset, then do it again in the correct order: **exposure** → **contrast** → **white balance** → **saturation**. Screenshot your before and after.

You can move on when you can... take any single shot and, in the correct order, set its exposure, contrast, white balance and saturation so the picture reads as *correct* — and explain out loud what each control changed.

NOTES — WHAT YOU SAW

1.2 Scopes

Read the waveform, RGB parade, vectorscope and histogram; spot clipping, crushing and color casts numerically instead of guessing.

Do it

- Open the **Color** page, drop any clip on the timeline, and open the **Scopes** panel (the icon top-right, or the expand button → four-up view).
- Set the four boxes to **Waveform, Parade, Vectorscope, Histogram** — click each box's title to change it. Keep the waveform on the **Y** channel.
- Turn on **Display Qualifier Focus** (three-dot menu → *Display Qualifier Focus*), then hover over a bright highlight, a shadow, and a face. Watch the highlighted spot jump around each scope.
- In the vectorscope's menu, turn on **Show Skin Tone Indicator**. Find a shot with a face and see where the skin lands relative to the line.
- Push **gain** up until the top of the waveform flattens against the ceiling — that's **clipping**. Pull **lift** down until the bottom flattens — that's **crushing**. Reset.
- Find a real clip in your own footage that is *already* clipping or crushing and identify it on the scope.

You can move on when you can... open the scopes on any clip and say out loud, without touching a control, whether it is clipping, crushing, or carrying a color cast — and point to the scope that told you.

NOTES — WHAT YOU SAW

1.3 Primaries

A full primary correction with the wheels and bars: lift, gamma, gain, offset, contrast and pivot — the tools that move the whole image.

Do it

- On the **Color** page, grab a flat-looking clip and open the **Primaries** palette with the scopes visible (waveform + parade).
- Start on **offset**: set overall brightness with the slider so the mid-tones sit sensibly, then use the ring to pull out the obvious color cast until the parade columns roughly line up.
- Move to **lift / gamma / gain**: drop lift to set your blacks, lift gain to set your whites, nudge gamma so the face sits right. Watch the bottom, top and middle of the waveform respond.
- Add **contrast**. When it goes too dark or too bright, fix it with **pivot** — don't undo the contrast.
- Add a small amount of **saturation** to finish. Toggle the node off/on (click its number) to compare against the original.
- Now do the same shot again using the **bars** instead of the wheels, to feel the difference.

You can move on when you can... take a flat clip and, using only primaries in order (offset → lift/gamma/gain → contrast/pivot → saturation), make it correct — and name what each control changed and where you saw it on the scopes.

NOTES — WHAT YOU SAW

1.4 Nodes 101

Build a labeled serial node tree with one job per node — the habit that keeps every grade you ever do organized and reversible.

Do it

- On a clip, do your exposure work on **node 1** and label it *Exposure*.
- Add a serial node (Alt/Option-S), label it *Balance*, and do your white-balance fix there.
- Add another for *Contrast*, and a fourth for *Sat* (saturation).
- Now play: click each node's number to toggle it off and on. Watch the image lose just that one job. Reset the *Contrast* node (right-click → *Reset Node*) and confirm the others survive untouched.
- Middle-click-drag to reposition nodes if the layout gets messy — moving them on screen does **not** change the order; the connecting wires do.
- Screenshot your labeled four-node tree. That's a professional's minimum.

You can move on when you can... build a labeled serial tree with one job per node, toggle any single node off to show what it did, and explain why the order of the chain matters.

NOTES — WHAT YOU SAW

1.5 Log, LUTs & normalization

Recognize flat log footage and normalize it correctly with a Color Space Transform or Resolve Color Management.

Do it – Recipe A: the CST node (do this one first)

- Drop a log clip on the timeline – confirm it looks flat and grey.
- On the Color page, add a serial node as your **first** node and label it *Normalize*.
- Add the **Color Space Transform** OpenFX to that node. Set **Input Color Space** and **Input Gamma** to your camera's log (e.g. S-Log3 / S-Gamut3.Cine), and **Output** to **Rec.709 / Gamma 2.4**.
- Watch it snap to a correct, neutral image. Check the waveform – blacks near the floor, whites near the top, nothing slammed.
- Now grade, on nodes after the normalize node, using everything from 1.3.

Do it – Recipe B: RCM (set once)

- On a fresh timeline: *Project Settings* → *Color Management* → *Color Science: DaVinci YRGB Color Managed*, Output color space **Rec.709 Gamma 2.4**. Tag each clip's input space (right-click the clip → *Input Color Space*). Everything normalizes automatically.
- Prove the point: apply a **creative** LUT to raw log with no normalization, watch it clip and go wrong, and compare against the same LUT applied *after* a proper CST.

You can move on when you can... spot log footage on sight, normalize it with a CST node or RCM to a correct Rec.709 image verified on the waveform, and explain why slapping a creative LUT on un-normalized log is the wrong move.

NOTES – WHAT YOU SAW

1.6 Balancing a shot (the workflow)

Exposure → contrast → white balance → saturation, as one repeatable workflow, verified on scopes. This is the Level 1 gate.

Do it

- Grab a single unbalanced shot (normalize first if it's log). Build a four-node tree: *Exposure, Contrast, Balance, Sat*.
- Exposure:** set the level on offset, confirm on the waveform — nothing clipped or crushed.
- Contrast:** add punch, fix brightness with pivot, watch the waveform.
- Balance:** neutralize on the parade until the channels align; check the vectorscope and skin-tone line.
- Saturation:** a small push, confirmed on the vectorscope.
- Grab a still** into the gallery. Move to a second shot from the same scene, pull a **wipe compare** against the still, and balance the second to match the first.
- Toggle your whole grade off/on (Shift-D) to see the before/after. Screenshot it.

You can move on when you can... take any single shot and balance it in order — exposure, contrast, white balance, saturation — on a labeled node tree, verify each step on the correct scope, and grab a still to wipe-match the next shot. **This is the Level 1 gate.** When you can do it reliably, you're ready for the Level 1 capstone (page 9 of this workbook).

NOTES — WHAT YOU SAW

Render your graded work out of Resolve at the correct levels and codec.

Do it

- Grade or balance a short timeline, then open the **Deliver** page.
- Click the **H.264** preset. Set the format to MP4, resolution and frame rate to match your timeline, and give it a filename and location.
- Check **Audio** is on (AAC). Leave data levels on **Auto** for now.
- Save as a new render preset** — call it *YouTube 1080 H.264*.
- Add to the render queue and render. Then **play the exported file** outside Resolve and compare it to the Resolve viewer — confirm the blacks and whites match (that's your levels check).
- Now add a second output: a **ProRes** (or DNxHR) master of the same timeline, and render both in one pass.
- Bonus: before rendering, filter the Deliver page for **ungraded clips** to prove the habit.

You can move on when you can... export a graded timeline at the correct codec, resolution, frame rate and levels, verify the delivered file matches what you saw in Resolve, and save your settings as a reusable preset.

NOTES — WHAT YOU SAW

That completes Level 1. Next, prove it on the following page: the **Level 1 capstone — Balance a scene**.



Level 1 capstone — Balance a scene

Gate: balance one shot. The capstone proves it at scene scale — balance five mixed shots to a consistent, correct baseline, each verified on the scopes.

The brief

You have five shots of varying exposure, white balance and (ideally) mixed cameras or lighting. Take all five to a **correct, neutral, consistent balance** — the 1.6 workflow — so that, cut together, they feel like one continuous scene. No creative look. Just correct, and consistent.

1. If it's log, **normalize** it first with a CST node or RCM (1.5).
2. Build a labeled serial node tree — *Exposure, Contrast, Balance, Sat* (1.4).
3. Balance in order: **exposure** → **contrast** → **white balance** → **saturation** (1.6).
4. **Grab a still** of your first finished shot, then **wipe-compare** every following shot against it so the five match.
5. Export the graded scene at correct levels and codec (1.7).

Scope-verified checklist

Tick every box, on the scopes, for all five shots:

- No clipping or crushing** — nothing slammed flat against the top or bottom of the waveform (unless it's meant to be, like a practical light).
- Exposure consistent** — the mid-tones (faces) sit at a similar level across all five shots.
- Neutral white balance** — the RGB parade channels line up on things that should be neutral; no unwanted cast.
- Skin on the line** — any faces sit on or just clockwise of the vectorscope's skin-tone line.
- Saturation sensible** — the vectorscope trace isn't ballooning past reasonable limits.
- Shots match** — wipe between adjacent shots and the join feels continuous, not like a jump cut in color.

Self-assessment rubric

Grade	What it looks like
Not yet	Shots are individually okay but don't match, or you balanced by eye without confirming on scopes, or a log shot was hand-graded instead of normalized.
Passing	All five are correct (exposure, neutral, sensible contrast/saturation), verified on scopes, and reasonably consistent cut together. You normalized log via CST/RCM, built labeled node trees, and exported at correct levels.
Strong	The five are indistinguishable as a scene, skin lands on the line throughout, and you can explain every node in every tree and why it's in that order.

You pass Level 1 — and unlock Level 2 — at **Passing** or above. If you land at *Not yet*, the fix is almost always more reps on 1.6, not more watching.



Completion sign-off

Lesson exercises completed

- 1.1 · Meet the image
- 1.2 · Scopes
- 1.3 · Primaries
- 1.4 · Nodes 101
- 1.5 · Log, LUTs & normalization
- 1.6 · Balancing a shot (the gate)
- 1.7 · Export right
- Level 1 capstone — Balance a scene

- Not yet Passing Strong

Capstone self-assessment grade (from page 9) — check one.

I confirm I have completed every Level 1 lesson exercise and the Level 1 capstone described in this workbook, verified against the scopes as specified in each lesson.

Learner signature

Date

Print name

Reviewed by (optional — mentor / instructor)

Once signed off, you're ready for **Level 2 — Intermediate**. Keep this page — it's your record that Level 1 is genuinely done, not just watched.