

# How To Paint Hair

## GIMP 2.6 and 2.8

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2.6



2.8

# Introduction

In this tutorial I will be showing you how to paint hair in GIMP. For this tutorial I will be doing it in two sections, how to draw in 2.6 and how to draw in 2.8. The reason for that is though the basic principles are the same the foundational principles of color variation differ because 2.6 and 2.8 do not share similarities in some settings.

I will be assuming that those who are reading this know how transparency works, and about layers. You don't need any drawing experience to be able to digitally paint hair just some patience.

And one last note. I'm doing this with a mouse, so id I can do it with a mouse you can do it with one or a tablet if you have one! Okay lets get started!

~ *Firefly*

# GIMP 2.6

## Step 1:

The first thing you need to do is sketch out your hair style. This doesn't have to be in GIMP you can use a scanned drawing or any kind of sketch you want. The main thing to remember is the detail comes in the coloring, not on the sketching so keeping it simple is key. If you have manga or cartoon drawing experience keep the simplicity of the hair in mind and that's how you should sketch your hair out. It really doesn't have to look pretty beyond the fact you like the style.

I'm keeping it simple just so I can't remember the steps I took easier but you can get as crazy as you want to!



## Step 2:

Now, create a new transparent layer and turn down the transparency enough to where you'll still be able to see your sketch somewhat clearly. We'll be putting it to 100% later.

Now pick a color and fill in your hair style, it's okay if it looks blocky from the sketch this next part of the step will show you how to fix that.



Now, what you want to do is get a brush that looks like it's kinda stringy or bristle like when you draw with it, like this:



Once you have a brush like that, add to the hair you just colored in, with the same color. The point is to make some loose looking hair around the edges and such, since this is a base layer we don't want to see a blocky image through the other parts we're going to add on top of it. Make sure you add fluidity to the hair and not just a flat board base, you want it to be interesting to your viewer.

Don't be shy to erase part of the hair to make the bristle brush more effective, and also don't worry about staying fully true to your sketch, your sketch was just an idea it's not a cemented necessity.

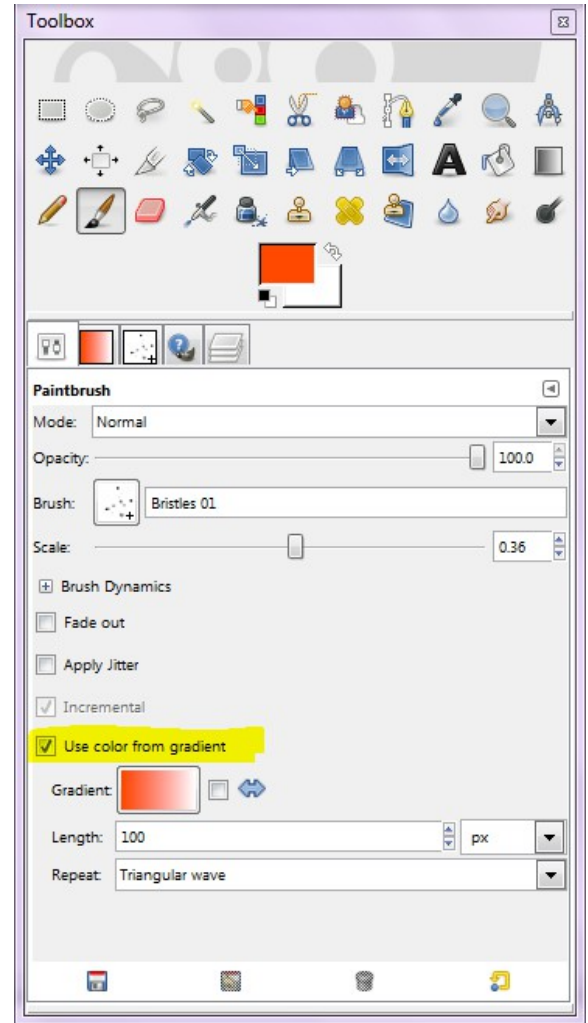


## Step 3:

**Note:** You have your foundational stuff down, if you want to keep your base layer transparent in order to place bangs properly you can but you don't have to if you have a good estimating eye.

Okay, this is where things get fun! Keep using your bristle brush, and pick a foreground and background color with your color picker, and select the “FG to BG (HSV clockwise hue)” gradient. Now in brush settings select color from gradient.

**Note 2:** Sometimes if the colors are vastly different you get a blocky gradient you want one that has a smooth transition, there are other gradients that are created when you pick the BG and FG colors, pick the smoothest looking one.



What you do next is create another new transparent layer and go over the hair in the directions it would be flowing.

You don't have to stay on the base layer's limited area you can go out of the lines a little bit, just be sure to cover as much of the base layer as possible so it doesn't look like a scribbled mess.

Sometimes it looks too shiny like metal and you'll want to turn transparency down, that's what I ended up doing in this case.



## Step 4:

Now it's starting to look more like hair!

The next thing you will want to do is add some shading so this doesn't look like a fluffy gradient mess! Make a new layer, go to a normal round brush and turn gradient off. Now, turn down transparency on the brush to about 20 and make the color black.

After doing that, go to where shadows are needed and paint over and over in layers to add depth to the color. This is better than making 10 layers to add depth with one color.

**Note:** Smudging the black often helps add depth and in some cases using overlay will make the black blend better and not dull down the colors. Another tip is switch between the hard round and the soft round brushes to add more texture and depth, and of course using the bristle one works sometimes too!

For this one I turned transparency down on the black layer and put it on overlay and duplicated it and made put it on normal and turned down transparency a little more.



## **Step 5:**

Now you can add highlights and other things. I use white most of the time or light yellow and play with the lighting and layer-modes, at this point the shading and lighting are not really something I can teach but you have to play with it. Just try and remember that you don't have to draw each strand of hair, the gradient did a lot of that for you already. Just play with it and have fun!

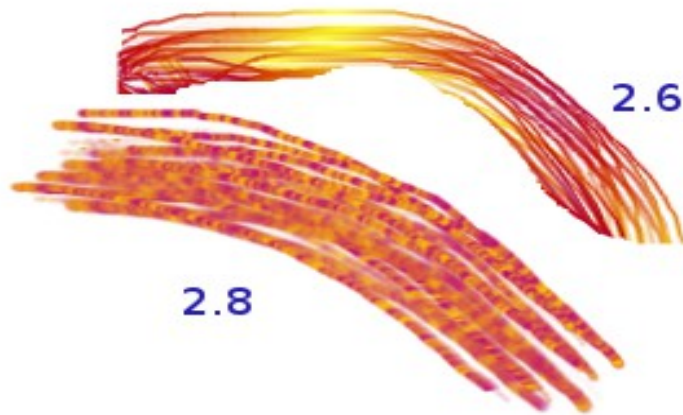
One main thing I can say about light on hair is that unlike comics/manga the light “shine” isn't a flat line, but it zig-zags along the hair.



And that's the basic idea for how to paint hair in GIMP 2.6.  
Now we move on to 2.8!

# GIMP 2.8

You can do the 2.8 style in 2.6 but not the 2.6 style in 2.8. The reason for this is that the brush mode for coloring with a gradient in 2.8 is different.



## Steps, 1 and 2:

These first two steps are exactly the same as in 2.6, the main change is when we come to the definition and that's step 3.

## Step 3:

Make a new transparent layer and set mode to multiply, select a darker color of your hair or a complimenting color that would match it and turn the transparency down on the brush settings. Now do what you did in step 3 of 2.6 only this is going to be adding depth so work more detailed oriented. Do this as many times on as many layers as you want until you get the depth you like. - You can change the color and modes too.



## Step 4:

Repeat step 3, only using light colors like white and pale yellow instead of dark colors, and use layer modes like overlay or grain merge when needed so it doesn't look blocky. Also feel free to mess with layer transparency as well.



Now using overlay, start adding shading and lighting. For this I use black and white. Then after I put the base shading down I add some more depth.



I played with layer modes to add some color variation and some more lighting and that's it!



## **2.6 - Final Result**



## **2.8 – Final Result**

