

Know Your Blues

Blue is a confusing color in terms of its hue temperature. There is a misconception that all blues are cool. This is not true; for example, Prussian, Cobalt, and Phthalo Blue, for example, are warm. Ultramarine Blue is so warm that it's almost a purple.

Single blue pigments are easily available from today's manufacturers. They are listed as **PB1, PB15, PB16, PB17, PB24, PB27, PB28, PB29, PB33, PB35, PB36, PB60, PB66, and PB74. I recommend PY numbers listed in Green. PY numbers listed in red- I do not recommend. Black- I have not rated.**

Many blues are available to artists. There are 30 or more manufacturers offering over 340 actual blues of both single pigments and blends. Of these hundreds of blue formulas you only really need ten;

Two **PB15** Thalo Blues: a Red shade and a Green shade
One **BB16** Phthalo Turquoise
One **PB27** Prussian Blue
Two **PB28** Cobalt Blues: a Red Shade and a Green Shade
Two **PB29** Ultramarine Blues: a Red Shade and a Green Shade
One **PB35** Cerulean Blue
One **PB60** Indanthrone Blue, and
One Indigo Usually a blend of pigments

You can expand to a total of 20, by attempting to find in each of the ten, the most transparent manufacturer and the most opaque manufacturer of each color. Even though there are over 340 individual blues, in my short list for the 10 blues you can find everything you need in just 9 pigments: **PB15, PB17, PB27, PB28, PB29, PB33, PB35, PB36, and PB60.**

Doesn't use too many blues in any one painting, especially mixtures of red and green shades, and be especially careful with your mixed greens. If the tone is off, it will scream from your painting. I tell my students, "Be careful not to mix the Jolly Green Giant."

Blues were the most expensive colors in the past. Owning an oil painting made with expensive blues was a status symbol. Painters hardly used any blue unless they lived in cosmopolitan areas.