

Colour Theory

Colour theory was established by Sir Isaac Newton in 1666 when he invented the colour wheel. He understood colours by systematically categorising them into the three groups: Primary, secondary and tertiary.

By understanding the basics of colour theory, you can begin to use and create colour palettes more strategically in your design work. Colour is a major aspect of design and it can have an impact on how the reader reacts and feels to a certain piece of work or product.



Primary Colours

The basic colours and cannot be made from mixing any other colours.

Red, Blue and Yellow



Warm Colours

Tend to be yellows, oranges and reds, and combinations of similar colours. Warm colours are associated with heat, sunlight and happy emotions.

Cool Colours

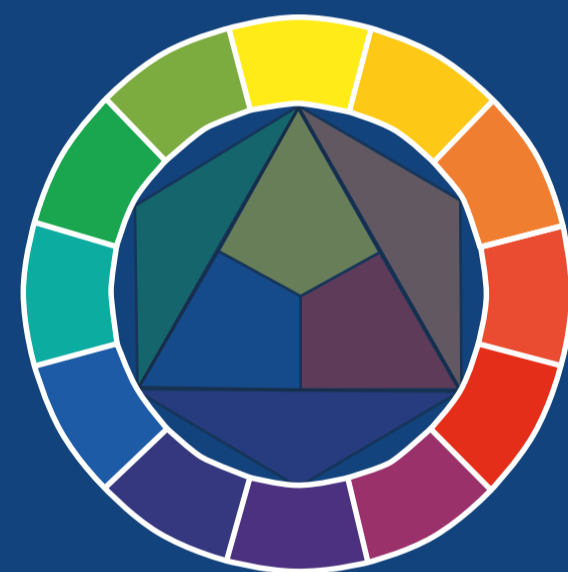
Tend to be greens, blues and purples, and combinations of similar colours. Cool colours tend to be associated with the cold, water and cold feelings.



Secondary Colours

These three colours are made by mixing two primary colours.

Orange, Green and Violet



Complementary Colours

When any two colours directly opposite each other are used.

Example: Yellow and Violet



Tertiary Colours

There are six colours, each made by mixing one primary colour with an adjacent secondary colour.

Yellow-Orange, Yellow-Green, Blue-Green, Blue-Violet, Red-Violet and Red-Orange



Split Complementary Colours

When you select a base colour (violet in this example) and mix it with the two adjacent colours to its complementary colour.

Example: Violet, with Yellow-Orange and Yellow-Green



Key

COLOUR: The aspect of an object which can be described by hue, lightness and saturation.

HUE: The main property or name of a particular colour.

SATURATION: The intensity of light and purity of a colour.

TINT: Any colour with white added to it.

MONOCHROMATIC: Any tint, tone or shade of the same colour

NEUTRAL GREY: An equal combination of both white and black.

SHADE: Any colour with black added to it.



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