

Color

Color is the first and most important element of design. Color sets the tone of visual communications and generates an immediate emotional response. The initial and most visceral reaction to any object is to its color, even before its content, shape, size, or other characteristics.

All colors (in pigments) can be broken into three primary colors:

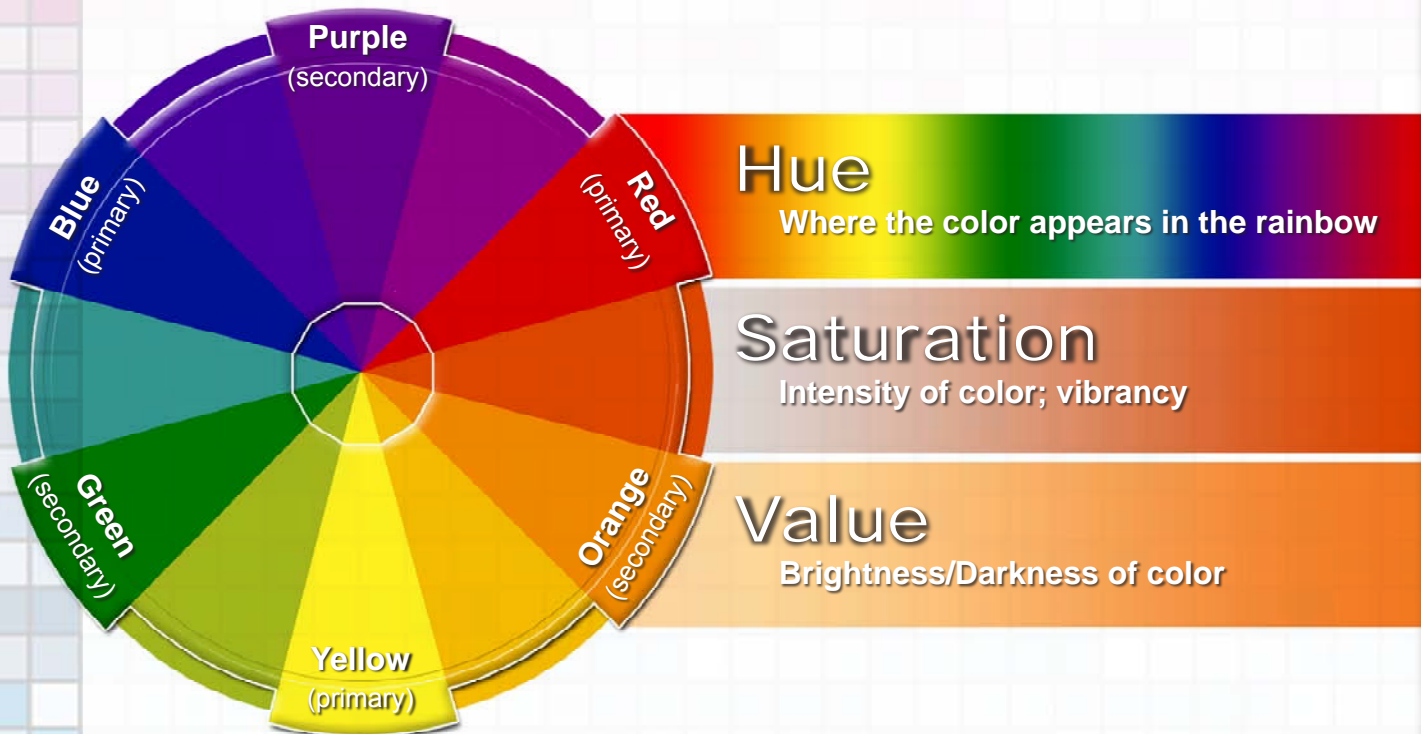


Mixing these colors together creates three secondary colors:



Further mixing these colors creates all the possible colors in the world except for white and black.

Colors are most often represented in a circle known as the color wheel:



Complementary

Colors that are opposite one another on the color wheel are complementary. These color combinations create a dynamic and lively contrast and appear to vibrate against each other.

Analogous

Colors that are adjacent to one another on the color wheel are analogous—they're "buddies." Analogous color combinations create a more harmonious look and feel and are visually appealing against each other.



Color Palettes

Limit your colors to 1-4 main colors (including *shades* and *tints*). Use your company's colors, your customers' colors, or a synergy of both.

Balanced Palette – Colors that are analogous and their complements



Complementary Palette – Colors that are opposite to each other on the color wheel



Monochrome Palette – Shades (the color + black) and tints (the color + white) of a single color



warm

Warm colors are reds, oranges and yellows. These colors visually and emotionally convey the feeling of warmth and happiness. Warm colors will naturally come forward in the design while cool colors recede visually.

cool

Cool colors are blues, greens and violets. These colors create a subdued and calm feeling and will move to the back of a design when combined with warmer colors.

Emotions

| | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Red | Empowering, bold |
| Orange | Warmth, happiness |
| Yellow | Happiness, energy |
| Green | Balance, refreshing |
| Blue | Relaxing, cool |
| Violet | Comforting |
| White | Pure, associated with cleanliness |
| Black | Authoritative, shows discipline |

Cultural

| | |
|--------|---|
| Red | In India, purity/weddings; in China, luck and prosperity |
| Orange | In Ireland/UK, Protestantism; in Holland, royalty |
| Yellow | In Japan, courage |
| Green | In Muslim countries, sacred color |
| Blue | In Iran, heaven/spirituality |
| Violet | In Thailand, mourning; in the US/UK, royalty |
| White | In China (and other eastern countries), death; in many western countries, purity/weddings |
| Black | In the US/UK, death |