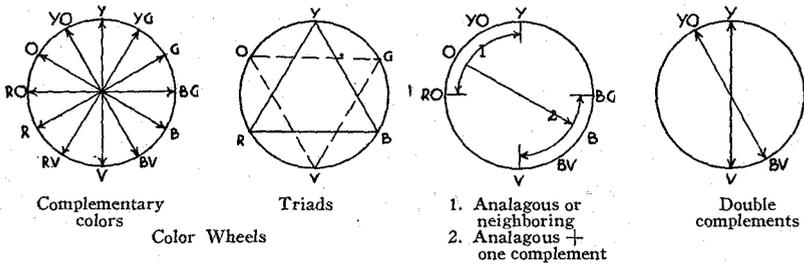


# The *Color Wheel* in Home Furnishings

By

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One of the loveliest, most evasive things in our everyday life is the occasional appearance of the rainbow after a rain storm, or when the sun shines through a misty cloud on a cool spring or summer morning. This beautiful arch of color represents all the colors that can be seen by the naked eye of man. He has taken them, separated them from each other, and has given them names. But the order which appears in the rainbow has been kept the same in our usage of colors. As they appear in the spectrum, or rainbow, they are as follows: violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. The six colors named above have been selected as the six standard colors. From these six, any other color can be made by mixing the pigments together or combining colored lights. Between these six, to make the colors more complete, have been placed six intermediate colors: blue-violet, blue-green, yellow-green, yellow-orange, red-orange, and red-violet. For convenience in arranging these colors for our use they have been placed in a circle, because it has been discovered that in this form the colors naturally blend into each other. This circle is known as the color wheel, with yellow placed at the top because it



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appears to be the lightest, or nearest white of all colors, and violet is placed at the bottom of the wheel. Violet is the darkest of all colors. (See color wheel.)

### Color vocabulary

Before we go any farther we must have a common knowledge of some of the words used in describing color. Here is a small vocabulary that has been arranged to simplify and make clearer the discussion to follow on color.

*Hue* refers to the chromatic quality of a color, which we indicate by its name—red, violet, green, etc.

*Intensity* is the degree of brilliance of a hue.

*Value* refers to the relation of a color to black and white—light blue, dark violet, etc.

*Shade* refers to the darkness or grayness of a color.

*Tint* refers to the paleness of a color, or when a great amount of white is present, plus the actual color—pink, pale blue, etc.

*Tones* relate to the subject of black and white.

White	Gray	Black
Light	Middle	Dark

*Value scale* is an arrangement of steps between white and black in regular sequences.

Light	tint	pink
Medium light		rose
Middle	normal hue	red
Medium dark		ruby
Dark	shade	maroon

### Warm and cool colors

We find that colors have different effects on our feelings. For example, red makes us warm and excited, while blue is cool and soothing. So do all the other colors in the spectrum have definite warm and cool effects. The hues, which are the warm colors and can be associated with fire and molten metal, are all on one side of the wheel, yellow-orange, orange, red-orange, red, red-violet, and violet. These are active and stimulating, enlivening, and cheerful. Their presence in a room gives an effect of warmth and comfort. They may be chosen in soft, dull tones for the wall coverings, or in somewhat clearer, though not too intense, tones for window hangings, rugs, upholstery, and in combination with neutral walls. Small spots of intense color are used in small ornaments, pillows, vases, lamps, etc.

### Warm color schemes

Generally speaking, a room on the north side of the house, where little or no sunshine penetrates, should be made to seem brighter and warmer by the use of warm colors. Walls in north rooms can be finished in clearer, warmer colors than those of rooms of any other exposure. The light in north rooms is usually limited in amount and cold in quality, without much sunshine. On the north walls, any of the various tones of yellow, from a clear, light orange-yellow tint to a neutral yellow-gray (sand color), or one of the many tones of tan or brown, may be used. Brown, red, purple, mulberry, terra cotta, and old rose are colors containing a large amount of red or yellow in their composition, and are warm in effect; so in their obvious neutralized form they are very desirable for large areas such as in rugs, hangings, draperies, etc., in rooms of north or northeast exposure. Further warmth and sparkle may be introduced into a room with the use of still brighter and purer warm colors such as red violet, red, red orange, orange, yellow orange, and yellow. All pure colors should be used with restraint, and they are better used in very small but well chosen spots.

If the room is decorated generally throughout with warm tones of creams, browns, dull rusts, and grayed reds, it is most generally enlivened with *small spots of some color* in pure form selected from the opposite side of the color wheel—green, yellow green, blue green, or blue.

This is a practical use of the simplest color combinations, the complementary colors, or colors directly opposite from each other on the wheel. Combinations of complementary colors, if used discreetly, will add zest and cheer to any room.

### Cool color schemes

The colors on the other side of the wheel—yellow green, green, blue green, blue, blue violet, and violet—have a tendency to be cool, and can generally be associated with the nature elements of water, sky, green grass, and trees, all exemplifications of freshness, airiness, and coolness.

Because of these warm and cool qualities in colors they have definite purposes in the decorative scheme of your home.

In rooms of south or west exposure, where an effect of coolness is desirable, blues and greens may be used. These colors are cool and quiet and produce an atmosphere of dignity and restfulness. They are particularly pleasing in summer homes, in the country or at the seashore, where coolness is the aim. Gray is a cool color, although there are many tones of gray and various degrees of coolness among

them. Bluish gray is the coldest gray. Greenish gray may appear cooler or warmer according to the amount of yellow in the mixture. A light olive green may be a comparatively warm color. Dust color or dull yellow gray may be quite warm. It is neutral enough to be used anywhere in the house.

East rooms may well be decorated in cool or warm colors and either cool or warm colors may be chosen for west rooms. In any room, *warm gray* walls may be used in combination with hangings and accessories of warm or cool colors, according to their suitability.

### **Dominant colors**

When choosing a color for any room it is necessary to make one color the outstanding or dominant color and relate the other colors to this. This does not mean to use one color entirely, as was done once when the walls, rug, hangings, and painted furniture were all chosen in various tones of one color. This would produce a most monotonous scheme, and anyone using the room would soon grow very tired of it.

In selecting a color scheme for a particular room we also have to consider its size. Dark colors as a rule tend to make the room appear smaller, and lighter colors tend to enlarge the room. A darker color on the ceiling tends to make high walls appear lower.

Whatever colors are selected for the walls, woodwork, and floors, it must be kept in mind that the general effect of these three colors should be grayed enough to make a pleasant background for furniture, draperies, rugs, etc., which are to be placed against them. The walls should set the color for the background upon which you have decided. The ceiling should be lighter in value than the walls, but not too extremely different from the walls. White as a rule is too glary.

The floors should be the darkest plane, especially when the woodwork is white or light toned.

### **How to achieve unity in adjoining rooms**

*Use the same neutral wall color throughout.* If the same wall color has been used in connecting rooms—such as a warm grayed tone—variety may be introduced through the use of rugs and hangings of different colors in the different rooms, an effect of pleasant harmony would result. It is usually advisable to also repeat one other color throughout the adjoining rooms such as in the living-room draperies, dining-room pottery or accessories and hall picture and rug.