

Color and Its Use in the Home

Home Economics Series

By

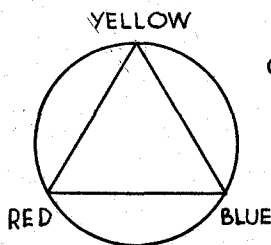
JOAN PATTERSON, Specialist in Home Furnishings

Did you ever think what it would be like to see everything about you—the trees, flowers, mountains, water, and sky, as well as your own home—in tones of gray, black, or white? This condition is found in the eyes of many persons because of some physical defect. They never see color in any of its glorious aspects.

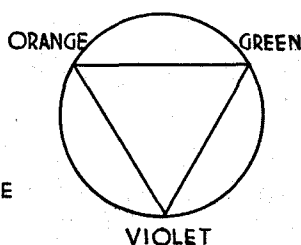
There are some people who believe they are color blind when they cannot name a color. This is not color blindness in the physical sense, but the education of that person has not been complete enough to enable him to identify colors. Luckily this condition can be corrected.

There are many colors in existence, but few rules for combining them, and even these are no guarantee as to their harmonizing qualities. Combining colors in a pleasing way involves many factors, and can be more easily demonstrated than described. In addition to the physical differences in people, the individual powers of appreciation and personal likes and dislikes must be considered.

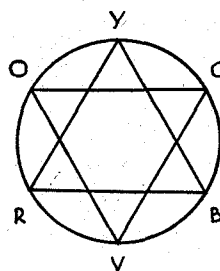
There are six standard colors in the rainbow, or spectrum, made up of three primary colors and three secondary colors as shown on the following "Color Wheels."



Primary colors



Secondary colors



Standard colors

Primary colors are so called because from these three all other colors can be made. Secondary colors are combinations of any two primary colors. Between these six standard colors are six intermediate colors, each of which is a combination of the two adjacent standard colors as arranged on the "Color Wheel" above, making twelve standard and intermediate colors, viz.: yellow, yellow-orange, orange, red-orange, red, red-violet, violet, blue-violet, blue, blue-green,

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green, and yellow-green. Besides these true hues we have neutral colors; gray, black, and white.

For convenience we have selected four simple ways of combining colors. These are not all the possibilities of color combinations, but will help the average person to get an idea of just where to start the study of color. The recognition of good color harmonies depends, in the last analysis, on training and practice that develop individual sensitiveness and judgment. So with this simple "eye-opener" into the fascinating color problem, it is hoped you will expand your knowledge by going further into the subject, by consulting good textbooks on color, and by studying pictures, some of which have been recognized for centuries as examples of fine color combination.

The following four methods of combining colors are more likely to result in harmony than any others:

1. Using gray with bright color

Good color harmonies may result from using various absolutely neutral tones of gray (also with black and white), together with some clear, bright color. The values and intensities, as well as the amounts used, have an important effect in the result. For example: Taupe davenport used with a rust chair.

2. Using tones of one color

Combining different values and intensities of one color may result in a pleasing effect. Several tones may be used in varying amounts—the duller tones in larger areas, the brighter touches in smaller areas. A room with walls papered tan, window hangings of ecru linen or pongee silk, a rug dark brown, and furniture in oak or walnut, illustrates this kind of harmony, variously called monochromatic harmony. Tones of brown are used throughout. Bright color in touches of orange may be introduced for accent.

To gray a color, mix with the major hue a small amount of the opposite color, or complement. Continue to mix the two together until the desired gray is obtained. An equal amount of both colors will result in a medium neutral gray.

3. Using related colors

Using colors that have a common element in their composition, which makes them similar, is often a successful way of creating color harmony. Blue and green are related colors, and may well be used together. Blue and violet are also related in composition and may be combined pleasantly. Blue is the common color used in mixing all the colors in these two combinations. Blue and violet asters in a gray-green vase would illustrate the latter combination. Red and purple have red as a common element, so can be used very satisfactorily together; thus the color scheme, *Analagous colors*, or the combination of neighboring colors.

4. Using contrasting colors

We may also combine colors that are not similar, but very different in their composition, that have no common elements, but are absolutely unlike and contrasting. Such contrasting colors are red and green, blue and orange, or yellow and violet. Used together in bright tones and equal amounts, they are *not good*. Such colors must be combined with care. These harmonies are called complementary harmonies. Under this rule we have also the Double Complementary color schemes.

Double Complementary colors are contrasting colors; two adjacent colors and the complements of each. For example: red-violet plus violet, with yellow plus yellow-green.

The *Triads*, another example of contrasting hues, are the combination of three colors lying in equilateral triangles on the color wheel. Examples: red, yellow, and blue; or yellow-orange, red-violet, and blue-green.

Contrasting harmonies will attract attention.

Complementary—2 colors lying directly opposite on the wheel. Example: red and green.

Double complementary—2 adjacent colors and the complements of each. Example: red-violet and violet with yellow-green and yellow.

Neighboring complement—One color combined with the color located directly opposite on the color wheel, plus neighboring colors on each side of the complement. Example: green with red-orange, red, and red-violet.

Triad—Any three colors lying in an equilateral triangle on the color wheel. Example: red, yellow, and blue.

Like harmonies reduce attraction power

Analogous—Colors located side by side on the chart. Example: red, red-violet, violet.

Alternate neighboring—Every other color on the wheel. Example: red violet, blue, green, yellow.

Monochromatic—One color in different values and intensities. Example: value, light and dark red. Intensities, blue, gray-blue, and gray.

Some of the popular names for grayed colors are:

Gray red—Russet, tile, Spanish red, rose.

Gray yellow—Tan, mustard, beige, buff, cream, ivory, ecru, pale, and lime.

Gray blue—Slate, midnight, powder blue, Alice blue.

Gray green—Olive, hunter's green, grass green.

Gray orange—Brown, peach, apricot, brick dust, cedar, copper.

Gray violet—Grayed violet, burgundy, plum.

A general plan for building a color scheme

1. Consider the exposure, lighting, size, and proportions and use of a room and the personality of its occupants.

2. Decide on one prevailing color. Various colors should enter into the scheme, but one should predominate.

3. Use a neutral or harmonizing color for ceiling, walls, and floors, as a background. Keep the floor the darkest, the walls next, and ceiling lightest in value.

4. Use the prevailing color in *draperies*, *upholstery*, sometimes in rugs, also in lamps, pillows, pottery, books, etc.

5. Splash in one note, at least, of the complementary color for interest.

Definite color scheme

Exposure—Southwest, well lighted, size 13 x 20, living room; occupants of moderate means but "genuine quality" folks.

Prevailing color—Blue, with rose next in quantity, also some taupe, black, and cream, and a splash of orange—the complement of blue.

Walls—Warm gray or gray tinted with tones of blue and old rose, if paper is used.

Ceiling—Light ivory.

Woodwork—Warm gray, slightly lighter than the walls.

Floor—Dark oak.

Floor coverings—Deep blue and tan.

Draperies—Cretonne in blue, rose, black, and yellow, with blue predominating and lined with ecru sateen.

Glass curtains—Ecru colored net.

Upholstery—Couch cover and one chair deep blue denim. One smaller chair in cretonne same as draperies. Cushion pads for Windsor or wooden chairs, old rose.

Lamp—Black or blue pottery base and shade of neutral cream shade.

Accessories—Pillows, 2 blue, 1 orange, 1 old rose. Blue bowl, filled with "Japanese Lanterns," marigolds, or candlesticks of soft blue with orange candles. Books, varied color bindings on shelves and tables. Pictures, all the above colors.

Suggestions for a new color scheme in a room already established

A new color scheme must grow from something that cannot be changed and that is already in the room. It may be walls, floor, rug, etc. The rug is often the *basis* for the color scheme. If the rug is figured, there is usually every possibility of using the colors predominating in it for the general color scheme of the room.

If *cool* colors are needed in the room, the blue and green should be repeated. If it is *warmth* that is needed, gold, a warm tan, dull rose, or dull red might be emphasized.

If the rug and walls are neutral and plain, they make a good background for any colors that are needed in the room.

Upholstered furniture may be the basis for the color scheme in exactly the same way as a rug.

Also a color scheme may grow from a colored picture. Repeat the colors that appear in the picture and make it a center of interest. Always be careful *not to group* all of one color together on one side of the room. Rather repeat it from place to place throughout the room to tie the scheme together.

If a room has too much of one color in it, add touches of a color that appears opposite on the color wheel. The complementary color is not always the one that solves this problem, but it always is a possibility.

Additional suggestions for color schemes

Walls	Woodwork	Furniture	Floor Coverings	Upholstery	Accessories
Neutral tan	Darker brown	Darker brown	Tan, blue, green, rust, or burgundy	Brown	Blue, green, orange, and rust
Warm gray	Lighter warm gray	Mahogany	Soft green, dark gray, gold	Dull blue	Gold, black, yellow
Ivory	Ivory	Mahogany	Grayed gold, green, dark brown	Gold and green	Touch red orange, or yellow orange
Neutral tan	Oak	Oak	Tan, yellows, green, blue, rose, and black	Black, green	Black and green
Ivory	Ivory	Walnut	Old rose, blue, black	Taupe, rose	Gold

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