



Vocabulary for Describing Color

Hue

Indicates the name of a color (red, blue, yellow). Hue is determined by the specific wavelength of a color in a ray of light.

Value

The relative degree of dark or light in a color. The characteristic of color determined by light or dark, or the quantity of light reflected by the color.

When a hue is mixed with varying amounts of white, the colors produced are tints. Shades are produced when a hue is mixed with black.

Saturation

The strength or purity of a hue. A vivid color is of high saturation, a dull color is of low saturation. Also called intensity or chroma. It also refers to the quality of light in a color. You can change the intensity or saturation of a color by placing one color next to its complement. This will increase the color's intensity. For example, if blue is placed next to orange, it will appear more saturated.

Complimentary Colors

Any two colors opposite each other on the color wheel are complimentary.

Primary Colors

The basic hues in any color system that may be used to mix all other colors. For this exercise we are going to adopt the painters palette and use yellow, blue and red as our primary colors.

Secondary Colors

A color produced by a mixture of two primaries.

Intermediate Color

A color produced by a mixture of a primary color and a secondary color.

Split Compliment(s)

A color and the two colors on either side of its complement.

Analogous Colors

Colors that are closely related in hue(s). They are next to each other on the color wheel.

Monochromatic

Having only one hue; the complete range of value of one color from white and black.

Simultaneous Contrast

When two different colors come into direct contact, the contrast intensifies the difference between them.

Temperature

Cool Colors

Green, violet, blue
(earth, sky, water)

Warm Colors

red, orange, yellow
(sun, fire)

Organizing colors by their temperature is another way to consider color. All the colors can be classified as warm or cool. Red and orange are associated with fire or the sun, and are therefore warm. Colors with blue in them from violet to green are associated with the air, sky and water and are therefore cool. This quality of warmth or coolness may be influenced by the hues around or near it. For example, the warmth of an orange may be heightened by locating it near a touch of its complement, blue.

Example of color wheel



Example of simultaneous contrast

