

The Color Wheel



Theory



Primary Colors



Red, Yellow, Blue
These can't be made by mixing other colors.

Secondary Colors



Orange, Green, Purple

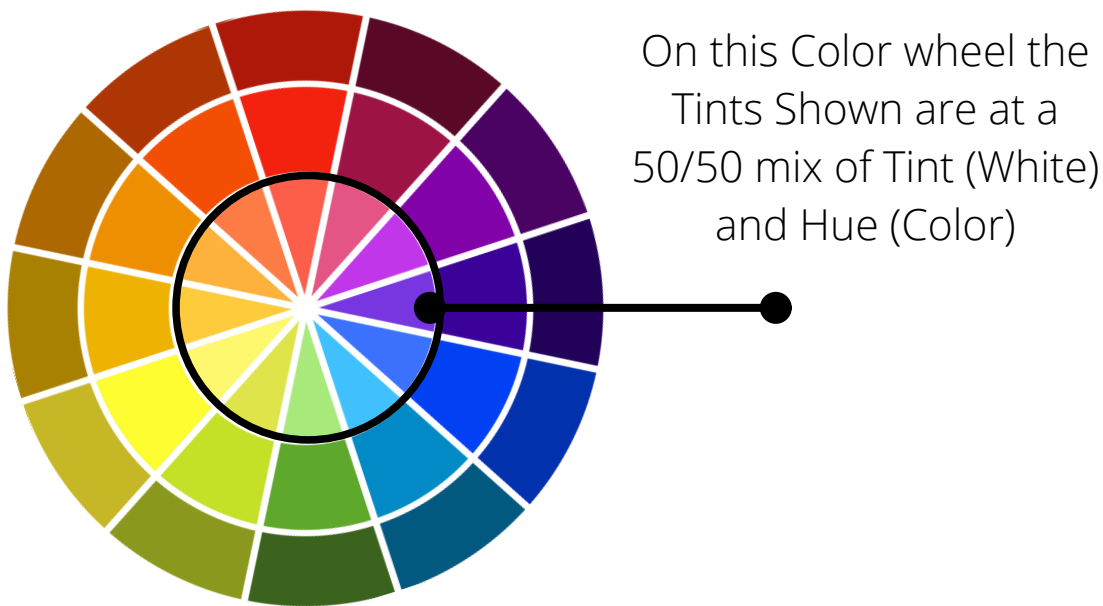
Made by mixing a primary color to another primary color

Tertiary Colors



Red-Orange, Yellow-Orange, Blue-Green, Blue Purple
(Blue Violet), Yellow-Green, Red-Purple (Red Violet)
Made by mixing a primary with a neighboring secondary

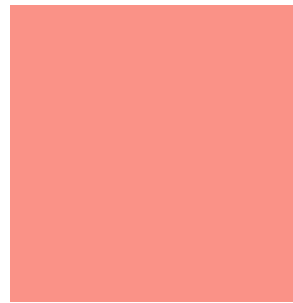
What is a Tint



0% White
100% Red



25% White
75% Red



50% White
50% Red



75% White
25% Red

A tint is created by adding white to a pure color (also called a hue), resulting in a lighter, softer version without changing the color's basic identity—think red becoming pink, or blue becoming baby blue. Often called pastels, tints are widely used in art, design, fashion, and crafting to soften bold colors, create visual hierarchy, and evoke emotions like calmness, innocence, or lightness. They're especially popular in branding, spring-themed work, or anything aiming for a gentle or uplifting feel. Tints are effective for balancing darker tones, brightening designs, and giving a fresh, youthful atmosphere to a composition. Whether you're working in watercolor, digital art, interior decorating, or junk journaling, tints help bring a sense of harmony and softness to your palette while maintaining color cohesion.

What is a Shade



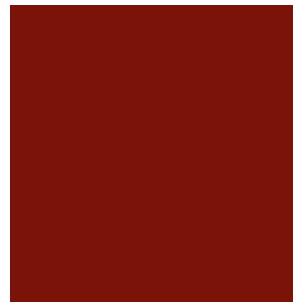
On this Color wheel the Shade Shown are at a 50/50 mix of Shade (Black) and Hue (Color)



0% Black
100% Red



25% Black
75% Red



50% Black
50% Red



75% Black
25% Red

A shade is created by adding black to a pure color (hue), resulting in a darker, deeper version of that color—like turning blue into navy or red into burgundy. Shades add richness, drama, and intensity to a design and are often used to create contrast, depth, and mood. In art, fashion, interior design, and crafting, shades can convey elegance, mystery, or seriousness, making them great for more mature, moody, or sophisticated themes. They help ground a color palette, balance out lighter tones like tints, and add visual weight to a composition. Whether you're painting, designing digitally, or layering paper in a junk journal, using shades can help you emphasize focal points, enhance atmosphere, and create a striking impact while still staying true to the original hue.

What is a Tone



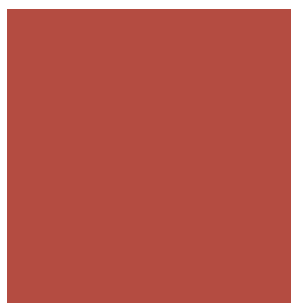
I have added a 50% Grey mix on top of the Hue's in this color wheel, you can see how they are darker but not as harsh



0% Grey
100% Red



25% Grey
75% Red



50% Grey
50% Red

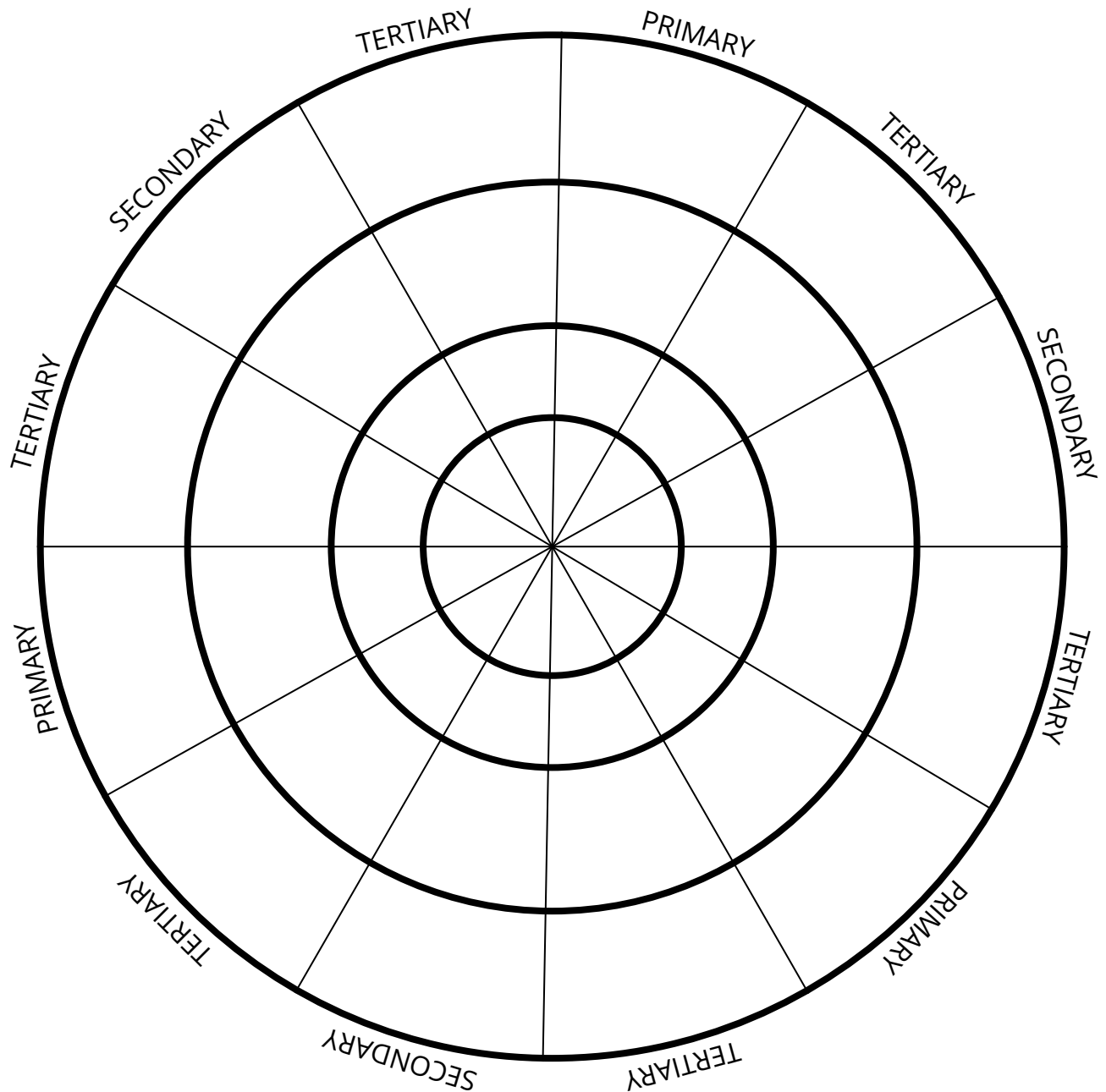


75% Grey
25% Red

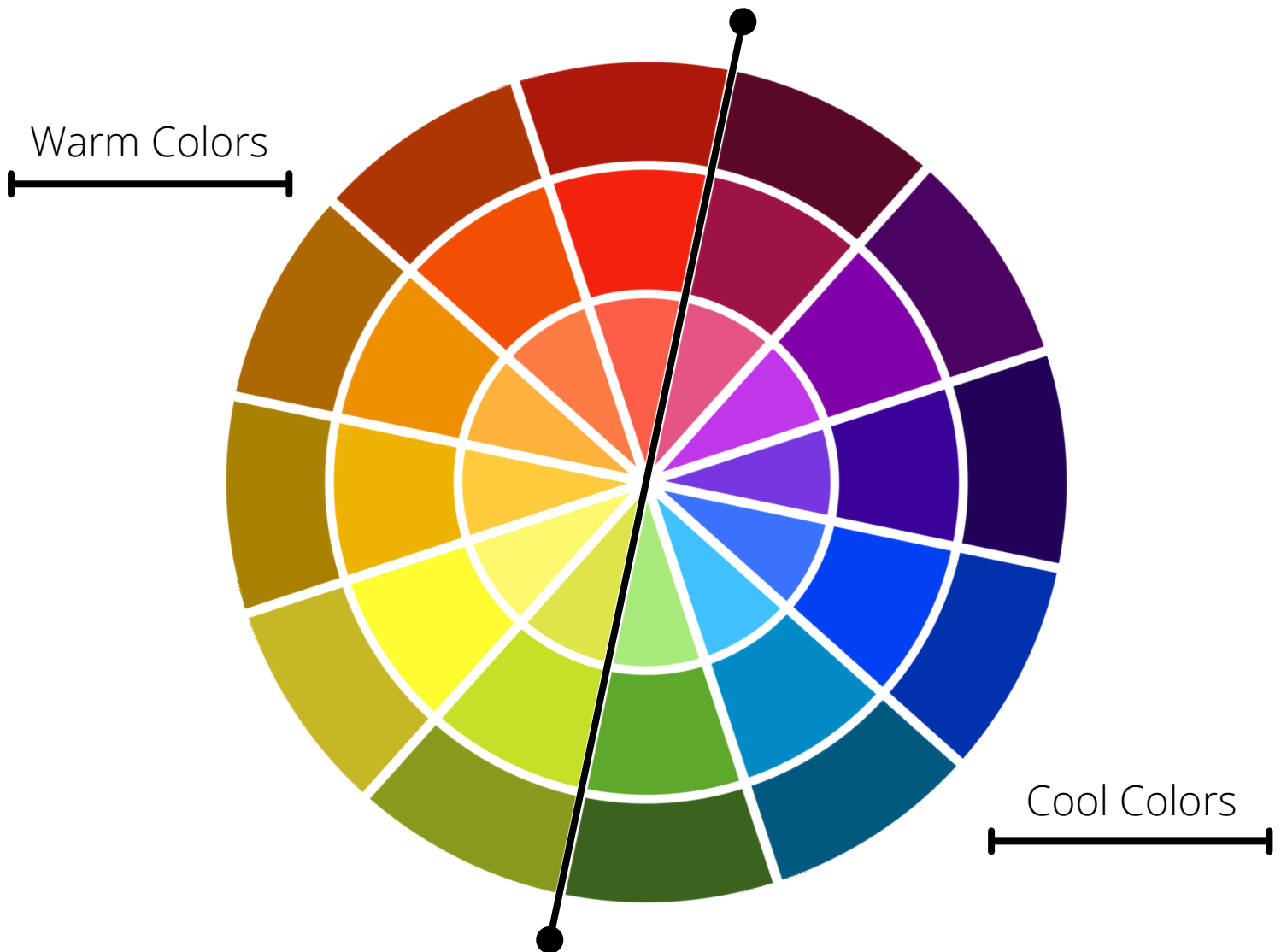
A tone is created by adding gray (a mix of black and white) to a pure color, resulting in a more muted, subdued version of that hue. Unlike tints or shades, tones don't just lighten or darken a color—they soften its intensity, making it less vibrant and more refined. Tones are widely used in art, design, fashion, and home decor to create sophisticated, balanced, and versatile color palettes. They're perfect for evoking calm, elegance, or a vintage feel, and they work beautifully when you want to avoid overly bright or overpowering colors. In crafting and junk journaling, tones help create depth and texture while maintaining a harmonious look. Whether you're aiming for subtlety or simply need to quiet down a bold color, tones are essential for achieving a more natural, nuanced aesthetic.

COLOR WHEEL PRACTICE

Color each triangle with the correctly labeled color. Then, add black to the outer ring to make a shade. Next, add white to the ring above the inner ring to make a tint. And add Grey to the inner ring to make a tone. Use a blending tool to mix the colors.



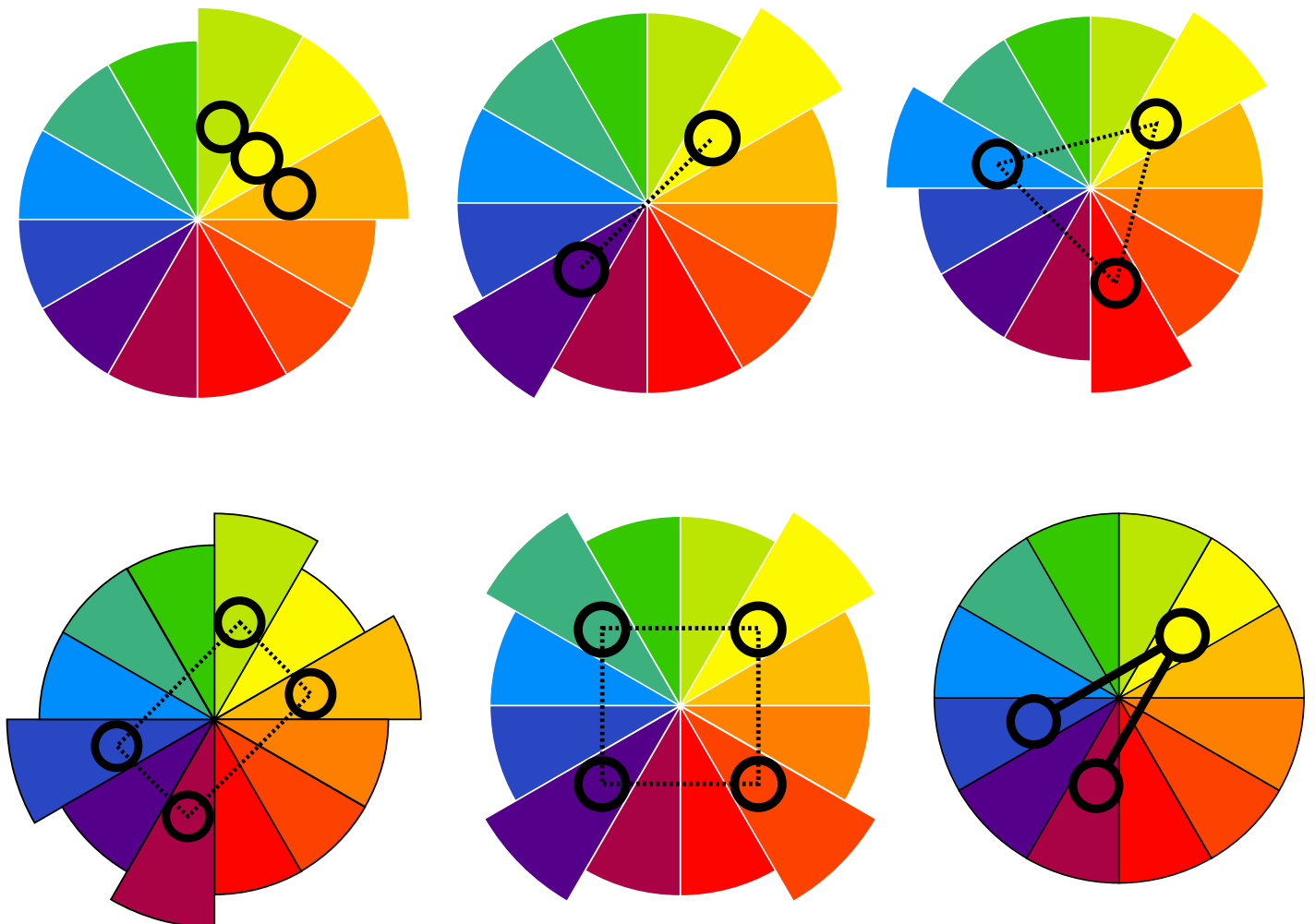
Warm and Cool Color



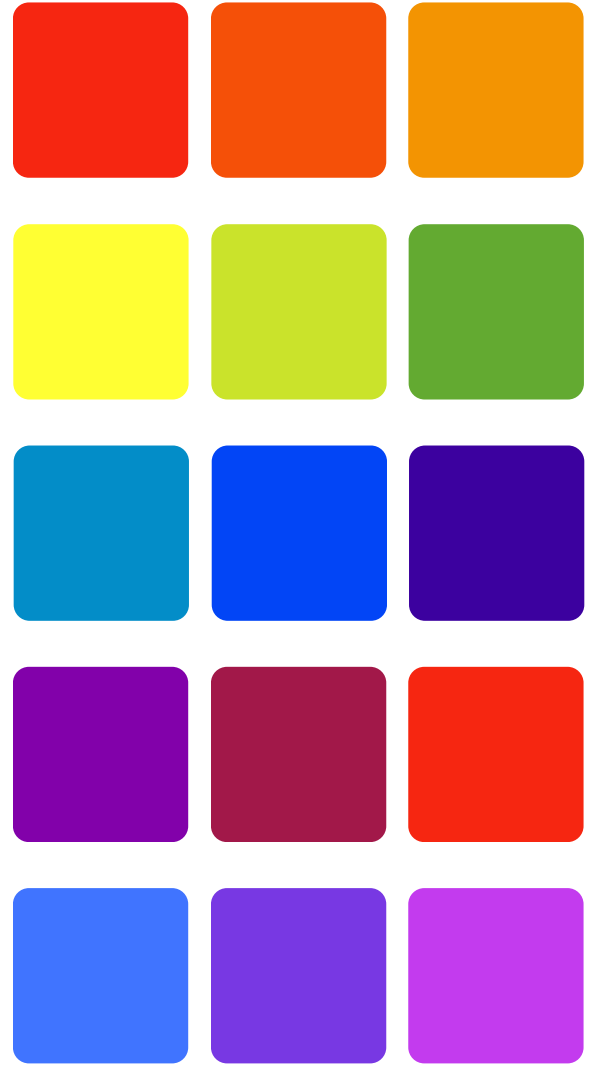
Warm and cool colors refer to the emotional and visual temperature of colors on the color wheel. Warm colors—such as red, orange, and yellow—are associated with heat, sunlight, energy, and passion. They tend to feel lively, cozy, and inviting, and they visually advance in a composition, drawing the eye. In contrast, cool colors—like blue, green, and purple—are connected to water, sky, calmness, and tranquility. They evoke a sense of peace and relaxation and tend to recede in a design, creating depth and space. Understanding the difference between warm and cool colors helps in setting the tone or mood of a piece and in balancing color relationships effectively.

Intro to Color Schemes

Color schemes, also known as color harmonies, are combinations of colors that are aesthetically pleasing and work well together. These schemes are based on relationships between colors on the color wheel and are used in art, design, fashion, and crafts to create balance, contrast, mood, and unity. By understanding how different colors interact, you can build palettes that convey specific emotions or draw the eye in intentional ways. Whether you're looking to create bold contrast or soft harmony, color schemes help guide your choices and bring cohesion to your creative work.



Analogous Colors



Analogous color schemes use colors that sit next to each other on the color wheel, such as blue, blue-green, and green. These colors share similar undertones, which creates a harmonious and cohesive look. Analogous palettes are often found in nature—like the changing hues of leaves or ocean blues—and are ideal for designs that feel calm, unified, and pleasing to the eye. They're perfect for creating gentle transitions and soft, serene atmospheres.

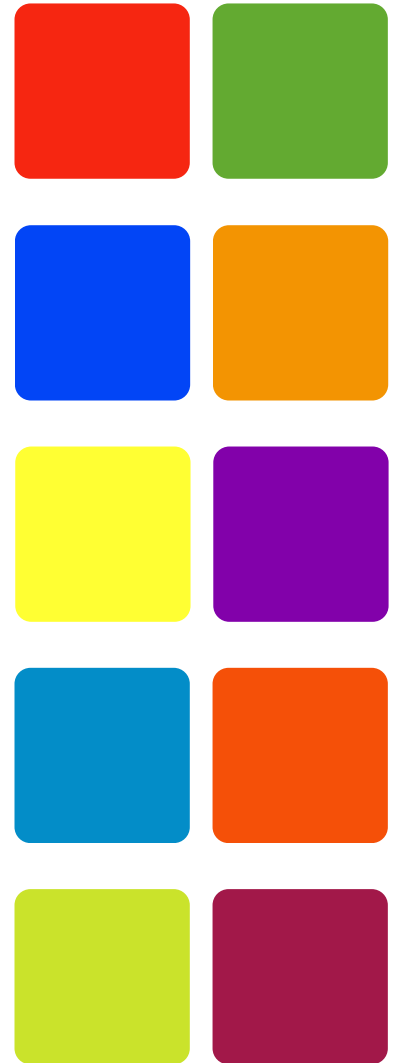
Analogous Colors



Make some of your own
Analogous Color Groups

You can use any colors
you have on hand (pencil
Crayons) or color them in
a drawing program

Complementary Colors



Complementary colors are opposite each other on the color wheel, such as red and green or blue and orange. When placed next to each other, they create strong contrast and vibrant visual impact. Complementary schemes are bold and eye-catching, often used to make elements stand out or add excitement. However, because of their intensity, they're best used with one color dominant and the other as an accent to maintain balance.

Complementary Colors

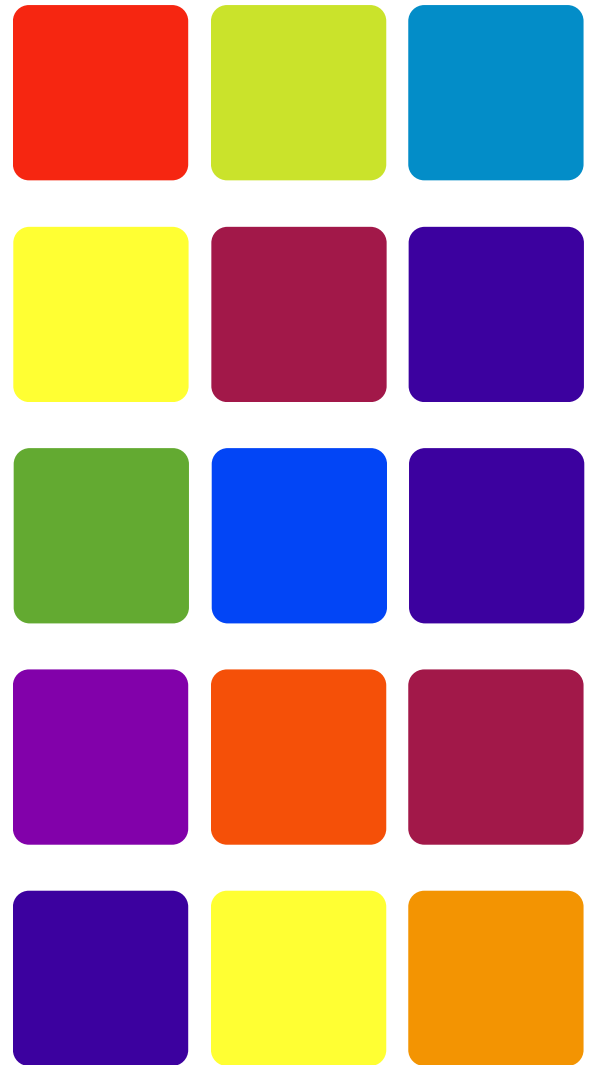


Make some of your own
Complementary Color Groups

You can use any colors you
have on hand (pencil Crayons)
or color them in a drawing
program

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Split Complementary Colors



Split complementary schemes take one base color and pair it with the two colors adjacent to its complement, offering contrast without the intensity of a true complementary pair. For example, blue's split complement would be yellow-orange and red-orange. This creates a dynamic but more balanced palette, giving you the contrast of complementary colors while being easier to harmonize in your design.

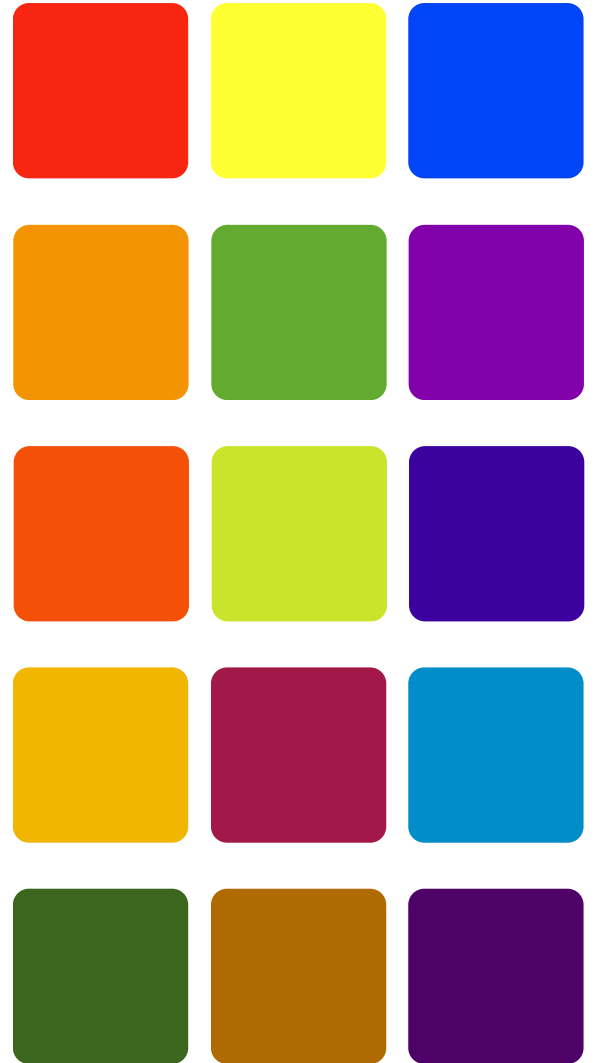
Split Complementary Colors



Make some of your own
Split Complementary
Color Groups

You can use any colors
you have on hand (pencil
Crayons) or color them in
a drawing program

Triadic Colors



Triadic color schemes use three colors evenly spaced around the color wheel, such as red, yellow, and blue. This scheme offers a high level of contrast while remaining visually balanced. It's lively and colorful, often used to create vibrant, energetic compositions. To keep it harmonious, it's usually best to let one color dominate and use the other two as supporting or accent colors.

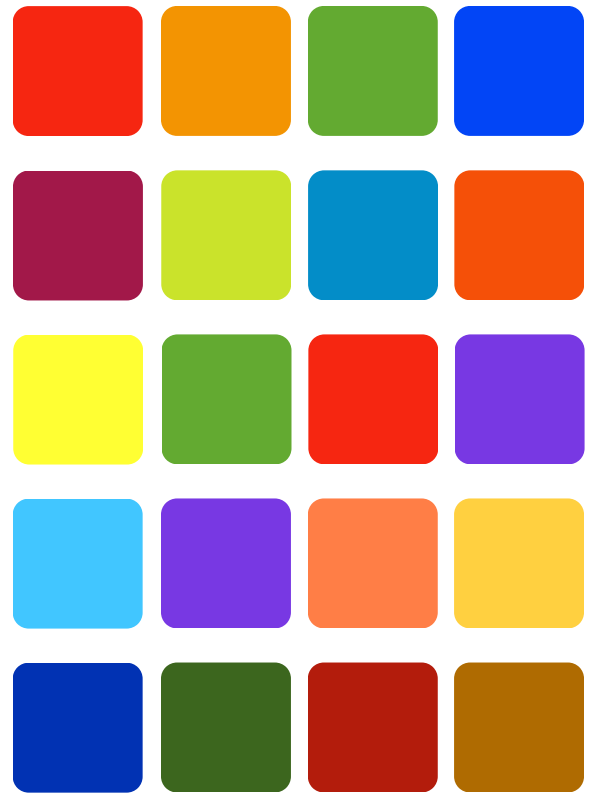
Triadic Colors



Make some of your own
Triadic Color Groups

You can use any colors
you have on hand (pencil
Crayons) or color them in
a drawing program

Tetradic Colors (Double Complementary)



Tetradic color schemes, also known as double complementary, use two pairs of complementary colors, forming a rectangle on the color wheel (e.g., red and green, blue and orange). This scheme provides a rich and varied palette but requires careful balancing, as it includes both warm and cool colors. It's great for complex designs and projects that need a lot of color variety without clashing.

Tetradic Colors (Double Complementary)



Make some of your own
Tetradic Color Groups

You can use any colors
you have on hand (pencil
Crayons) or color them in
a drawing program

Square Colors



A square color scheme is similar to tetradic but the four colors are evenly spaced around the color wheel, forming a square. This creates a balanced use of contrast and color variety while maintaining harmony. Square schemes work best when one color is used as the main focus and the others support it. It's ideal for playful, colorful compositions that still feel structured and intentional.

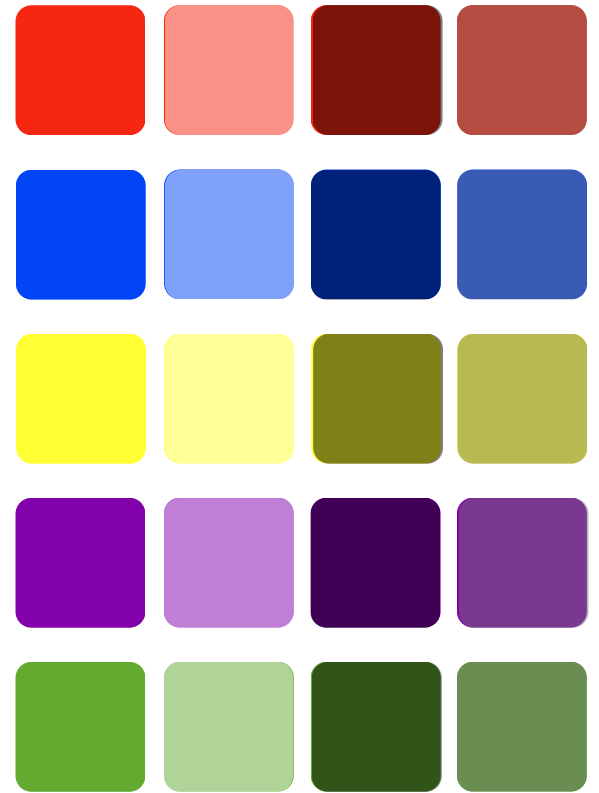
Square Colors



Make some of your own
Tetradic Color Groups

You can use any colors
you have on hand (pencil
Crayons) or color them in
a drawing program

Monochromatic Colors



Monochromatic color schemes use variations of a single hue, including its tints, tones, and shades. This creates a very cohesive and elegant look, as everything stems from the same root color. While lacking in contrast, monochromatic palettes make up for it with unity, subtlety, and sophistication. They're often used in minimalist designs or to create a mood with depth and texture using just one color family.

The monochromatic Colors Below include Shades, Tints and Tones



Monochromatic Colors



Make some of your own
Monochromatic Color Groups

You can use any colors you have on hand (pencil
Crayons) or color them in a drawing program.

For this exercise Add your tints to your Hue,
25% White, 50% White, 75% White. Then do the
same for your Shades and your tones.

	50% White	75% White	25% White	25% Black	50% Black	75% Black	75% Grey	50% Grey	25% Grey
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Fun Additional Color Info

Color Value

Value refers to how light or dark a color is, regardless of its hue. It's one of the most important elements in design and art because it creates contrast, depth, and visual focus. High-value contrast (like black and white) is great for drawing attention, while similar values across colors can create harmony or a soft, blended look. Mastering value helps you guide the viewer's eye and build compositions that feel balanced and intentional—even in monochrome palettes.

Color Saturation (Intensity)

Saturation measures how pure or vivid a color is. A highly saturated color is bold and vibrant, while a desaturated color (closer to gray) is softer and more muted. Saturation affects mood: vivid colors feel energetic and playful, while muted ones feel calm, vintage, or moody. Adjusting saturation can help you emphasize elements without changing the hue or value, making it a subtle but powerful tool in color composition.

Color Temperature Within the Same Hue

Even within a single color, temperature can vary—some blues are cool with a green tint, while others are warmer with purple undertones. This subtle shift in undertone influences how colors interact. Mixing warm and cool versions of a hue adds complexity and nuance to your palette. For example, pairing a warm red-orange with a cooler red-violet creates variation without moving far from your chosen hue family.



Psychology of Color

Colors carry emotional weight and can influence how people feel. Red can evoke excitement, love, or urgency, while blue often feels calming, trustworthy, or sad. Yellow is cheerful and attention-grabbing, while green suggests nature, growth, or healing. Understanding the psychology of color helps you intentionally craft mood, theme, or brand identity in your work, whether it's art, a journal page, or a digital design.

Cultural Meaning of Color

Colors have different meanings across cultures, and being aware of these associations is essential—especially in global design or storytelling. For instance, white symbolizes purity in Western cultures but mourning in some Eastern traditions. Red can represent luck and celebration in China but also danger or warning elsewhere. Keeping cultural context in mind ensures your color choices resonate respectfully and effectively with your audience.

Neutral Colors and Their Role

Neutral colors—like black, white, gray, beige, and brown—don't appear on the color wheel but are vital for grounding a color palette. They help balance out bold hues, create visual breathing room, and offer contrast without competing for attention. Neutrals can be used as backgrounds, frames, or calming accents in highly saturated compositions, making them indispensable for polished and balanced designs.



Simultaneous Contrast

Simultaneous contrast is a visual effect where two colors placed side by side appear to change based on how they interact. For example, a gray next to a bright red might look slightly greenish, or the same color might seem lighter or darker depending on its background. This phenomenon can be used creatively to make colors pop or to understand why some combinations feel off, even if they're technically "correct."

Color Blocking & Proportion

Knowing how much of each color to use can make or break a composition. The 60-30-10 rule is a common guideline: use 60% of a dominant color, 30% of a secondary, and 10% as an accent. This approach brings structure and visual flow to your color choices. Effective color blocking helps maintain harmony, emphasizes key areas, and ensures your palette feels intentional rather than chaotic.

Color Accessibility

Color accessibility focuses on ensuring your designs are usable and understandable by people with color vision deficiencies (like red-green color blindness). This includes avoiding problematic color pairings, ensuring sufficient contrast between text and background, and using symbols or textures in addition to color to convey meaning. Incorporating accessibility makes your work more inclusive and functional for everyone.



[illegible]