

# **Visual Literacy: Introduction to Color**

**Title:** The Influence of Color

**Grade/Age Level:** High School

**Time Frame:** 1 class period (80 minutes)

**Description of lesson:** Teacher will show two self portraits by the same artist to start considering how color influences how an artwork communicates. Teacher will facilitate a brainstorm by the class of factors that we might consider when making color choices for our self-portraits. Student will then read a handout introducing basic color theory. Students will then participate in a group activity in which they find and objects around the classroom and have their peers guess what types of colors or color schemes they are representing with the objects.

## **CA Art Standards:**

Prof.VA:Re7.1 -Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.

Acc. VA:Re7.2 - Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences.

## **Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes:**

I will be able to:

- Identify colors schemes using the color wheel
- Demonstrate my understanding of the reading by finding objects in the classroom that represent the set of colors or color schemes during the activity
- Examine the objects my peers group together to determine which set of colors or color schemes they represent
- Judge if my peers understand the definition of the set of color or color themes they are trying to represent
- Improve how I and/or my classmates understand the sets of colors or color schemes

## **Materials and Resources:**

### **Art Materials**

- Handout of four pages of reading
- Projector
- Teacher's computer
- Papers with words for activity (Printout below)

### **Instructional Resources**

- Walter Foster Publishing, 2012. *100 Things Every Artist Should Know: tips, tricks, & essential concepts*
- <https://www.saatchiart.com/art/Painting-Self-Portrait-I-m-thinking-of-them-4/285816/1641442/view>

## **Procedures:**

### **Anticipatory Set**

#### Class Discussion

- Teacher opens with this statement: When creating a self-portrait painting, the element of color can be highly influential in how that artwork communicates. As we begin to create our self-portraits, what factors might influence our color choices?
- Teacher uses the projector to show two self-portraits created by the same artist.
- Teacher will write "COLOR" on the white board and circle it. Teacher will then facilitate a brainstorming session with the class.
- Teacher will sum up the brainstorm by reading the the first paragraph from the handout:

*"A fundamental knowledge of color can assist you in clearly expressing yourself in your art. Color helps communicate feelings, mood, time of day, seasons, and emotions. Knowing how colors work, and how they work together, is key to refining your ability to communicate using color."*

### **Direct Instruction**

- Teacher explains that the handout the students will be reading is basic information on color theory. Teacher encourages students to pay attention to the bold words and their descriptions, as they will need to be able to identify these words and their meanings in the post-reading activity.

- Teacher explains that once students have completed their reading, they will come to the teachers desk and receive a folded piece of paper. Teacher will assign students to groups as this happens so that those who finish before others can be grouped together and not have to wait for students who are taking more time to read.
- Teacher explains the activity:
  - The piece of paper will identify the name of a set of colors or color scheme, for instance “primary colors”. To ensure secrecy, remember what is on the card and return it to the teacher.
  - Your job is to go on a scavenger hunt to find objects in the classroom that you can take with you to the desk, so not the clock on the wall, that represent that set of colors on your card.
  - You will then group your objects on the table and your peers will have to guess what set of colors or color scheme you are representing
  - If everyone in your group has had a turn and there is more time in the period, the activity can be repeated with new cards from the teacher.

### **Guided Practice**

- Students will read the handout and are encouraged to make any notes either directly on the handout or on a separate piece of paper. Students may raise their hands at any point if they need clarification on the reading and the teacher will assist

### **Independent Practice**

- When students have completed their reading they will approach the teachers desk to receive and view their card before handing it back to the teacher. Teacher will assign students to groups as this happens. Students will then go on a scavenger hunt to find their objects, and the group will gather to identify each others color representations. This activity will continue until the end of class.

### **Accommodations and/or Modifications:**

- **ELL, ADHD, and students with reading comprehension challenges:** Students will be paired with another student who can best support them during the reading activity. Teacher will closely monitor and check in with students to assess the students understanding.
- **Visual impairment** - Students who are visually impaired will work with a group member for their scavenger hunt, as it might be challenging to find objects around the room.

**Vocabulary:**

- **The Color Wheel** - A diagram that represents the colors of the visible spectrum and their relationship to one another
- **Primary Colors** - Colors that can't be created by mixing other colors. They are red, yellow, and blue
- **Secondary Colors** - The colors that are created by mixing two primary colors together. Eg red + yellow = orange
- **Tertiary Colors** - The colors that are created by mixing a primary color with a tertiary color. Eg red + orange = red orange
- **Color Schemes** - An arrangement or combination of colors
- **Complimentary Colors** - Colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel. These colors have the most contrast to one another
- **Analogous Colors** - Colors that are next to each other on the color wheel
- **Triadic Color scheme** - 3 colors that form an equilateral triangle on the color wheel
- **Tetradic Color scheme** - 4 colors created by choosing two colors, and their two complimentary colors
- **Split-Complimentary Color scheme** - 3 colors created by selecting a color and the two colors on each side of that color's complimentary color
- **Cool Colors** - The half of the color wheel that starts with green and includes all colors to red-violet
- **Warm Colors** - The half of the color wheel that starts with red and includes all colors to yellow-green
- **Hue** - The color by name
- **Value** - The lightness or darkness in a color
- **Intensity** - The purity and saturation of a color



**Activity:** Teacher will printout and cutout these word descriptions and fold each in half.

Primary Colors	Secondary Colors	Tertiary Colors	Compliment ary Colors
Analogous Colors- minimum 3	Triadic Colors	Tetradic Colors	Split- Compliment ary Colors
Cool Colors - inlcude 6	Warm Colors - include 6		

**Focus Artworks: Used for projection at beginning of class**



*Self Portrait-I'm thinking of them-4*  
*Painting, contemporary*  
Masri Hayssam. Mixed media on canvas



*Self Portrait Painting, contemporary*  
Masri Hayssam. Oil on wood

**More info about the artist:**

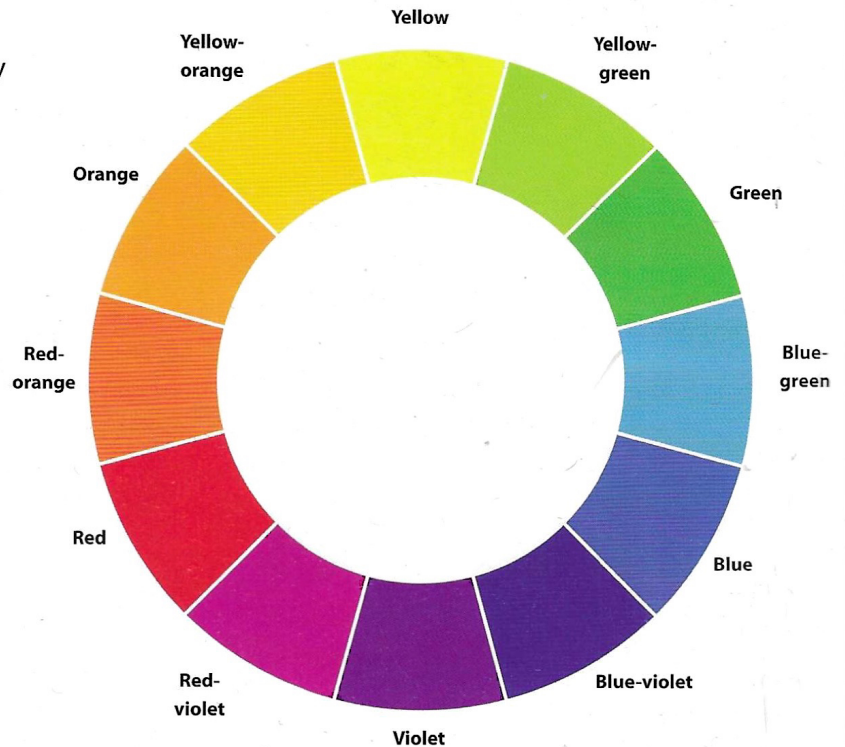
<https://www.saatchiart.com/art/Painting-Self-Portrait-I-m-thinking-of-them-4/285816/1641442/view>

# Introduction to Color

A fundamental knowledge of color can assist you in clearly expressing yourself in your art. Color helps communicate feelings, mood, time of day, seasons, and emotions. Knowing how colors work, and how they work together, is key to refining your ability to communicate using color.

## The Color Wheel

A color wheel is a visual representation of colors arranged according to their chromatic relationship. The basic color wheel consists of 12 colors that can be broken down into three different groups: primary colors, secondary colors, and tertiary colors.

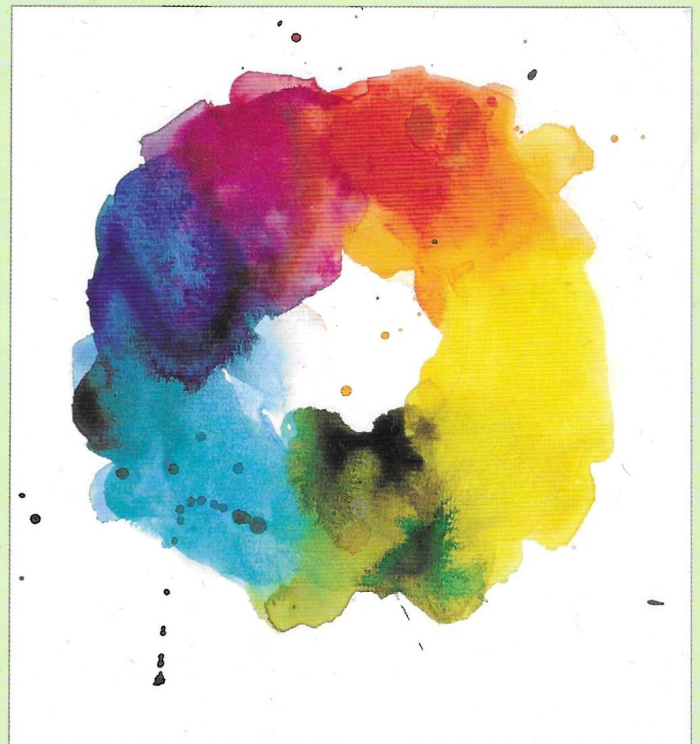


## Creating Wheel References

One of the easiest things to create is a 12-color color wheel with just the three primaries: red, yellow, and blue. All colors are derived from these three. Beginners should mix a color wheel with both the primaries and secondaries. This can help you understand how to create additional colors, see how colors interact, indicate if you have too many colors (do you really need five reds?), and see your palette of colors in spectrum order.



Color wheel made with three primaries



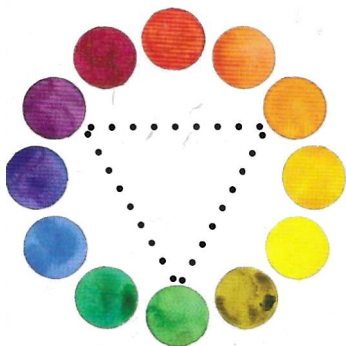
Color wheel made with primaries and secondaries



# The Basics of Color

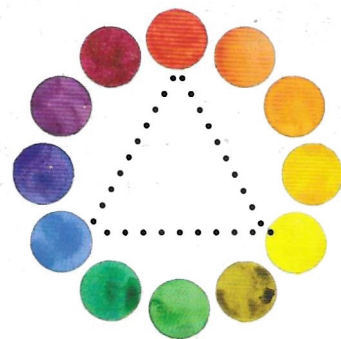
## Primary Colors

The primary colors are red, yellow, and blue. These colors cannot be created by mixing any other colors, but in theory, all other colors can be mixed from them.



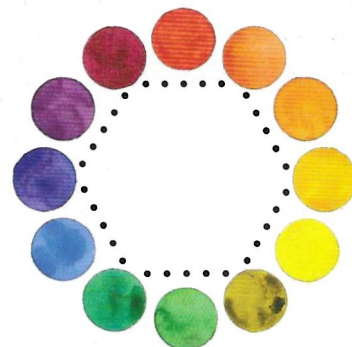
## Secondary Colors

Secondary colors are created by mixing any two primary colors; they are found in between the primary colors on the color wheel. Orange, green, and purple are secondary colors.



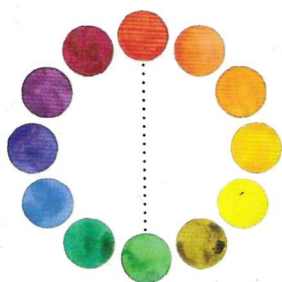
## Tertiary Colors

If you mix a primary color with its adjacent secondary color, you get a tertiary color. These colors fill in the gaps and finish the color wheel. Tertiary colors are red-orange, red-violet, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, and blue-violet.

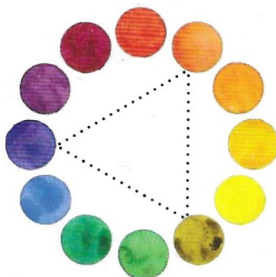


## Color Schemes

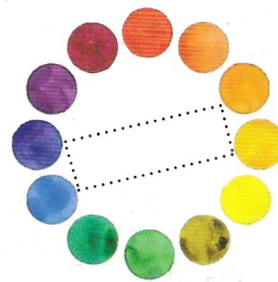
Choosing and applying a color scheme (or a selection of related colors) in your painting can help you achieve unity, harmony, or dynamic contrasts. This page showcases a variety of common color combinations. Explore these different schemes to familiarize yourself with the nature of color relationships and to practice mixing colors.



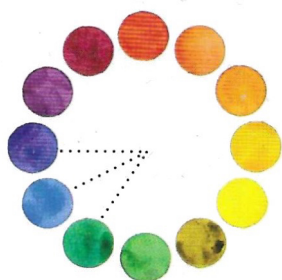
**Complementary Color Schemes** Complementary colors are opposite each other on the color wheel. Red and green (shown above), orange and blue, and yellow and purple are examples of complementary colors. When placed adjacent to each other in a painting, complements make each other appear brighter. When mixed, they have the opposite effect, neutralizing (or graying) each other.



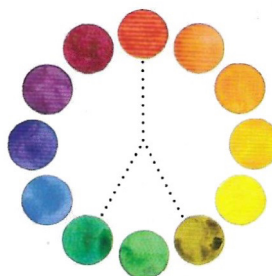
**Triadic Color Scheme** This scheme consists of three colors that form an equilateral triangle on the color wheel. An example of this would be blue-violet, red-orange, and yellow-green (shown above).



**Tetradic Color Schemes** Four colors that form a square or a rectangle on the color wheel create a tetradic color scheme. This color scheme includes two pairs of complementary colors, such as orange and blue and yellow-orange and blue-violet (shown above). This is also known as a “double-complementary” color scheme.



**Analogous Color Schemes** Analogous colors are adjacent (or close) to each other on the color wheel. Analogous color schemes are good for creating unity within a painting because the colors are already related. You can do a tight analogous scheme (a very small range of colors) or a loose analogous scheme (a larger range of related colors). Examples of tight analogous color schemes would be red, red-orange, and orange; or blue-violet, blue, and blue-green (shown at left). A loose analogous scheme would be blue, violet, and red.

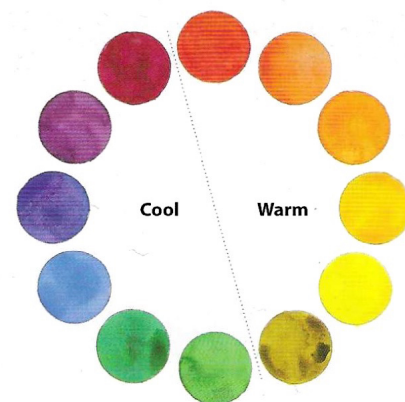


**Split-Complementary Color Schemes** This scheme includes a main color and a color on each side of its complementary color. An example of this (shown at left) would be red, yellow-green, and blue-green.



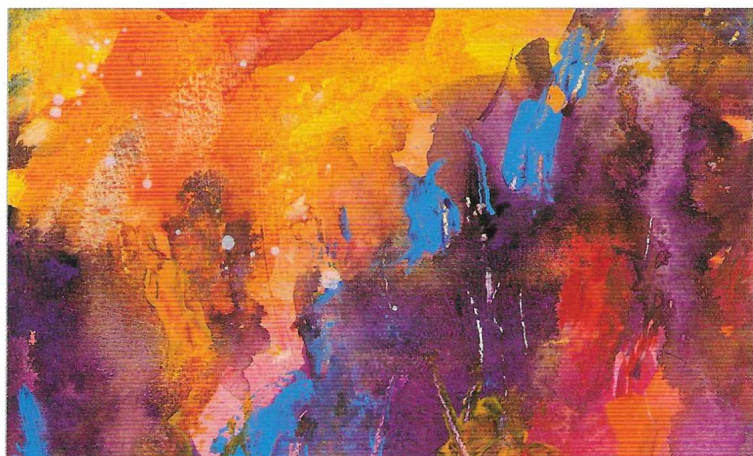
# Color Temperature

Divide your color wheel in half by drawing a line from a point between red and red-violet to a point between yellow-green and green. You have now identified the warm colors (reds, oranges, and yellows) and the cool colors (greens, blues, and purples). Granted, red-violet is a bit warm and yellow-green is a bit cool, but the line needs to be drawn somewhere, and you'll get the general idea from this. In a painting, warm colors tend to advance and appear more active, whereas cool colors recede and provide a sense of calm. Remember these important points about color temperature as you plan your painting.

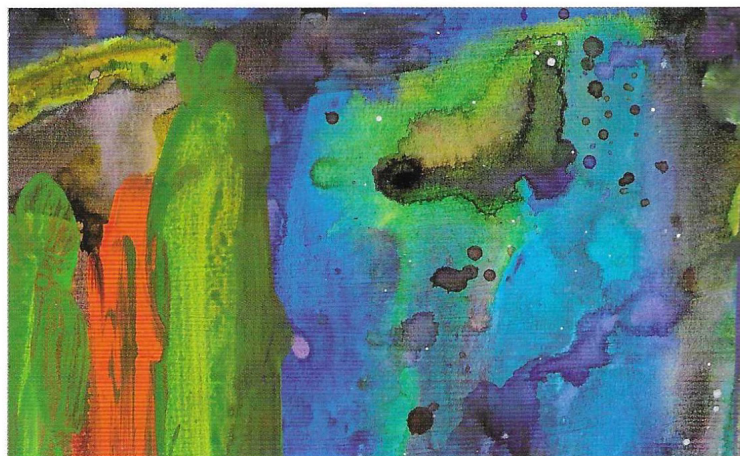


## Mood and Temperature

We are all affected by color, regardless of whether we realize it. Studies show that color schemes make us feel certain ways. Warm colors, such as red, orange, yellow, and light green, are exciting and energetic. Cool colors, such as dark green, blue, and purple, are calming and soothing. Use these colors schemes as tools to express the mood of the painting. In fact, you'll find that you don't even need a subject in your painting to communicate a particular feeling; the abstract works below demonstrate how color is powerful enough to stand on its own.



**Warm Palette** What is this painting of? Who knows! It doesn't matter. The point here is to express a mood or a feeling. Here the mood is hot, vibrant passion. Energetic reds and oranges contrast the cool accents of blue and purple.



**Cool Palette** A much different feeling is expressed in this painting. It is one of calm and gentle inward thought. The red-orange accents create an exciting counterpoint to the overall palette of cool greens and blues.

## Suggesting Mood with Strokes

Color isn't the only thing that affects mood. All parts of the painting contribute to the mood of the piece, including the brushstrokes and line work. Keep these points in mind as you aim for a specific feeling in your paintings.



**Upward Strokes**  
(heavier at the base and tapering as they move up) suggest a positive feeling.



**Downward Strokes**  
(heavier at the top and tapering as they move down) suggest a more somber tone.



**Vertical Strokes**  
communicate force, energy, and drama.



**Horizontal Strokes**  
denote peace and tranquility.



# Color Properties

The properties of color are hue, value, and intensity. When you look at a color, you will see all three properties. Hue is the name of the color, such as red, yellow, or blue. Value refers to how light or dark a color is. Intensity is the color's brightness or dullness.

## Hue

Hue refers to the color name. Here are some examples of blue hues.



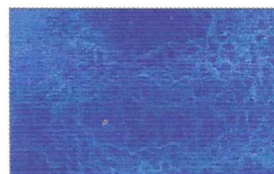
Phthalo blue: a greenish blue



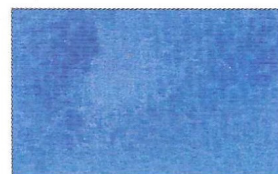
Cobalt turquoise light:  
a bright, greenish blue



Cerulean blue: a bright,  
grayish blue



Ultramarine blue: a cool,  
reddish blue



Cobalt blue: a pure blue

## Value

Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a color (or of black). Variations of color values are an important tool for creating the illusion of form and depth in your paintings. Colors have their own inherent value; squint at a color wheel and you'll see light colors, such as yellow, and dark colors, such as purple. In addition, each color has its own range of values. With watercolor, add water to lighten the value (creating a tint of the color), or add black to darken the value (creating a shade of the color).



Purple



Yellow



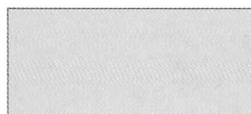
Red



Green



Purple (grayscale)



Yellow (grayscale)



Red (grayscale)



Green (grayscale)

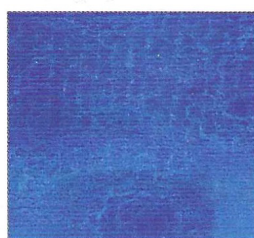
**Assessing the Value of Color** Above are colors from the color wheel (top row) and how they appear in grayscale (bottom row). Viewing them in this manner reveals the true value of each color without any visual distractions. As you can see, purple is very dark, yellow is very light, and red and green are similar medium values.



**Creating Value Scales** Get to know the range of lights your paint colors can produce by creating a few value scales. Working your way from left to right, start with a very strong wash of your color and add more water for successively lighter values.

## Intensity

Intensity refers to the purity (or saturation) of the color. Colors right out of the tube (or as they appear on the color wheel) are at full intensity. To change the intensity of watercolor paint, you can dull the color (or gray it) by adding its complement, gray, black, white, or water. Although adding black or water changes the value of the color, it also neutralizes it, dulling it and making it less intense.



Ultramarine blue right out of  
the tube at full intensity



Ultramarine blue dulled  
with water



Ultramarine blue dulled with  
burnt umber

**Methods of Assessment:**

	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Activity Participation</b>	<p>Can express understanding of the vocabulary used for the activity by gathering appropriate objects to represent their color set or scheme</p> <p>Can express understanding of the vocabulary used for the activity by naming the color set or scheme being represented by their peers -or- Can improve the understanding of the vocabulary used for the activity for their peers by showing examples that may help support understanding</p>	<p>Can express understanding of the vocabulary used for the activity by gathering appropriate objects to represent their color set or scheme with only one error</p> <p>Can express understanding of the vocabulary used for the activity by naming the color set or scheme through discussion with their peers</p>	<p>Can express understanding of the vocabulary used for the activity by gathering appropriate objects to represent their color set or scheme with only two errors but still close (eg, next to the color that would better represent the color)</p> <p>Can somewhat express understanding of the vocabulary used for the activity through discussion with their peers but still may not be able to name the color sets or schemes without group support</p>	<p>Cannot express understanding of the vocabulary used for the activity by gathering appropriate objects to represent their color set or scheme</p> <p>Cannot express understanding of the vocabulary used for the activity by naming the color set or scheme being represented by their peers</p>
<b>Participation in Class Discussion</b>	<p>Contributes frequently with well formed ideas and original thought</p> <p>Listens intently and responds showing an understanding of the progression of the discussion</p>	<p>Contributes frequently</p> <p>Ideas are on topic</p> <p>Listens actively and responds appropriately to peers</p>	<p>Contributes at least once</p> <p>Somewhat listens to the discussion</p> <p>Somewhat is able to follow the discussion</p>	<p>Does not contribute</p> <p>Is distracted and not listening to the discussion</p>