

Colors

What they mean and how they effect us

Green

Green occupies more space in the spectrum visible to the human eye than most colors, and is second only to blue as a favorite color. Green is the pervasive color in the natural world, making it an ideal backdrop in interior design because we are so used to seeing it everywhere.

The natural greens, from forest to lime, are seen as tranquil and refreshing, with a natural balance of cool and warm (blue and yellow) undertones. Green is considered the color of peace and ecology.

However, there is an "institutional" side to green, associated with illness and government-issued green cards, that conjures up negative emotions, as do the "slimy" or "bilious" greens.

How the color green affects us physically

- Soothes
 - Relaxes mentally, as well as physically
 - Helps alleviate depression, nervousness, and anxiety
- Offers a sense of renewal, self-control, and harmony

Green around the globe

- Green is used worldwide to represent safety.
- In several religions, green is the color associated with resurrection and regeneration.
- In Ghardaia and other parts of M'zab, houses painted in green indicate that the inhabitants have made a pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Green, blue-green, and blue are sacred colors in Iran, where they symbolize paradise.
- As the emblematic color of Ireland, green represents the vast green hillsides, as well as Ireland's patron saint, St. Patrick.
- In Japan, green is regarded as the color of eternal life.
- In Aztec culture, green was considered to be royal because it was the color of the quetzal plumes used by the Aztec chieftains.
- The solid green flag of Libya is currently the only national flag of a single color.
- In China, jade stones represent virtue and beauty.
- In Portugal, green is the color of hope because of its associations with spring.
- In the highlands of Scotland, people used to wear green as a mark of honor.

*There is a superstition that sewing with green thread on the eve of a fashion show brings bad luck to the design house.

Red

Red has more personal associations than any other color. Recognized as a stimulant, red is inherently exciting and the amount of red is directly related to the level of energy perceived. Red draws attention and a keen use of red as an accent can immediately focus attention on a particular element.

How the color red affects us physically

- Increases enthusiasm
- Stimulates energy and can increase the blood pressure, respiration, heartbeat, and pulse rate
- Encourages action and confidence
- Provides a sense of protection from fears and anxiety

Interesting information about red

- Red is the highest arc of the rainbow.
- Red is the first color you lose sight of at twilight.
- The longest wavelength of light is red.
- In the financial arena, red symbolizes a negative direction.
- Eric the Red is the Norwegian Viking credited for colonizing Greenland...he earned his nickname from his bright red hair and beard.
- Feng shui recommends painting the front door of a home red to invite prosperity to the residents.
- According to "The Language of Stained Glass" at Armstrong Browning Library at Baylor University: When Dante spoke of the Seraphim - the first of the nine choirs of Angels - the color that "glows" was the pure orange vermilion which his fellow citizens and brothers-in-spirit (the painters, illuminators, and glassmen) knew as red. So, it may be said that pure red is the color of divine love, the Holy Spirit, courage, self-sacrifice, martyrdom, and all the warm impulses that belong to the great-hearted everywhere.
- Bees can't see the color red, but they can see all other bright colors. Red flowers are usually pollinated by birds, butterflies, bats, and wind, rather than bees.

Red is the color that means "severe" in the color-coded threat system established by presidential order in March 2002. This system quickly informs law enforcement agencies when intelligence indicates a change in the terrorist threat facing the United States.

Yellow

Yellow shines with optimism, enlightenment, and happiness. Shades of golden yellow carry the promise of a positive future. Yellow will advance from surrounding colors and instill optimism and energy, as well as spark creative thoughts.

How the color yellow affects us physically

- Stimulates mental processes
- Stimulates the nervous system
- Activates memory

Encourages communication

Popular phrases that include yellow

- Yellowbellied: a cowardly manner
- Yellow fever: a disease involving high fever and jaundice that is common in the tropics
- Yellow jack: a flag flown on a vessel to show that it is under quarantine
- Yellowdog contract: a contract which denies a person the right to join a worker's union

Yellow journalism: newspaper articles thought to be sensationalized in order to sell more papers [Why yellow?](#)

[See our list of popular phrases that include color...](#)

Quotes about yellow

- "Everyone knows that yellow, orange, and red suggest ideas of joy and plenty. I can paint you the skin of Venus with mud, provided you let me surround it as I will." -- Eugene Delacroix
 - "As a picture painted in yellow always radiates spiritual warmth, or as one in blue has apparently a cooling effect, so green is only boring." -- Wassily Kandinsky
 - "Oh yes! He loved yellow, did good Vincent...When the two of us were together in Arles, both of us insane, and constantly at war over beautiful colors, I adored red; where could I find a perfect vermilion?" -- Paul Gauguin
- "What a horrible thing yellow is." -- Edgar Degas

Blue

Blue is the overwhelming "favorite color." Blue is seen as trustworthy, dependable, and committed.

The color of ocean and sky, blue is perceived as a constant in our lives. As the collective color of the spirit, it invokes rest and can cause the body to produce chemicals that are calming. However, not all blues are serene and sedate.

Electric or brilliant blues become dynamic and dramatic -- an engaging color that expresses exhilaration. Some shades or the overuse of blue may come across as cold or uncaring.

Indigo, a deeper blue, symbolizes a mystical borderland of wisdom, self-mastery, and spiritual realization. While blue is the color of communication with others, indigo turns the blue inward to increase personal thought, profound insights, and instant understandings.

Blue is the least "gender specific" color, having equal appeal to both men and women.

Interesting information about blue

- President Martin VanBuren is credited with introducing blue into the decorating scheme of the White House in 1837 and since then, there has been a "blue room" in the White House.
- Blue is one color that means "low" or "guarded" in the color-coded threat system established by presidential order in March 2002. This system quickly informs law enforcement agencies when intelligence indicates a change in the terrorist threat facing the United States.
- Blue is the favored color choice for toothbrushes.
- Powder blue is often used in products to promote cleanliness and purity.
- IBM's Deep Blue became the first computer to win a chess tournament against a reigning world champion chess master. Deep Blue had 32 processors and processed about 200 million chess moves per second in its historic six-game match against Garry Kasparov. Today, Blue Gene is the fastest supercomputer in the world and the descendent of Deep Blue. It uses 131,000 processors to routinely handle 280 trillion operations every second.
- The blue ribbon has been widely recognized as a national symbol of child abuse awareness.
- Owls are the only birds that can see the color blue.
- Over the past decade, scientists have reported the successful use of blue light in the treatment of a wide variety of psychological problems, including addictions, eating disorders, impotence, and depression.
- People are often more productive in blue rooms.
- The highest quality ultramarine blue is made with powdered lapis lazuli from Afghanistan.
- The 1993 film "Blue" consists entirely of the color blue with narration and soundbytes.
- "Alice Blue" is a light blue-gray or steel blue color that was favored by Alice Roosevelt Longworth, daughter of Theodore Roosevelt; it sparked a fashion sensation in the United States.
- Mosquito's are attracted to the color blue twice as much as to any other color.
- In ceramics, a variety of ingredients -- including cobalt oxide, copper carbonate, and iron oxide -- produce the blue colors. The different variations are produced when each ingredient is combined with other materials or with each other. The application, thickness of the glaze, how it is applied, and the type of clay used also have an impact on the final color after firing. Unlike paint, raw glazes look nothing like their final appearance after firing.
- Blue Tigers (Maltese Tigers) have been sporadically reported in the mountains of the Fujian province in China. They are described as bluish-grey or slate-blue with white patches on the face and black stripes.

Pablo Picasso's "Blue Period" refers to a series of paintings in which the color blue dominates and which he painted between 1901 and 1904. The Blue Period is a marvelous expression of poetic subtlety and personal melancholy and contributes to the transition of Picasso's style from classicism to abstract art.

Gray

Gray is the color of intellect, knowledge, and wisdom. It is perceived as long-lasting, classic, and often as sleek or refined. It is a color that is dignified, conservative, and carries authority. Gray is controlled and inconspicuous and is considered a color of compromise, perhaps because it sits between the extremes of black and white. Gray is a perfect neutral, which is why designers often use it as a background color.

How the color gray affects us physically

- Unsettles
- Creates expectations

Interesting information about gray

- The New York Times is sometimes called "Gray Lady."
- Gray represents non-involvement, giving it a formal authority.
- Gray is associated with intellect and the brain is composed of "gray matter."
- Gray is representative of pessimism.
- The human eye can distinguish about 500 shades of gray.
- Gray in athletics and sports
- The "Grey Cup" refers to the Canadian Football League championship game and also to the trophy given to the winning team.

Popular phrases that include gray

- Gray market: the business of buying or selling items that are priced below what has been regulated
- Gray mood: an unhappy mood
- Gray area: caught between two differing views

Orange

Orange, a close relative of red, sparks more controversy than any other hue. There is usually strong positive or negative association to orange and true orange generally elicits a stronger "love it" or "hate it" response than other colors. Fun and flamboyant orange radiates warmth and energy.

Interestingly, some tones of orange, such as terra cotta, peach, and rust have very broad appeal.

How the color orange affects us physically

- Stimulates activity
- Stimulates appetite
- Encourages socialization

Interesting information about orange

- The interior dash lights on older model Subaru cars were orange.
- Orange is the color that means "high" in the color-coded threat system established by presidential order in March 2002. This system quickly informs law enforcement agencies when intelligence indicates a change in the terrorist threat facing the United States.
- In the United States Army, orange is the color of the United States Army Signal Corps.
- Safety orange is a color used to set things apart from their surroundings. Safety orange is the color usually used in the United States for traffic cones, stanchions, barrels, and other construction zone marking devices. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that certain construction equipment must be painted safety orange.
- Agent Orange, an herbicide named after the color of its containers, was used in a systematic herbicidal program organized by the US military that ran from 1961 through 1971 in Vietnam. At the time, this program was meant to deny food and jungle cover to Vietnamese liberation forces, but the chemical remained in the water and soil decades later. Dioxin, the toxic compound in Agent Orange, has been shown to cause cancer, birth defects, and organ dysfunction.