

## Basic Color Theory

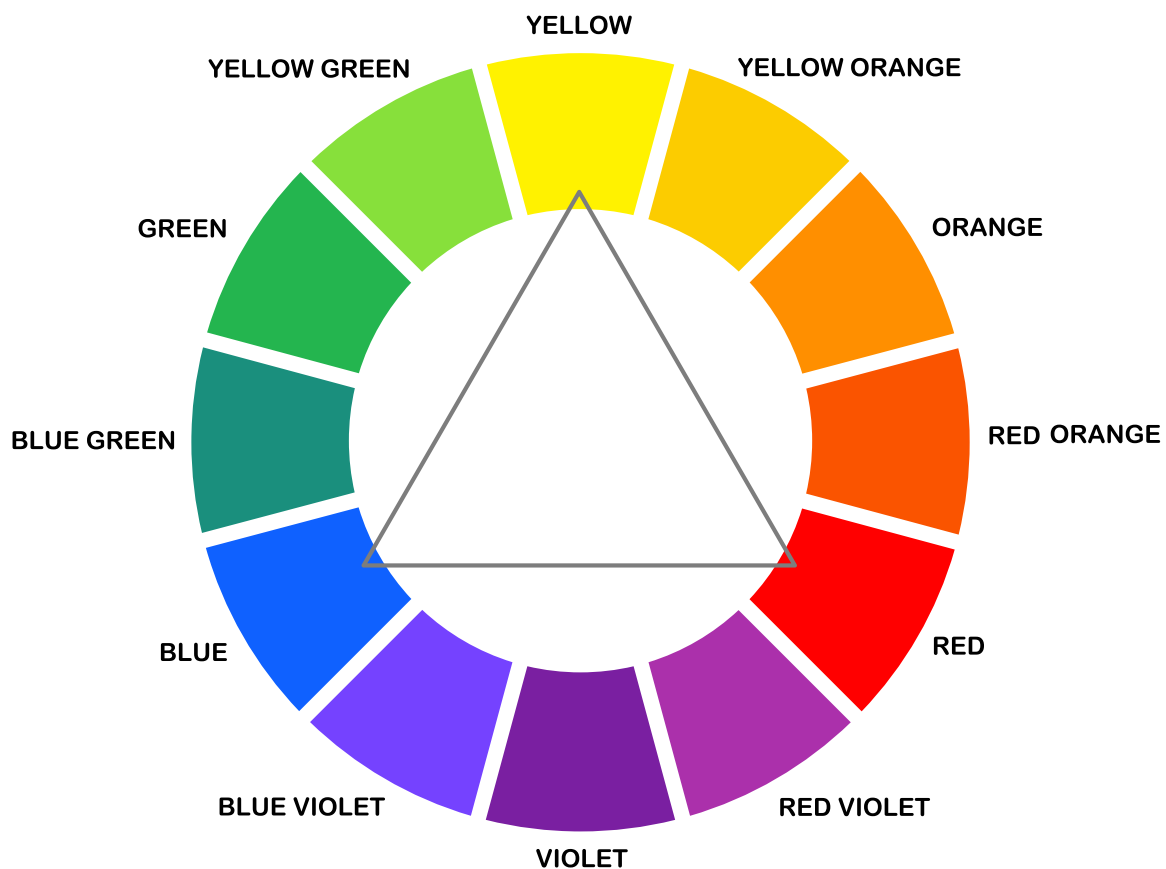
Color is one of the most important elements of any design. When planning projects, it is great to know the basics of color theory to help you achieve the attractive look you desire.

### The Color Wheel

The color wheel describes the relationships between colors. It shows primary, secondary, complementary, and intermediate colors.

**Primary colors** are red, yellow, and blue. They can be mixed to create all other colors.

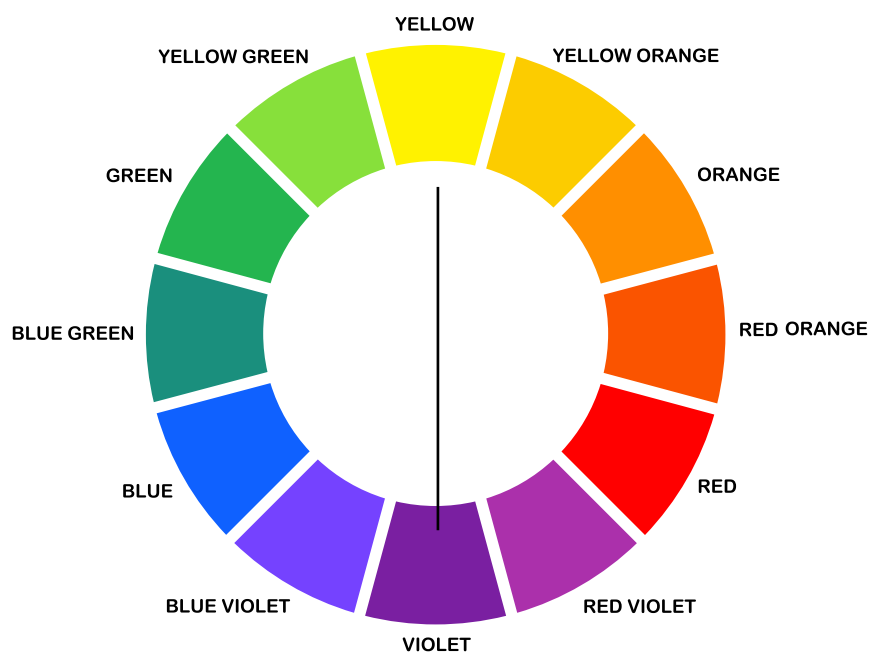
**Secondary colors** are green, violet, and orange.



## Basic Color Theory, continued

**Complementary colors** appear opposite each other on the color wheel such as yellow and violet. These colors contrast with each other on the color wheel.

**Intermediate colors** are created by mixing secondary colors with primary colors. These colors are yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, red-violet, red-orange, and yellow-orange.



**Hue** is any color. When white or gray is added the result is a **tint**. Adding black results in a **shade**.



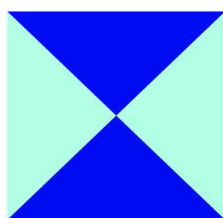
Tint



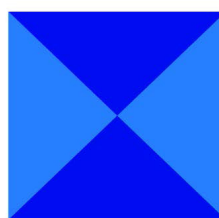
Shade

## Basic Color Theory, continued

**Contrasting colors** are a great way to make your visuals more appealing to the eye. A sharp contrast in color draws attention. Look at the boxes below. Example A has a sharp contrast and is much more visually appealing than Example B.



Example A



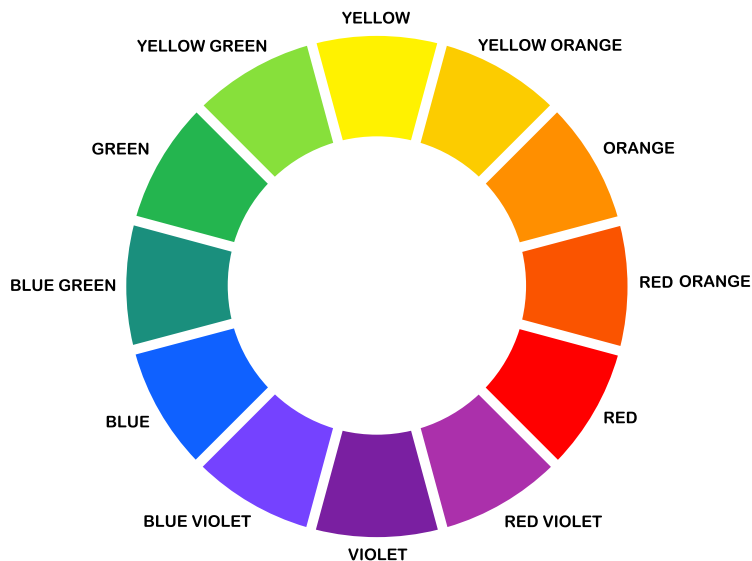
Example B

Text is also very important when choosing contrasting colors unless you want the text to blur into the background. But, you can take text too far in contrast. Some contrast are so far apart that the text will appear to vibrate. You will want to avoid this effect when designing materials for presentations and materials you expect may be read on computer screens. The chart below shows you a general idea of how some colors will look on different backgrounds.

color	color	color	color	color	color	color	color
color	color	color	color	color	color	color	color
color	color	color	color	color	color	color	color
color	color	color	color	color	color	color	color
color	color	color	color	color	color	color	color
color	color	color	color	color	color	color	color
color	color	color	color	color	color	color	color

## Basic Color Theory, continued

Colors can take on many qualities and evoke many responses and moods. On this color wheel, warm colors are on the left side, and cool colors are on the right. Below are some of the words that may be associated with certain colors, as well as the positive and negative moods they could evoke.



<b>Color</b>	<b>Positive Association</b>	<b>Negative Association</b>
RED	warmth, passion, strength, love	danger, anger, war, or violence
BLUE	snow, ice, cold, sea, sky, calm, unity, stability	depression
GREEN	trees, nature, spring	envy
YELLOW	sun, gold, hot, summer, hope	illness, hazard
WHITE	snow, pure, peace	clinical, cold
BLACK	power, style, depth	death, fear, evil
GRAY	mature, smart	shadow, fear, cold

## Reference

Jupiter Onlinemedia Corporation. (2007). *Design with color*. www.devx.com

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