

# Color & The Color Wheel

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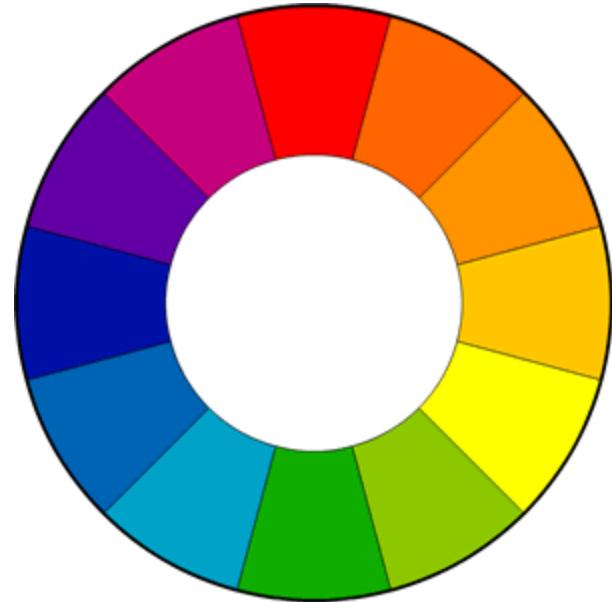


## Color is an element of art

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- A Color Wheel is an exceptional tool for teaching students about color theory and how colors relate to one another. The first circular color diagram was created by Sir Isaac Newton in 1666.
- Color wheels start with the three Primary colors: red, yellow and blue (typically located at the 12:00, 3:00, and 9:00 positions of a circle). Then the secondary colors are added: orange, green and purple (with green located at the 6:00 position). Secondary colors are made by mixing primary colors.
- To illustrate how a Color Wheel is created, talk about the color wheel while you paint one, mixing the colors and showing students how to make the secondary colors.
- Discuss the concept of **Color Schemes** (described below), explaining the various groupings of colors.



## Vocabulary

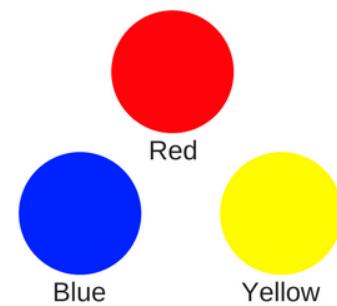
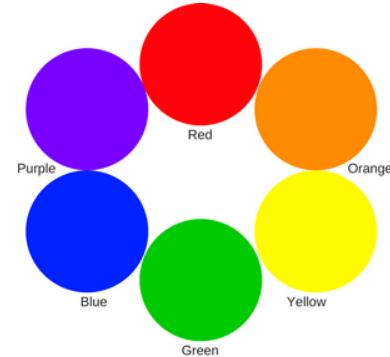
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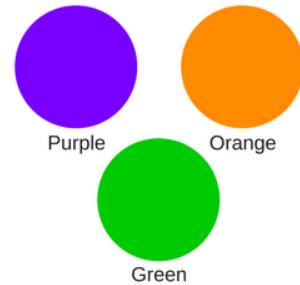
**Color Wheel:** a circle with different colored sectors used to show the relationship between colors.

**Primary Colors:** red, yellow and blue. The colors from which all other colors are created by mixing.

**Secondary Colors:** green, orange and purple. Colors created by mixing primary colors only.

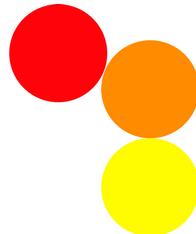
**Intermediate Color:** a color created by mixing a primary color with the secondary color next to it; also called a tertiary color; intermediate colors include red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, and red-violet.



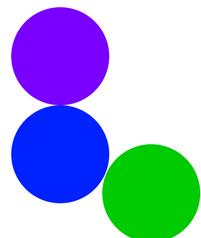


## Color Schemes: groupings of colors that are related on the color wheel.

**Analogous Colors:** Colors that appear next to each other on the color wheel. For example, red, orange, and yellow are analogous colors. If mixed, these colors tend to make variations of the original colors.



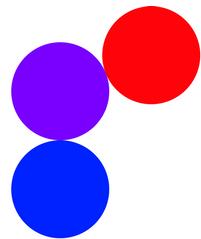
**Complimentary Colors:** Colors that appear opposite to one another on the color wheel. These colors compliment one another and are often used together in order to create a strong visual impact (one example is the UW Husky colors). Sometimes also called contrasting colors. If mixed, complimentary colors tend to create "muddy" tones such as black, brown, or gray.



Red - Green

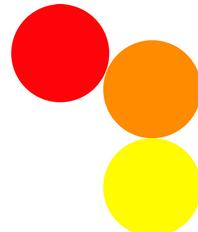
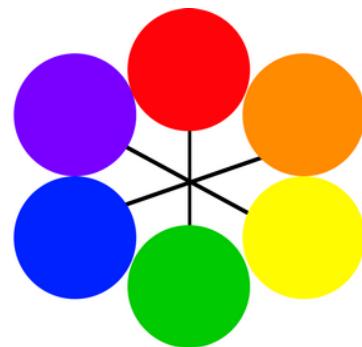
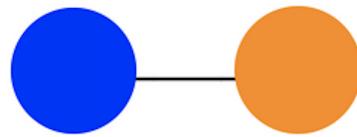
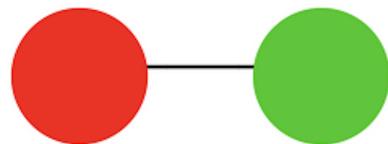
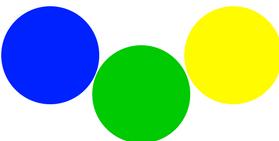
Blue - Orange

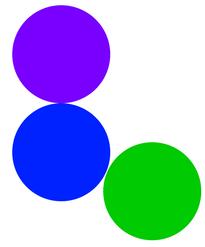
Purple - Yellow



**Warm Colors:** a group of colors on the color wheel that are associated with warmth, such as red, yellow, and orange (and variations on these colors such as pink, red-orange, etc.). In art, warm colors appear to advance toward the viewer.

**Cool Colors:** a group of colors on the color wheel that includes blues, greens, and violets. In artwork, cool colors appear to be farther away from the viewer.





## Sample Projects

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- [Color Mixing Bugs](#) (Kindergarten) art lesson.
- [Ice Cube Painting](#) (Kindergarten) art lesson.
- [Mondrian's Primary Colors](#) (Kindergarten) art lesson.
- [Mouse Paint](#) (Kindergarten) art lesson.
- [Warm and Cool Leaves](#) (Kindergarten) art lesson.
- [Color Wheel Magic](#) (1st Grade) art lesson.
- [Color Wheel Spring Flowers](#) (1st Grade) art lesson.
- [Crazy Color Wheels](#) (1st Grade) art lesson.
- [Analogous Color Weaving](#) (3rd Grade) art lesson.
- [Warm and Cool Hearts](#) (3rd Grade) art lesson.
- [Snakes Drawn in Analogous Colors](#) (3rd Grade) art lesson.
- [Space Landscape](#) (3rd Grade) art lesson.
- [Monochromatic Abstract Painting](#) (4th Grade) art lesson.
- Make a Color Wheel starting with a [blank color wheel template](#). Have students begin with red, yellow and blue then have them mix the secondary colors (noting that darker colors may overpower colors like yellow so it's best to begin with yellow then add tiny amounts of blue to get the desired shade of green, for example).
- Paint a hot air balloon or an umbrella in the colors of the color wheel.

## Additional Recommended Reference Materials

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*Mouse Paint* book by Ellen Stohl Walsh.

[Printable Color Wheel Worksheet](#) (blank for students to complete).

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