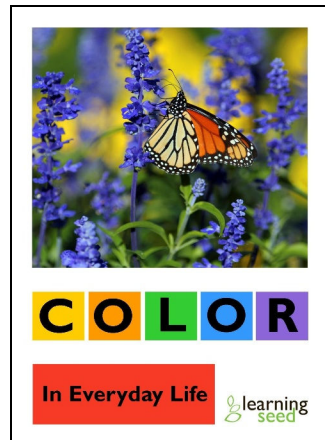


Color In Everyday Life



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Summary

Color is a power in daily life. It shapes how you dress, what you eat, your physical appearance, the rooms you live in, and how you feel. What is color and why does it have so much power?

Explore:

- Color is the most powerful illusion in the world. Discover that our eyes work more like a paint gun than a camera.
- We are all deeply prejudiced about color. Food coloring is not to mislead us, it's to satisfy our color biases. Salmon has to be pink, egg yolks a golden orange, and lemon meringue pie a bright yellow. We insist.
- Give people a lime flavored drink and color it orange, and the color can overpower the taste. Our eyes are part of our taste buds.
- Color influences what we buy. Can color make a golf ball travel farther? Can color make your skin itch?
- Can a “little blue pill” make you sleepier than a “little pink pill”? How does color influence health?
- From UPS brown to yellow cabs, learn how corporations stake claims to specific colors as part of their identities.
- Explore cultural, ethnic, and religious use of color. Would you trust a judge wearing a neon green robe?
- See how color is used as a signal system from ancient laws restricting color in clothing to today's required OSHA safety colors.

Color is critical in consumer education, literature, art, interior design, fashion, and life itself. *Color in Everyday Life* will increase awareness of the power and magic of color.

Key Ideas

Color is not a “thing” “out there,” in doors or birds or faces. Color is a creation of our eyes and minds. Color is in the observer, not the thing observed.

Color is not a quality or thing that objects have. It's not so much that this apple IS red, it's that we now SEE red. Color demands light and an observer. That's why that door in perfect darkness has no color until someone sees it under light

When it comes to color, we all hold strong prejudices. Food has to fit our color bias. Just try serving blue oatmeal or green eggs and purple ham. Experiments find that many people become physically ill from eating perfectly good food with unexpected colors — a gut reaction caused by color prejudice.

You might suspect food producers use color additives to fool consumers. But most food coloring is added to satisfy strong prejudices about what color a food “should be.” Eaters demand to be fooled.

In a room or office, warm colors such as browns, gold, and reds can make people FEEL warmer. And light, pale colors can actually make people feel cooler. The colors do not change the actual room temperature, but they can change our perception of warmth and cold.

A study gave people two sleeping pills and asked which worked better. The only difference between the pills was color – one blue the other pink. 72% taking the blue tablets reported it made them feel sleepy compared to just 37% of those taking the pink pills.

Many corporations attempt to “claim” one or two colors as their own. UPS says to “ask what brown can do for you.” UPS wants the world to think of brown as a signal for no-nonsense reliability.

Brands that compete for shelf space wear their uniforms much like sports teams. When we examine the grocery display for soup we don't need to READ labels. We look for Campbell's red, Progresso's blue and Healthy Choice's green.

The meaning of other color signals depend on the culture in which they appear. Black is the color of mourning in many western nations, while white serves that purpose in some Asian cultures.

We can distinguish among thousands of hues, many of which have no commonly agreed upon names. When paint maker Benjamin Moore changed the name of an “off white” color from “ivory” to “antique silk,” it went from 20th to 6th in sales volume the next year. Marketers invent color names to sell goods.

In the Middle Ages laws described specific pieces of clothing and colors suitable to each class. Clothing colors often signaled social standing.

In some religions, especially before the 12th Century, color was considered a mask that hid God's glory. Even today, a variety of religious movements see color more as a distraction than a celebration.

Color influences us constantly, yet its power is often invisible. The first step in understanding color's power is to be more aware of colors. Notice how colors influence your emotions. Examine your color prejudices. Experiment with colors. We have more color choices today than at any time in history – enjoy them.

Color Psychology

Feelings

Hue: Warm hues excite, cool hues quiet. Warm colors can make people feel warmer. Too many cool colors can lead to feelings of coldness.

Value: Light values tend to be cheerful, friendly, and informal. Dark values are more serious and formal. They often convey authority.

Intensity: Low intensities are "laid back." High intensities are energetic.

Size

Hue: Warm colors increase the apparent size of objects. Thus, warm colors make walls larger and the room "feel" smaller.

Value: Light values increase apparent size. A sharp contrast in values also increases perceived size.

Intensity: High intensity colors increase the size of objects. When used for walls, they make a room feel smaller.

Distance

Hue: Warm hues pull colors forward. Cool colors make objects appear more distant.

Value: Light values recede, dark values advance. Contrasting values also advance.

Intensity: High intensity colors appear closer than they really are.

Attraction

Hue: Warm colors call attention and attract more than cool colors.

Value: Extremes in values attract as do contrasts in value.

Intensity: High intensities pull the eyes.

Red - Red has power and heat. It is active and filled with energy as it advances to meet you. Red is warm, even hot. Red and hearts can mean love, but red also means stop in the face of danger. The meaning of red, like any color, depends on its context. A color does not have "meaning" like a word. There is no "dictionary" of the meanings of color.

Blue - Blue (along with red and yellow) are primary colors. Blue is cool. It moves away from you — keeps its distance. Blue reminds us of water and the sky. Blue has the power to calm and soothe so it is conducive to relaxation and contemplation. Blue is the most commonly used color in stained glass windows for churches.

Yellow - Yellow is sunshine. It is happy and cheerful. Yellow reminds us of sun. It is one of the first colors an infant responds to.

Pink - Pink is a soft, gentle color. Pink is often considered a feminine color while red is masculine.

Context - A hue does not have one specific meaning. The meaning of a color changes according to where it is and what other colors surround it. The burgundy carpet will feel warm, rich, and solid. But the same color on walls or ceiling will look oppressive, heavy, or even disturbing.

Color In Everyday Life

Multiple Choice

Circle the best available answer for each of the following:

- 1) The program asks viewers to “imagine a world without color.” It concludes:
 - a) it would be like a black and white movie
 - b) it would be gray and white
 - c) it cannot be imagined
 - d) it would look like a white cat in a snowstorm
- 2) Color is a creation of:
 - a) ultraviolet rays
 - b) magnetic waves
 - c) light radiation
 - d) our eyes and minds
- 3) Food coloring is used mostly to:
 - a) hide inferior ingredients
 - b) satisfy our color prejudices
 - c) trick us into tasting flavors that are not in the food
 - d) satisfy our need for bright colors
- 4) Give people a lime-flavored drink with orange coloring and many people will say:
 - a) it is an orange drink
 - b) it is a lime drink
 - c) it is an orange-lime drink
 - d) it is disgusting
- 5) The video tells of experiments with skin cream and golf clubs that reveal:
 - a) color has little effect on performance evaluations
 - b) women prefer pink and men blue in most objects
 - c) color influences our judgment of many consumer products
 - d) color influences our decisions about cosmetics but not sports equipment
- 6) The bright red outfit we associate with Santa Claus may have become standard thanks to:
 - a) religious influences
 - b) an ad campaign by Coca-Cola
 - c) the psychology of the color red
 - d) the universal signal of red as danger
- 7) Competing brands often use:
 - a) clearly different colors
 - b) similar colors so as to confuse shoppers
 - c) similar colors but in different ratios
 - d) complementary colors
- 8) Regional color palettes are usually based on:
 - a) colors found naturally in the region
 - b) advertising campaigns designed to attract tourists
 - c) traditions established by local architects and planners
 - d) dyes and paints popular when the region was first populated
- 9) The color black means:
 - a) power
 - b) luxury
 - c) mourning
 - d) authority
 - e) all of these depending on context
 - f) none of these
- 10) In the Middle Ages, clothing colors:
 - a) identified the social class to which people belonged
 - b) were regulated by laws about who could wear which colors
 - c) were more limited than today’s colors
 - d) all of these

Color In Everyday Life

Multiple Choice Answer Key

Circle the best available answer for each of the following:

- 1) The program asks viewers to “imagine a world without color.” It concludes:
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Suggested Activities

1. Assign each student a color scheme. Keep a color journal for a day (or week), observing that scheme. *(The objective here is to foster awareness of colors and combinations in daily life.)*
2. To raise color awareness give each student a color. Use colors from paint chips or fabric swatches. Assign each student to seek as perfect a match as possible for that color.
3. Devise and conduct an experiment in which you show that color alone can influence opinion about a food or consumer good.
4. Conduct a color survey in which you observe the use of colors and explain why you believe they were chosen. Use:
 1. A professionally decorated home or model
 2. The lobby of a hotel or other public building
 3. The interior of a clothing store
 4. A fashion spread in a national magazine
 5. The interior of a restaurantThe works of a single artist
5. Find pictures in magazines, photographs, or packages (food cartons, for example) that illustrate each of these color effects:
 - a. Red-orange colors used to give "warmth" to a room or scene.
 - b. Blue-green used to give "coolness" to a room or scene.
 - c. Dark colors chosen because they make an object appear "heavier" than light ones.
 - d. Light colors chosen to make an object appear larger, farther away, cooler, or physically lighter.
6. For discussion or as a written essay: Describe color to a person who has never been able to see.
7. Find ten examples of corporations or brand names that attempt to "claim" a color as part of their identity. For example, Coca-Cola's red and white or Kodak's gold.
8. Find a food or consumer goods category in which competing brands identify themselves using color combinations much like school colors. The example in the video is Campbell's red, Progresso's blue, and Healthy Choice's green.

Give examples of color bias in foods. You are looking for foods that consumer's demand in a certain color even though the color has to be added. Examples in the video include lemon meringue pie and salmon.
10. Give examples of packaging in which the color of the package sends a message about the contents. Examples could include reduced calorie foods, foods positioned as healthful, or environmentally friendly products.
11. Show a series of examples illustrating regional or national colors. For example, colors of the desert southwest, of Florida, or colors of Mexico or China.

For More Information...

Color Workbook by Becky Koenig (Prentice Hall, NJ, 2003) is a color and design text written in a clear, user-friendly style. Part I details color theory while Part II deals with using color in design and art.

Color: The Secret Influence by Kenneth and Cherie Fehrman (Prentice Hall, NJ, 2nd edition 2004) is a college textbook that roams widely amid the vast and often hidden ways in which color affects us everyday. Certainly a contender for the most comprehensive textbook on color.

Blue: The History of a Color by Michel Pastoureau (Princeton University Press, NJ, 2001 translated from the French) can best be described as a scholarly coffee table book. It's beautiful, insightful, and absolutely fascinating.