

ART · Y2-Y6

# Colour Theory

Knowledge Organiser — KS2 Art

## Key vocabulary

1

### Primary colours

Red, yellow, blue. You can't make them by mixing — but you can mix them to make all other colours.

2

### Secondary colours

Made by mixing two primary colours: orange (red + yellow), green (yellow + blue), purple (red + blue).

3

### Tertiary colours

Made by mixing a primary with a neighbouring secondary. Six in total — red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-purple, red-purple.

4

### Colour wheel

A circle that shows how all colours relate to each other.

5

### Complementary colours

Colours opposite each other on the wheel. They make each other look brighter.

6

### Analogous colours

Colours next to each other on the wheel. They look harmonious together.

7

### Tint

A colour mixed with white — makes it lighter. Pink is a tint of red.



8

**Shade**

A colour mixed with black — makes it darker. Maroon is a shade of red.

9

**Warm colours**

Red, orange, yellow. Feel warm — like the sun or fire.

10

**Cool colours**

Blue, green, purple. Feel cool — like ice or water.

## the colour wheel

How all colours connect

- 12 colours arranged in a circle.
- PRIMARY (3): red, yellow, blue — equally spaced around the wheel.
- SECONDARY (3): orange, green, purple — between the primaries that make them.
- TERTIARY (6): between each primary and secondary.
- OPPOSITE colours on the wheel are COMPLEMENTARY:
- Red and green
- Yellow and purple
- Blue and orange
- Use complementary colours to make a painting POP.
- Use analogous (neighbouring) colours for a calm, harmonious feel.

## ts and shades

Light and dark of any colour

- TINT = colour + WHITE (lighter). Red + white = pink.
- SHADE = colour + BLACK (darker). Red + black = maroon.
- TONE = colour + GREY (more muted). Red + grey = dusty red.



- Adding more white or black changes how much you make.
- Most paintings use a range of tints and shades, not just pure colours.
- Mixing white with too many colours makes them all look pastel — sometimes you want this, sometimes you don't.

## colours feel like

Colour psychology — bas

- RED: love, anger, danger, energy
- ORANGE: happiness, warmth, fun
- YELLOW: sunshine, joy, attention (can also feel uneasy)
- GREEN: nature, growth, calm, health
- BLUE: peace, sadness, sky, water
- PURPLE: magic, royalty, mystery
- BLACK: power, mystery, sadness, formal
- WHITE: peace, cleanness, simplicity
- Different cultures see colours differently — white is wedding colour in UK, mourning colour in some Asian cultures.
- When making art, choose colours for the FEELING you want, not just because you like them.

