

Graphic Design: Color Schemes

Lesson 8: Warm and Cool Colors

How do we use warm and cool colors?



warm colors



cool colors

Warm colors are vivid in nature. They are bold and energetic. Warm colors are those that tend to advance in space; therefore, caution needs to be taken so you do not overwhelm your content with eye catching hues. If an element in your design needs to pop out, consider using warm colors to do that.

Cool colors are soothing in nature. They give an impression of calm and rarely overpower the main content or message of a design. Cool colors tend to recede; therefore, if some element of your design needs to be in the background, give it cool tones.

Peter Max was brilliant using colors that were vivid and alive. In his design, *RAINFOREST FOUNDATION*, Max does a wonderful job of illustrating warm and cool colors.

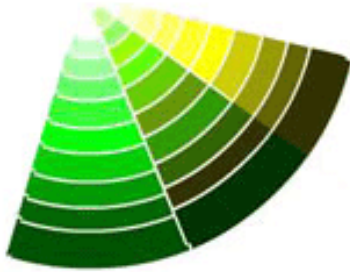
This piece is a wonderful example of warm and cool colors used together to convey a feeling.



[Visit the Peter Max site](#)

Lesson 9: Analogous

How do we use Analogous Colors?



Analogous colors are a palette of compatible color combinations that blend well together. They are neighbors on the color wheel. They tend to live harmoniously because they are relatives to each other.

Analogous colors are less vivid, bright and saturated. They have less contrast and vibrational energy than complementary colors. A good textual example is in *Texturing & Painting* by Owen Demers. "Think of purple, blue, and, magenta colors in a twilight sky or the yellows, golds, and oranges in an Arizona desert. A pine forest has light greens to blues and purples within its depths."

If ever in doubt about what looks good, look to nature. The color combinations are breathtakingly beautiful and are in full harmony.



Picture taken along the Susquehanna River in Bloomsburg, PA.
Fall 2001

Lesson 10: Complementary

How do we use complementary colors?



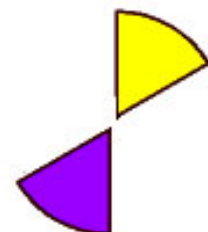
an example of complementary color families

Complementary colors are colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel. They contrast, enhance and intensify each other. Therefore, complementary colors need to be used with caution. The differences in tone and hue can be eye catching, but used to much they can be an eyesore.

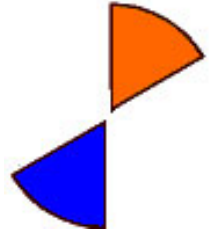
Peter Max, in his design *SUNRISE 2000*, uses complementary colors to create a vivid and lively effect. Look at the colors in the poster and see where they are located on the color wheel:



Advertisers are very aware that **complementary colors** work well for selling products:



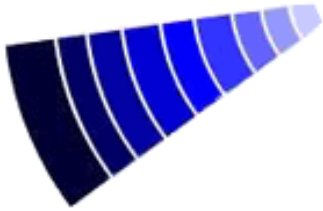
Tide uses orange and blue to bring attention and energy to their product.



Lesson 11: Monochromatic

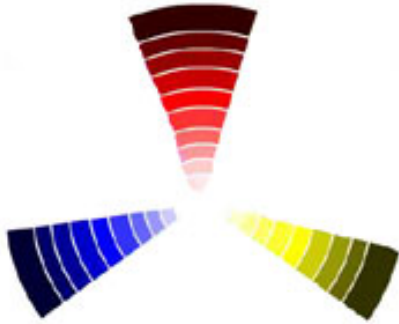
How do we use monochromatic colors?

Monochromatic colors are all the hues (tints and shades) of a single color. As a result, the energy is more subtle and peaceful due to a lack of color contrast. Monochromatic colors offer very little contrast and may be considered boring unless there is diversity within the design.



Lesson 12: Triadic

How do we use triadic colors?



an example of triadic colors

Triadic colors are high-energy colors that are found by choosing three colors that are separated by 120 degrees on the color wheel. The primary (red, blue, and yellow) and secondary (purple, orange, green) colors are examples of triadic colors.

This Sunoco sign is a good example of triadic color:

