

COULEURS
MONOCHROMES,
COMPLÉMENTAIRES
ET COULEURS
CONTRASTANTES

Fundamentals of Colour Theory in Design

A comprehensive exploration of colour principles and applications in graphic design and multimedia for humanities students.

Module Name: ICT Tools and Digital Media

Lecturer: Mrs Shameera Lauthan

Learning Objectives



Identify primary, secondary, tertiary, and neutral colours on the colour wheel.

Explain the concepts of hue, tint, shade, value, intensity, and saturation.

Apply suitable colour schemes to create visual harmony in design.

Compare the effects of warm and cool colours in visual compositions.

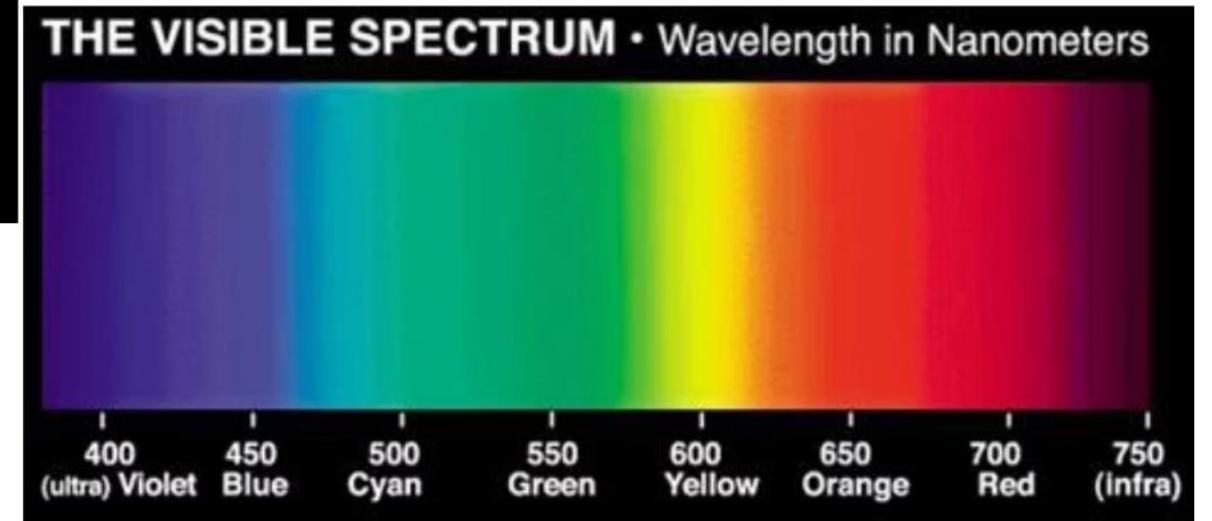
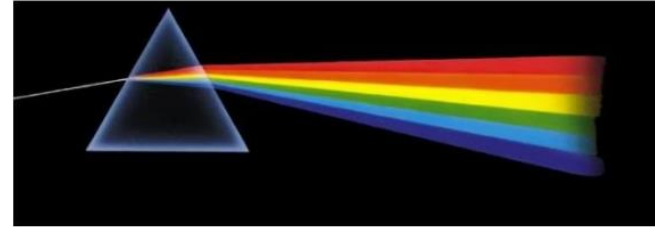
Assess how colour choices influence emotion, perception, and communication.

Create a colour-balanced design using psychological and theoretical principles.

Elements of Design

Design elements are the fundamental "tools" available to designers. There are four key elements:

- Line
- Form
- Colour
- Texture



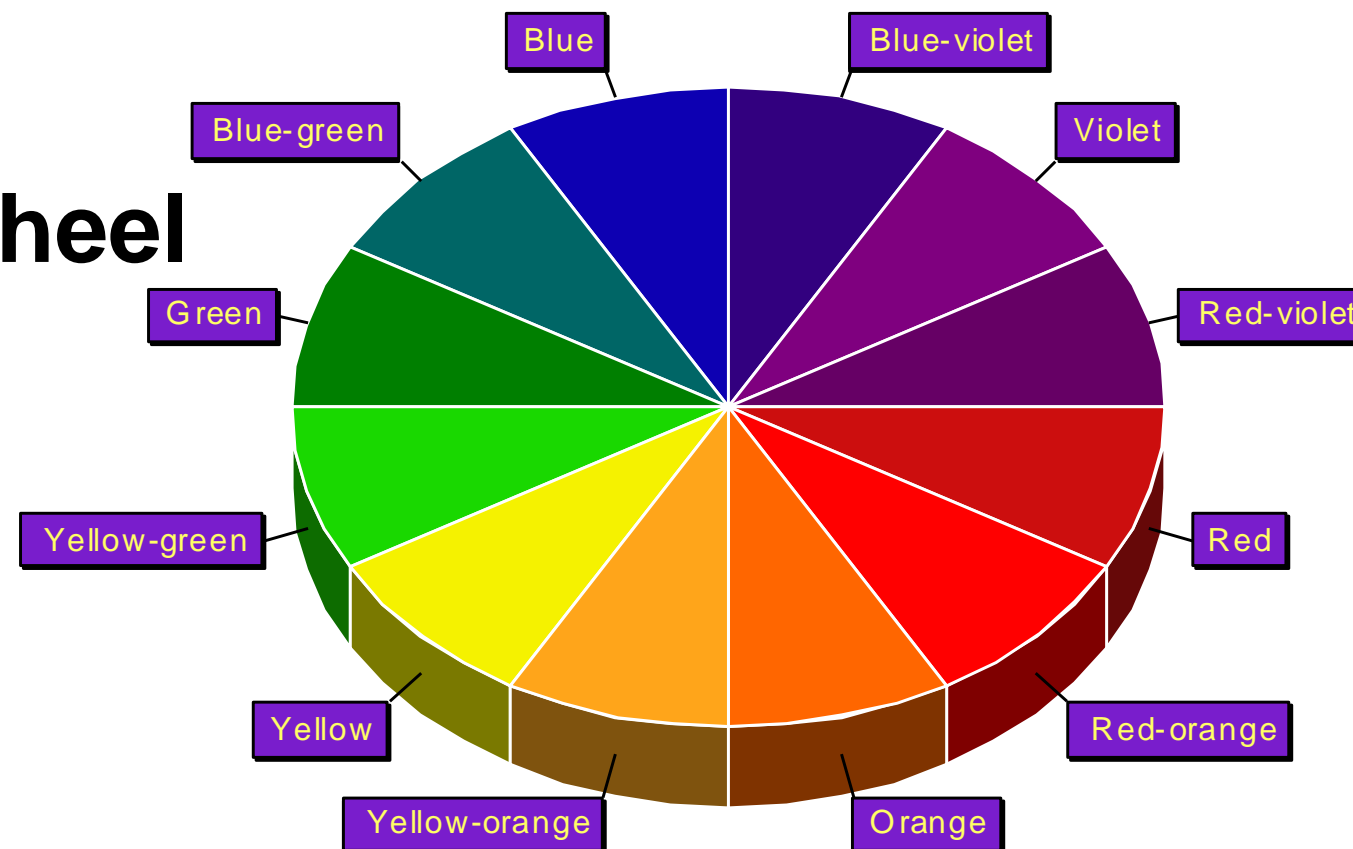
Colour is a property of light. When a beam of light passes through a prism, it produces a colour spectrum. Scientists have identified more than 10 million colours.

The Colour Wheel System

The colour wheel system based on three primary colours is known as the **Brewster System** (or Prang System), developed by David Brewster.

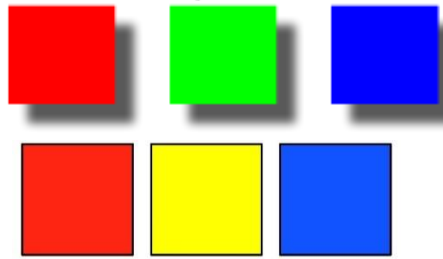
Each colour on the wheel represents a true "hue" - a single colour in the spectrum such as red, yellow, or blue.

Color Wheel



Colour Groups

Primary Colours

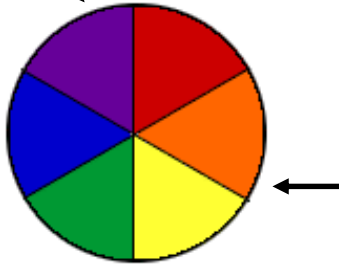


Primary Colours

Basic colours that cannot be obtained from mixing other colours: red, blue, and yellow.

1

Secondary Colours



Secondary Colours

Result of mixing primary colours: orange (red + yellow), green (blue + yellow), and violet (red + blue).

2

Tertiary



Tertiary Colours

Derived from mixing primary with secondary colours, such as yellow-orange or blue-green.

3

Neutral Colours



Result from mixing all three primary colours, used for balancing contrasting colours.

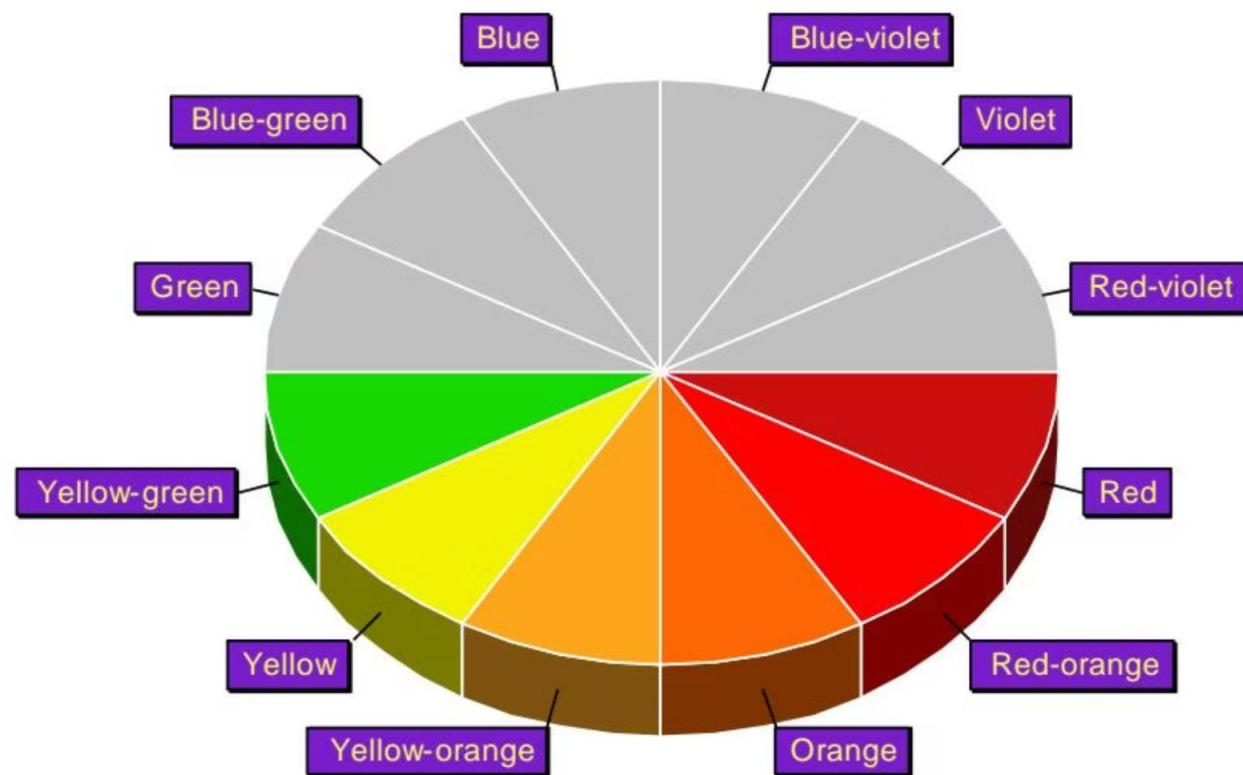
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Warm and Cool Colours

Warm Colours

Range from greenish-yellow to red

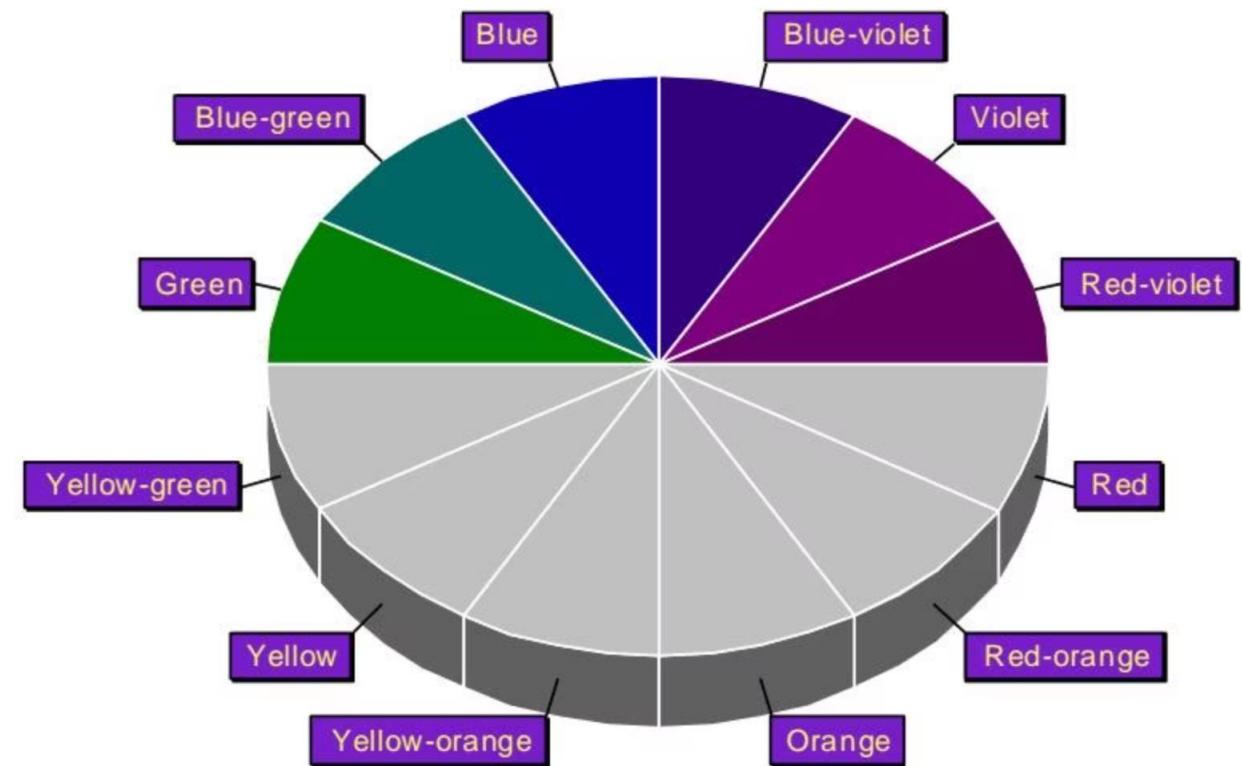
- Create impressions of warmth and closeness
- Include reds, oranges, yellows, and browns
- Especially good in rooms with northern exposures



Cool Colours

Range from reddish-purple to green

- Create impressions of coolness and distance
- Include blues, greens, violets, and greys
- Especially good in rooms with southern exposures



Colour Properties: Value and Intensity

Value

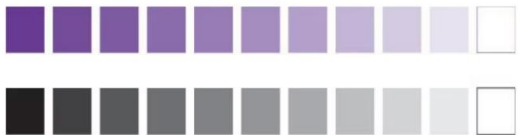
The lightness or darkness of a colour:

- **Shade:** Combining a hue with black
- **Tint:** Combining a hue with white
- **Tone:** Combining a hue with both black and white



Value – Tint – Shade-Saturation - Hue

Value: The relative lightness or darkness of a color.



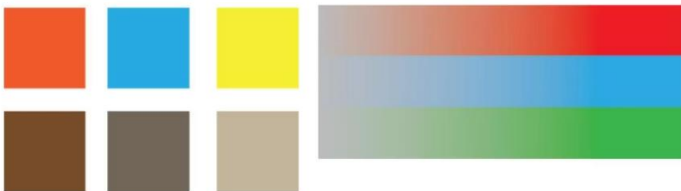
Tint: A color with white added.



Shade: A color with black added.



Saturation: The relative intensity or brightness of a color
Bright, vibrant colors (reds or oranges) have a saturation
dull or muted colors (browns) have a low degree of saturation



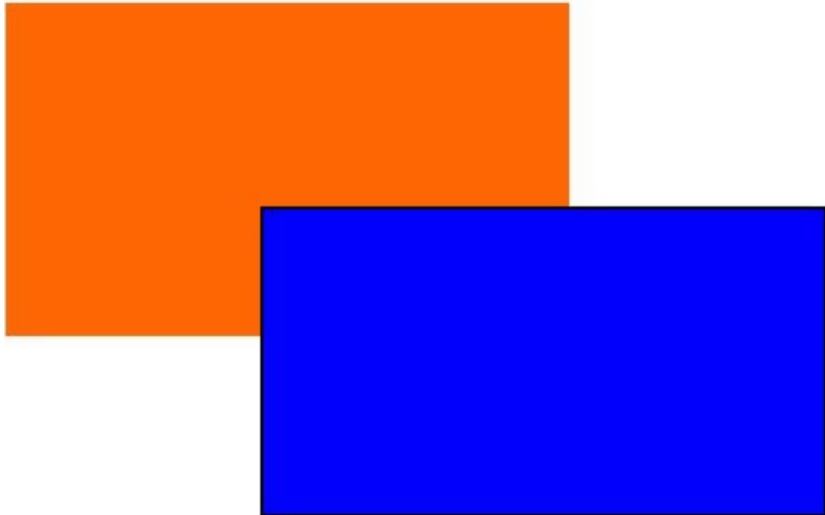
Colors can be of the **same hue** and still have **varying degrees** of saturation



Intensity

The brightness or dullness of a colour (also called "chroma"):

- Place a hue beside its complement to make it appear brighter
- Add the complementary colour to a hue to make it duller
- The degree of brightness is referred to as "saturation"



Complementary Colours

Complementary colours are located directly opposite each other on the colour wheel.

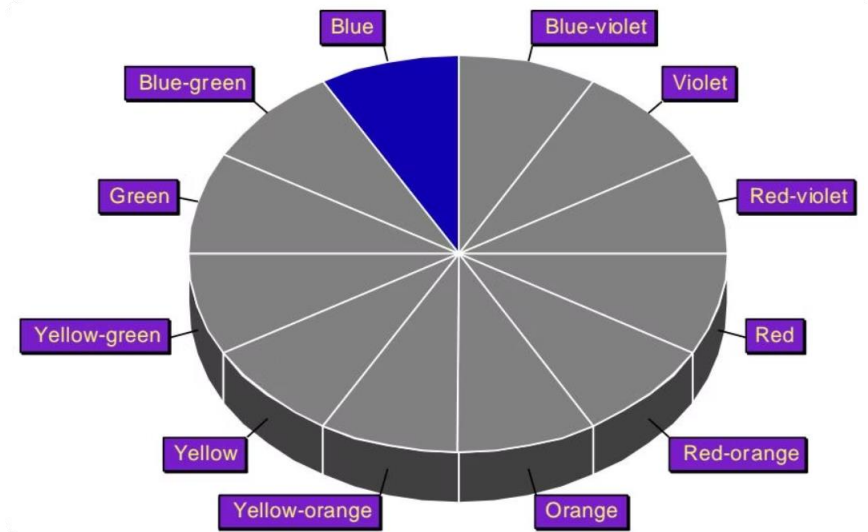
At the heart of colour theory, they consist of one primary colour and the secondary colour created by mixing the other two primaries.

For example, the complementary colour to yellow is purple (a mix of blue and red).



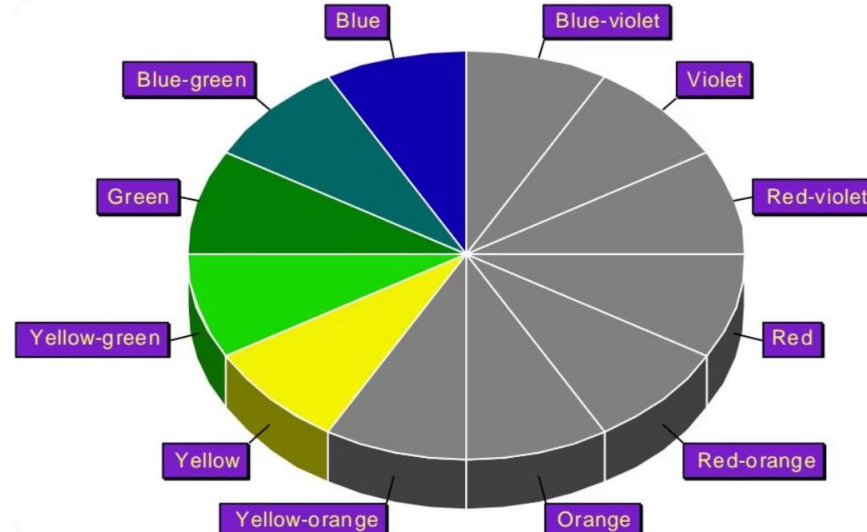
- ① When complementary colours are mixed, they create greys and browns. This is useful for creating neutral tones in your designs.

Colour Schemes



Monochromatic

Uses one colour with its tints, tones, and shades. Easiest scheme to balance visually, but may lack impact.



Analogous

Uses 3+ colours next to each other on the colour wheel. Creates unity and harmony in designs.



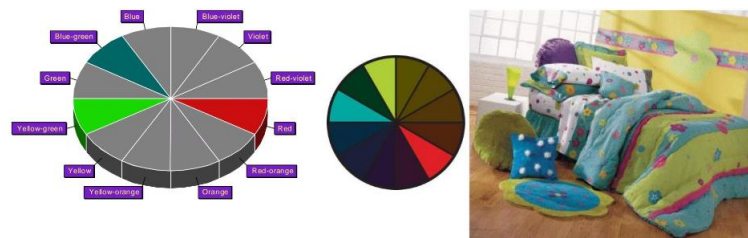
Complementary

Uses colours opposite each other on the wheel. Provides strong visual contrast and demands attention.

Advanced Colour Schemes

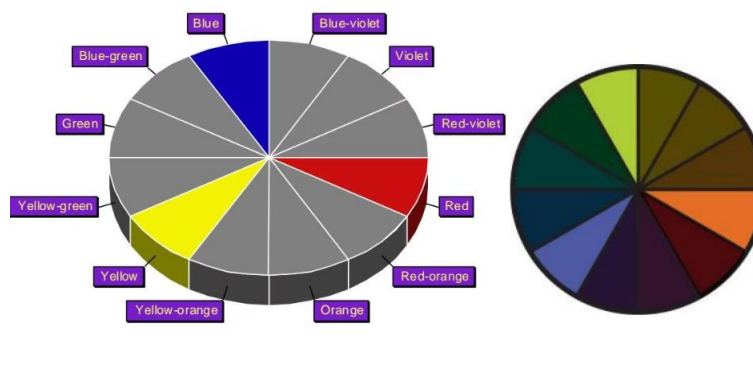
Split Complementary

Uses one colour and the two colours on either side of its complement. Provides more visual variety than complementary schemes with strong contrast.



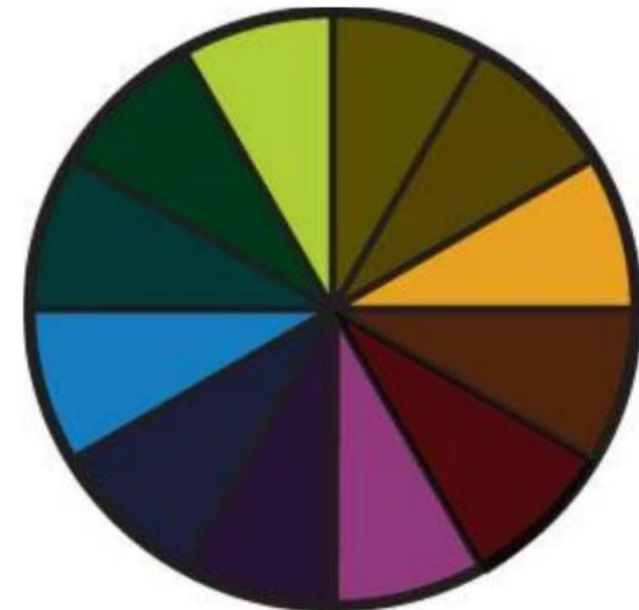
Triadic

Uses three colours equally spaced around the colour wheel. Provides strong visual contrast while adding balance and richness.



Tetradic (Double Complementary)

The richest scheme; utilizes four colours arranged into two complementary colour pairs. Can be hard to harmonize.





Psychological Effects of Colour

Red

Passion, strength, energy, fire, love, excitement

OR danger, blood, war, anger, aggression

Blue

Peace, harmony, tranquility, confidence, loyalty

OR depression, coldness, ice, winter

Green

Nature, fertility, environment, wealth, good luck

OR inexperience, envy, jealousy, greed

Yellow

Joy, happiness, optimism, wealth, summer, hope

OR cowardice, illness, hazards, dishonesty

Colours create powerful psychological and physiological effects. They can affect perception of weight, temperature, and time, and even influence recovery rates in patients.

[Link to Assignment on Theory of colors](#)