

Using the Color Wheel to Choose a Color Schemes

Remember that color is all about perception. It's about eye appeal and emotional effect. How you use color matter as much as the colors you choose. The basic RYB color wheel, as shown in our diagrams below, is a great guide for select a grouping of complementary colors to obtain a desired vibe.

The color wheel has 12 color sections. You cannot go wrong choosing the “best go together” colors based on one of seven typical color schemes. All schemes are made of not only primary and secondary colors but also tertiary colors. One side of the color wheel is warm colors. The opposite side is cool colors. Regardless of the color scheme, all designs begin with one dominant hue.

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|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Analogous | 4. Monochromatic |
| 2. Complementary | 5. Triadic |
| 3. Split-Complementary | 6. Tetradic |

1. Analogous Color Scheme:

Best-Go-Together: Choose any three colors that are side by side on the color wheel and belong to the same color family. Usually, you choose one dominant core color which is a primary or secondary color and use the other two colors as a support and an accent.

Effect: This is a versatile combination. Together they create a harmonious variant of your core color to produce a calming effect that is also aesthetically pleasing. . Analogous color schemes are found in nature.



2. Complementary Color Scheme (sometimes called contrasting or clashing colors)

Best-Go-Together: When pairing colors, you can find harmony by choosing two colors on opposite sides of the color wheel. To make this color scheme work best do not utilize the colors equally. To tone down the intensity you could choose a neutral accent or select a color from one adjacent to either of the complementary colors.

Effect: The high contrast between these colors creates visual depth and a vibrant high impact look. Complementary color combos tend to be bold, which is why sports teams often use this formula for their colors. If used improperly, this scheme can be very visually jarring.



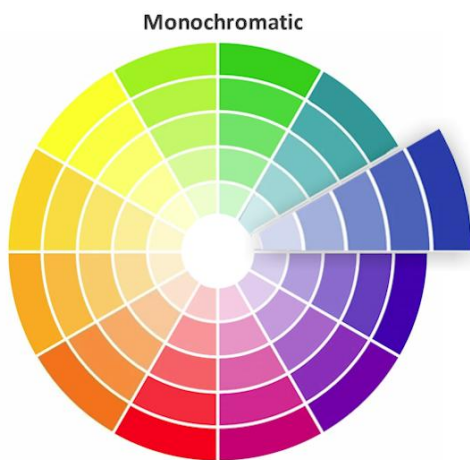
3. Split-Complementary

Best-Go-Together: For variety, instead of two colors directly across from each other. This combination is what designers say is perfect. It is made up of any core color you select plus the two colors on either side of its complementary counterpart.

Effect: This combination is easier to balance, tends to be less bold or jarring, and includes both warm and cool colors.



4. Monochromatic Color Scheme:



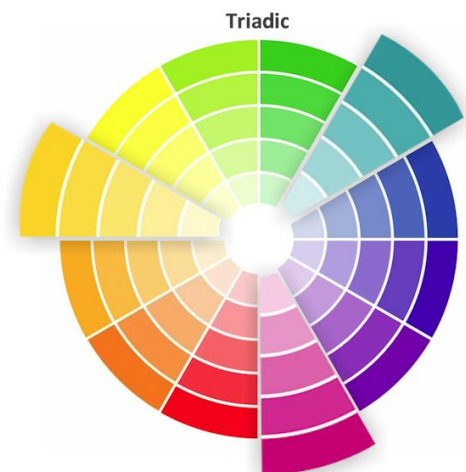
Best-Go-Together: This scheme is comprised of different variations of a single hue. Decide on your core color. Select three colors that are either a shade, tone, or tint of your focal color. This scheme is easy to implement and flexible.

Effect: Using a subtle variant of your focal color creates a visually interesting and harmonious feel. It is conservative but still creative and contemporary. Using shades, tints and tones of your primary color is a way to strengthen and enhance your core color.

5. Triadic Color Scheme

Best-Go-Together: Select any three colors. Instead of being adjacent or opposite each other triadic colors are equally spaced around the color wheel. Each has three colors between as shown here. Again typically, one color will act as the dominant color, while the other are used as accents

Effect: High contrast, bold, vibrant – the high energy of the three hues can disturb the harmony, but you make it eye-pleasing by using the monochromatic principle of varying the triadic hues with tints, tones and shades.



6. Tetradic Color Scheme



Best-Go-Together: The tetradic color scheme is comprised of four colors. This can also be referred to as a “double-complementary color scheme” because it’s made up of two complementary color pairs. Two colors on the cool side and two on the warm. This is an aggressive color scheme and it will draw attention for sure. It could look busy. The key to make this combination aesthetically pleasing is to let one color dominate and be judicious about where you draw the viewer’s eye.

Start by choosing your dominant color. Then choose a second color that is either adjacent, one color away, or two colors away. Then select the complementary counterparts of those first two color choices. In our illustration the first two colors are one color away from each other.

The four colors form a rectangle. When you choose two adjacent colors to start, the tetradic forms a narrower rectangle. When your first two choices are separated by two colors the tetradic forms a square.

Effect: The result is eye-catching. You can mix it up with tints and tones of the four colors so you don’t end up with an overly loud effect. If you use the warm and cool colors equally you will have a lively, playful, vibe. If your goal is a more reserved vibe, decide on whether you prefer warm or cool. Then make those two colors your focus and use the other two colors as accents. Another option is to utilize white, black or grey as your dominant color and use the tetradic colors as accents. Tetradic color combinations are less common which can provide an opportunity to create a design, brand, website, or piece of artwork that stands apart.

Having Difficulty Determining your Color Scheme?

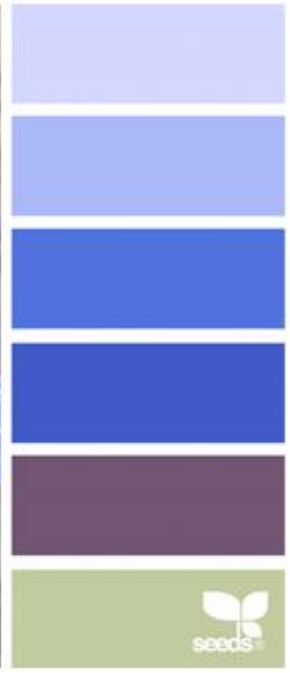
Determining a color scheme can be a bit daunting. You want to get it right which means you cannot rush the process of selecting the colors. Of course, your understanding of color wheel does make it easier. Using a color wheel that includes a variety of tints, tones and shades of a hue will give you visual variations. You may have to consult the RGB color wheel if your only concern is for a digital outcome.

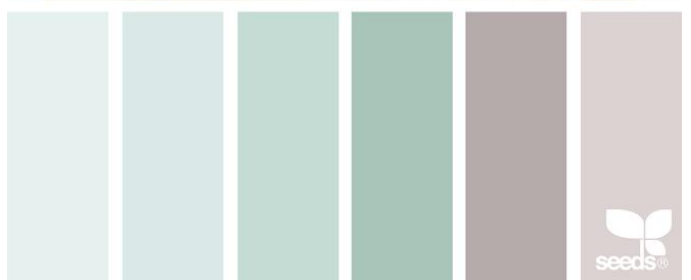
Always the first step is choosing your core or dominant color. Once you are sure of that, try exploring schemes in a step by step process to narrow down what will work best for you. Using your core color:

- 1) Match it. Try the look of analog colors. Experiment with tints, tones and shades of your hues.
- 2) If you do not want to match the colors try complementary colors.
- 3) If contrast is too intense for you, split it! Try using the split complementary scheme.
- 4) Try the triadic and tetradic complementary colors to see more variations.
- 5) When those variations do not work try monochrome variations.
- 6) Of course there is achromatic choice using basic black or white with your dominant color.

Color Schemes Designed by Nature

Nature provides perfect color harmony. We were awe-inspired by Jessica Colaluca, a designer who studied the world around her to celebrate the hues she found. She shared their aesthetic for purposeful living. We will share four color palettes here to illustrate how you can motivated to borrow a color scheme from nature. If you are equally inspired look about you. Visit Jessica's archived blog to learn more. (<https://www.design-seeds.com>)





Historic Colors

People of past eras expressed their culture in the design of their buildings and in the colors that enhanced them.

What did the colors of the past look like?

There was a time when historians mistakenly assumed that the colors of the past were muted and somber. However, when conservators, curators, architects and researchers meticulously scraped away layers of modern paints from the old surfaces of historic buildings and painted objects from previous centuries they discovered what the colors looked like before time, sunlight and weather altered them.

In extracted hundreds of samples from the previous four centuries, they found refined neutrals and vivid bold colors. The color trends of past eras featured surprisingly flamboyant combinations; people surrounded themselves with colors that inspired them.

Color trends may come and go, but some paint palettes, like the heritage colors, just seem to have staying power. It's a splendid tradition to recreate the sprite energy of sunlight on water, nature's bountiful presence, and the beauty of the sky at twilight.

How can you use the rich colors of heritage in your home and office design or even your brand identity?

