Colour and Associations

These are just some associations ACCORDING TO OUR SOCIETY; remember, it is different for different cultures and parts of the world, so if you are designing for another country you must investigate their meaning of colour before you proceed. Also, remember in design, rules are made to be broken.

WARM COLOURS

**RED** – The most emotionally intense colour of all! Red is an extreme colour often associated with boldness, love, and life (blood). Red also can denote a warning (traffic lights/sign/alarm) so be careful of overuse.

* **Rage, Anger, Warning, Stop.**
* Alertness, Ambition, Aggression, Battle, Beauty, Brilliance, Charity, Charm, Circulation, Communism, Compassion, Courage, Danger, Desire, Determination, Devotion, Domination, Eccentricity, Emotion, Energy, Excitement, Extroversion, Fashion, Fervour, Fire, Friendship, Hate, Heat, High Voltage, Intensity, Life, Love, Luck, Lust, Madness, Martyrdom, Motion, Movement, Murder, Pain, Passion, Patriotism, Power, Prohibition, Rage, Rebellion, Rescue, Revolution, Romanticism, Sacrifice, Sensuality, Speed, Strength, Suffering, Success, Tension, Thrill, Triumph, Urgency, Victory, Violence, Vitality, War, Warmth

**ORANGE** – Associated with energetic warmth and ambition. Orange is a vibrant colour which often denotes new beginnings, enthusiasm, and creativity: Paring hints of orange with cooler blues often creates an excited pop.

* **Warmth, energy, sunset, happy.**
* Action, Ambition, Appetite, Assurance, Celebration, Change, Charisma, Communication, Competence, Cosiness, Creativity, Determination, Disorder, Domination, Dryness, Earth, Emotion, Encouragement, Endurance, Energy, Enthusiasm, Exaggeration, Excitement, Expansion, Explosion, Extravagance, Extroversion, Exuberance, Fascination, Fitness, Flavour, Flexibility, Friendship, Fun, Generosity, Happiness, Health, Heat, Humanism, Humour, Independence, Invitation, Joy, Laughter, Motivation, Practicality, Radiation, Security, Service, Society, Smile, Success, Sunset, Temptation, Tropic, Visibility, Warmth, Warning, Wisdom.

**YELLOW** – Often portrayed as being a cheerful attention getter and is often associated with liveliness and being energetic. Yellow is also difficult for the eye to take in heavy doses, so it can easily overpower a pallet if overused.

* **Happy, cowardice, weak, bright, light, sun.**
* Activity, Aspiration, Alertness, Brightness, Caution, Communication, Confidence, Energy, Expansion, Expression, Extroversion, Fear, Forgiveness, Friendship, Gaiety, Happiness, Idealism, Ideas, Imagination, Intelligence, Innovation, Inspiration, Intuition, Joy, Knowledge, Laughter, Logic, Light, Optimism, Order, Philosophy, Playfulness, Power, Satisfaction, Signal, Spontaneity, Stimulation, Summer, Sunshine, Thought, Uncertainty, Warmth, Warning, Wisdom, Youth.

**BROWN** – Neutral, Earth, Solid, dependable, and confident are often traits attributed to brown. It can be seen as being both conventional and sophisticated depending on its intended use.

* Nature, Outdoorsy, Reliability, Ruggedness, Security, Support, Tough.

COLD COLOURS

**GREEN** – Symbolic of nature and organic materials. Green is one of the easiest colours on the eye and is often further associated with safety, optimism, growth, harmony, wealth, being lucky and stress relief.

* **Environment, plants, natural, Jealousy, everlasting.**
* Adventure, Aspiration, Calmness, Cleanliness, Comfort, Efficiency, Environment, Equilibrium, Faith, Fertility, Foliage, Frankness, Freedom, Freshness, Friendship, Generosity, Good Luck, Grass, Growth, Harmony, Health, Hope, Laziness, Life, Open Air, Outdoors, Moist, Mucous, Nature, Neutrality, Progress, Prosperity, Quietness, Relaxation, Renewal, Reproduction, Safety, Security, Sincerity, Spring, Sympathy, Vegetation, Vigour, Wisdom, Youth.

Green is sometimes viewed as unlucky in the design world (i.e. Green Cars do not sell!)

**BLUE** – One of the most used colours. Blue is the colour of the sky and is often associated with tranquillity, depth, honour, trusts, and productivity. Blue is also said to decrease one's appetite.

* **Calm, cold, sky, Poison (In Victorian times, a Blue Bottle was used to store poisons).**
* Acceptance, Authority, Balance, Calmness, Care, Caution, Cleanliness, Coolness, Cooperation, Compassion, Confidence, Contemplation, Culture, Depression, Despair, Depth, Dignity, Faith, Flexibility, Frankness, Freedom, Freshness, Goodness, Harmony, Honesty, Hope, Ice, Infinity, Intelligence, Introspection, Isolation, Law, Logic, Loyalty, Maturity, Obedience, Order, Peace, Piety, Power, Protection, Quality, Quietness, Reflection, Reliability, Responsibility, Sadness, Security, Self-Control, Serenity, Sincerity, Solitude, Stability, Stiffness, Technology, Tenderness, Tradition, Tranquillity, Transparency, Trust, Truth, Unity, Value, Virtue, Water.

**PURPLE** – Historically, connected to royalty, nobility, power, and wealth. Purple can also be associated with spirituality, but also to its rarity in nature, purple can often appear artificial.

* **Spiritual, dreams.**
* Ambition, Aristocracy, Art, Anxiety, Beauty, Balance, Compassion, Conflict, Contrition, Coolness, Creativity, Drama, Dream, Dignity, Enchantment, Enigma, Extravagance, Fantasy, Fashion, Femininity, Grief, Homosexuality, Independence, Individualism, Inspiration, Intelligence, Introspection, Intuition, Justice, Knowledge, Leadership, Luxury, Magic, Majesty, Meditation, Mood, Mystery, Mysticism, Nobility, Nostalgia, Passiveness, Penitence, Preciousness, Pride, Quietness, Reflection, Religious Devotion, Responsibility, Richness, Royalty, Sadness, Secrecy, Sensuality, Seriousness, Shadows, Sobriety, Solemnity, Solitude, Sophistication, Sorrow, Spirituality, Splendour, Style, Sublimation, Suffering, Superstition, Truth, Value, Wealth, Wisdom, Wit, Vanity.

**PINK** – Often Attributed to femininity, love, romance, and tenderness. Pink has also been known to produce a calming effect.

* Charming, Cheerful, Feminine, Gentle, Nurturing, Sincerity, Soft, Sophistication, Tranquillity, Warmth.

Tones of Black & White

**WHITE**

Signifying purity, cleanliness, sterility, and youth. White is also known to project the absence of colour, lending itself nicely to providing negative space in design.

* **Pure, Hygienic, clean, empty, cheap**
* Calm, Clarity, Cleanliness, Cleanness, Down-to-Earth, Happiness, Heavens, Honest, Hygiene, Innocence, Peace, Purity, Safety, Serenity, Sincerity, Soothing, Tender.

**GREY**

Pure Grey is the only colour that has no direct psychological properties. It is, however, quite suppressive. A virtual absence of colour is depressing and when the world turns grey, we are instinctively conditioned to draw in and prepare for hibernation. Unless the precise tone is right, grey has a dampening effect on other colours used with it. Heavy use of grey usually indicates a lack of confidence and fear of exposure.

* Positive: Psychological neutrality.
* Negative: Lack of confidence, dampness, depression, hibernation, lack of energy.

**BLACK**

A symbol of power and authority. Black is also used as a colour of sophistication and elegance, often provoking emotions of mystery.

* **Mourning, mystery, sophistication, quality**

Finally….

It is said there are four psychological primary colours:

* Red – The body
* Blue – The mind
* Yellow – The emotions
* Green – The essential balance between these three.