

# Color Selection

**Unit:** The Art of Design

**Problem Area:** Elements and Principles of Design

**Lesson:** Color Selection

- **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Evaluate the psychological response to color.**
- 2 Analyze personal color choices.**

- **Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

“Color Psychology: Do Different Colors Affect Your Mood?” *infoplease*. Accessed Aug. 5, 2012. <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/colors1.html>.

Desy, Plylameana Lila. “Color Therapy and Your Wardrobe,” *About.com: Holistic Healing*. Accessed Aug. 5, 2012. <http://healing.about.com/od/colortherapy/ss/color-therapy-and-your-wardrobe.htm>.

Jirousek, Charlotte. “Color, Value, and Hue,” *Art, Design, and Visual Thinking: Cornell University*. Accessed Aug. 5, 2012. <http://char.txa.cornell.edu/language/element/color/color.htm>.

“Psychological Responses to Colour,” *eWeb Designs*. Accessed Aug. 5, 2012. [http://www.ewebdesigns.ca/web-design/psych\\_colour.ihtml](http://www.ewebdesigns.ca/web-design/psych_colour.ihtml).

Sherwood, Ruth F. *Homes & Interiors: Careers in Housing & Interior Design*. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2007.

Wolfe, Mary. *Fashion Marketing & Merchandising*, 3rd ed. Goodheart-Willcox, 2009.



## ■ **Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

## ■ **Key Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- ▶ color
- ▶ color psychology
- ▶ color spectrum
- ▶ color therapy
- ▶ neutrals

## ■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

*When teaching color in interior decorating, bring in (borrow) several floor lamps. Use a combination of different colored bulbs with different colored lampshades to illustrate how areas of color in the room are impacted by various light sources. Ask students to discuss how the various lighting sources and colored shades make them feel.*

*When teaching color in fashion, show color groupings of different outfits using a PowerPoint slide show, and discuss the students' responses or feelings about each color theme.*

*Explain to the class that color blindness (color deficiency) is the inability to see certain colors in the normal way. For example, about 1 in 10 men have some form of color blindness (usually red-green), but very few women are colorblind. Use VM-A in your discussion.*

# CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

**Objective 1:** Evaluate the psychological response to color.

**Anticipated Problem:** What is involved in the psychological response to color?

I. Psychology of color

A. **Color** is a phenomenon of light; it is a form of visible light. Color is often described in terms of hue, brightness, and saturation. Synonyms may include dye, tint, shade, dye, paint, and pigment. The larger the block of color, the more it dominates the overall response or feeling. The **color spectrum** is the full range of all existing colors. Blacks, whites, browns, silvers, and grays are considered **neutrals** rather than true hues (primary, secondary, and tertiary colors). Color is an element or property of light that helps create moods. Our nervous system responds to color. For example:

1. A quiet person may not wear bold or bright colors with lots of contrast.
2. Colors get their meaning, in part, from sensory responses to them.

B. **Color psychology** is how a color affects a person's mood, emotions, and behavior. Artists, interior designers, and fashion designers understand how different colors affect moods and feelings. Color is a powerful communication tool, and certain colors are able to raise blood pressure and increase metabolism.

**Color therapy** (chromotherapy) is light therapy; holistic medicines often use light therapy to heal. Color therapists apply light and color, usually in the form of tools (e.g., gems, candles, fabrics, and eye lenses), visualizations, and/or verbal suggestions to balance energy in the body. There is some skepticism about light therapy. For instance, some psychologists indicate that the effect of a particular light decreases after a short period of time. However, light therapy has a temporary effect.

1. Yellow light is used to stimulate nerves and purify the body.
2. Blue light is used to soothe illnesses and treat pain.
3. Red light is used to stimulate the body and the mind and to increase circulation.
4. Orange light is used to heal the lungs and to increase energy levels.
5. Indigo, violet, and purple are used to reduce skin problems.

C. Color and performance

1. Red: When the color red is prevalent prior to taking an exam, the results tend to be negative. However, when the color red is prevalent before an athletic event, it causes people to react with greater speed and force.

2. Blue: Many offices are decorated in blue because research shows people tend to be more productive in blue environments. Exposure to blue is also said to lower the pulse rate and the body temperature.
3. Yellow: Yellow backgrounds can cause eyestrain (computer monitors and print materials) and create feelings of anger and frustration. In addition, yellow often increases metabolism.
4. Green: The use of a green transparent sheet over print material is said to improve a person's reading ability (speed and comprehension). In addition, it is said to relieve stress.
5. Orange: Orange creates a sense of excitement and enthusiasm. It also draws a person's attention, such as in a sign, safety clothing, etc.
6. Purple: Purple creates the perception of wisdom, royalty, and creativity. Depending on the tint, shade, or tone, purple may appear artificial.

**Teaching Strategy:** Ask students to take an inventory of their wardrobes in terms of color. Print copies of VM–B for them to tally their wardrobe colors. Analyze their personal color choices. For a quick illustration of the perception of each color, access the “Color Therapy and Your Wardrobe” website at <http://healing.about.com/od/colortherapy/ss/color-therapy-and-your-wardrobe.htm>.

**Objective 2:** Analyze personal color choices.

**Anticipated Problem:** What is involved in analyzing color choices?

II. Color choices

A. Color psychology

1. Blue
  - a. It is a cool color (as in atmosphere and temperature).
  - b. Blue suggests respect, responsibility, authority, and trust.
  - c. It is used by banks and businesses in their advertisements.
  - d. Royal blue attracts impulse buyers; navy blue attracts shoppers on a budget; and sky blue attracts traditional buyers.
  - e. It suggests honesty, security, loyalty, and integrity (“true blue”).
  - f. Blue tends to slow the heartbeat.
  - g. It is a primary color (on the color wheel).
2. Red
  - a. It is a warm color.
  - b. Red has energy.
  - c. It is hot, exciting, stimulating, and emotional.
  - d. Red increases the heart rate and raises the blood pressure.
  - e. It creates a sense of urgency (e.g., blood and fire).
  - f. Red is used in clearance sale advertisements.

- g. It stimulates the appetite.
  - h. A tint of red is pink and is often equated with femininity; pink and rose colors attract traditional buyers.
  - i. It is a primary color (on the color wheel).
3. Yellow
- a. It is a warm color.
  - b. Yellow is optimistic and youthful.
  - c. It grabs the attention of window shoppers.
  - d. Yellow stimulates the memory.
  - e. It requires the most visual processing by the eyes.
  - f. Yellow is cheerful, warm, friendly, and happy.
  - g. It is a primary color (on the color wheel).
4. Green
- a. It is a cool color (as in atmosphere and temperature).
  - b. Green is the easiest color for the eye to process.
  - c. It is associated with wealth.
  - d. Green evokes peaceful, relaxing, calm, natural, and serene feelings.
  - e. It is used by businesses to create a relaxed atmosphere; teal green attracts shoppers on a budget.
  - f. It may suggest jealousy (e.g., “green with envy”).
  - g. Green is a secondary color (on the color wheel); it is a mixture of blue and yellow.
5. Purple
- a. It is a cool color.
  - b. It suggests royalty and dignity.
  - c. Purple is artistic, creative, and expressive.
  - d. Violet is a lighter tint version of purple.
  - e. People tire of this color the fastest of all the colors.
  - f. It is used to market beauty and anti-aging products.
  - g. Purple is a secondary color (on the color wheel); it is a mixture of red and blue.
6. Orange
- a. It is a warm color.
  - b. Orange is an aggressive color and is often a call to action (e.g., buy, subscribe, or sell).
  - c. It is stimulating.
  - d. Orange is informal and inexpensive.
  - e. It shares some qualities with red, but they are slightly reduced.
  - f. Orange is good around fast food because red-orange attracts impulse buyers.

- g. It is a secondary color (on the color wheel); it is a mixture of red and yellow.
7. Black
- a. It is a neutral color.
  - b. Black may have positive or negative associations.
  - c. It is powerful and sleek; it is strong authority when combined with white.
  - d. Black suggests mourning, sorrow, and depression.
  - e. It has a limited positive response in decorating.
  - f. Black is used to market luxury products.
  - g. It reinforces any color it touches. As a result, it is a powerful accent and attracts impulse buyers.
8. White
- a. It is a neutral color.
  - b. White is delicate and refined.
  - c. It is a symbol of purity, chastity, and cleanliness.
  - d. White softens edges around colors.
  - e. It evokes clarity, openness, and brightness.
9. Brown
- a. It is a natural color (“down to earth”).
  - b. Brown is masculine and strong.
  - c. It may create feelings of sadness and isolation.
  - d. Brown is warm, snug, and secure.
  - e. It has positive food associations.
  - f. Brown has less intense behavioral responses.
  - g. It is solid and universal; it is conventional and reliable.
  - h. Brown is sophisticated.

**Teaching Strategy:** Use VM–C through VM–K in a discussion. Then have the students imagine they are interior designers hired to decorate spaces in a new children’s museum. What colors would they select for spaces in the museum (e.g., snack bar, nature room, play area, and reading room)? Why did they select those colors? Assign LS–A.

■ **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle. Questions at the ends of chapters in the textbook may be used in the Review/Summary.

■ **Application.** Use the included visual master(s) and lab sheet(s) to apply the information presented in the lesson.

- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

- **Answers to Sample Test:**

**Part One: Multiple Choice**

1. d
2. b
3. c
4. d
5. a
6. a

**Part Two: True/False**

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. F
6. T

**Part Three: Short Answer**

Answers will vary but should be similar to the information in Content Summary: II.A.1 to 8.

# Color Selection

## ► Part One: Multiple Choice

**Instructions:** Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Color is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. a phenomenon of light
  - b. a form of visible light
  - c. described in terms of hue, brightness, and saturation
  - d. All of the above
  
2. The color spectrum is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. a small color wheel
  - b. the full range of all existing colors
  - c. the rainbow
  - d. warm colors and neutral colors
  
3. Blacks, whites, browns, silvers, and greys are \_\_\_\_\_ colors.
  - a. primary
  - b. warm
  - c. neutral
  - d. cool
  
4. Color psychology is how a color affects one's \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. mood
  - b. emotions
  - c. behavior
  - d. All of the above



5. Color therapy is also known as \_\_\_\_\_ therapy.
- a. light
  - b. psychology
  - c. image
  - d. physical
6. A color that creates an energetic mood or feeling is \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. orange
  - b. green
  - c. blue
  - d. yellow

► **Part Two: True/False**

**Instructions: Write T for true or F for false.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Color is usually the last thing others notice about your home (or outfit).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Colors get their meaning, in part, from our sensory responses to them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Color is an element or property of light that helps create moods.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. A quiet, shy person is usually comfortable wearing bold, bright colors with striking contrasts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Yellow backgrounds are easy on the eyes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When the color red is the dominant color (e.g., locker room, stands, and uniforms) before an athletic event, it causes people to react with greater speed and force.

► **Part Three: Short Answer**

**Instructions: Answer the following.**

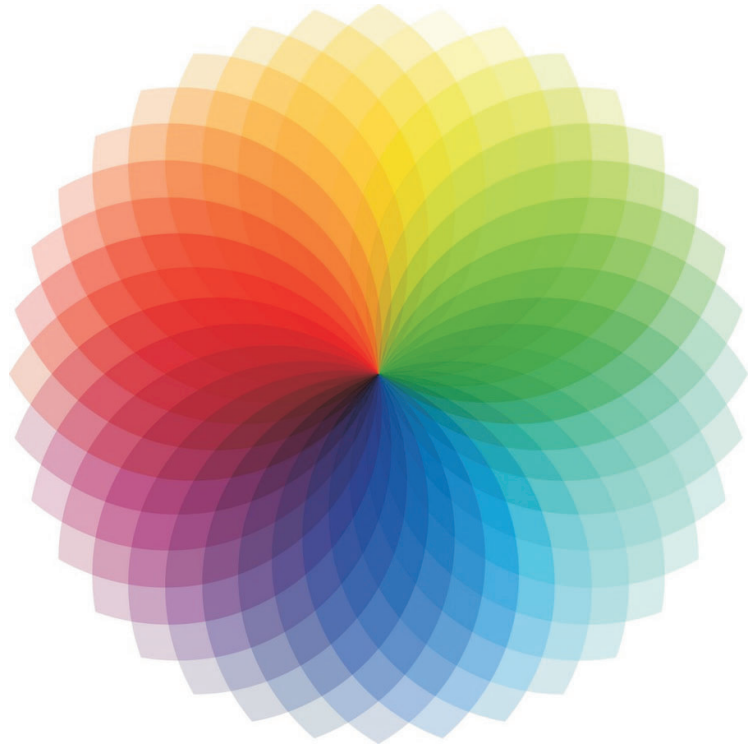
Select two colors—one true hue and one neutral. Describe the color psychology of each.

# WHY CHOOSE THAT COLOR?

◆ The color spectrum is the full range of all existing colors.

◆ As a class, discuss answers to the following questions:

1. Sports teams sometimes paint the opposing players' locker room bright pink. Why?
2. Red cars are popular targets for thieves. Why?
3. Fashion consultants often recommend wearing blue to job interviews. Why?
4. People are more productive in blue rooms. Why?
5. People waiting to appear on TV sit in "green rooms." Why?
6. Weightlifters do their best in blue gyms. Why?



# WARDROBE COLOR INVENTORY

Tally the number of garments (shirts, slacks, shoes, etc.) of each color in your wardrobe. For prints, select the dominant color.



\_\_\_\_\_ Green

\_\_\_\_\_ Blue

\_\_\_\_\_ Gray & black

\_\_\_\_\_ Orange

\_\_\_\_\_ Pink

\_\_\_\_\_ Purple (violet)

\_\_\_\_\_ Red

\_\_\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_\_\_ Yellow

# BLUE

- ◆ Blue is a cool color (as in atmosphere and temperature).
- ◆ It suggests respect, responsibility, authority, and trust.
- ◆ Blue is used by banks and businesses in their advertisements.
- ◆ Royal blue attracts impulse buyers; navy blue attracts shoppers on a budget; and sky blue attracts traditional buyers.
- ◆ It suggests honesty, security, loyalty, and integrity (e.g., “true blue”).
- ◆ Blue tends to slow the heartbeat.
- ◆ It is a primary color (on the color wheel).



# RED

- ◆ Red is a warm color.
- ◆ It evokes energy.
- ◆ Red suggests hot, exciting, stimulating, and emotional.
- ◆ It increases the heart rate and raises the blood pressure.
- ◆ Red creates a sense of urgency (e.g., blood and fire).
- ◆ It is used in clearance sale advertisements.
- ◆ Red stimulates the appetite.
- ◆ A tint of red is pink, and it is often equated with femininity. Pink and rose colors attract traditional buyers.
- ◆ Red is a primary color (on the color wheel).



# YELLOW

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- ◆ Yellow is a warm color.
- ◆ It is optimistic and youthful.
- ◆ Yellow grabs the attention of window shoppers.
- ◆ It stimulates memory.
- ◆ Yellow requires the most visual processing.
- ◆ It is cheerful, warm, friendly, and happy.
- ◆ Yellow is a primary color (on the color wheel).



# GREEN

- ◆ Green is a cool color (as in atmosphere and temperature).
- ◆ It is the easiest color for the eye to process.
- ◆ Green is associated with wealth.
- ◆ It evokes peaceful, relaxing, calm, natural, and serene feelings.
- ◆ Green is used by businesses to create a relaxed atmosphere; teal green attracts shoppers on a budget.
- ◆ It could suggest jealousy (e.g., “green with envy”).
- ◆ Green is a secondary color (on the color wheel); it is a mixture of blue and yellow.



# PURPLE

- ◆ Purple is a cool color.
- ◆ It suggests royalty and dignity.
- ◆ Purple is artistic, creative, and expressive.
- ◆ Violet is a lighter tint version of purple.
- ◆ People tire of this color the fastest of all the colors.
- ◆ Purple is used to market beauty and anti-aging products.
- ◆ It is a secondary color (on the color wheel); it is a mixture of red and blue.




# ORANGE

- ◆ Orange is a warm color.
- ◆ It is an aggressive color and may be a call to action (e.g., buy, subscribe, or sell).
- ◆ It is stimulating.
- ◆ Orange is informal and inexpensive.
- ◆ It shares some qualities with red, but it is slightly reduced.
- ◆ Orange is good around fast food; red-orange attracts impulse buyers.
- ◆ It is a secondary color (on the color wheel); it is a mixture of red and yellow.



# BLACK

- ◆ Black is a neutral color.
  - ◆ It may have positive or negative associations.
  - ◆ Black is powerful and sleek; it has strong authority when combined with white.
- 
- ◆ It suggests mourning, sorrow, and depression.
  - ◆ Black has a limited positive response in decorating.
  - ◆ It is used to market luxury products.
  - ◆ Black reinforces any color it touches; it is a powerful accent. In addition, it attracts impulse buyers.

# WHITE

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- ◆ White is a neutral color.
- ◆ It is delicate and refined.
- ◆ White is a symbol of purity, chastity, and cleanliness.
- ◆ It softens edges around colors.
- ◆ White suggests clarity, openness, and brightness.

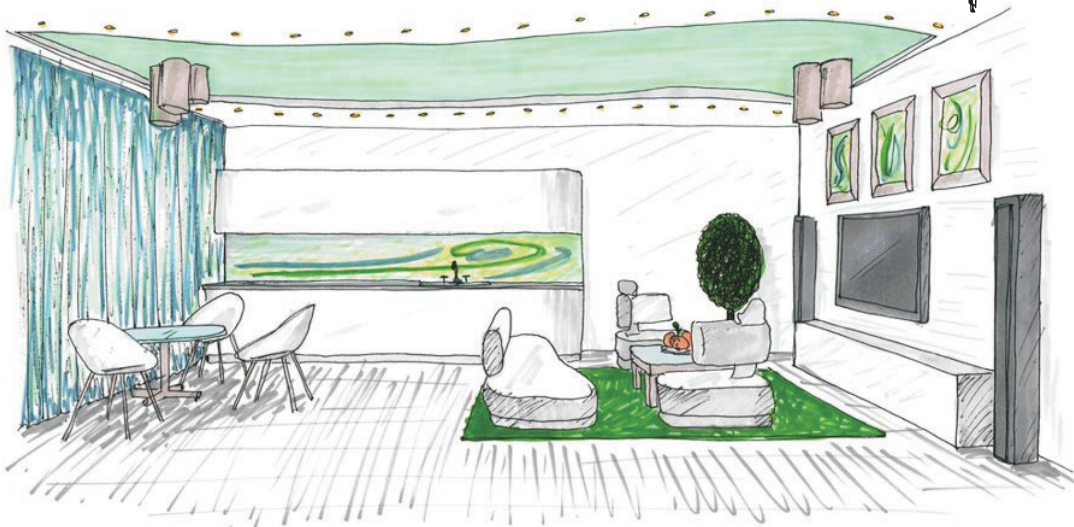
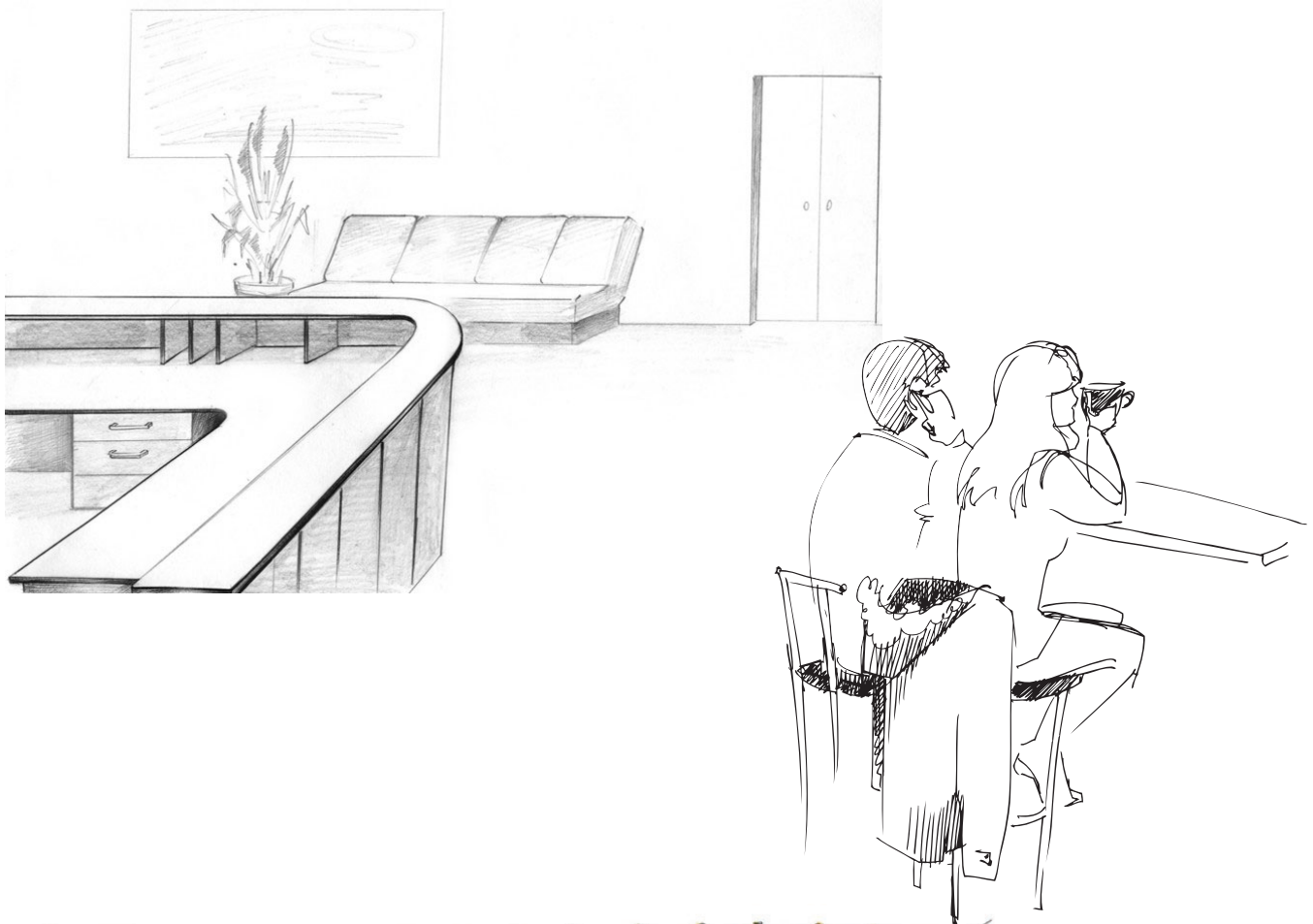


# BROWN

- ◆ Brown is a natural color (e.g., “down to earth”).
- ◆ It is masculine and strong.
- ◆ Brown may create feelings of sadness and isolation.
- ◆ It makes people feel warm, snug, and secure.
- ◆ Brown has positive food associations.
- ◆ Brown evokes less intense behavioral responses.
- ◆ It is solid and universal as well as conventional and reliable.
- ◆ Brown is sophisticated.



# SAMPLE ROOM SKETCHES



# Create Color Schemes

## Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to create color schemes based on your knowledge of the psychological effect color has on people.

## Objectives

1. List descriptive terms associated with specific environments.
2. Sketch three environments.
3. Create a color scheme for three environments.
4. Enhance the sketch with color, fabric, wallpaper, etc.
5. Write a rationale for each color scheme.

## Materials

- ◆ class notes
- ◆ VMs C through K
- ◆ colored pencils
- ◆ writing utensil
- ◆ watercolors
- ◆ old magazines
- ◆ fabric and wallpaper samples
- ◆ 8½ × 11 paper
- ◆ scissors
- ◆ glue
- ◆ stapler





rural, or urban). For example: *I/we chose blue and white as a color scheme for the room because...*

a. A doctor's office exam room (not the waiting room)

b. A fast food restaurant dining area

c. Your choice: \_\_\_\_\_ room

7. Participate in a discussion with your classmates and your instructor, and describe your rationale for the rooms you designed.

8. Staple your color schemes to this lab sheet, and give the lab sheet to your instructor.

## **Create Color Schemes**

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1. If students need to “see” examples of sketches of the three environments for which they would design a color scheme, use VM-L.
2. Encourage students to feel free to make an abstract sketch and then enhance the sketch with colored pencil, watercolor, magazine images, fabrics, and wallpaper samples. When necessary, direct students to write descriptions of details they feel are important, and include an arrow to the area of the drawing.
3. The emphasis of the lab is not to judge how well they sketch or use watercolor, it is to determine what they learned about color schemes and the psychology of color.