

What does colour mean?



Teaching suggestions

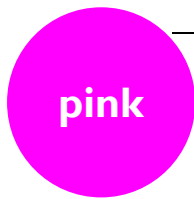
Colour in different cultures

Students could survey the students in their class or do some internet research to find out meanings of colours that are different from Western meanings. e.g. In Chinese culture, red means good luck. In South Africa, red is associated with death and mourning. In Australian Indigenous culture, red represents the earth or the land (e.g. on the Aboriginal flag.)

This activity can highlight the importance of context in interpreting artworks. Students cannot rely on their own impressions of an artwork - they have to know about the context and culture so they can interpreting the meanings.



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things	feelings and qualities
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girls	happy
flowers	sweet
sugar / icing	love
	cute
	young
	delicate



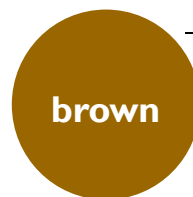
things	feelings and qualities
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stone	dull
cloudy sky	dirty
dirt	boring / bored
the city	neutral
	emotionless
	conservative



things	feelings and qualities
--------	------------------------

fruit	joy
hot sun	warm
autumn leaves	creative
fire	healthy
	hungry
	energetic



things	feelings and qualities
--------	------------------------

earth	natural
wood	neutral
coffee	warm
	organic
old-fashioned clothes	cozy
	old fashioned



Teaching suggestions

Students could collect brand packaging and examine the colours used by advertisers and marketers. They could analyse how colours are used to suggest different meanings and to create different moods and emotions. For example, orange is associated with hunger, so many food logos are orange. Sales and bargains are often advertised using the colour red.



What does colour mean?

Meanings of colour

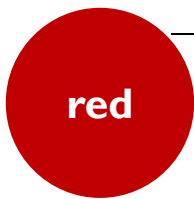
Over time, people have linked colours with events, purposes, objects and meanings. Colours mean different things in different cultures. For example, in some cultures white means death but in other cultures it means purity and life. The meanings on this page are common meanings of colour in modern Western culture, especially in Australia.



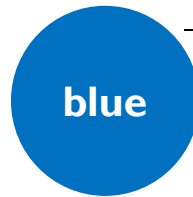
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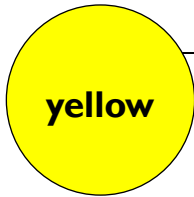
Things associated with colours and typical meanings



things	feelings and qualities
life	angry
fire	desire
blood	love
roses	rage/anger
energy	passion / passionate
	aggressive



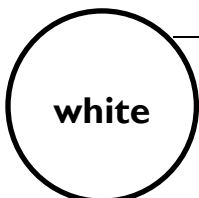
things	feelings and qualities
sky	peaceful
sea	calm
water	trust
males (boys' clothes)	melancholy /sad (e.g. I feel blue)



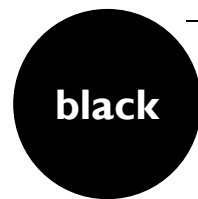
things	feelings and qualities
sunlight	warm
flowers	happy
daytime	cheerful
sand	healthy



things	feelings and qualities
nature	healthy
environment	peaceful
life	envy, jealousy (e.g. I am green with envy)
money	
springtime	



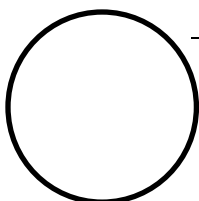
things	feelings and qualities
day	peaceful
faith	pure
light	soft
snow	innocent
goodness	good
purity	clean



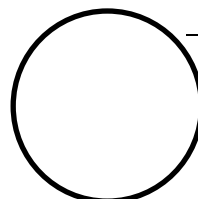
things	feelings and qualities
night	evil
shadows	depression
darkness	strength
death	sadness / grief
fashion/ style (e.g. black car, dress)	stylish
	strong
	powerful



Choose two other colours and research the things related to the colour and the meanings of the colour. You could try pink, grey, orange, brown or another colour.



things feelings and qualities



things feelings and qualities
