



Lesson 2: Basic Color Theory Transcript © Syndee Rogers

In this lesson we are going to touch on basic color theory with the help of the color wheel. Understanding the color wheel and how to use it when creating papers will not only help you create a pleasing color palette, but also help make what can be one of the hardest steps a whole lot easier!

To start off it's important to note that the Primary colors, Red, Yellow, and Blue are the base colors of any color wheel. These three colors are what's known as pure colors and what that means is that they cannot be mixed or created by combining colors. And all other colors are created by mixing these three primary colors.

Now, There's some basic color terminology that will be helpful to know:

First up, of course, is the color wheel which is a circle usually divided into 12 sections and shows the relationship between colors. The twelve main colors on the color wheel are known as Hues. Colors mixed with white to lighten the color are tints. Colors mixed with gray are usually used to dull or desaturate the color and those are called tones. And color mixed with black to darken the color are shades. By using the color wheel we can come up with harmonious color combinations. Colors that are pleasing to the eye and that have a sense of order and balance. These combinations are called color schemes or are also known as color palettes were swatches. In this class I will be referring to them as pallets and swatches. Now, we're going to talk about the color schemes. They're kind of like recipes for color.

First up, we have monochromatic. Which is a color scheme or palette that is made up of tints, tones, and shades of one color. Personally, I like to have at least two other colors even if it's just small pops of color.

Then we have analogous. An analogous color scheme is three or more colors side by side on the color wheel. Such as yellow, yellow- orange, and orange. Usually one of the colors stands out. I

think two to six colors makes a colorful and fun color palette - like the colors shown here that remind me of citrus fruit, which would be a fun set of papers for Summer!

Next up is complimentary. The complementary color scheme consists of two high contrast colors that are directly opposite each other on the color wheel. Fuschia and green are perfect examples. This is one of the easiest color schemes to use and build upon. In this example, you can see the three different tints and shades of these two complementary colors.

There are several more color schemes, but I am just going to touch on the next three to give you an idea of how many color options there are.

So, we have Split Complementary, this is a variation of Complementary and is made from two colors adjacent to it's complement. It makes a long triangle on the color wheel. Kind of looks like it's stretched out.

Next we have the Triadic color scheme which are three colors that are evenly spaced apart on the color wheel. Notice this forms a triangle.

Then we have Tetradic. This color scheme is made up of 4 colors in two complementary pairs. This forms a rectangle on the color wheel.

Using the color wheel can help you have more confidence and give you a direction when you first set out to create a set of papers.

What happens when we don't have a harmonious color palette?

Color schemes that are not harmonious, can fail to engage or at the opposite end of the spectrum, overstimulate and make something really hard to look at.

Here we have some examples of color palettes that you can right off that are not pleasing to the eye. Some of them even give me a slight headache if I look at them too long. And that's never a good sign.

The first example shows us that warm and cool colors can be tricky to use, but you can use cool and warm tones together if done correctly. I've included a link in this lessons manual, to an article that even though it's geared towards home decor, gives us some very helpful tips on balancing cool and warm colors. Notice the four colors here that mix warm and cool in a very pleasing way.

The other examples just do not evoke a pleasant feeling at all. Some mix overly bright colors with dark colors that don't complement each other and seem chaotic. And you want to stay away from an all dark palette as you can see in the example it just doesn't look good. Just by lightening up some of the colors you would have a workable palette. Our eyes really are pretty incredible because we tend to have an immediate reaction to colors that are either really pleasing or something that makes us want to look away. So chances are if you have a strong reaction to something either way you should definitely listen or in this case see!

Now that we have a basic understanding of colors and how to pick palettes that work well together let's have some fun with the color wheel in the next lesson! This has been Syndee Rogers with Passion for Paper.

