

# Color In Your Room

*It's FUN doing things to make your room and your home more attractive. You'll learn many new things about fabrics and furnishings as you choose them and work with them.*

*It will be easier for you to decide how to make your home more attractive if you know something about color, the influence of texture on color, and the principles of design. These are little things but they add up to really improve a room.*

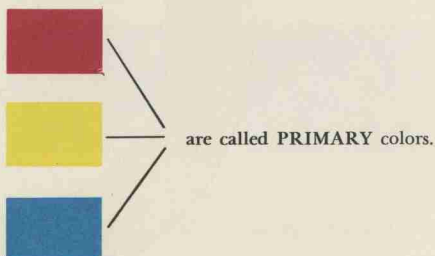
*Where do you start? Let's look at color first.*

## 1. Color

Color is one of the most important factors in decorating an attractive room. Some people seem to have a natural talent for choosing and combining colors to get a pleasing effect. But most of us need to learn about color and practice working with it before we can use it with good results.

What do *you* know about color?

### HOW MANY COLORS ARE THERE?



They are called primary because they cannot be made by mixing any other colors. We use the primary colors to get the next group, called: SECONDARY colors.

Mix red and yellow and you get . . . . Orange

Mix yellow and blue and you get . . . . Green

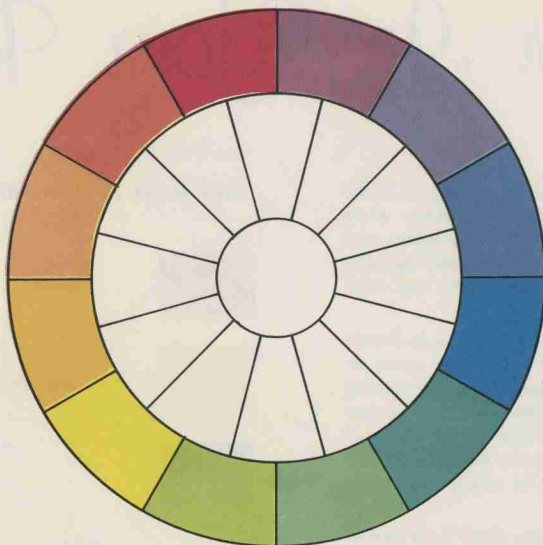
Mix blue and red and you get . . . . . Purple

You might think of the secondary colors as the *second* group, which you make by mixing any two colors of the first group.

Other colors are made from these six basic ones. You know, for example, that all greens are not alike. You have seen yellow-green and blue-green. Orange may be true orange, it may be yellow-orange, or it may be more of a red-orange.

Each time we mix any two colors, we get a new color which we might call an "in-between" color. You can easily see that the possible combinations are almost endless.

*Sometimes we show colors in a wheel.*



***Here you can see:***

*the PRIMARY colors . . . . . red, yellow, blue*  
*the SECONDARY colors . . . orange, green, purple*  
*You can also see some of the combinations, or in-between colors*

Why not try making a color wheel using water color, poster paint, or colored pencils? It will help you to really understand color.

#### **WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE COLOR**

Now it will be easy for you to understand some words which describe color.

#### **HUE**

—is the name of the color—like red, blue, green, purple, etc.



One other point: We hear many other names for colors such as aqua, forest green, lime, etc. These are “fashion” names for the basic colors. For example, aqua is light blue-green; forest green is dark green; lime is light yellow-green. However, if you know the basic names, you can identify most colors without worrying about the “fashion” names.

## VALUE

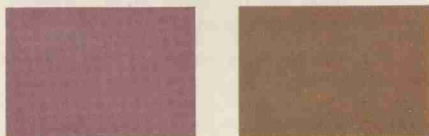
—refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. Colors are made “light” by adding white to them. They are made “dark” by adding black to them. Let us look at some examples. Add white to red and we get pink; add white to purple and we get lavender. Add black to blue and we get dark, navy-blue.



## INTENSITY

—refers to the vividness or brightness of the color. Colors are usually more pleasing when they are not too vivid. Any color can be made less intense and more pleasing by either of these 2 ways:

1. Add some black to it, or—
2. Add some of the color directly across on the color wheel.



## SHADE

—is a dark value, made by adding black to a hue.

## TINT

—is a light value, made by adding a hue to white.

## tone

—is a grayed value, made by adding black and white to a hue.

It's fun to test yourself to see how color conscious you are. Look at flowers, fabrics, painted walls. What makes them pleasing in color?



You will soon notice that the prettiest colors, “the easiest to live with,” are soft shades and tints rather than vivid, true hues.

## A VERY GOOD THING TO KNOW!

This brings up the next important principle for using color. Briefly stated it is this:

The smaller the area, the brighter the color; the larger the area, the more subdued the color.

This means that large areas such as walls, floors,

and large pieces of furniture should be quiet colors made by tinting the color with white, or darkening the color with black. Small areas, such as pillows, pictures, lampshades, and small chairs may be very bright colors. They will stand out as accents against the soft, restful background colors.

## HOW COLOR AFFECTS YOUR ROOM

Here are some factors which will influence the colors you use in any room:

1. Number of windows, and the direction they face. It is a well-known fact that some colors give a warm feeling; others a cool feeling.

*Warm*—colors remind us of sunlight and fire. They are *yellow, red, orange, brown,* and related colors.

*Cool*—colors remind us of fresh green grass, cool mountain lakes, and winter snow and ice. They are the *blues, greens, lavender, grays,* and related colors.

The rule for using warm and cool colors is simple.

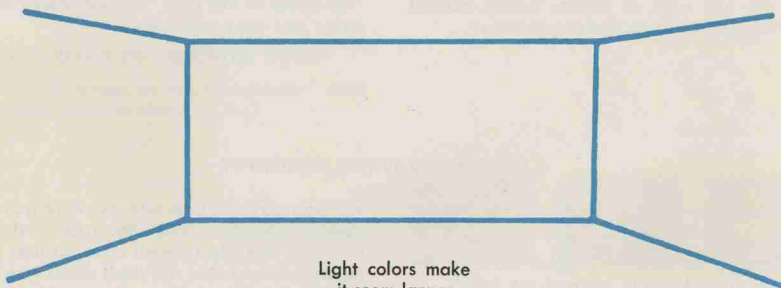
If your room is dark and cool looking, brighten it up with *warm* colors.

If your room is too sunny and hot, then you will want to tone it down with *cool* colors.

2. Is your room too large? Too small? It is a fact that light colors tend to make a room look larger, dark colors tend to make a room look smaller.
3. A whole room of one color, or one pastel color and white, is not interesting. Yes, by all means, do let one color stand out, but every room still needs some variety and accent. If you use a one-color plan, use different shades and tints of that color,—as an example: dark green, with some light green, accented with bright yellow-green.

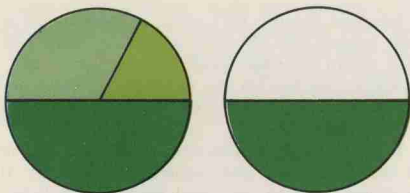


Dark colors make  
a room seem smaller



Light colors make  
it seem larger

You might visualize the colors in your room like this:



This is much more pleasing . . . than this

4. Several prints or patterned surfaces in a room give a confused, restless look to the room. In most cases it is best to have one outstanding print and the other surfaces more or less plain. Sometimes a stripe can be used with a print if the print is not too bold and bright. Remember that the texture of rugs and wood, pictures, vases, and other accessories lend a certain amount of "busy-ness" and pattern to your room. These along with your one print surface will usually be enough pattern in most rooms. Use small patterns in small rooms, large patterns in larger rooms.

## TEXTURE PLAYS A PART WITH COLOR

ROUGH OR SMOOTH, shiny or dull, coarse or fine, hard or soft—these words tell you something about the texture of a fabric or furnishing in your home.

Run your hand over your dress, the top of your dining table, an upholstered chair, a china plate. They all feel different—that "feel" is texture.

The same color will look different in different textures. Shiny, smooth finishes reflect light and the colors are clear and bright. Rough materials take up some of the light, and colors are deeper and less bright.

If you put a piece of satin and a piece of cheesecloth in a kettle of dye and leave them there the same time, they appear to be different colors. The difference in texture is the reason.

Use similar textures together—denim and corduroy are sturdy and go with maple and oak—taffetas and satins are good company for fine wood like mahogany. Sometimes you will want to change texture a little. Using corduroy all through your room would be very dull. You could use a denim or Indian head or even a glazed chintz with the corduroy.

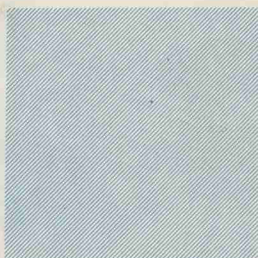
Small designs in upholstery, rugs, and curtains sometimes make these fabrics look and feel rough. In this way, design gives texture to furnishings.

You'll probably change your mind about the colors and materials you like as you work with furnishings each year. You'll acquire a taste for certain furnishings just like you do for different foods as you handle and study materials.

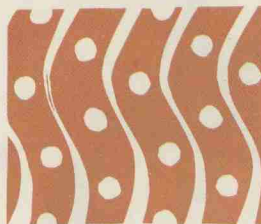
## TEXTURES



Coarse



Fine



Design Gives  
Texture

## 2. Design

We have discussed color and the influence texture has upon color. Design, also, is important. The basic principles are discussed under *Balance*, *Rhythm*, *Emphasis*, *Scale and Proportion*, and *Line*.

### BALANCE

#### *Formal Balance*

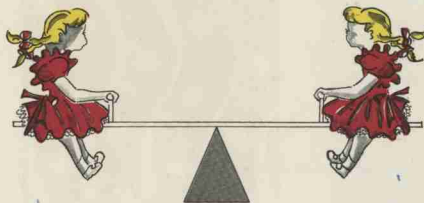
Formal balance is the easiest kind—one side of an arrangement is like the other. Look at yourself in the mirror. One side of your face is almost exactly like the other. This type of balance is found in your home in:

—Flower arrangements—where the sides balance the center.

—A davenport with an end table and a lamp on either end.

—A bowl of fruit on a table with a candlestick at each side.

Formal balance is easy to get. Use it where you want a formal, restful look; where you want things to appear orderly.



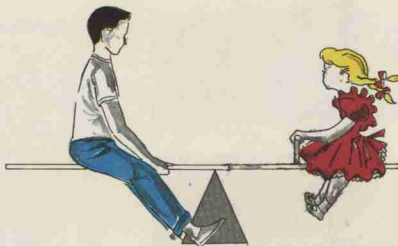
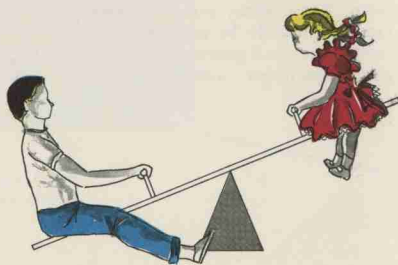
Informal balance isn't quite as easy to get as your formal, but it's more fun to do. Let's look at a seesaw to understand informal balance. It balances with you on one end and someone your size on the other. That's formal balance that we talked about before.

But if your big brother sits at one end with you at the other, you'll find yourself up in the air. If he moves closer to the center the seesaw will balance. That's informal balance.

You can see this when you put several articles of different size on your dresser. You'll have to put them at unequal distances from the center to get balance. Put the heavier objects near the center, the light ones farther away.

Looking at informal balance just once will probably not be enough. Look at it again and see what makes it balance.

Informal balance suggests movement. It gives you a feeling of more space, a comfortable feeling.



## RHYTHM

**RHYTHM MAKES A ROOM** come alive. You've felt rhythm in music and dancing — it's smooth and easy; helps you float along. Well, rhythm in furnishings and designs helps lead your eye around a room and from one room to another.

You'll have rhythm in your room and home by repeating:

- Colors in the same room or from room to room.
- The same kinds of lines.
- The same designs.

For example, well designed wallpaper lets your eye follow easily from one part of the pattern to the next. It isn't "spotty."

## EMPHASIS

Emphasize or "play up" the things you like. If you have a favorite picture, a hobby display, a chair just right for you—emphasize it. The color you use on the wall, the kind of thing you use with it will draw your eye to this spot.

Bright colors and bold patterns in other places in the room will draw your attention away from the things you want to emphasize. Play up the important things.

## SCALE AND PROPORTION

**SCALE IS THE WORD** that compares the size of one object, say a piece of furniture, with another. A small picture wouldn't be in scale with a large chest of drawers. A big comfortable chair needs a rather large table beside it. If your bedroom chair is small, it needs a slipcover with a

small print.

Your furniture must fit *your* size also.

Proportion means the relationship of the parts of an individual piece of furniture to one another. It means also the relationship of one piece of furniture to another piece of furniture.



## UNITY

UNITY MEANS furnishings are related to each other. It means arranging the furnishings in a room so everything fits its own spot and blends together into the rest of the room.

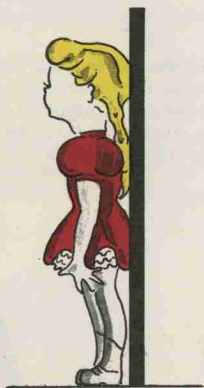
Furnishings tell the story of your room at a glance. If your friends say, "That's a pretty spread" or "Aren't those new curtains?", you may have

failed a bit. The comment, "I like your room," means the room is important at first glance and not just one or several items in it. You know that your room is a *unit*.

But your room really isn't a unit until you are in it. It must provide the things you need to be comfortable and happy—you are part of the plan.

## LINE

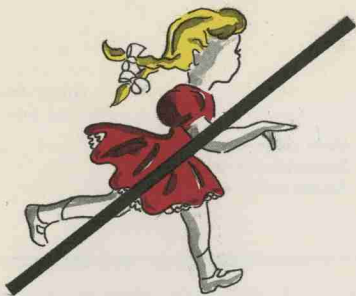
Lines have a language too.



*A vertical straight line says, "Stand straight, stand tall." It is a dignified, formal line.*



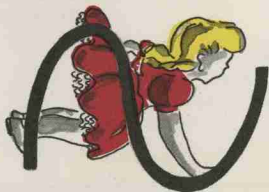
*A horizontal line is a quiet line. It invites you to rest.*



*A diagonal line says "Let's go." It is active, something restless. If it is broken, it's a very restless line and makes you wonder which way to go.*



*A curved line is gentle, quiet, restful. A large curve may be a sleepy line. Mass curved lines move easily, like rolling a hoop or a ball.*



*A tightly curved line says, "Watch out, I'm about to spring."*

The kind of lines you use in a room give a restful feeling—or a very active one. Whichever type of line you choose, you'll want to repeat that kind of line through most of the room. But make sure

you still have some variety in lines. For example, a round base on your lamp or a round table in a room with many horizontal lines could be a nice change.

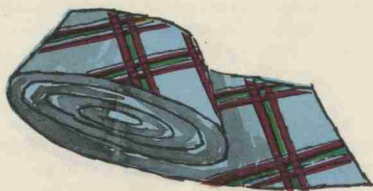
### 3. Good Ways Of Selecting Color And Design For A Color Scheme

First of all, *know what colors you like*. Plan to use them if at all possible. Be sure to consider the likes and dislikes of all who will use the room.

If you feel you would like a guide in selecting

a color scheme, try one of the plans below:

Before making final decision, consider texture, balance, rhythm, emphasis, scale, unity, line, and color of all the furnishings within the room.



Select colors from  
a *patterned fabric*.

Main color—tan.  
Second color—blue green.  
Accent color—red.

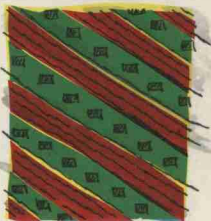
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Select colors from  
a beautiful *picture*.

Main color—rose.  
Second color—dark green.  
Accent color—pink and white.

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Select colors from a  
pretty *wallpaper*.

Main color—medium green.  
Second color—orange.  
Accent color—yellow and  
dark green.

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Select colors from a  
*carpet, linoleum, or  
tile pattern*.

Main color—gray.  
Second color—red.  
Accent color—green and  
yellow.

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## RATE YOUR OWN COLOR SCHEME

Ask yourself these questions before and after you plan your color scheme:

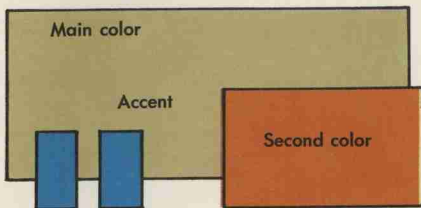
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- Are the large areas  
(walls, for example) a softer color?
- Have you used some bright  
accent color for small areas?
- Do you have 2 or 3  
colors other than white?
- Is there more of one  
color than of the others?
- Have you used warm and  
cool colors in the right places?
- Are the colors  
distributed around the room?
- Would you enjoy living  
in a room with these colors?

### TRY IT YOURSELF!

After you have studied about color, try planning a decorator's color scheme. Keep in mind the texture of your fabrics, the balance of color throughout the room, and all the other art principles we have discussed.

Paste samples of material, paper, or paint in the blocks below:

Now decide where to use these colors in your room.



If you can honestly answer "yes" to all 7 of these questions, you have done an excellent job color planning; if you answer "yes" to only 5, you may have a good color scheme. If you answer "yes" to less than 5, then perhaps it would be a good idea to look at your color scheme with a critical eye, and do something about it.

*Learn*—about color and how to use it.

*Practice*—using it with swatches of fabric or chips of paint.

*Look*—at color wherever you go. See it in pictures, flowers, etc. You will soon find that you enjoy the beautiful world of Nature more than ever. And you will, no doubt, soon want to — —

*Do*—something to make your home a more beautiful, a more colorful, place in which to live.



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