# Lesson Element

# How Colour Theory can be used in Graphic Images

### Pre-class research activity

### Research Task

Having learnt new skills in creating examples of typography using colour, we are now going to study general colour theory in Graphic images. We will be investigating the difference between additive and subtractive colour, colour symbolism and the different methods of mixing colours to achieve specific effects.

You’re going to research the different starting points that will help you understand how you can improve making your images practically. You must use this sheet to start your notes and continue on another document when necessary. You must cover the key points listed below:

* How are colours defined? What groups can they be split into? How are colours situated on the colour wheel?
* How do colours work with each other? Which colours clash, which colours harmonise and why? Give examples of colour groups and what effect they have.
* How do colours differ on screen and in print? How does colour affect legibility? How do colours affect the appearance of each other?
* What do colours connote and symbolise? How do they create emotion? How does culture affect understanding of colour?

Come with this research to the next lesson!

**Name at least one famous image which uses complementary colour and discuss the uses of this colour using the key words on this paper:**

**Use the web links below to find out:**

1. Primary, secondary and tertiary colour definitions
2. How is additive colour mixing different from subtractive colour mixing?
3. Look up the following terms and their meaning:

Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, Additive Colour, Subtractive Colour, Complementary, Active, Tint, Passive, Tone, Analogous, Harmonious, Monotone, Monochromatic, Hue, Duo Tone,  
Saturation, Triad, Shade, Advancing Colour, Receding Colour, Colour Legibility, Colour Vibration, Simultaneous Contrast.

Smashing Magazine – Colour Theory for Designers Part 1, 2 and 3

[http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/01/28/color-theory-for-designers-part-1-the-meaning-  
of-color](http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/01/28/color-theory-for-designers-part-1-the-meaning-of-color)

<http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/02/02/color-theory-for-designers-part-2-understanding-concepts-and-terminology>

[http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/02/08/color-theory-for-designer-part-3-creating-your-  
own-color-palettes](http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/02/08/color-theory-for-designer-part-3-creating-your-own-color-palettes)

Kuler Website - Enables you to create your own colour schemes and import into Photoshop <http://kuler.adobe.com> (if you cannot access this website through Internet Explorer, try another browser)

Basic Colour Theory – [www.worqx.com/color](http://www.worqx.com/color)

**Suggested Wider Reading:**

* Dabner, D. (2005) Graphic Design School: The Principles and Practices of Graphic Design, Wiley 9780471686835
* Eiseman, L. (2000) Pantone Guide to Communicating with Colour, Grafix Press 9780966638325
* AdamsMorioka (2008) Colour Design Workbook: A Real World Guide to Using Colour in Graphic Design, Rockport Publishers 9781616736514