

# Psychology of Color

## Do different colors affect your mood?

by David Johnson

Like death and taxes, there is no escaping [color](#). It is ubiquitous. Yet what does it all mean? Why are people more relaxed in green rooms? Why do weightlifters do their best in blue gyms?

Colors often have different meanings in various cultures. And even in Western societies, the meanings of various colors have changed over the years. But today in the U.S., researchers have generally found the following to be accurate.

### Black

Black is the color of authority and power. It is popular in fashion because it makes people appear thinner. It is also stylish and timeless. Black also implies submission. Priests wear black to signify submission to God. Some fashion experts say a woman wearing black implies submission to men. Black outfits can also be overpowering, or make the wearer seem aloof or evil. Villains, such as [Dracula](#), often wear black.

### White

Brides wear white to symbolize innocence and purity. White reflects light and is considered a summer color. White is popular in decorating and in fashion because it is light, neutral, and goes with everything. However, white shows dirt and is therefore more difficult to keep clean than other colors. Doctors and nurses wear white to imply sterility.

### Red

The most emotionally intense color, red stimulates a faster heartbeat and breathing. It is also the color of love. Red clothing gets noticed and makes the wearer appear heavier. Since it is an extreme color, red clothing might not help people in negotiations or confrontations. Red cars are popular targets for thieves. In decorating, red is usually used as an accent. Decorators say that red furniture should be perfect since it will attract attention.

The most romantic color, pink, is more tranquilizing. Sports teams sometimes paint the locker rooms used by opposing teams bright pink so their opponents will lose energy.

### Blue

The color of the sky and the ocean, blue is one of the most popular colors. It causes the opposite reaction as red. Peaceful, tranquil blue causes the body to produce calming chemicals, so it is often used in bedrooms. Blue can also be cold and depressing. Fashion consultants recommend wearing blue to job interviews because it symbolizes loyalty. People are more productive in blue rooms. Studies show weightlifters are able to handle heavier weights in blue gyms.

### Green

Currently the most popular decorating color, green symbolizes nature. It is the easiest color on the eye and can improve vision. It is a calming, refreshing color. People waiting to appear on TV sit in "green rooms" to relax. Hospitals often use green because it relaxes patients. Brides in the Middle Ages wore green to symbolize fertility. Dark green is masculine, conservative, and implies wealth. However, seamstresses often refuse to use green thread on the eve of a fashion show for fear it will bring bad luck.

### **Yellow**

Cheerful sunny yellow is an attention getter. While it is considered an optimistic color, people lose their tempers more often in yellow rooms, and babies will cry more. It is the most difficult color for the eye to take in, so it can be overpowering if overused. Yellow enhances concentration, hence its use for legal pads. It also speeds metabolism.

### **Purple**

The color of royalty, purple connotes luxury, wealth, and sophistication. It is also feminine and romantic. However, because it is rare in nature, purple can appear artificial.

### **Brown**

Solid, reliable brown is the color of earth and is abundant in nature. Light brown implies genuineness while dark brown is similar to wood or leather. Brown can also be sad and wistful. Men are more apt to say brown is one of their favorite colors.

### **Colors of the Flag**

In the [U.S. flag](#), white stands for purity and innocence. Red represents valor and hardiness, while blue signifies justice, perseverance, and vigilance. The stars represent the heavens and all the good that people strive for, while the stripes emulate the sun's rays.

### **Food for Thought**

While blue is one of the most popular colors it is one of the least appetizing. Blue food is rare in nature. Food researchers say that when humans searched for food, they learned to avoid toxic or spoiled objects, which were often blue, black, or purple. When food dyed blue is served to study subjects, they lose appetite.

Green, brown, and red are the most popular food colors. Red is often used in restaurant decorating schemes because it is an appetite stimulant.