

COLOUR AS A MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION

One of the most important considerations in the creation of an outdoor design revolves around the effective use of colour.

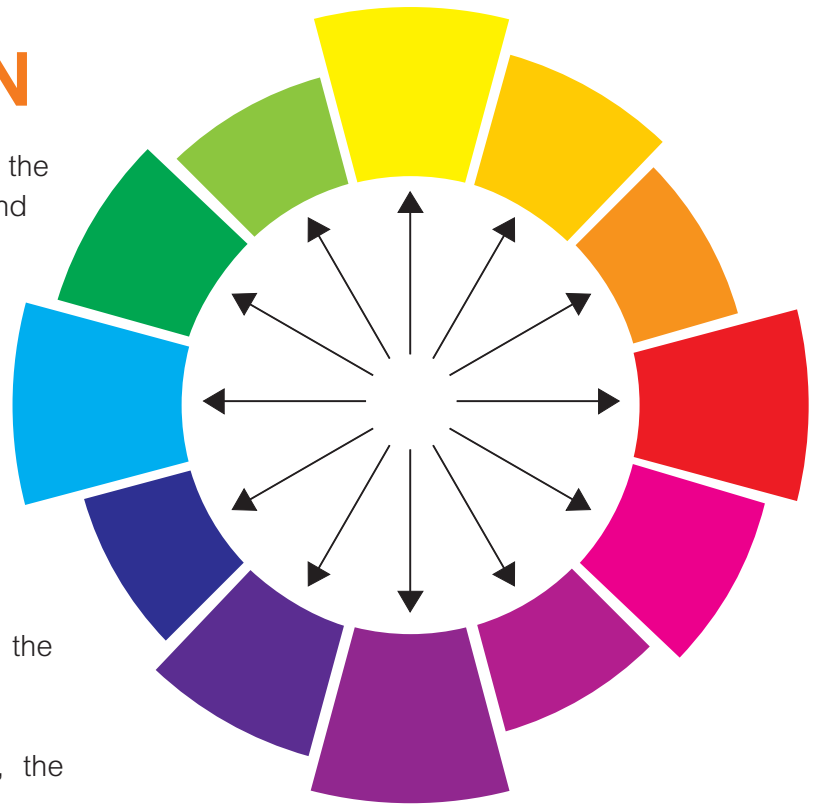
Colour can convey emotions. For example, consider the feelings associated with various colours:

- RED** signifies life, passion
- BLUE** gives the feeling of coolness, calm
- GREEN** connotes growth, springtime
- YELLOW** says warmth, vitality

Colour also affects both the visibility and the legibility of a design.

The stronger the contrast between colours, the more vibrancy created.

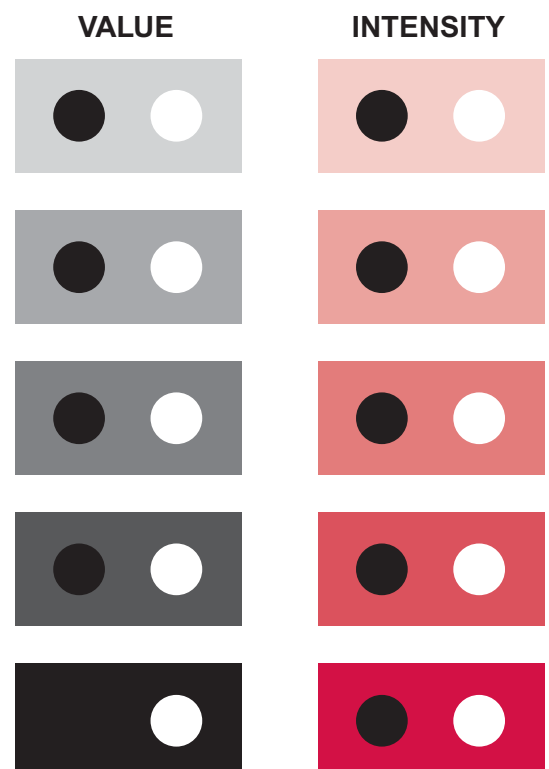
The strongest colour contrasts - opposites on the colour wheel - are colour complements. These opposites contain no common ingredient. For example, green contains yellow and blue, but no red. Thus, green and red are complements, offering vibrancy through their contrasting relationship.



COLOUR VALUES

Colours have the following qualities: hue, value and intensity. **HUE** is the “colour” of a colour or its identity such as red, orange, green, etc. **VALUE** is the measure of its lightness or darkness, its position on the scale which runs from black to white. **INTENSITY** is the measure of a colour’s strength and purity.

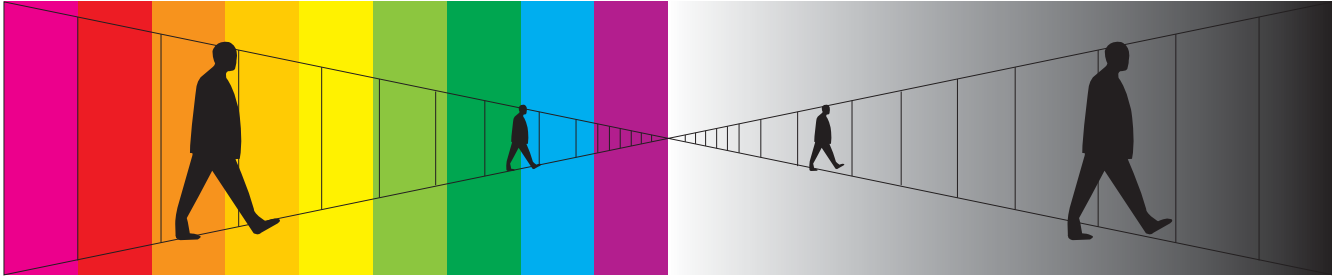
In the illustrations beside, *Value* is demonstrated in the left column, while Intensity is shown in the right column.



DESIGN TIPS: COLOUR



HUE, VALUE & DISTANCE



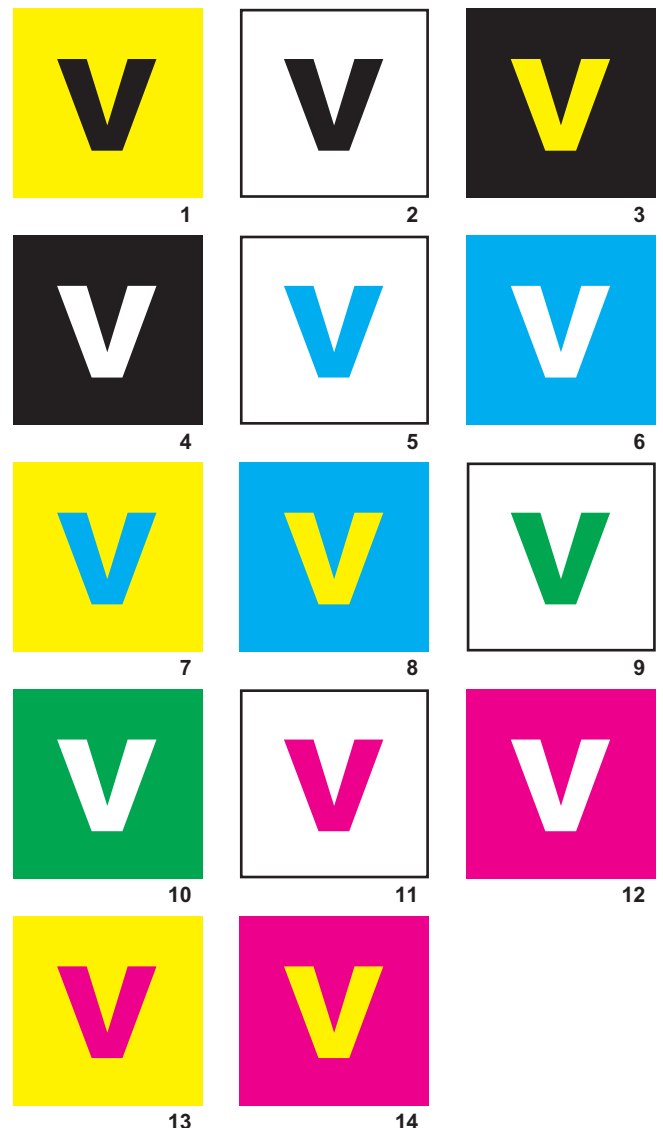
In addition to conveying emotion, colour and black and white values can affect distance factors. Warm hues - reds, oranges and yellows - are perceived as closer to the viewer. In contrast, cool colours of green, blue and violet seem more distant.

Similarly, darker values in colour or black and white seem to be more in the foreground, while lighter values recede. Strongly contrasting combinations of either value or hue seem closer. Legibility is affected more by value contrast than by hue.

COMPARATIVE VISIBILITY OF FULL VALUE COLOUR COMBINATIONS

These 14 colour combinations for lettering were tested using only primary and secondary colour of full hue and value. Tests for readability at a distance were conducted on different groups under the sponsorship of the Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA).

The results ranked in the sequence shown, with #1 the most legible and #14 as the least legible. Negative letters in 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 appear to have a broader stroke than their positive counterparts.



DESIGN TIPS: COLOUR



COLOUR FREQUENCY AND VIBRATION

Like sound waves, light rays have varying wavelengths or frequencies: the lighter the colour, the higher the frequency. These wavelengths determine perception of colour. Some pigments absorb certain light frequencies and reflect others. We see the reflected frequencies as colour.

Complementary colours such as red and green are not readily legible. They have similar black and white value, so their wavelengths set up a vibration. Any combination of colours of similar value, even without vibrating, will have low visibility. Although yellow and purple are complementary colours, they have strong contrast in value and therefore little vibration. They provide maximum visibility.

CONTRAST

VIBRATION

**LOW
VISIBILITY**

**HIGH
VISIBILITY**