



Color Theory

Make an Afterimage

Adult

Introduction

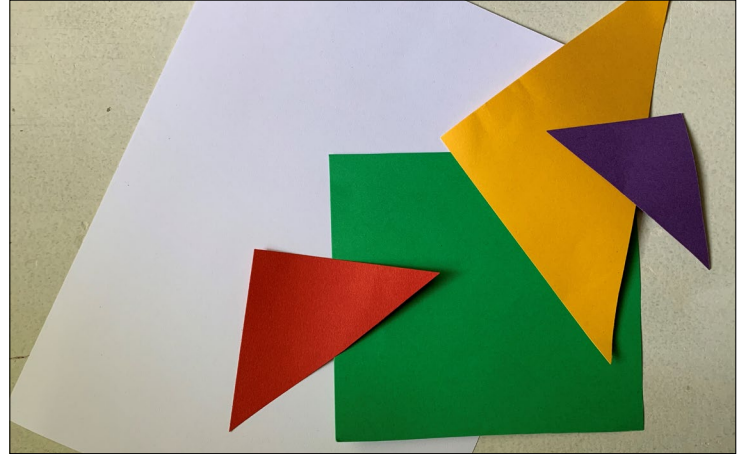
An object does not have inherent color, instead its surface reflects some colors and absorbs others.

Therefore, when you see a color, you are seeing what is reflected. Seeing color is dependent from how your brain perceives it.

Fun fact: birds, fish, and other mammals perceive the full spectrum of color. Bees can see ultraviolet colors that are invisible to humans.

To test out how your brain (not just your eyes) sees color, let's do an experiment with an afterimage optical illusion.

What do you see when you stare at one color for a prolonged period of time?



Supplies

- Brightly colored paper (if you don't have brightly colored paper, you can use felt, color in a shape with a marker, or use objects – anything that has a distinctive single color works best)
- Scissors (if you want to cut out portions and shapes)
- White sheet or surface

Instructions

1. Gather paper (or whatever you are using)
2. Place paper (or objects) adjacent to white paper or surface
3. Stare at element with color for at least 30 minutes and move gaze immediately after to white paper or surface
4. What do you see?
5. Try different colors and kinds of objects – does that change what you see?

Additional Information

Explore additional resources on our [website](#) and blog [Plano Library Learns](#), including information about library [databases](#)

Color Theory – Salem Press Encyclopedia [Link](#)

Colour: The Spectrum of Science [Link](#) | [Link to video](#)

Revised 4/14/2020



Color Theory – Make an Afterimage

Great Courses – Color: Color Theory and Color and Light [Kanopy Link](#)

How Do We See Color? An Introduction to Color and the Human Eye [Link](#)

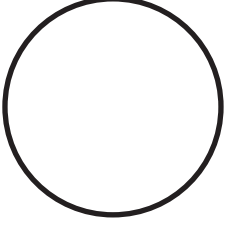
Smithsonian Libraries – The Science of Color [Link](#)

Sample Color Wheel

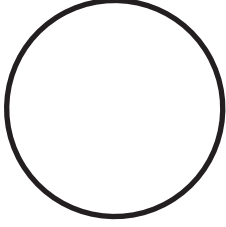


Color Wheel

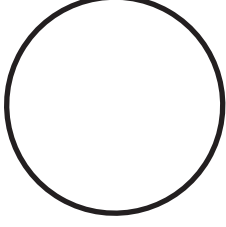
Red



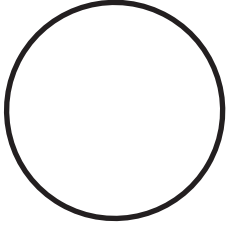
Red - Violet



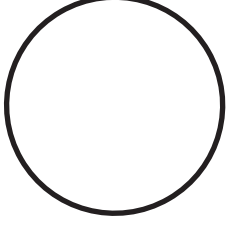
Red - Orange



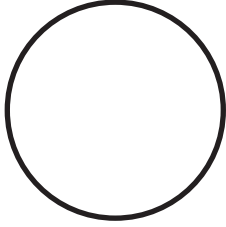
Violet



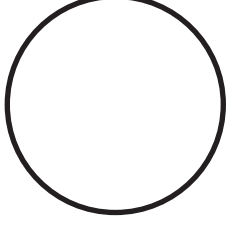
Orange



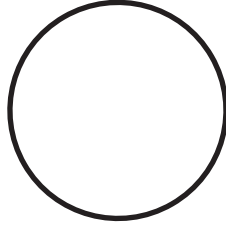
Blue - Violet



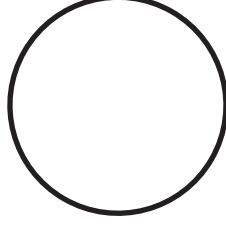
Yellow - Orange



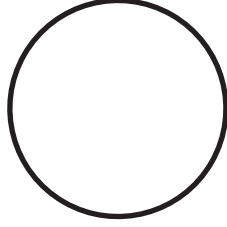
Blue



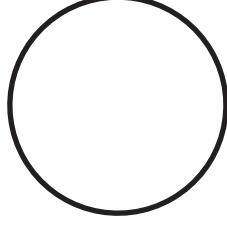
Yellow



Blue - Green



Yellow - Green



Green

