

Colour Mixing

The ability to mix a wide range of colours with paint is an essential and fundamental skill. Being able to do so allows access to an enormous range of other skills, processes and the ability to use other media easily. That said, colour mixing isn't something that children will pick up automatically so it is important to teach it and, for at least some of the time, in a fairly formal way. Children find formal exercises enjoyable and they are a good way to build confidence.

A good way to save some of the Art budget is to use the dual primary colour mixing system. Instead of buying assorted boxes of 12 colours teachers can buy just 8 colours from which every other colour can be mixed. You will need:

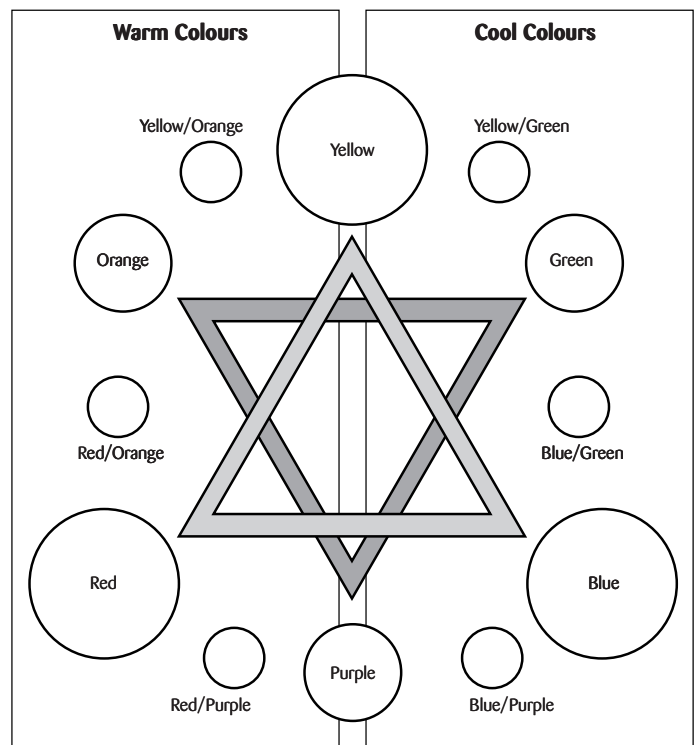
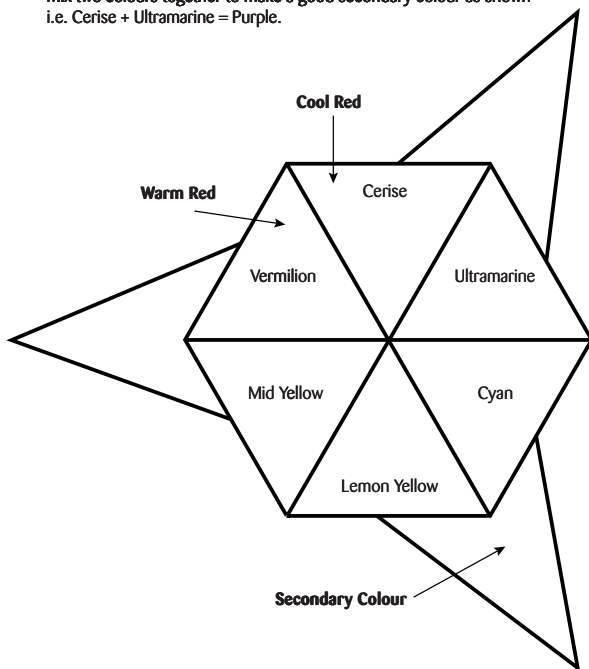


This selection gives a warm and a cold shade of red, yellow and blue. This allows clean, true versions of the secondary colours to be mixed (orange, green and purple).

A good starter exercise is for the children to mix each primary colour to make a secondary colour and paint them onto a simple chart like these;

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Primary colours are Red, Yellow and Blue. These do not always make good secondary colours when mixed together so a dual-primary system is used. This system uses two different Reds, two Blues and two Yellows. Mix two colours together to make a good secondary colour as shown i.e. Cerise + Ultramarine = Purple.



This is a simplified version of the standard colour wheel that is ideal for KS1 and KS2 pupils. It illustrates the way that primary colours are mixed to make secondary colours and also which colours can be described as 'warm' and 'cool'.

Go to the APFS website and click on 'Resources' to find photocopiable versions of these colour mixing charts to print out and use in the classroom. For best results, print them on good quality paper – why not cut cartridge paper to A4 size and photocopy onto that?

Go to our Facebook page to find even more useful resources.



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