

A coloured vision

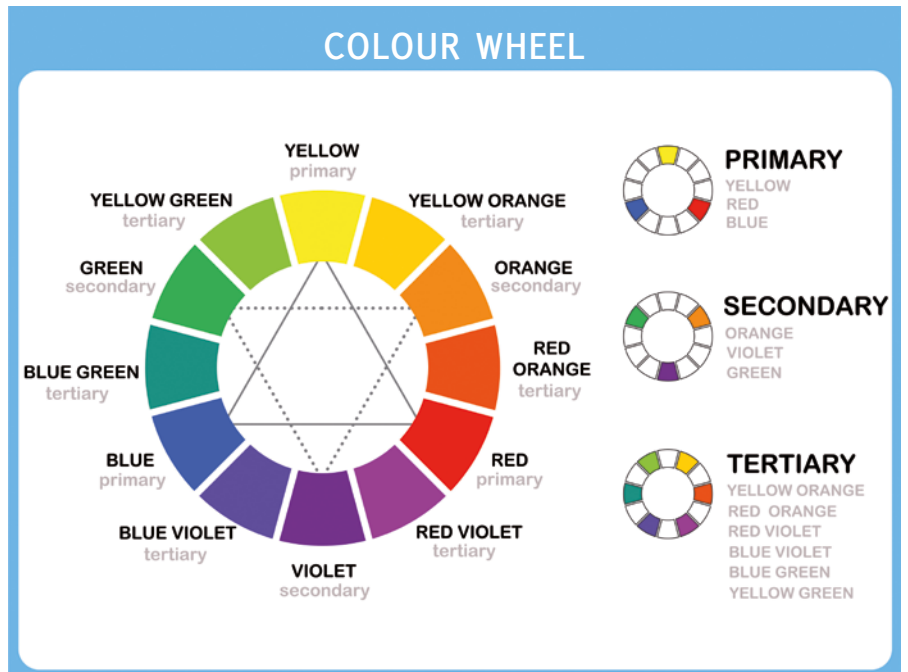
Colours or **hues** can be divided into **primary** – red, yellow and blue – which can be mixed to create three **secondary** colours – green, orange and purple or violet. Combinations of primary and secondary colours create **six tertiary colours**. Combinations of either a primary or secondary colour with a **neutral colour** (e.g. white) also produce tertiary colours (red + white = pink; black + white = gray).

Mixing colours

If you add white to a colour it becomes lighter in value; it is a **tint** of the original colour. If you add black to a colour it becomes darker; it is a **shade** of the original colour. And if gray is added, each gradation gives you a different **tone** so that the hue will appear less intense or less **saturated**.

If you want to darken a colour and make it rich, you mix **complementary colours** like orange and blue, green and red, yellow and purple, white and black. Red, yellow and orange are considered **warm** colours, while purple, green and blue are **cool** colours.

The **value** of a colour, that is the degree of light and dark of each colour, is important in a composition because it helps to **define forms**, to give objects a sense of **volume** and to create **spatial illusions**. The darkest colours are perceived by the human eye as nearer, while the softest and lightest are perceived as distant.

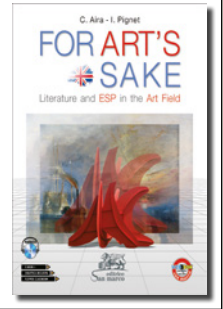


ACTIVITIES

Reading comprehension

1 Look at the colour wheel and complete the tables.

Primary colour		Primary colour	=	Resulting secondary colour
Yellow	+	Red	=	1
Red	+	2	=	Violet or purple
Blue	+	Yellow	=	3



Primary colour		Secondary colour		Resulting tertiary colour
Yellow	+	Orange	=	Yellow-orange or amber
4	+	Orange	=	Red-orange or vermillion
Red	+	Violet	=	5 or magenta
Blue	+	Violet	=	Blue-violet
Blue	+	6	=	7 or teal
Yellow	+	Green	=	8 or chartreuse

Vocabulary

2 Match each colour property with the correct definition.

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Hue | A Hue with addition of white |
| 2 Chromaticity | B Purity of colour |
| 3 Saturation | C Luminance of colour |
| 4 Brightness | D Hue with addition of black |
| 5 Tint | E Basic wheel colour |
| 6 Tone | F Intensity of colour |
| 7 Shade | G Hue with addition of grey |

3 Working in pairs, provide the opposites of the following colour qualities.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 Dull | 6 Pure |
| 2 Light | 7 Opaque |
| 3 Weak | 8 Sombre |
| 4 Cool | 9 Diluted |
| 5 Vivid | 10 Bright |

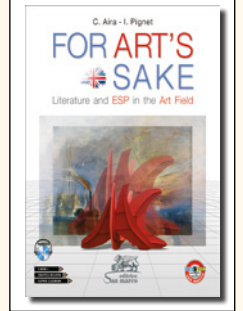
Speaking & writing

4 Look at the painting and in pairs discuss the colours the artist has used to paint the landscape. Decide which colours are primary, secondary or tertiary and then write down your conclusions.

Ex. The sky: the painter has used many colours to create this lively sky, but none of them primary: white = neutral colour for the clouds, mixed with blue-green and blue-violet (tertiary), so as to create new tints or variations of the original colours.

- The fields:
- The trees:
- The hills:
- The flowers:





Reading comprehension

5 Look at the painting *Tiger in a Tropical Storm* by Henri Rousseau in the next page. Then read the following analysis and answer the questions.

TIGER IN A TROPICAL STORM (SURPRISED!)

The work was painted in 1891 by Henri Rousseau, a primitivist painter. This jungle painting was originally named *Surprised*, probably because the tiger, illuminated by a flash of lightning,¹ is waiting for its prey hidden in the foliage. The tiger's prey² is not visible, so it is left to the imagination of the viewer to decide what the conclusion will be. Rousseau's jungle paintings appear to be simple, but they are built up meticulously in layers,³ using a large number of green shades (with touches of red, orange and yellow) to capture the luxuriant exuberance of the jungle.

The violent rain is rendered with silver, diagonal lines across the canvas. The colours are pure and simple, the outlines⁴ clear, every single leaf of a tree and every blade⁵ of grass is individually detailed with thick paint and strong brushstrokes. And yet there is something vigorous, poetic and appealing in this painting. Although the critics judged it childish, *Tiger in a Tropical Storm* became a starting point for future artists and works of art.



Henri Rousseau, *Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised!)*, 1891, National Gallery, London.

- 1 What is the subject of the painting?
- 2 What was its original title?
- 3 Where is the tiger hiding?
- 4 Is the prey visible?
- 5 Can you imagine the conclusion?
- 6 How is the painting built up?
- 7 What is the dominant colour?
- 8 Are objects (tiger, trees, leaves, grass) neatly outlined?
- 9 How is the rain rendered?
- 10 What was the critics' opinion?