



THE COMPLETE GUIDE FOR CHOOSING COLORS

LET'S COMBINE COLORS



Color is powerful.

It changes the way we interpret words.

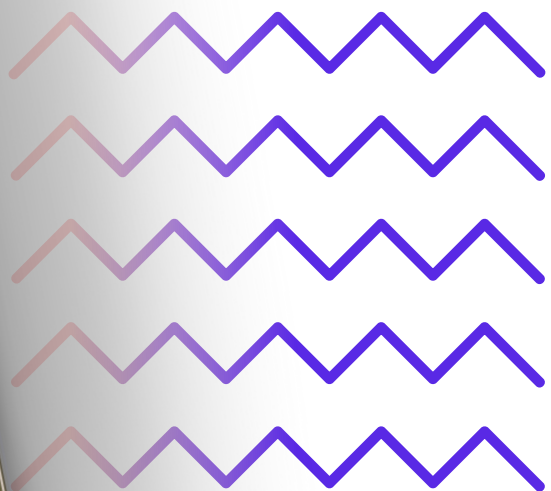
It forms our opinions about certain situations.

It impacts the way we remember an experience.

In design, we need to see color as a form of communication. It's a vessel for getting our point across, for guiding our audiences from one point to another. It helps us to build a connection with them and to evoke them into feeling one way or another.

With so much riding on it, how we use color can often completely make or break a design. This can be daunting when you feel you know nothing about perfect color combinations or how color psychology works.

Within this guide, we will teach you how to choose the right color combinations for your project. Using color in an impactful way can help to make your website more memorable; more impactful for both the company and the consumer.



DEFINE THE BRIEF

When you begin work with a client, they will often encourage you to familiarize yourself with their brand guidelines.

When it comes to colors, use this as your starting point to better understand your client, so that you can produce a design that directly matches their brand.

On the other hand, you might work with a client who has zero branding and zero preference for design direction.

As a designer, this is an even bigger challenge than working with someone who has the strictest guidelines you've seen.

Free reign can be fun, but it leaves a lot of room for error. In these circumstances, make sure you speak with your client about what they're trying to achieve, who their target audience is, and how they'd like their website interpreted.

Often clients underestimate the power of color and design until they see it in action.

However, in the following example, let's say you have received a design brief that helps you to choose the colors without any issues.

NOW, IT'S TIME TO ASK YOURSELF SOME QUESTIONS.

WHAT CONSTRAINTS DO I HAVE?

To find the answer, thoroughly read their brand guidelines. Always ensure you fully grasp their direction. If there is anything unclear, ask for further clarity.

Furthermore, look to see if there are any technical limitations or guidelines on the formats or combinations you can and cannot use.

IS THIS ALL THE GUIDANCE I HAVE?

If you're working with a new company, they may only provide you with very brief brand guidelines.

However, if you're working with a more established business, it can be helpful to take a look through existing materials they have to understand how they use color and color combinations to convey a message.

This can help steer your decisions within the web design process.

WHAT DO I WANT THE VIEWER TO DO?

This will be important to know when you're trying to guide the eye to a particular piece of information or a call to action they should take.

Defining the scope of what you want to achieve from the viewer will impact your color choice at certain stages of design depending on if you wish to attract or distract.

WHAT DO I WANT THE VIEWER TO FEEL?

- Do I want to provoke them?
- Interest them?
- Calm them?
- Entertain them?

Understanding the intentions and connections that the brand wants with its audience will also help to narrow down your color options in specific areas of the website.



SELECTING COLORS

THE PRIMARY HUE

ALL COLOR PALETTES BEGIN WITH ONE SINGLE COLOR.

Choose your primary hue depending on the mood you seek to set and the tone and associations you want your visitors to have on your website.

Before picking your primary hue, it is helpful to consider its color psychology. Every single color can create certain reactions and emotions in different people, especially across different cultures and backgrounds.

However, how each color is interpreted tends to be situational.

For example, for some red is the color of passion and love. Yet, it can also mean danger and warning. Using red in one situation could give a person positive feelings, whereas in another it can provoke anxiety. Understanding each hue's impact will help you to make an educated decision based on the type of site you're building.

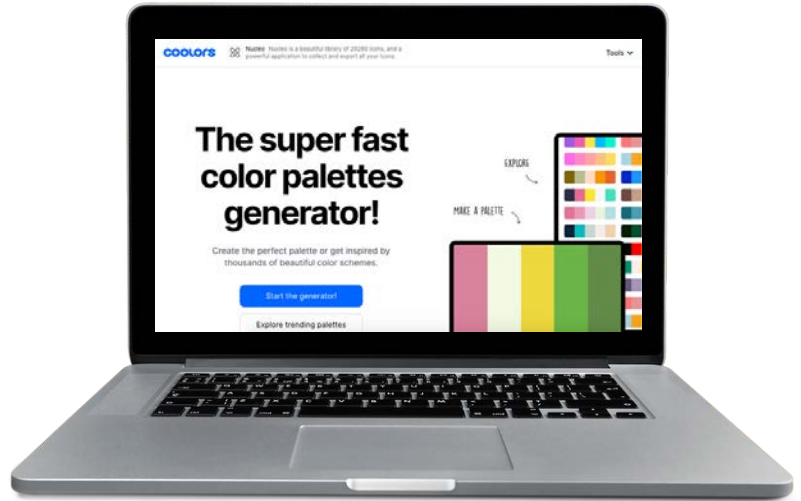


THE NUMBER OF COLORS

Once you have a base color, it's time to build a palette.

There are many color palette generators you can use online to help you visualize great combinations at work.

Check out: [Colors.co](https://www.colors.co)



With sites like this, it will introduce you to an array of palettes based on your original shade.

THE MOST COMMON COLOR PALETTES USUALLY FALL INTO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

MONOCHROMATIC

When the full palette includes hues from a single color.



ANALOGOUS

Colors that are next to each other on the color wheel.



COMPLIMENTARY

Two colors opposite each other on the color wheel. These work really well where a high level of contrast is required.



SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY

Like complementary, which uses the opposite color, this palette uses two opposing colors.



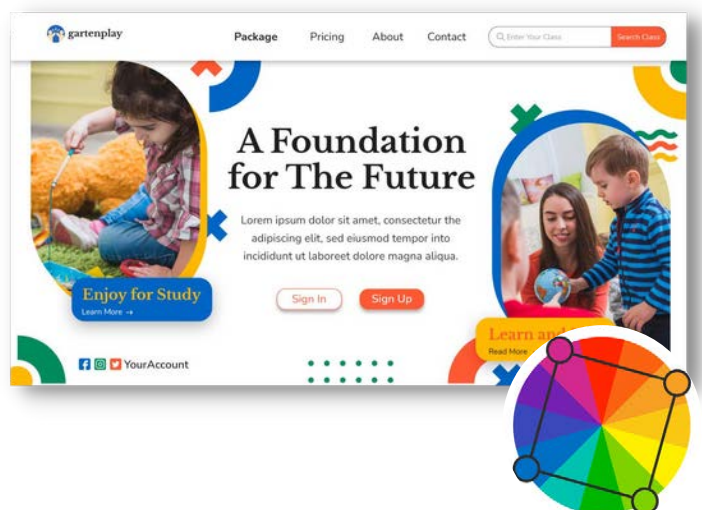
TRIADIC

This is created from three colors that are evenly spaced around the color wheel.



TETRADIC

Also known as the rectangle uses four colors. This allows for plenty of variation within the design.



UI CONSIDERATIONS

The **60/30/10** rule is common practice for web design. This means you use the primary color 60% of the time, the secondary for 30%, and the accent color for only 10%.

While this doesn't need to be STRICTLY adhered to, having some sort of percentage can help you in varying and balancing a page.

Fewer elements generally equal less chance of making a huge design mistake, so it's usually helpful to build the base with simplicity in mind and develop the accents to create the color pops later in the design process.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

Building a basic color palette

- [Coolers.co](https://coolers.co)
- [Canva Color Generator](https://canva.com/color-generator/)
- [Colormind.io](https://colormind.io)

Building a gradient palette

- [My Color Space](https://mycolor.space)

Contrast checker for text on color

- [Color Contrast.cc](https://colorcontrast.cc)



COLOR USAGE RULES

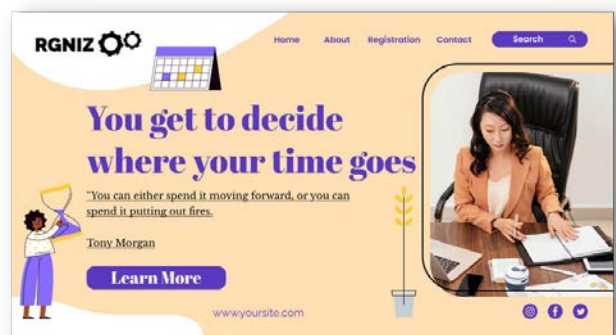
We've mentioned the 60/30/10 rule already, which is undoubtedly one to be considered.

However, one thing to note is that it doesn't have to include only three colors. This is merely a guideline to help you gauge how much dominance your primary color should have with any accents.

Another helpful thing to consider is contrast. The higher the contrast between two colors, the more each color will stand out from one another. When it comes to contrast, you can't just think about the color itself, but also the tone you use. This will profoundly impact the visibility of the overlap and eye strain needed to comprehend it.

High contrast will mean the text is more legible.

Low contrast, and you'll have an abundance of people who couldn't read the message you were aiming to display.



REVIEWING YOUR WORK

When it comes to designing color, you will need to play around a little to determine if something works or not. What it looks like in your mind may not work on the screen and vice versa.

Once you've completed the first draft of your design, ask yourself some last questions.

IS IT FUNCTIONAL?

For example, is the text legible? Does the color distract or compliment? Does it guide the eye or capture it? Your color choice should support what you want the viewer to do (i.e., taking action) rather than confusing or overwhelming them.

IS IT APPEALING?

Some color combinations are functional (i.e., you can easily read them), but they don't look very appealing. If that is the case, maybe a shade below or above might improve how it's interpreted.



IS IT CONSISTENT WITH BRAND GUIDELINES?

A beautiful website is great, but if it doesn't match the brand guidelines, then it's not very helpful for your client.

Before you submit it for review, double-check that you've used the exact color codes and combinations they use in their brand guide.

HAVE I ANSWERED THE BRIEF?

Test your website a couple of times to check if it does what your client has asked you to make it do.

Thanks for reading,
We would love to see you in one of our in-
depth courses or on our free social media
channels.

BROWSE OUR COURSES

BROWSE NOW



Until next time, happy designing!

**Ran Segall &
The Flux Academy Team**

