Color: Culture & Meaning

**Cultural Color** – Why is this important? How is this different?

**Red:**
- Ambition
- Brilliance
- Charity
- Communism
- Courage
- Domination
- Energy
- Excitement
- Intensity
- Motion
- Patriotism
- Power

**Orange:**
- Ambition
- Change
- Communication
- Determination
- Earth
- Expansion
- Humanism
- Independence
- Security
- Society
- Success
- Wisdom

**Yellow:**
- Aspiration
- Communication
- Confidence
- Expansion
- Idealism
- Intelligence
- Innovation
- Knowledge
- Logic
- Optimism
- Order
- Power

**Green:**
- Aspiration
- Efficiency
- Environment
- Freedom
- Growth
- Harmony
- Nature
- Neutrality
- Prosperity
- Renewal
- Security
- Vigor

**Blue:**
- Acceptance
- Balance
- Cooperation
- Dignity
- Freedom
- Harmony
- Honestly
- Intelligence
- Loyalty
- Order
- Peace
- Power

**Purple:**
- Aristocracy
- Balance
- Conflict
- Dignity
- Independence
- Inspiration
- Justice
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Passiveness
- Pride
- Responsibility

Color in Motion:
Cultural Color Meanings of Pink

Western:
• Caring and nurturing
• Love and romance
• Feminine

Eastern:
• Feminine

Europe:
• Feminine color
• Baby girls

Belgium:
• Pink is used for baby boys

Japan:
• Well-liked by both males and females

Thailand:
• Color for Tuesday

Korea:
• Trust

Cultural Color Meanings of Purple

Western:
• Royalty
• Spirituality
• Wealth and fame
• High ranking positions of authority
• Military Honor (Purple Heart)

Eastern:
• Wealth

India:
• Sorrow
• Comforting

Japan:
• Privilege
• Wealth

Thailand:
• Color of mourning for widows
• Color for Saturday

Brazil:
• Death and mourning

European:
• Royalty

Catholicism:
• Mourning
• Death, Crucifixion

Cultural Color Meanings of Orange

Western:
• Affordable or inexpensive items
• Halloween, combined with black

Eastern:
• Happiness
• Spirituality

Thailand:
• Color for Thursday

Ireland:
• Religious color for Protestants
• Appears on the Irish flag along with white for peace and green for Catholics

Netherlands:
• Color of the Dutch Royal Family

Hinduism:
• Saffron, a soft orange color, is considered an auspicious and sacred color
**Cultural Color Meanings of Magenta**

**Western:**
- Creative, innovative and artistic
- Imaginative and outrageous
- Loving, compassionate and kind
- Encourages emotional balance
- Spiritual yet practical
- Non-conformist

**Spain:**
- Official color of the Union Progress and Democracy political party

**Netherlands:**
- Used by the Amsterdam based Magenta Foundation in support of anti-racism

**Cultural Color Meanings of Yellow**

**Western:**
- Happiness, joy
- Hope
- Cowardice
- Caution, warning of hazards and hazardous substances

**Eastern:**
- Sacred
- Imperial

**China:**
- Sacred
- Imperial, royalty
- Honor
- Masculine color

**India:**
- Sacred and auspicious
- The Symbol of a Merchant

**Thailand:**
- Considered auspicious as the bright yellow flower "cassia fistula" is a national symbol.
- Represents Buddhism.

**Egypt:**
- Color of mourning

**Burma:**
- Color of mourning

**Israel:**
- Used to label Jews in the Middle Ages

**Middle East:**
- Happiness
- Prosperity

**Japan:**
- Courage
- Beauty and refinement
- Aristocracy
- Cheerfulness

**Europe:**
- Happiness, joy
- Cowardice, weakness
- Hazard warning

**France:**
- Jealousy

**Greece:**
- Sadness

**Africa:**
- Usually reserved for those of high rank

**Buddhism:**
- Wisdom

**Jewish:**
- Yellow is considered the royal color, the color of Monday which is the King’s birthday
- Yellow star badges of the Middle Ages and post war Germany and Poland
**Cultural Color Meanings of Green**

**Western:**
- Lucky color in most western cultures
- Spring, new birth, regeneration
- Nature and environmental awareness
- Color for ‘go’ at traffic lights
- Saint Patrick’s Day
- Christmas combined with red
- Jealousy
- Greed

**Eastern:**
- New life, regeneration and hope
- Fertility

**China:**
- New life, regeneration and hope
- Fertility
- Disgrace - giving a Chinese man a green hat indicates his wife is cheating on him
- Exorcism
- Studies show it is generally not good for packaging

**India:**
- The color of Islam,
- Hope, new beginnings
- Harvest
- Virtue

**Thailand:**
- Color for Wednesday

**Japan:**
- Eternal life
- Youthfulness
- Freshness

**Indonesia:**
- A forbidden color

**Ireland:**
- Religious color for Irish Catholics
- Color symbol of Ireland - the Emerald Isle

**France:**
- Not good for packaging

**North Africa:**
- Corruption and the drug culture

**Egypt:**
- Hope
- Spring

**Middle East:**
- Color of Islam
- Strength
- Fertility
- Luck

**Saudi Arabia:**
- Wealth and prestige

**South America:**
- Death

**USA:**
- Money
- Jealousy

**Cultural Color Meanings of Brown**

**Western:**
- down-to-earth, practical
- comfortable
- stable, dependable,
- wholesome

**China:**
- In Chinese Horoscopes brown is the color for earth

**India:**
- Color of mourning

**Nicaragua:**
- Sign of disapproval
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Color Meanings of White</th>
<th>Cultural Color Meanings of Black</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Brides and weddings</td>
<td>• Power, control, intimidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Angels</td>
<td>• Funerals, death, mourning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hospitals, doctors</td>
<td>• Rebellion</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Peace - the white dove</td>
<td><strong>Eastern:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Purity and cleanliness</td>
<td>• Wealth, health and prosperity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern:</strong></td>
<td><strong>China:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Death, mourning and funerals</td>
<td>• Color for young boys</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sadness</td>
<td><strong>India:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evil, negativity, darkness</td>
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<tr>
<td>China:</td>
<td>• Lack of appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Death and mourning</td>
<td>• Anger and apathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Virginity and purity</td>
<td>• Used to ward off evil</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Humility</td>
<td><strong>Japan:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Age</td>
<td>• Color of mystery and the night</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Misfortune</td>
<td>• May be associated with feminine energy - either evil and a threat or provocative and alluring</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>India:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thailand:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unhappiness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Symbol of sorrow in death of family member</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Traditionally the only color a widow is allowed to wear</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Funerals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Peace and purity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan:</td>
<td><strong>Middle East:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• White carnation symbolizes death</td>
<td>• Unhappiness,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thailand:</td>
<td>• Bad luck, evil</td>
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<tr>
<td>• White elephants are considered auspicious,</td>
<td><strong>Judaism:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• White symbolizes purity in Buddhism</td>
<td>• Unhappiness,</td>
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<td><strong>Middle East:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Korea:</td>
<td><strong>Middle East:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Purity, innocence,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Morality,</td>
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<td>• Birth and death</td>
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**Cultural Color Meanings of Blue**

**Generally the safest color to use worldwide**

**Western:**
- Trust and authority
- Conservative, corporate
- Peace and calm
- Depression, sadness
- "Something blue" bridal tradition
- Masculine color
- Baby boys

**Eastern:**
- Immortality

**China:**
- Immortality
- Associated with pornography and "blue films"
- Feminine color

**India:**
- Lord Krishna
- National sports color

**Japan:**
- Everyday life

**Korea:**
- Color of mourning

**Thailand:**
- Color for Friday

**Belgium:**
- Color for baby girls

**Cherokees:**
- Defeat, trouble

**Mexico:**
- Mourning
- Trust
- Serenity

**Iran:**
- Color of mourning
- Heaven and spirituality
- Immortality

**Israel:**
- Coat of Arms

**Egypt:**
- Virtue
- Protection - to ward off evil

**Middle East:**
- Protection

**Colombia:**
- Associated with soap

**US Politics:**
- Liberalism

**UK & European Politics:**
- Conservatism

**Religious Beliefs in Many Cultures:**

**Christianity:** Christ's color
**Judaism:** Holiness
**Hinduism:** The color of Krishna
**Catholicism:** Color of Mary's robe

**Cultural Color Meanings of Red**

**Western:**
- Energy, excitement, action
- Danger
- Love, passion
- A warning to stop
- Anger
- Christmas combined with green
- Valentine's Day

**Eastern:**
- Prosperity
- Good fortune
- Worn by brides
- Symbol of joy when combined with white

**China:**
- The color of good luck and celebration
- Vitality, happiness, long life
- Used as a wedding color
- Used in many ceremonies from funerals to weddings
- Used for festive occasions
- Traditionally worn on Chinese New Year to bring luck and prosperity

**Indonesia:**
- Color of purity, fertility, love, beauty
- Wealth, opulence and power
- Used in wedding ceremonies
- A sign of a married woman
- Also color of fear and fire

**India:**
- Color of mourning
- Usually reserved for ceremonies
- Worn by chiefs

**Russia:**
- Associated with the Bolsheviks and Communism,
- Means beautiful in Russian language
- Often used in marriage ceremonies

**Australian Aborigines:**
- Represents the land and earth
- Ceremonial color

**Hebrew:**
- Sacrifice, sin

**Christian:**
- Sacrifice, passion, love