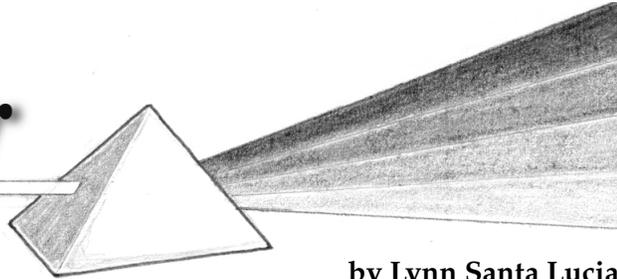


Directions

Read the article “Color Power.” Then do Numbers 1 through 3.

Color power



by Lynn Santa Lucia

How much can the color of the shirt you wear, the food you eat, and the walls you surround yourself with affect you?

A lot more than you may think.

1 Ariella Angert is no fan of math class, but her discomfort has nothing to do with decimals, fractions, or formulas. Rather, Ariella can't stand the actual room she goes to for math lessons. “The bright yellow walls in my algebra class really freak me out,” says the 14-year-old freshman at Oceanside High School in New York. “Sometimes, it's hard for me to concentrate in that room, and I usually walk out with a migraine.”

Ariella's negative reaction towards the color yellow may seem odd, but it really isn't. The human eye can see 7 million colors. All these colors can affect a person's mind and body. According to experts in fields ranging from interior decorating to psychology, color can alter moods, influence behavior, and even cause physical reactions—like raising your blood pressure or suppressing your appetite.

Too Much Stimulation

Ariella's reaction to bright yellow is an example 3 of a negative response. In addition to causing headaches, colors can make a person feel nauseated or tired. Bright lemon yellow is the most fatiguing of all colors. Why? The answer comes from the physics of light and optics. Bright colors reflect more light, and as a result they excessively stimulate the eyes. Look at yellow for too long and your eyes will get irritated. Research shows that babies cry more in yellow bedrooms, and families are more apt to fight in yellow kitchens.

But the news isn't all bad for yellow. The color is known to promote confidence and learning. So while that yellow classroom may contribute to Ariella's headaches, at the same time it might actually be helping her solve those challenging square root equations. Other colors also have

positive effects on people. For instance, blue helps the body relax, and orange tends to improve a person's mood and appetite.

- 5 Think all of this is hogwash? The ancient Egyptians didn't. Four thousand years ago, the Egyptians built healing temples of light, which filtered the sun's rays and bathed patients in specific colors to treat particular illnesses and emotional states.

More recently, studies have shown that colors can affect you when you don't see them. Noted neuropsychologist Kurt Goldstein confirmed in his classic, *The Organism*, that a blindfolded person will experience physiological reactions under rays of different colors. In other words, the skin "reads" color, and our bodies, minds, and emotions respond.

Frequency Effect

- 7 Exactly how does this happen? Attached to the human brain are pineal glands, which control the daily rhythms of life. When light enters through the eyes or skin, it travels along neurological pathways to these pineal glands. Different colors give off different wavelength frequencies, and these different frequencies have different effects on us.

It's not by chance that a major fast-food chain chose a golden color for its arches, and that employee uniforms of many successful fast-food chains are a combination of yellow, orange, and red. These colors, with some of the longest wavelengths, are known to stimulate the appetite. In fact, years ago, when another major fast-food chain changed the color of its employee uniforms to blue and green—colors reputed to suppress the appetite—sales went down considerably.

Pink is another color that has proved to suppress the appetite and stop stress-related snacking. As part of a weight-control program at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, patients are given a color square called "bubble gum pink" to help them eat less. Even the National Institute of Mental Health has done studies showing that our mental health and behavior depend in part on having a normal balance of colors in our life.

Surrounded by Color

So Ariella isn't the only person affected by colors. You are too. Color is all around you—in your school, in your home, in your wardrobe, and on your dinner plate. Many of these colors affect study habits, friendships, sleep patterns, and self-esteem.

Picture the T-shirt or sweatshirt you like to wear most when you play sports. Imagine the rooms in which you feel most comfortable, nervous, or irritable. Think about foods or meals that turn you off. The colors in clothes, carpeting, or cookery may be influencing your moods.

Does this mean that you should carry color swatches with you to make sure you always benefit from the colors around you? No. Color is light energy that you can tap into simply by looking at or being around those that you need most at a given moment. "You can keep the right color energies around you by carefully selecting the foods you eat, the clothes you wear, and the places you park yourself," says Emma Swedlow, an alternative healing practitioner in Baltimore, Maryland. "Color really can be a wonderful tool for creating balance in your life."

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Go On ►

HUE EFFECTS OF EIGHT COLORS

Color	Proven Effects	Negative Effects	Practical Application
Black	Promotes self-confidence, power, and strength.	Too much black can make a person feel depressed.	Dress in black if you need to make a good impression—except when you’re trying to console a friend whose pet just died.
Violet	Brings about a feeling of peacefulness and understanding; promotes sleep; suppresses appetite.	Too much violet can make a person feel disoriented.	If you’re having trouble sleeping, place a purple bulb in your bedside table lamp. Turn the light on when you go to bed.
Blue	Calms the mind; gets rid of nervous tension; suppresses appetite.	Too much blue can make a person feel cold, sad, or depressed.	Taking an exam today? Dress in blue and wear a pair of blue-tinted sunglasses on your way to school.
Green	Mentally and physically relaxing; balances emotions; creates openness between you and others.	Too much green can make a person in a bad mood feel worse.	Next time you have a headache or muscle aches, look at a plant. Even better, surround yourself with foliage.
Yellow	Energizes; promotes learning; improves memory; stimulates appetite; combats the doldrums.	Too much yellow can make a person feel tired or irritated.	If you really want to remember something, take notes on a yellow legal pad or yellow Post-its.
Orange	Like the sun, orange is a natural healer and mood lifter; has a gentle warming effect; and increases appetite.	Too much orange can make nervous people more agitated.	If you’re feeling low, eat a slice of orange pound cake and drink a glass of orange juice.
Red	Stimulates brain-wave activity; increases heart rate and blood pressure; improves circulation.	Too much red can make people aggressive and agitated.	Trying out for the team, or need to make a speech? Wear something red—a scarf, cap, or shirt.
Pink	Suppresses appetite; relaxes muscles; relieves tension and reduces violent tendencies.	Too much pink can make people sleepy.	Got a lousy grade in school? Give your mom a bouquet of pink flowers before delivering the bad news.

1 What is the author’s purpose in paragraph 10?

- A** to remind the reader of the main idea of the article
- B** to introduce new evidence to support the author’s position
- C** to tell the reader how to avoid the effects of color
- D** to show that the author is changing the subject of the article

2 Which of these features best contributes to the conversational tone in the article?

- F** boldfaced headings
- G** title for the color chart
- H** questions to the reader
- J** references to fast food

3 The author of “Color Power” says there is no need to carry color swatches to make sure you benefit from the colors around you. Write an explanation that tells why carrying swatches might be beneficial after all. Include details and examples from the article that clearly support your explanation. Write your explanation on the lines in your Answer Book.

STOP 

Acknowledgments: "Primary Lessons" by Judith Ortiz Cofer is reprinted with permission from the publisher of *Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood* (Houston: Arte Publico Press—University of Houston, 1990).

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