A Guide for Quilter’s

Each color that we see has hue, value and intensity. When discussing color we shall refer to them using these terms. The three dimensions of color are discussed more fully in the following pages.

Hue

The word color is a general term which can refer to only one color or to many colors. When we refer to one selected color by name, we are speaking of its hue. For example, red is a hue. The word hue can be used interchangeably with the word color.

Within each color family, are a wide range of hues. For example, within the red color family are the hues: rose, pink, burgundy, mauve, magenta, cranberry, brick.

The spectrum colors are red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet. They are known as pure colors, meaning they have not been altered through tinting (adding white) or shading (adding a darker color or a complement).

The neutrals: white, black, gray and beige are referred to as colors. In quilting the neutral colors provide the background on which the other colors interact with one another.

Organizing Your Stash

For ease in fabric selection, sort fabrics into color groups; one stack, box, or shelf for each color family. Other categories may include batiks, brights, neutrals, plaids, florals and multi-colors, novelties, landscapes, vintage, oriental and whole collections.
1. **Primary Colors** are red, yellow and blue. When mixed in varying proportions, they make all the other colors.

2. **Secondary Colors** are violet, green and orange they are created when mixing equal proportions of any two primary colors.

3. **Tertiary Colors** are red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, and red-violet. They are created by mixing one primary color and one secondary color.

4. **Complementary Colors** are opposite one another on the color wheel. They are composed of one primary color and one secondary color such as red and green, blue and orange, yellow and violet.

5. **Analogous Colors** are a combination of three or more adjacent colors are combined, such as green, blue-green and blue.
Value

The value of a color is its’ lightness or darkness. By tinting or adding white, a color becomes lighter in value. Pink is a tint of red. Through shading (adding a dark color or a complement), a color becomes darker in value. Navy is a shade of blue. A tone is created by adding gray. The word tone is also used to describe a color or group of colors, such as green tones.

In quilting, when we refer to light, medium and dark fabrics, we are speaking of the overall values of the fabric. These values fall into specific categories on a value scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dark Values</th>
<th>Medium Values</th>
<th>Light Values</th>
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Seen individually, we can describe each fabric as light, medium or dark. However, value is relative to the other fabrics used in combination. While a medium might appear light against a dark background, the same fabric would appear dark against a light background.

To achieve a look of depth in a quilt, include a full range of values. To get the most depth, show strong contrasts between light and dark. High contrast quilts are bold and dramatic.

However, if you prefer a softer more blended look, choose fabrics with less range on the value scale, such as medium to light. Because value is relative, be cautious about adding a very dark fabric to a predominately light quilt.

Quilts done in all medium values can appear flat. To add interest, choose fabrics in a variety of colors and patterns.

Contrasting Value

The placement of value in a quilt pattern accentuates the design.

The points of a star stand out dramatically when a very dark star point is against a light background.

While a bold look is achieved through a strong contrast of values, a more subtle look can be achieved through a gradual transition in values.

For example, in the log cabin, the fabrics are arranged in an order which becomes increasingly darker or lighter in value. This gradual change in value is called a gradation or graduating values.

To achieve balance and interest in your quilt, show contrasting values in some areas, and subtle graduations in other areas.
Intensity

Intensity refers to the brightness or dullness of a color. As seen on the color wheel, the pure hues are the most intense. As they are shaded or grayed they become more dull and subdued.

Generally speaking, we combine colors with similar intensities. Pastel shades create a soft feminine look. Brights are great for kids, or kids at heart. Achieve an antique or muted look with dusty or grayed fabrics. Earth colors convey a warm, homey quality. Brilliant jewel tones give a vibrant contemporary look.

Bright colors advance while dull colors recede. A sparkle effect is created when an intense color is added to a predominately muted color scheme. Use the intense color in a small proportion, as an accent.

Suggestions for Fabric Combining

Start with an inspirational fabric which contains two or more of your main colors. Select several different values of your main colors in a variety of scales or textures. Combine fabric with similar style or personality, such as vintage, whimsical, oriental, or traditional.

Select from the following combinations:

Monochromatic - Combine colors from the same color family in a variety of values from light to dark.

Warm and Cool - The warm colors (red, yellow, orange) advance, or appear to move forward, while the cool colors appear to recede. When combining warm and cool colors, excitement is achieved as the colors play back and forth. Use the colors in unequal portions, and let one color dominate.

Analogous Colors - To create a visually harmonic design combine three to five colors adjacent to one another on the color wheel.

Complementary Colors - When placing a color next to its opposite on the color wheel, they intensify one another with stunning results.

In choosing fabrics, the most important consideration is to pick the colors that you truly love. Select with your heart, and not with your intellect. Trust your intuition. Relax, play and let the colors speak to you.

By choosing your favorite colors, quilting becomes therapy, as the colors affect our emotions and energy levels. They bring joy and excitement into our lives. The experience of creativity is one of great reward as it brings enrichment and fulfillment into our lives.

Using Color to Enhance Our Lives

Absolutely everything that we see has color: the forms in nature, the furnishings in our homes, the clothing that we wear, the foods we eat. Each time we enter a room or select an article of clothing to wear we are being influenced by the color. Although the effect of color appears to be quite subtle, it can actually be quite powerful.

Color is a form of energy, because colors are the components of light. This is visible in the spectrum, as light is color separated by a prism. Without light our plants could not grow; without light there could be no life.

Colors influence our moods and our judgements about objects, places and people. And color combinations can control how comfortable or confused we feel. By working effectively with the colors in our environments we can create beauty and order in our lives, promote clear thinking and stimulate an energetic approach to our daily activities.
Some Colors Can Energize Us, While Others Help Us Relax

Modern scientists have been studying the effects of color on the human body. Through brain wave testing it was discovered that the various colors can have an effect on our body’s metabolism. While the warm colors (red, yellow, orange) are physically energizing, the cool colors (blue, green, violet) promote relaxation.

In addition it was discovered that the various body organs are correlated with the respective colors. For example the color orange stimulates our organs of digestion. Notice how often we see orange used for decorating and advertising restaurants. In addition, it was discovered that the color yellow stimulates the left brain, which is the mental, conceptual mathematical side of the brain.

To apply these research findings to our daily usage, we can wear red for energy (or any warm color) or for waking up in the morning. While engaging in mental work, it is helpful to write on yellow paper (a legal pad), use a yellow highlighter, or to wear yellow.

It is important to note that each one of us is unique. The body’s color requirements vary with each individual, and can change from day to day. One who is nervous or hyper-active might benefit from more blue or green to relax. And one with a more sluggish metabolism will benefit from wearing clothes in warm colors. To lose weight, wear red or any warm color such as magenta, yellow, orange, bright purple. If you don’t feel comfortable wearing warm colors, use warm color accents in your home. To gain weight, wear blue or cool colors.

A good balance is to wear a warm color with a cool color and a neutral color. If wearing a cool color predominately wear a warm color accent, such as a jewelry, a belt or a scarf.

Usually we intuitively select the colors which are best for us. Sometimes we avoid the colors which we need the most. By introducing some new colors into our lives we can experience changes in our energy levels, our attitudes, our dispositions.

Colors: Symbolic Meanings and Practical Applications

White: Purity, Perfection, Balance of all colors (spectrum)
Red: Life, Physical Energy, Passion
Blue: Serenity, Peace, Contemplation, Reduces Anxiety, Relaxing
Yellow: Joy, Mentally Stimulating, Cleanses the Body
Green: Spring, Youth, Prosperity (money is green) Soothes the Nerves
Orange: Constructive Energy, Social, Enhances Digestion
Violet: Inspirational, Creative, Regal, Uplifts the Mind and Spirit
Indigo: Intuition
Pink: and Salmon Pink: Universal Love
Gold: Wisdom
Earth Colors: Warm, Comforting, as they remind us of Nature
Transparency

The illusion of transparency is created when one seemingly transparent shape is placed next to a second transparent shape. Where they overlap, a third color is created from the combination of the two colors.

An easy way to create this effect is to choose a light, medium and dark fabric from one color family. Start in the center and arrange the shapes in order from dark to light. With the medium value in between the other two, it appears transparent.

Another way to achieve this effect is by using analogous or adjacent colors from the color wheel. Line up the shapes in the same order as they appear on the color wheel, such as green, blue-green, blue.

Directions for making this block are given on the following pages. If you make it in batiks or mottled fabric, it looks like a gemstone or stained glass.
**To Make One Block, Cut:**

- (1) 4½” Medium-Dark Square
- (1) 6” Medium Square
- (1) 6” Light Square
- (1) 4½” Medium Square
  
  Makes four

- (1) 3½” Dark Center Square
- (1) 2” x 9” Light-Medium Strip
- (1) 2” x 9” Light Strip
- (1) 2” x 15” Light Strip
  
  Makes four

To make this block you will need a Flying geese ruler from Quilt in a Day. (quiltinaday.com)

Use either the Small Geese (makes both 3” x 6” and 1½” x 3”) or the Mini Ruler Set (1½” x 3”).

### Making Corner Squares

1. With ¼” seam, sew 9” strips together.
2. Press seam to dark side.
3. Cut into four 2” sections.
4. Assembly-line sew sections onto 15” light strip.
5. Cut strips even with blocks.
6. Press seams to dark side.
Making Flying Geese

1. Follow directions included with the 1½” x 3” Finished Geese, and make 2 sets of flying geese.

2. Assembly-line sew.


4. Lay out block. Turn patches as illustrated. Note placement of seams.

5. Flip middle vertical row patches to patches on left.


7. Sew horizontal seams and press toward center.

Lay out patches for locking seams.