Benjamin Moore®

THE
COLOR
HANDBOOK

A Guide to Selecting Color

Using several shades of
one hue will unify a space
visually. A monochromatic
scheme is a good choice in
a room that's broken up
by shelving, trim, and doors.

BOOKCASE: Lucerne AF-530,
ADVANCE® Semi-Gloss
DOOR: Soot 2129-20, Aura®
Grand Entrance®, Satin
BACK OF SHELVES: Exhale
AF-515, Regal® Select, Matte

CHOOSING YOUR COLOR

Color really does make the room.
The perfect shade and finish can enlarge a
small space, bring in more light, or deliver
that kick of energy you need with your
morning coffee. But finding the right one?
Now that's another story.

Thankfully, a few guidelines can ease
the process. After all, you want to love the
colors you live with.

Nothing clears your head like an all-white room. A soothing palette of white, cream, and off-white creates a calm, airy backdrop and will highlight the play of light across every surface, making the space feel bigger and brighter.

Grayed-down pales often play well together. Here, a neutral gray alcove distinguishes itself against a pale blue room.

NEAR WALL: Palladian Blue HC-144, Natura®, Eggshell
ALCOVE: Sag Harbor Gray HC-95, Natura®, Eggshell
TRIM: Swiss Coffee OC-45, Natura®, Semi-Gloss

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO START?

Dividing colors into three simple categories—pales, neutrals, and deeps—is an easy way to make the magnificent spectrum a little more manageable.

PALES

LIGHT AND AIRY COMBINATIONS TO UPLIFT YOU

Ballet pink, dusty lavender, washed out blue—a gentle, pale palette is versatile and easy to live with. If a pale color starts to look too sugary sweet, just tone it down with a little gray.

NEUTRALS

NATURAL COMBINATIONS TO KEEP YOU GROUNDED

Slate, clay, sand, ochre—neutrals go far beyond gray and brown. These colors of the earth are real shape-shifters. To combine neutrals, look for its undertone—is it warm or cool—and keep its partner in the same family.

DEEPS

MYSTERIOUS COMBINATIONS TO INTRIGUE YOU

Violet, onyx, sapphire, ruby—these confident colors create instant character and dominate a room. They dissolve boundaries and edges, creating intimacy and the perception of depth.

Many neutrals have
a chameleon-like quality,
shifting in color slightly
with changing light,
making them a good choice
for kitchens and other
rooms used throughout
the day.

Spaces you use
occasionally, like a library
or powder room, can
provide the perfect
opportunity to go bold.

WALLS: Fernwood Green
2145-40, Regal® Select, Eggshell
DOORS: Witching Hour
2120-30, Aura® Grand Entrance®,
Satin CABINETS: Flora AF-470,
ADVANCE®, Satin

WALLS: Chambourd
AF-645, Aura®, Matte
MANTEL: Smoke Gray
2120-40, ADVANCE®,
Satin

THE THEATER OF LIGHT

OVERCAST DAYLIGHT

ARTIFICIAL LIGHT
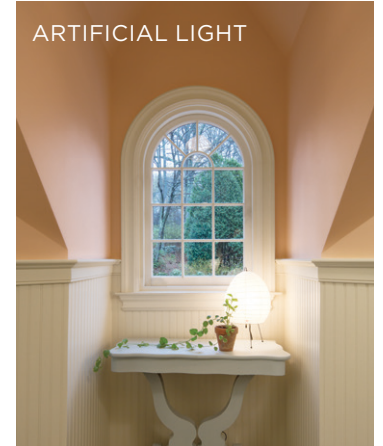
Color is site-specific. That's why you should always try out a shade in the space and view it at different times of the day before committing. A pale pink room will look gleaming in the direct sunlight of a south-facing room, and cooler and more muted in indirect northern light.

Time of day matters, too. Bright midday sun will wash out most pale hues (left) that will be flattered by softer, indirect illumination (above, left), while artificial light will add a warm glow to the wall color (above, right).

WALLS: Dream Whip 2174-60,
Regal® Select, Matte
WAINSCOTING: Mascarpone
AF-20, Regal® Select, Eggshell

SHEEN

Don't shy away from sheen—trust us, it can work magic on a room. Painting the walls with a gloss will add dimension and levity. Or try a semi-gloss on a low ceiling—it will move light around the space and create the illusion of height. Just remember: Shiny finishes look best on smooth, clean surfaces while matte or flat paints are the most forgiving of imperfections, so choose your surface wisely.

WALLS: Cloud White OC-130, Aura®, Semi-Gloss TRIM: Cloud White OC-130, ADVANCE®, High Gloss

A glossy finish lightens up a dark hue, multiplying the flicker and romance of candlelight or the glow of a street lamp outside the window.

WALLS AND TRIM: Newburyport Blue HC-155, Aura®, Semi-Gloss

To make a statement and draw the eye through the house, use a bold hue at one end of a room-to-room view.

ROOM THROUGH ROOM

LEFT WALL: Azores AF-495, ben®, Eggshell
MANTEL: Ashley Gray HC-87, ben®, Eggshell RIGHT WALL: Gloucester Sage HC-100, ben®, Eggshell

FAR WALL: Dinner Party AF-300, Regal® Select, Semi-Gloss
FAR DOORS: Dinner Party AF-300, Aura® Grand Entrance®, High Gloss
MID WALL, UPPER AREA: Onyx White OC-74, Regal® Select, Eggshell
LOWER AREA: Chantilly Lace OC-65, Regal® Select, Semi-Gloss
MID AND NEAR DOORS: Chantilly Lace OC-65, Aura® Grand Entrance®, Satin NEAR WALL: Mt. Rainier Gray 2129-60, Regal® Select, Eggshell

In an open-plan home, use different colors to define different spaces and highlight interesting architecture. But always keep the big picture in mind. The simplest way to keep things harmonious, is to combine shades of the same color—or similar tones—from room to room.

Switch things up by
pairing neutral walls
with a colored trim.
Or for an extra-crisp
effect, try jet-black.
The role reversal will
showcase a room's
unique architecture.

WALLS: Frostine AF-5,
Regal® Select, Eggshell
WAINSCOTING AND
TRIM: Frostine AF-5,
Regal® Select, Semi-Gloss
ACCENT TRIM: Black
Satin 2131-10, Regal®
Select, Semi-Gloss
DOOR: Frostine AF-5,
Aura® Grand Entrance®,
Satin

ROOM-DEFINING
TRIM

BASE MOLDING:
Green Grove 2138-20,
Regal® Select, Semi-
Gloss LOWER WALL:
Briarwood HC-175,
Regal® Select, Matte
UPPER WALL: Bleeker
Beige HC-80, Regal®
Select, Matte

Create architectural interest by painting
the walls with different shades of one color.
Keep the darker hue closer to the bottom
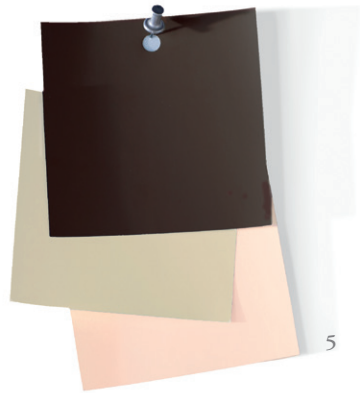for an ombre effect.

OUR
FAVORITE

COLOR COMBINATIONS

Coming up with the right color palette can be tough, so we've put together some tried-and-true trios that strike a chord. Try the top color on the walls, the middle shade on trim, door or ceiling, and the third hue as an accent in accessories, fabric or on painted furniture.

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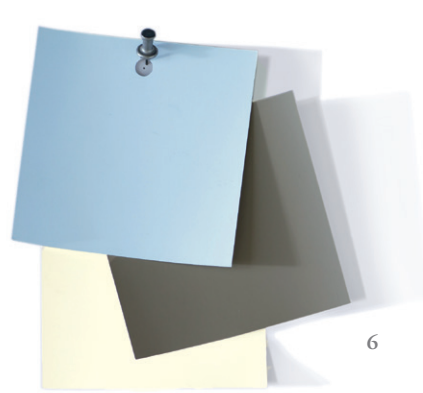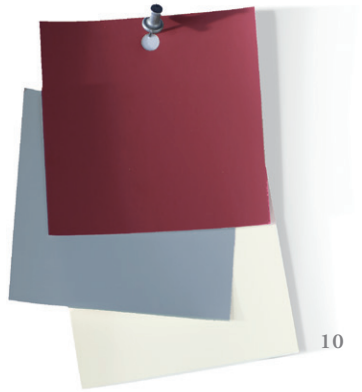2

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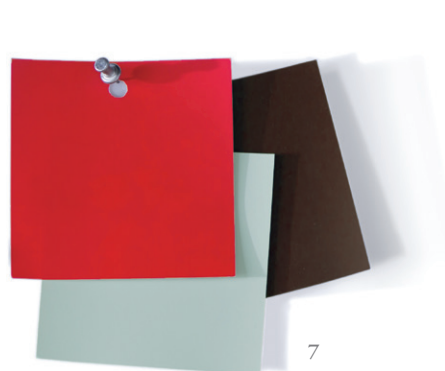
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1. MAIN COLOR:
Porcelain 2113-60
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Filtered Sunlight 2154-60
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Appalachian Brown 2115-10

2. MAIN COLOR:
Coral Essence 2007-40
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Old Navy 2063-10
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Fountain Spout 2059-70

3. MAIN COLOR:
Louisburg Green HC-113
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Lancaster Whitewash HC-174
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Tangy Orange 2014-30

4. MAIN COLOR:
Blue Angel 2058-70
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Arctic Blue 2050-60
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Sea Foam 2123-60

5. MAIN COLOR:
Mississippi Mud 2114-20
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Grant Beige HC-83
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Dream Whip 2174-60

6. MAIN COLOR:
Windmill Wings 2067-60
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Chelsea Gray HC-168
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Simply White OC-117

7. MAIN COLOR:
Million Dollar Red 2003-10
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Wedgewood Gray HC-146
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Bittersweet Chocolate 2114-10

8. MAIN COLOR:
Gray Owl 2137-60
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Pale Vista 2029-60
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Cedar Green 2034-40

9. MAIN COLOR:
Cinnamon Slate 2113-40
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Hibiscus 2027-50
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Dark Linen 2147-60

10. MAIN COLOR:
Cranberry Cocktail 2083-20
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Oxford Gray 2128-40
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Lily White 2128-70

11. MAIN COLOR:
Revere Pewter HC-172
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Straw 2154-50
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Amherst Gray HC-167

12. MAIN COLOR:
Montpelier AF-555
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Prescott Green HC-140
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Apricot Ice 2015-70

13. MAIN COLOR:
Bronze Tone 2166-30
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Mayonnaise 2152-70
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Soot 2129-20

14. MAIN COLOR:
Purple Lotus 2072-30
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Stuart Gold HC-10
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Witching Hour 2120-30

15. MAIN COLOR:
Cement Gray 2112-60
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Fruit Shake 2088-60
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Witching Hour 2120-30

16. MAIN COLOR:
Atmospheric AF-500
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Old Prairie 2143-50
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Beacon Hill Damask HC-2

17. MAIN COLOR:
Ebony Slate 2118-30
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Lavender Mist 2070-60
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Chantilly Lace OC-65

18. MAIN COLOR:
Teal Ocean 2049-30
1ST ACCENT COLOR:
Hawthorne Yellow HC-4
2ND ACCENT COLOR:
Simply White OC-117

COLOR BASICS

Primary Colors

Red, yellow, blue—these core colors form the spokes of the wheel, mixing and matching to create every other shade on the spectrum. Alone, they can be too strong to use. Take these super saturated hues down a notch with a hint of gray or white to make them more approachable.

Complementary Colors

Color pairings from opposite sides of the wheel have serious chemistry. Choose one shade for the walls and use a small amount of its complementary hue as an accent on trim, doors, or a piece of furniture. Like any great couple, they'll each play up the other's strengths.

Secondary and Tertiary Colors

The secondary and tertiary colors round out the color wheel with varying degrees of complexity. Orange, green and violet are secondary colors made by combining two primary hues, while tertiary colors are the middlemen between the primary and secondary colors. Together, the relationships on the color wheel offer endless options.

Take a moment to study the color wheel. The science is all in this circle—warm reds, yellows, and oranges congregate on one side while cool lavenders, blues, and greens are on the other. Creating a palette within one half of the wheel tends to be more harmonious. But pairing two colors that stand opposite one another can add a dash of invigorating tension. Which do you prefer?

TEST DRIVE YOUR COLOR

Before you commit, buy a pint sample so you can see how the color looks in the actual room. Paint a board, place in different parts of the room and watch how the color changes throughout the day. Does it grow bright and airy in the morning and then sepia-toned near dusk? Does it take on the tone of something out the window?

Live with it a little. This way, you can find the color that works for you, morning to night.