Colour: Teachers' notes and tips – upper intermediate

1 Pre-reading tasks

a Lead in. Write the following on the board: -blind, -fast, -ful, and tell students there is one word that goes in front of all three to make a compound adjective. Can they work out what it is? (*colour*)

b Ask students in pairs to go through the worksheet quiz slowly. Explain that the first colours are those made from pigment - what we use to paint or dye things. The second set are rainbow colours. Don't give any answers at this stage.

c Go through the ideas open class just to see how much they know (Newton is more famous for his *three laws of motion* but he also calculated the laws of light and drew the first colour wheel) but still offer no answers.

Tip: use fun tasks to create interest in the topic.
Have a look at http://www.caithness.org/links/colour.htm for some ideas connected to colour including 9interactive experiments and stuff for kids too.

2 First reading tasks

a Students read the first text and check their answers to questions 1 to 7. (Pigment: – going clockwise - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet/purple with black in the middle. Light: red, yellow, green, cyan, blue, magenta with white in the middle).

Tip: do an experiment in class
Place a large piece of red card with a dot in the middle on the board. Ask a student to stand near and stare at the dot for 30 seconds, and then look at the whiteboard for 30 seconds. The colour they will see is pale blue/ green – a pale version of cyan.

b Students read the text again and then draw both experiments: the prisms and the leaf demonstration. Then ask one student to do it on the board with the class helping. Make sure the violet is bending more than the red!

Tip: consider using non-linguistic responses to a reading
The experiments are very visual; if the students can draw them this is an appropriate comprehension task.

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c Ask students to tell each other what their favourite colour is, and then open class feedback: how many have the same colour? For the same reasons?

3 Second reading tasks

Tip: make sure they read the whole text

As soon as students start shouting out 'orange' tell them that it's *not* orange and make them carry on reading. Only when they've all finished and insist it's orange do you agree!

a Students individually read quickly to identify the colour: *orange.*

b Next refer to the questions on the worksheet, students now work in pairs. As always don't let them worry about unknown vocabulary at this stage, there are plenty of words they do know. Feedback.

4 Post-reading tasks

a In pairs students choose one colour. (Or you could put the names of colours in a hat and get them to pick one out so they're all working on something different – but not orange of course) Give them time to brainstorm as many things as possible that occur in that colour. Refer to the examples in the text: food, animals, precious stones, flowers etc.

b After a set period of time ask students to tell you (without looking) what the first sentences were for the main paragraphs for *orange*. Board:

- I'm a wild colour
- I'm also a warm colour
- But above all I'm an exotic, tropical colour

Delete the words *wild, warm* and *exotic, tropical*. Ask students to look at their list and to group them appropriately. They then change the sentences above to go with their colour.

Tip: make sure there are lots of opportunities for speaking too

Now that they have their lists students can spend time discussing the qualities of their colour and how to best describe them. If they're enjoying this stage don't rush them.

c In pairs students now write a *What colour am I?* text in three paragraphs. It should end with the question.

d When finished they swap these with another pair, can they identify the colour? And do they agree with the opinion of the writers?

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Tip: concentrate on the vocabulary and not the grammar

It's good to let students focus only on vocabulary for a change. Just refer to how the sentences start *I'm…I can be seen in…*which they can copy if they want.

You'll probably need bilingual dictionaries for this.

Extra tasks: if you can get your hands on a colour paint chart similar to those for decorating a house that would be great – there are some interesting names for colours, perhaps do a matching colours and name task and then get them to come up with their own names.

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