

Colour and décor (Upper Intermediate – Teacher's notes)

1

Put the students in pairs to decide which colours the words in the lists are similar in meaning to.

Answers

- a. red
- b. green
- c. white
- d. black
- e. brown
- f. yellow

Answer the questions as a class.

Answers

Which words describe precious stones? ruby, emerald, pearl, jet

Which describe things you eat and drink? ginger, olive, lime, coffee, butter, lemon

Which of the colours above would you collocate with the words below?

Cheeks: ruddy, crimson, pale

Hair: ginger, brunette, sandy

Lips: scarlet, ruddy, ruby, crimson, pale

Skin: marble, pale, sun-tanned

Uniform: scarlet, khaki

2

Ask the students to match the colour to the emotion or state. Then ask them to rewrite the phrases using an idiomatic phrase.

Answers

- a. Blue I'm feeling a bit blue at the moment.
- b. Red I saw red!
- c. Green I'm green with envy!
- d. Yellow He's yellow – scared of everything.
- e. Pink The children looked in the pink.
- f. White He went/turned white.

3

Ask the students to complete the phrases with the words *black* or *white*.

Answers

a black look

a white lie

white hot

a black eye

the black market

the black sheep of the family

a white wedding

white wine

Then ask the students to complete the sentences with the phrases.

Answers

- a. In this country, you can't buy such things legally. You'll have to get them on **the black market**.
- b. I must have said something stupid. My girlfriend gave me **a black look**.
- c. Don't touch it. You'll burn your hand badly. It's **white hot**.
- d. 'What would you like to drink?' '**White wine**, please.'
- e. He punched me in the face and gave me **a black eye**.
- f. I couldn't tell her the truth. She would have been very upset. So I told her **a white lie**.
- g. His brothers and sisters are doctors, teachers and lawyers, but he's been in and out of prison all his life, and has never had a job. He's **the black sheep of the family**.
- h. I'd like the dress, bridesmaids, everything traditional when I get married. I'd like **a white wedding**.

4

Ask the students to complete the gaps.

Answers

- a. He went as white as a sheet. He was so scared.
- b. It was as black as pitch. It was so dark.
- c. He went as red as a beetroot. He was so embarrassed.
- d. It only happens once in a blue moon. In other words, almost never.

5

Ask the students to read the passage, and choose the best word in each case.

Answers (underlined)

Decorating a new flat

I've decided to redecorate my flat. I love wonderful vibrant/lurid colours so I'm going to paint/dye the living room a brilliant/subtle red colour. I've bought a new hall carpet, which is green with a hint of blue/with a bluish tint, and I'm going to give the hallway a new coat/level of paint to match. I've decided to paint the bedrooms white with a splash/riot of colour provided by red and blue cushions and throws – nothing too dramatic, though. I think colours in bedrooms should be restful/vivid.

6

Ask the students to imagine that they are going to redecorate their bedroom. Give them a few minutes to think about the questions, then get them to interview their partner.

7

Ask the students to write a description of their favourite room. You could set this for homework.

Using the Macmillan English Advanced Learner's Dictionary and CD ROM

If your students have access to the Macmillan English Advanced Learner's Dictionary and CD rom, set them the following quiz. They can find all the answers by finding the key word *colour*, and following the various links. If they don't have the dictionary let them try with the Internet or any other reference materials you can use.

Colour Dictionary Quiz

- 1 What are you if you are *off-colour*?
- 2 What's the difference between a *deep* colour and a *sombre* colour?
- 3 What sort of things do children *colour in*?
- 4 What does it mean if you want to *see the colour of someone's money*?
- 5 What are the *primary colours*?
- 6 If you like *local colour* on holiday, what are you looking for?
- 7 What is *colourful language*?
- 8 What is a *colourless person* like?
- 9 What's the difference between *shade* and *tone*?
- 10 What is a *colour supplement*?
- 11 Which of the following is positive: *gaudy*, *vibrant*, *garish*?