

1 Match the words

Match the colours with the natural things they describe. There may be more than one colour per item, or vice versa:

bright red	tree
deep blue	leaf
dark brown	hair
bright yellow	sky
pale blue	sea
dark green	flowers
light green	eyes
	sun
	lips

2 Fill the gaps

What's the missing colour in each sentence? What are they describing?

- Stop when it's red, then wait for amber, then _____.
- You can get a colour one or a black and _____ one.
- Well, the French one, like the American one, is red, white and _____, but the Italian one is red, white and _____.
- I've always liked Simply _____, Deep _____ and _____ Floyd. And of course the Beatles, especially _____ Submarine.
- You can buy red ones, green ones, _____ ones, and even orange ones in the supermarket, and they taste great in casseroles, some pasta dishes, and ratatouille.
- In professional matches, if you commit a bad foul, you are shown a _____ card. Two bad fouls, and you're shown a _____ card and sent off.
- Red, orange, yellow, green, _____, indigo, violet.

3 Question time!

Answer the questions about you, (without checking). When you have finished, interview your partner, and ask them the same questions:

What's your favourite colour?

What colour are your eyes?

What colour is your hair?

What colour are your socks?

What colour is your bedroom carpet?

What colour is your kitchen wall?

What colour are your husband's/wife's/boyfriend's/girlfriend's/teacher's eyes?

4 Guess the colour

Read the descriptions and decide which colours they are describing:

- In advertising, they use this colour to catch people's attention. If somebody's face is this colour, then they are angry, embarrassed or possibly exhausted. People with this hair colour are considered fiery and emotional. It often means danger or a warning. We use it to tell people to stop or watch out.
- It's the colour of a cloudy, rainy day, the colour of an industrial town, the colour of a boring life. It's a sad colour. It makes you feel miserable and depressed.
- It's a feminine colour. Little girls are often dressed in this colour, and the walls of their bedroom are painted this colour. It's also a healthy colour. People from cold countries go this colour on the first day of their summer holidays.
- It's a clean, calm, natural colour. It can be deep and rich, suggesting wealth, heat and sensuality. Or it can be light, pure and bright. People often paint their kitchens and bathrooms this colour because it makes them feel bright and clean. It is also the colour of cowardice in some cultures.

Write a short description to describe either green or blue. What does blue (or green) mean to you?

5 Idiom and colour

In English, there are many idiomatic phrases associated with colours. Match the phrases in *italics* with their definitions below:

- Nowadays, students are often *in the red*. They have to borrow a lot of money from the bank.
- Paul has been *feeling blue* since his girlfriend left him. We should invite him out.
- You're going to the Caribbean on your holiday for three weeks. You're so lucky. I'm *green with envy*.
- After the accident, Joanne was *black and blue* all over. She looked awful.
- Read it! There it is *in black and white*. It says here, in the newspaper, that your brother is in prison.
- He just appeared *out of the blue*. We don't know where he came from.
- Well, Frank just *saw red*. He got up and started shouting at the top of his voice.

Sad/depressed
Suddenly get very angry
Very clear – you can't doubt it
Unexpectedly

Covered in bruises/badly hurt
Owe money to the bank
Jealous

6 Group planning

Work in groups. Redesign the classroom. It needs a bit of colour. Present your ideas to the rest of the class, and agree on a new colour and design for the room.

- What colour will you paint the walls? Why?
- Will you have a whiteboard or a blackboard?
- What colourful things will you introduce to the classroom to make it brighter or more interesting?
- What about the colour, style and comfort of the tables and chairs?
- What about the floor?
- What about the carpet?
- What about the teacher? How can you make the teacher more colourful?

Teacher's notes – Colour (Pre-intermediate)

At this level it is a good idea to find visuals to help teach these words. You could bring in some cards showing lots of different colours.

Elicit the colours from the students.

- 1 Put the students in pairs to match the colours with the natural things they describe.

Answers:

tree: dark brown **leaf:** light/dark green **hair:** dark brown **sky:** pale blue **sea:** deep/pale blue
flowers: bright red/deep blue/bright yellow/pale blue **eyes:** dark green/deep blue/light green/dark brown/pale blue **sun:** bright yellow **lips:** bright red **bananas:** bright yellow/light green

- 2 Put the students in pairs to find the missing colour in each sentence, and decide what they are describing.

Answers:

- a. Stop when it's red, then wait for amber, then green. **Traffic lights**
b. You can get a colour one or a black and white one. **TV**
c. Well, the French one, like the American one, is red, white and blue, but the Italian one is red, white and green. **National flags**
d. I've always like Simply Red, Deep Purple and Pink Floyd. And of course the Beatles, especially Yellow Submarine. **Pop bands and songs**
e. You can buy red ones, green ones, yellow ones, and even orange ones in the supermarket, and they taste great in casseroles, some pasta dishes, and ratatouille. **Peppers**
f. In professional matches, if you commit a bad foul, you are shown a yellow card. Two bad fouls, and you're shown a red card and sent off. **Football**
g. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. **Rainbow**

- 3 Ask the students to think of their own answers then interview their partner, using the same questions.

- 4 Ask the students to read the descriptions and decide which colours they are describing.

Answers:

- a. red b. grey c. pink d. yellow

Ask the students to write a short description to describe either *green* or *blue*. This could be set for homework.

- 5 Put the students in pairs to match the phrases in italics with their definitions:

Answers:

- a. *in the red* - owe money to the bank b. *feeling blue* - sad/depressed
c. *green with envy* - jealous d. *black and blue* covered in bruises/badly hurt
e. *in black and white* - very clear – you can't doubt it
f. *out of the blue* - unexpectedly g. *saw red* - suddenly get very angry

- 6 Ask the students to work in groups to re design the classroom. Give them a few minutes to answer the questions and think of ideas, then ask one student from each group to present their ideas to the rest of the class. Ask the class to agree on a new colour scheme and design for the room.

You might like to extend this activity by giving students some large sheets of paper and getting them to do a complete re design. Ask them to create the perfect language learning environment.