



# How Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Colours Work Together

KS3 Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

## What Are Primary Colours?

**Primary colours** are the three colours that cannot be made by mixing any other colours together. They are **red**, **yellow**, and **blue**. Think of them as the building blocks of all other colours.

Think of it like the three basic ingredients in cooking—flour, sugar, and butter. You can use just these three to make many different recipes, but you can't make them from anything else.

## Creating Secondary Colours

When you mix two **primary colours** together, you create a **secondary colour**. There are three secondary colours:

**Red + Yellow = Orange**

**Yellow + Blue = Green**

**Red + Blue = Purple**

Secondary colours sit between the primary colours on the **colour wheel**, which is a circular tool artists use to understand how colours relate to each other.

Think of it like mixing ice creams—if you combine vanilla and strawberry, you get strawberry swirl, which is completely different from both flavours alone.

## Understanding Tertiary Colours

**Tertiary colours** are made by mixing a **primary colour** with a **secondary colour**. This creates colours like **red-orange**, **yellow-orange**, **yellow-green**, **blue-green**, **blue-purple**, and **red-purple**. These are much more specific and subtle than primary or secondary colours.

Think of it like creating a playlist—first you pick your favourite songs (primary), then you mix in some popular ones too (secondary), then you add rare or unusual tracks for

variety (tertiary).

## How They Work Together

The **colour wheel** shows how all three types of colours work together in harmony.

**Complementary colours** sit opposite each other on the wheel—like red and green, or yellow and purple—and they make each other look brighter when placed side by side.

Artists use primary, secondary, and tertiary colours to create **colour harmony**, which means choosing colours that work well together to create a pleasing effect.

Understanding these colour relationships helps artists, designers, and anyone creating visual work make better choices about which colours to use.

Whether you're painting, drawing, or even choosing clothes, knowing how these colours mix and relate to each other helps you create combinations that look amazing!