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Color for your Clothes

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Color For Your Clothes

Gerda Petersen

Color speaks more loudly than words. According to psychologists, we remember colors we see better than words we hear. Color can be the most important factor in dress because it attracts or repels before cut, line or fabric are noticed.

One mark of the woman of taste and personal distinction is the colors she chooses and wears.

People go through different stages of color appreciation. A little girl soon shows preference for certain dresses. Usually these are of bright colors. As she grows and matures her interest, ability and environment will affect her development of color taste.

The problem of every woman is to choose colors that will flatter as much as possible, that will play up her best features and minimize the less attractive ones, that will give her spirits a lift, and that will create pleasure and harmony for others.

The selection of colors depends on several factors:

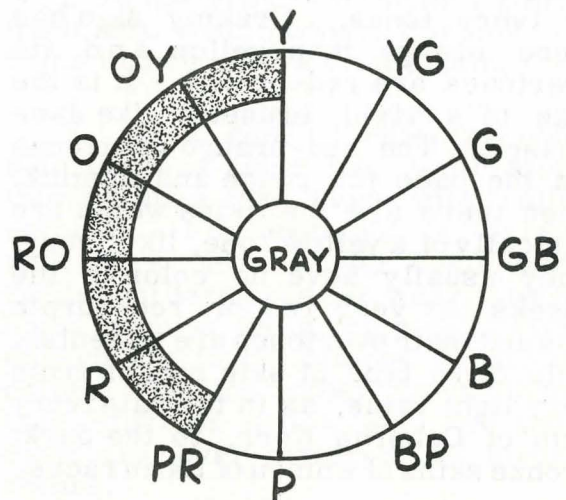
1. The individual
 - a. Her coloring
 - b. Her age
 - c. Her size
 - d. Her personality
2. The kind of light under which it will be worn.
3. The texture of the fabric.
4. The occasion for which the color is chosen.

Coloring Of The Individual

When you are choosing becoming colors consider, first, the coloring in your skin, hair and eyes. Remove all cosmetics and study your coloring in a mirror. Think of the color wheel. Where do you place yourself on the color wheel? Is your coloring warm or cool? The following paragraphs may help you decide:

Skin Coloring

The colors usually found in various skins are neutralized tints or shades of orange, yellow--orange, red-orange, orange-yellow, yellow, orange-red and red-purple.



As you look at the skins of various people you will notice that some are dark and some are light, others are vivid or pale. Some have more red in their complexions while others have more yellow.

All skin colors are warm but some are warmed or cooler than others. The overtones (colors found in cheeks, lips and eye shadows) help to classify skins as warm or cool.

Grace Margaret Morton, in her book "The Arts of Costume and Personal Appearance", gives the following information on skin color:

"Those, whose skins tend to be very light and cool, are called fair to distinguish them from dark or creamy or ivory skins. A fair skin has a basis of orange-yellow; in the cheeks and lips are overtones of red-violet or violet-red; and there are also blue shadows which occur about the nose and under the eyes. It is the blue and red-violet overtones which give fair skin its coolness and determine to a great extent the hues of rouge and lipstick usually most effective.

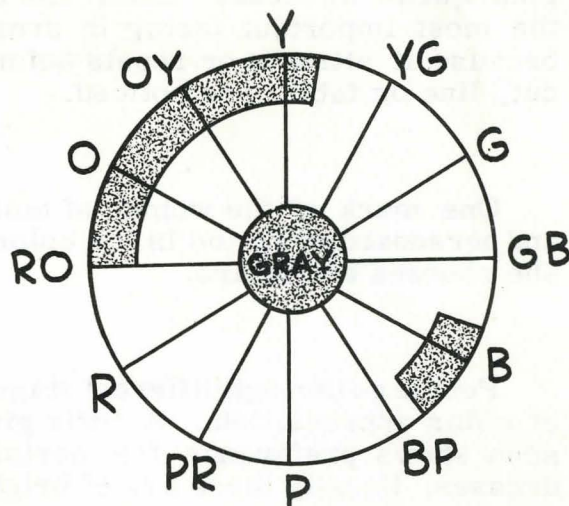
"The skin tones of the warm types have either a creamy or an ivory cast, ranging from very dark, rich, and swarthy, to light creamy or ivory tones. Creamy skin has more orange than yellow and its overtones are red-orange. It is the skin of a vivid brunette like Jane Russell. The red-orange overtones set the pace for rouge and lipstick. Then there are the skins which are basically of a yellow tone, like ivory. They usually have no color in the cheeks but very red or red-purple lips and their overtones are greenish. This olive type of skin ranges from very light value, as in the pale ivory skin of Deborah Kerr, to the dark, bronze skins of women of Latin races.

"The skin tones of auburn-haired types are yellow-orange, ranging from light creamy tones to darker, richer ones. The overtones are usually red-orange. Purple-red overtones in this type give what we

call a florid skin, which presents difficulties in selecting becoming colors"

Hair Coloring

Hair coloring may also be classed as warm or cool.



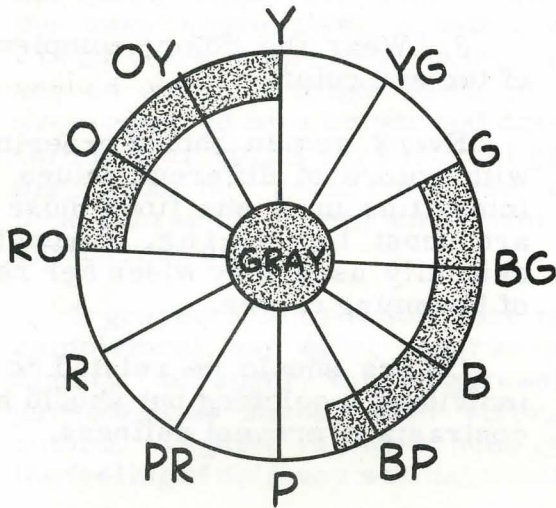
Blue-black hair and gray hair are considered cool.

Blondes are placed in the yellow-orange to yellow area. If the yellow color is so neutralized with blues that it almost has a grayish cast we say it is a cool coloring. This grouping includes the light and dark blonde (ash).

When the yellow-orange is less neutralized we have a golden blonde. Her hair color is warmer than the ash blonde. Light red, sometimes termed "light carrot" in common terminology combines blonde and red characteristics, and is a very warm color. Medium red to auburn hair contain more red and are a darker shade. Brown hair may vary from yellow-orange to red-orange, which is greatly neutralized, and is found in both light and dark shades. Brown hair is usually considered warm.

Eye Coloring

Eyes are generally various values of blue, blue-green, green, blue-purple or brown (a dark neutralized shade of yellow, orange, or red-orange).



Gray, blue, green and blue-violet eyes are considered cool. Brown eyes are warm. Hazel eyes (eyes where blue or green and brown are combined) may be either warm or cool, depending on the amount of blue or green in relation to the amount of brown.

Each person is different. In the U. S. we have persons who have some of the characteristics of the cool coloring of the Scandinavians blended with the warm coloring of the Latin people. Many are not definitely blonde or brunette but may have interesting characteristics of both as, a blonde with brown eyes. Therefore, it is not possible to prescribe colors for any definite type, as blonde, because there is no definite type.

After considering skin, hair and eyes it is generally possible to class most people as warm or cool types. If you are a warm type your best colors will be warm colors, if you are a cool type your best colors will be the cool ones.

Effect of Colors on Skin, Hair, Eyes

Since the head and face of the individual should be the center of interest, it becomes necessary to study the way colors affect the appearance of skin, hair and eyes.

Colors should be chosen first, to enhance the skin because the appearance of a glowing healthful skin is most necessary to a pleasing attractive appearance.

While experimenting with the effects of color on the skin we find:

1. Intense colors reflect on the skin; some in a becoming way, others unpleasantly. Intense blue and purple increases pallor, while red (if not too harsh) reflects a rosy glow which makes it becoming to a pale individual. Brilliant yellows and yellow-greens reflect yellow on the skin, which increases the appearance of sallowness.

2. Brilliant hues induce the appearance of their complement on the skin. Bright green will make a florid (red) skin seem redder. Purples and blues induce yellow on the skin.

3. As a general rule, persons with decided color may wear more intense hues than those with pallid coloring. For example, a person with dark hair, ruddy complexion and bright dark eyes can wear intense hues because their coloring is vivid enough not to be outdone by strong colors. On the other hand blonde hair, light or sallow skin and light eyes are over-powered by strong colors.

4. Unrelieved neutrals tend to dull any skin tone but can be successfully worn when relieved by an accent of some color, as in a scarf or necklace, at the throat. Stark white emphasizes sallow skins. Warm white is generally more flattering.

5. Colors that are warm enough to be harmonious with the skin, yet different enough in hue, intensity and value to give interest and variety, are usually becoming to sallow skins.

6. Warm colors that are grayed and dark, are usually becoming to florid skins.

If you wish to play up the color of hair:

1. Choose hues that contrast in value and in intensity with the hair.

2. Repeat the color of the hair in small amounts in the costume.

3. Choose a color complement of the hair.

The individual, whose hair is a mixture of dark and gray should avoid fabrics of black and white mixtures, as tweed, unless a solid color is worn near the face. She should also avoid colors that give the hair an unpleasant greenish cast. Browns, tans and yellow-greens may not be attractive with this changing type of hair.

Soft grayed colors of darker values will probably be most becoming, as well as soft, warm colors in medium values.

If the hair that is turning gray has a brownish cast, the colors that were becoming before the change will probably still be the best, but they should be less intense. Choose the colors that complement the skin and eyes.

When the hair has become white a wider range of colors will probably be becoming. The wise woman will capitalize on the air of distinction and sophistication, that white hair gives her, by choosing colors to accent it.

If the color of the eyes is to be emphasized:

1. Wear large amounts of a color

in the same hue as the eyes but in a darker and duller shade.

2. Repeat the color of the eyes in small amounts on the costume.

3. Wear the color complement of the eye color.

Every woman should experiment with colors of different values and intensities until she finds those that are most becoming. Cosmetics, skillfully used may widen her range of becoming colors.

Colors should be related to the individual's coloring but should have contrasts to prevent dullness.

The Age Of The Individual

As a woman grows older, her hair and complexion change. She may find that the bright colors that now seem overly intense and even harsh. Bright colors and clear pastels are for young girls with fresh, clear skins. Softer and duller colors will be more becoming to older women. They harmonize with the softening effect of graying hair and character lines in the face.

The Size Of The Individual

Colors may make a woman's figure appear larger or smaller. Bright and light colors increase the apparent size of the figure. Colors of medium value blend with the background and are, therefore, most suitable to the larger or stouter figure. Cool and dark colors are slenderizing but very dark colors and especially black, call attention to the silhouette and may emphasize figure defects, such as very broad hips.

The Personality Of The Individual

Colors should enhance a personality and not over-shadow it.

Personalities may range from the quiet, reserved, gentle type to the very aggressive, dynamic and vivacious type. A quiet, reserved woman might seem to be over-powered by a bright red dress. On the other hand a very neutral gray may make her seem colorless, and lack character unless an accent of contrast is used.

A grayed blue or a soft rose may complement her quiet reserve and dignity. Stronger, more aggressive personalities should wear stronger colors. Lighter values of hues give the feeling of delicacy and daintiness.

The Effect Of Light

Natural and artificial light, whether incandescent or fluorescent, can give a different quality to color. Some colors may appear soft under artificial lights, while in sunlight they may appear too bright and harsh. Colors will need to be chosen with consideration for the effect of light.

Effect Of Texture

The same color may appear harsh in a shiny texture as satin yet appear soft in a dull texture as wool. Fabrics with a shiny surface will emphasize flaws in the skin, while a dull-surfaced fabric will usually make the skin look clearer. Shiny textures call attention to the size of the figure.

Colors For The Occasion

A specific occasion often determines the intensity or value of a chosen color. Bright, gay colors are often chosen for sportswear and evening gowns, while quieter, darker colors may be chosen for street and business wear.

Planning Colors For Your Wardrobe

The economical plan, in choosing colors for your wardrobe, is to begin with a basic color. The most general basic colors are: beige, brown, gray, black and navy blue. These colors can be worn year after year without becoming monotonous.

A choice of color for a coat comes first, because this is usually an expensive item and will be worn for a longer period of time.

Colors for dresses may vary in hue, value and intensity from the coat but they should harmonize.

Accessories might be high style and chosen in brighter, but still harmonious colors.

When adding new clothes to your wardrobe, choose colors that will harmonize with those that you already have. Consider, also, that light colored fabrics require frequent cleaning. Bright colors and conspicuous printed designs may become tiresome.

Each season fashion designers emphasize different colors. The color in current fashion may not be becoming to you. However, the color might be used as an accessory and combined with some shade that is becoming to you.

Bright colors or bold contrasts may emphasize your good points. For example, red shoes may call attention to slim ankles and small feet. A bright flower at the waistline may accent a tiny waist.

When combining colors in your costume remember the "Suggestions for Making Color Combinations" given in E. C. 56-1115 "Concerning Color".

Well planned color combinations bring great satisfaction to the wearer as well as pleasure to others.

WORK SHEET FOR SELECTING MY BECOMING COLORS

1. Skin Coloring:

<u>Hue</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Texture</u>
a. sallow (yellow) _____	a. light _____	a. clear _____
b. tends toward yellow _____	b. medium _____	b. freckles _____
c. medium _____	c. dark _____	c. blemishes _____
d. tends toward red _____		d. lines _____
e. florid (red) _____		

2. Hair Coloring:

(name the hue) _____

- a. light _____
- b. medium _____
- c. dark _____
- d. golden _____

3. Eye Coloring:

(name the hue) _____

- a. light _____
- b. medium _____
- d. dark _____

4. Age:

- a. Youth (up to 25) _____
- b. Young adult (25 to 40) _____
- c. Middle age (40 to 60) _____
- d. Older adult (over 60) _____

5. Size:

- a. petite _____
- b. average _____
- c. tall & slender _____

- d. short & stocky _____
- e. tall & heavy _____
- f. other _____

(describe)

6. Personality:

- a. quiet & reserved _____
- b. dignified _____
- c. feminine _____
- d. tends toward masculine _____

- e. sophisticated _____
- f. forceful _____
- g. vivacious _____
- h. other _____

(describe)

- 7. Warm colors _____) will generally be
- Cool colors _____) most becoming

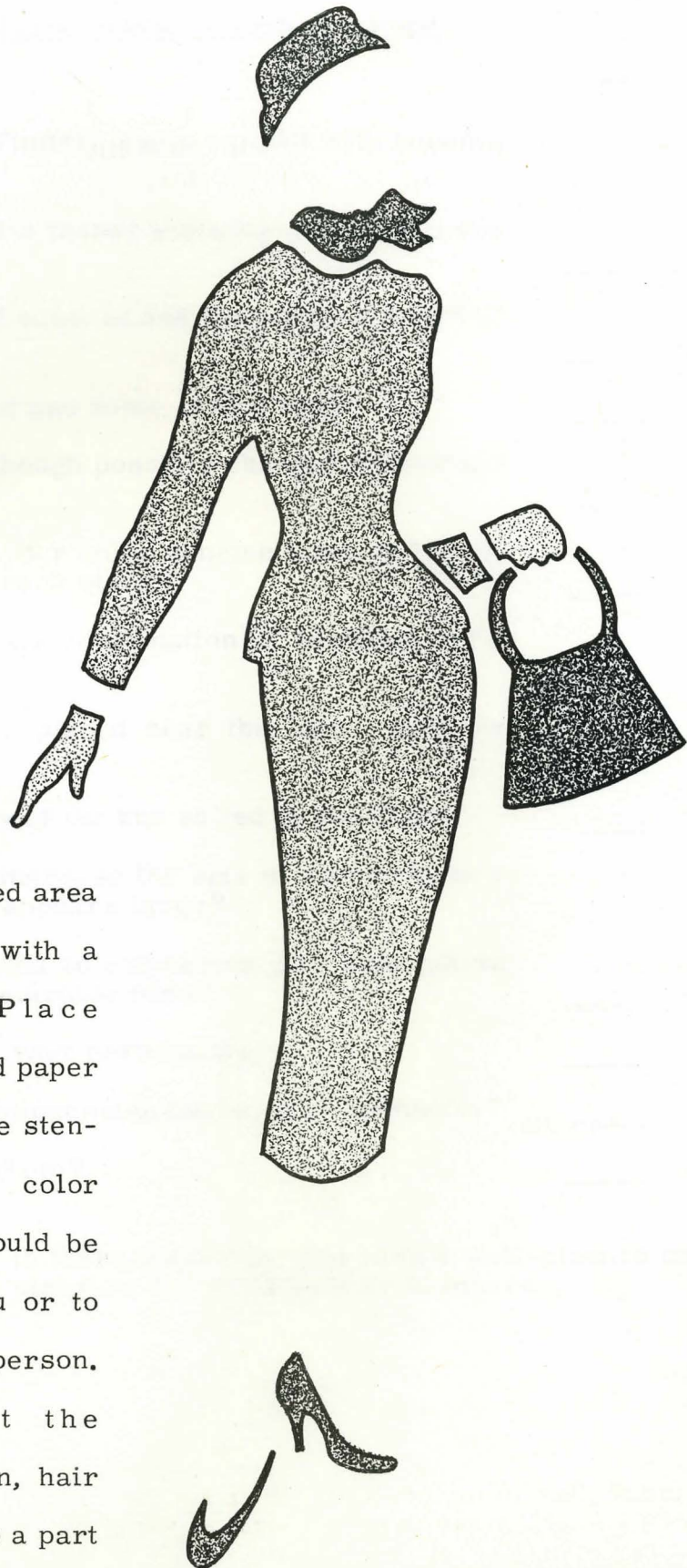
Becoming colors for large areas as coats, dresses, suits, (select several that may be used interchangeably).

Becoming colors for small areas as blouses, hats, etc.

Very small accent areas as flowers, jewelry, etc. _____

Basic color plan in my present wardrobe. _____

Additions I might make to my present color plan. _____



Cut out the shaded area of this stencil with a razor blade. Place pieces of colored paper or cloth under the stencil to make a color scheme that would be becoming to you or to some definite person. Remember that the color of the skin, hair and eyes is also a part of the color scheme.



CHECK YOUR COLOR SCHEME

	Yes	No
1. Is your color scheme definitely warm or cool with accents of the other?	_____	_____
2. Is one main color used with lesser amounts of one or more other colors?	_____	_____
3. Are the largest areas of subdued and the smaller areas of brighter colors?	_____	_____
4. Have you used some light and some dark colors?	_____	_____
5. Have you used a color (although possibly changed somewhat) in more than one place?	_____	_____
6. Do all the colors used in your color scheme seem to belong together and to enhance each other?	_____	_____
7. Do you have a harmonious combination of textures and pattern?	_____	_____
8. Do the colors which are placed near the face, enhance your coloring?	_____	_____
9. Is the value and intensity of the hue suited to your age?	_____	_____
10. Does the color seem to increase the size of your body to a point where your figure appears large?	_____	_____
11. Are the colors distributed to emphasize your good points and minimize the less desirable ones?	_____	_____
12. Are the colors suited to your personality?	_____	_____
13. Are the colors suited to the occasion and to your community?	_____	_____
14. Will you enjoy wearing them?	_____	_____

If you can answer "yes" to these questions, you have a well-planned color scheme that should give pleasure to you as well as to others.