

Books About Colors and Design

Baker, A. (1994). *White Rabbit's color book*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

White Rabbit discovers three pots of paint – the three primary colors. He hops in the paints and learns to make the secondary colors.

Brown, M. W. (1986). *The color kittens*. New York: Random House.

In this classic, gentle story, two kittens want to make green, since nearly every place they like to go was green. But they only have red, yellow, and blue paint. As they mix the colors, they learn to make the secondary colors, including green, that they use to color their world.

Ehlert, L. (1988). *Planting a rainbow*. New York: Harcourt, Inc.

Ehlert uses simple shapes and bold, basic colors to introduce readers to all the colors of plants in a garden. Using labels, Ehlert also introduces readers to the various names of garden plants. Her pictures show readers which plants grow from bulbs or seeds, how they grow, and which parts of plants we eat.

Ehlert, L. (1989). *Color zoo*. New York: HarperCollins.

Ehlert, L. (1990). *Color farm*. New York: HarperCollins.

In these two books Ehlert layers basic shapes, such as ovals, circles, squares, triangles, and hearts, to make the faces of zoo and farm animals. She uses saturated monochromatic backgrounds that vividly complement the faces. Thus, both books offer outstanding features of design.

Gill, B. (2008). *What colour is your world?* New York: Phaidon.

Gill uses simple line drawings and basic colors to show how various people such as gardeners, ranchers, or bricklayers see the world. He then contrasts their monochromatic visions with the creative, multicolored visions of painters.

Gonyea, M. (2005). *A book about design: Complicated doesn't make it good*. New York: Henry Holt.

Gonyea, M. (2007). *Another book about design: Complicated doesn't make it bad*. New York: Henry Holt.

Gonyea, M. (2010). *A book about color: A clear and simple guide for young artists*. New York: Henry Holt.

These three books by Mark Gonyea teach readers all the important elements of design and use of colors, using simple, kid-friendly prose that make complex ideas easy to understand. A Book About Color introduces primary and secondary colors and includes an explanation of the color wheel.

Harris, N. E. (2008). *Comparing colors*. Chicago, IL: Heinemann-Raintree.

In this non-fiction text, Harris uses real photographs to show the diverse colors of nature.

Jonas, A. (1989). *Color Dance*. New York: HarperCollins.

Three young dancers dance with primary colors. As they leap and twirl and run across the page, their colors combine to create the primary colors. By viewing the dance, readers also discover color combinations.

Kalman, B. (2008). *What color is it?* New York: Crabtree.

Kalman uses beautiful photographs to reveal the magical colors of wildlife. The last pages of the book invites readers to explore mixing primary colors to make secondary colors.

Milich, Z. (2004). *City colors*. Toronto, Canada: Kids Can Press.

Milich uses photographs to show the many bold and striking colors in any urban landscape. The book helps readers to pay attention to their urban surroundings.

Walsh, E. S. (1995). *Mouse paint*. New York: Red Wagon Books.

This is a delightful story of three mice on a white piece of paper, so they are camouflaged from the cat. One day, they discover mouse paint. By following the story, readers also learn the mixing of primary colors to make secondary colors. Primary grade students might enjoy viewing YouTube videos of the book. www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeNxIHdqhHA or www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWvngxY83Y8, among others.