Basic Colour Theory
Colour Schemes
Hints and Tips

For more information visit
www.promarker.info
Introduction to ProMarkers...

The Anatomy of a ProMarker

- **Cap**: Click-fit caps at either end
- **Fine Nib**: For detailed work
- **Barrel**: Contains alcohol based, dye ink
- **Colour Name**: 148 individual colours
- **Reference colour position**
- **Broad Nib**: For large area fills and controlled line widths

Alcohol based ProMarkers have a range of unique qualities, which separate them from other colouring mediums

Alcohol based ink is translucent, and so going over the same spot with a single marker colour will darken the area, giving a deeper shade with each subsequent layer of ink. By overlaying two different colours you can create a third new colour. These qualities allow you to produce gradients between different colours, and easily add shading and highlighting to your images.

You can experiment with mixing colours on a sheet of acetate, or creating a smooth blend between colours by touching the tips of two different coloured markers before applying to your page.

ProMarker ink is a solution made from alcohol and dye ink. The alcohol floats the dye ink onto the art surface, and then evaporates as it dries, leaving flat colour and a smooth, streak free finish.

Because alcohol based inks blend so well, it’s important to remember they may smudge or smear when used with other solvent based inks. For best results, use water based pens such as Letraset Fine Liners for your linework. If you are using ProMarkers for rubber-stamping, then be sure to use a water-based ink pad.

You can use ProMarker inks on a diverse range of materials, including paper, card, acetate, glass, plastic, wood etc. Bear in mind that each material and surface will make colours appear slightly differently, so always make sure to test your colours on a scrap first.
Basic Colour Theory...

Setting the Tone

Used effectively, colours can be the most powerful weapon in your design toolbox. Choosing the right colour scheme can attract attention, affect moods and reflect traits in personality.

Various studies have shown that colours can affect us, both physically and mentally. A strong red can raise the blood pressure, a bright yellow can induce fear and anxiety, and a soft blue can have a calming effect and increase concentration.

Understanding colours and their relationship to each other will take your designs to the next level, and help you to create spectacular results.

The Colour Wheel

In the late 1660s, Sir Issac Newton designed the first circular colour diagram, which would become the basic model for many subsequent colour systems.

Today, the colour wheel is still the artist’s most important tool for choosing and combining colours.

The most common modern version of the colour wheel is made up of 12 colours, and is based on the RYB (or artistic) colour model. Using the colour wheel ensures that virtually any colours you pick from it will look good together.

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Colours

In the RYB colour model, the primary colours are red, yellow and blue.

Three secondary colours (green, orange and purple) are created by mixing two primary colours.

Six tertiary colours are created by mixing primary and secondary colours.
Basic Colour Theory... continued

Warm and Cool Colours

The colour circle can be split into two sections of warm and cool colours. Warm colours are vivid and energetic, and appear closer to us. Cool colours give an impression of calm, and create a soothing impression. White, black and grey are not included in the colour wheel, and are considered to be neutral.

Tints, Shades and Tones

Often used incorrectly, these terms actually describe fairly simple colour concepts. Adding white to a colour creates a tint; adding black to a colour creates a shade; and adding grey to a colour creates a different tone.

Tints - adding white to a pure hue:
Shades - adding black to a pure hue:
Tones - adding grey to a pure hue:

Creating Colour Schemes

Knowing where to begin when first introduced to markers can be a daunting task for many budding crafters and designers.

The Letraset ‘Colour-Blend’ sets provide a highly accessible option for beginners. Each set contains 3 references which compliment each other and blend well together. The sets can be positioned around the colour wheel, simplifying colour schemes.

Overleaf displays a variety of colour schemes illustrated using the ProMarker Colour-Blend sets.

Image: Colour-Blend Sets positioned around the colour wheel.
Creating Colour Schemes...

1 Complementary colour scheme

A complementary colour scheme uses two colours that are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel. Complementary colours give high contrast, and look best when a warm colour is used alongside its opposite cool colour. For best results, choose a dominant colour, and use its complementary colour for highlights and accents.

Colour Scheme 1

Colour Scheme 2

Colour Scheme 3

Colour Scheme 4

Colour Scheme 5
Creating Colour Schemes... continued

2 Analogous colour scheme

An analogous colour scheme is created from colours adjacent to each other on the colour wheel. Analogous colour schemes can often be identified in nature, and although less vibrant than complementary schemes, appear pleasing to the eye. One colour should be used as the dominant colour, using the other colours to enhance the scheme. Avoid combining warm and cool colours in this scheme.
Creating Colour Schemes... continued

3 Split Complementary colour scheme

A variation on the standard complementary scheme, the split complementary scheme uses a dominant colour and the two colours adjacent to its complementary colour.

This scheme gives more combinations than the complementary scheme, while still retaining high contrast.
Triadic colour scheme

The triadic colour scheme uses three colours, equally spaced around the colour wheel.

The scheme is not quite as contrasting as the complementary scheme, but gives a more balanced and harmonious appearance.
Creating Colour Schemes... continued

5 Tetradic (double complementary) colour scheme

The tetradic colour scheme uses four colours, arranged into two complementary colour pairs. This scheme offers by far the greatest variety, but it can be hard to get right.

Avoid using all four colours in equal measure, and choose one dominant colour to keep the scheme balanced.
ProMarker Hint and Tips...

Getting Started

If it’s your first time using markers, they may take a little getting used to. Alcohol based markers will tend to bleed, so be careful which type of paper you use. Special ‘bleed proof’ marker paper is available but if you use normal copy machine paper, make sure you have something underneath to protect your work surface. If you ink your drawing before colouring, do a few tests to make sure the lines don’t smudge when you draw over them with a marker (this shouldn’t happen, so long as you use a water-based pen when inking). Picking the colours for your illustration is often a challenge. Few of us have access to the full range of colours available, so you need to think about how to make the markers that you do have go a long way. As a rule of thumb, don’t use every colour in your palette or you’ll end up with something garish and colours that clash. The most important thing is to have one dominant colour and work the other colours around it. Another thing to keep in mind is that de-saturated colours are less prone to clashing. In an illustration it’s generally best to only pick one (or at the most two) saturated colours and let the rest be more neutral. When picking more than one strong colour for an illustration, colour theory comes in handy.

Basic Blending and Shading

Shading, that is overlaying colours to create depth, might seem straightforward enough but you will need to think carefully about where to place the shadows and which colours to use. Before starting to colour, pick a light source. Everything will be affected by the same source so the shadows need to conform to the direction of the light. Greys may seem like the most obvious choice for shadows but they can actually tend to make your colours look dead and flat. If you do use grey, choose a lighter shade so as not to drown out the underlying colour. A better way to shade is to simply pick a darker, related version of the base colour. You will rarely need more than two, or at the most three, shadow colours for any one base colour. A good quality marker will give you a surprising number of variations in tone from just a very small selection of colours. Alternatively you can layer the same colour over itself – the translucent quality of ProMarker inks means the more you overlay a colour, the darker it will appear.
Advanced Blending and Shading

Alcohol based markers are fast drying, so you’ll generally need to work quite quickly – for this reason it can help if you pre-select the colours you’ll be using for a particular piece of artwork. The key to blending is to understand how the colour you put down will react with the underlying colour. When overlaying marker colours, the first layer should be applied quickly. Try not to go over the surface too many times or the paper will saturate and the next graduation will be difficult to see. Once the first layer has dried, you can go over it again with the same marker. Sometimes you will want a soft, blended edge between two colours and at other times you may want a harder edge. It all depends on the material and the surface that you are describing. Applying colour whilst the underlying layer is wet will create a soft, blended effect. If the underlying colour is allowed to dry then you’ll get a more defined edge.

The colder colours in the colour wheel (violets / blues / blue-greens) can be effectively shaded with blue – you should use a less saturated blue that is slightly darker than the base colour. White is usually best shaded with a very light blue or violet (not grey, which may seem the obvious choice). Blues will make the white look vibrant, whereas greys will tend to make it look dirty. The example below shows the various shades that can be achieved by blending just three related ProMarker colours.
Shading 3D Objects

Understanding how shadow hardness varies between different shapes is key to achieving more convincing shading. The rotation of a surface will cause different types of shadows to form. A round surface turns away gradually from the light and will therefore give rise to a soft shadow edge. A sharply angled surface on the other hand will create a harder shadow edge and the more acute the angle, the sharper the edge will be.

Here are some examples of the basic shapes that most things around you are represented by – the sphere, the cylinder, and the box.

A sphere has very soft shadow edges whilst a box has very sharp edges that give rise to hard shadows.

A cylinder has fairly soft edges, but the smaller the cylinder, the more acute the curvature of the surface, so the edges will look harder.

At its most extreme, a soft edge turns into a gradient, which is something you get when a very large, slightly curved surface turns away from the light.

The ProMarker Blender

The ProMarker Blender (which is colourless) is great when you want to create softer shadows. There are two ways of approaching this. The first is that you put down your colour first and then go over the edge with the Blender. The other is that you wet the paper using the Blender first and then add the colour. Try to saturate the paper with the blender for best effect.
### ProMarker 148 Colour Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Colour</th>
<th>Secondary Colour</th>
<th>Tertiary Colour</th>
<th>Quartary Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lipstick Red</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Berry Red</td>
<td>Ruby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardinal Red</td>
<td>Poppy</td>
<td>Crimson</td>
<td>Burgundy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnt Umber</td>
<td>Chestnut</td>
<td>Henna</td>
<td>Walnut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinnamon</td>
<td>Tan</td>
<td>Caramel</td>
<td>Cocoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umber</td>
<td>Sandstone</td>
<td>Raw Sienna</td>
<td>Soft Peach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mango</td>
<td>Bright Orange</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin</td>
<td>Ginger</td>
<td>Spice</td>
<td>Burnt Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricot</td>
<td>Honeycomb</td>
<td>Blush</td>
<td>Saffron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastel Yellow</td>
<td>Mustard</td>
<td>Primrose</td>
<td>Soft Lime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Canary</td>
<td>Sunflower</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttercup</td>
<td>Ivory</td>
<td>Satin</td>
<td>Pastel Beige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime Zest</td>
<td>Lime Green</td>
<td>Marsh Green</td>
<td>Olive Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear Green</td>
<td>Meadow Green</td>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>Leaf Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Green</td>
<td>Grass</td>
<td>Emerald</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine</td>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>Pastel Green</td>
<td>Mint Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The colour swatches shown are as closely matched as possible for the method of reproduction.

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