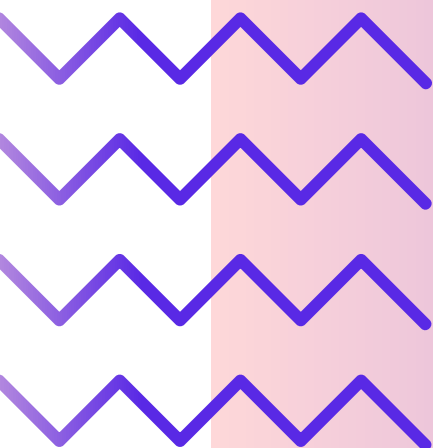# COLOR PSYCHOLOGY FOR DESIGNERS

FLUX

INTRODUCTION

Choosing the right color, and learning how to combine it correctly with another, is a hurdle that many designers struggle with, especially when starting out.

Why?

As every color has a meaning.

Colors help us to feel our emotions, they enable us to make quick associations, they dictate our reaction to things. Knowing how this works is a powerful tool to have in your toolkit when taking on the world of branding and design.

Why one color can be deemed right and the other wrong often relates to the psychology behind it and what it evokes for people internally.

That's why, as designers, we need to grasp the power of color and the significance of each color's meaning every time we sit down to create. The more we understand it, the better we can help our clients get the most from their brand through their marketing materials, websites and assets. Color heightens the impact of a brand's visual presence, and helps it remain relatable to their target audience.

With this guide, we will take you through the basics of color psychology. That way you will be able to make the most of the colors you choose, using each one with power and knowledge, provoking the emotions and reactions you're aiming to achieve.
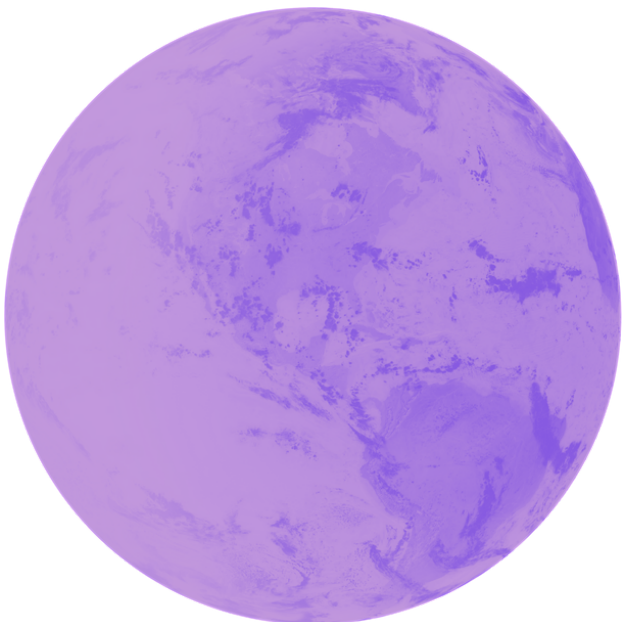
IS COLOR PSYCHOLOGY UNIVERSAL?

Not entirely.

That means if you're working with clients across the globe you may come across the issue that some colors have a certain connotation in one location, and a completely different association elsewhere. It's helpful to be mindful of this throughout your work.
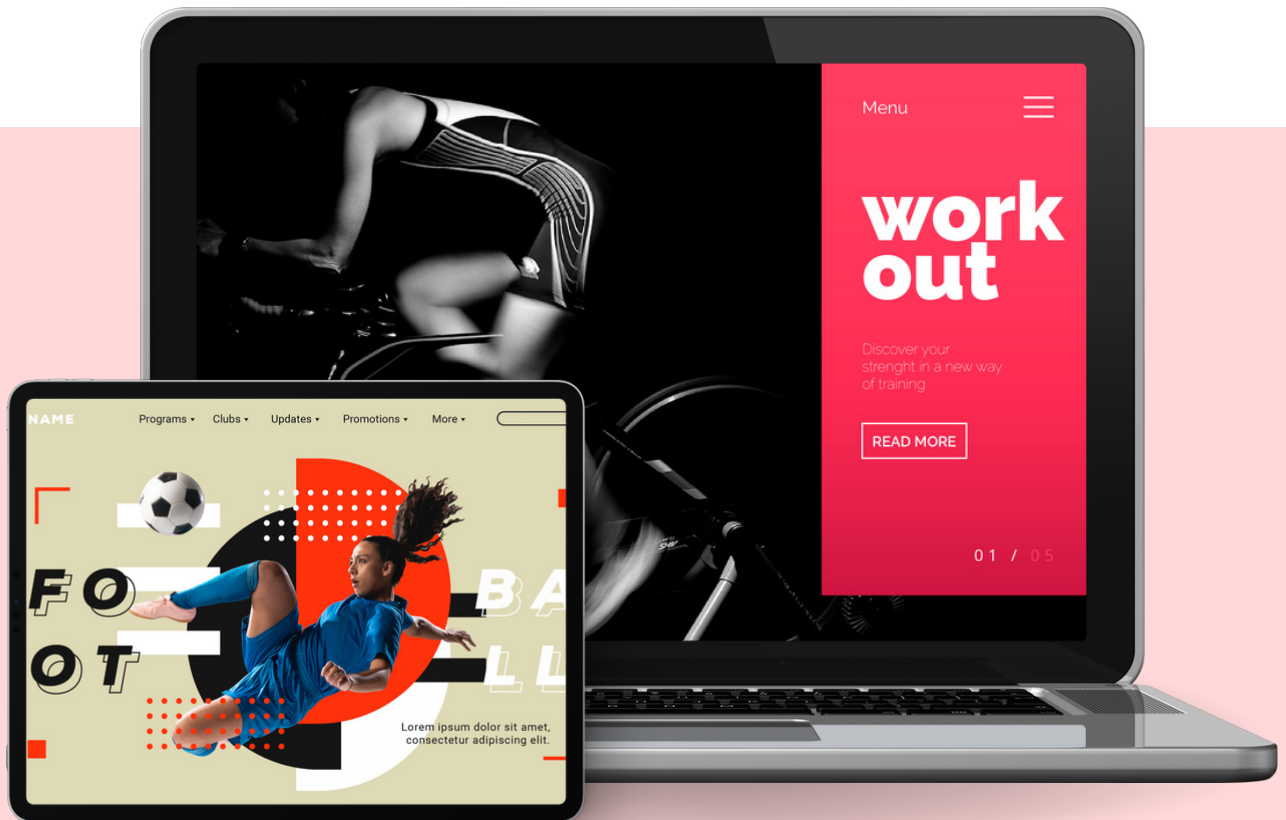
An example of this (that shows the sheer polarization colors can hold) can be seen when we think of a color associated with grief and mourning.

In Western areas, like Europe and the US, people will associate black with mourning. However, in some Asian countries white is the primary color associated, furthermore, in South Africa it's red.

Another example is that in the US green is a color of wealth and money, simply because the dollar has been green since color could be printed on notes. However, elsewhere this association isn't as easily made, most likely because the color of money differs from place to place.

Nonetheless, some elements are pretty universal, at least in Western countries, and these are the ones that we will talk you through. So, let's get straight to it.

RED

Red is mostly associated with intense feelings.

It's a bold choice in branding as it's destined to make a statement, be seen, and draw attention. Generally, it isn't a color that blends in or neutralizes a design. Instead, it attracts the eye and makes it pop out.

Red represents:

- Passion
- Danger
- Love
- Fire
- Heat
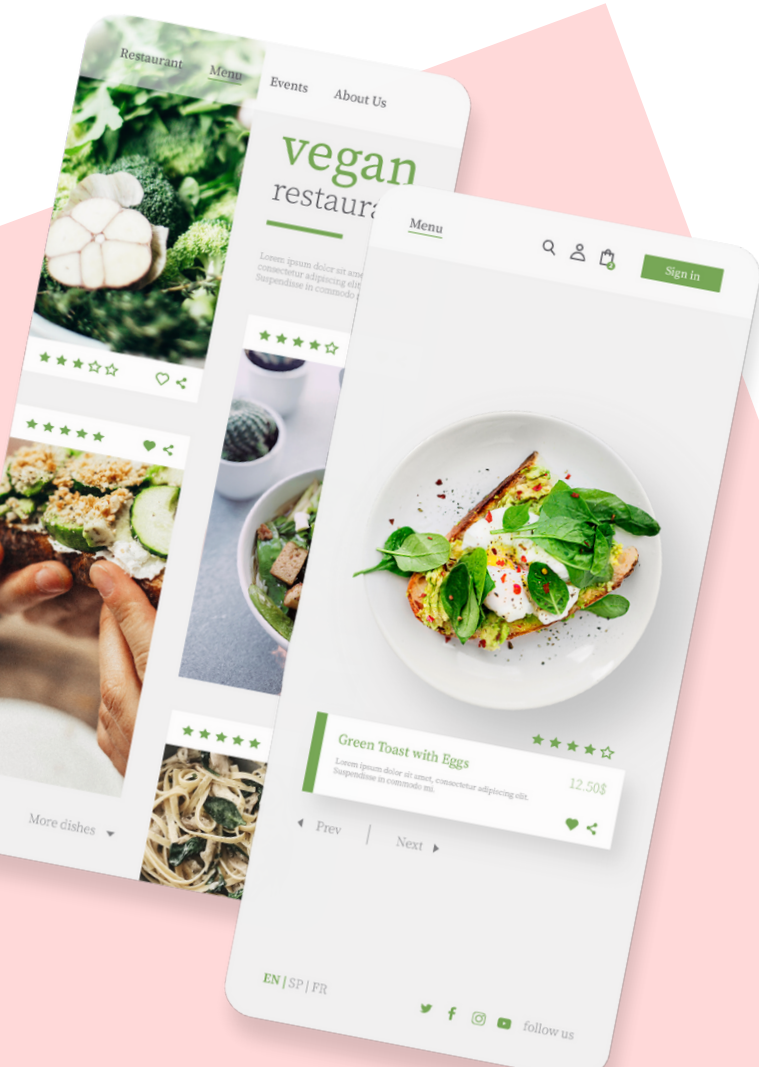- Energy
- Confidence
- Authority
- Strength

GREEN

Green is deeply associated with nature and the environment, and, as we mentioned earlier, it is connected with wealth and money in the US (but, more and more around the globe). This gives it two pretty opposite psychological meanings that can be used to our advantage, depending on the target audience of a brand.

The tone of the greens you use will impact how it is processed.

Green represents:

- Growth
- Prosperity
- Health
- Calmness
- Stability
- Sustainability
- Eco-conscious
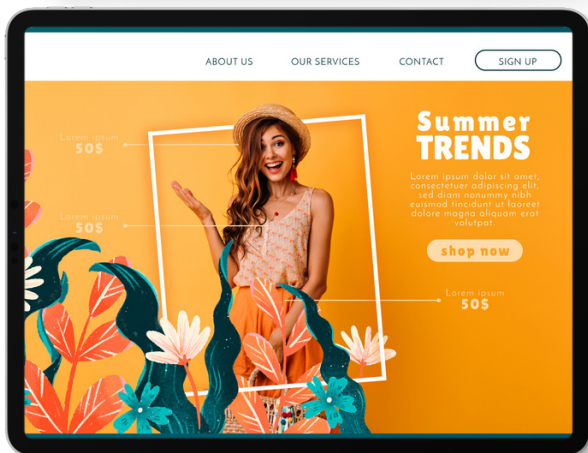- Wealth
- Finances

BLUE

Blue is another color often found in nature, that's why it has similar calming qualities to green when used in lighter tones. However, it has an abundance of other meanings to go with it when used in combination with other colors and when dark shades are integrated into branding.

Blue represents:

- Trust
- Reliability
- Power
- Knowledge
- Authority
- Royalty
- Professionalism
- Luxury
- Tranquility
- Relaxation
- Peace

ORANGE

Orange has the energy and vibrancy of red, without running the risk of being too daring, bold, or abrasive. That's why it's often associated with youthful brands that target newer generations. It's inviting and engaging while remaining somewhat calm and fresh. While bright neon comes with a warning (traffic cones, hi-vis jackets), earthier tones are tranquil and fun.
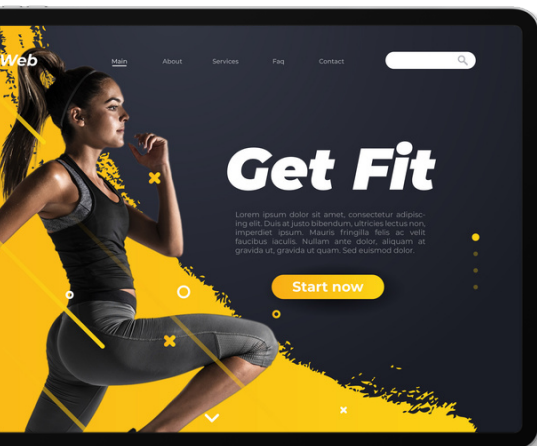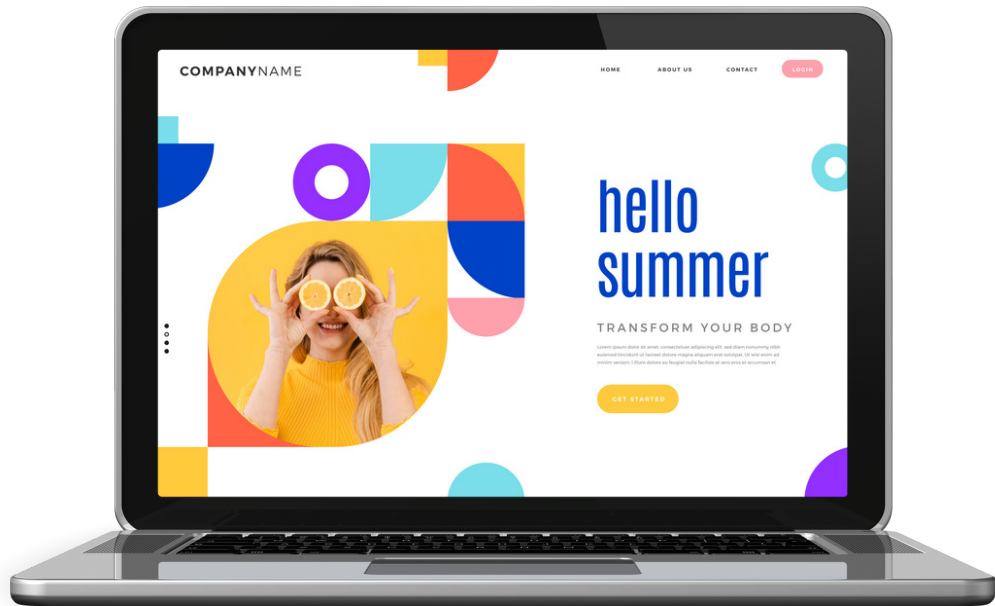
Orange is:

- Fun
- Fresh
- Vibrant
- Tranquil
- Earthy
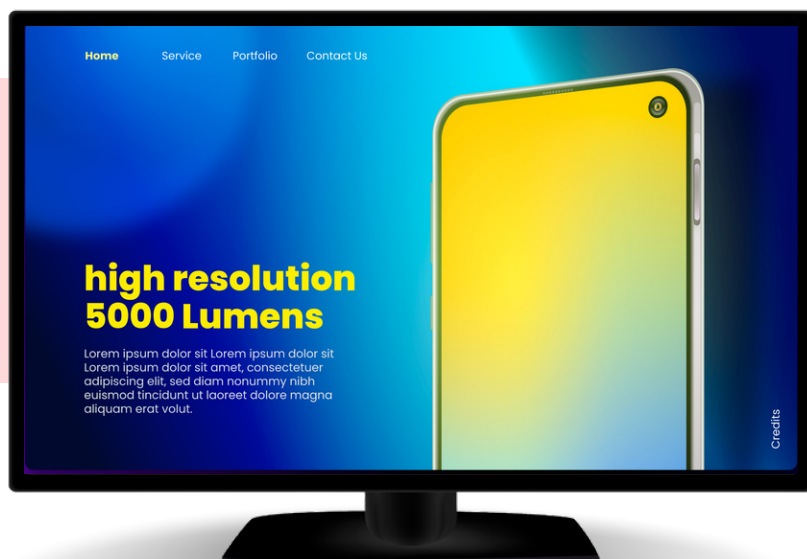- Youthful
- Joyful
- Enthusiast
- Creative

YELLOW

Sunshine, smiling emojis, summer flowers; yellow, while loud, has many, many happy associations.

It's one of the easiest colors to see from a distance when matched with deeper tones. This makes it helpful for signs and billboards or drawing attention in large and crowded spaces.

Yellow is:

- Cheerful
- Happy
- Vibrant
- Excited
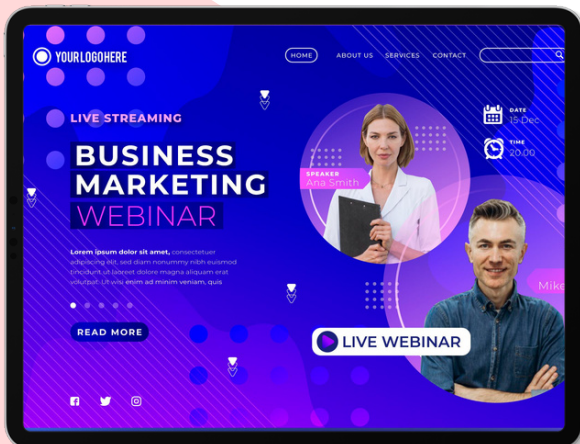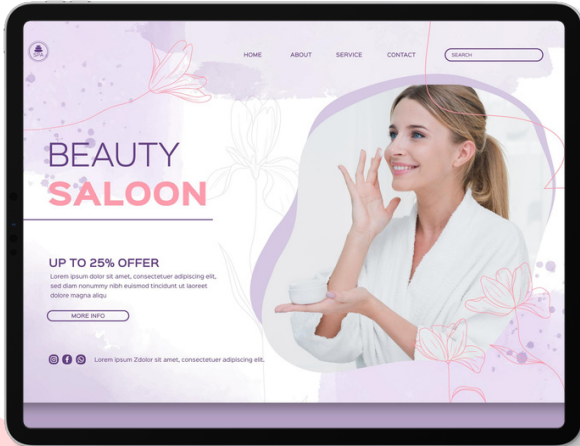- Energized
- Optimistic
- Powerful

PURPLE

Purple is an interesting color in that it is both deep and light, warm and cold. It's often combined in the mind with blue tones, however, it doesn't offer the same tranquility and peacefulness. In fact, purple often has a sense of mystery or uncertainty about it – which is perhaps why it's commonly used by tech or progressive companies.

Purple represents:

- Ambition
- Opulence
- Royalty
- Healing
- Femininity
- Prestige
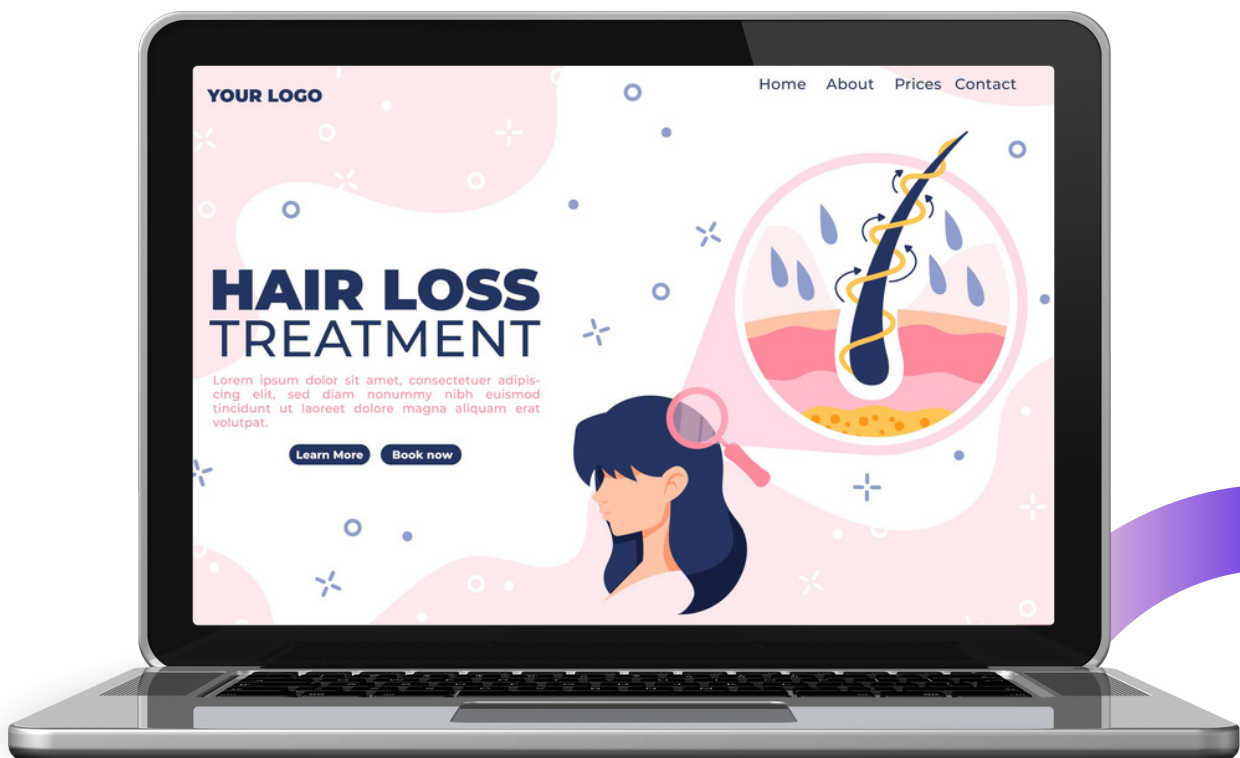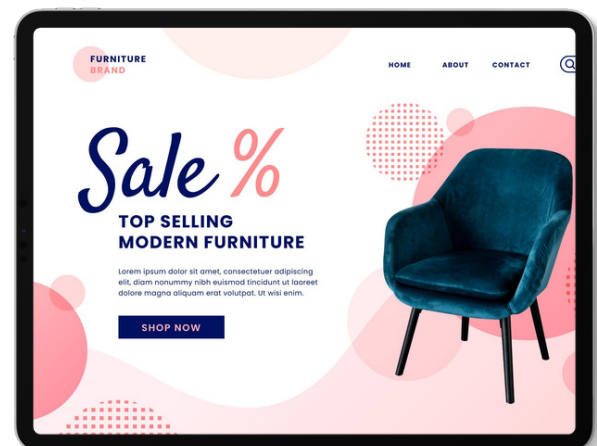- Connection
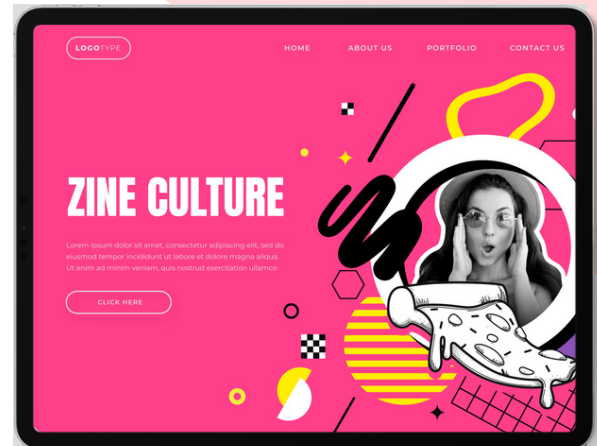- Power
- Mystery
- Progressive

PINK

Traditionally, pink was associated with femininity, and often only used to target and resonate with women. However, newer generations don't have this same association, which means pink has spurred a new phase of life that is more playful, bold, rebellious, and obstructive.
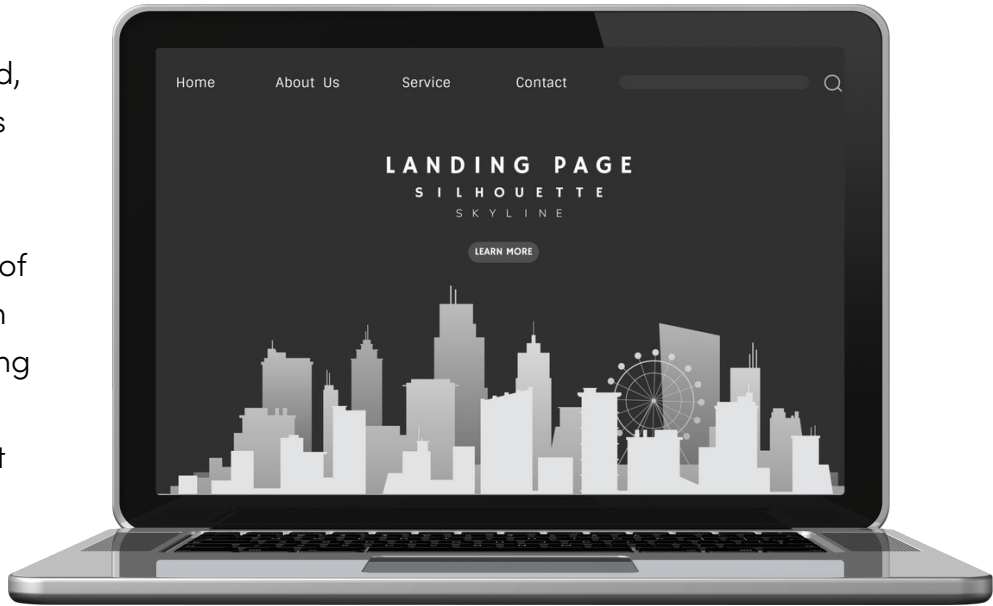
Pink is:

- Playful
- Healthy
- Innocent
- Cheerful
- Bold
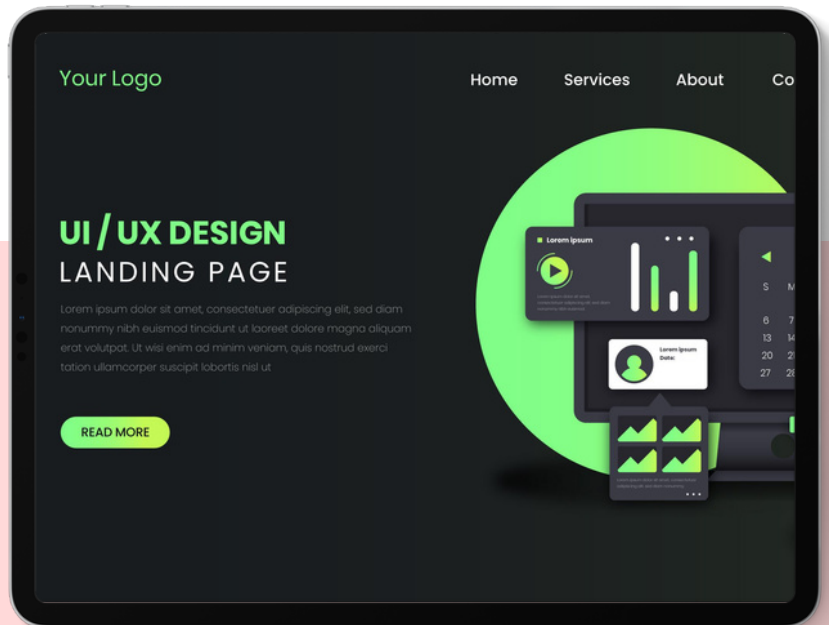- Rebellious
- Soft
- Love
- Kindness

BLACK

Black is powerful, especially in design terms. It is sophisticated, formal, and eye-catching in its own right.
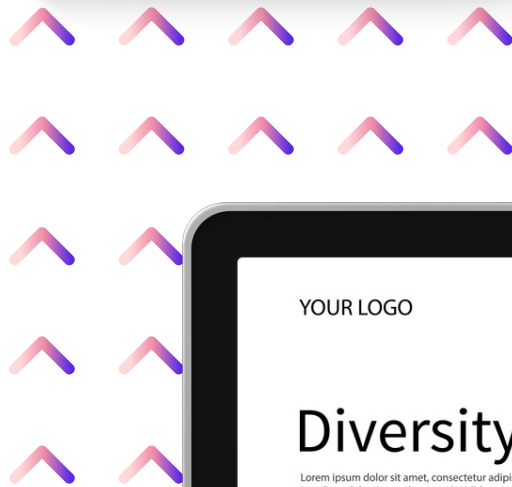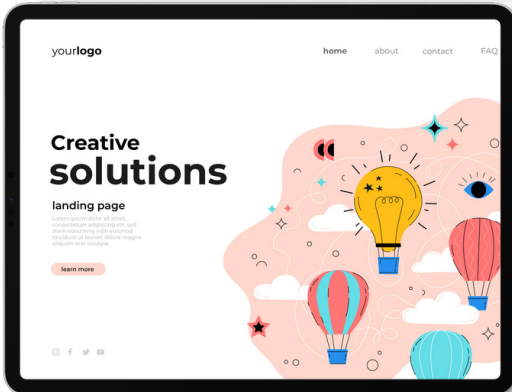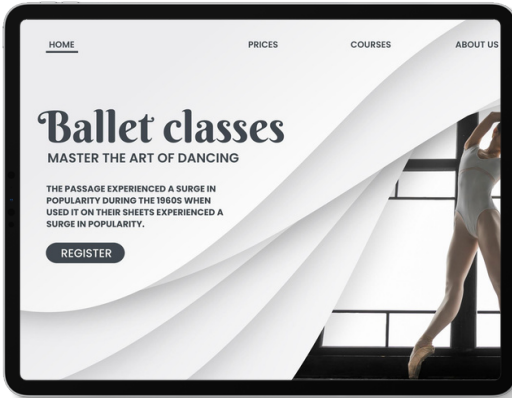
When used with the right pop of color it can shine brighter than any other tone. That's why using it right is so tricky as it is both neutral and provoking, dull yet vibrant.

Black is:

- Rich
- Luxurious
- Bold

- Power
- Elegance
- Sophistication

- Classic
- Progressive
- Clean

WHITE

White is innocent, simple, minimal, and sophisticated when used right. It's sterile and sad when used wrong. Nonetheless, there are few brands that don't have some element of black or white in their branding and style. It can breathe air and space into a complex design, in other instances, it can tell a whole story of its own.

White is:

- Pure
- Clean
- Peace
- Delicate
- Balanced
- Simple
- Sophisticated

AND, THAT'S IT...

Naturally, we could talk for hours about the true meaning of each shade, and how different combinations will create certain reactions in particular people, however, having a couple of words in your mind associated with each color can be an excellent base to build your knowledge from.

Colors are power and designers are the artists that blend them to perfection. They create a story without words and build a connection in one glance.

In your journey as a designer, you'll need to experiment, test, and explore how each color makes you feel, and then question how they work for the general public or your target audience.

If you'd like to learn more from the Flux Academy, we offer a variety of courses for aspiring designers like you. Our courses focus on high-value skills and proven processes that will elevate your work, wow your clients, and help you build a real-world freelance business as a web designer.

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Until next time, happy designing!

**Ran Segall &
The Flux Academy Team**

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