

The Color Wheel and the Three Bears

The three bears are different sizes and so can be used as an analogy for the quantities of colors to use when making choices from the color wheel. Papa Bear will be the warm or cool decider because he will take up the largest area or color space overall. Mama Bear will be the next largest amount of color overall and Baby Bear will be the smallest amount of color overall.

1. Analogous Colors – next to each other on the color wheel

These are colors that lie next to each other on the color wheel and they all have one color in common – here are some examples of possible color combinations

e.g. yellow green, yellow, yellow orange, orange, – the common color is yellow

e.g. blue violet, blue, blue green, green, yellow green – the common color is blue

e.g. red violet, red, red orange, orange, yellow orange – the common color is red

Analogous colors always work really well in painting because their connection to each other always results in color harmony. **Papa Bear, Mama Bear and Baby bear all wear variations of the same colors here.**

2. Analogous Colors – plus the complement – next to each other plus a little of the opposite

These are analogous colors plus a little of the color that lies opposite on the color wheel. **Papa Bear and Mama Bear wear the same colors but Baby Bear is dressed differently.**

This color combination is more interesting than analogous colors alone – a little of the opposite is always a welcome change.

3. Complementary Colors – opposite each other on the color wheel

These are colors that lie directly opposite each other on the color wheel. When they sit next to each other they make each other ‘sing’ but when they are mixed together they neutralize each other (gray each other down). **Papa Bear wears a bright version of one color and Mama Bear wears a more neutral version of the opposite color (or vice versa). Baby Bear can wear either color.**

4. Split Complementary Colors – narrow triangle on the color wheel

These colors are a little more interesting than complementary colors because they include a small variation of one of the complements. Point the arrow to the main color that you would like in your painting. **Papa Bear wears the main color, Mama Bear wears one of the split complementary colors at the other points of the triangle and Baby Bear wears the other split complementary color.**

5. Triad Colors – wide (equilateral triangle) on the color wheel

Triad color choices will be equidistant apart on the color wheel.

Point the arrow to the main color that you would like in your painting. **Papa Bear wears this color, Mama Bear wears the color on one of the other points of the triangle and Baby Bear wears the color on the third point of the triangle.**

Remember that to gray down or neutralize colors you can mix them with their complement, (the color that is opposite on the color wheel). (or you can also use black if you are working in opaque colors)

One easy way to identify and remember the complement of a primary color is to mentally mix together the other two primaries. For example; the complement of red is green – green is made with yellow and blue. The complement of yellow is violet; violet is made with red and blue, the complement of blue is orange; orange is made with red and yellow.