



Episode 44: What's in a Color?

Hi! If this is your first time listening to our podcast, this is an opportunity for upper-level English learners to practice listening skills and learn new vocabulary by listening to authentic conversations.

In today's episode Donielle and Khrystyna discuss color preferences, meanings, and the psychology behind them. The quiz and several color insights were from the book, [The Wonder of Colors](#) by Bridget Watson Payne.

To help you follow the conversation, here's a brief background on brands, characters, and other cultural references mentioned that may be unfamiliar.

Tony the Tiger	a cartoon tiger mascot for a popular breakfast cereal
Tigger	a bouncy tiger character from the Winnie the Pooh children's classic story
Nemo	a clownfish character from the movie <i>Finding Nemo</i>
Cheetos	a brand of bright orange cheese-flavored snacks
Orange Crush	an orange-flavored soda
The Wicked Witch	the evil character from the movie <i>Wizard of Oz</i>
Oscar the Grouch	a green puppet character from the children's show <i>Sesame Street</i>
The Grinch	an angry, green character who tries to steal Christmas
Shrek	a green ogre character from animated films
Nerf gun	a toy brand known for foam dart guns
"Slug Bug"	Khrystyna's story about the game she plays with her son is a variation of the one often played while on road trips where players call out "Slug Bug!" when they see a Volkswagen Beetle and lightly hit the person next to them. The name comes from the car's nickname "Bug" and the word slug, meaning a playful punch.
Mardi Gras	a festive season similar to Carnival, which is marked by parades, balls, and celebrations ending just before Ash Wednesday (Christian holy day marking the first day of Lent, a 40-day season of fasting, prayer, and repentance before Easter)

You can also read the [transcript](#) for this episode.

See the following pages for vocabulary and language focus from this episode.



Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

extra	informal: doing more than necessary; over-the-top or overly fancy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I know I can be a little <u>extra</u> when it comes to hosting parties, but I love doing it.</i>
spread	a large amount of food prepared and displayed for a meal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Look at this amazing Thanksgiving <u>spread</u>!</i>
oblige	do something because someone expects it or asks you to. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>She <u>obliged</u> her family and cooked the whole turkey.</i>
[one's] crew	informal: a group of friends; people who hang out together frequently <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My <u>crew</u> will be driving down from Illinois.</i>
be drawn to something	feel naturally attracted to something. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am <u>drawn to</u> certain color combinations.</i>
start off with	begin something, usually the first in a sequence of items or events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Let's <u>start off with</u> the color read.</i>
discriminate	treat something or someone differently, often unfairly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I don't <u>discriminate</u> – I like all colors.</i>
gravitate [to/ toward something]	naturally move toward or prefer something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I <u>gravitate toward</u> green because it feels calm.</i>
verging on	approaching something closely; be close to or similar to something (derived from verge, which means the edge or border of something = on the verge of) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's an appealing shade of red, <u>verging on</u> burgundy.</i>
burgundy	a dark red color with a purple tone
maroon	a dark reddish-brown color
evoke	cause a feeling or memory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Warm colors can <u>evoke</u> feelings of comfort.</i>
hostility	angry or aggressive behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The argument created tension and <u>hostility</u> in the room.</i>
right on the money	exactly correct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The personality tests result was <u>right on the money</u>.</i>
way back when	a long time ago <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I remember we had a conversation about this <u>way back when</u>.</i>
guru	an expert in a particular area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Marketing <u>gurus</u> understand color psychology.</i>
mark [something] down	ph. verb: reduce the price of something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>On February 15, all Valentine's Day products are <u>marked down</u> 50 percent.</i>
(creative) juices flowing	starting to think of original, inventive, or artistic ideas freely and easily <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Listening to music helps get my <u>creative juices flowing</u>.</i>
cowardice	lack of bravery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yellow is sometimes associated with <u>cowardice</u>.</i>
daring	brave; willing to take risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Buying a yellow car is a <u>daring</u> choice.</i>

Colors in Idioms

Here are some common idioms that refer to colors:

Red	<p>be in the red - describing a business that is operating in negative cash flow</p> <p>red tape – excessive steps, rules & procedures, esp. in public business, government</p> <p>catch red-handed – catch someone in the act of doing something wrong</p> <p>roll out the red carpet – to give someone a special and honored welcome</p>
Black	<p>be in the black – describing a business that is operating in positive cash flow</p> <p>black sheep – a member of a group who is different from the rest (negative)</p> <p>the pot calling the kettle black – criticizing someone for a fault they also have</p> <p>black out – faint or lose consciousness</p>
Yellow	<p>yellow-bellied/to be yellow – cowardly, fearful, or lacking courage</p> <p>yellow journalism – unethical or sensationalized news that prioritizes grabbing attention over accuracy</p>
Green	<p>green with envy – very envious or jealous of someone</p> <p>the green-eyed monster – jealousy</p> <p>have a green thumb – be very good at gardening</p> <p>be green – used to refer to someone who is inexperienced or new to something</p>
Blue	<p>...until you're blue in the face – repeat something over & over, esp. without success</p> <p>a blue ribbon – of the highest quality; a first-place award in a competition</p> <p>talk/speak a blue streak – a rapid and lengthy flow of speech</p> <p>out of the blue – a sudden/unexpected action, such as a call from a long-lost friend</p>

Join the Conversation

- What is your favorite color, and why do you think you are **drawn to it**? What are your favorite color combinations? Are there any colors that you strongly dislike? Why?
- Are there certain colors you **gravitate to** when selecting certain items (such as Khrystyna's example of always buying red cars)?
- Do you believe colors can have an influence on your mood? If so, can you give an example?
- What examples of symbolism and practical uses were mentioned for the following colors?

red orange yellow green blue purple

Do you think this is helpful to keep in mind? Which, if any, of the tips would you like to try?
- In your culture, talk about colors and meanings associated with the following events:
 - weddings
 - **mourning**
 - luck
 - flowers
 - other situations?

Thanks for checking out our podcast!

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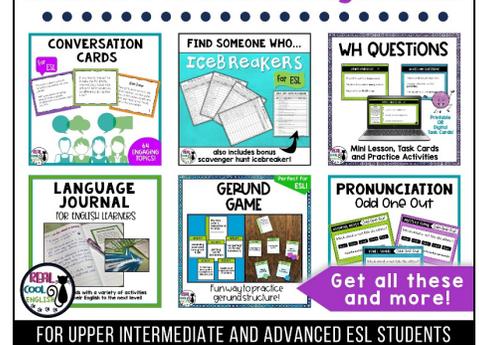
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