What Do Colors Mean?

Have you ever stopped to think why some things are the colors they are? Can you figure out why fast-food restaurants use red? Do colors themselves have meaning?

That’s not an easy question to answer because some colors mean different things in different cultures. White is a color that symbolizes weddings in the United States. But in Asia, white is the color of death.

In China, red means good luck. In Russia, it symbolizes beauty. But in South Africa, red is the color for sadness and mourning.

Some colors can even mean different things within the same culture! For example, in our culture we sometimes see red as a sign of anger or of danger. But at the same time, red is the color of love and Valentine’s hearts.

Colors can make people feel or behave in certain ways as well. Restaurants often use red in their décor because it is supposed to make people feel excited and hungry. It also makes them eat faster, which frees up tables for the next customers.

Blue is the color of the sky and ocean. It tends to be considered soothing. But be careful—too much blue can contribute to peoples’ sadness, as well.

Green is the color of nature and of healing. Green is a calming color and is often used in places where people might be nervous, such as hospitals. Nowadays when we say something is “green,” we mean it won’t hurt the environment.

Yellow is a delightfully cheery color that can actually help people concentrate. (That’s why notepads are often made with yellow paper!) But it’s a mystery why people get angry more often in yellow rooms, and why it makes babies cry more!