

black



dark scary frightening wild ferocious

Black is often associated with darkness, which may make it difficult for many people to use in living spaces. Black has many depths and shades that may be used to throw other colours and finishes into relief, such as glossy black and chestnut brown, chalky black and warm white. Black paint is probably best used in these sorts of combinations in interiors rather than on mass.

Many colour-infused blacks are available in the Resene range of paints and multi-layered effects may be achieved by adding glazes and special effects, such as Resene Pearl Shimmer and Resene Pixie Dust over black.

There will always be associations of dark scary nights, stormy rain clouds and big black monsters that may originate from childhood nightmares and storybooks. Black is one colour to avoid when decorating children's spaces.

wicked evil deathly lethal

Black is the colour associated with death and is linked with evil, magic and the 'dark arts'. Black magic, witches and potions, deadly spiders and lethal weapons.

A 'black mood' describes the inability to see a way forward or to feel any hope for the future. Depression is associated with the colour black in some cultures, while the Chinese say that black in a home is lucky, and tend to combine it with bright shades of red.



Fortunately not everyone associates these negative reactions to the colour black, evidenced by the number of people who wear black clothing.



dark side illegal unknown

Black is usually the colour worn by magicians and wizards and has been used to describe illegal sale of goods, commonly known as the 'black market'.

Like walking into a dark cave, entering a black room may make some people feel uneasy, as if they are walking into the unknown. However, creating this cave-like entrance may also set up anticipation and expectation, which is what Michael Hill Jewellers did when they first designed their stores - it was like going into Aladdin's Cave, full of jewels. And of course with clever lighting, the black was a great background for sparkling diamonds, precious stones and metals.

Keep this in mind when decorating a room or space in black. It is important to have a high level of lighting so people can see where they are going and what lies ahead.

Blacklist, blackmail, blackball or blackguard - all suggest something that is generally disapproved is going on.



funerals sombre serious

Black was traditionally the colour of mourning and it was considered appropriate to wear only black clothing at funerals. Women covered their head with black hats and veils to detract from their beauty.

Funeral directors continue to wear black suits and the hearse is often painted black, but mourners today wear less formal attire.

Black may still reflect a serious and sombre mood and this is important when designing spaces with black as a dominant colour.

Youth culture have taken on black clothing as their uniform, which may be interpreted as their preference to blend into the crowd with their peers. Some teenagers also like black for their bedroom (if parents permit) to express their freedom of choice. A black interior may seem depressing so is best supported with warm-toned neutrals, light coloured timber and energised with a dash of red or bright green.



black - balls rum grapes berries sauce

Black is used in a number of instances to describe foods that are often not really black at all.

Blackballs are black and white striped sweets, while black grapes have a blue tinge and blackberries are a blackened violet.

Many of us refer to Worcester sauce as 'black sauce' when it is infused with brown, as well as black rum.

When black is infused with another colour, it takes on the characteristics of that colour. A blue black is cool and moody while a red black is warmer and enveloping.

Resene Indian Ink has hints of dark blue, like midnight skies, and **Resene Nero** is very inky, while **Resene Diesel** is infused with a red brown giving it a softer and mysterious feel.



strong fast robust tireless

On a positive note, black also conveys strength and speed, durability and robustness. People who have a strong preference for black are normally self-disciplined, independent and possess inner strength. Perhaps this is why the NZ yacht was called Black Magic and the national rugby team is named the All Blacks. In karate, students work towards their 'Black Belt'.

In colour theory, black is the colour of knowledge, and when combined with the right colour accents, black can be a powerful decorative hue.



formal fashion business respect

Wearing black may be interpreted that you are authoritative, strong willed and well organised. You give the impression of being efficient and self-controlled and possibly a good leader.

Wearing black, the colours of monks and priests, may also suggest that you prefer a simple life and have earned respect within the community. Court judges also wear black cloaks, presumably to portray authority.

Black is often seen the colour of choice at formal functions, every woman has a 'little black dress', and men wear their shiny black shoes with a suit. An invitation to a 'black tie' event suggests that it is considered a formal function and the dress code is set accordingly.

In the more casual scene, black jeans are well accepted by either gender. A hunt through the wardrobes of most of the young generation will yield at least one black t-shirt.



practical durable high-tech advanced

Black has been used for decades to manufacture everyday items - from the old box brownie camera to the digital cameras available today. From heavyweight telephones made last century, black is now combined with more high-tech aluminium for today's lightweight cellular phones.

Black, because it doesn't show the marks and dirt, is often preferred for luggage - remember the last time you were waiting at the airport carousel for your luggage to come around!

Audio-visual equipment and computers still come in black although there has been a move to silver this millennium or combinations of both. The same applies in décor - black granite benchtops with aluminium finish kitchen appliances or black leather furniture with brushed stainless steel frame. The heaviness of black is lightening when combined with silver metallic elements.



rich intense luxurious extravagant

Black forest gateau or liquorice - both are quite rich in flavour and intense in taste.

Black is a popular colour for packaging expensive items, such as make-up and cosmetics, to express luxury and indulgence and a high price tag. Premium quality is especially conferred when combined with metallic printing, gold or silver. Both shiny or matt black paper looks classy.

It is also used effectively with grey in graphic design, neutral but still with a sense of restraint and minimalism. One of the other compelling reasons to use a professional black and grey colour scheme is the lower cost of printing. They can also be used to showcase or package brilliantly coloured items as they do not compete with it, but provide a contrasting background.



sophisticated sexy stylish slick

Black is definitely sophisticated, stylish and slick. When combined with white, black is timeless - both in clothing and interior or exterior design.

Black has power and it makes white look whiter and colours more pronounced. Black on an interior wall is a bold venture, but if used on just one wall it can be effective, as long as the other walls are left white. The contrast between black and white may be softened with the addition of grey. Another tip for a black wall, if it is insisted by a teenager for their bedroom, is to paint it with Resene Blackboard Paint and encourage writing notes to remember or expressions of art, which will break up the black space.

On timber furniture or floors, a blue black is eyecatching and stylish - try Resene Indian Ink. Or for a greyed black select Resene Night Rider or Resene Bastille.



rubber gumboots school shoes

Black tyres and black gumboots may be your earliest memories of the colour, as it is seldom used in young children's living and sleeping areas.

Most of us had black school shoes and can probably recall the smell of black nugget we used to keep them clean and shiny. Equally as important for those who were raised in the country were the Fred Dagg black gumboots.

Black rubber tyres are today shredded and recycled to make all sorts of objects, from handbags to watch straps, toys to household gadgets.

Early memories of matt black may be creosote that was used to stain timber black for building homes and sheds. It is quite popular again today and black stained homes and baches blend well into bush or seaside environments.



shiner, gloss, lacquer, sheen

Black is the colour of a shiner, a term commonly used to describe a black eye!

Glossy black finishes, whether lacquer or high gloss paint, always appear rich and exotic. The entrance to a modest little white weatherboard cottage is given a lift with a black high-gloss front door.

Remember though that a black glossy surface does show fingermarks and dust, and requires constant attention to keep it looking its best.

The well known story of "Black Beauty" reminds us of the lustre and shine that can be achieved by grooming a black horse until its coat shines like the illustration here.



leather classical timeless

Black was popular during the early 1900's for decorating and contrasted against the art deco colours of this period. Like a black picture frame it defined objects, such as stained glass windows, walkways on tiled floors, architectural detailing on buildings and porcelain homewares.

Furniture designed during this period is timeless, especially the chrome and leather combinations which are as popular today as they were when first introduced.

Black was used with yellow, red and green for textile and graphic design at this time, and these combinations still work well in colour design.



exteriors bauhaus tudor architectural strength

Black has been used in New Zealand architectural design for many decades. The gothic style mansions were built in black stone, offset with white to contrast.

The black and white tudor style was also popular in the late 1800's and in the early 1900's Californian bungalows were painted black by more adventurous architects and homeowners.

In the 1940's and 1950's the square and simple lines of modern homes emerged and sometimes the timber was treated with black creosote.

In the 1980's we saw the arrival of black granite high-rise towers in Auckland and Wellington.



mechanical engineered speed

Black cars were the only colour you could purchase when Henry Ford manufactured early models of the Ford. And London taxis just wouldn't be the same if they weren't black.

Shiny black sports cars and motor bikes appear to go faster somehow, perhaps that is because black is a receding colour rather than advancing, and the same reason that people believe they look slimmer in black clothes.

Engines in factories and motor vehicles are often black in colour, conveying strength and solidity.



industrial commercial robust

Black coal, black rubber, black steel, black granite. All industrial but also robust.

See how strong the black granite high-rise building appears, set amongst other skyscrapers in the picture alongside.

Some of the industrial blacks take on a slightly green tone, perhaps the colour of engine grease in the sun.

An example of a greenish black is **Resene Eternity**, it has a slight army green undertone.



timber amber rust ochre

Black is instantly warmed when teamed with natural timber as in the Eames chair and stool illustrated on this page.

Black and ochre, black and rust or black and mustard always look well together, both brave and sometimes slightly off-beat.

It is predicted we will see more of the yellow clay colours emerging in the near future, and these work particularly well with black and charcoal.

As yellow is opposite violet on the colour wheel, black with a touch of violet would be a great selection. Try **Resene Showtime**, which is quite regal, or **Resene Revolver**, which has hints of grape.