

# Red

The Secret Language of Color

# Red

- The flashiest and sultriest of hues, red is a color that has fanned the flames of revolutions. It's the color that groups as diverse as Satanists, Communists, and American conservatives have all claimed as their own. Red can be used equally to express love or hate and may signal sin, fertility, courage, guilt, or good luck, depending on your longitude and latitude.



# Red

- Whether you "see red" symbolically, in its angrier turn of the phrase, or follow its practical injunctions as a law-abiding citizen, it will stop you in your tracks. Just be careful not to get lured into the red-light district by a red herring and end up red-faced, branded with a scarlet letter.



# Ironclad

- Our blood is made up of protein, iron, and oxygen. It's the iron and oxygen that are responsible for its red hue. Iron is attached to the protein hemoglobin, whose job it is to transport oxygen from red blood cells to the rest of the tissues in the body. When we inhale, oxygen mixes with the iron in our hemoglobin and turns our blood a true red. Red blood cells make up about 40% to 50% of our blood and tint the tonality red.



# Ironclad

- The more oxygen, the brighter the red. Blood flowing from heart via the arteries has first passed through the lungs and is much richer in oxygen than blood flowing back to the heart via the veins - the latter has deposited its oxygen throughout the body and is coming back for more. When an emergency medical technician arrives at an accident and sees bright red blood, he or she knows an artery has been cut.



# Ironclad

- A form of iron oxide, rust is the stuff that makes up the surface of the planet Mars, known as "The Red Planet." Rust is created when iron comes back into contact with oxygen or water and turns an orange-red. Iron oxide is also the stuff of the very first pigments used by humans, pigments that included ochre (which, despite its common mustard, is often more red than yellow) and sienna (the base of its more popular counterpart, burnt sienna)



# Ironclad

- Ochre and sienna were used to create some of the earliest known art works, the cave drawings studied in Typography, which date back to 17000 BCE. These pigments have been used ever since, by virtually every major artist, at least up through the 19th century. Rembrandt used sienna and ochre as the standard colors in his palette, as did Van Gogh.



# Ironclad

- Because rust is plentiful on farms (think of all that rusty farm equipment hanging around), it was also used as the base for paint on red barns, which are commonly associated with the iconic New England landscape. Starting in 18th century



# Ironclad

- America, farmers made use of this highly durable, easy-to-use fungus fighter that keeps mold from forming on wood.
- Interestingly, blood was also used to tint paint red. Rust or blood would be mixed with other common products found on a farm like milk and linseed oil to create an easy to make paint.



# Ironclad

- To this day, ochre and sienna and other iron oxides are used as pigments in a plethora of man-made products, from makeup to commercial paints. Mother Earth herself has made fantastic use of these pigments throughout the clay and rocks that make up much of our landscape.



# Bugs in Mugs

- In 2012, a vegetarian website took the coffee giant to task, stating that its strawberry Frappuccinos were not, in fact, vegan as per their description. Instead, Starbucks was using crushed dead bugs to color these drinks pink. Cue public relationship nightmare.



# Bugs in Mugs

- Organizations like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals insisted they use an alternative dye. Regular consumers of the pink hued Frappuccino went bug-eyed. But the color cognoscenti were bemused, knowing just how many products are tinted by the pigment - and bug - in question, cochineal.



# Bugs in Mugs

- Cochineal was worshipped by the early Aztecs. During Mexico's post-colonial, it was, next to gold, the country's most desired export - an insect that distinguished the powerful from the powerless as the color of fabric that clothed the rich. The Aztecs were the first to harvest cochineal, which they dried and crushed into a fine powder to derive the wonderfully colorfast pigment they used in the art and clothing.



# Bugs in Mugs

- When the Spanish arrived and saw the brilliant red color in the Aztec's textiles, they were awed. Europe had no red dye to match cochineal in either brilliance or staying power.
- The dye soon became all the rage, despite its steep price.



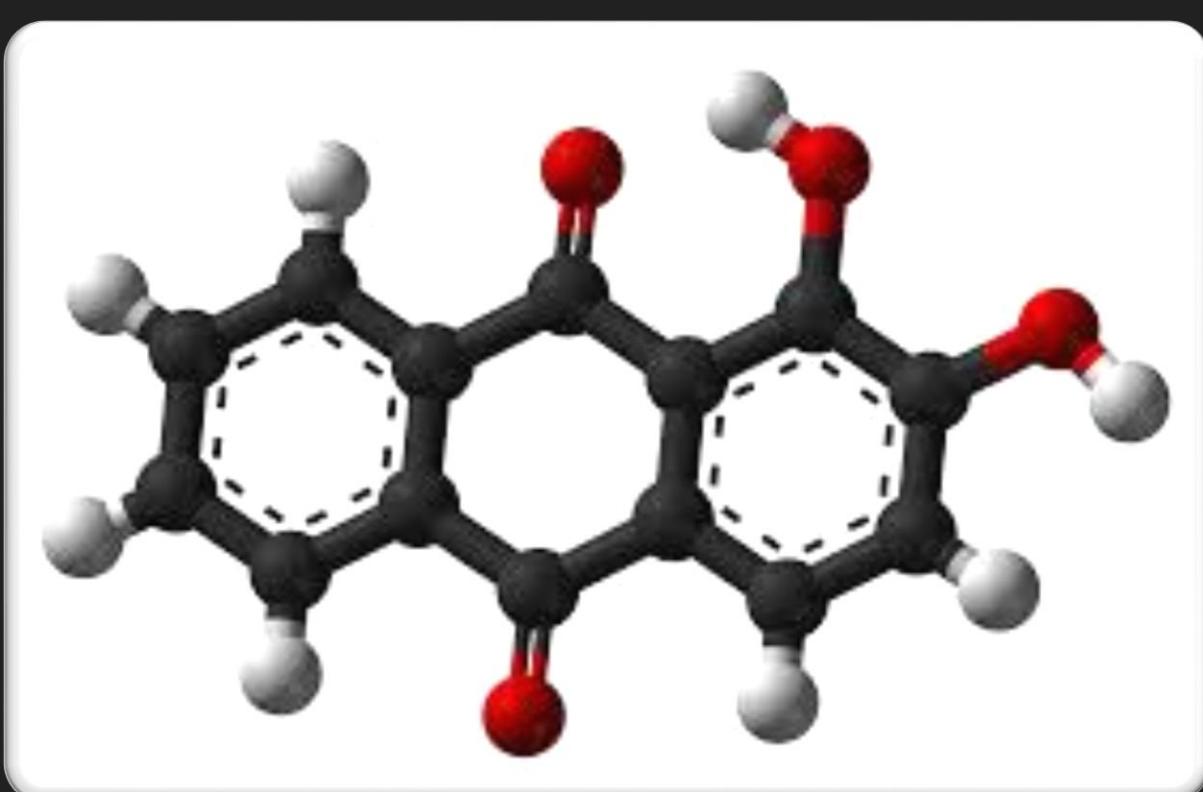
# Bugs in Mugs

- The Spanish managed to keep a monopoly ended a day a clever Frenchman smuggled a cactus pad studded with cochineal insects into Haiti and started his own manufacturing outfit. From there, the technique took off, with many countries eventually peddling the pigment.



# Bugs in Mugs

- In the 1870s, a new synthetic dye, alizarin, was produced. Overnight, the cochineal's stock fell to junk status in the face of this new, brilliant, colorfast red that could be achieved for pennies. The hue's newfound availability and affordability made aristocrats far less interested in wearing it. Their taste turned to the subdued range of colors they now considered an elegant alternative to crimson's flashy vulgarity.



# Bugs in Mugs

- Cochineal, for its part, has found its way back into our lives, bringing us full circle to the Starbucks public relationship crisis. The world is now filled with toxic red dyes, some of which have been proved to cause cancer.. In the search for something more natural, many have returned to cochineal. Now, more commonly known by its chemical name, red dye E120, cochineal can be found in numerous products, including lipstick, and other cosmetics, sausages, jams, yogurt, juices, maraschino cherries and naturally dyed yarns.



# Sealed with Red Tape

- From the garments of medieval aristocracy to the letters and documents they posted, kings, popes, and other dignitaries throughout the Middle Ages guaranteed the privacy of the correspondence via elegant red envelope seals made from expensive red dye. That practice prevented messengers or other prying eyes from violating the papers contained therein.



# Sealed with Red Tape

- Wax eventually gave way to tape: red tape. One of its first mentions involved the 18th century's Henry VIII, who was desperately trying to convince Pop Clement VII to grant him an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. As they traveled between England and the Pope, necessary documents were sealed in red tape to ensure that no one tampered with them.



# Sealed with Red Tape

- Use of the phrase *red tape* to describe the hoops bureaucrats force us to jump through is said to have originated with Charles Dickens, who wrote, "There is a good deal of red tape at Scotland Yard, as anyone may find to his cost who has any business to transact there."



# The Rank of Red

- In medieval Europe, in the absence of the Internet, newspapers, cameras, or even a printing press, how was anyone to identify their monarch's likeness? The populace wouldn't necessarily know its king's regale countenance except by the color of his coat. And if the king and those in his court wore red, surely no one else could; the masses were forced to abide by medieval sumptuary laws prohibiting anyone below the aristocracy from donning the color. Not that anyone of lesser rank could afford garments made of precious red dyes like cochineal.



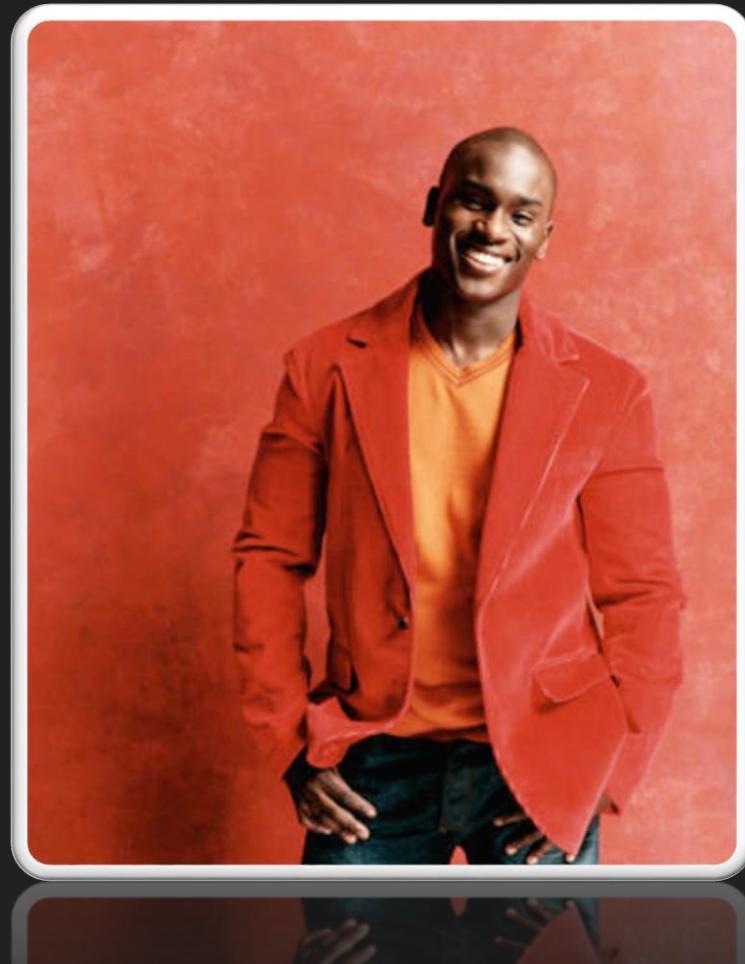
# Hot, red, & biased

- The attention grabbing power of red play an important role in both attraction and intimidation.
- In one study, women were asked to look at photos of men dressed in colored clothing against variously colored backgrounds. The results of the study revealed that women were consistently more likely to label men as "sexy" when they were either dressed in red or photographed against a red background.



# Hot, red, & biased

- The authors of the study concluded that this bias is related to the perception that red indicates high status. This red bias is true for many other animals including birds, nonhuman primates, and even crustaceans.



# Hot, red, & biased

- In some cultures, a woman in a bright red dress might also signal sex appeal. The implications of a woman in red span from sexy to sexual transgression. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1850 novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne is forced to wear a scarlet letter "A" on her dress as punishment for her adultery.



# Hot, red, & biased

- In the classic novel movie *Jezebel*, Bette Davis's character scandalizes her community by daring to wear a red dress to a ball. Her willingness to flout convention actually causes her fiancé to break their engagement.



# Hot, red, & biased

- In northern India, however, women traditionally wear red on their wedding day. Brides not only wear red saris, but also red bindis and red henna tattoos on their hands. For Hindus, red symbolizes not only potential but power - including sexual power. Red continues to be an important color for married Hindu women even until death.



# Hot, red, & biased

- If a woman dies a widow, she is shrouded in white before being cremated. If she dies before her husband dies, she is shrouded in red.
- Wearing red may also be a good idea if you want to get an edge on an opponent.



# Hot, red, & biased

- Wearing red may also be a good idea if you want to get an edge on an opponent. As long as you're playing against a man, that is. According to one study, individuals or teams who wore red in the 2004 Olympics were more likely to win.



# Hot, red, & biased

- A more recent study of video gamers who chose a red avatar came up with the same results. Experts hypothesize that the power of red goes back to our primitive selves, when ruddiness was a sign of male power and virility. Men with more testosterone tend to have redder complexions, so the rosy cheeks were feared by men ranked lower.



# Those Ruby Slippers!

- It may come a surprise, but there are no ruby slippers in L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Baum's Dorothy wore silver shoes. How could our memories be so faulty? Or, rather, were our memories of the movie so strong that they overrode the book?



# Those Ruby Slippers!

- As it turns out, the creators of the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz* made the switch to make the most of the power of Technicolor, at the time a relatively new technology with which moviegoers were infatuated. Who can forget the movie starts in black and white Kansas and turns to color only once Dorothy lands in the land of the Munchkins?



# Those Ruby Slippers!

- The contrast between her ruby slippers' sparkling red and the vibrant gold of the yellow brick road proved a wonderful way to light up the screen. And the magical properties of those red shows still reverberate in imaginations the world over.



# Those Ruby Slippers!

- Originally, six or seven pairs of ruby slippers were made for Judy Garland, the last of which was sold at auction for somewhere in the vicinity of two million dollars. Another pair was supposedly stolen. So if you happen upon these gems, you have just found a pot of gold over the rainbow.

