



Since yore, royalty has been known to set themselves apart from the general public. And the colours they used played a major role in this. Explore the realm of royal colours with **Taravali Sharma, AIS Gur 46, XI J** and discover why these colours became royal exclusives!



Colour of passion - Red

Roots of colour: The colour was originally made by crushing 0.2-inch-long cochineal bugs. Ground into a grainy red substance, further refined to obtain the dye.

Chromatic rarity: Around 70,000 bugs produced one pound of dye. Adding to this, the trade routes for obtaining high-quality red dyes were long and perilous. These factors added to the scarcity of red colour and fabric. Certain laws limited their use to the royalty and aristocracy.

Hue heritage: 40,000 years ago hunters used red clay to make paint. The Catholic church adopted red as a symbol of the blood of Christ and the fires of hell.

Symbolism: Red is believed to represent power, love, courage and good fortune.

Colour of tranquillity - Blue

Roots of colour: The Egyptians created the first blue pigment around 2,200 B.C. The production of blue dyes was expensive and labour-intensive. The vibrant blue hues derived from the Indigo plant were popularised as a substitute for the Woad plant, which gave a very light tint.

Chromatic rarity: The lengthy process to make the royal colour made blue fabrics a luxury which was affordable only to the wealthy and powerful. Artists had to go into intense debt to complete their works using this expensive blue.

Hue heritage: Virgin Mary was painted in blue and a robe for Queen Charlotte was made with the colour royal blue.

Symbolism: The colour represents tranquillity, dependability, productivity and wisdom. Blue has also been associated with heavens and the Gods.

Colour of power - Purple

Roots of colour: 15th Century citizens of Sidon and Tyre, Ancient Phoenicia (Lebanon) produced the Tyrian purple dye/ Imperial purple from crushed Murex shellfish extract which was sun-dried for a specific amount of time.

Chromatic rarity: The tedious process made the colour extremely scarce and expensive. The affordability of this colour was only restricted to the royals. The royalty of this colour was such that the subjects were punished if they dared to wear this colour in the Roman Empire.

Hue heritage: Purple has held independent hegemony over the image of the royals since time immemorial. Rulers wore purple and used purple ink to sign edicts.

Symbolism: The colour purple symbolises royalty, luxury, and imperial authority.

Colour of wealth - Gold

Roots of colour: The word gold as a colour name was first used in the 1400s to refer to blond hair. But the most accurate representation of the colour is the metal gold, first discovered in its natural state, in streams all over the world around 4000 BCE.

Chromatic rarity: In ancient times, gold mines became scarce due to high demand. High price coupled with limited availability made gold - the metal, and subsequently the colour elusive and luxurious. Gold was used in many ancient civilizations, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, India, and Rome.

Hue heritage: Gold was also used to illuminate text, architecture, textiles, and decorative borders in the Indo-Persian artistic culture established by Mughal Emperor Akbar.

Symbolism: It represents abundance, wealth and prestige. Real gold was used by emperors to reflect their wealth in their clothes, jewellery, temples, tombs, currency, and gifts.

The colours' Royale

Pic: Diya Kerur, AIS Gur 46, XI J
Models (L-R): Jaksh Pahwa, III F, Shivanya Sharma, III I, Kinaya Garg, III F & Advik Rohatgi, III H; AIS Gur 46