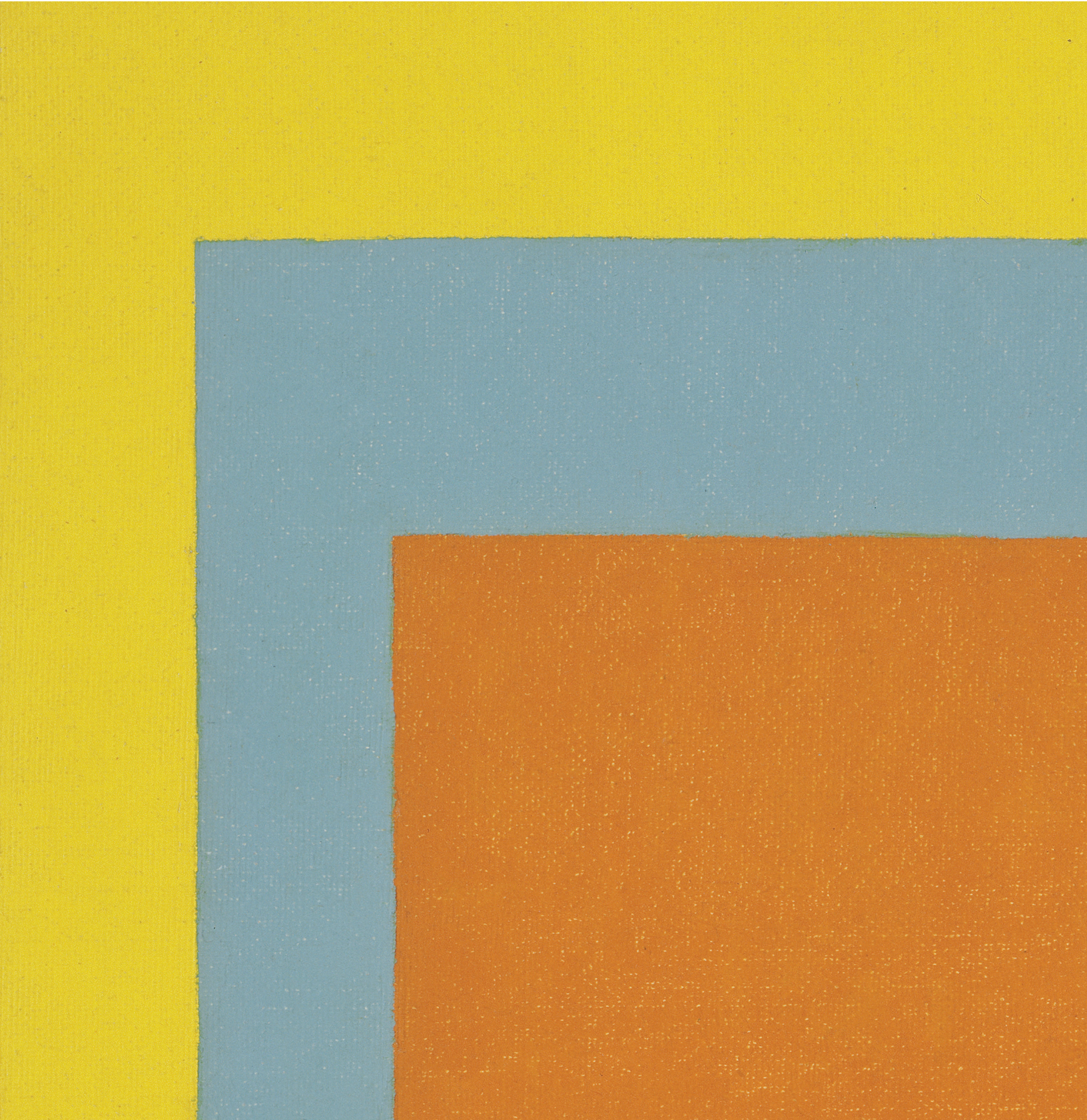


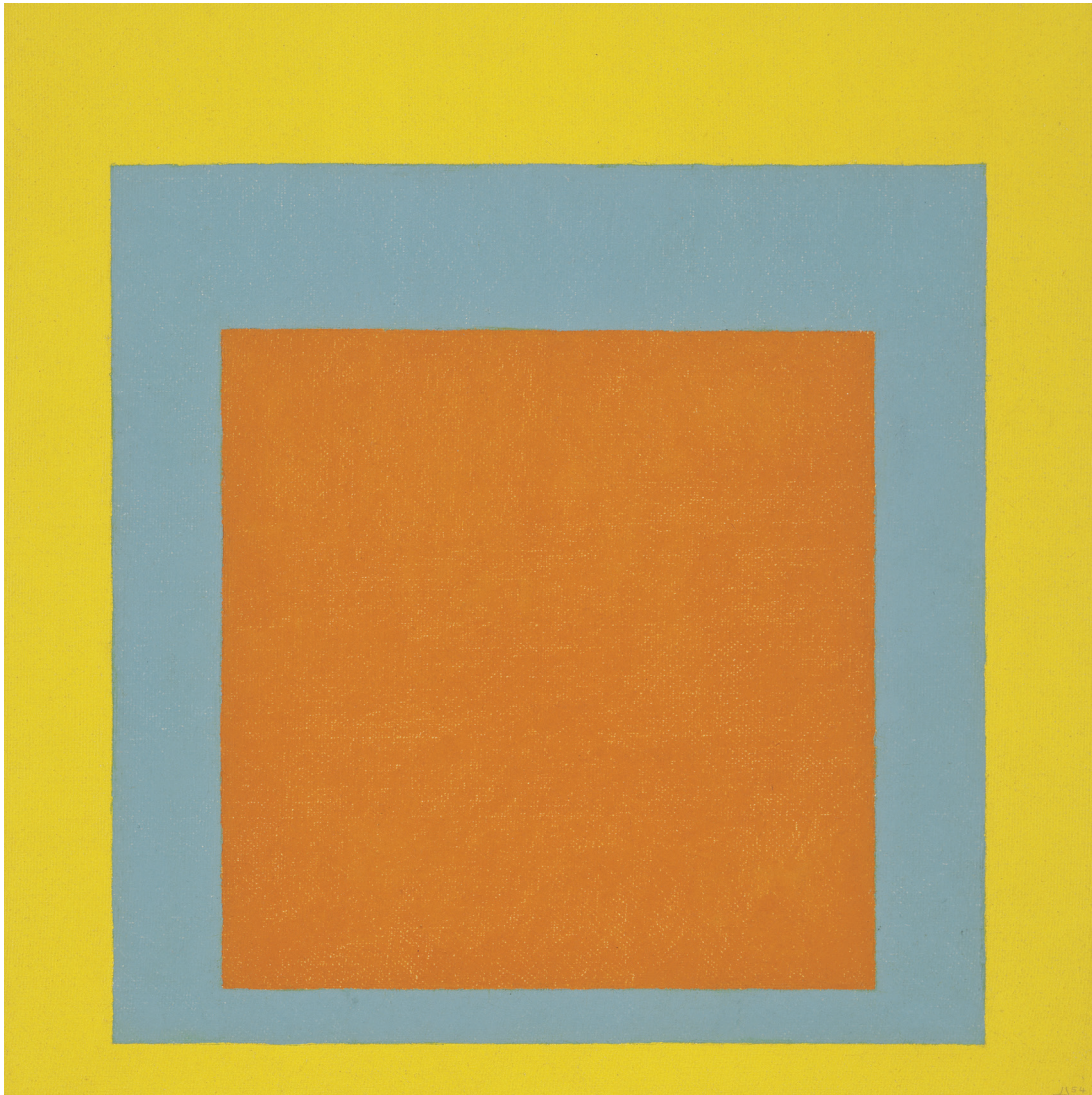
# Josef Albers

Born 1888, Bottrop, Germany; died New Haven, Connecticut, U.S. 1976





**Josef Albers** was born in Germany. He studied art and later became a professor at the Bauhaus, a famous art school in Weimar, Germany. When the Bauhaus closed in 1933, Albers moved to the United States, where he taught at Black Mountain College and later at Yale University. Albers was an important art teacher, and many of his students went on to become famous artists. In his own work, Albers became very well known for his study of color. He discovered he could change the mood of a painting depending on the color combinations he used. Albers painted his colored squares until he died at the age of 88.



Josef Albers, *Homage to the Square: Confident*, 1954

Josef Albers created over 1,000 paintings, each titled *Homage to the Square*. An **homage** pays tribute to or honors something or someone. The works all depict squares of different sizes nested within each other, based on a mathematically determined format. He used this format as a way to explore the effects that colors have on each other.

Albers once said that the square was “the only dish I serve my craziness for color in.”

## Fun Fact!

When Albers was a young boy, he would watch his father, who was a house painter, paint doors as if they were works of art. Once he became an artist himself, he said he was inspired by the colors and shapes he saw around him every day—particularly the shapes of buildings.

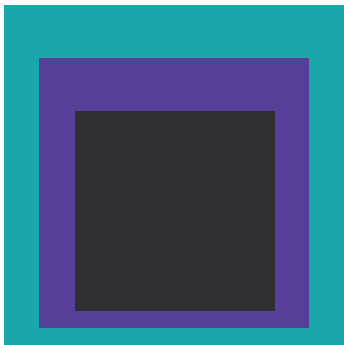
What shapes and colors do you see every day at home, at school, or in your neighborhood?

Choose one object you see every day. What simple shape would you use to represent that object? What colors would you use?

## Explore

The *Homage to the Square* painting on the opposite page has a second part to its title: *Confident*. **Confident** means believing in yourself and your abilities, and having a feeling of trust. Do you think the colors in this painting convey that idea? Why or why not? What colors would you choose to express feeling confident?

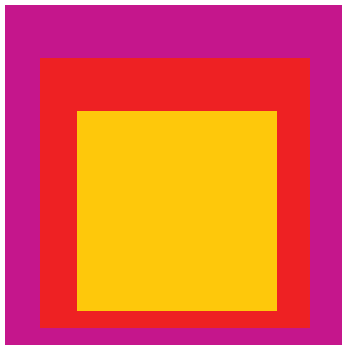
Give the following Albers-inspired color combinations a second part to their title that you think reflects the mood or feeling that the colors express.



*Homage to the Square:*

.....

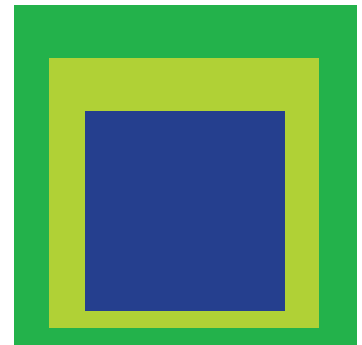
.....



*Homage to the Square:*

.....

.....



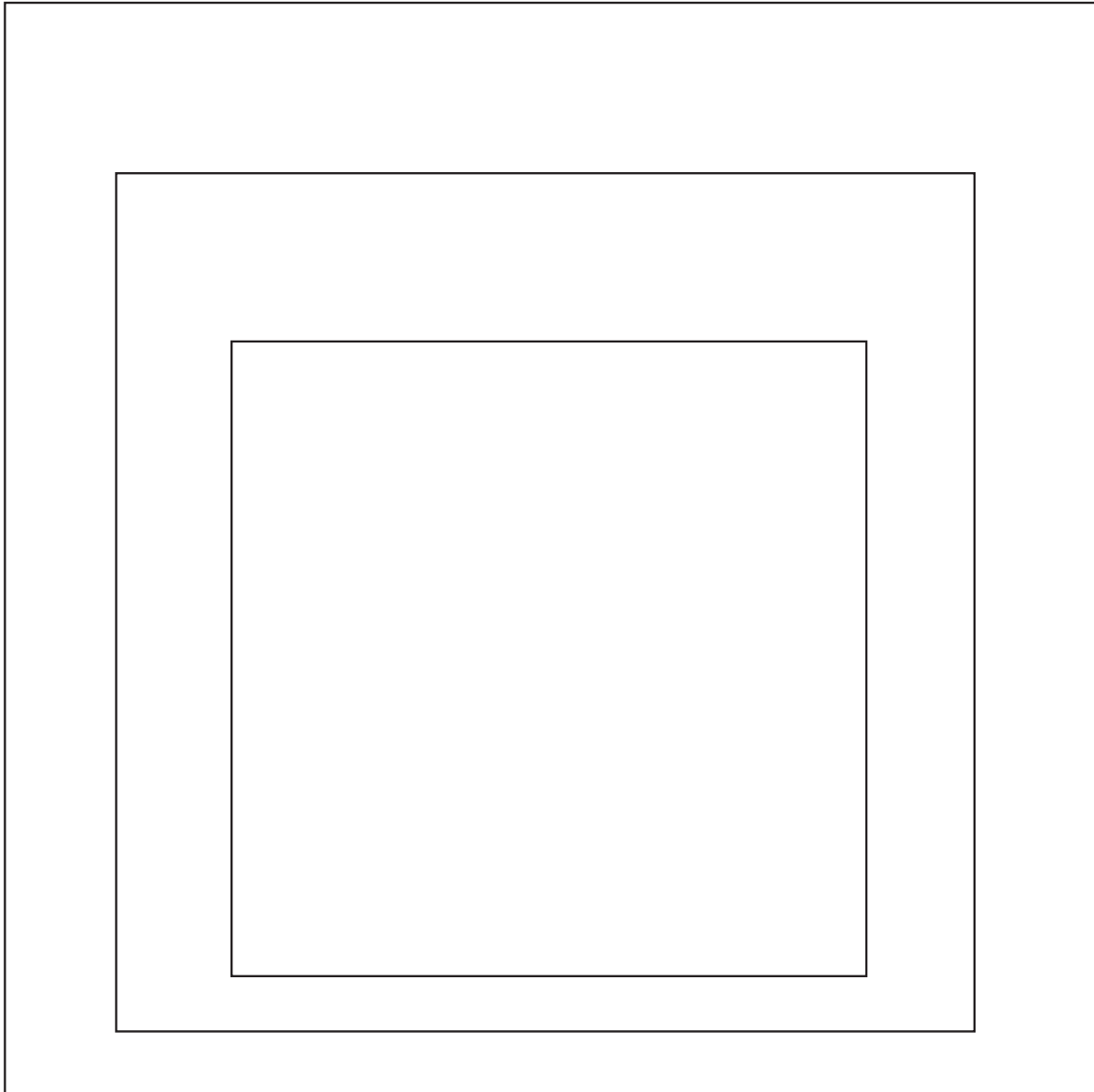
*Homage to the Square:*

.....

.....

## Create

Think about a mood, feeling, or idea that you want to convey. Using Albers's template, fill in each square with colors you think will best express that idea, feeling, or mood.



Front cover image: Josef Albers, *Homage to the Square: Confident*, 1954 (detail); collection SFMOMA, gift of Anni Albers and the Josef Albers Foundation; © The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, 2020

For more information about this work, check out [sfmoma.org](https://sfmoma.org).