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Crayon color cornucopia: renaming the rainbow?

on a lighter note...

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Long ago, it only took a handful of crayons to inspire a child's imagination. Armed with nothing more than red, yellow and blue crayons, we could unleash an endless supply of doodles, squiggles and stick figures; but in an ever-changing world, even the innocent art, or lack thereof, of coloring was bound to be affected.

Today, if you were to go to the store and purchase a box of Crayola crayons, you will find that several of them have names more suitable for a spelling bee than a color. For instance, one crayon that looks to be a dark blue is labeled as "cerulean." According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the word cerulean is derived from a Latin word which means "dark blue." Perhaps "dark blue" had too much of a negative connotation, and Crayola decided to resort to the obscure yet intelligent-sounding Latin. It's either that, or dark blue went through the Witness Protection Program after testifying against a fellow crayon.

If someone were to ask you what color crayon would be best suited for the name "Wisteria," what would you say?

"I'm looking for a crayon, goes by the name Wisteria."



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"Well, what does he look like?"

"He is a shade of purple resembling the flower of a leguminous Asian vine."

"Umm...let me check in the back..."

Truth be told, it was hard enough trying to figure out that violet meant purple and indigo meant blue. Now they go and add to the mayhem with colors like "razzmatazz," "cerise" and "fuzzy wuzzy brown."

Oddly named colors are not the only new thing to come from Crayola. Now available is the Crayola 16-count Multicultural Crayons pack. You read right, Crayola has turned our differing ethnic skin colors into a marketable box of politically correct crayons. Of course it wouldn't be proper to give those crayons names such as "Asian" or "Hispanic" so it instead resorted to "raw sienna," "goldenrod," "burnt sienna," "mahogany," "salmon" and "tan." The end to racial slurs as we know it? Probably not, but there's really no harm in letting kids grow up thinking they're sienna-skinned. Then again, maybe there is.

So it may not be the end of the world for Crayola to revamp its line of colored wax. However, one can never be quite sure of what is to come when children are improving their vocabulary beyond the grasp of the typical college student while they color. At least Crayola has made some less trivial advances such as washable crayons. Although, contrary to popular belief, "washable" does not mean you can put them in the washing machine with your load of white linens, let alone in the dryer.

Although the world of coloring may be continuously shifting, one thing will always remain true: Make your girlfriend a card with a \$2 pack of crayons, a piece of white paper folded in half and 20 minutes of your time, and it will always be worth your weight in brownie points, no matter how lousy you are at drawing.

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