



Standard Practice for Calculating Yellowness and Whiteness Indices from Instrumentally Measured Color Coordinates¹

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This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the Department of Defense.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice provides numbers that correlate with visual ratings of yellowness or whiteness of white and near-white or colorless object-color specimens, viewed in daylight by an observer with normal color vision. White textiles, paints, and plastics are a few of the materials that can be described by the indices of yellowness or whiteness calculated by this practice.

1.2 For a complete analysis of object colors, by a specified observer and under a specified illuminant, use of three parameters is required. For near-white specimens, however, it is often useful to calculate single-number scales of yellowness or whiteness. This practice provides recommended equations for such scales and discusses their derivations and uses, and limits to their applicability (see also Ref (1)²).

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:³

D 1535 Practice for Specifying Color by the Munsell System

D 1729 Practice for Visual Appraisal of Colors and Color Differences of Diffusely-Illuminated Opaque Materials

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E12 on Color and Appearance and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E12.04 on Color and Appearance Analysis.

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² The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this practice.

³ For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

D 1925 Test Method for Yellowness Index of Plastics⁴

E 284 Terminology of Appearance

E 308 Practice for Computing the Colors of Objects by Using the CIE System

E 805 Practice for Identification of Instrumental Methods of Color or Color-Difference Measurement of Materials

E 991 Practice for Color Measurement of Fluorescent Specimens³

E 1164 Practice for Obtaining Spectrophotometric Data for Object-Color Evaluation

E 1247 Practice for Detecting Fluorescence in Object-Color Specimens by Spectrophotometry

E 1331 Test Method for Reflectance Factor and Color by Spectrophotometry Using Hemispherical Geometry

E 1345 Practice for Reducing the Effect of Variability of Color Measurement by Use of Multiple Measurements³

E 1347 Test Method for Color and Color-Difference Measurement by Tristimulus (Filter) Colorimetry³

E 1348 Test Method for Transmittance and Color by Spectrophotometry Using Hemispherical Geometry

E 1349 Test Method for Reflectance Factor and Color by Spectrophotometry Using Bidirectional Geometry³

E 1360 Practice for Specifying Color by Using the Optical Society of America Uniform Color Scales System

E 1499 Guide for Selection, Evaluation, and Training of Observers

E 1541 Practice for Specifying and Matching Color Using the Colorcurve System³

3. Terminology

3.1 Terms and definitions in Terminology **E 284** are applicable to this practice.

3.2 Definitions:

3.2.1 *perfect reflecting diffuser, n*—ideal reflecting surface that neither absorbs nor transmits light, but reflects diffusely, with the radiance of the reflecting surface being the same for all reflecting angles, regardless of the angular distribution of the incident light.

⁴ Withdrawn.



3.2.2 *whiteness, n* —the attribute of color perception by which an object color is judged to approach the preferred white.

3.2.3 *whiteness index, WI , n* —a number, computed by a given procedure from colorimetric data, that indicates the degree of departure of an object color from that of a preferred white.

3.2.4 *yellowness, n* —the attribute of color perception by which an object color is judged to depart from colorless or a preferred white toward yellow.

3.2.5 *yellowness index, YI , n* —a number, computed by a given procedure from colorimetric or spectrophotometric data, that indicates the degree of departure of an object color from colorless or from a preferred white, toward yellow.

3.2.5.1 *Discussion*—Negative values of YI denote departure toward blue.

3.3 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Practice:

3.3.1 *near white, n* —a color having a Munsell value greater than 8.3 (luminous reflectance factor $Y = 63$) and Munsell chroma no greater than 0.5 for B hues, 0.8 for Y hues, and 0.3 for all other hues.

3.3.2 *preferred white, n* —color of a white standard used as the basis for calculating indices of whiteness or yellowness as the departure of the color of the specimen from that of the preferred white; in this practice, the perfect reflecting diffuser.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 The calculations described in this practice assume that specimens have been measured according to Practices E 1164 and E 308 and one of the Test Methods E 1331, E 1347, E 1348, or E 1349, depending on the type of specimen and measuring instrument used (see also Practice E 805).

4.2 This practice takes as a starting point for the calculations CIE tristimulus values X , Y , and Z for one of the CIE standard observers and one of the CIE standard or recommended illuminants of daylight quality. Such tristimulus values are available by use of modern color measuring instruments.

4.3 Equations for the preferred methods of calculating YI and WI are described in Sections 6 and 7, respectively. Equations for calculating other quantities used as indices of yellowness or whiteness are given in Appendix X1 and Appendix X2, respectively.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This practice should be used only to compare specimens of the same material and same general appearance. For example, a series of specimens to be compared should have generally similar gloss, texture, and (if not opaque) thickness, and translucency.

5.2 For yellowness measurement, this practice is limited to specimens having dominant wavelength in the range 570 to 580 nm, or Munsell hue approximately 2.5GY to 2.5 Y. For whiteness measurement, this practice is limited to specimens having Munsell value greater than 8.3 (CIE Y greater than 65) and Munsell chroma no greater than 0.5 for B hues, 0.8 for Y hues, and 0.3 for all other hues (see 3.3.1).

5.3 The combination of measurement and calculation leading to indices of yellowness or whiteness is a psychophysical process, that is, the procedures specified are designed to

provide numbers correlating with visual estimates made under specified typical observing conditions. Because visual observing conditions can vary widely, users should compare calculated indices with visual estimates to ensure applicability. Some standards addressing the visual estimation of color and color difference are Practices D 1535, D 1729, E 1360, and E 1541, and Guide E 1499.

5.4 This practice does not cover the preparation of specimens, a procedure that may affect significantly the quantities measured. In general, specimens should be prepared and presented for measurement in the manner that is standard for the test being performed. Select enough specimens or specimen areas to provide an average result that is representative of each sample to be tested. See Practice E 1345.

6. Yellowness Index

6.1 *Background*—The currently recommended equation for the calculation of yellowness index is derived from an equation due to Hunter (2) in 1942: $YI = (A - B)/G$, where A , B , and G are, respectively, amber or red, blue, and green colorimeter readings. Another version, used in the 1940s to 1960s for transparent plastics (3, 4), was based on transmittances near the ends of the visible wavelength region: $YI = 100(T_{680} - T_{420})/T_{560}$ (with a factor of 100 introduced to give values of YI near unity). This equation failed to account correctly for differences in the spectral transmittance curves of such plastics, especially after the adoption of ultraviolet light absorbers to improve weathering, and was soon abandoned. When, in 1957, ASTM solicited new equations for calculating yellowness indices, Hunter's equation was converted (5) into CIE tristimulus value form by using Hunter's approximate relations between colorimeter readings and those tristimulus values; the resulting equation, $YI = 100(1.28X - 1.06Z)/Y$, was adopted for use in Test Method D 1925 in 1962.

6.1.1 In the original form of Test Method E 313, an alternative equation was recommended for a yellowness index. In terms of colorimeter readings, it was $YI = 100(1 - B/G)$. Its derivation assumed that, because of the limitation of the concept to yellow (or blue) colors, it was not necessary to take account of variations in the amber or red colorimeter reading A . This equation is no longer recommended.

6.2 *Significant Digits and Precision*—The coefficients of Test Method D 1925 equation were rounded to the number of digits shown, commensurate with the precision of then-existing color measurement instrumentation. It was not intended that more significance should be attributed to values of YI than that implicit in this number of digits. As instrumentation was improved, however, it was found that some instruments unexpectedly gave nonzero values of YI for clear air or the perfect reflecting diffuser. One suggested ((1), p. 205) remedy for this presumed failure of the equation was to increase the number of digits in the numerical coefficients from two to ten after the decimal point, despite the obvious lack of significance of most of these digits. With modern instrumentation, it is believed that two digits added to the coefficients in the original Test Method D 1925 equation suffice to bring the nonzero value of YI below 0.0005 on average. The new coefficients are given to this precision in 6.3.

6.3 Derivation of Equations—Several sets of coefficients are involved in the derivation of the final equations recommended for calculating yellowness indices. With them evaluated, it is possible to derive highly precise equations for both the CIE 1931 standard observer and the 1964 supplementary standard observer, in combination with either CIE standard illuminant *C* or *D*₆₅. The results are given in [Table 1](#).

6.3.1 The first set of coefficients required, consists of the tristimulus values *X*_n, *Y*_n, and *Z*_n of the perfect reflecting diffuser (or clear air) for the above observer-illuminant combinations. These are established by the CIE, and for the present derivation were taken from the tables of tristimulus weighting factors in Practice [E 308](#).

6.3.2 From these “white point” values, it is possible to calculate the coefficients in Hunter’s equation relating tristimulus value *X* and colorimeter readings *A* and *B*: $X = X_n (F_A A + F_B B)$, thus improving on the approximation $F_A = 0.8$ and $F_B = 0.2$ originally used.

6.3.3 Finally, the coefficients in revised Test Method [D 1925](#) equations for *YI* can be calculated, rounded, and adjusted in the last retained significant digit to minimize the residual error in the white point values. These coefficients are given in [Table 1](#) as *C*_X and *C*_Z in the recommended equation for yellowness index:

$$YI = 100(C_X X - C_Z Z)/Y \quad (1)$$

The tabulation of the residual white point error completes the table.

7. Whiteness Index

7.1 Background—The earliest equation for whiteness index *WI* appears to be due to MacAdam ([6](#)) and related *WI* to excitation purity. This and other equations utilizing the purity have largely been abandoned. Judd ([7](#)) appears to have been the first to recognize that a whiteness index should incorporate two terms, one based on the lightness of the specimen relative to that of a preferred white, and the other describing the difference in chromaticity between the specimen and that preferred white. Much debate has arisen over the years as to the nature of the preferred white, but at the present time the perfect reflecting diffuser is almost always adopted as that reference.

7.1.1 In the original form of Test Method [E 313](#), the equation for *WI* was based on the above premise and the use of colorimeter readings *G* and *B* only. It was found that the chromaticity factor $G - B$ required three to four times the weighting of the lightness factor *G*. Hence the equation was written $WI = G - 4(G - B) = 4B - 3G$. This equation is no longer recommended.

7.2 CIE Equations—The equations for whiteness recommended in this practice were derived and published ([8](#)) by the CIE. Two equations are given, one for the whiteness index *WI* and another for a tint index *T*. Their coefficients are given in [Table 2](#). The CIE gave coefficients for both standard observers and Ill. *D*₆₅; those for the 1931 observer and Ill. *C* were taken from the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists (AATCC) method for *WI* ([9](#)); and those for the 1964 observer and Ill. *C* and Ill. *D*₅₀ were estimated by Subcommittee E12.04. Those for Ill. *C* and Ill. *D*₅₀ and both observers are unofficial and should be used for in-house comparisons only.

7.2.1 Equation for Whiteness Index *WI*:

$$WI = Y + (WI, x)(x_n - x) + (WI, y)(y_n - y) \quad (2)$$

where:

Y, *x*, *y* = the luminance factor and the chromaticity coordinates of the specimen,
*x*_n and *y*_n = the chromaticity coordinates for the CIE standard illuminant and source used, and
WI, *x* and *WI*, *y* = numerical coefficients.

Values for all these except those measured for the specimen are given in [Table 2](#).

7.2.2 Equation for Tint Index *T*:

$$T = T, x(x_n - x) - T, y(y_n - y) \quad (3)$$

where the symbols have meanings analogous to those in [7.2.1](#).

7.3 Notes and Restrictions to the CIE Equations—The CIE notes the following regarding the use of equations for *WI* and *T*:

7.3.1 The application of the equations is restricted to specimens that are called “white” commercially, that are similar in color and fluorescence, and that are measured on the same instrument at about the same time. Under these conditions their use should give relative, but not absolute, evaluations of whiteness that are adequate for commercial use.

7.3.2 The higher the value of *WI*, the greater is the indicated whiteness. The more positive the value of *T*, the greater is the indicated greenish tint of the specimen; the more negative the value of *T*, the greater is its reddish tint. Lines of equal *T* are approximately parallel to the line of dominant wavelength 466 nm. For the perfect reflecting diffuser, *WI* = 100 and *T* = 0.

7.3.3 Equal differences in *WI* or *T* do not always represent equal perceptual differences in whiteness or tint, respectively.

7.3.4 These equations should be used only for specimens with $40 < WI < (5Y - 280)$ and $-3 < T < +3$.

TABLE 1 Coefficients of the Equations for Yellowness Index

Quantity	CIE Standard Illuminant and Standard Observer			
	<i>C</i> , 1931	<i>D</i> ₆₅ , 1931	<i>C</i> , 1964	<i>D</i> ₆₅ , 1964
<i>X</i> _n	98.074	95.047	97.285	94.811
<i>Y</i> _n	100.000	100.000	100.000	100.000
<i>Z</i> _n	118.232	108.883	116.145	107.304
<i>F</i> _A	0.7987	0.8105	0.7987	0.8103
<i>F</i> _B	0.2013	0.1895	0.2013	0.1897
<i>C</i> _X	1.2769	1.2985	1.2871	1.3013
<i>C</i> _Z	1.0592	1.1335	1.0781	1.1498
Residual error	−0.0006	−0.0004	−0.0004	−0.0006

TABLE 2 Coefficients for the Equations for CIE Whiteness Index and Tint

Value	CIE Standard Illuminant and Observer					
	<i>C</i> , 31	<i>D</i> ₅₀ , 31	<i>D</i> ₆₅ , 31	<i>C</i> , 64	<i>D</i> ₅₀ , 64	<i>D</i> ₆₅ , 64
<i>x</i> _n	0.3101	0.3457	0.3127	0.3104	0.3477	0.3138
<i>y</i> _n	0.3161	0.3585	0.3290	0.3191	0.3595	0.3310
<i>WI</i> , <i>x</i>	800	800	800	800	800	800
<i>WI</i> , <i>y</i>	1700	1700	1700	1700	1700	1700
<i>T</i> , <i>x</i>	1000	1000	1000	900	900	900
<i>T</i> , <i>y</i>	650	650	650	650	650	650



8. Apparatus

8.1 *Color Measuring Instrument*—Spectrophotometer or tristimulus (filter) colorimeter, capable of producing CIE tristimulus values and chromaticity coordinates for either CIE standard observer and the desired CIE standard illuminants of daylight quality, for a CIE recommended geometry. The instrument should meet the manufacturer's requirements for calibration.

8.1.1 If the specimens are known or suspected to be fluorescent (see Practice E 1247), the choice of instrument optical geometry can affect the measurement results. When hemispherical (integrating sphere) geometry is used for measuring fluorescent specimens, the spectral power distribution of the illuminating system may be altered by the reflected and emitted power from the specimen. The use of bidirectional geometry is therefore preferable. In addition, follow the requirements of Practice E 991 with respect to the spectral output of the instrument illuminator.

8.2 *Standards*—The primary standard of reflectance shall be the perfect reflecting diffuser. Instrument standards calibrated in terms of the perfect reflecting diffuser or the perfect transmitting diffuser shall be used in standardizing the instrument.

9. Procedure

9.1 Operate the color measuring instrument according to the manufacturer's instructions for standardization and measurement. Refer to Practices E 308 and E 1164 and, according to the instrument type and geometry, Test Method E 1331, E 1347, E 1348, or E 1349.

9.1.1 In addition to the standards required or furnished by the manufacturer, it is desirable to measure periodically one or more system verification standards with known values of yellowness or whiteness.

9.2 If not carried out automatically by the instrument, print, display, or store values of X , Y , Z , x , y for the specimens for use in calculations.

9.2.1 Make as many repeat measurements as required (refer to Practice E 1345) and average the resulting values of X , Y , Z , x , y . Use the averaged values in calculations.

10. Calculations

10.1 As required, calculate for each specimen the value of YI by Eq 1, of WI by Eq 2, and of T by Eq 3.

10.1.1 Refer to Appendix X1 and Appendix X2 for other equations used in the past for calculating indices of yellowness and whiteness. Such equations may be used if desired, but the resulting values will in all probability differ from those obtained by use of the recommended equations of this practice.

11. Report

11.1 The report shall include the following information:

11.1.1 Manufacturer, model, geometry, and any further identification required for the instrument used,

11.1.2 Illuminant(s) and observer(s) for which data are reported,

11.1.3 Specimen identifications for each measurement,

11.1.3.1 If multiple measurements were made of a single specimen and set of conditions, number of measurements,

11.1.4 Indices of yellowness, whiteness, and tint as required, and

11.1.5 Special considerations including the following:

11.1.5.1 If the specimens were fluorescent, details of the instrument light source as required in Practice E 991, and

11.1.5.2 If the specimens were transparent or translucent, the thickness of each specimen.

11.2 It is good practice for the report to include the following information:

11.2.1 Measured values of X , Y , Z for each measurement, and

11.2.1.1 If multiple measurements were made of a single specimen and set of conditions, average values of X , Y , Z .

12. Keywords

12.1 color; colorimetric analysis; color/light; instrumental measurement; reflectance; reflectivity; whiteness indexes; yellowness indexes

APPENDIXES

(Nonmandatory Information)

X1. ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF YELLOWNESS

X1.1 *Positive Values of the Yellowness-Blueness Coordinate of Any Opponent-Color Space:*

X1.1.1 Such coordinates include Hunter b Refs (1, 5); CIELAB b^* , (Refs 1, 8, and Practice E 308); and CIELUV v^* (Refs 1, 8, and Practice E 308). The equations for these coordinates are given in the references cited.

X1.2 *Values of the Chroma Coordinate of Any Opponent-Color Space When Expressed in the Coordinates Hue, Lightness, and Chroma:*

X1.2.1 Such coordinates include chroma derived for the Hunter system:

$$C_H = (a^2 + b^2)^{1/2} \quad (\text{X1.1})$$

and CIELAB and CIELUV chromas. The equations for these quantities are given in the references cited in X1.1.1.

X1.3 Hunter β' , Ref (2):

$$\beta' = 88.4 G^{1/4} (G - B)/(R + 2G + B) \quad (\text{X1.2})$$

X1.4 Scofield b Refs (1, 10):



$$b = 2B G^{1/2} (G - B)/(R + 2G + B) \quad (\text{X1.3})$$

(Ref 12, and Practice E 1360):

X1.5 Friele's Yellowness Index Refs (1, 11):

$$YI = 1/2 (R + G)/B \quad (\text{X1.4})$$

$$j = C (R^{1/3} + 8G^{1/3} - 9.7B^{1/3}) \quad (\text{X1.5})$$

where the quantities required for the calculation are defined in Eqs 3, Eqs 5, and Eqs 6 of Practice E 1360.

X1.6 Optical Society of America Uniform Color Scales *j*X1.7 The equation $YI = 100(1 - B/G)$ discussed in 6.1.1.

X2. ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF WHITENESS

X2.1 Hunter, 1942 Refs (1, 2):

$$WI = 100 - \{ [220 (G - B)/(G + 0.242B)]^2 + [(100 - G)/2]^2 \}^{1/2} \quad (\text{X2.1})$$

Berger Ref (15):

$$WI = Y + 3.108Z - 3.831X \quad (\text{X2.4})$$

(For the CIE 2° Standard Observer/Illuminant C)

X2.2 Hunter, 1960 Refs (1, 13):

$$WI = L - 3b = 10 (Y - 21)^{1/2} (Y - 0.847Z)/Y^{1/2} \quad (\text{X2.2})$$

X2.2.3

The equation $WI = 4 B - 3G$ discussed in 7.1.1: when written in the equivalent form $WI = 3.388 Z - 3 Y$, this equation is known as Taube's whiteness equation.

X2.2.1

Stensby Refs (1, 14):

$$WI = L - 3b + 3a \quad (\text{X2.3})$$

X2.2.4

Equations containing the excitation purity Refs (1, 6).

X2.2.2

NOTE X2.1—Other compilations of whiteness equations are found in Refs (16-19).

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