Example

row keys	column family "color"	column family "shape"
"first"	"red": "#F00" "blue": "#00F" "yellow": "#FF0"	"square": "4"
"second"		"triangle": "3" "square": "4"

row (labeling the "first" row)

row (labeling the "second" row)

Column Families

- Each column family stores values of a similar type

- However, a row key can be associated with an arbitrary number of column families

- In the previous example, row key "second" does not have a value for "color"

- Why not store everything in one column family?

  - This would basically lead to a KV store (with large values)

  - Column families allow independent performance tuning of each family