

Dark Mode Color Reference

Dark Mode Pattern Design: Techniques & Pitfalls

About This Document

This reference accompanies the article: Dark Mode Pattern Design: Techniques & Pitfalls

Read the full article at: <https://svgeneration.com/docs/dark-mode-pattern-design>

Article Summary

Design patterns that look stunning in both light and dark modes without duplicating SVG files or JavaScript complexity.

The Core Challenge

Light-mode patterns typically use a light background with a slightly darker or more saturated motif. Naively inverting these colours for dark mode produces washed-out or garish results. Effective dark-mode patterns require carefully chosen colours not just inversions and often different visual weights.

Strategy 1: Opacity-Based Patterns

The most versatile approach: design patterns where the foreground motif uses a neutral colour at low opacity (e.g., `fill="white" fill-opacity="0.08"`). On a light background, this gives a subtle light grey motif. In dark mode, you only need to change the background-color the white-at-8% motif naturally becomes a light shimmer on dark. No SVG changes required.

Strategy 2: CSS Custom Properties

Define pattern colours as CSS variables, then override them in a dark-mode media query. Since CSS variables don't work directly inside base64 SVGs, pre-compute two data URIs (light and dark) and swap them via `@media (prefers-color-scheme: dark)`. More maintenance overhead than Strategy 1, but gives full control over both appearances.

Free Resources

Visit [SVGeneration.com](https://svgeneration.com) for 600 free SVG background patterns. No attribution required.

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