Describing colour

When describing colours, it is useful to break it down into its constituent parts. Archaeologists often use a Munsell Colour Chart to help identify specific colours. This uses three elements (value, hue and colour) to describe a colour. A simpler method can be used to cover the soils you will see at most sites, and the colours and descriptions you see above give a good range of what you might find. When describing a soil colour, make sure you have a clean sample on the end of your trowel. Next, try and break the colour you see down into three main elements:

- **modifier** - lightness or darkness, eg how would you describe the tone, is it light, mid or dark?
- **hue** - the group of colours which the soil colour might fit into, such as reddish, yellowish, greyish, brownish
- **colour** - the main description for colour? Is it a grey, brown, yellow?

Now you just need to combine these elements to give your colour, mid yellowish grey, or dark greyish brown. The colour blocks above are not exhaustive, but should give a guiding hand!