



## watercolor supplies

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> watercolor paper      | <input type="checkbox"/> paper towel              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> paints                | <input type="checkbox"/> pencil                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> various round brushes | <input type="checkbox"/> eraser                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> palette               | <input type="checkbox"/> masking fluid (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jar of water          | <input type="checkbox"/> gouache (optional)       |

One of the very best parts of watercolor (besides the gorgeous paint effect!) is how accessible it is. The few supplies you need are readily available at your local craft store or online and you can set up your work space easily. All you'll need is a flat surface and enough space for your paper, paints and a jar of water.

Because there are only a few items you'll be purchasing, set yourself up for success by buying the best quality you can afford. There really is a difference between the kids' craft quality and artist versions and you'll be happy with your choice to upgrade.

The suggestions you'll find on the following pages are in the mid-range. Certainly not the most expensive, but great options for beginning to intermediate watercolor artists. These are the items I use every day in my artwork and they will serve you well in your watercolor endeavors.

Once you gather your supplies, the very best thing you can do is practice! The more you play with mixing colors, using your brushes, experimenting with paint:water ratios and developing your own style the more you will love the art of watercolor.

Enjoy!

xo,  
[handwritten signature]

# PAPER

Choose paper specifically made for watercolors (in other words, don't use regular printer paper!) Watercolor paper is thick and often slightly textured. It will not buckle and is less absorbent which will allow the paint to puddle and dry in its beautiful watercolor-y way.

Paper is available as tablets, single sheets, extra large pieces and blocks. Most often, I go with a tablet, but if you are looking for paper to stay completely flat while painting and drying, a watercolor block is a great option. Once your painting is complete, you can remove the top piece of paper to reveal the next on the block.

Hot press paper is smooth; cold press paper has texture. I prefer the texture, but you are welcome to pick your favorite!

When choosing your paper, aim for a least one step up from the kids' craft quality and you will be happy with the difference in how your paint will flow on the page and dry.

My favorite paper is Strathmore 400 series 140lb cold press. I typically use the 9x12 tablet and the 8.5x5.5 tablet. For my small daily sketches, I cut down the 8.5x5.5 to 4.25x5.5.

## PAPER RECOMMENDATIONS:



STRATHMORE 400 SERIES  
9x12 WIRE BOUND  
\$10



STRATHMORE 400 SERIES  
8.5x5.5 TAPE BOUND  
\$5



ARCHES 140lb  
7x10 BLOCK  
\$20

# *PAIN*T

There are so many options for watercolor paint - its very likely you have some hiding in a craft drawer or your kids' art supplies right now! There are two main categories of paints to choose from:

## PAINT PAN SETS

This is what you likely imagine when you think about watercolor paint. Most basic sets typically contain round dried or semi-moist cakes with 8 basic colors - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown and black. Some palettes come with many more colors.

To use pan paints, you'll add water directly into the paint to moisten it and can mix a variety of colors.

I have found that the less expensive classroom sets (or those specifically marketed to kids) are great beginner sets, but the colors are much less saturated and true. It is a good idea to find a set that is labeled "professional" or "artist quality" for better results.

## PAINT RECOMMENDATIONS:



*PRANG PROFESSIONAL  
SEMI-MOIST CAKES*

*\$15*



*WINSOR & NEWTON  
POCKET KIT*

*\$20*



*KURATAKE  
36 COLOR SET*

*\$28*

## *PAIN* (CONTINUED...)

Pan sets are great, especially for a beginning artist. When you feel ready to try something a bit more pigmented and saturated, give tube paints a try.

### TUBE PAINTS

A tube of watercolor is a wet paste (similar to the consistency of toothpaste) and are better quality than a pan set. You can find sets with the basic colors and supplement with a wide assortment of colors. These paints are more expensive, but so highly concentrated that you will get many uses out of one small tube.

To use, I like to add little dollops of paint to a paint palette and let it dry overnight. To activate the dried paint, add water (just like you do with the paint pans). You can certainly use the paint straight from the tube, but it is more difficult to control the saturation when the paint is fresh from the tube.

### PAINT RECOMMENDATIONS:



*REEVES WATERCOLOR SET*

*24 PIECES*

*\$22*



*WINSOR & NEWTON  
COTMAN STUDENT QUALITY*

*\$28*



*WINSOR & NEWTON  
PROFESSIONAL QUALITY*

*\$130*

## BRUSHES

There are three parts that make up a brush. The handle, usually made of wood, the bristles, either made with animal hair or synthetic and the metal part that connects the two called the ferule. Watercolor brushes come in a wide variety of sizes, shapes and quality. The best brushes have sable bristles (from weasel fur!) and are well loved for their ability to hold and distribute paint. However, sable brushes can be quite expensive and fortunately there are great synthetic options available.

For most general watercolor painting, you'll want a few different sizes of good quality round brushes. Make sure you choose brushes that have a nice point at the end. Most brushes that come with a paint set are not an excellent quality and make it challenging to control the paint and make a fine line. You'll be surprised at how fine of a line you can paint with a large round brush as long as it has a good point. Once a brush no longer holds a point, it's time to replace it.

I typically paint using four round brush sizes - 6, 4, 2, 1 and because I tend to paint with fine details, I like to have a few different tiny liner brushes.

To care for your brushes, be sure to rinse thoroughly with clean water and lay flat to dry. Never leave a brush point-down in the water as this will damage the bristles.

### BRUSH RECOMMENDATIONS:



PRINCETON  
ROUND BRUSH SET  
\$14



DAVINCI SYNTHETIC  
LINER  
\$12



PRINCETON SYNTHETIC  
SIZE 6  
\$12



DAVINCI SABLE  
SIZE 6  
\$30

## *PALETTE*

In order to mix your paint, you'll want a paint palette. One of the benefits of using a pan set is that the palette is built in to the box. Use the little plastic wells to mix your paint with water or create your own custom colors. When you are finished painting, just let the paint dry on the palette and when you are ready to paint again, you can reactivate the dried paint with water. After a few sessions of painting, your palette will be messy, but beautiful!

If you are using tube paints, you can purchase plastic palettes in various sizes and shapes that fit your needs. An even better options is to mix your paint on a white ceramic or porcelain dish. Watercolor tends to bead up on plastic, but will lay smooth on ceramic and so it makes an excellent paint palette. Again, once your painting session is over, just let the paint dry and you can reactivate with water the next time.

### PALETTE RECOMMENDATIONS:



*ROUND PLASTIC  
PALETTE*

*\$4*



*BUTCHER TRAY  
PALETTE*

*\$10*



*CERAMIC RECTANGULAR  
PALETTE*

*\$14*

NOTE: before you purchase a palette, check your kitchen cupboard! A simple white plate or serving dish will work perfectly!

## *WATER*

The key to watercolor is WATER! Whether you are using paint pans or tube watercolors, water will be the main ingredient to activate, mix and get that transparent look we all love. Adding more water will dilute your paint, resulting in a lighter hue.

There is no special requirement for water; use tap, bottled, warm, cold. Just make sure you refresh the water once it becomes dirty to keep your paints as true to color as possible.

A simple widemouth container will work well for holding your water. I prefer clear glass so that I can tell when the water needs changing.

WATER VESSEL RECOMMENDATION:



*WIDE MOUTH*

*PINT JAR*

*\$10 for 4*

## *PAPER TOWEL*

Next to your paints and water, you'll want a paper towel. I like to fold a full-size towel in half to make it extra absorbant. You will use the paper towel to dry your brush, remove excess paint from your brush and to blot up any mistakes. Watercolors are very forgiving and if you drop paint where you don't want it, you can use a small piece of paper towel to soak it up. The paper towel is also a great place to let your brushes dry once they have been thoroughly rinsed.

## PENCIL + ERASER

Before you put paint to paper, you may want to lightly sketch out your subject. I prefer to use a very fine mechanical pencil to create faint sketches and actually find the pencil lines to be quite charming in the finished painting. You can, of course, erase the pencil marks after if you prefer.

Look for a good quality white eraser to avoid those marks that can be left behind with a pencil eraser.

PENCIL + ERASER RECOMMENDATIONS:



*TUL 0.5*  
*MECHANICAL PENCIL*  
\$7.50 for 2



*WHITE PEARL*  
*ERASER*  
\$4

## MASKING FLUID (optional)

Masking fluid is a great product to use when you want to leave parts of your paper unpainted. Simply paint on the masking fluid, allow it to dry and complete the rest of your painting. Once all of the paint has dried, use the rubber eraser to remove the dried masking fluid and the white paper will be revealed underneath. Be sure to wash your brush thoroughly as this will ruin your brushes if allowed to dry on the bristles, or try a masking fluid pen.

MASKING FLUID RECOMMENDATION:



*WINSOR & NEWTON*  
*MASKING FLUID*  
\$17



*RUBBER CEMENT*  
*ERASER*  
\$5



*MASKING FLUID*  
*PEN*  
\$8



## GOUACHE (optional)

Gouache (pronounced 'gwash', like squash) is similar to watercolor paint in that it is water-soluble but it is much more opaque. Unlike with watercolors, you can layer light gouache paint over top of dried darker colors.

I like to have a tube of white gouache to use to add white details once my painting is finished or to add splatter drops to give the effect of snow. Metallic paint is also fun to have on hand. If you want to expand your artist supplies, try adding a whole set of gouache paints to try out.

### GOUACHE RECOMMENDATIONS:



WINSOR & NEWTON  
WHITE GOUACHE  
\$10



WINSOR & NEWTON  
GOLD GOUACHE  
\$13



REEVES GOURACHE  
STARTER SET  
\$21

## WHITE PEN (optional)

A white paint pen is an excellent thing to keep on hand for making marks once your paint is dry.

### WHITE PEN RECOMMENDATIONS:



POSCA PAINT PEN  
EXTRA FINE  
\$3.95



UNI-BALL SIGNO  
GEL PEN  
\$5.50 for 2