



# Watercolor Painting



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# The Art & Science of Watercolor Painting

Age Level: All ages | Lesson Duration: Unlimited  
Learning Zone: Art Garden | Subject: Painting

**[WATCH THE VIDEO LESSON HERE!](#)**

## Materials Needed:

- Watercolors palette
- Paint brushes
- Watercolor paper taped on board
- Oil Pastel
- Extra sheets of plain paper
- Cup
- Water
- Paper towel
- Imagination

## Louisiana Standards:

VA-CE-M1, VA-CE-M2, VA-CE-M3, VA-CE-H1, VA-CE-H5, VA-AP-E1, VA-AP-E2, VA-AP-E3, VA-AP-E4, VA-AP-E5, VA-AP-M1, VA-AP-M3, VA-AP-H1

## Louisiana's Birth to 5 Early Learning & Development Standards:

AL1, CC2, LL2, PM2

## Learning Objectives:

For this activity the learner will use art to learn about the science of materials and the reaction of oil and water.



## History:

Watercolor is a type of paint which uses dry pigments (colors made from natural materials from the ground) and water. The first paintings ever created by humans were painted during the Paleolithic Era, 14,000 years ago. They used red dirt and black charcoal ground up and mixed with water to make paint. They painted images of animals inside caves, using their fingers and sticks as good luck symbols before hunts.

In more recent time, 700 years ago, artists discovered they could make brighter colors by grinding minerals, and stones to get blues, greens and yellows. Bright red and purple came from insects and shells. The Cochineal Beetle makes a bright red, and sea urchins make purple. Two hundred years ago new colors were created using chemistry. Today, scientists have figured out how to create almost any color you can imagine.

## Steps:

- Take out your materials, place them on a table or on the floor to work.
- Find a plastic cup and fill it 1/2 full of cool water. Put your brushes tip down in the water for them to soak.
- Open your paint box. Notice that the paint is dry - it will need to be activated or softened with water to change its state from a solid to a liquid.
- Put your brush in the water and dab (drop) water onto each of the colors.
- Wait a few minutes for the water to start reacting to soften the solid paint so you can use it.
- The paper we are using is called Watercolor Paper. Touch it, notice it's not smooth but instead slightly rough. Watercolor paper has texture which is called a "tooth" - compare it to the other paper in your kit.
- Watercolor paint will work on any type of paper but the "tooth" or texture makes the paper stronger, so it won't disintegrate (fall apart).
- Your watercolor paper is taped onto a cardboard - this keeps the paper flat as it dries and creates a frame or border around your completed painting, making it look professional.
- Take out your oil pastel, notice that it feels softer than a crayon. That is because it is made out of a soft oil. Draw on your paper with the pastel. You can draw lines, your name, a heart, a tree, an animal.

## Cool Science Fact:

If you were to leave your oil pastel in the sun it would get soft and melt. Oil pastels are soft version of a crayons. Crayons are made with wax, which is a form of oil that has a higher melting point. Any crayon or oil pastel will melt in the sun, but the pastel will melt faster because it has a lower melting point. You can try melting a broken piece of crayon or crayon and see what happens.

## **FOLLOW THIS LINK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OIL PASTELS**

### **Steps Cont'd:**

- When your drawing is done, it's time to paint ON TOP OF YOUR DRAWING. You will need to use your brush and water to paint.
- Experiment using different amounts of water. Try painting first with JUST the water and then add the watercolor paint. See how the paint reacts. Remember art is about practicing and discovery – there is no one way to make art. See how dark you can get your color. Try putting one color next to the other, you will notice that it bleeds – which means the colors run into each other and mix. Watercolor can never be totally opaque or solid looking. The water makes it transparent which means you can see through the color.
- Rinse your brush in water every time you change colors. If you mix your colors too much on the paper or in your palette they will turn “muddy.” – You can always rinse your palette under the tap to clean it off.
- Keep your paintbrush happy with lots of water. If it becomes too dry your paint won't work well. Fix this by dipping your brush back in the water. Also the bristles or hairs on the brush are fragile. If you rub them too hard on paper they will fall apart.
- As you paint, notice that your oil pastel drawing reacts to the water. Look closely, you will see the water is repelled by the oil in the pastel. This causes it to bead up and not stick to the lines you drew.
- Don't mix too many colors or your painting will turn brown – that's what happens when all colors mix.
- When you are done keep you painting flat to dry. Wash your brushes and dry, then place brush tip up in an empty cup or lay on a towel to dry. Clean off your watercolor palette by running it under water, close the lid and tidy up your work space.
- When your painting is dry, pull off the tape. Start at one end pulling up gently, it should release from the paper. If it tears use your glue stick to fix it.
- Watercolor painting is a great outside activity. Painting outside is called Plein Aire Painting. Paint more paintings using the paper included or find more paper in your house.

### **Follow Up Activities:**

- Dig up different types of dirt in your yard. Notice the different colors. Dirt is made from different kinds of minerals. Try mixing the dirt with water to create paint. What else can you paint with?