

Materials, Supplies for Beginners

To get started in realistic painting, we will keep it simple – just a few supplies are needed until you decide that you would like to delve deeper into this style of painting.

All you need for our free tutorials...

- Palette: Something to put the paint on - all you need is a plate or any white surface that repels water
- Some watercolor paints
- A round brush with a pointed tip
- Watercolor paper (any type of paper is fine)
- A container for water, and a towel and paper towel

If you already have some items on hand, I encourage you to experiment with them. If you would like to start out fresh, click the links contained in the information below to explore or purchase.

Scroll lower to learn about:

- Paints
 - Brushes
 - Paper
 - Additional materials
 - Recommended links to purchase materials
-

Paints: You will only need three or four colors.

The small, 5 ml tubes will provide plenty of paint. You can create so many colors just by mixing the three that you see below. These are the colors I use most often when painting realistic animals in watercolor. We will use these colors in the free "Dog's Eye" tutorial.

- [French Ultramarine Blue](#)
- [Burnt Sienna](#) or [Burnt Umber](#)
- [Yellow Ochre](#)

In the free tutorials and in our watercolor school, we use [Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolor paints](#). If you are just getting started, [Winsor & Newton Cotman](#) are student grade paints that are less expensive than professional paints, but of good quality.

I encourage you to use any type of watercolor paints that you have on hand. When ready to delve deeper into watercolor painting, go for the professional paints.

Should I use Tubes or Pans?

Tubes contain a smooth paste of paint, like toothpaste. Squeeze a bit of paint on to your palette and add water. Pans contain dry, solid paint. Add water to "wake up" the color. Both tubes and pans will be fine. Use what works best for you.

Brushes

In our tutorials, we use a pointed round brush.

A pointed round brush has a *narrow, pointed tip* for creating details and thin, fine hairs and fur. I encourage you to experiment with any pointed round brush that you have on hand. In these lessons, you will see these brushes:

- A small brush - details and fur
- A medium-sized brush for larger areas

Small Brush: Details and Fur: This is the type of brush used most often in our lessons.

We use a small pointed round brush to create detail and fur. These two synthetic brushes are sturdy and retain a nice, fine point. Feel free to experiment with either, both, or any brush that you prefer.

- [Michael Klein Synthetic Pointed Round Brush, size 2, by Rosemary & Co.](#) This brush is made in the U.K. You will see it in the more recent courses in our watercolor school. These brushes are available for purchase in the United States at [Wind River Arts!](#)
- [Raphael Golden Kaerell Synthetic Pointed Round Brush, size 0](#) This brush is used in many courses in the school and can be purchased in the U.S.

Many members of the school use and love these pointed round brushes, but others have their own favorites. I encourage you to experiment with any pointed round brush that you have on hand.

Optional Medium-sized brush for covering larger areas with color or water

In these lessons, we often use a [Princeton Velvetouch Long Round Brush](#), series 3950 size 6. A general-purpose round watercolor brush will be fine - any that you have on hand.

Optional Inexpensive Brush for Mixing Colors: I like to use a cheap and/or old - for mixing paints to save the good brushes for painting. I've used same old synthetic round brush for years. Feel free to use what you have.

Watercolor Paper

To create realistic, detailed paintings, it is important to use good quality watercolor paper. But, if you are just starting out, you might not want to spend a lot of money on paper, so go ahead and use less expensive paper. The results might not be quite the same, but you will have something to use as you get started. When you decide that you like this style of painting, purchase the good paper.

If you would like to get started with quality paper, we will use [Arches 140 lb. Natural White Cold Press Paper](#)

- Arches is the brand name.
- 140 lb. is the weight of the paper. There is also 90 lb., 300 lb., and 400 lb. *Make sure you purchase 140 lb.*
- Natural White is the color of the paper.
- Cold press refers to the texture of the paper. This type of paper has a slightly rough surface and is popular among watercolor artists of all levels. This is the kind of paper used most often in our school.

You can purchase the paper in [single sheets which you can cut to size](#), or in [blocks of different sizes](#). Blocks contain 10 or 20 sheets. Feel free to use what best fits your needs.

Additional Materials

Palette to Mix Your Paints

If you don't have a palette for your paints, no problem! You could use a plate, plastic trays, trays - anything that the watercolor paints will not soak into. Presently, I use a Mijello Airtight Watercolor 18-well palette.



- Container for water - Any container is fine. I use a plastic container. Many artists use sturdy glasses.
- Towel for wiping brushes and clean up - paper or material
- Device to view reference photo - I use my phone and computer; others use their tablets; I've even seen people use their television

Here is what my setup looks like. I'm right-handed, and keep all of these items to my right.



This is all you need to get started!

Do you have any questions? Feel free to email Rebecca at admin@rebeccarhodesart.com

As you go through these lessons, allow yourself to move slowly, learn from mistakes, and have fun! As you experiment, learn, and develop your own unique style, you will gradually build your cache of supplies and encyclopedia of techniques. And remember: The joy is in the process as well as the finished painting!

Links

[Blick Art Materials](#) - I am an affiliate of Dick Blick and receive a small commission for purchases. Thank you!

[Full List of Materials](#): This link will take you to our entire list of materials/supplies, as well as where you can purchase these items.

Where to Purchase Supplies

Not sure where to purchase painting supplies? Here is a list of resources, thanks to the members of our School!
Email Rebecca Rhodes at admin@rebeccarhodesart.com with your additional suggestions and thank you!

United States

- Artist & Craftsman Supply <https://www.artistcraftsman.com>
- Journey Art Stuff (formerly Cheap Joe's) <https://journeyartstuff.com/>
- Dick Blick <https://www.dickblick.com/>
- Ellen Hutson Paper Craft Essentials & More: <https://www.ellenhutson.com/>
- Jackson's Art Supplies (U.S. and U.K.) <https://www.jacksonsart.com/>
- Jerry's Artarama <https://www.jerrysartarama.com>
- Princeton Artist Brush Co. <https://www.princetonbrush.com/>
- Sam Flax, Orlando, Florida <https://www.samflaxorlando.com/>
- Scrapbook <https://www.scrapbook.com>

United Kingdom

- Cass Art <https://www.cassart.co.uk/>
- Jackson's Art Supplies (U.S. and U.K.) <https://www.jacksonsart.com/>
- Ken Bromley Art Supplies <https://www.artsupplies.co.uk>
- Rosemary & Co. Brushes <https://www.rosemaryandco.com/>

Australia

- Art Shed Online <https://www.artshedonline.com.au/>
- Eckersleys Art and Craft <https://www.eckersleys.com.au/>
- Micador <https://www.micador.com.au/>
- Sydney Art Store <https://www.thesydneyartstore.com.au/>
- The Art Scene <https://www.artscene.com.au/>

Additional

- Amazon.com <https://www.amazon.com>
- Hobby Lobby <https://www.hobbylobby.com>
- Michaels Arts and Crafts <https://www.michaels.com>

This page was updated in 2025.

If you have any questions or suggestions, contact me, Rebecca Rhodes at admin@rebeccarhodesart.com. Thank you!