

Watercolour Materials

- **Paper**

Watercolour paper is your single most important material. It is the most expensive outlay you will make but definitely worth it! Whatever you choose, **100% cotton** paper is the key.

Texture: watercolour paper can be bought in three textures; Hot Pressed (HP), Cold Pressed (CP), and Rough. HP is mostly used for fine botanical type work and is very smooth but not very forgiving. Ideal for a beginner is CP (suitable for florals and landscapes), or Rough (ideal for sea/ and landscapes). To be safe, go for the middle, CP.

Weight: 300gsm is ideal and a common option. 185gsm is fine for botanicals but buckles with washes. 625gsm is unnecessary unless you are planning a very large piece.

Size: Watercolour paper comes in loose sheets, in pads, and in blocks (glued sides) in many sizes. I suggest A4 or A3 as a good starting point, or, in the case of loose sheets, quarter imperial (1 full sheet cut in 4).

Best: Arches, Saunders Waterford, or Baohong Professional grade, all 100% cotton and sized thoroughly (sizing is a gelatine-like substance that the paper is impregnated with that helps delay absorption). Only Arches paper is sized throughout the paper, the others are sized on one side.

Good: Fabriano, Bockingford, and Baohong Academy are a reasonable mixed pulp alternative if cost is an issue. Cheaper options will not forgive lifting and scrubbing out, pretty important when you are beginning with this medium. But this is up to you and your budget.

- **Brushes**

Synthetic watercolour brushes are ideal and come in all shapes and sizes, are relatively cheap, and do the job most excellently. Squirrel mop brushes are amazing for holding tons of water but are also a bit unyielding in use. Smaller natural hair brushes are in my experience no better than synthetic ones.

Chinese calligraphy brushes are amazingly good and very cheap (can order them from Wah Lee in Auckland, TradeMe, or Temu/Aliexpress)

- Essential
 - Mop brush, small round brush, Hake (hah-kay) brush
- An extended set

Large mop brush for loose, wet work, a smaller mop, a round brush, a fine, thin brush, a Hake brush, a flat brush

- **Paints**

These come in single half pans, half pan sets, and tubes (5ml to 15ml). The most cost-effective way to buy watercolour paint is in tubes, along with a tin and half pans (Temu/Aliexpress, Hobbyland) and squeeze some paint into your pans. Or, even easier, get a white dinner plate or palette and squeeze your paints around the edges as you need. Online stores also have good ready-made sets. Watercolour paint keeps forever, and is easily rewet and ready for use, no problem. Just cover your palette with cling film to keep it free from dust.

A good watercolour paint has a high pigment content and when moistened gives a well-saturated, rich wash. Cotman is excellent (Warehouse Stationery), as is any other cheap student tube or pan paint. However these are not necessarily colour/lightfast, and have a low pigment content. Avoid buying those cheap cute round disc paints in a set, they are rubbish.

You can splash out on Winsor and Newton, Schminke Horadem, or Daniel Smith, THE 3 big brands. Other good ones are Mungyo, van Gogh, and Sennelier. Of these I recommend Mungyo as it has a remarkably high pigment content and it's cheap! (comes in a handy tin with 12 basic and versatile colours). Though often included in sets, black and white are unnecessary in watercolour.

- A starter kit will include
Yellow, Red, Pink, Ochre, Blue, Green (Viridian), Payne's Gray (or similar)
- A more elaborate kit will include
Lemon yellow, Cadmium yellow, Cadmium red, Alizarin Crimson or Rose Madder, Raw sienna, Burnt sienna, Sepia, Cobalt blue, Ultramarine blue, Sap green, Viridian, Indigo and/or Payne's Gray

You can buy all these materials online through Gordon Harris, The French Art Shop, Hobbyland, Takapuna Art Supplies, Mighty Ape, TradeMe, Amazon, Aliexpress, Temu, etc. or go shopping!