

Suggested Supplies

SUPPLIES FOR "DRAWING & SKETCHING ONLINE!"

(Don't feel that you have to have ALL these at once, and know that you can get by with a small sketch pad and a #2 pencil!)

Drawing surfaces:

Try a sketchbook with decent weight paper, at least 70 lb. (you'll usually see weight on the front cover); not too lightweight as to fly away or buckle too badly if you should decide to use light watercolor or watercolor pencils, and will take rough handling it might get in the field.

Look for one with a medium "tooth" or texture that is, not made with paper so slick that it won't take pencil well or so rough that an ink pen will skip and stutter. (You may want to try a smooth Bristol or plate surface too, rather like hot press watercolor paper.)

Choose a neutral pH, acid-free paper for lasting results. (You can buy a pen that will let you test your papers at most art supply stores.) Don't try to get by with too cheap a sketchbook--fighting uncooperative paper is enough to put you off the whole idea!

Aquabee makes a useful spiral-bound sketchbook (Super Deluxe 808) in a variety of sizes. Strathmore has several nice drawing or sketching pads, too. You may like a Bristol Vellum (or even smooth for some special effects.) Pentelic hardbound journals have nice paper, but it doesn't handle watercolor washes well nor do Moleskines, but they're lovely otherwise. I'm enjoying the new Stonehenge sketchbooks (available at <http://legionpapers.com>). Let us know if you have a favorite!

You may prefer a hardbound book, or one with its sheets glued along one edge, so the spiral wire doesn't get in your way. Try out several, perhaps sticking to smaller sizes till you find the paper or papers you like best.

Strathmore also makes a nice spiral-bound Watercolor Sampler to play with, too, with lots of different surfaces to try out for a modest outlay of cash. You can sometimes find the small one, 6" x 9", and try everything from hot pressed paper to lovely subtle tints. (If you decide to branch out into watercolor pencils, you'll like this option!)

If you can't find these brands just look for a paper that's not too light, not too rough, and not too slick. Try out several if you can. Your chosen medium will work differently on different surfaces, and only you can tell what you really love.

Later, we'll try out tinted paper with light and dark effects, but to start, the papers above will suffice. If you want to get tinted paper, look for tablets meant for pastels, etc., or one of the recycled paper sketchbooks with a medium toned paper. (Just to explore, you can use a brown paper grocery sack, but this is not neutral pH.)

Pencils:

A #2 or HB pencil is the standard for drawing not too soft (so it doesn't smear too much) and not too hard (so that it's difficult to make a dark-enough line), I find these to be very versatile.

If you want to branch out, the 2H and higher pencils get progressively harder for precise, clean, narrow lines. 2B and higher get very soft, and make bold, dark, and generally broader lines. You may find them handy for filling in dark areas. We'll use a softer pencil (4B to 6B) for some effects.

You can buy artists' pencils in sets or singly, but a standard #2 pencil can be gotten anywhere.

You may want a mechanical pencil as well. There's no need to sharpen these, the lead just advances as you use them. Choose one with a 5mm or 7mm point they generally come with a nice soft white vinyl eraser in the end, for when you just **MUST** erase.

A small set of colored pencils you might want to just try the primaries to start.

One warm or cool dark gray or black Prismacolor pencil, or equivalent.

Consider a small set of watercolor pencils you may find them on sale for experimenting with, but do buy a decent brand. The discount store type are seldom satisfactory they're too dry and harsh.

Pens:

An inexpensive fiber-tipped pen will get you started sketching, and even a ballpoint can be fun to use for nice, subtle, almost graphite-like effects. Look for fiber-tipped pens in both waterproof and water-soluble for special effects.

I often use the Micron Pigma or Zig Millennium pens, in black--they're waterproof, so you can lay in watercolor washes right over it. They come in several nib widths, but I usually choose the smaller ones. Faber-Castell Pitt Artist Pens and Staedtler Pigment Liners are lovely, too, and come in sets.

Some pen sets include brush tips as well.

You might like to try a Pigma or Pentel Pocketbrush pen, too.

Dip pens like crow-quills or lettering pens are fun. An inexpensive bamboo pen is nice, too, but you can also draw with a sharpened stick.

Liquid Ink:

India ink and one of the colored inks, your choice

Paints:

A small set of watercolors will come in handy to add color to your sketches. Prangs are fine to start, but replace the brushes with better ones (see below.) Soon, you will want to graduate to artist-grade paints, though student grade

or kids' paints have low pigment to filler ratio and really don't save much in the long run. They're not as satisfactory to use, either.

A few small (but decent!) brushes, perhaps a #3 and a #7 round and a 1/2" or 3/4" flat. Don't depend on ones that come with a set of kids' paints, they'll make you crazy! There are many with manmade hairs that work very well and cost a fraction of sable brushes. I often use Loew-Cornell.

Extras:

A soft vinyl eraser, preferably white

A kneadable eraser, if you like them

Stump or tortillon for blending (optional)

Small sharpener or little folding pocketknife to sharpen your pencils. I found a small battery powered one that works very well in the field! (This is especially good with colored pencils, which tend to break if sharpened with a blade.)

A container for water, if you've chosen watercolors or watercolor pencils.

Paper towels or tissues