



WATERCOLOR LANDSCAPES FOR BEGINNERS

A Getting Started Guide

Watercolor is a beautiful and expressive medium, perfect for capturing landscapes with light, color, and atmosphere. This guide will help you get started with essential techniques, from washes to textures, so you can paint with confidence!

Getting Started with Watercolor

Basic Supplies:

- ✓ Watercolor Paper – 100% cotton, cold-pressed for best results.
- ✓ Brushes – A large wash brush, a medium round, and a small detail brush.
- ✓ Paints – A basic set of professional or student-grade watercolors.
 - ✓ Palette – For mixing colors.
- ✓ Water & Paper Towels – To control moisture and clean brushes.
- ✓ Pencil & Eraser – For sketching composition before painting.

Setting Up Your Workspace:

- ✓ Use a tilted surface to control paint flow.
- ✓ Have clean water and paper towels ready.
- ✓ Work with good lighting to see colors accurately.





FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES

Paint Light To Dark

Watercolor is transparent, so plan ahead: Paint light colors first.

- ✓ Build up mid-tones and shadows gradually.
- ✓ Preserve whites by painting around them or using masking fluid.
- ✓ Start with large shapes and washes. Work big to Small
- ✓ Refine details later to maintain depth and avoid overworking.



An example of blocking in light values initially and following up with darker values.

Washes

Create smooth transitions and vibrant backgrounds:

- ✓ Flat Wash – Even color across the paper.
- ✓ Graded Wash – Fades from dark to light.
- ✓ Variegated Wash – Blends two colors naturally.
- ✓ Wet-into-Wet – Apply water first for soft, blended effects—great for skies and water.



Texture & Scumbling

- ✓ *Dry Brush – Minimal water for rough texture.*
- ✓ *Spattering – Flick paint for organic effects.*
- ✓ *Scumbling – Drag a dry brush for broken color.*
- ✓ *Lifting – Blot to lighten areas.*

Final Thoughts

Watercolor is a beautifully expressive medium that rewards patience, practice, and a willingness to embrace its spontaneity. By mastering key techniques like layering, washes, and texture, you'll gain confidence and control while still allowing the paint to flow naturally. Keep experimenting, stay curious, and most importantly—enjoy the process of creating!



Painting by Deb Anderson