

Hi All,

Harlan here! I was asked by a family about supplies to use at home, they suggested it would be helpful. So what follows is a list of what we keep at Open House for Art class and an explanation of my choices.

I will say in advance my choices are always based on appearance, workability, and quality. I want what the children make to look as good as possible. I expect art making to be messy, and I do not avoid materials that stain. The materials I use are not the most inexpensive choice. Though often they end up to be more economical because they achieve their effect with less waste. I believe all of the materials listed are non-toxic; though caution should be taken as ingestion of large quantities of some would cause stomach distress. This is true with both water-based glue and tempera paint. I do not use super glues or other materials that use alcohol or other "chemical" solvents that are the thinner. I do not suggest using oil paint with young children. I also do not use chalk in the classroom due to the high incidence of asthma among my students over the years.

For simplicity's sake I am going to list specific materials we use that are sold by "School Specialty". Any other "art supply" retailer should have the same or comparable products.

I did not talk much about 3-D. Next time.

All the best,
Harlan

Paper:

Medium to heavy white drawing paper

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/pacon-multi-media-art-paper-natural-white-1329811>

We use 80 pound, white, multi-media paper at Open House. It is heavy enough that we can use it with wet materials without it buckling too much; and stiff enough to use as a backing for collage. It also has some tooth to the surface, so it “grabs” at dry media like pencils or oil pastels to create a richer line. We buy it by the ream, 500 sheets. I usually get 12 x 18 and cut it down, I have listed 9 x 12

“Tru-Ray” construction paper

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/tru-ray-sulphite-construction-paper-9x12-inches-assorted-colors-50-sheets-054054>

The construction paper is branded “Tru-Ray”, based on its claim that the dyes in the paper are more lightfast, and will not immediately fade if hung in a light room. Black paper is particularly sensitive in this regard, and turns a dark purple very quickly.

Fadeless paper

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/pacon-fadeless-art-paper-multiple-color-006093>

“Fadeless” paper is even more lightfast. Usually white and coated with ink on one or both sides. It’s also lightweight and easy to cut. It comes in many colors and has a smooth, slick surface

Cardstock (newsboard, cut-up cereal boxes, something light but stiff)

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/school-smart-newsboard-9x12-inches-natural-pack-of-24-085564>

Single layer cardboard. Like the back of a legal pad or for that matter, a cereal box. It’s stiff, and you can build three dimensional projects on it.

Media:

Pencils (erasers)

Any standard #2 pencils are great. So are Pink Pearl erasers.

Oil pastels

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/oil-pastel-405704>

I love Sakura “chubbies”, because they are fat and easy to hold, they don’t break, the colors are rich and beautiful and blend together easily. The drawings they make are beautiful. And they get all over the table so cover it up.

Student grade watercolors

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/crayola-watercolor-mixing-set-watercolor-mixing-set-090244>

Crayola “educational” watercolors again are great student grade materials. The colors are rich and vibrant and permanent. And the set comes with a very serviceable synthetic paintbrush. (I do not use Crayola “washable” watercolors. The paint has soap mixed into it and is extremely difficult to get satisfying rich colors. The brush that comes with the set is basically useless.) Put on a smock, or an old tee shirt and cover the table.

Acrylic tempera paint

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/sax-versatemp-heavy-bodied-tempera-paint-assorted-colors-2-set-of-6-2048206>

Sax “versa temp” heavy bodied acrylic tempera paint is thick and opaque. The colors are rich and pure. Inexpensive acrylic paint is just that, inexpensive; it has filler added, and the pigments are not pure. When you mix two primary colors the results are often not what you were expecting. Also it does not respond well to being thinned with water. Try using better paint and you will not want to go back. Sax has proven to be consistently good. Blick’s (Utrecht) etc. is probably fine as well. Just be careful not to skimp.

Crayons and markers

I don't use them but obviously, they work great.

The colors that crayons lay down are rather faint. So, I don't use them. They also don't mix very well. But they are relatively easy to clean up and they don't get all over everything, so they are a great tool to have around.

Markers make brilliant colors and do get all over everything. But the tip generally makes one mark, no matter how you hold it and how you press, (or don't press). They have none of the poetry of a pencil or brush. But everyone loves to use them because the ink just flows out. So, use them.

Adhesives:

Elmer's white glue

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/elmers-glue-all-white-2000858>

Elmer's makes a whole variety of glues now. I prefer the consistency of "glue-all". It goes on white and dries clear. I put it in a cup and apply it to the project with a small plastic brush or glue spreader (see below). You can put the glue exactly where you want it then, and you do not have to wait for the bottle, or worse, clean the bottle.

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/roylco-paste-and-glue-spreader-assorted-colors-201062>

The same ones we use at school.

Tape - cellophane and masking

You choose.

Tools:

Paintbrushes

<https://www.schoolspecialty.com/school-smart-paint-brush-set-short-handle-black-bristle-assorted-sizes-set-of-24-1332344>

Short handled flat bristle brushes, assorted sized, ¼” to 1”. This is the smallest set I could find. Hog’s bristle (here) is very similar to the white bristle we use. The brush is extremely durable and will survive much abuse. The handle are wood and sometimes shrink and fall out. Simply reattach them.

Scissors

Child sized and adult sized. I like Fiskars, but that’s up to you. We teach children to be careful with scissors and to keep their fingers out of the way. Which to me is the best path. (I cannot stand plastic scissors that don’t cut.) And you should have your own pair of sharp scissors.

Scissor get dirty, especially is you use them to cut tape, the adhesive clogs them up and they need to be cleaned. Citrus based solvents such as “Gloop” work great, in a pinch use lemon juice. And be careful. The blades are sharp.

Sponge

I use O-Cel-O. They sell them at my supermarket. You want a good quality cellulose sponge that maintains itself when wet, and holds the water it absorbs. (And doesn’t just let it all flow out on your way to the sink.)

Paper towels

Yes.

Plastic felt backed tablecloth

Felt backed tablecloths use to be available in every dollar store. They lay flat on the table and don’t slide around. And they are waterproof and inexpensive.