

Laying a flat wash of colour wet on dry

Ideally - when doing a wash on a large painting, you should stretch your paper - taping the wet paper to a board with brown paper tape - then leaving it to dry. (*It stretches as it dries - and won't buckle as you paint*). However that is neither feasible or necessary when you are creating greetings cards, since they are so much smaller - and the area of the wash is usually fairly limited.

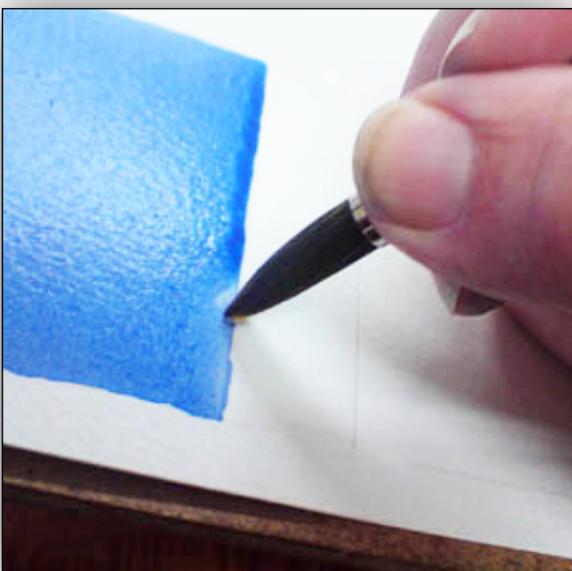
Mix enough of the desired colour to complete the task. This is where the paint pallet is useful. You can mix a strong solution of paint in the round well - then dilute it in the rectangular well. If you do run out of paint mid-wash it's quicker to add water to already-mixed paint than to begin to mix from scratch (*by the time you've done that your wash will have dried mid-way and you'll have a line right across it*)

Colour is applied with a fully-loaded brush in side-to-side brush strokes **that should merge with the colour above**. Begin on whichever side is most comfortable for you, but remember to **start at the same side each pass**. When you reach the opposite edge, and have completed your first stroke, repeat this step **by reloading your brush** and continuing with the next stroke just below the one above it.



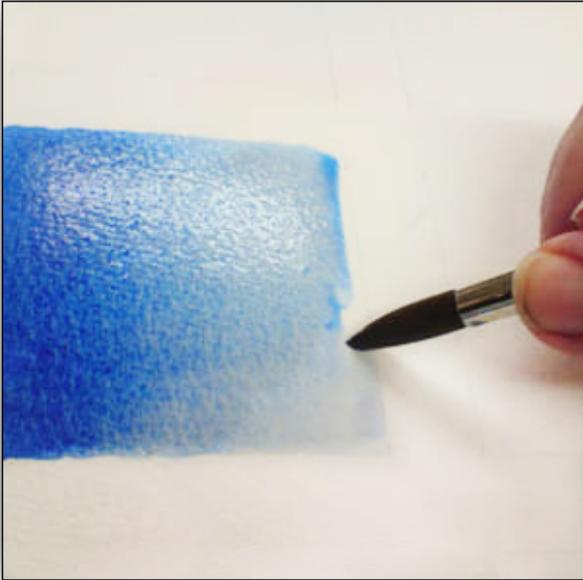
Reservoir of colour

If you want to lay down an unbroken wash of colour across an area it is important that the advancing edge of the wash isn't allowed to become dry as this will produce a hard edge. The solution is always keep a 'reservoir' of colour, by loading your brush frequently and tilting the board to allow the colour to run down as you work from top to bottom. (first photo)



Lift out excess colour

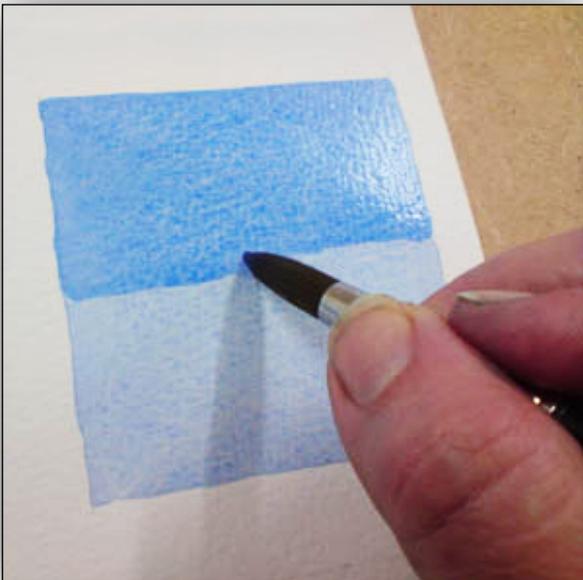
Finally lift out excess colour from the bottom of the area with a clean damp brush (*second photo*), **being careful not to disturb your wash**. Leave the board tilted while the colour dries so that the colour does not run back upwards.



A graduated wash

You may want to lay a wash that varies in strength. Firstly prepare different strengths of the required colour in the mixing palette. Test these out first on a scrap piece of paper to check their relative strengths.

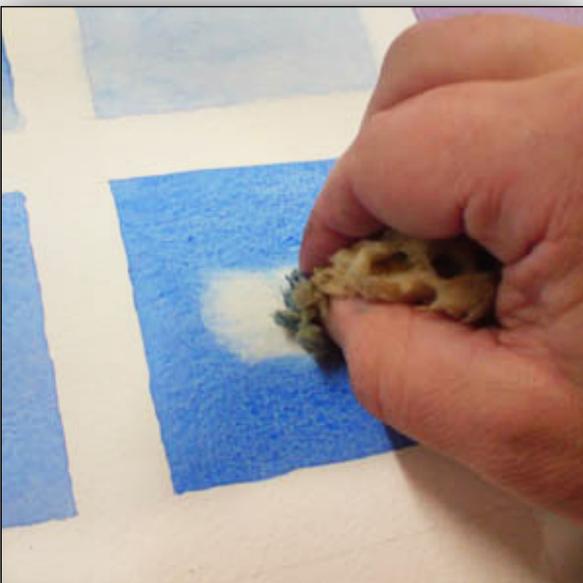
If you need a wash going from dark to light, start with the strongest wash at the top and finish with clean water at the bottom. Colour running down from above will tend to strengthen the colour even though you will be adding weaker mixtures, and you will need to experiment to achieve the result you want.



To deepen a wash

A wash can be darkened by simply applying further washes of colour over the top. This is easier if the paint is a staining paint like a Windsor or Phthalo paint.

If the paint is non-staining (*and especially if it is granulating*) try not to disturb the first wash any more than you have to, by loading the brush well and using a light touch.



Lifting a wash

If a non-staining or granulating colour is used for the wash, soft-edged highlight areas can be sponged out after the colour has been applied. Such a technique could be used to create clouds in a sky for example