

## First stage watercolour kit

When it comes to watercolour materials, you want to spend as little as possible to begin with - in order to see if you enjoy it. On the other hand, if you buy equipment that is not up to the job, you'll never enjoy watercolour!

The answer is to buy the minimum equipment you need - but of a good enough quality that you are able to make progress. It doesn't need to be the very best quality to start with, but it's worth remembering that, if you do progress, you are likely to want to invest in better equipment. All the more reason to buy no more than you need to at first.

### Brushes

Rosemary's hand-made brushes are used by painters the world over. I have used their sable brushes for decades - I love them. A very large sable brush is expensive (*though not as expensive as some other manufacturers*) Their smaller sable brushes work out much less expensive. However they also make synthetic beginners' brushes that is quite *amazing* for a synthetic brush - at a very reasonable price. So you might like to begin with just three of these - a **size 2**, a **size 4**, a **size 6** (**£1.33, £1.58, £1.88**)

These brushes are not in their catalogue or on their web site - except as part of a larger set. But I have spoken to Rosemary herself and, if you telephone and mention me and this group, you can order them separately. Telephone: **01535 632666**. It will probably be another lady, Rosie, who will deal with your order. Everyone there is incredibly friendly and helpful. Just ask for the **pink beginners synthetic brushes**.

### Paints

As with brushes, you want to spend as little as possible to begin with - in order to see if you enjoy it. On the other hand, if you buy paints that are not up to the job, you will never enjoy watercolour!

Again - as with brushes - the answer is to buy the minimum (*and smallest*) tubes of paint you need - but of a good enough quality that you are able to make progress. It doesn't need to be the very best quality to begin with, but it's worth remembering that, if you do progress, you are likely to want to invest in better paints. All the more reason to buy no more than you need to at first.

I had never used Windsor and Newton Cotman student paints - I've always used professional quality paints. So I bought some Cotman and did some comparison testing against Windsor and Newton Professional - and SAA paints. I was very pleased by how well the Cotman paints performed - not quite as good as the Professional as you'd expect. But at least comparable and, in some cases, better than the SAA paints.

The price is less for the Cotman than the SAA and, where the SAA is 14ml, the Cotman is 21ml. Another advantage is that the Cotman do a 8ml tube - which is a good size to start with. They cost between **£2.15** and **£2.50** a tube - depending where you get it from. I suggest 5 colours to begin with (*see list below*)

### Two exceptions

There are **two exceptions** to the Cotman. I thoroughly recommend that you invest in the smallest size tubes of Professional **Windsor Violet** and Professional **Permanent Sap Green**. These are very valuable colours in their own right and, mixed together, they make perfect greys and black - colours that are normally not easy to create.

<b>Winsor and Newton Cotman paints</b> (cheapest at Art Discount but not much more at The Range)		
Intense (Phthalo) blue	8 ml £2.15	<i>Mix with yellow to make greens. Mix with violet to give a violet-blue</i>
Alizarin Crimson	8 ml £2.15	<i>Mix with yellow to make reds/oranges. Mix with Violet to give various shades of purple</i>
Cadmium yellow	8 ml £2.15	<i>Mix with sap green to make a golden green</i>
<b>Winsor and Newton Professional paints</b> (cheapest at Art Discount but not much more at The Range)		
Winsor Violet	8 ml £4.79	<i>Mix with sap green to make greys and blacks</i>
Permanent Sap Green	8 ml £4.79	<i>Mix with sap green to make greys and blacks</i>

**Cotman:-** <https://artdiscount.co.uk/collections/watercolour-paints/products/cotman-watercolour-tubes>

**Professional quality:-** <https://artdiscount.co.uk/collections/watercolour-paints/products/winsor-newton-professional-watercolour-5ml-tubes-series-1>

**Watercolour paper** The right paper is very important. **Bockingford** is a good enough quality paper to begin with. The best value pack is 20 sheets of quarter imperial paper for **£9.25**. If you can get together with a friend or two, however, you can split a pack between you.

<https://artdiscount.co.uk/products/bockingford-watercolour-paper-approx-15-x-11-20-sheets-per-pk-140lb>

**Board** Rather than pay quite a few pounds for a board to clip your paper to, you can use a **12" x 10"** board that is normally used as a base for an oil painting. That size will be plenty big enough for painting greetings cards and will cost you only **£1.75**. Later, if you invest in a bigger drawing board, the smaller one will always be useful as part of a travel kit

<https://artdiscount.co.uk/products/loxley-canvas-boards?variant=12583126990930>

**Ceramic Palette (£6.40)** - not essential - but really worthwhile if you can afford to add that to your beginners kit. It will make a big difference to your mixing colours and laying a wash (*see more information on the next page*). Having said that, many watercolourists are perfectly happy with mixing their paints on a white plate.

<https://artdiscount.co.uk/collections/palettes/products/china-palette>

## **Koh-I-Noor putty rubber in Case**

<https://artdiscount.co.uk/products/koh-i-noor-putty-rubber>

**Extras:-** 2B pencil, bulldog clip, ruler

**Note:-** This is a very minimum list - just enough to get you started. If you decide you enjoy painting, and want to add to your kit, I have a list (*with links*) of the next items you might like to consider. Email me and I'll send it to you.

## Using a Ceramic Slant Tile Palette

When you come to lay a wash of colour, you will need to ensure that you don't run out of paint before you finish the wash. Otherwise the paint is likely to dry while you mix some more colour. Also you're unlikely to be able to create an exact colour match. This is where a tile palette like the one below is so useful.



**1** Make up a fairly strong mix of the colour you want to use in one or more of the round wells (*this may be just one colour with water - or more than one colour mixed*). Make up a good amount - stronger than you need it

**2** Put some water in the rectangular well next to it - and add more water

**3** When you run out of paint from the rectangular well, simply repeat step two - trying to get the same amount of water into the rectangular well as you did the first time

**Note:-** If you need to keep any unused paint, simply cover the palette with cling film (*though it doesn't matter if the paint dries - because you can simply add water to reconstitute it.*)