

# Painting

## Coursebook



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# Introduction

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Welcome to Painting! In this course, you will study color and design in painting. The prerequisite for this course is Drawing & Design, which introduced you to the foundation of design elements within a visual composition. In this course, you will begin by painting on canvas board or pressed paper and then will explore stretched-canvas options. You will build on your knowledge of color, scale, and unity. Representational skills in painting will be developed, and aspects of nonrepresentational and abstract elements in painted compositions also will be explored. Paintings from history will be examined and elements discussed, and you will be asked to compare and contrast the work of different artists within the context of what you are learning in each lesson.

The objective of the Oak Meadow Fine Arts program is to develop creative thinkers who have basic skills but are able to use their imaginations as their skill level increases. You will be asked to explore your creative process in a written format and to conduct self-assessments or critiques of your work.

**Support Your Understanding:** Throughout this coursebook, you will be directed to the textbook for this course: *50 Paintings You Should Know* by Kristina Lowis and Tamsin Pickeral. Whenever you see a **Support Your Understanding** section, you will be directed to different paintings in this text. Take some time to study the paintings closely and to read about the artist and their work. This will help you develop a deeper understanding of the elements of painting and a more profound appreciation for art, both of which will enhance your development as an artist. Please note that not all paintings are listed in the table of contents, but if you turn to the section for the artist, you will find other paintings included (after the one listed in the table of contents).

## Prepare

Painting can be a messy process. It is important that you locate a space where you can work and keep your supplies. You should discipline yourself to keep the area tidy and keep brushes clean and paints with their lids on tight. Any containers for mixing should be cleaned when you are finished (not hours later!). Brushes and palettes can be ruined if they are not kept clean.

## SHARE YOUR WORK

### Work Submission

If you are enrolled in Oak Meadow School and will be sending your work to your Oak Meadow teacher, please pay attention to the **Share Your Work** sections you will see. These will instruct you regarding lesson assignments that you will be submitting to your teacher. If you ever have a question about your work, your teacher will be happy to help.

## Materials List

- paints, acrylic or tempera (acrylic is best but more expensive). Colors should include basic primary and secondary, and black and white; add more colors if you wish.
- brushes, soft tip, in several sizes
- canvas pressed paper or canvas board
- canvas (cloth) for stretching handmade canvases—four stretched canvases total for the course
- stretchers (minimum of four to stretch one canvas) sizes to be determined by the student (two 16-inch and two 12-inch stretchers are good for a first try)
- staple gun
- pliers (optional)
- gesso

### Online Illumination

Throughout this course, you will be referred to [googleartproject.com](https://googleartproject.com), an amazing repository of fine art. You may be directed to look in a particular collection (by clicking on the Collections tab), view the work of a particular artist, or search for a painting with a specific theme. You are also encouraged to spend time on your own exploring this extensive website so you can make your own art discoveries. When you find a painting you like, search for more work by that artist. You can even create your own “Gallery” of artwork that inspires, intrigues, or pleases you that you can refer back to over and over. It seems the more we study art, the more we can see. Take your time and enjoy the process!

## Lesson

# 1

# What Do You Already Know?

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*If you hear a voice within you say  
“you cannot paint,” then by all means  
paint, and that voice will be silenced.*

Vincent van Gogh

## Lesson Goal

You will begin this course by writing an essay reflecting on your painting experience.

In this first lesson, you will be writing a one- to three-page essay about your experiences with paint. Explain everything that you can remember even if you haven't painted a picture since kindergarten. Maybe you painted your bedroom or T-shirts, or painted your sister's hair blue! Any kind of painting counts.

Be as specific as you can about the type of painting you did. Did you use tempera paints in preschool? Watercolors in a Waldorf elementary program? Oil paints in last summer's art class at the rec center? Each of these materials feels different on your brush, acts different on the paper, and looks different in the final product.

## Prepare

You will only need a pen and paper for this lesson, or you can write your essay directly on the computer. Putting your thoughts on paper by hand at first often helps the writing process, allowing your reflections and ideas to flow just as a brush lets the paint flow across the paper.

## Step by Step

1. Take a few minutes to search your memory for all the times you've held a paintbrush in your hand.
2. Describe your feelings about using paint. Discuss your apprehensions or fears about painting. Talk openly about what you love most about the process. If you have never painted before, talk

about what you hope to learn about painting. What do you think you will love best? What do you think will be the biggest challenge?

## Assignments

1. Reflect on your painting experience.
2. Write a one- to three-page essay.

### SHARE YOUR WORK

You will submit the essay to your teacher when you submit your artwork for lesson 2.

## Lesson

# 2

# Recreating the Wheel

## Lesson Goal

You will create a color wheel as your preliminary exploration of painting.

We live in a Technicolor world. We often take colors for granted. We expect to see them each day.

As you begin to paint, you will probably begin to see the colors in your daily life differently. You might start to wonder how certain colors were mixed for a painting or how so many greens can appear in the spring and summer. You might ask yourself how many different colors you actually see in the sky. These are excellent observations.

## Prepare

Assemble your acrylic paints and brush and a sheet of heavy watercolor paper. You will also need a pencil. All you need for this lesson are your primary colors, but if you have others, you may use them too. Squeeze a small amount of each primary color onto your palette (if you are using secondary colors, you may add them to your palette as well).

Before you begin, examine the *color wheel*.

## Artist Tip

Using the palette takes some getting used to, both in terms of holding it in your free hand, and adding enough paint for your project without wasting any. Don't worry if you add too much or too little at first—you will quickly learn to judge the amount of paint you will need for a single project.





## Step by Step

1. On your paper, use a pencil to draw any 12 shapes around a circle. The shapes do not have to match what you see in the color wheel.
2. Begin by painting the **primary colors**—red, yellow, and blue. These should be arranged in a triangle shape, anchoring the color wheel at three points of equal distance from one another.
3. Next, add the **secondary colors**—orange, green, and purple—creating another triangle in between the primary colors.
4. Begin carefully mixing colors to fill in the spaces between each primary and secondary color. By blending adjacent colors, you will soon have a beautiful color wheel.
5. Hang your color wheel where you paint. You will find it helpful as you work with primary, secondary, and **complementary colors** in your paintings.

## Self-Assessment

In one to three paragraphs, write your observations about how you painted your color wheel. Include the following:

- Was it difficult to mix the colors?
- Did the colors look different after they dried?
- How would you do this project differently if you did it over again?

## Assignments

1. Create a color wheel.
2. Complete the self-assessment.

## SHARE YOUR WORK

Photograph your color wheel and send it to your teacher along with your self-assessment and the essay from lesson 1.

**Color wheel** A design that shows a wide range of hues and the relationship between primary colors, secondary colors, and complementary colors.

**Primary colors** Colors that cannot be made by mixing other colors and are used to make all other colors when mixed in different combinations. Red, yellow, and blue are the primary colors.

**Secondary colors** Colors made by mixing two primary colors. For example, purple is made by mixing red and blue. (Tertiary colors are made by mixing a primary color with a secondary color.)

**Complementary colors** Colors that are said to be “opposite” each other on the color wheel. When complementary colors are placed side by side, they provide a pleasing contrast.



## Lesson

# 6

# Explorations in Secondary Colors

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## Lesson Goal

You will paint a still life in secondary colors.

Now that you have explored the value range of a single primary color, you are ready to learn to mix subtle variations of a secondary color.

**Support Your Understanding:** Study the following paintings in your textbook: *Day Lilies on the Bank* by Claude Monet and *Petunia No. 2* by Georgia O'Keefe. Note how these two very different artists both explored the values of the colors they chose.

## Prepare

Find two pieces of fruit or two vegetables that have different secondary colors: a green apple, an orange, a purple eggplant, an orange carrot, etc.

Arrange the two objects before you. Consider the way the space—especially foreground and middle ground—is organized, and light the arrangement. Adjust the light and composition until you are satisfied.

Assemble your materials as before.

## Step by Step

1. Capture your composition in a quick gestural drawing.
2. Begin to mix your paint to match the range of values you see before you. You will likely have many different shades of each color.
3. Add shades of color to capture the darker and lighter areas of your composition. Keep mixing and layering color until your painting is complete.
4. Do not rush your painting. If you need to, you can take a break or even return to it in a day or two. (Just remember to keep your composition and lighting in place.) Painting is a thoughtful process and is best approached with patience and care.

## Self-Assessment

Now that you have explored the many variations within a single color, please write a one- to two-page assessment of your experience. You will use the following assessment format throughout this course.

- **DESCRIBE** Give a description of your work and remember to specify the materials used (e.g., acrylics on watercolor paper).
- **ANALYZE** Using the visual language that you are learning (such as color, value, tone, scale, foreground, etc.), discuss how you paint. Analyze the techniques you used and how effective they were in conveying what you hoped to achieve.
- **INTERPRET** What does this painting mean to you? What sense or mood does it convey?
- **EVALUATE** Do you like what you did? What do you want to improve?

## Assignments

1. Arrange a composition using two fruits or vegetables.
2. Light your composition.
3. Draw and then paint the still life.
4. Pay particular attention to the range of values.
5. Complete your self-assessment.



## Lesson

# 17

# Developing Your Landscape Series

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## Lesson Goal

You will continue to work on your landscape series, using your knowledge of scale and value to portray distance and space.

### Step by Step

1. Continue to develop each of your six landscapes. As you work, you may find natural connections between some of the compositions. For instance, some may share identical or complementary hues, others may share the same details, such as a tree in the foreground or a mountain in the distance. You don't have to try to emphasize these connections, but you may find it happening naturally.
2. You may notice that the sky takes up a large portion of one or more of your landscapes. Take your time figuring out how to capture the colors and shapes in the sky and clouds.
3. Make sure to use variations in tone intentionally to help portray objects that are fading into the background.

### Artist Tip

Sometimes artists will literally step away from their work in order to see it better. Backing up and viewing your work from several different angles and distances can help you spot areas in your painting that need further development.

## Assignments

1. Continue to develop each of your six landscapes.
2. Pay particular attention to the sky.
3. Use variations in tone to portray objects in the distance.

## Lesson

# 23

# Effects of Light

*Painting is by nature  
a luminous language.*

Robert Delaunay

## Lesson Goal

You will compose a still life that you will paint over the course of several lessons.

In the next six lessons, you will be exploring the use of light to create emphasis and interest in your painting. You will create one painting that you work on over the course of several lessons. In this lesson, you will arrange and sketch your composition in preparation for painting in the next lesson.

**Support Your Understanding:** While not a still life, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Jan Vermeer is a lovely example of the use of light. The light reflecting off the girl's headpiece and her face is luminous and made even more captivating by the stark black background. In *The Isenheim Altarpiece*, artist Matthias Grünewald uses glowing color that seems lit from within to emphasize key elements of his paintings. Light in a composition acts to illuminate the subject, but also draws the eye and adds depth and character to a painting.

## Online Illumination

Type in a search for *still life* and view the collections that result to see a great variety of still life compositions. Pay particular attention to the following excellent compositions:

*Luncheon Still Life* by John F. Francis

*Still Life with Bouquet* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir

*Still Life with Apples* by Paul Cézanne

## Prepare

Locate three to six simple household or kitchen objects and arrange them, keeping in mind surface areas as you create your composition. Put one or more objects in the background and then figure out what will go in the middle ground and then the foreground. What will you have on the tabletop? What will the backdrop (background) be?

Place a desk lamp or other focused light source so light is directed onto your arrangement. Adjust the light source until you are happy with it.

You may use your stretched canvas for this painting. You will also need a sketch pad and pencil for this lesson.

### Step by Step

1. Take your time to sketch your composition onto paper first. Before you paint, you will complete a gestural drawing—take your time with it. You are working to capture precise proportion, scale, and placement in this composition. Your sketch will be your guide, so do not rush this step.
2. Add contour lines to your sketch. Measure the angles and scale of the elements in your still life composition. Keep looking back and forth between your composition and your sketch, carefully drawing the angles and forms, and working to portray accurate proportions and scale.
3. Remember that objects in an arrangement are always relative in size to other objects in the drawing. You should continually measure and check and measure again until you are satisfied.

## Assignments

1. Arrange a composition of three to six objects.
2. Carefully light your arrangement.
3. Create a detailed sketch on paper.

### SHARE YOUR WORK

Remember to photograph your sketch to send to your teacher.