

Basic watercolor techniques – (<http://www.watercolorpainting.com/watercolor-tutorials.htm>)

For pictures to go with these techniques, go to the above web site.

1. Dry brush – dry brush with fairly dry paint put on dry paper. (use this to create texture such as tree bark and the texture on the ground – this technique makes the brush “skip” over the paper leaving white marks)
2. Wet into dry – wet paint on dry paper. The edges of the painted area will be sharp.
3. Wet into wet- wet paint on wet paper. Wet the paper with a spray bottle or a damp sponge. Paint with a wet brush and wet paint. Edges of the painted area will be soft and fuzzy.
4. **Sgraffito is an Italian term** for a scratching techniques usually associated with scratching through layered ceramic glazes to expose the underlying glazes. Scratch a line using a pointed tool or the end of the paint brush will damage the paper. **The wet paint is sucked into the bruised paper fibers as you scratch across the wash, creating dark lines. This technique can be used just after the paint has been applied or before the paint is applied.**

Used judiciously, this technique is excellent for adding details to landscape paintings in the form of naked trees, branches, flora and grass.

5. Lifting wet paint – wet paint on wet paper – If you want a lighter or whiter area during painting you can do the following. After putting on the wash, take a tissue, sponge or paint brush and wipe out the color. This can be clouds or blossoms in a vase.
6. Lifting dry paint –If you want a lighter or whiter area after the paint has dried, use a knife or eraser to scratch off the paint to get down to the white. You can take a wet paint brush and “scrub” the paint off also, just be careful for some watercolor papers bruise or “pill”.

(Note: Watercolor has a weak binder so the paint will “lift”. This means that when water is applied to dry paint the pigment will turn back into usable paint and lift off of the paper and smear around. This can be an advantage or a disadvantage. The advantage is that you can get back some whites. The disadvantage is that if you are trying to layer colors the under color may be washed off. Acrylic paints have a polymer binder and will dry like a plastic and will not “Lift” or wash off.)

7. Splatter –creates texture - wet paint and wet brush – can be used on dry or wet paper. The dry paper will have sharp edges while the wet paper will have soft edges. Load the paint brush with paint and tap it on your finger - watch where you are spraying. Do not use your arm to “throw” paint as it will get all over everything. Tapping it on your finger will contain the splatter a little but there is still a chance of getting the paint in places you don’t want paint to be.
8. Tooth brush – creates texture - moist or wet paint on dry or wet paper – the dry paper will have sharp edges and the wet paper will have soft edges. Looks like pointillism. Used with a stencil or painting shield will result in a hard edge. Load a tooth brush with paint. Run your thumb over the bristles to “splatter” the paint on your paper. This is used to create texture.
9. Sponge – moist or wet paint on dry paper – used to create texture – great for trees. Put the damp or dry sponge in the paint which can be moist or wet and “pounce” it on the paper. Use a light touch to get small marks. Use a heavy touch to get large marks.
10. Stamping – create a stamp from an eraser or sponge. Cut a flat sponge into a shape or carve a flat eraser to create a unique stamp. Put paint on the stamp you created and stamp the image onto the paper . You can create a repeated pattern or a single image. Anything can be used as a stamp like the end of a pencil. If you want round dots, put paint on the flat end of a pencil and stamp.
11. Salt – wet paint on wet paper – This creates a textured area usually used as a background. Wet the paper and float color into the wet areas. Sprinkle the salt over the area and let it dry. When dry, brush off the salt. The color collects around the salt crystal and leaves little “blooms” of paint.
12. Cling wrap – wet paint, wet paper –This creates a textured area usually used as a back ground. Wet the paper and float color into the wet areas. Scrunch plastic wrap and lay it on the painting. Let dry and remove the plastic wrap. It will result in a geo pattern. Great for backgrounds.
13. Watercolor pencils- use watercolor pencils on wet paper or dry paper. Color the area with the watercolor pencil. Leave it or wet it after application. Go over any parts with a damp paint brush. The water will reconstitute the pencil into paint. For a different effect, wet the paper, then color with the watercolor pencil. I do not recommend putting the pencil in a container of water and letting it sit as the pencil will dissolve.
14. Saving the whites –There is no white watercolor paint so the white of the paper must be saved if you need highlighted areas. Use rubber cement or a masking liquid to cover

areas you want to stay white. Remove after your painting is done. The paint will not adhere to the rubber cement or masking fluid. Masking fluid is colored and does the same thing but you can see where you put it on the paper.

15. Wax resist – A different way to “save” the whites. Use a white color crayon and color the areas you want to stay white, then paint. The paint will not adhere to the color crayon. You can use candle wax instead of a color crayon.
16. flat wash – create a puddle of paint in the pans of your palette. Load the paint brush and make a “swatch” with the brush in the area that you want painted. Reload the brush with paint and repeat until you have created a flat wash over the entire painting. The color will be the same over the area.
17. graded wash – wet paint on dry paper or moist paper – create a puddle of paint in the pan area of your palette and load the brush. “sweep” the brush side to side going from top to bottom. Don’t reload the brush. The color gets lighter as it gets to the bottom.
18. Alcohol – This creates white spots in a wash of color. This is not to be used in school. Supplies: Q-tips and 91% Isopropol Alcohol. This technique creates texture.
 - a. Put down a wash with a lot of paint. The paint must be wet.
 - b. Dip the Q-tip in the alcohol and tap it on as you would splatter paint.
 - c. The paint will move out of the way and create spots.
19. Water spots. – This looks the same as with the alcohol only it is safe for school use. Use the same techniques but with water, not alcohol. You will get lighter spots. This technique creates texture.
20. Ink – india ink is the best – you can use it on dry paper (sharp lines) or on wet paper (fuzzy lines). You can use a brush or a pen. Using black ink gives you very nice black that you can’t see through. You can use colored inks also.
21. Wash out. This techniques should be used when the paint is fairly dry around the edges but still damp in the middle. Take a damp sponge, paint brush or a small spray bottle and re-wet the area. Carefully dab the area with a towel to remove some of the paint. This leaves a lighter area to add interest and contrast. This is used with watercolor not acrylic as acrylic paint will not “lift”.
22. straw and wind –Creates random lines. Take a straw and blow the wet paint around on the paper. Can be used for branches on trees. Creates an irregular line.

23. Drip – Creates irregular lines and spots. Use very wet paint. This can be used on wet paper (soft lines/spots) or dry paper (sharp lines/spots). Get lots of paint on your brush. Hold it vertically over the paper and let it drip. The drip is more dramatic when the paint brush is held high above the paper. This causes spots. You can put diluted paint in a squirt bottle with a pointed tip and write or draw which will create lines rather than spots.

24. Tilt – Creates irregular lines. Put paint on an area then tilt the painting and let the paint run. Put the painting at an angle. Wet an area and put on lots of paint. Slowly pull the painting toward you and let the paint overflow the boundaries and run. You can control the “running” by trailing a clean wet paint brush ahead of the paint flow if you desire.

25. Stencil –A stencil is used to protect an area from paint so you can go back later and fill it in. Create a stencil by cutting a shape out of a heavy paper. Cover the area you want to “save” with the stencil and paint, splatter, drip, sponge over the stencil and the paper. When dry, lift the stencil to reveal your saved area.

26. Tape – Creates sharp edges, straight lines and corners. The use of tape is to mask off or protect areas. You can make very straight lines using a splatter, toothbrush, or sponging technique when you use tape. The tape can be cut and shaped. The only thing you have to be careful of is that the tape can be too sticky. Take the tape and use it on your clothing to get rid of some of the “stickiness”. Put the tape on your shirt and pull it off several times to get the tape ready for the paper. Even though you have taken off some of the “sticky”, do not leave the tape on the paper over night as it will pull the paper off. So paint, and remove ASAP. Remove the tape at an angle so that you don’t tear the paper.

27. The difference between “acrylic watercolor painting” and regular watercolor painting.

a. Regular watercolor paint has a weak binder and “lifts”. Acrylic has a stronger binder and will not “lift”. It will be permanent.

b. Acrylic watercolor paint is just watered down acrylic paint so that it looks like watercolor paints.

c. Washing up of equipment is very important as the acrylic paint will dry as a plastic and ruin all sponges and paint brushes. Use lots of soap and clean everything very well.

D. The distinctive look of a water color comes from the transparency of the paint. Light goes through the paint, hits the white paper, rebounds to your eye and create a luminosity. Acrylic paint does not do this as it is opaque.

E. Watercolor painting is the cheapest painting medium but it is the hardest to master.