

Painting Dramatic Skies with Pastels

Lana Ballot

Materials List

This might look like a long list but that's because I give you options and more info about each choice. You might already have what you need, if you are not just starting out with pastels.

The links below are for **www.dickblick.com** so you can see the details, but you can search other online stores and compare the prices.

Papers:

Non-Sanded Sketching Paper

Some **non-sanded mid tone gray paper** - for grayscale value studies. I like to use Canson for this, the paper is a bit smoother and allows for easier blending or lifting of charcoal in value studies.

Canson: Gray Tones pad or a few sheets of mid tone gray.

<https://www.dickblick.com/items/canson-mi-teintes-drawing-papers-9-x-12-gray-tone-pad-24-sheets/>

Pastel Papers:

In this class I'll be using both **toned (mid tone dark gray) sanded paper** and **neutral UART sanded paper** (this one is for the demo with alcohol underpainting).

- **UART sanded paper, 400 grit, neutral color (not black)** - for the projects. You can get 12"x18" sheets and then cut a sheet in two 9"x12" when smaller sizes are needed.

<https://www.dickblick.com/items/uart-sanded-pastel-paper-12-x-18-400-grit-single-sheet/>

If for any reason you cannot have UART paper, you can use another brand of sanded paper, just make sure it's either white or neutral - that's what is needed for the underpainting technique.

***Note:** Not all sanded paper can be used with liquid - water or alcohol might dissolve the adhesive that holds paper and grit together. It's best to run a quick wash test on a swatch of paper if you never used it with the Wet Underpainting before. Good alternative is **LuxArchival Professional Sanded Art Papers**.

- **Toned Sanded Paper** - any brand that you like will do (it's best to stay with mid size grit). In the demo, I'm using **Clairefontaine Pastelmat, dark gray**. The sheets come in approximately 19"x27". The demo size is about 13.5"x10".
<https://www.dickblick.com/items/clairefontaine-pastelmat-card-19-12-x-27-12-dark-gray-1-sheet/>

***IF YOU ONLY HAVE UART, YOU CAN JUST TONE IT IN FLAT MID TONE COLOR, LIKE YOU'D DO FOR THE UNDERPAINTING.**

Pastels:

Hard Pastels

Hard pastels are great to use with underpainting and a couple of first layers. The brands I use often are **NuPastels, Cretacolor, Richeson**.

*Note: Until recently the NuPastel was available as single sticks, but now it's going to be sold only as sets. So for single colors please check other brands.

In Hard pastels, the colors I used in the demos are:

- A few warm colors - from more chromatic mid tone Orange and Yellow to more neutral and darker Coral Red.
- Warmer Purple, Blues, Grays, Dark Purple Gray, Dark Green.

*Note: You can use Soft pastels instead of Hard pastels, but you need to make sure you apply them with a very light touch. Otherwise, they clog the tooth of the paper with too much pigment right away.

Soft Pastels

- Your pastel box should always have a basic range of colors no matter what your current subject is. That means you should have a few **light to dark colors in each basic Color family** (like Blue, Purple, Red, etc.)
- You should also have some **cooler and warmer colors in each color family**, like blue-purple and red-purple in Purple.
- There should be some **grays and neutrals as well as rich chromatic colors** in each color family. It's particularly important to have the chromatic (pure saturated) colors, because we cannot make the color more pure than it already is.

Before shopping for sets or single colors, check your pastel box - you might already have what you need.

*For a basic range of sky colors, you can refer to my signature set “**Luminous Skies.**” I selected these colors for Richeson hand-rolled soft pastels. You can see or purchase the set at <https://www.judsonsart.com/collections/richeson-instructor-sets/products/lana-ballot-luminous-skies-40-pc-set>

Optional:

If you are looking to expand a certain color range, then I have a few suggestions below. Please note, that the sets mentioned sets are **not** “must-have” for this course. It’s up to you how you build your pastel palette. Besides, it’s just a fraction of what’s available from different pastel manufacturers:

Terry Ludwig, Best of Blues

<https://www.dickblick.com/items/terry-ludwig-soft-pastels-best-of-the-blues-set-of-30/>

Mount Vision Soft Pastel Set - Thunderstorm Gray, Set of 25

<https://www.dickblick.com/items/mount-vision-soft-pastel-set-thunderstorm-gray-set-of-25/>

Art Spectrum Extra Soft Square Pastels - Highlights, Set of 10

<https://www.dickblick.com/items/art-spectrum-extra-soft-square-pastels-highlights-set-of-10/>

Materials for Underpainting technique:

Synthetic brush, 3/4" or 1" Don't use an expensive brush, the sanded surface will quickly ruin it.

Isopropyl Alcohol - I use 70%, but other % numbers can be used, the higher the number the faster it dries. You can also use water, if you cannot use the Isopropyl Alcohol for any reason.

A couple of small jars or cups (to hold small amounts of liquid)

Other Materials:

Soft Charcoal, White NuPastel or white charcoal - for value studies

Bristle Brush - to remove pastel, to correct mistakes, etc. (don't use the same brush as you use for the underpainting!)

Foam Core Boards, 16"x20" is good for small to medium size projects.

Glassine Paper - to protect the work from smudging.
<https://www.dickblick.com/products/glassine-interleaving-paper/>

Artists' Masking Tape
<https://www.dickblick.com/products/artist-tape/>

Gloves - if you use them.

Paper towels