

# Chalk Pastels

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## What is it?

Chalk pastels are pure pigments that are combined with a binder to hold it together. There are three common varieties – hard, soft, and pencil form – that can be used for various techniques. The ones we use are soft pastels, which have bright colors and can be smudged and blended easily.

Chalk pastels respond differently to different types of paper. Many artists use a textured paper to add interest to their drawing. Finished chalk drawings need to be protected with a fixative to prevent smudging. A low-cost version of fixative that works well is cheap aerosol hairspray.

## Preparation

Very little preparation is needed. Each table will need one to two sets of chalk pastels for the project. The tables may be covered in newspaper before the lesson; however, students can quickly clean the tables with this media.

Chalk pastels can smear and transfer easily to hands, arms, clothes, etc. While the chalk will wash out easily in the laundry, some teachers have their students wear aprons/big t-shirts over their clothes.

## Techniques to Try

- Chalk pastels are usually held between the thumb and the first finger.
- The end of the pastel is good for coloring in small areas and the broad side of the pastel can fill in large areas.
- Try blending two or more color together with your finger– for example, to add a shadow to an object, blend purple or dark blue in the area. A q-tip or tissue can blend the pastel as well.
- Try different pressures to apply the pastel.
- A pencil eraser can lift unwanted pastel off the paper.

## Clean-up

Students need to organize the pastels back into the containers – older students can try to create “complete” sets (one of each color) to prepare the boxes for the next class.

If tables were not covered, a quick wipe with a damp paper towel should remove any leftover pastel.

Spray all artwork with a light coating of aerosol hairspray and let dry. You can protect the artwork further by placing a piece of paper on top of the work and storing it in a safe place.