

# Oil Pastels

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## What is it?

Oil pastels are a cross between a wax crayon and chalk pastels. The color is bright and can be easily applied and blended onto paper. They were first developed in Japan during the 1920s to teach children Western art techniques, but are now used by serious artists as well. Artists enjoy the oil paint effect they can achieve using oil pastels (without the mess and time of oil paint).

## Preparation

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

The paper wrapper on the pastels can be peeled just like a regular wax crayon.

## Techniques to Try

- Try blending two or more color together – for example, to add a shadow to an object, blend purple or dark blue in the shadow area.
- Oil Pastel can be a resist when using watercolor – if the students draw with oil pastel first, they can then add a watercolor “wash” (watercolor with lots of water) on top of it. The watercolor will not stick to the oil pastel.
- Students can also draw the outline of objects and then paint inside the outline with watercolor paint for a fun effect.

## Clean-up

Students need to organize the oil 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.

Oil pastels never truly “dry” - they can smear easily. It is a good idea to place a sheet of paper in between each artwork and make sure the art is stored in a safe place.