**1. PAPER**

You can buy individual sheets of paper or pads. For beginners, pads are the most cost-efficient solution. Paper also comes in different weights (90lb, 140lb and 300lb) and different textures (rough, cold press and hot press).

The weight number is actually the weight of 500 20″ x 30″ sheets of paper, the higher the number, the thicker the paper.

* 90lb paper is quite thin and more suited for studies and training; it will need to be stretched.
* 140lb is of medium thickness and the most commonly used; it will also need to be stretched.
* 300lb is more like cardboard and doesn’t require stretching, but is more expensive and will take longer to dry.

**2. PAINT**

Watercolor paint comes in two forms: pan or tube. Pans are very convenient and are great for traveling, but make it more difficult to gather enough paint for a very large or dark wash. With tubes, you can take as much or as little paint as you need on your palette.

**3. BRUSHES**

Watercolor brushes come in different shapes and sizes. They can be natural or synthetic. The most expensive ones are the sable brushes.

[**Shape**](http://www.art-is-fun.com/Blick-Brush-Shape-Chart)**-** Watercolor brushes are available in several different shapes that serve different functions:

* **Angular** - The hairs are cut at an angle (hence the name). Can be used for precise strokes but also can be used to fill medium-large blocks of color.
* **Flat**- Can hold lots of color. The edge can be used for sharp lines, but the brush can also be used to fill in broad areas with color.
* **Square Wash**- Looks like a short, stumpy version of the flat brush. Ideal for wetting the paper or laying in washes.
* **Mop** - Great for wetting your paper and laying in large areas of color quickly.
* **Oval Wash**- These brushes look kind of puffy, like a make-up brush. Used for wetting paper and laying large washes of color quickly. These brushes never form a point or an edge.
* **Round** - The best "all-around" brush – you *must* have a round brush in your box of watercolor painting supplies! The round brush can be used for both details and washes. You can change the width of your lines by varying your angle and pressure.

To start, you don’t need many brushes, just a small round brush (#4,5 or 6), an angled flat and a big flat (2″ or more) for washes.

**4. BOARD**

Any paper lighter than 300lb will need to be stretched, as it will buckle with water if not. You can buy stretchers or staple your paper on foam board, wood, MDF or masonite panels.

**5. PALETTE**

They come in many different sizes and shapes. Separating the paint and mixing areas allows you to easily move the tray without risk of spilling the paint. Most palettes have wells for the paint and a flat mixing area. I use a butcher tray in addition to my pan.

**6. OPTIONAL SUPPLIES**

You may also want some pencils, a kneaded eraser, paper towels, sponges, plastic cards and painting knives for texture, or spray water or alcohol — the list goes on.