

# How to Paint a House

Let's paint a house! I've always been drawn to painting houses and buildings, and I've painted many over the years. Painting is a great way to get out some creative energy and can be fun homemade gifts to give your loved ones; painting their own houses makes for a unique and personalized gift. My favorite houses to paint have brick fronts and lots of pretty windows, which the house we'll make today has plenty of!

# Gather Supplies

First we'll need to gather our art supplies.

**Canvas:** You can use any sort of flat surface or material to create this, however for beginners, I would recommend a large sheet of thick, pressed watercolor paper (my go-to!) or a watercolor canvas. Be sure to check that it is compatible with watercolor paint, otherwise your painting will bleed, and it will be hard to do multiple layers of paint.

**Paint:** Watercolor is an excellent paint medium for beginners as it can be very forgiving. Here I used a mix of watercolors and gouache, a paint that has properties of both acrylic and watercolor paints. Honestly, you can create gorgeous paintings with only a handful of colors (I've seen people create stunning lifelike portraits with just 9 colors!), but when you're starting out it may take a while to learn the color wheel theory, so having options is nice.

**Pencils & Pens:** I would highly recommend using a 2H or 3H pencil, so the marks can erase easily or hide behind the paint. Anything softer would leave behind smudges and marks. As for the pens, inking over your painting is completely optional, but it is something I like to do to add that extra 'something.' Here I used a combo of 01, 03, and 05 micron pens for different thicknesses and boldness in different areas of the piece.







**Brushes:** There are an incredible amount of options when it comes to paintbrushes - from different sizes, shapes and materials, it can be a bit overwhelming. When I paint with watercolor or gouache, I like to use synthetic brushes, as their soft and smooth bristles create beautiful washes of color without leaving behind a texture. As for shape and size, this is completely dependent on what you are painting and what you feel comfortable with. I usually have 2-5 brushes on hand when painting: a round/pointed-round, filbert, medium bright, small liner brush for little details, and a large flat or oval wash brush for base painting and large washes of color.

**Water:** I typically have two glasses of water in front of me when painting, a small one and a large one. The large one is for rinsing the brushes off before switching colors - this water can get muddy quickly, which is why I keep the second smaller one to use *only* for *adding* water to paint (a little eyedropper tool is also super helpful for this!).

**Ruler:** This is optional but I highly recommend it. A lot of houses and buildings have numerous straight lines and repetitive features, and a ruler is extremely helpful with keeping proportions and symmetry.

**Masking tape:** Again this is optional, but I use masking tape to A) create a nice, clean border around the edge of my painting, and B) tape it down to my table or work surface, so it doesn't slide around when painting.



# Step One:

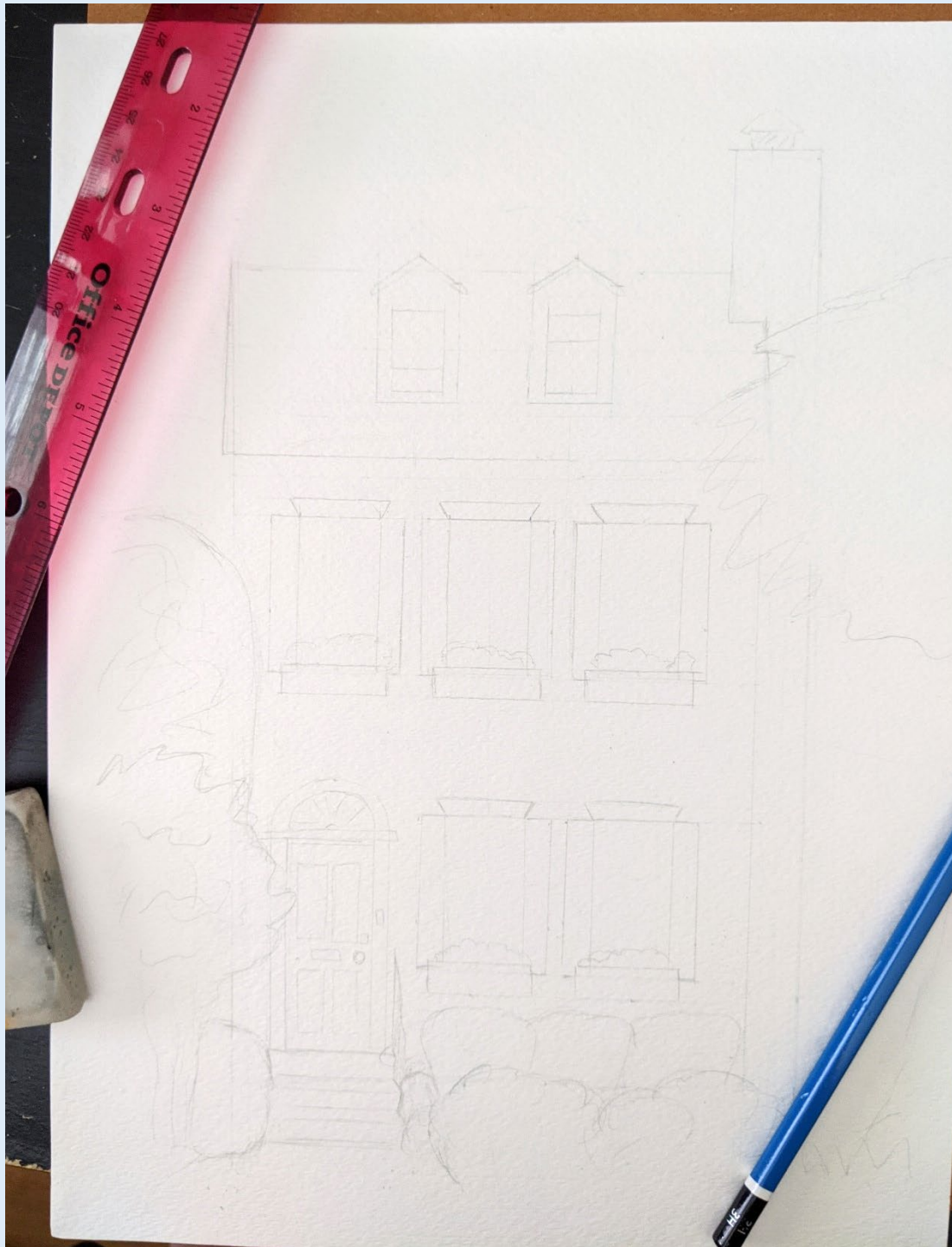
## *Pick a House*

Find a photo of a house or object that you would like to paint, or to use as a reference.

You can also make one up entirely, but I find it easiest to use a reference photo for the sake of details.

You can go on a walk through your neighborhood to find something that interests you, or do a quick Pinterest search!





## Step Two: *Sketch it Out*

Draw out a rough outline of what you'd like to paint. Not all of the details need to be included in the sketch, just include what you think you will need to lay down the first layer of paint. You can always sketch a couple of details on top of the dry paint later.

Since houses are typically quite geometric, it typically ends up being a series of rectangles of different sizes, which is where that ruler comes in handy.

You can also use this sketching period to make changes to your reference photo – add or remove anything to make the final product your own!



# Step Three:

## *Color Blocking*

Using the sketch that you just drew, lay down your first light layer of paint with a brush of your choosing.

This step has very limited details. It is just the base/under color of each section of your image – you are 'blocking' off the general shapes. Just simple washes of color. If you want certain areas to be white, be sure to paint *around* them – it looks so much better left blank than with white paint painted over it later.





## Step Four:

### *Slowly Adding*

Using this foundation layer of color, slowly start to add in more colors into slightly more detailed areas. For example, here I added some color to the windowpanes and flower boxes. You may want a small to medium-sized brush.

Here, you can also start to erase some of your pencil lines. I erased nearly all of the pencil except for a few more detailed spots like the windowpanes, and the steps, for where I wanted to add shadows. It will be harder to erase the pencil marks later in the process when there's more paint over them, so try to erase anything you don't need.



# Step Five:

## *Larger Details*

Now is when we start to add in more details, one by one. When painting, I find it easiest to go from the least to most detailed parts.

So here, I have added in the brickwork on the house – it does appear quite detailed, but it is also a very simple, repetitive, and widespread detail – just a bunch of small rectangular brush strokes over a large area.

Your brush choice will likely vary from detail to detail, so try to have a variety of brushes handy. Here is also a good time to start using more variety when mixing colors, to give your piece dimension.







## Step Six:

### *Pigment & Shape*

Add on another layer or two of paint to more pigmented areas, such as the window boxes seen here. By also adding another rough, patchy layer in the foliage, it creates more shape and detail. Real trees and plants have dozens of layers, so adding overlapping layers helps to create that illusion. Here, I decided to add two more layers to some of the trees, one of a lighter green, and one of a more blueish medium green. I also added a yellow-green layer to the bottom left tree and darker blue-green to the bushes and shrub after this image was taken.



# Step Seven:

## *Shadows & Background*

Adding shadows to your image makes it look much more realistic and gives it great dimension and shape. Be mindful of where you would like the sun placed in your image, and add in shadows wherever there would regularly be shadows. This would be next to any sort of protrusion – for example here, I pictured the sun being in the top left corner, and therefore added shadows to the lower right of the trees, the windowpanes, the attic windows, the steps, and even the rectangular details on the door.

I wasn't sure if I wanted a background when I started, so I also decided to add it in during this step.







## Step Eight:

### *Inking Outline*

These next two steps are completely optional, but for my style of painting, I love to add an ink outline!

Trace over some of the more prominent outlines of the image to give some definition and make it stand out. Here I outlined the house, as well as the windowpanes and shutters.



# Step Nine:

## *Other Details*

Here, we continue with the ink details, now focusing on adding to the trees and window plants, as well as more detailed parts of the house like the roof.

In this image, I wanted to focus more on the house, and decided to give a general shape to the foliage instead of attempting to detail each individual leaf. So I just added fun little scribbles, drawing what I would see if I squinted my eyes – just general shapes.







# Step Ten:

## *Finishing Touches*

Almost done! Now is the time to add any finishing touches that you think the painting may need.

Here, I decided to paint over a few areas with one more layer of paint to give more depth, and add a bit more ink details. I also made a few little splatters here and there to give the image a fun, eclectic vibe.

If you decided to add masking tape as a border, now you get to have that satisfying peel, revealing your beautiful painting! Great job!