



Use Watercolor  
to make the

# State of Kentucky

## What makes Kentucky special?



- Kentucky is well known for many things, from basketball to horse racing, from bluegrass to black mountain coal, from Mammoth Caves to My Old Kentucky Home. Kentucky's diverse people, resources and uniqueness are what makes it special.
- For many of us, Kentucky is a state of mind- the memories and feelings we get when we cross the state line, returning home. What treasures make up your Kentucky?

## What materials do I need?



- A pencil with eraser and a dark permanent marker. Water-based marker colors will run when wet, but permanent marker ink will not.
- You'll need a few pieces of thick paper. Watercolor paper works best to keep your piece from warping, but cardstock is better than thin notebook or copy paper.
- A set of watercolor paints and a soft-bristled paintbrush. Children's watercolor paints work very well for this activity. You may want to play around with paintbrushes in different shapes and sizes for different effects.
- Two cups of water- one cup for brush rinsing and one for adding fresh water to the paint. Don't forget paper towels for drying brushes and cleaning up.

## What are the benefits?



- When your identity becomes connected to a place and the people in it, it can help you feel more secure and give a greater sense of freedom. It is crucial in building the social connections that form communities.
- Painting with watercolors is a very fluid process. Mistakes are easily corrected by adding more water or more paint. Working through mistakes and exercising your creativity helps build problem-solving skills, patience, and determination.

## Trace the outline.



Trace the outline of the state of Kentucky onto your thick paper by first cutting the outline from this document.

Attach tape to the back of the shape to attach it to your watercolor paper or cardstock so it won't move. Then trace around it lightly with a pencil.

Remove the cut-out shape and trace over your pencil line with a permanent marker to create a thicker outline.

If you are viewing this document digitally but don't have a printer, enlarge the Kentucky image on your computer monitor or tablet to trace lightly with a pencil.

## Practice with your paints.



Pick a color and use your brush to wet the color until it is the shade you prefer. For darker colors, use less water – for lighter, translucent colors, use more water.

Practice your watercolor techniques by making a color wheel on a scratch piece of paper if you wish. You can mix colors to get new hues. But remember, colors opposite each other on the color wheel will muddy and turn brown when mixed.

If you aren't using watercolor paper, you may need to reduce the amount of water you use. Too much water can weaken the paper, making it easy for your brush to tear through.



## Paint your state.



A blank sheet of paper can be intimidating. A quick way to get past that feeling is to wet your brush with plain water and coat your entire paper with water only. This prepares the paper for accepting the paint color and helps paint "move".

Consider beginning by painting the whole state with one light wash of color. You can build new colors on top. What might certain colors say about your state?

It will be difficult to paint detailed objects in a realistic style if you are a beginner to watercolors. You may have more success by making abstract paintings, focusing on color and technique. Don't fight the water. Let the water do the work.

Your first painting may not be perfect. If you make a mistake, don't worry--you can always add more water or color to blend it away. Make several pieces.

## Experiment with different techniques.

4

Try putting thick, dark drops of paint onto the outline then holding your paper up to create a "running watercolor" effect.

Work your brush into the paper to allow for a swell and buckle topographic effect.

Sprinkle table salt onto the paint and wait for it to dry. Salt will draw paint to the crystal and give your piece a speckled texture.

Crinkle some plastic cling wrap on top of wet watercolor paint and leave until paint is completely dry. You'll get an interesting texture.

Coffee or fruit juices can also be used on your Kentucky watercolor to create natural tones. What other ideas do you have?

Upload  
your painting to  
social media and  
tag our page to  
share your  
creation!





# Key Terms

**Abstract:** a term to describe art that is not representational or based on external reality or nature.

**Buckle:** the uneven surface or rippling effect occurring on a material like canvas or paper.

**Color:** the perceived hue of an object, produced by the way it reflects or emits light into the eye.

**Color Wheel:** a chart that shows the relationships between primary, secondary and complementary colors.

**Complementary Colors:** colors that are opposite to each other on the color wheel. Complementary colors consist of one primary color and the secondary color that is created by mixing the remaining two primary colors.

**Hue:** a particular gradation of color; a shade or tint.

**Identity:** the distinguishing character, personality, or values of an individual. Identity can sometimes be bound to people, places or things.

**Outline:** the lines by which a figure (or shape) is defined in; the sum of these lines forming the contour of the figure.

**Primary Color:** a color that cannot be created by the mixing of any other colors. Traditional primary paint colors are red, yellow and blue.

**Secondary Color:** a color produced by mixing two primary colors in equal proportions. Traditional secondary paint colors are purple, green and orange.

**Shade:** a hue produced by adding black to a starting color.

**Texture:** the tactile or perceived surface quality of an object. Texture can be real or implied.

**Translucency:** allowing some light to pass through a layer, but objects beyond cannot be seen clearly.

**Transparency:** the quality of being able to clearly see through one or more layers in an artwork.

**Watercolor:** a paint or painting technique in which the paint color is dispersed by mixing it with water.

**Wet-on-Wet Technique:** a watercolor method where wet paint is applied to wet paper, producing soft edges and random effects.

**Wet-on-Dry Technique:** a watercolor method where wet paint is applied to dry paper, allowing the creation of greater detail and sharper, well-defined shapes.