


**KENTUCKY 4-H PROJECT GO!**




**Painting with Acrylics**

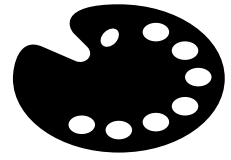
Applying paint requires practice, patience, and problem-solving skills.


Acrylic paints are a recent invention in the art world. In the 1940's, two scientists, Leonard Bocour and Sam Golden, experimented with acrylic polymers. They found a way to use the polymers to suspend pigment, thus creating acrylic paints. Acrylics are versatile. They can be very fluid or have a thick-bodied consistency. They can be applied to any surface and come in a wide range of colors. Acrylics are made of three ingredients- pigment, acrylic polymer resin and water that make up an emulsion. As the paint dries, the water either evaporates or soaks into the painting surface. With the water gone the polymers join holding the pigment tight. The result is a beautiful rich color. If you want to think the acrylic paint, be careful not to overdo it. If adding water, add a little more paint. If the pigment is too thin when it dries, it will not bond within the polymer net.

If using a surface other than paper, make sure it is dirt and oil free and consider priming it with a high-quality acrylic gesso or base coat. You can use varnish to protect your painting. If there is any paint leftover, store it in an airtight container.

**Materials Needed**

- Brushes
- Palette or paper plate
- Acrylic paints
- Rinsing cup/can
- Paper
- Palette knife
- Fruit for model
- Lamp (optional)
- Spray bottle for misting (optional)



| Learner Objectives   | Skill/ Grade Level       | Curriculum         | Life Skills     | Educational Standards         | Video Lesson  |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Using acrylic paint, youth will create a still life painting | Beginner Youth Ages 9-18 | Portfolio Pathways | Problem Solving | National 4-H Mission Mandates |  |


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**Do the Activity:**

1. Position a single piece of fruit so it has contrasting shadows and light. If in a poorly lit area, use a lamp.
2. Use a pencil to draw a contour sketch of the fruit before you paint it.
3. Mix colors to create the base color of the fruit. Do this with a palette knife, not a brush.
4. Using the mixed paint, begin painting inside the contour sketch.
5. For shadows, mix a portion of the remaining base color with black. Black is never used by itself, only mixed with other colors because it overpowers other colors. Paint on the darker shades to create the shadows. If you need different darkness of shadow, add more black.
6. For light areas, mix the base with white paint. You can use plain white on the extreme light areas but consider using it in moderation.

**Reflect:**

1. What happened when you mixed colors to paint the fruit?
2. When blending the base colors with white and black what happened?
3. What problems did you have when using acrylic paint? How did you solve them?

**Apply:**

1. Set up for another painting. Now add 2-3 pieces of fruit to the composition. Position the fruits in an interesting composition, creating contrasting shadows and light.
2. Create a contour sketch of the fruits.
3. Mix the color of the first fruit and begin painting.
4. Mix the colors for the other fruits when you are ready.
5. If your paint begins to dry, lightly mist the water to keep the palette moist.
6. Mix the colors with black and white as needed. Paint in the shadows and light areas.
7. Use acrylic paints to create other works of art!

Learn more at [www.kentucky4h.org](http://www.kentucky4h.org) or contact your county extension office.

| Extended Learning  | Civic Engagement  | Communications                                     | Exhibit  | References  |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| Use your imagination and your paint to make a painting of anything you like. | Use your talents to create paintings for loved ones.<br><br>Paint cards for a local nursing home. | Prepare a demonstration or speech on your project. | Enter your project in the Kentucky State Fair! | Created by Jennifer Tackett, Extension Specialist for 4-H Youth Development, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Portfolio Pathways |

