

# Watercolor Salt Effects Lesson Plan



## Overview

This lesson plan was developed by members of the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art's (BIMA) Curriculum Collaborative, generously funded by an Arts in Education Partnership grant from ArtsWA, the Washington State Arts Commission.

The Curriculum Collaborative paired Kitsap County elementary school educators with BIMA teaching artists to develop arts-integrated lesson plans that augment learning potential embedded in existing Art in Action videos.

The teaching artists, classroom teachers and lesson plans foreground equity, with an emphasis on one or more of the following areas: Spanish dual-language, special education, social emotional learning (SEL), and/or arts integrated curriculum development.

BIMA is grateful to the following Curriculum Collaborative members for their dedication to high quality experiential education for young learners in Kitsap County and beyond.

### Teaching Artists

Robin Bundi  
Isobel Coney  
Becky Johnston  
Pamela Lee  
Scott Méxcal  
K. Malia Peoples  
Amaranta Sandys

### Classroom Educators

Jennifer Cleverdon  
Adriana Vazquez Jaco  
Clancy Jacobsen  
Jillian Samms

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Becky Johnston, Arts In Education Partnership Coordinator  
Kristin Tollefson, Director of Education and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advancement

The Bainbridge Island Museum of Art acknowledges that the land on which we gather is within the aboriginal territory of the suq'wábš "People of Clear Salt Water" (Suquamish People). Expert fishers, canoe builders, and basket weavers, the suq'wábš live in harmony with the lands and waterways along Washington's Central Salish Sea as they have for thousands of years. Here the suq'wábš live and protect the land and waters of their ancestors for future generations as promised by the Point Elliot Treaty of 1855.

We pay respects to their elders past and present.

# Watercolor Salt Effects Lesson Plan

In this one-part science experiment, one-part art exploration, students will determine how salt reacts with water and use that knowledge to create a textured effect on a watercolor painting. Students will think about how salt works and how to use non-traditional tools and abstraction in painting.

## Standards

### Arts

This lesson plan addresses the following Washington State Arts Learning Standards. [For more information or for grade-level specific performance standards, refer to Washington State Learning Standards: The Arts Learning Standards: Visual Arts by Grade Level \(2017\).](#)

Creating	Performing/Presenting/Producing
Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work (Anchor Standard 1)	Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation (Anchor Standard 5)
Organize and develop artistic ideas and work (Anchor Standard 2)	Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work (Anchor Standard 6)
Refine and complete artistic work (Anchor Standard 3)	



## Science

This lesson plan addresses the following [NGSS Learning Standards](#).

2-PS1-2 Analyze data obtained from testing different materials to determine which materials have the properties that are best suited for an intended purpose.\*

PS1.A: Structure and Properties of Matter

- Different properties are suited to different purposes.
  - [Clarification Statement: Examples of properties could include, strength, flexibility, hardness, texture, and absorbency.]

## English Language Arts

This lesson plan addresses the following Washington State English Language Arts and Literacy Learning Standards. For grade-specific performance standards, refer to [OSPI](#).

### Craft and Structure

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. (Anchor Standard 4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.5)

## Session One – Learn and Experiment

### Supplies

- BIMA [Art in Action Video](#)
- Salt (nice to have a variety: flakes, table salt, rock salt)
- Brush
- Watercolor Set
- 2-3 Pieces of Watercolor Paper (Watercolor paper is designed to hold and absorb water without wrinkling or tearing and the paint soaks in and stays vibrant)
- Vessel of Water
- Paper Towels
- Pencil
- Optional: Piece of Cardboard, Mat Board, or Popsicle Stick
- Sink Access
- Work space at a table for each student
- [Vocabulary](#) Sheet

## Launch

Introduce the topic by first seeing what students know about salt. “What do we know about salt?”

Common facts that students might know are:


- Salt is a natural mineral that is found on Earth.
- The ocean is made of saltwater.
- Salt comes in different forms, including sea salt, rock salt, table salt, and salt flakes.
- Salt also has a variety of uses, including seasoning foods, preserving foods, regulating the water in your body, and disinfecting or killing germs.
- In the wintertime, we use salt to melt ice.

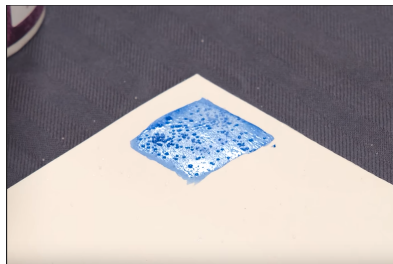

Related to that last fact, salt absorbs moisture. Today, we are going to be using this very important fact in our watercolor painting.

Discussion: Do the students have a hypothesis why? How do we think this will be applied? What do we think might happen?

## Make

Watch the Art in Action video until the 4:07 mark for an overview, learn about materials, and see what will happen. Teacher may want to pre-teach [vocabulary](#).

1	<p>Explore painting a wet wash of color (<a href="#">reference min 1:15-1:24 of video</a>)</p> <p>Watercolor is all about the management of how much water you are putting on the paper. When the watercolor paint is put on the paper there should not be pools of paint or to dry so that you can immediately touch the paper without it smearing. The paint should be lightly wet and have a sheen/shine to it when you move the paper.</p>	
<p>Formative Assessment Look to see if students are getting the correct ratio. Look for students saying I</p>		

can't do this and how to shape learning needs to help them.		
3	Test putting salt on the watercolor washes ( <a href="#">reference min 1:25-1:38 of video</a> )	
<p>Formative Assessment</p> <p>Have students gotten the salt to pull in the water/pigment that surrounds it?</p>		
5	<p>Set aside the sheets. While the paint dries and the salt crystals take effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore water cycle extension activities at the end of this lesson plan.</li> <li>• Did the students see that salt worked like little sponges soaking up water and pigment that is around it (<a href="#">3:09-4:06 of the video</a>)?</li> </ul>	
6	<p>Problems might have arisen that salt did not pull up the water. There are two reasons that this happened. If their color wash was not wet enough, there would not be any water/pigment to pull up. Students can test this out.</p>	
7	<p>Another reason that the salt did not pull up water:</p> <p>If there was too much water on their paper then the salt would have been overpowered and not have been able to pull up the water/pigment. Students can test this out.</p>	
8	Experiment with using different kinds of salt ( <a href="#">2:08-3:02 of video</a> ).	
<p>Formative Assessment: Do students notice the differences of absorption with the different kinds of salt?</p>		

## Session Two – Watercolor Scene

### Launch




Discuss: Ask students to recap what they learned from day one.


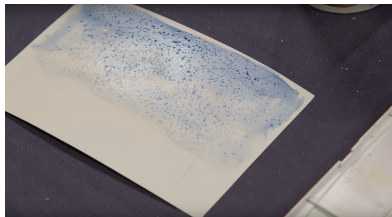


We'll take these skills to create a painting that incorporates the salt effect.

Go over these tips for watercolor success:

- **Pre-wet Watercolor Palette.** Have students place a single drop of water on each color before they start to paint. By doing this the paint becomes moistened just enough and students won't need to grind their brush into the paint to pick up the color.
- **Add Water.** Keep adding water to the paint and students will learn exactly how much water to add through practice. Watercolor is designed to be a transparent medium. If the paint looks thick and sticky, add more water.

### Make

1	Watch from 4:06 to the end of the video. <i>(This portion of the plan can be modified by having students create a salt textured background, and once dry, adding a word or experimenting with mark making.)</i>	
2	Using a pencil, lightly draw the horizon line and trees. This helps students know where they have to paint towards. <i>(Watercolor will cover light pencil marks.)</i>	
Formative Assessment: Have students completed their pencil drawing, with a horizon line and trees?		
3	The sky will be done in a wet on wet technique. Paint clear water where the sky is located. You know you have enough water on the paper when you can see a light sheen.	

Formative Assessment: Do students have enough water on their paper? Can they see a light sheen?		
4	Apply blue paint to the sky on top of the wet paper, with more color towards the top of sky and less closer to the horizon line. This mimics how the sky appears in nature.	
5	Add salt crystals to the blue sky before the paper dries.	
Formative Assessment: Have students added salt crystals?		
6	Let the paper fully dry with the salt crystals on it. Once dry, remove the salt crystals with a piece of cardboard, mat board, or popsicle stick.	
7	Paint the pencil drawn trees with a dark blue paint for a finished landscape painting!	
Formative Assessment: Have the students completed their trees?		

## Summative Assessment

- Have all students completed a final watercolor painting that demonstrates an understanding of using salt and water to create a textured effect? What was easy about this project? What was challenging?

## Wrap-Up

- Class Art Walk – Art walk – Notice different artistic choices classmates made in their painting.

## Extension Activities

- Water Cycle – Students can explore various questions and topics. Why does winter happen and what does it mean? How does snow fit into the water cycle? How does salmon react and correspond to the water cycle?
  - [Learn about the local watershed and its connection to salmon](#)
  - [Explanation of the water cycle](#)
  - Students can [draw in their own water cycle map](#) in reference to the Hood Canal and Olympic peninsula.
  - The PNW Salmon Center also has many [activities to link students](#) to their outside environment.
- Personal Values/Community Connections – Students can add a component to their art piece that incorporates some sort of value they hold dear to their hearts such as: respect, responsibility, perseverance or can include a word or picture that represents their own community.

## Accommodations and Adaptations

- This is a visual activity, so teachers can point out and hold all of the materials that will be used and can show the video for students.
- Teachers can show how to hold the materials in another way (example: different ways to hold a brush). Students can also pair up if a student can't hold the brush. The other student could put the paint on the paper and then they could sprinkle the salt on to the paper.
- After watching the video, the teacher can demonstrate how to do the next step. If students are still having trouble, the teacher can show students one-on-one.
- Visually challenged students can sit closer to the instructor and could feel the pieces along the way: what does a dry watercolor feel like, what does it feel like after the salt has dried to the paper, and can they feel the texture the salt has left.

## Additional Resources

### Science and Watercolor From BIMA

- Teach about [atmospheric perspective and how to create it via a watercolor painting](#).
- Teach about [colors that you find in nature and how to think about an atypical material](#) as a paint source.
- Teach about [material properties and why resists work](#).
- Teach about [different kinds of leaves](#) by making watercolor leaf impressions.

## Technique

### Basic Watercolor

If students have never used watercolor before it will be helpful for them to first use the medium. This [rainbow painting project](#) is a fun way to explore how to use the medium.

### Wet on Wet

Watercolor is a painting method in which the paints are made of pigments suspended in a water-based solution. If you place your wet watercolor pigments into a field of wet paint it is called the wet on wet technique. Because the wet paint is laid on wet paper, the colors flow, blending into one another in beautiful, unexpected ways. This technique can also help to talk about dispersion. This [video](#) shows the basic technique in a fun project.

### Other Resists

If your students liked working with salt they might like to learn how to incorporate wax crayons, sandpaper, tissue, or cling wrap into their painting process. This [video](#) walks through the different techniques.