

Art Supplies for Sketchbook Journals

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Sources

I have had good luck ordering art supplies from Plaza Art Stores (<https://www.plazaart.com/>), Jerry's Artarama (<https://www.jerrysartarama.com/>), Dick Blick (www.dickblick.com), and Amazon. If you are lucky enough to live near an art store you can of course pick up your art supplies there. Plaza Art and Jerry's Artarama both have stores in Nashville, the people who work there are usually artists and can answer your questions. Michael's and Hobby Lobby also usually have a pretty good selection of art stuff.

Notebooks/Journals

The main point is to get paper thick enough so you can do ink and watercolor washes without causing the paper to wrinkle up. Don't get a sketchbook labeled for "dry media." Oddly enough, you may need to avoid notebooks listed as "Sketch" quality, because sometimes they have thin paper. Look for sketchbooks/journals with 90 pound (190 gsm) paper or heavier. One choice is Canson Montval All-Purpose spiral sketchbooks. I have also used the Strathmore Mixed Media Spiral notebook, which works well. You can also use almost any watercolor journal or "mixed media" notebook, as they all have heavier paper.

I find that 6 by 8.5 inch or 7 by 10 inch notebooks are about the right size for sketching.

Pencils

Almost any pencil will do since we only use it in the preliminary phase of the sketch. I use a 2B, B or HB, but any of those hardness levels is fine. (2B is softer, B is harder, HB even harder.)

Erasers

I think kneaded erasers are great. I think any brand would be ok: Prismacolor, Faber-Castell, etc.

Drawing Pens

The Uni-ball Vision rollerball pen, 0.7 mm and 0.5 mm work very well. I tend to use the Micron Pigma technical pens from Sakura, I like the 05 and 03 Pigma pens (actually 0.45 mm and 0.35 mm line widths). All these pens are waterproof and won't smear when brush ink or watercolor over them. Other pens are fine, just make sure the ink is really waterproof. Any pen will do to get started!

India Ink

Various authors recommend using Kohinor, Staedtler, or Rapidograph ink. I have used Higgins India Ink, and found it to be OK. I use the liquid ink like a watercolor wash to provide dark/light shading for a sketch.

Water brushes

I like to use water brushes and pre-mix some ink and water into the reservoir of the water brush. We'll talk about this when we get to the ink shading technique. I like the Pentel brand of water brush.

Watercolor Sets

I recommend the Windsor and Newton travel sets, or the Koi pocket field sketch box. You only need about 12 colors (since we are just sketching, not making watercolor paintings!), but anywhere in the 6 to 24 color range should be fine. You definitely don't need more than 24 colors. Other watercolor sets are fine too, make sure it has a palette area where you can mix your paints with water, so you don't have to carry a separate palette.

Watercolor Brushes

There is a bewildering array of brushes out there. Some good choices are white sable or nylon round brushes like the Snap! Brand, sizes 2, 4, 6, 8 and 12. I like flat brushes in the same sizes. The Raphael Kaerell and Princeton 4050 series brands are also good, other brands are fine. Buying brushes individually can get expensive. There are many good brush sets, I like the Jack Richeson 713995 Watermedia Pocket Plein Air Brush Set, which has short handled brushes for traveling in a useful case. If you're just starting out, just get one big and one small brush of any kind to get going, or an inexpensive brush set.

Paper Towels

Having a roll of paper towels around is a big help when using ink or watercolor.

Water Holder

Having a container that will hold about a cup of water is very useful for ink washes and watercolors. I have used yogurt containers, peanut butter jars, old hand cream jars, etc. It should be something you don't mind getting stained with colors.