

Sketchbook Materials List

You don't need everything on this list -just a sketchbook and something to draw with - think about what you want your sketchbook practice to look like, and get the materials you need.

Sketchbooks

Stillman and Birn - either Beta, Delta or Zeta series depending on whether you prefer ivory or white paper - all are reasonably heavyweight and hold up to water media pretty well. My preference is extra heavyweight, hotpress paper.

[Stillman and Birn Sketchbooks](#)

Venezia Fabriano

These is good paper for dry media - it buckles with anything other than a light watercolor wash, but has a perfect light tooth for ballpoint and pencil:

[Fabriano Venezia sketchbook](#)

Koval Sketchbooks

This is a small, artist-run company that makes gorgeous sketchbooks with 100% cotton paper

[Koval Sketchbooks](#)

Best high-end sketchbook:

Will J Bailey: - I only discovered these a few years ago and they're phenomenal - smooth enough for ballpoint, doesn't buckle no matter what I do to them with water media. The paper he's using is Fabriano Artistico 300gsm, HP and Waterford Saunders

[Will J Bailey Sketchbooks](#)

Pens/pencils:

A drafting pencil - any pencil that you have is probably great. This is one that I like:

[Pentel drafting pencil](#)

[Zebra 301F](#)- all around great ballpoint, fine point, layers easily:

[Bic cristal .7](#) - probably my favorite pen of all time. It's lighter weight than the zebra, goes from very light grey to black by varying the pressure, doesn't blot/create clumps of ink - if I were to get stuck on a desert island, this would be it.

<https://www.amazon.com/BIC-Crystal-Exact-Ballpoint-Black/dp/B083FVNWDN>

[Ohto slim line .5](#) - best super-fine point pen for details (this pen is sometimes out of stock - if it is, the [Muji ballpoint pen](#) has the same size nib)

[Jetstream .38 standard](#): Best fine hybrid pen (its a low viscosity gel/ink mix) , to accentuate darks:

Best overall source for pens online: [JetPens](#)

Best source in NYC - basement of the [Kinokuniya bookstore](#):

Watercolor and Gouache

Best inexpensive, portable watercolor set: [Windsor and Newton Cotman pocket box](#): this was my travel paint set for years- it's cheap, lasts forever and works beautifully. When the colors run out, I replace them with out of the tube watercolors.

[A.Gallo Watercolors](#) - these are gorgeous, handmade watercolors made in Assisi, Italy using honey and rosemary oil. This is a good gift to yourself if you have a birthday coming up.

[Horadam Schminke](#): best high-end tube watercolors and [gouache](#) (the watercolors come with a nice ceramic palette, but you'll need a portable palette to use them outside the studio)

[Best sketchbook palette](#):

The Go Draw store sells my favorite travel palettes - they clips onto your sketchbook, and you fill it with any watercolor/gouache colors you want:

A [perfume atomizer bottle](#) for reactivating gouache and creating texture

Clip-on palette cup

[Plastic version](#), which is lighter and cheaper:

[Stainless steel version which lasts a bit longer](#) (you can pick a single or double cup)

Paper towels/cloth rags

You can either use any absorbent piece of old cotton you have on hand, or [blue shop paper towels](#), which are extremely durable.

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Acrylic Ink

You can also tone paper with a watercolor wash or by applying matte medium and rubbing it with oil paint or acrylic. I like acrylic ink because it's waterproof so it doesn't dilute when you put watercolor or gouache on top.

Acrylic ink: these have a huge range of colors, and are completely waterproof (my recommendation is to begin with a netral like burnt umber or sepia

[Liquitex](#)

Walnut Ink

makes a beautiful matte brown sepia color, not waterproof

[Daniel Smith Walnut ink](#)

Shellac Ink

These can be mixed to create a series of neutrals, and diluted to regulate the tone. Keep in mind that the less diluted they are, the shinier they become - if your surface is too shiny it becomes too slippery to paint on with water media, although it can then be used for oil paint

Sennelier shellac based ink

Brushes

Da Vinci Maestro: my favorite travel brushes

I like sizes 6, 5 and 3, series 35

I got in touch with the distributor of Da Vinci North America at some point and he made a [discount link for this class:](#)

[Rosemary and Co Ivory series](#)

These are inexpensive synthetic brushes that work beautifully with oil, acrylic and gouache - they're stiff enough to push heavy bodied paint around, and come down to a fine point for details. I like the flats and filberts (size 4-6 for sketchbooks) and rounds (size 1-3 are best for details)

[Mod Podge](#) - this functions as both glue and sealer (and a shiny finish). I use it for collage, and as a sealer for layers of water media so I can either paint on top of them with more gouache without reactivating the layers underneath, or to layer oil paint on top of gouache. Transparent matte medium works for this as well.

Some of my other favorite sketchbook things ([I have a video of my setup here](#)):

[Peg and Awl artist roll](#) - beautifully made roll that keeps everything organized, and that's such a pleasure to the touch it actually makes me sketch more.

[Sketchbook board](#): a lightweight board fits onto your sketchbook and has magnetic strips to hold your palette and water cup - its an easy, portable travel sketchbook setup.

Other things to try:

Collage, metal leaf, washi tape - sketchbooks are for experimenting!

