

Smart and Frugal Ways with Art Room Supplies

Tips in the use and storage of art materials.

Acrylic Paint

You need the primary colours, plus black and white paint. All the other colours can be created by mixing them.

Pour paint into plastic containers with lids. Put a small plastic spoon in each container. Leave the spoon in the container, as it saves on washing up. Trim the end of the spoon if you can't close the lid.

Put the five paints on trays. These can be put on the tables, ready for use.

Provide each child with a paper plate for putting and mixing paint on. This can be disposed of, rather than washing the paint down the drain.

Put a small pile of cut up newspaper on each table for wiping brushes. This way, you won't need water. Water usually makes the paint runny and often creates mess. If you prefer water for washing the brushes, put a jar of water in a larger jar. If it spills, it will be contained.

Invest in a drying rack. A folding one that is attached to the wall is a convenient idea.



Dye

Put concentrated dye in small containers. Arrange a collection of different coloured dyes on small trays. The trays can be placed on tables. If the little dye pots tip over, the dye will be contained on the tray.

Put a cotton bud in each container. This is what the children use to apply the colour to their art.

When you use the dyes on another day, the dyes may have dried out. Simply add a few drops of water to the dye and it will rehydrate.



Coloured pencils

Take the coloured pencils out of the boxes they arrive in. Distribute them evenly into storage containers. Ensure the containers stack for easy carrying and storage.

It's worth having more pencils than you need. When the pencils need sharpening, have the children put them in a separate container for you to sharpen later. The children can carry on using those in their supply. This way, you are free to teach rather than sharpen pencils during the lesson.

I recommend an electric pencil sharpener. I have survived for 9 years in the art room with a variety of other sharpeners. I have just invested in an electric sharpener which is easily accessible, quick and effortless.

Indian Ink

Indian ink is a fabulous medium for children to use. I supply kebab sticks for dipping into the ink and drawing with. It creates an irregular line which is interesting.

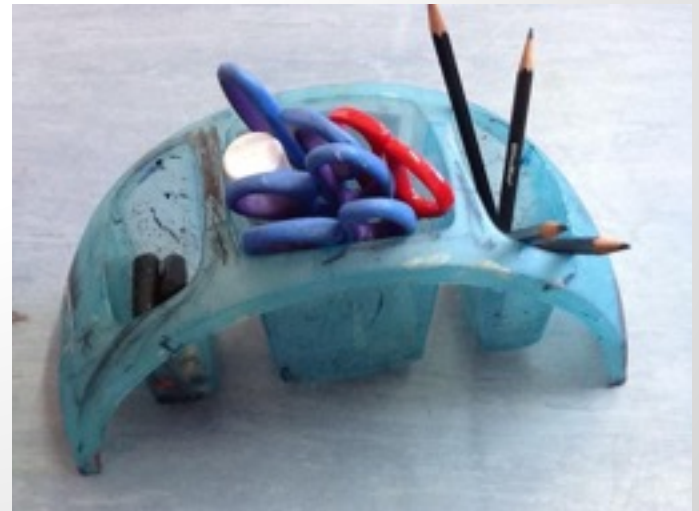
Pour the Indian ink into small containers that have lids. Put each container into a larger one, in case of spills.

Simply top up when the ink runs low.



Pencils, scissors and glue.

Purchase containers that have several compartments. Buy one for each table. Pencils (4B are good drawing pencils), scissors, glue sticks, white and black wax crayons. They are used on most days in my art room. These can be kept in the different compartments of your containers. They can be distributed at the beginning of the lesson and easily gathered up at the end. This is also an easy way of keeping track of the supplies. It's easy to count them in small groups.



Brush Care

I was lucky enough to have a commercial paint brush holder given to me by a local artist. It's brilliant.

The brushes can be grouped, they are stored upright and are easily accessible.

This storage system could be replicated using kitchen utensil holders.

The ideal way to store brushes is horizontally, so water drains away from the bristles. This could also be achieved with cutlery trays, if you have the space.

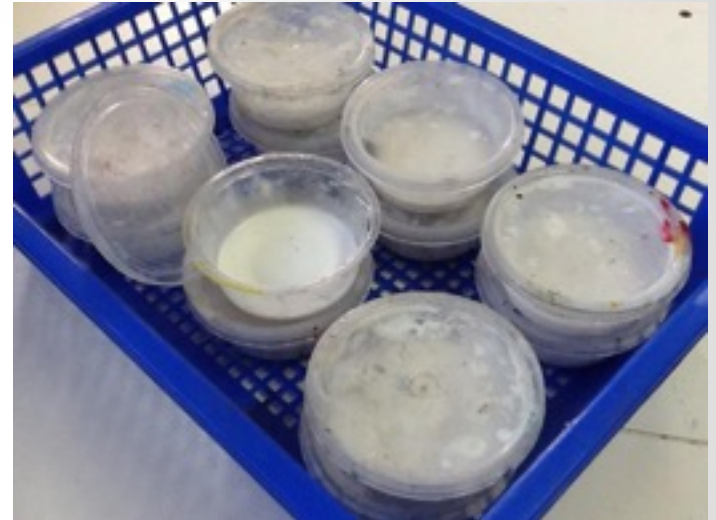


Glue

As glue is constantly being used in the art room, it is important to have some PVA at hand that hasn't clogged up the nozzle of the glue bottle. Glue sticks are a good option, but PVA is cheaper.

I gave away the little bottles of glue with narrow spouts and replaced them with small containers with lids.

I have renamed it 'finger glue'. I instruct the children to use it sparingly. Too much PVA won't stick successfully. Any glue left on their fingers can be wiped back into the container. The remainder dries and peels off easily.



Storing the bits and pieces.

File boxes stack easily and once they are labeled with appropriate names describing their contents, they are easily accessed.

Mine have labels such as Sewing, Lids (for mixing paint on), Scissors (spare ones), Chalk (in little containers), Tissue, Cellophane, Wool, Water colour paint palettes, lino cutters, dye, etc.



Erasers

I have lost many erasers in the past. So I put a threaded darning needle through the eraser. I tied the thread to a disk of plastic with a hole punched at each end. This makes the eraser difficult to lose.

I hang it up in the classroom. It is also a boomerang that returns to the hook when it has been used.

As you can see from the photo, the eraser has had a bit of use. But the good news is, it is one of 3 that have been in the room since February. It's November now.

