

# Painting the Clouds

## Supplies Needed:

- Canvas or other painting surface.
- Brushes: A relatively soft, medium sized chisel (eg approximately 1.5cm wide)
- Paint: White, French Ultramarine Blue (or similar), Burnt Umber
- I recommend keeping it simple. Stay with either a warm blue or a cool blue.

## How to Paint Clouds:

In this exercise I'm using a warm, French Ultramarine Blue. Paint a canvas a lovely pale blue color. Paint a gradient shade if you like.

Mix a little bit of Burnt Umber, and a touch of French Ultramarine Blue, and a large pile of White.

This grey will make the shadows on the underside of your cloud.

Clean most of the paint off your brush. Apply the paint gently and loosely and replicate the random shapes of a cloud.

Add some white to that grey. Apply this color above the shaded area, bringing it down into the darker grey.

Repeat this process.

You may eventually wish to recreate those beautiful fluffy white clouds.

You'll need to clean your brush and apply pure White. As before, blend it down into the greyed areas, and gently pull it across into the sky blue.

You need to use a very gentle touch. That's the first step in learning how to paint clouds. But we all know that it's not that simple!

One of the most compelling things about learning how to paint clouds is creating the illusion of a sunset or sunrise.

Unless you have a strategy, it can be a little daunting (but oh so rewarding!). This is another strategy that I use to make painting sunrises and sunsets much simpler.



I'm going to paint a sunset over trees. There's light bouncing around everywhere, and all sorts of different shifts in tone and hue. I need to simplify.

### Here we go:

On a loosely roughed in canvas, I paint in the darkest areas of the clouds, using Purple, Cadmium Yellow Medium and a touch of French Ultramarine Blue, and White.

These darkest areas will be the furthest away from the light source. Now, mix a highlight using the previous mix of color, but leaving out the French Ultramarine Blue.

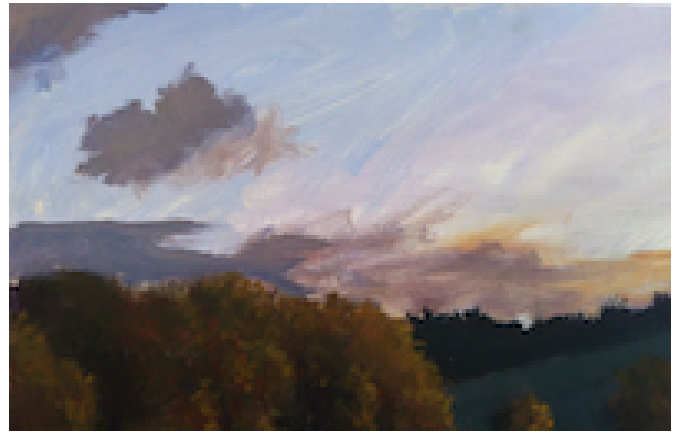
This highlight then becomes the dark area on the next set of clouds closest to the light source.

I mix up a new highlight for this set of clouds. This one has less Purple in it. It then becomes the darker area on the next set of clouds closest to the light source.

I repeat this process, gradually eliminating most of the Purple (and adding a tiny touch of Red Light). By the time I'm closest to the light source, the highlights will be almost white.

**Simply Said:** the highlights on the last cloud become the shadows on the next one.

The premise behind this, is that the closer you get to the light source, the warmer and paler the clouds will become.



This is a great place to start. As usual, don't sacrifice your observational skills, and make sure you adjust the piece you're doing.

This strategy, however, can still be used in hundreds of different skies. The only difference being variances in color and tone.

**Yay! Now go and paint!**

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