

# Watercolour Pencils: Birds

by Kim Fjordbotten

## Materials

Watercolour pencils  
Watercolour brush, Round or Flat  
Watercolour paper approx. 6x8"  
Practice paper for sketching

[Easy order – Click Here.](#)

## Goal

This project will help students acquire observational skills.

Watercolour pencils provide a nice transition from drawing to painting.

## Project

Choose a specific species of bird and illustrate it using watercolour pencils.

## Step One

Sketch the shape of the bird using a photograph or digital image as reference. Note proportions of body to tail and the placement of eye next to beak. Note how the legs are in line with the beak and eyes. Look closely at the highlights and shadows. How does lighting help create the illusion of volume?

## Step Two

After practicing a couple of times on sketch paper, draw the bird onto watercolour paper. Watercolour pencils are harder to erase than regular pencils so draw lightly at first to make sure the shape and lines are correct. Next, colour in the bird shape. Shade in a way that will add volume to the flat drawing. Colour in the direction of the feathers. The lines should almost seem like feathers. Leave it loose as there are many layers to this project.



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## Step Three

Use water and a wet brush to gently turn the drawing mark into a paint mark. A light touch of water will soften the hard marks of the drawing. The colours will also blend to create highlights and shadows.

## Step Four

Let the painting dry for a few minutes and then draw more details with the watercolour pencil.

Repeat these steps in as many layers as you like to create a richly finished art work.



## More Inspiration

The art will be interesting to look at if the both drawing marks and the watercolour blends are visible in the finished piece. In other words, encourage students not to overwork or over-blend their marks.





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This project can also be used for botanical illustrations.



Lightly sketch design on drawing paper with a very sharp pencil.



Add color lightly at first. The pencil stroke should follow the direction of the shape being filled in.



Blend colors by coloring heavily over dark colors with light colors to smooth them out - this is "burnishing."

