
Cloud Perspective

Stage by stage how to paint clouds in perspective

Jane Denman Skyblue Art Classes - 23 March 2016

Want to paint amazing skies? We were inspired by artist Dave White to learn how to get cloud perspective. Use this lesson plan and have a go, there are a few steps but hopefully they will take you through in a clear way.

Most important thing when you are outside, look up! Take your sketchbook and try and sketch our amazing skies, notice the shapes and colours



Marking off the 3rds, roughly with a pencil on sides and top is your starting point after you have painted your 'graded sky' background

Use white chalk and follow the instructions on page 2 here

Practice blending with fingers, cloth and don't overwater your paint

How to paint clouds in perspective using acrylic

Colours: Titanium White, Ultramarine Blue (deep good too), Cadmium Red, Lemon Yellow, 2" soft brush for background, number 4 round for clouds,

1. First paint the background sky (this is with a graded wash meaning that you have a darker band for the horizon - a type of stripe). Use white with ultramarine and a large brush, brush out so you get a smooth join.
2. You need plain white chalk. Use the rule of thirds: using your handspan measure you painting into thirds roughly in both directions - so vertically up the side and horizontally across the top. Mark roughly where these are
3. About a third of the way up, in the darker band, on the right hand side, 1/3rd in place your Vanishing Point cross
4. From the VP cross radiate white chalk lines out to the edges
5. Horizontal lines: measure roughly 1", 2", 4" (so doubling each time) draw in white chalk these lines
6. You now have a rough grid
7. Get some colours: ultramarine deep, cadmium red deep and lemon yellow (cloud mix) start on the horizon line (trick here is to blend with the background sky as much as you can, these lower clouds need it more than others). Use a white and cloud mix for highlights
8. NOTICE: where your light source is from (top right off the picture) here is where you place the highlights
9. Start to paint other clouds within the grid (see diagram) Important: vary shapes, observe real clouds to get natural effects. Each cloud will rest on and between the lines pointing roughly toward the VP point cross. Vary the sizes, shapes and dont overcrowd. An uneven number is always best.
10. Add the light source and then rub out the chalk lines!

These tips were taken from Dave White "Sea and Sky Acrylics" by Search press.