

## Tempera Paint Pours

Gravity makes some of the most interesting art...

We all know that mixing yellow and blue makes green, but what happens if the colors don't actually mix? What if they just hang out together, side by side?

Tempera paint is commercially manufactured by first creating a paint base, then adding colorant. Usually, all colors within a tempera line have a consistent body and viscosity. Physical effort mixes them together, but physical science keeps them isolated.

Because of this, simple classroom tempera paint can be poured out onto a surface and manipulated by the force of gravity into unique marbled patterns. It's random, abstract, and a whole lot of fun, so get ready to hear the "oohs" and "aahs"!

**GRADES preK-8** Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

### Preparation

1. Prepare a pouring station by covering a table and providing cardboard boxes or trays to catch drips. Designate a place where paint-covered boards will be set to dry, and cover that area with paper.
2. Use a heavy-duty paper cutter or packing knife to cut the 30-ply chipboard into pieces.
  - From a 22" x 28" piece of chipboard, cut 24 pieces, each measuring 4-1/2" x 5-1/2".
  - From a 28" x 44" piece of chipboard, cut 44 pieces, each measuring 4" x 7", or 77 pieces that measure 4" x 4".
3. For small groups, paint may be used directly from the bottle. To distribute paint to a larger group, divide it into smaller flip-top bottles.

### Process

1. Start by squeezing out enough of one paint color to cover the bottom of the paper cup. Tap the cup gently on the table to level the paint. Using a second color, make a pool in the center. Repeat to make rings of color inside of one another, creating a bullseye effect. Use as many colors as desired, or keep it simple by layering only 2-3 colors.

Aim for approximately 0.5 oz of paint in the bottom of the cup. Tap the cup on the table to level the colors.
2. Place a chipboard piece on top of the cup. Hold it in place with one hand and hold onto the cup with the other. In one fluid motion, flip the cup and chipboard piece so the cup is upside-down. Wait at least 30 seconds for the paint to flow out of the cup. Students can also be allowed to tap the cup in order to track the time and speed of the paint flow.
3. Remove the cup. If excess paint remains inside, it can be dislodged with a craft stick. Discard cup.



### Materials (required)

Chipboard, double-thick 30-ply, 22" x 28" (13115-2232) or 28" x 44" (13115-2236); need a minimum of one sheet per class

Blick Premium Grade Tempera Paint, Pints, assorted colors; plan for 0.5 oz per student. Recommended selection:

Pack of Pints, 6  
Fluorescent Colors (00011-0049),  
Black (00011-2006),  
White (00011-1006),  
Gold (00011-9006),  
Silver (00011-9306)

Paper cups, 3 oz size

Creativity Street Craft Sticks, bag of 150 (60401-1500); need one per student

### Materials (optional)

Flip Top Bottles, 2 oz, package of 12 (04993-1002); share at least 2 packages across class

Economy Grade Tempera Paint, recommend:

Blick Student Grade Tempera Paint, Pints, assorted colors (00018-)

Blick Essentials Tempera Paint, Pints, assorted colors (00057-)

Blick Economy Canvas Panel Classroom Pack, 5" x 7", (07015-1000) package of 24

Krylon Low Odor Clear Finish, gloss, 11 oz spray can (23710-1001)



## Process, continued

4. Hold the chipboard upright by the edges over a box or tray to catch any drips. Allow the paint to flow close to an edge, then rotate the board to send the paint in another direction.
5. Allow the paint to run and cover the surface of the chipboard. Some paint may drip off, and some edges of the board may not be covered with paint. When the paint begins to dry, it will flow less freely. Gently tapping the back of the board with fingers or against the side of the drip-catching box will keep the paint moving.
6. As an option, gently blow through a straw on the surface of the paint to expose another color just beneath the surface.
7. Set the board on a covered, flat, level surface and allow it to dry for 6–8 hours or overnight.
8. If desired, protect the final artwork with a gloss fixative spray (keep away from children and follow safety instructions on the label).



**Step 1:** In a small paper cup, squeeze out just enough paint to cover the bottom. Create a pool in the center with a second color. Repeat, squeezing paint into the center of each color, forming a “bullseye.”

## Options:

- When dry, the poured paintings can be used as a base for printmaking, drawing, or collage.
- If desired, protect the final artwork with a gloss fixative spray (keep away from children and follow safety instructions on the label).

## Options

- Experiment with various viscosities of tempera paint. Try spraying water on the poured paint surface to change the surface tension. Glue, dish soap, baby oil, window



**Step 2:** Turn cup upside-down on top of a piece of chipboard and allow paint to flow out into a puddle.



**Step 3:** Hold the board upright and rotate it, allowing paint to run in all directions until the board is covered.