

# 7 Distinct Techniques to Transform Your Oil Pastel Projects

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7 years ago Tracy Hare

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Oil pastels are one of those mediums that you either love or hate. Sometimes, the mess of them smeared over every surface just outweighs the benefits of using them in your classroom.

Maybe you have always felt that you were demonstrating techniques incorrectly leading to your students' work looking like they used plain ol' crayons. Well, have no fear! Here are seven techniques to wow your students with the next time you dig out the oil pastels. Be sure to download the handy guide at the end of this article!





### **1. Heavy Pressure Blending**

Generously add oil pastel in one direction onto your paper. Layer additional colors on top to create a rich, blended look. Experiment with black or white pastel for shadowing and highlighting effects. Here's a quick lesson that uses this technique.

### **2. Light Pressure Blending**

Lightly add oil pastels on paper with little pressure. Layer more colors to achieve various values or even different hues.



### **3. Color Mixing**

Apply a rich layer of oil pastel then follow with another color applied on top (consider trying primaries first). Continue to blend/layer additional colors to achieve your desired hue. Students could practice this technique when creating nature drawings.

### **4. Stippling**

Using small, choppy strokes, create a stippled effect on your paper. Layer additional colors for depth within your technique.

### **5. Scumbling**

Apply controlled, scribbled marks of oil pastel. Build up with additional layers of various colors to reach desired value and texture.

### **6. Sgraffito**

Overlap two thick layers of different oil pastel colors on paper. Using a paper clip or wooden stylus, scratch or scrape away line designs revealing the color underneath.

### **7. Oil**

Using a cotton swab soaked in baby oil, smooth the oil pastel to create blended color on your paper. Let dry overnight.

Try these techniques the next time you are considering using oil pastels in your classroom. You and your students will be surprised at the flexibility of this adaptable material. For additional reference, I've created a guide for all the techniques mentioned available for download below!



# 7 *Outrageous* OIL PASTEL TECHNIQUES

## General Tips:

- Always create with newspaper underneath to catch oil pastel flakes.
- Try layering techniques for endless possibilities.
- Keep a small rag handy to wipe off dirty or stained oil pastels.

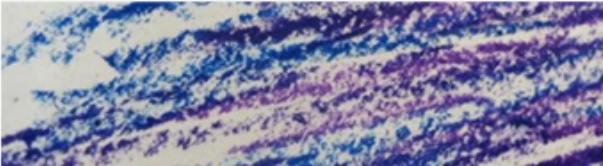
## Heavy Pressure Blending

- Generously add pastel in one direction on paper.
- Layer colors to achieve a blended and rich look.



## Light Pressure Blending

- Lightly add pastel in one direction on paper.
- Layer colors to achieve various hues.



## Scumbling

- Apply controlled, scribbled marks of oil pastel to build up value and texture.



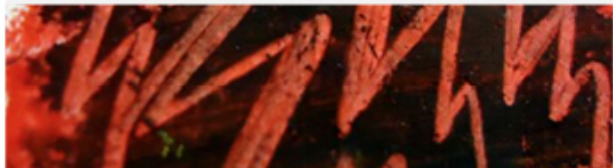
## Color Mixing

- Apply a layer of oil pastel and follow with a contrasting color over.
- Continue to blend/layer additional colors to get desired hue.



## Sgraffito

- Overlap two, thick layers of different colors on paper.
- Use a paper clip or wooden stylus to scratch or scrape away line design revealing underneath color.



## Stippling

- Use small, choppy strokes to create stippled effect on paper. Layer with additional colors for depth.



## Oil

- Use a cotton swab soaked in baby oil to smooth and blend oil pastel marks on paper. Let dry overnight.



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*What is your favorite way to create with oil pastels?*

*What oil pastel techniques do you regularly show students?*

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Tracy Hare, a middle school art educator, is a former AOEU Writer. She strives to deepen students' 21st-century skills by encouraging them to practice critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills.





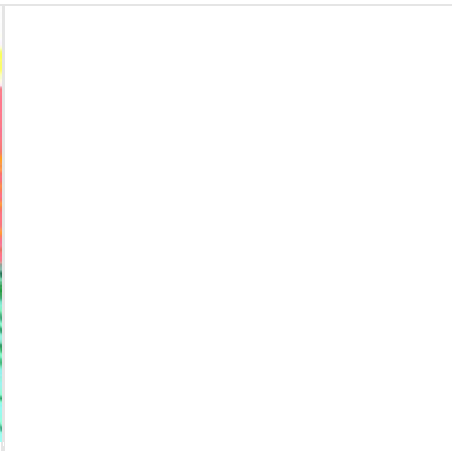
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