

# Shading Techniques for Illuminated Manuscripts

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## ***Shading Techniques:***

### ***Lifting, Layering, Blending, & Reverse Color Wash.***

#### ***\*Plus paint application Instruction.***

The purpose of shading is to make a two-dimensional object look like a three-dimensional object.

Here I will show you at least four shading techniques, and one important application technique, that I use on a regular basis. In no way are these the only methods. Or are you restricted to using only one of these techniques on any one illuminated manuscript. Once you have tried many different styles, feel free to experiment and see what will work best for you.

One of the hardest parts of doing these particular ways of shading is water control. Too much water on any paper will make it bubble or possibly warp the design. Too little water and you will be fighting yourself to get the right effect or coverage. This will come in time so don't worry.

Things to remember, and need to be applied, when doing the following exercises.

**Light Source:** The light source is usually in the top left. The reasons for this are that the illuminated letter will be in that location, which is where the wording on the scroll will start. It helps in bringing your eye to that location, by painting in this way.

Not all scrolls are designed this way, but the majority are.

#### **Things you will need to get you started:**

1. A small container to hold a small amount of water
2. Two individual pieces of paper towel
3. At least one paintbrush (I use a Angle shape)
4. A pallet of some sort
5. Gouache paint
6. Watercolor or the like paper

Start by picking out a light color and a darker color of paint. Put a pea-sized dollop of each color on your pallet, at least three inches or so apart. Get a container to put your water in that has a wide base and cannot be easily tipped over. Put water in the container and fill it out a little less than half way full, and place the container where you can reach it but not accidentally knock it over by you, anyone, or anything else. Take one piece of paper towel and fold it over and over till you have a square about the size of an index card [approx] this will be used for the first of the four techniques. The other piece of paper towel is placed next to you as you will need it to clean off your brush. Put one small drop of water near each dollop of paint so that each one becomes the consistency of yogurt or slightly melted ice cream.

#### **Feathering Technique For Paint Application:**

One of the brush painting techniques best used with all of the following shading techniques is commonly called "*feathering*". This is where you lay down a good/heavy/thick amount of paint in a corner or just to the inside of the object being painted. Once that is dry; you go back with a clean damp brush and with sweeping motions pull out just a little bit of the paint a little bit at the time that you originally laid down. As you do this; you will want to get a gradation from non-opaque(solid-not transparent) to more opaque(transparent-tint).

## **Shading Techniques:**

**1) Lifting:** First start painting the object one even color, until the entire shape is evenly coated with an even amount of paint. Now clean off your brush completely. Take the small square piece of paper towel in one hand and the paintbrush in the other. Then get the end of your paint brush wet enough so that it is not dripping, now using a crescent or half circle shape type arcing motion wash just inside of the top left corner about the width of your finger following the shape of your object. Now using the paper towel dab the area you just washed, going straight down, then straight back up, changing the side of your dabbing towel every time, otherwise you will be putting paint back on. Keep going till you get the desired effect of gradual shading from light to dark.

*Tip: Most often than not, the paper buckles from the water, or wet paint, sitting and soaking into the paper. To try and prevent this by working in an area that has good airflow / movement. This will help in keep, the paper from buckling as fast.*

**2) Layering:** The consistency of the paint you will be using in this style will be somewhere between colored water and very diluted paint. This style is one of coating the object being painted with layers of tint or thin layers of one color, (or shades of one color) in a scaling or progressive manner, from light to dark, giving your object a greater sense of depth. You will need to picture this object into quarters from the top left, or the closest to the light source, to the bottom right corner. You can put small tick marks on the outside of the object to help you. First, start by lightly painting one even tint of your color across the entire object. Next you will paint only three fourths of the object from the 3/4<sup>th</sup> mark down to the bottom right corner. Then you will paint half of the object from about middle down to the bottom right. And finally you will paint the last bottom quarter right.

Tip: like with most of these methods, you may have to let some layers dry between applications, to get a better effect, and to reduce buckling.

**3) Blending:** This technique will be taking two contrasting colors by simply putting. A lighter color on the top left of your object and a darker color on the bottom right.

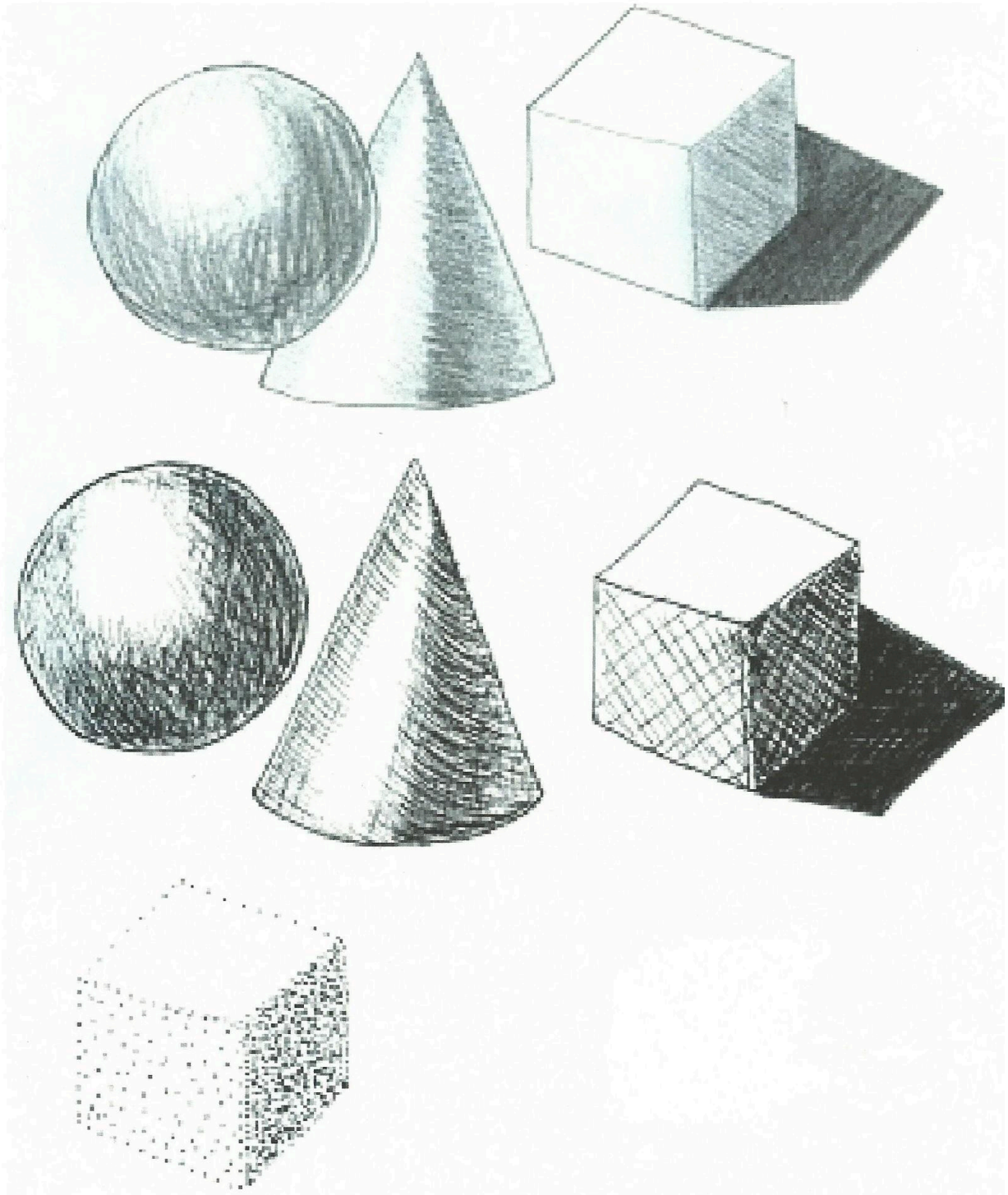
When putting down your paint, you will be imagining this object in three quarters this time, top left quarter, middle quarter, and bottom quarter. Put a good coat of the light color you have chosen on the top left quarter remembering to keep in painting the shape of your object. Then paint, and cover, the bottom right quarter with the darker color. Then with a clean brush and a very small amount of water on your brush, slowly bring the paint slowly towards the middle one side at a time, in a feathering type motion. As you go each color as they get to the middle will be lighter and lighter till they almost disappear in the middle. You will need to clean your brush often between strokes/coats, as you will be picking up paint as you wash the object. Keep doing this till you have a very light tinted bleached area in the middle about the width of your finger or more.

*Tip: This is best done when the two paint colors are still semi-wet.*

**4) Reverse Color Wash:** First lay a solid, heavy, and thick line of my paint about the width of your thumb in the bottom right of your object which will be the most point farthest away from the light source, then with very little water on my clean brush, I feather or pull the edge of the paint just enough to make a gradual and thin layer of paint from one side to the other getting lighter and lighter as you go. When you are done, most of the paint will be on one side to almost no color on the other side of the form. In this style you can add white highlights and black, sharp lines to enhance the shading as a whole, as you can do with all of these exercises I have explained.

This last one is my favorite style: First, it uses very little paint, which will make it more convenient if you want to change it, especially if it is not looking or coming out the way you may have wanted it to. Second, it quickens the outcome, and produces a shaded look fast, yet in a quality and an aesthetically pleasing way.

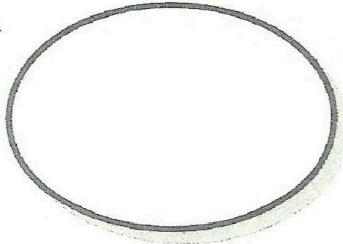
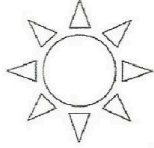
## Examples of shading on different shapes



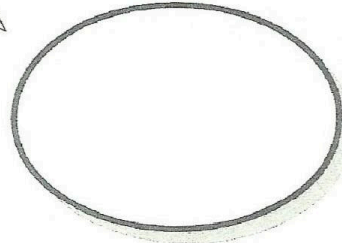
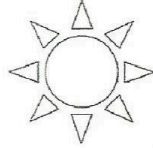
# Practice sheet

(This page can be printed out on hot press watercolor paper. You can also print this page out on regular paper to practice water control.)

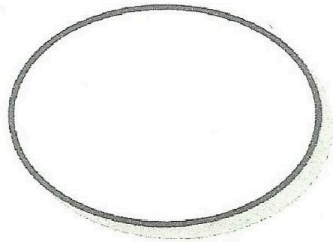
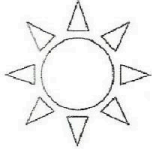
1) **Lifting:**



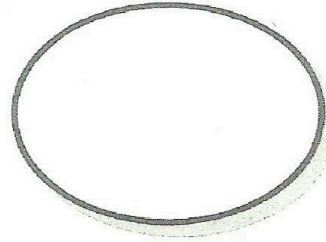
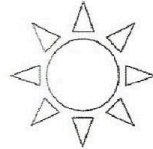
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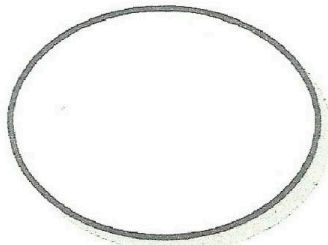
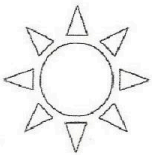
2) **Layering:**



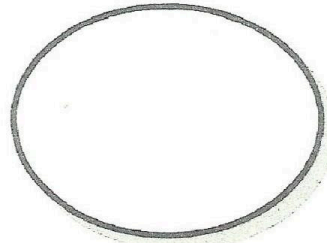
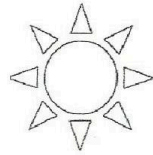
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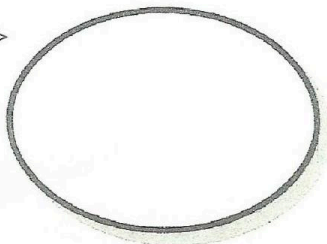
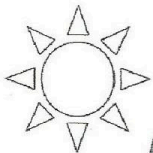
3) **Blending:**



3) **Blending:**



4) **My most used Technique (reverse color wash):**



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