

# Graded Wash Exercise

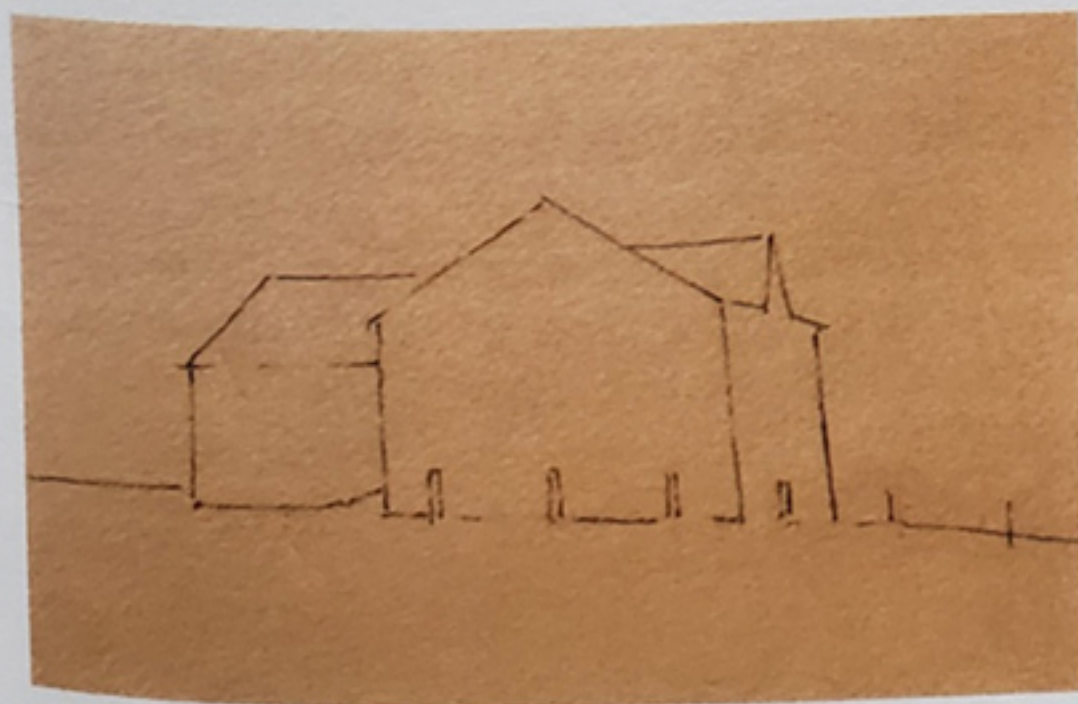
It's quite simple: A graded wash is a field of color, painted over all or part of the paper, that gradually fades away or gets stronger depending on how you look at it. A graded wash is done just like the flat wash with the work surface tilted and each stroke overlapping the wet bottom edge of the previous stroke. But here's the difference: You start with clear water and gradually add more and more color to your mixing bowl, making each stroke darker. (Or, conversely, you start with pigment and gradually add clean water.)

## Barn

This will be an extreme example of the graded wash. You see in the picture below that I've drawn a very simple barn. I admit it's a little cockeyed; this isn't a course in drawing. I don't have trouble drawing things, but you might not be as comfortable. Therefore, I've tried to select subjects that are relatively simple, not in all cases but in most. The last thing I want to do is intimidate you.

So, here we have this barn sitting dead center in a field. I'm told you shouldn't put buildings in the center, but for the sake of this exercise, it stays. We'll talk about composition in the final chapter.

We begin as always by taping a  $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7\frac{1}{2}''$  (14cm  $\times$  19cm) piece of 300-lb. (640g/m<sup>2</sup>) rough-surfaced paper to our Coroplast and then penciling in the drawing below.



Step 1: Pencil Sketch

Palette:  
Ultramarine Blue



## Step 2: The First Stroke

First you need to do a flat wash of clean water. Flip the Coroplast upside down and tilt it slightly toward you. Load your 1-inch (25mm) square brush with clean water and with a long, steady brushstroke drag it from left to right across the horizon line. Just make one pass.



## Step 3: The Second Stroke

Make a pale mix of Ultramarine Blue. Load your brush with it and stroke it in just below the area of the previous stroke, remembering to overlap the bottom edge of the first water wash.

## Step 4: The Third Stroke

Strengthen your mix by adding in more Ultramarine Blue from your tube. Just as before, drop in this third stroke over the bottom wet edge of the previous stroke.



### Step 5: The Last Stroke

Finally, pump the value of the mix to near maximum, then stroke in the final pass. Lay the Coroplast flat and let your graded wash dry. After it has dried, flip your Coroplast around and have a look. What you'll see is a sky, a very ominous-looking sky, I might add.



### Step 7: Glazing

Using your 1/2-inch (12mm) square brush and the same mix, apply another cover of paint over the barn. Do not paint over the sunward roof and wall.



### Step 6: Flat Wash

Still using the same brush and high-value mix, paint in the barn and foreground. Let your work dry.



### Step 8: Fence Posts

Do not paint where you'll want to place the fence posts that are in front of the barn. You'll paint those posts by not painting them, so to speak. Merely rest the side of your brush on the paper for a fraction of a second.

In some situations, one must learn to paint quickly. . . . There's an old story of two painters who were painting a scene on the edge of a duck pond. One painter was an old pro, the other her student. After a few hours, the pro was finished with her picture. Turning to have a look at the student's progress, she saw that all he had managed to paint was the feet of one duck. When she asked him what his problem was, he replied, "Gosh, you gotta be fast to paint ducks!"



### Step 9: Dormer Detail

By utilizing the side edge of your ½-inch (12mm) square brush, drop in a shadow on the eaves of the dormer window.



### Step 10: Fence Posts Again

Go over the remaining fence posts once again to increase their value.

### Step 11: Scoring

You know by now that scratching a dull edge into wet paint can create some pretty dramatic effects. To suggest barn boards, I've used the scoring end of my ½-inch (12mm) square brush to score the barn with straight lines. But don't score in all the boards; less is more.



*Barn*

5½" × 7½" (14cm × 19cm)