

WATERCOLOR WASHES : THE PRAIRIE

YOU NEED:

- Pictures of the prairie: eg: A prairie boy's summer , A prairie boy's winter by Kurelek; A Prairie Alphabet , by Y. Moore ; If you're not from the prairie by D. Bouchard.
- Watercolor paper, paints & brushes

1. LOOK, DISCUSS and WRITE

- Look at several prairie pictures and paintings. Discuss them with a partner.
- Find the landscape zones in each picture: foreground, middle-ground and background.
- See if you can find examples of these landscape features:

HORIZON LINE- where sky meets the land.

CONVERGING LINES- parallel lines (like the sides of a road) that seem to get closer and closer together as they recede towards the horizon.

VANISHING POINT-the point on the horizon where converging lines seem to meet.

SIZE OF OBJECTS- objects seem smaller when they are farther away.



Draw and label a sketch to show:

*horizon line
converging lines
vanishing point
size of objects.*

SKY COLORS:

The colors just above the horizon are often different than the colors higher in the sky. Describe a difference in sky colors _____

Why do you think the sky colors are different?

LAND COLORS:

The distant, background colors are often different than the colors in the foreground. Describe a difference in background and foreground colors _____

Why do you think the land colors are different?

2. PLAN A PRAIRIE SCENE

- Lightly sketch a simple prairie landscape onto watercolor paper. Use a high, middle or low level horizon line. Add some converging lines and simple land forms.
- Choose a season, a weather condition and a time of day for your prairie scene. What colors will you need to show this?

My landscape sketch and ideas:



The season:

The weather:

The time of day:

Main sky colors:

Main land colors:

3. PAINT THE WATERCOLOR WASHES

- Dampen the sky area with water and let it soak into the paper. Blot off excess water.
- SKY WASHES: Choose two or three similar sky colors. Load one brush with one color and stroke it across the top of the wet sky. Load another brush with the second sky color and stroke it below the first. Let the colors blend together on their own. Continue alternating strokes down to the horizon line. Blot off some paint with a tissue to create clouds. Let the sky dry.
- LAND WASHES : Choose two or more land colors. Repeat at least one of your sky colors. Use the same painting technique as in the sky. Start at the bottom of the watercolor paper and work up to the horizon line. Let the brush strokes follow some of the land forms and converging lines. Let the land dry.

4. USE YOUR WATERCOLOR WASH PAINTING ...

- As a background for writing or poetry, or to create a greeting card .
- As the beginning of a more detailed prairie picture: Draw right over the watercolor washes with a thin permanent marker. Paint or color in your new ideas.
- Create a silhouette of a distant landscape and collage it onto your wash painting.