

How to Paint Dog Eyes



Type: Real-Time

Time: 10-Minutes

Medium: Acrylic

Level: Beginner

Canvas Prep:

1. Paint the eyes first or last. That is entirely up to the artist.
2. Sketch the eyes in graphite pencil using reference photo.

Section #1: Outline the inner and outer eye.

1. Using a **micro thin round detail brush** (my recommendation, otherwise use whatever detail brush you have available), outline the outer eye using Mars black.
2. Outline just the **shape of the eye**. Leave out the eyelid if obvious in reference photo.
3. Create dark pupil without painting over the tiny **light reflection**.
4. Outline the iris (the pigmented part) as **thinly** as possible.
5. **Repeat** all previous steps on opposite eye.

Section Notes: The micro thin round detail brush I have was about \$9.99 at Hobby Lobby. Since they are so expensive, try to keep them clean and NEVER leave them sitting in your water. The bristles are very light and fragile.

Section #2: Paint eyelid and sclera if obvious in reference photo.

1. Use any detail for this step, a shorter round detail brush is what I would recommend.

2. **Mix** the correct color for the eyelid. I use dark grey.
3. Apply paint to entire eyelid.
Note: Some dogs do not have an obvious eyelid. If that's the case for you, just bypass this step.
4. **Mix** up the color of the iris.
5. I use Naples Yellow, Raw Sienna, and Vermillion Orange, to create a light orange.
6. **Artist Tip:** When painting the iris, make sure pupil is dry. Otherwise black will muddy up the iris in areas you don't want it.
7. Mix up a **light grey** to paint the sclera.
8. With thin detail brush, paint the sclera.
9. **Blend** in Titanium White over the wet light grey to create highlight.
10. Apply highlight to both eyes. Sometimes light is only hitting **one eye**.



Section Notes: If you cannot see these details in your reference photo, it probably means you need to get a brighter, more crisp image. I use a minimum of three photos to paint one dog.

Section #3: Apply all the light reflections.

1. Apply Titanium White to **every** light reflection.
2. **Artist Tip:** Light reflections can be all different shapes. Look carefully to see if they are circular, triangular, square shaped, etc.

Section Notes: Sometimes light may only be hitting one eye, leaving only one or two light reflections on that eye.

Section #4: Paint the iris.

1. **Mix** up the colors for the iris.
2. Using micro detail brush, paint the iris.
3. Add small amount of dark grey or black to both corners of the sclera **while wet**.
4. If need be, touch up the primary eye color in **lower iris**.



Section Notes: Use pallet knife to mix colors instead of micro detail brush like I did to keep bristles protected.

Section #5: Touch up eye with black. Add final highlight to iris.

1. **Redefine** eyes with Mars Black.
2. **Artist Tip:** When adding highlights to the iris, simply add white or yellow to the primary color.

Section Notes: Don't overdo it on the black. Keep black outline thin and neat.

Need Help?

If you would like feedback, advice, and/or would like to share your work with me, go right ahead! My email is linked below.

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Materials List: Materials will vary depending on color and breed of dog.

- A. Acrylic Paint
- B. Paint Brushes
 - a. Micro round detail brush
 - b. Small detail brush
- C. Canvas
- D. Water
 - a. Plastic cup or glass jar of water
- E. Paint Pallet
 - a. Glass paint palette
 - b. Metal bowl
 - c. Paper plate
- F. Other Materials
 - a. Paper towel or old cloth