

ILLUSTRATED STEPS / SAVE IT. FIND IT. BUILD IT.

INK

Turn artist's willow charcoal, water and gum arabic into a paper ink.



START HERE

01

GET READY

Tools + clickable build map

02

FOLLOW THE STEPS

One clearly numbered stage at a time

03

FIND IT AGAIN

Quick reference + PDF bookmarks

A paper-only adaptation of the video's carbon ink: clean artist's charcoal, water and gum arabic. Never use on skin or in food.

WATCH THE TIKTOK

MORE FREE BUILD GUIDES

SOURCES / Materials Matter: ink · Human Ecology: carbon ink

BUILD MAP

NEXT

YOUR BUILD MAP

Tap a step to jump there. The printed page numbers work offline too.

HAVE THESE READY

- 50 g plain willow artist's charcoal
- 2 cups water; liquid artist gum arabic
- Scale, measuring cup, mortar and pestle
- Spoon, sieve, filter, funnel and bowl
- Two lidded art jars; brush and scrap paper
- Protective work cover and damp cloths

READ IN ORDER

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QUICK REFERENCE / PAGE 10

BEFORE YOU START

Paper craft only. Wet preparation avoids dry grinding. No soot scraping, egg, burning or iron-gall method. Never use on skin, in food or for permanent safety labels.

KEEP THIS COPY

Save the PDF with its guide ID. Use the build map, bookmarks, or your PDF reader's search to find a step later. Video and source links need internet; the instructions do not.

SETUP

Set out the whole batch

READ BEFORE STEP 01

PREP

Keep the work area separate from food preparation.



THREE INGREDIENTS

- **Weigh 50 g of plain willow artist's charcoal.**
- Choose a product made from willow alone, such as Coates natural sticks, rather than compressed drawing sticks or fuel briquettes.
- Measure 2 cups of water into a jug.
- Set out prepared liquid gum arabic for artists.

TOOLS AND PAPER

- **Use a scale, measuring cup, deep mortar and pestle, spoon, sieve, coffee filter with supporting funnel, bowl and two clean lidded art jars.**
- The mixing jar must hold the water and charcoal with shaking room.
- Add a brush, scrap paper, cloths and a covered work surface.

SOURCES / Materials Matter: ink · Coates: willow charcoal

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

STEP

Dampen before crushing

1 OF 5 / READ IN ORDER

01

An adult handles the charcoal preparation.



WORK IN SMALL PORTIONS

- **Place a few charcoal pieces in the mortar.**
- Wet them with some of the measured water before gently breaking them down with the pestle.
- Repeat in manageable portions; keep the material wet as you work.

KEEP DUST DOWN

- **Do not use a coffee grinder or crush dry charcoal.**
- Keep your face clear and never blow dust away.
- If dust escapes, stop and wet-wipe the area.
- Use dedicated art tools; keep hands, brushes and materials away from your mouth.

SOURCES / Materials Matter: ink · Princeton: art safety

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

STEP

Grind and mix

2 OF 5 / READ IN ORDER

02

Use the same measured water throughout this batch.



REDUCE THE GRIT

- **Grind the wet charcoal with the pestle until the slurry looks evenly fine, without obvious large pieces.**
- Transfer it into the mixing jar.
- Rinse the mortar into that jar using the rest of the measured water.

MIX THE LIQUID

- **Close the lid securely and shake to disperse the charcoal.**
- Open over the covered work area.
- This is carbon pigment dispersed in water; the next steps remove coarse material and add the binder.
- Nothing needs heating.

SOURCES / Materials Matter: ink · Human Ecology: carbon ink

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

STEP

Remove coarse particles

3 OF 5 / READ IN ORDER

03

Support each filter before pouring.



STRAIN TWICE

- **Pour the mixture through the sieve into the bowl.**
- Then pass that liquid through a coffee filter supported in a funnel into the clean receiving jar.
- Pour slowly and let it drain; do not overfill the filter.

CHECK THE RESULT

- **Look for visible grit in the collected liquid.**
- Keep the strained ink for the next step.
- Handle the wet residue gently and place it with used cleanup materials for disposal according to local rules.
- Wipe spills while wet; do not brush dried charcoal into the air.

SOURCES / Materials Matter: ink · Princeton: art safety

[BUILD MAP](#)[PREVIOUS](#)[NEXT](#)

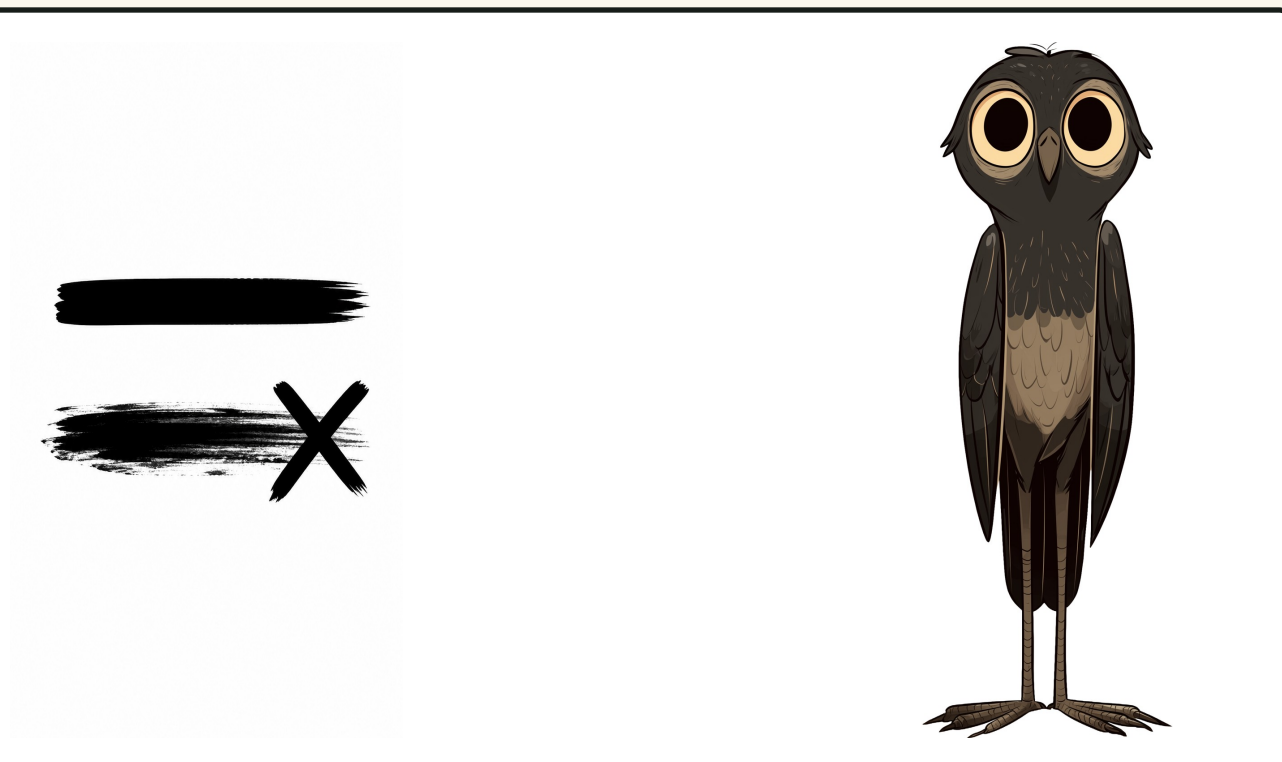
STEP

Add gum; make a swatch

4 OF 5 / READ IN ORDER

04

Test the actual ink on the paper you intend to use.



ADD THE BINDER

- **Stir a few drops of prepared liquid gum arabic into the filtered ink.**
- Record the amount you used.
- Gum arabic binds pigment and changes its flow and drying; extra gum is not a substitute for black pigment.

JUDGE THE SAMPLE

- **Brush a short line and a broad stroke onto scrap paper.**
- Let them dry, then gently rub one corner with a clean tissue.
- Check darkness, spreading and transfer.
- If the result is too pale, gritty or easily rubbed off, keep it as a trial rather than use it for an important note.

SOURCES / Materials Matter: ink · Winsor & Newton: gum

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

STEP

Use it for paper art

5 OF 5 / READ IN ORDER

05

Work with a brush and let each sheet dry undisturbed.



MAKE THE MARKS

- **Stir before loading the brush and write or draw on paper that passed your swatch test.**
- Keep wet sheets flat and separate.
- Do not stack or handle the marks until dry.
- Reserve this batch for disposable practice, drawings or brush lettering.

FINISH THE SESSION

- **Label the jar PAPER INK - NOT FOR SKIN OR FOOD.**
- This guide makes no storage-life claim; prepare it for the current session rather than keeping an untested batch.
- Follow product and local disposal instructions.
- Wash the art tools, wet-wipe the work area and wash your hands.

SOURCES / Princeton: art safety · Illinois: ink preservation

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

NOTE

A dark mark is not a guarantee

KEEP THESE LIMITS WITH THE STEPS

REF

Keep a dated sample and your batch notes.



WHAT THIS INK CAN DO

- **Carbon inks have a long history, but their behavior depends on their materials and preparation.**
- Moisture can disturb some carbon-ink marks, and heavy applications may flake.
- Do not assume this batch is waterproof, archival or suitable for permanent labels.

WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

- **Use the recorded ingredients next time; do not add egg, household chemicals or unknown soot to rescue a weak batch.**
- The video also shows iron-gall ink, a different chemistry that can damage paper over time.
- This guide covers only the carbon craft method.
- Never use either homemade ink on or under skin.

SOURCES / Human Ecology: carbon ink · Illinois: ink preservation

QUICK REFERENCE

Read the full steps first. Tap any row to return to its instructions.

BEFORE STEP 01

Paper craft only. Wet preparation avoids dry grinding. No soot scraping, egg, burning or iron-gall method. Never use on skin, in food or for permanent safety labels.

01	Dampen the charcoal Adult prepares the charcoal wet, using part of the measured water. Never dry-grind or blow dust away.	P04
02	Grind and disperse Grind wet; transfer to the jar. Add the remaining measured water, close and shake.	P05
03	Strain twice Sieve into a bowl, then coffee-filter into a clean jar. Keep the liquid.	P06
04	Bind and test Stir in a few drops of liquid gum arabic. Dry a paper swatch; check darkness, spread and rubbing.	P07
05	Write and clean Use on practice paper; dry sheets separately. Wet-clean tools and surfaces. No storage-life or waterproof claim.	P08

NUKE SAYS

The apocalypse may be permanent. This label is not.

SOURCES / Human Ecology: carbon ink · Illinois: ink preservation