

## Lesson unit plan 1: Art competition – Colour mixing greens for landscape painting

**Outcome:** A colour grid as a palette reference for a future landscape lesson — children choose greens intentionally rather than defaulting to one flat colour.

**Purpose:** BIG Book Award 2026 Art Competition. An A4 painting of a scene from one of the BIG Book Award 2026 Shortlist.

NB: This series of lessons focuses on painting, but children can submit 2D entries in pencil, soft or oil pastels, pen, ink, print or paint (no collage).

**Audience:** The Art Competition Judging Panel will be made up of representatives of The Arts Society, Shrewsbury.

### Lesson objectives:

- Understand that “green” is not one colour but a spectrum of hues found in nature.
- Explore how to mix naturalistic greens using blue, yellow and small amounts of complementary colours.
- Develop observational skills by comparing real greens from the environment.
- Create a reference grid of greens for future landscape painting.

### Outdoor Exploration: Finding Greens in the Real World

Task:

Take the class onto the playground or field and ask each child to collect one green object (leaf, blade of grass, moss, twig with lichen, etc).

Discussion prompts:

- Which is the darkest green?
- Which is the lightest green?
- Which looks more yellow?
- Which looks more blue?

Place all the objects together so the class can see the full range.

Children quickly realise that nature rarely uses “straight-from-the-tube” green.

### Preparing the Mixing Grid

Task:

- Give each child an A4 sheet.
- Fold it in half, then in quarters, both landscape and portrait.
- Open it out to reveal a 4 × 4 grid (16 squares).
- This will become their “Green Mixing Chart”.

### Mixing the First Column: Basic Greens

Materials:

Blue paint, yellow paint, paintbrush, water pot.

Steps:

1. Mix 1 dab of blue + 1 dab of yellow.  
Paint this green into the top square of the first column.

2. Mix 2 dabs of blue + 1 dab of yellow.  
Paint this into the square below.
3. Mix 2 dabs of yellow + 1 dab of blue.  
Paint this into the next square.
4. Continue experimenting with slightly different ratios until the first column is filled.

Purpose:

Children see how ratio alone shifts green from warm to cool, bright to deep.

### **Mixing the Middle Columns: Natural Greens Using Complementary Colours**

Task:

Start again with 1 dab of blue + 1 dab of yellow.

Now introduce tiny amounts of complementary colours:

- Add a tiny touch of orange → muted, earthy green
- Add a tiny touch of red → olive or mossy green
- Add a tiny touch of purple → shadowy, cool green

Important:

Emphasise tiny — the complementary colours are powerful.

Fill the next two columns with these natural greens.

Once dry:

Children write the colour ratios on top of each square so they can recreate them later.

### **Final Column: Watered Tints (No White Needed)**

Task:

- Mix a slightly larger amount of equal blue + yellow.
- Paint this concentrated green into the top square of the final column.
- Add a little water to the mix and paint the next square.
- Add more water for the next, and so on.

Outcome:

Children see how dilution alone creates lighter greens — perfect for distant hills or background foliage.

### **Plenary: Reflection and Application**

Discussion:

- Which greens look most like the ones we found outside?
- Which greens feel “forest”, “grass”, “shadow”, “sunlit”?
- How might these greens be used in a landscape painting?

Use the grid as a palette reference for a future landscape lesson — children choose greens intentionally rather than defaulting to one flat colour.



Example of a completed palette using watercolour

### Pick and mix success criteria: Mixing Natural Greens for Landscapes

I can observe carefully

- I looked closely at real greens outside and compared their shades.
- I noticed which greens were darker, lighter, more yellow or more blue.

I can mix colours accurately

- I mixed greens using different ratios of blue and yellow.
- I added tiny amounts of complementary colours (orange, red, purple) to create natural greens.
- I controlled how much paint I used so the colours didn't become muddy.

I can record my colour mixes

- I filled each square of my grid with a different green shade.
- I wrote the colour ratios on each square once the paint dried so I can recreate them later.

I can create tints using water

- I made a column of watered-down greens that gradually became lighter without adding white.
- I controlled the amount of water so the gradient changed smoothly.

I can reflect on my work

- I can explain which greens look most like the ones found in nature.
- I can choose greens that would work well in a landscape painting.