

Paint the Winter Sunrise

Explore and paint the winter sunrise with pastel colors!



From November to February in Interior Alaska, the sun rises and sets slowly, staying close to the horizon. This is a great opportunity to observe the sun rising and setting, with beautiful shades of pastel colors.

Left: Western Alaska sunrise. [Image: Wikimedia Commons.](#)

Materials Needed:

White paper, washable paints (white, yellow, red, and blue), paintbrushes, piece of cardboard.

Instructions:

Step 1: Observe the sunrise. What colors do you see in the sky? **Caution:** Never look directly at the sun.

Step 2: Pour out some white paint on a flat piece of cardboard. Pour small amounts of red, yellow, and blue paint around the white paint.

Step 3: With a paintbrush, gently mix each color with the white paint. Create light shades of orange, blue, pink, and yellow that look like the colors in the sky at sunrise.

Step 4: Use the pastel colors you have created to paint a winter sunrise scene on the white paper. Be creative!

Extension: Let your artwork dry. Cut out trees, houses, animals, or other shapes and glue them on to your painting to create a winter scene.



Colors of the Sky

Why is the sky blue?

The sky is blue because of the way our eyes see light. The sun emits white light that is made up of all the colors of the rainbow. Sunlight has to travel through the atmosphere to reach the Earth.

Gas molecules from the atmosphere break apart the light and scatter it into different colors. Some colors travel faster than others! Purple and blue travel the fastest. Our human eyes are more sensitive to blue than purple. This means we see the sky as blue!

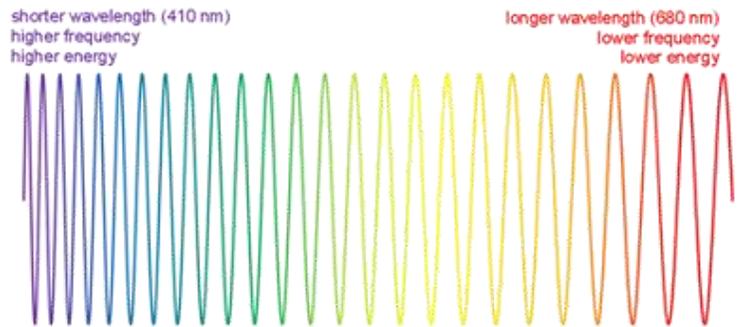
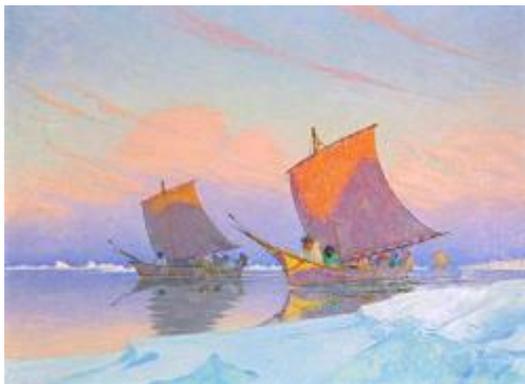


Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Why are sunrises so colorful?

When the sun is near the horizon, light has to travel through more of the atmosphere. This gives a chance for colors that travel more slowly to reach our eyes first, like yellow, orange, pink and red. A few clouds catch this light too. This can make a sunrise or sunset even more beautiful.



Two Umiaks Under Sail

by Magnus (Rusty) Heurlin, UA2003-023-001

Painting the colors of the sky

Many artists have been inspired by the beauty of the northern skies. Rusty Heurlin is an artist who used pastel colors to capture the striking colors of the northern winter sky. Some of his artwork is on exhibit at the UA Museum of the North.