

# Applying Paints and Enamels

## Look for These Terms

- enamel
- gloss
- latex paint
- primer

### YOU'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Choose an appropriate paint or enamel finish for a project.
- Prepare bare wood surfaces for painting.



Paints and enamels are *opaque finishes*—they cannot be seen through. Available in a wide range of colors—literally thousands of colors if they are custom-mixed at the store—paints and enamels are used to cover less expensive woods and to add beauty and durability to a project. **Fig. 33-1 (page 422).**

Paints and enamels may be water-based **latex** (also called *latex acrylic*) or oil-based. Latex paints and enamels dry much more quickly than oil-based ones and offer quick, easy, soap-and-water cleanup. (Oil-based paints and enamels require solvents such as mineral spirits for cleanups.) In addition, latex finishes don't usually have as strong an odor as oil-based ones and, because latex paints dry more quickly, the paint odor clears away more quickly.

Paints are available in flat, satin, semigloss, and gloss finishes. (**Gloss** refers to the amount of surface brightness. For example, flat paint has no gloss; satin paint has a soft luster.) **Enamels** are high-gloss paints that provide a slick, hard surface that is easy to clean.



**Fig. 33-1**—*There's a paint for every job, big or small, in just about any color imaginable.*



**Fig. 33-2**—*If painting over bare wood, a primer is always needed to seal the wood.*

Both paint and enamel are available as brush-on or aerosol finishes. This chapter discusses brush-on applications. Aerosol paints and enamels are applied in much the same manner as aerosol lacquers. You can read about aerosol and spray-on applications in Chapter 32.

## PREPARING TO PAINT

Prepare the surface by raising or filling any dents or gouges, sealing any knots, and final sanding. (See the “Preparing the Surface” section of Chapter 31, pages 396-399.)

Apply a **primer** to bare wood surfaces. An undercoat of primer seals the wood and prepares it to take the paint or enamel finish. **Fig. 33-2.** *Be sure that the primer is compatible with the type of paint (oil-based or latex) you plan to use.*

## Safety First

### ► Painting

- Always work in a well-ventilated area when painting.
- Review the rules for personal, materials, and finishing room safety in Chapter 31 before beginning a painting project.
- Thoroughly read the safety precautions listed on the label of the product you are using.
- Always wear eye protection when working with volatile chemicals such as paints and solvents.

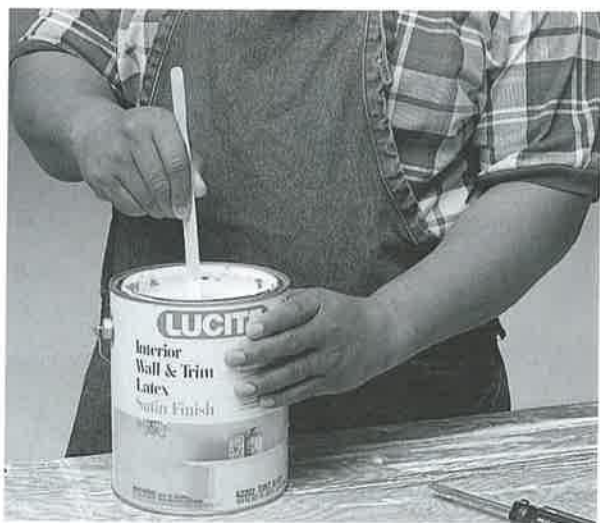
## APPLYING PAINT OR ENAMEL BY BRUSH

Below are the basic steps for applying paint and enamel with a brush. Drying times and directions for application can vary from brand to brand, so be sure to carefully read the directions on the label of the product you will be using.

1. Make sure the surfaces to be painted are clean and free of all dust particles.
2. Stir the paint until smooth and well blended. **Fig. 33-3.**

*Note:* If the paint or enamel needs to be thinned, use the thinner recommended on the product label.

3. Dip about one-third of the bristle length of the brush into the paint. When the bristles are well filled, remove them from the paint and tap lightly against the inside edge of the rim to remove excess paint—the bristles should be filled but not dripping with paint. **Fig. 33-4.** Use long, even strokes to brush a generous amount of paint onto the surface. Then feather out the paint, using lighter brush



**Fig. 33-3**—Be sure the paint has been stirred well before using.

## SCIENCE Connection

### Paint Pigments

In good-quality paints, the primary pigment (tint or color) is titanium oxide ( $\text{TiO}_2$ ). Good-quality paints contain a much higher concentration of  $\text{TiO}_2$  than lower-quality paints. Lower-quality paints often substitute less expensive pigments. Lower-quality pigments often result in a grayish tinge to the paint color.

strokes in the direction of the grain. The surface should be well covered, but take care not to apply too much paint or runs will develop in the finish.

*Note:* For large areas, you can apply the paint or enamel with a small roller, then feather it out with light brush strokes. **Fig. 33-5** (page 424).



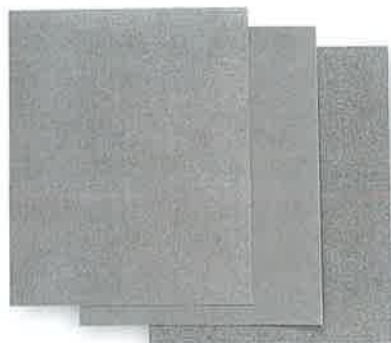
**Fig. 33-4**—Dip about one-third of the bristle length into the paint. When the brush is well filled, remove it and tap it lightly against the inside rim of the can.

4. Allow the surface to dry thoroughly (at least 24 hours). Sand it smooth with 320- or 400-grit sandpaper. **Fig. 33-6.** Then clean the surface with a cloth to remove dust.
5. Apply the second coat in the same manner as the first, but do not sand the final coat.

Be sure you clean brushes and any other materials used for painting immediately after each use. Those used with latex paint or enamel should be washed thoroughly in warm, soapy water, then rinsed thoroughly in cool,



**Fig. 33-5**—For large areas, you can use a small roller to apply the paint. Then use light brush strokes to feather it out.



**Fig. 33-6**—Which of these three would you use for final sanding? Remember, the finest grit is used for the finish work.

clear water. **Fig. 33-7.** If oil-based paint or enamel was used, use a solvent such as mineral spirits for cleanup. Hang brushes to dry. *Never allow the brush to stand on its bristle end.* (See Chapter 31 for a full discussion of the care and use of brushes.)

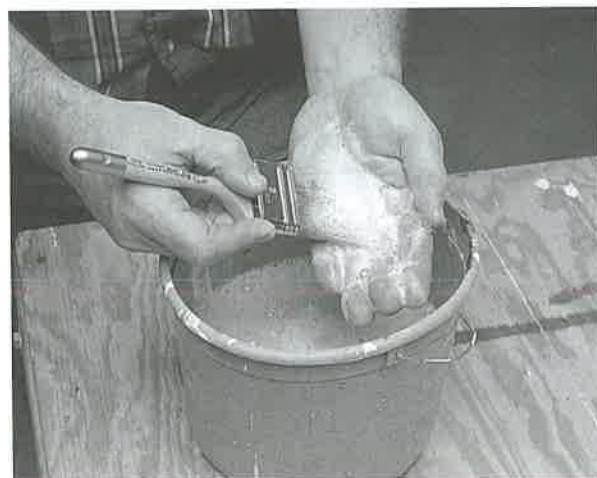
## PAINTING FURNITURE

The discussions below outline special techniques for painting different types of furniture. A basic principle to keep in mind when painting any type of furniture is to always paint the hard-to-reach parts—legs, undersides, cross spindles, backs—first.

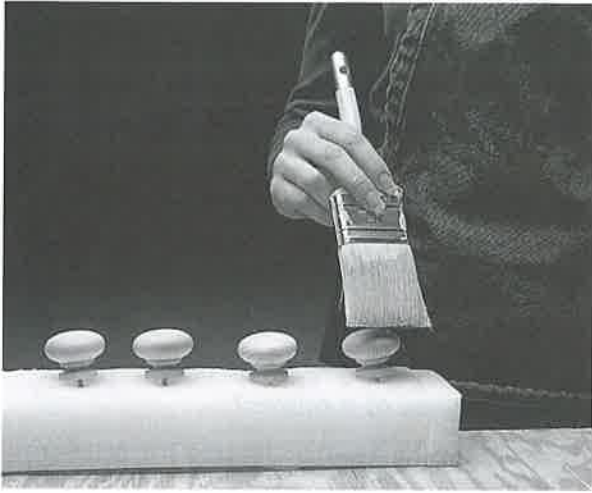
Before beginning to paint furniture, remove all knobs and handles. Paint these separately, using a small brush. **Fig. 33-8.**

### Tables

Begin by turning the table upside down and painting the bottom of the tabletop and its edges. Then paint the legs, painting the inner sides first. Finish the legs with smooth, lengthwise strokes. (When painting round or turned legs or braces, brush all the way around them; do not finish with lengthwise strokes.)



**Fig. 33-7**—Equipment used with latex paint can be easily cleaned with soap and water.



**Fig. 33-8**—You can place screws through the bottom of heavy cardboard, Styrofoam®, or scrap wood to hold the knobs as you paint them.

Turn the table right side up. Paint all the top edges and frame sides. Then paint the tabletop, brushing across the narrowest dimension. Follow with long, light strokes the length of the tabletop, using only the tip of the brush to achieve a smooth, even finish.

## Chairs

Turn the chair upside down. Place the seat of the chair on a box or a table. Paint all bottom surfaces—seat bottom, legs, and cross braces. Then stand the chair upright and paint all top surfaces, finishing with the seat. **Fig. 33-9.**

## Chests and Cabinets

First, remove any drawers from the chest or cabinet and put them to one side. Begin by painting the moldings (if there are any) that surround the panels of the cabinetwork. Then paint the panels, picking up any runs or sags at the corners. Paint the frame and then the top of the cabinet or chest, using a cross-brushing technique.



**Fig. 33-9**—A combination of paint and stain was used to finish this project.

To paint the drawers, first paint each side. Start at the front and work back about 6 inches. Next, paint all exposed edges and the front panel. (If painting the inside of the drawer, do that *before* painting the exposed edges and the front.) Stack all painted drawers to dry with the bottom edges in an upright position.



### *Eliminating Touch-ups*

When painting two or more colors on the same project, or when painting any surface next to a surface of a different color, use masking tape for color separation. This will help eliminate time-consuming touch-ups. The tape is readily peeled off after you are done painting.

# Review & Applications

## Chapter Summary

Major points from this chapter that you should remember include:

- Paints and enamels may be water-based latex or oil-based.
- Paints are available in flat, satin, semigloss, and gloss finishes.
- Enamels are high-gloss paints that provide a slick, easy-to-clean surface.
- A primer should always be applied to bare wood before painting.
- Generally, two finish coats of paint or enamel are applied, with a light sanding between the coats.
- Always paint hard-to-reach areas of furniture first.
- There are special techniques for painting tables, chairs, chests, and cabinets.

## Review Questions

1. What are some advantages of latex paint?
2. What is the benefit of enamel paints?
3. When should a primer be used? What is the purpose of a primer?
4. Describe the basic technique for brushing paint onto a flat surface.
5. How long should you let the first coat of paint dry before applying the second coat? What, if any, surface preparation should be done before applying a second coat?
6. Give a step-by-step description of how to paint a table.
7. Outline the steps for painting a chair.



## Solving Real-World Problems

Steve has an unfinished armoire that he wants to paint. The armoire is constructed of pine and has been sanded with 220-grit sandpaper. After priming with an oil-based primer, Steve decides to paint it with an old 4-inch nylon paintbrush. The paint that Steve has chosen is an oil-based paint that has a very thick texture. What can Steve use to thin the paint so that it can be brushed? Will his nylon brush do a good job, or is there another that would work better?

