

Watercolour workshop in the style of Constable

Who Was John Constable?

John Constable was a British artist who painted the countryside. He loved painting trees, rivers, skies, and old buildings like windmills and churches. He wanted to show how beautiful nature is.

What's Special About Constable's Art?

Constable's paintings:

- Show **real places** he visited, like fields and farms.
 - Have **big skies** with fluffy clouds.
 - Are full of **green landscapes**, animals, and people working outdoors.
 - Use **soft colours and lots of detail** to feel like real nature.
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Constable's Top Tips

- Look closely at the world around you
- Use soft, natural colours
- Paint the sky as carefully as the land
- Show peace and beauty in nature
- Add little details to bring your scene to life

Create a Countryside Scene in the Style of John Constable



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Materials Needed:

- A4 or A3 paper (preferably thick)
 - Pencil and eraser
 - Black fineliner or pen
 - Watercolours or coloured pencils
 - Reference photo of a countryside landscape (optional)
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Step 1: Sketch the Horizon Line

Lightly draw a **horizontal line** across your paper to show where the ground meets the sky. Constable often painted low horizons to show **big, dramatic skies**.



Step 2: Add Countryside Features

Draw gentle **hills, trees, a river or stream**, and a **cottage or mill** if you'd like. Make sure to:

- Vary the size of trees for perspective.
- Add a **path or water feature** to lead the viewer's eye into the picture.



Step 3: Sketch a Dramatic Sky

Constable loved skies! Draw **fluffy cumulus clouds** with soft shapes. Try to make the sky take up **at least half** of the picture.



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Step 4: Go Over in Fineliner

Use a **black pen or fineliner** to outline your sketch gently. Don't press too hard, and don't worry if it's not perfect — Constable's drawings often had loose, expressive lines.

Step 5: Add Colour to the Sky

Start painting the **sky with watercolours**. Use **light blue**, and leave white areas for clouds. Add hints of **grey or yellow** for shadow or sunlight.

Step 6: Paint the Landscape

Use **greens and browns** for grass, trees, and paths. Constable used many **shades of green** — try layering light and dark tones. Add touches of **yellow, ochre, or burnt sienna** for warmth.

Step 7: Add Detail and Texture

Use small dabs or strokes to **suggest leaves, ripples in water, or wooden textures**. Don't overwork it — Constable often **let the brush do the work!**

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Step 8: Create Mood with Light

To give your painting a true Constable feel, add a **shadowed area** (like under trees or on one side of a building). Add a bit of **sunlight breaking through clouds** with warm colours like pale yellow or peach.

Step 9: Final Touches

When dry, go back and **add finer details** such as **ducks in a stream**, a **person walking**, or **tiny birds in the sky**. These small touches bring the countryside to life.

More Fun ideas

-  Make your own cloud sketches – Constable loved painting skies.
-  Make a puzzle from a printed picture of "The Hay Wain" and put it back together.