

Interior Painting — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a paint-day playbook. Each section maps to a course module and gives you exercises to assess and plan, worksheets to spec primer, paint, and sheen, and checklists to run the prep, the rolling, and the trim in order. Keep it on your ladder shelf as you take a real room from washing the walls to the last cut line. The goal is to make the wet-edge rhythm, the right primer call, and the room-by-room sheen choice automatic before you ever open a can.

Reading the Room and Prepping the Surface

Assess every surface, clean and repair it, de-gloss what is slick, and mask the room so paint lands only where you want it.

Exercise: Walk the Room and Diagnose Every Surface

Stand in the room and answer these in writing before buying anything. The substrate and condition decide your prep and primer.

- List each surface to paint (walls, ceiling, trim, doors) and its substrate (drywall, plaster, enamel trim, popcorn).

- Note every condition flag you can see or feel: water stains, smoke yellowing, grease, peeling, chalkiness, cracks, nail holes.

- Which surfaces are glossy or semi-gloss and will need de-glossing before paint?

- Measure the wall area (perimeter x height, minus doors and windows) and decide how many gallons and coats you need.

Worksheet: Surface, Repair, and Prep Plan

Spec the prep each surface needs so nothing is skipped on paint day. Leave the gallon math for you to calculate from your measurements.

Surface / location

Substrate (drywall / plaster / enamel trim / ceiling)

Cleaning needed (dust only / degreaser-TSP / none)

Repairs needed (spackle holes / joint-compound dents / caulk gaps)

De-gloss method (sand 150-220 / liquid deglosser / not needed)

Wall area (sq ft, you calculate)

Gallons needed for two coats (you calculate)

Checklist: Room Prep and Masking Ready-to-Paint

- Switch and outlet plates, picture hooks, and curtain rods removed; screws bagged by location
- Furniture moved to center and covered; floor protected with canvas or plastic drop cloths
- Walls dusted and greasy areas washed with a TSP substitute, then rinsed and fully dry
- Nail holes and dents filled, sanded flush, and sanding dust wiped off
- Glossy surfaces de-glossed by sanding or liquid deglosser until dull
- Painter's tape applied at carpet, ceiling color line, and fixtures, and burnished down hard
- Tape edge sealed with existing color or caulk where the sharpest line is needed

Primer, Paint, and the Tools That Apply Them

Match the primer to the actual problem, choose paint by resin and sheen, and pick brushes and roller naps that fit the job.

Exercise: Make the Primer Call

For each surface that needs attention, name the problem and the primer that solves it. Targeted priming beats priming everything.

- List each surface that needs primer and state the specific problem (bare drywall, water stain, glossy enamel, big color change).

- For any water, smoke, or tannin stain, confirm you are using a shellac or oil blocker (such as Zinsser BIN or Kilz Original), not water-based.

- For glossy or chalky surfaces, which bonding primer will you use (e.g. INSL-X STIX, Bulls Eye 1-2-3)?

- For a drastic color change, are you having the primer tinted toward the topcoat to save a coat? (Y/N)

Worksheet: Paint and Product Selection Sheet

Lock in the products for each surface so your shopping trip is one stop. Record the VOC number and resin type from the label, not the marketing words.

Surface (walls / ceiling / trim+doors)

Paint product and line

Resin type (100% acrylic / waterborne alkyd enamel)

Sheen chosen

VOC level (g/L, from label)

Primer product (if any) and reason

Quantity (gallons / quarts)

Checklist: Tools and Sundries Ready

- 2.5-inch angled synthetic sash brush (plus a 2-inch for narrow trim)
- Roller frame (9-inch) and a 4-inch mini-roller for tight spots
- Roller covers in the right nap (3/8 smooth, 1/2 standard, 3/4 heavy texture)
- Roller extension pole (about 4 ft) for walls and ceilings
- 5-gallon bucket with roller grid, or a roller tray with liners
- 5-in-1 tool, can opener, pour spout, painter's tape, and a wet rag for drips
- Step stool or ladder and a work light to see cut lines and coverage

Cutting In and Rolling Walls

Cut a crisp freehand line and roll the field in a wet-edge pattern that dries flat, then build a proper two-coat film.

Exercise: Rehearse Cutting In with Two Passes

On a section of wall (or scrap board), practice loading the brush and the two-pass cut. Record what you observe.

- How far up the bristles did you load, and did you tap rather than scrape off the excess?

- On the first pass, how far short of the line did you stop to unload the bulk of the paint?

- Describe how the second pass with the thinner brush let you bring the edge to the line.

- Did you roll the wall before the cut line dried so the textures blended? What happened if a cut band dried first?

Checklist: Rolling a Wall Without Lap Marks

- Loaded the roller fully and evenly against the grid; spun off heavy drips
- Laid paint on in a large W or M across a 3 by 3-foot section without lifting
- Filled in the W with crossing passes until evenly coated, not over-rolled
- Finished each section with light passes all in one direction for uniform stipple
- Overlapped every new section into the previous wet edge before it dried
- Rolled the whole wall corner to corner in one session without stopping mid-wall
- Let the first coat dry the full recoat time before applying the second

Worksheet: Coat and Recoat Tracking Log

Track each surface through its coats and dry times so you never recoat over soft paint. Leave the recoat-clock times for you to fill from the can label and your conditions.

Surface / wall ID

Coat number (1 / 2 / 3)

Product and sheen

Roller nap used

Time applied

Recoat window from label (you note: 2-4 hrs etc.)

Ready to recoat? (Y/N) and time

Exercise: Plan a Difficult Color Change

If your job involves a hard color (light over dark, or a red/yellow/orange), plan the coats and primer before you buy.

- What is the change (light over dark, dark over light, vivid red/yellow/orange, sheen change)?
- Are you having a primer tinted toward the new color to do the hiding? What gray or shade?
- How many topcoats do you realistically expect, and did you buy enough paint for it?
- Did you paint a test patch and let it dry fully under the room's real lighting? What did it reveal?

Trim, Ceilings, Sheen, and Cleanup

Finish trim and ceilings to a smooth result, lock in the sheen for every room, and clean, store, and dispose correctly.

Checklist: Trim and Door Finishing Steps

- Painted in order: ceilings, then walls, then trim last
- De-glossed and sanded old trim, filled holes, and caulked gaps with paintable acrylic-latex
- Used a self-leveling trim enamel and a quality 2 or 2.5-inch angled sash brush
- Laid paint on, then tipped off with a light single stroke along the length to remove brush marks
- Painted a panel door in order: panels, rails, stiles, then edges (including the top edge)
- Caught drips and sags at inside corners and profile bottoms before they set

Worksheet: Room-by-Room Sheen Plan

Assign a sheen to every surface so the result looks intentional. Match sheen to traffic and moisture, and keep walls one sheen and trim a step glossier.

Room

Wall sheen (flat / eggshell / satin)

Ceiling sheen (flat)

Trim and door sheen (semi-gloss / high-gloss)

Traffic / moisture level (low / high / wet room)

Prep quality required for that sheen (higher sheen = flawless surface)

Color name and code for each surface

Checklist: Ceiling and Cleanup Checklist

- Used flat (or go-and-dry tinted) ceiling paint and a 3/8-inch nap on a smooth ceiling
- Cut in the perimeter, then rolled the whole ceiling in one direction keeping a wet edge
- Wore eye protection and used an extension pole to reduce overhead spatter
- Scraped excess paint back into the can and rinsed latex tools until water ran clear
- Cleaned the brush heel with a comb, reshaped it, and dried it in its keeper

- [] Sealed and labeled leftover paint (room, color, code, sheen, date) and stored it where it cannot freeze
- [] Dried out or dropped off paint waste per local rules; laid oily rags flat outdoors to dry

Exercise: Final Walkthrough and Touch-Up

Once everything is dry and the sheen has set, inspect under raking light and against the common amateur tells.

- Under side light, are there any lap marks, holidays (missed spots), or roller tracks on the walls or ceiling?

- Is the cut line crisp at the ceiling and trim, with no fuzzy bleed or wandering edge?

- Are the trim and doors free of drips, sags, and brush marks, with edges sealed?

- Walk a stranger through: does anything read as a DIY tell, and what spots still need a touch-up?

Your Action Plan

1. Walk the room and diagnose every surface and condition flag before buying anything.
2. Clean, fill, sand, and de-gloss each surface so the new paint can bond and lie flat.
3. Make the targeted primer call: stain blockers on stains, bonding primer on glossy or chalky spots only.
4. Spec paint by resin and sheen and gather brushes and the right roller nap for each surface.
5. Mask the room, burnish the tape, and seal the tape edge where the sharpest line matters.
6. Cut in one wall with the two-pass technique, then roll that wall before the cut line dries.
7. Roll the field in the W pattern, always overlapping into the wet edge, finishing in one direction.
8. Apply two coats, respecting the full recoat window, and add a third only for difficult colors.
9. Paint ceilings first, walls next, trim last, laying on and tipping off the trim enamel.
10. Clean tools to last, seal and label leftover paint, and dry out or drop off all waste safely.

