

# Cookie Decorating — Workbook

This workbook turns the Cookie Decorating course into reps at your own kitchen counter. Each section maps to a course module and mixes guided exercises, fill-in worksheets, and checklists so you build a repeatable royal icing system rather than one-off lucky cookies. Work through it batch by batch, log your numbers, and keep the templates as your personal reference for every order to come.

## Royal Icing Foundations and Consistency

Dial in a base recipe and learn to hit named consistencies on command, the skill everything else depends on.

### Exercise: The Consistency Ladder Drill

Make one base batch of royal icing, then split it into four small bowls. Thin each bowl progressively with water added a half-teaspoon at a time to reach stiff, 20-second, 15-second, and 10-second consistencies. Run the second-count test on each by dragging a knife through and timing how long the line takes to smooth flat. Record what each one looks and feels like falling off your spatula.

- How many half-teaspoons of water did it take to move from your base batch to a clean 15-second consistency?

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- Describe in your own words how 10-second icing looks and behaves differently from 20-second.

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- Which consistency was hardest to hit and hold, and what threw it off (humidity, over-thinning, mixing)?

### Worksheet: My Base Recipe Card

Fill in your standardized base batch so you can reproduce it every time. Lock these numbers once you find a batch you trust, and only vary the water from here.

Powdered sugar amount (cups / grams)

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Meringue powder amount (tablespoons)

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Starting water amount (tablespoons)

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Mixer type and attachment (paddle / whisk)

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Mix speed and time (minutes)

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Extract / flavor used and amount

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Bright-white gel used (yes / no)

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Notes on texture at correct mix

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### Checklist: Before You Pipe a Single Cookie

- Sugar and meringue powder fully combined before adding water
- Mixed on low-to-medium with paddle, no foaming whisk
- Icing reached bright, smooth, soft-peak stage
- Base batch covered with plastic wrap pressed onto the surface
- Spray bottle and fine spatula at the station for adjustments
- Target consistency named and tested, not guessed

### Outlining, Flooding, and Color

Lay down clean outline-and-flood fills, control dry time and sheen, and mix colors without bleed.

### Exercise: Outline-and-Flood Six-Pack

Bake or buy six identical simple-shape cookies (circles or squares are ideal). Outline all six with 20-second icing, let the borders set 5 to 10 minutes, then flood with 15-second icing one at a time. Tap to settle, scribe-pop bubbles, and dry the first three in front of a fan and the last three in still air. Compare the results once fully dry.

- Which cookies had a higher sheen, the fan-dried or the still-air set, and how big was the difference?

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- Did any cookie crater or develop holes? Trace it back to a cause (air, thickness, set time).

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- How long did your flood take to crust, and how long until it was hard enough to handle?

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### Worksheet: Color Mixing Log

Record every custom color you mix so you can reproduce it exactly for the next order. Note the wet shade versus how it dried, since royal icing deepens over time.

Color name / order it was for

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Base used (white, brown, pre-colored)

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Brand and gel colors added

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Approximate drops or toothpick dips

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Wet shade vs. dried shade

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Hours tinted ahead of use

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Bleeding observed (yes / no)

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Adjustment for next time

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## Checklist: Clean Flood and Color Checklist

- Outline set firm before flooding began
- Flood stayed inside the border with no run-off
- Surface tapped flat and bubbles scribe-popped before crusting
- Deep colors (red, black, navy) pre-tinted hours ahead
- Only gel or paste color used in wet icing, never liquid drops
- Cookies dried fully (6 to 12 hours) before stacking or bagging

## Exercise: Color Scheme Studio

Pick a theme (a holiday, a birthday, a brand) and design three swatch sets on paper using only the color schemes from the course: monochrome tints, a complementary pair, and an analogous run. Limit each to two or three colors plus white. Then mix the winning scheme in real icing and swatch it on a dried base.

- Which scheme felt most cohesive for your theme, and why?  
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- Did the real mixed colors match your paper plan, or did they dry darker or muddier?  
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- What complementary color could you keep on hand to mute an over-bright batch?  
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## Wet-on-Wet, Texture, and Stenciling

Add the effects that read as custom: marbling, feathering, dimensional texture, and crisp single- and multi-layer stencils.

## Exercise: Wet-on-Wet Speed Run

Prepare a base flood color and two accent colors in fine-tip bottles, all matched to roughly 12 to 15 seconds, before you flood anything. Then decorate three cookies in quick succession: one marbled, one feathered, and one with a row of dot-into-hearts. You must add accents within 30 to 60 seconds of flooding, before any crust forms.

- Did your accent colors sink flush into the base, or did they sit raised? What does that tell you about consistency?  
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- Which effect muddied, if any, and were you moving too slowly or stirring too much?  
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- What would you line up or prep differently to beat the crust window next time?  
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## Worksheet: Stencil Project Planner

Plan a single- or multi-layer stencil cookie before you start, since registration and dry time between layers cannot be improvised. Fill this in for one design.

Stencil design / number of layers  
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Base cookie color and dry status  
\_\_\_\_\_

Method (icing-squeegee or airbrush)  
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Icing consistency for squeegee (target seconds)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Color order, layer by layer  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dry time planned between layers  
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How the stencil is held down (magnets, genie, hand)

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Cleanup plan for stencil between prints

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### Checklist: Effects and Stencil Readiness

- [ ] All wet-on-wet colors filled and tipped before flooding the first cookie
- [ ] Accent and base consistencies matched to about 12 to 15 seconds
- [ ] Dimensional detail piped only on a fully dried base
- [ ] Stencil base cookie hard, dry, and flat
- [ ] Squeegee icing at roughly 20-second, applied thin with firm pressure
- [ ] Stencil lifted straight up, then washed before icing dried in cutouts
- [ ] Each stencil layer dried before placing the next

## 3D, Sculpted, and Finished Cookies

Build structural cookies, package them to survive transport, and price your work to actually profit.

### Exercise: Build a Standing or Stacked Cookie

Choose one 3D project: a slotted standing shape (two notched pieces that lock) or a small stacked tower on a flat base. Decorate every piece flat and let them harden overnight. Then assemble using stiff icing as glue, holding each joint 30 to 60 seconds and propping the structure while joints cure. Photograph the finished build.

- Did your dough hold sharp enough edges to slot or stack square? If not, what would you change in the recipe or chilling?

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- Which joint was weakest, and how long did it actually need to cure before it held weight?

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- What did you have to prop or support, and what would you box it in for transport?

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### Worksheet: Cookie Cost and Price Sheet

Cost one dozen of a standardized cookie honestly, including your own labor, then set a price that includes margin. Repeat this for each design you sell.

Design name and size

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Material cost per cookie (dough + icing + color)

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Packaging cost per cookie (bag + tag + box share)

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Minutes to decorate one cookie

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Your hourly labor rate

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Labor cost per cookie

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Total cost per cookie

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Margin multiplier applied

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Final price per cookie

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Local comparable price (sanity check)

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### Checklist: Order-Ready Packaging and Compliance

- Cookies completely dry, surface and underneath, before bagging
- Sealed in cellophane bags, laid flat in a single snug layer
- Not refrigerated or frozen for storage (avoids condensation)
- 3D builds boxed and padded in their own compartment
- Allergen / ingredient card included (wheat, egg, dairy)
- Local cottage food rules checked before selling
- Portfolio photos taken of the finished set

### Exercise: Production Time Study

Time yourself decorating one full dozen of a single design from filled bags to finished cookies. Then decorate the same design a second day and time it again. The goal is to prove that speed, not new techniques, is what makes orders profitable.

- How many minutes per cookie did you average on day one versus day two?

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- Which step ate the most time, and how could you streamline or batch it?

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- At your day-two speed and your price sheet, what is your effective hourly rate?

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## Your Action Plan

1. Lock in one base royal icing recipe and write it on your recipe card so every batch starts identical.
2. Run the consistency ladder until you can hit 15-second icing on demand without chasing it.
3. Decorate a six-pack of simple shapes with outline-and-flood, fan-drying half to compare sheen.
4. Pre-tint your deep colors a day ahead and start a color mixing log you reuse for orders.
5. Practice the three wet-on-wet effects on the same shape until accents sink flush every time.
6. Complete one single-layer stencil cookie, then attempt a two-layer registered design.
7. Build one 3D or stacked cookie, respecting overnight drying and stiff-icing joints.
8. Cost a standardized dozen on the price sheet and set a profitable per-cookie price.
9. Package a set flat and snug, add an allergen card, and confirm your local cottage food rules.
10. Do a two-day production time study, then standardize the few designs you can make fastest.









