

## Light- Shade- Shadows

1. First, determine the light source – even an indirect one. Even a cloudy, dreary day has a sun in the sky, and some variation in values of shapes in light and shade can often help a composition a bit more. Most indoor scenes have a light from above, or a window nearby.

2. A shadow is often necessary to show form, or character and detail of an object.
3. A shadow is cast on a surface facing the light, but which is prevented from receiving light by an intervening object.
4. Shadow shape is that of the object itself, sometimes modified by the surface it falls on, but usually is similar. The shadow shape goes to the same vanishing points as that of the object itself. It is not always smooth or regular, but can be bumpy, wiggly, very texture-y in character, depending on the surface receiving the shadow.

If you choose to put a shadow in one object in a composition, such as on a building, ALL other objects (trees, figures, bushes, flag poles) must have a shadow shape also.

Shade is the side of the object away from the light...*usually* cooler in value

5. Shadow color is the color—and value—of the object that the shadow falls on, NOT of the object itself. The color/value is slightly darker at the base of the object (bottom of bush, or building, where it touches the surface or ground).

An object controls the *shape* of its shadow, but not the *color or value* of it.

A shadow of a dark building on green grass will be a dark value.

A shadow of a dark building in snow will be a light value.

6. Shadow *color* tells about the character of the object in shadow. Shadow *shape* tells about the object itself. Shadow shape should never be as important as object itself, and should NEVER be outlined, (unless in a stylized or abstract composition).

7. Changing the source or angle of the light can change the character of the composition—  
Early morning light is different from that of noon. A lamp is different from natural light.  
Early morning and late in the day shadows are long, and often dramatic.  
Shadows at midday are directly overhead with only back-lighting for drama at that time of day to be most effective.  
The most “photogenic times” of day to work outdoors are around 10 to 11AM, and between 2 and 3 PM.

8. Changing the color of the *light source*, such as colored lighting for a performance, or during sunset or sunrise, can change the whole mood and character of the composition. This might require working on a different colored surface, and a change of the palette

9. Try to avoid working with several sources of light in a composition. It can be too confusing. Choose one angle, and stick with it.

10—Creating a shadow area—in both watercolor and in soft pastel: used a darker value (usually cooler) of the same color... “Glaze” in watercolor, “layer” in soft pastel..Keep shadows more “transparent”—not too opaque, and heavy. Consider a duller version, or even a complementary color for a different effect for that shadow.

Remember WHAT is the shadow falling on.. how dramatic, what shape should it be?