



Application Instructions

Thank you for ordering **SayWhat? Custom Lettering and Designs**. Although easy to apply, it is extremely important to prepare properly before adhering to your surface to be painted. We have included a small sample piece to practice with. We recommend that you try out the whole process with the sample, even if you are familiar with using traditional overlay stencils. We have also included basic painting instructions for those who are new to this

Make sure that all the phrases in your text are there. Although we check these before they are shipped, mistakes can happen- please notify us immediately if there are missing words or phrases, or it is otherwise not as you expected. If a single character seems to be missing, it is very likely there, but was overlooked in the "weeding" process. (Where the cut vinyl pieces are removed). Just apply normally as outlined below and weed it before you start painting by spearing the letter with a craft knife and lifting it up and out. **Note:** Very small letters are often deliberately left unweeded; we will usually include a separate sheet explaining this.

If you have a large phrase or sentence, cut it into manageable widths (a comfortable arm stretch) before positioning on the wall, and butt the cut edges together as you tape it up. Although we pre-position the text, it is certainly OK for you to cut out individual words or lines and position them as you wish.



Tape "sandwich" into position

Your lettering contains three layers, a "sandwich" of materials. The top is clear transfer tape, which keeps everything in place until you are ready to paint. The middle is a white low-tack adhesive backed vinyl, which is the layer you paint through. At the bottom, against the adhesive side of the vinyl, is a waxed paper backing. Use the straight edge of the **VINYL** (the **WHITE** layer) as your guide for measuring, and to check with a bubble level. (Fig. 1 and 2) The waxed backing may not be cut straight- this is normal. When it is in the correct and



2. Check level using white layer

level position, tape into place securely **at top edge of sandwich only with 3/4 to 1 inch or wider tape**. The tape will become a "hinge". (Fig. 3) We recommend 3M Long-Mask® tape, but regular masking tape would work.



3. Tape securely along top edge

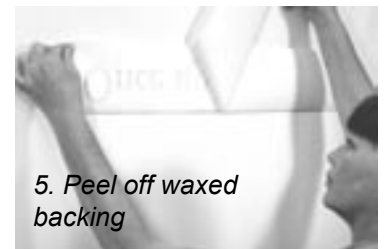
If you have ordered a page format **SayWhat?** that requires more than one section, **tape all sections into place securely along top edge** as described above. Remove the waxed backing and apply the vinyl from the **bottom section first**, working up. You may tape the section above out of the way by lifting it as long as it is securely taped into place along the top edge. If you have some overlap of material into the cut letter area, carefully cut off the excess material as needed before applying the next section. This can be done any time after correct placement has been established, even after painting the lower section and before applying the upper section.



4. Flip up sandwich

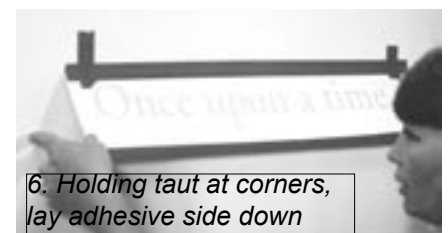
When you're satisfied with the placement, cut between the words (or letters) to give yourself a comfortable amount of material to work with at one time, approximately 1-2 feet. We recommend

that you adhere the vinyl to the wall immediately before painting, working fairly small areas at a time, whatever is comfortably within your reach. Flip up one section at a time and **slowly and carefully** peel the waxed backing off starting from the left corner at the junction of the tape, working toward the opposite corner, keeping the vinyl taut and away from the painting surface until the backing is completely free. (Fig 4 and 5) Holding the free corners firmly taut, lay the film against the painting surface. (Fig.



5. Peel off waxed backing

6) Smooth firmly with the flat of your hand; it may sometimes be necessary to burnish the vinyl with a tool such as a credit card or squeegee. (Fig 7) Don't worry about getting out small bubbles, they will cause no adverse effect as long as there are no actual wrinkles and the letter edges are stuck down. You may tape over your cuts between



6. Holding taut at corners, lay adhesive side down



7. Smooth down firmly

letters if you feel you may get paint in the cut during application.

Remove all the positioning "hinge" tape from the top. Peel transfer tape (top layer) from top left to bottom right, (reverse if you are left handed) pulling down rather than out toward you. (Fig. 8) You may shift the direction slightly so that you lift the transfer tape with the cut of the letters rather than against them, which can cause tearing. As you remove the transfer tape, be careful to smooth down any areas that shift slightly during removal. If you have a piece lift up as you pull



8. Carefully remove transfer tape (top clear layer)

o• the transfer tape, such as the center of a letter, lay the transfer tape back down and press •rmly on the piece that is lifting. If you are having a lot of trouble with the *SayWhat?* lifting, burnish the whole area •rmly with a credit card or squeegee. You may have a small amount of tearing if you pull the transfer tape against the cut of the letter. If this occurs, just press it down



9. Paint using very light coats (drybrush method)

and snip a little of the vinyl from the margin and lay over the tear.



10. Remove adhesive mask, including letter centers

Paint using whatever technique works best for you. (Fig. 9) If you have not painted using the dry brush method before, refer to the instructions on next 2 pages. Remove the *SayWhat?* as soon as possible. (Fig 10). To remove the letter centers, use an X-acto or craft knife to gently "spear" into the plastic at an angle, then lift it out. This method will decrease the chances of damaging the paint, which could occur from peeling it o• from the edge. Go on to the next area.

Our No Fault Guarantee:

If you don't get the results you expect, we will replace the problem portion at NO CHARGE. (Shipping charges may apply)

Cautions and Limitations:

SayWhat? is a high quality vinyl product with a low-tack adhesive designed for temporary applications. On most surfaces it will stick •rmly to allow for painting with drybrush, airbrush and some sponging methods, yet be easily removed without disturbing surface paint. Using a wet (heavy) application of paint is not recommended and will probably cause seepage of paint under the vinyl and/or failure of adherence to surface.

Be sure to test any adhesive product on a small area of the application surface.

Although *SayWhat?* adhesive masks are designed to be removed easily, in rare instances any adhesive product (including masking and painters tape) may not be compatible with the surface material on which they are applied, or the application surface may not be sound, and may leave a residue, be di•cult to remove, or damage the surface •nish. **Adhesive products should not be left on the surface for extended periods of time, nor exposed to heat or direct sunlight.** Your results may vary depending on surface preparation and smoothness. It is the consumer's responsibility to determine if the product is suitable for use and The Mad Stencilist's liability is limited to no greater than the retail value of it's own product.

Basic Stencil Painting Instructions

Dry brush, stippling or airbrush methods work well with most designs, and roller stenciling can be a huge time saver for large areas. But whatever method you choose, layer very small amounts of color at a time, building intensity and depth with each layer. Be sure to take your time, and have fun!

Dry Brush Method: Pour a quarter sized puddle of paint onto a paper plate. Dip the end of your stenciling brush into the paint, wetting just the tips of the bristles. Swirl the brush firmly into a stack of paper towels (Bounty®



Apply paint along the edge of the window using a circular or tapping motion

brand works extremely well) using a circular motion—this will load the brush properly and remove excess paint before application to your painting surface. Very little paint should be left on the brush. **If paint runs under the edge of the window (bleeding), you have too much paint on your brush.**

If you experience a build-up of paint on the brush, which sometimes dries and prevents even paint application, you may drag the brush against a paper towel saturated with some isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol to remove some of the paint.

Apply paint along the edge of the window (the shapes cut out from the stencil) using the circular motion described above. Work the paint gradually toward the center of the window. A nice effect is to allow the area in the center to remain lighter. Go over the area repeatedly rather than attempting to cover it in one application.

Stippling is also dry-brush stenciling, substituting a firm tapping motion rather than a circular motion. Stippling will provide a clearer print on rough surfaces such as textured walls, and will add a more textured look when used on a smooth surface. You may wish to load the brush slightly heavier when stippling than with swirling.

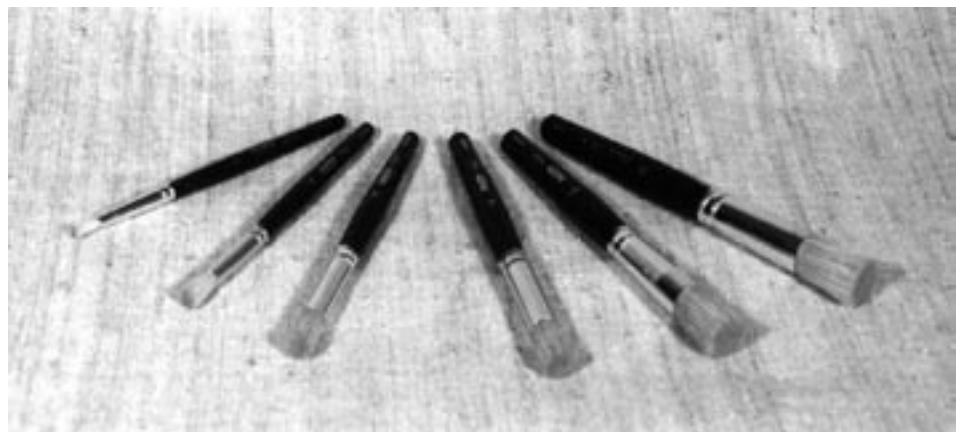
Roller Stenciling Technique- Some designs call for even coverage of a large area, which is then shaded with dry brush or other methods. Stencil the exposed shapes with a compact foam roller. If you have a problem with the paint drying too fast you can extend the drying time by mixing 3 parts paint to 1 part extender, or use pre-mixed glaze. After rolling into the paint mixture, remove excess by rolling onto paper towels or paper bags. This will even out the paint distribution. Roll the paint into the windows, repeating application after it is dry to the touch if necessary. Stencil subsequent overlays when dry.

Airbrushing delivers a fine spray of paint to the surface, the control of which is manipulated by a lever on the airbrush and the distance from which the paint is being sprayed. Follow manufacturers instructions and practice to gain control of the paint flow. If you are airbrushing, it is recommended that you use artist grade acrylic paint rather than the less expensive craft paints. The pigments in these paints are ground finer for successful use through the airbrush without excessive

clogging. Please contact us for further information on this distinctive technique.

Brushes

Use brushes specially designed for stencil painting. Good brushes will last a long time with proper care. It



Stencil brushes are available in a variety of sizes

is best to have a separate one for each color of paint; this will save you time and effort, and give the best results. Brushes are available in a variety of sizes; select diameters that are appropriate to the window sizes of the stencil. Stenciling brushes are available through The Mad Stencilist or your local arts and crafts store.

Sponges and other special applicators can also be utilized, with various results. We recommend you see your local craft store for more information.

Paints



Choosing the right paint isn't hard, but there are differences you should be aware of. Here are some general guidelines:

Acrylics are the easiest and most versatile paint to use for stencil painting. Commonly available at craft stores, as well as from our website, they come in an enormous assortment of colors, are durable, and work well on a wide variety of surfaces, including painted or unpainted walls, floors, wood, fabric, natural stone and the like, and are fast drying. The common 2 oz. bottles will last a long time, and is usually plenty for all but the largest projects.

Stencil crèmes or crayons are generally oil based and have a longer drying time, producing a softer look and enabling the beginner to blend colors more easily. However, depending on the surface being painted, there may be a waiting time of up to 24 hours for complete drying.

Unusual surfaces:

Most acrylic or crème paints will work fine on fabric, though may require a fabric medium and heat setting for permanence. There are also paints specially formulated for this use. Several suppliers now offer glass and tile medium, a chemical additive that creates lasting results on those surfaces, and other types of paint specifically made for ceramics are also available. For some applications cans of spray paint may be suitable. Metal surfaces or areas previously painted with enamels or oil based products may require a primer for maximum adhesion. It is always a good idea to try out a new technique on a sample area first.

The sheen of your wall paint will also effect your painting results. Satin, eggshell or flat paint is recommended as the base coating for best results. If you have semi-gloss paint on your walls and wish to avoid repainting you may add some "tooth" to the surface by lightly sanding the area to be painted. When dry brushing, stippling works best on slick surfaces, and waiting a little longer between colors for the paint to

dry may be helpful. Another option would be to paint first with a latex primer or all purpose sealer.

Color and Shading:

Keep in mind you don't need to paint a solid color. It's easy to blend and combine colors for more interesting results. It is very helpful to try your colors out on paper first to determine the color blend. Go over the area repeatedly rather than attempting to cover in one application.

As a normal rule, start with your lightest color first. Shade with additional colors, a small amount at a time for soft blending. Shade with darkest color last. When dry brush stenciling, the blend of color occurs on the painted surface. As you stencil your colors from light to dark, each color should cover less area than the color before it so that you see the blend and the variations between them.



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