

The Painted Pumpkin Planner

A printable companion to Painted Pumpkins: Simple Monster Faces

Print this planner and keep it with the craft supplies. It gives you the six faces as step cards, the pumpkin-picking chart, the supply checklist, the paint and sealer guide, the age-and-skills chart, a four-week rhythm planner and a design sheet for each child - everything you need to run a pumpkin-painting afternoon without scrolling back through the article.

The Six Faces at a Glance

1. One-eyed monster	Flat base colour, one large white circle slightly off-centre, a smaller black pupil inside it, a lopsided smile underneath. Five minutes, no steady hand needed. Best first face.
2. Stitched smile	Draw the curved mouth line first with a fine brush, then add short perpendicular strokes across it for the stitches. Two black dots for eyes above. Pale base works best.
3. Wide-eyed ghost	White base, two large oval eyes and a small round mouth, all in black. Nothing else. The restraint is the design - three marks look confident, twelve look busy.
4. Bat silhouette	Deep base colour - black, plum or navy - then a single bat shape in white or cream across the front. Cut a card template and trace it if you cannot draw one freehand.
5. Polka-dot monster	Solid base colour, then dots of a contrasting colour using a brush handle or cotton bud. Add eyes and a mouth on top. The most forgiving face on the list.
6. Handprint monster	Paint a child's palm and fingers thinly, press onto the pumpkin, lift straight up. Fingers become teeth, hair or legs. Add eyes once dry. The one to do with a baby.

Pumpkin-Picking Chart

Pumpkin	How it takes paint	Best for	Watch out for
White or cream real	Excellent - pale skin is almost a primer	Any face, especially bold two-colour designs	Still perishable; will not keep past the season
Orange real	Good, but needs a white base coat first	Designs where orange shows through	Two extra coats; colour muddies easily
Faux or craft	Very good - takes paint evenly	Anything you want to keep and reuse	Never soak it; wipe clean only
Small sugar pumpkin	Good, but fiddly to hold	Table displays and a row of faces	Dries out and shrinks faster
Heirloom or knobbly	Poor - bumps break up any clean line	A single painted base colour, no face	A face will look smudged

Buy one spare pumpkin. A dropped pumpkin, one painted over a time too many, or one claimed by a younger sibling is the most common reason a painting afternoon ends in tears.

Supply Checklist

- Pumpkins - one per child, plus one spare. Check each for soft spots before you start.
- Acrylic craft paint in three or four colours - black and white are non-negotiable
- One bright accent colour: teal, purple or lime
- A fine detail brush for outlines, pupils and stitches
- A medium flat brush for base coats
- A shallow dish or palette for each colour
- Painter's tape for masking and holding a stencil
- A soft 2B or 4B pencil for the transfer method
- Clear matte sealer for anything going outside
- A plastic tablecloth or kraft paper, taped down at the edges
- A rimmed tray under every pumpkin
- A bowl of warm water and a towel on the floor beside the table
- A drying area on kraft paper, out of the way of feet

Paint, Sealer and Weather Guide

Finish	Where it belongs	How long it lasts	Notes
No sealer	Indoors only	The season, indoors	Fine for a shelf or a table centrepiece
Clear matte sealer	Covered porch, sheltered step	4 to 6 weeks outdoors	The default choice; dries invisible
Clear gloss sealer	Anywhere you want a wet look	4 to 6 weeks outdoors	Makes colours pop but shows brush marks
Outdoor acrylic paint	An exposed step or a low wall	6 to 8 weeks outdoors	Flexes with temperature; use as base coat
Spray varnish	Large pumpkins, fast coverage	4 to 6 weeks outdoors	Spray outdoors in light coats; cure a day

Two things kill a painted pumpkin: a wet surface and a thick coat. Wipe and dry the pumpkin completely, then build the colour in two or three thin coats rather than one heavy one. Seal after 24 hours, not after 24 minutes.

Age and Skills Chart

Age	What they can do	Best face	Skip this
Under 2	Hold, pat, smear, taste-test everything	The handprint monster, adult paints	Fine brushes, markers
2 to 3	Scribble, dab, place large marks with help	The polka-dot monster with a cotton bud	Fine outlines, small details
3 to 4	Follow one instruction, place marks deliberately	Polka-dot monster, then wide-eyed ghost	Freehand drawing of a set design
5 to 7	Draw a planned shape, use a stencil, work alone 20 min	One-eyed monster and stitched smile	Projects needing drying between stages
8 to 11	Plan a design, mix colours, work for an hour	Bat silhouette, plus the transfer method	Tasks designed for a four-year-old
12+	Design and execute a whole look	Bat silhouette, or designing the family's set	Being told it is for little kids

Give an older child a real job - the camera, the paint mixing, the design for the whole family's set - rather than a harder version of the same task. Being needed keeps them in the room.

Four-Week Painting Rhythm

Week one - gather and choose (buy, wash, dry, pick a face)

Week two - the base coats (paint every pumpkin, dry overnight)

Week three - the faces (one pumpkin at a time, fine brush)

Week four - the keepsake and the display (handprint, then arrange)

Buffer - the last few days, nothing planned

Do not plan all six faces. Two or three across the month is a better October than six in one weekend, and the buffer week is what makes the plan survive real life.

Design Sheet

One sheet per child. Sketch the face, note the colours and the face number, and tick it off when it is finished.

Child's name _____ **Face no.** _____ **Colours** _____

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Project Log

Date	Face	Who painted it	Where it lives now

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