



## Staining Paper Tutorial

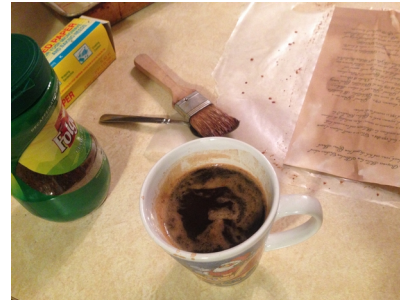
I've experimented a lot in finding best practices when making old/distressed parchment. Here are some of the things I found that work best, especially if you're trying to make a lot of pages (say, for a journal).

### Paper Types

I found that printing on matte paper (i.e. construction paper) works best because it lacks the gloss of regular printer paper. However, even printer paper can be made to look very, very good.

### Staining: Coffee vs Tea

I think using coffee to stain looks the best, but it also causes your 'ancient papers' to smell like coffee. Coffee also makes the pages a little sticky, especially to slightly sweaty palms. Tea-staining would be my next choice; it's not as strong of a coloring as coffee, but odor control is easier (Earl Grey or another strong tea is great).



For the games I sell, I make a diluted mixture of water and acrylic paint using colors like yellow ochre and brown/burnt umber. There's little to no odor this way.

### Staining: How To

The best-looking effect I found is to use multiple passes. Stain, dry, repeat. This builds up multiple, differently-shaped layers of stain and looks fantastic.

To do this:

1. Make strong coffee or tea. Use multiple tea-bags if necessary.
2. Pour coffee/tea into a 'dipping tray' (walled cookie sheet, etc).
3. Dip papers one at a time.
4. Set them side by side (not stacked) on a towel or cookie cooling rack to dry. If you're going to stain each page a couple times (which I recommend), just



let the pages mostly dry and stain again. They don't need to be totally dry until you're ready to print on them (see below).

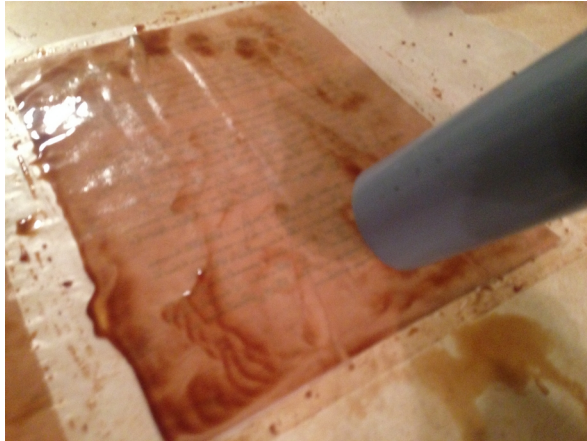
### Final Drying

If you are going to use these pages in an inkjet printer, the paper needs to be **TOTALLY** dry. I mean bone dry. If they are damp in the least, the printer ink will bleed and mess up your text/image.

To dry, you can either leave them out to air dry or use heat.

I recommend letting them partially air dry, then using a hairdryer to dry them out really well. You can even use the oven (if using the oven, please be very careful. Start on the lowest temperature and watch them closely. If the edges start to brown, it's time to take them out!).

If you're going to leave them out to air dry, give them at least a full day. Leaving them out to dry for a few hours isn't enough. They will still be somewhat damp on the inside. Either use heat, or let them dry for a full 1-2 days.



### Weathering

Finally, if you want to physically rough up the pages, I created a tutorial on my website that gives step-by-step instructions. However, if you're making a large quantity for a journal, etc and need them to lie really flat, you may not want bulky, crinkled paper. If that's the case, skip my weathering tutorial and just stain them using the methods above.

### Conclusion

Once you get the basics down, play around a little. You can add 'coffee mug' stains, splash or spritz them with other colors (like red or brown food coloring, juice, soda, etc), or sprinkle sand or dirt on them when they're still wet. Letting puddles of coffee/tea sit and dry also looks awesome. The sky's the limit!

Happy making!