

September New Leaf Challenge

🌿 The New Leaf Challenge

15 creative prompts to help you grow your skills this September.

September always feels like a fresh page. A chance to turn over a new leaf.

This month, I've put together a guided art challenge designed to help you do exactly that: practice, experiment, and stretch your creativity.

By the end, you'll have:

- ✦ improved your observation and shading skills
- ✦ tried your hand at perspective and proportion
- ✦ explored bold colours, patterns, and abstraction
- ✦ created your very own 'New Leaf' artwork

👉 Join in at your own pace, share your progress by tagging @papers_by_mae

It's like a gentle art class hidden inside a challenge 😊.



Post to your Instagram
and tag us
@papers_by_mae

Send us a photo via email and
we will share your creations
chloe@papersbymae.co.uk

Just create and enjoy your
art for you and your eyes
only!

10 Notes About the New Leaf Challenge

1. It's about growth, not perfection. Each prompt is designed to stretch your skills and help you try something new.
2. 15 prompts, not 30. So it's totally manageable. You can dip in when you have time or spread them across the whole month.
3. Skill building journey. The prompts build on each other
4. A final piece. By the end you'll create your own 'New Leaf' artwork that brings together everything you've practiced.
5. Beginner friendly. You don't need to be an experienced artist; the prompts are detailed, clear, and easy to follow.
6. Use what you've got. No fancy supplies required. A pencil, some paper, and maybe a few paints are all you need.
7. Flexible pace. It's not daily; you can do a couple each week or work through them in your own time.
8. Community & sharing. Tag @papers_by_mae to share your own progress
9. Creative variety. Subjects range from simple leaves and everyday objects to perspective exercises and abstract pieces.
10. A September reset. It's the perfect way to step into autumn with a fresh mindset, new skills, and a stack of artworks to be proud of!



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Prompt 1



Morning Cup

Sketch your tea or coffee mug using only line work. Look closely at its shape

Capture the handle, the rim, and any little imperfections. Don't add shading yet, just focus on clean, confident lines.

Prompt 2



Leaf

Find a real leaf (from the garden or a walk).

Do a careful line drawing, tracing the edges and following the curves. Add the veins if you can see them clearly. Take your time, This is training your eye to follow shape.

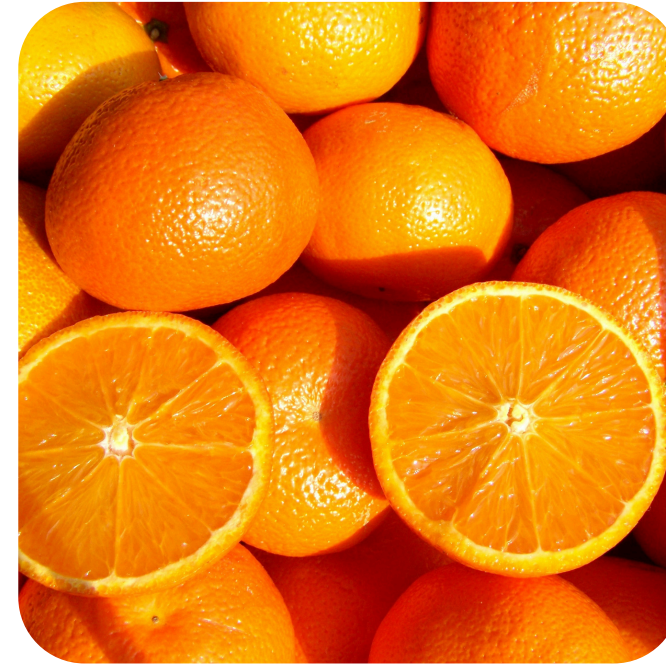
Prompt 3



Leaf continued

Return to yesterday's leaf (or choose a new one). This time, shade it with pencil or watercolour to add depth. Look where the light falls and where the leaf curves. Use hatching, cross-hatching, or layers of colour to show shadows.

Prompt 4



Fruit Study

Choose one piece of fruit (apple, banana, lemon anything you have). Place it under a light and observe how shadows fall.

Sketch or paint it as realistically as you can, capturing the roundness and surface texture. Try to make it look 3D.

Prompt 5



Textures

Pick something textured: wood grain, fabric folds, stone, bark. Sketch or paint a section of it.

Focus on how your marks can suggest texture. Cross-hatched lines for rough wood, soft shading for fabric, or dabs of paint for stone.

Prompt 6



Favourite Book

Place a book on the table and sketch it from an angle. Maybe slightly open, maybe stacked with another. Notice how the rectangle changes shape when viewed from the side, and how the pages curve when the book is open.

Prompt 7



Hands at work

Sketch your own hand holding something. A pen, a fork, a paintbrush. Hands are tricky! Look at the shapes: palms are big, fingers taper, thumbs bend differently. Keep it loose.

Prompt 8



Window View

Look out of your window and sketch the scene. Include both foreground (what's close to you, like a windowsill or tree branch) and background (buildings, sky, or distant trees). This will help you think about depth.

Prompt 9



The New Path

Draw a pathway, road, or trail. Use perspective lines to make it look like it's leading into the distance. (Tip: lines get closer together the further away they go.) Add trees, fences, or lampposts along the way to practice scaling objects.

Prompt 10



Leaf Pattern

Use the shape of a leaf to design a repeating pattern across the page. Try overlapping, mirroring, or rotating the leaves.

Play with colour or keep it monochrome.

Prompt 11



Bold Colour Tree

Sketch or paint a simple tree, but fill it with colours you'd never normally use.

Push yourself away from realism and see how bold colour choices transform the feeling of the whole piece.

Prompt 12



Cloud Abstract

Look up at the sky (or use a photo of clouds) and zoom in on one section.

Paint or sketch it as blocks of shape, colour, and soft edges, rather than as clouds. Focus on the flow and movement, letting it become an abstract piece full of light and atmosphere.

Prompt 13



Everyday object

Pick a household item (scissors, spoon, mug). Paint or sketch it in a completely unexpected way: rainbow-coloured scissors, a mug covered in stars, a spoon that glows. Have fun bending reality.

Prompt 14



Found Objects Collage

Gather scraps from your day. Receipts, packaging, old sketches, or magazine cuttings. Cut or tear them into shapes and arrange them into a composition on your page. Overlap and layer until something interesting appears. Then add paint, ink, or pen lines over the top.

Prompt 15



Your New Leaf Symbol

Create an artwork that represents your fresh start, growth, or transformation. This is where you use everything you've practiced: observation, shading, pattern, colour, and abstraction. It could be literal (an object) or symbolic (a scene or a self-portrait) Make it personal.