HOW TO CREATE AN AWESOME WHITEBOARD WALL

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Supplies
The supplies will vary depending on what size of a whiteboard wall you want to paint. Ours is about 50 square feet, and that size was mostly determined by the fact that it's the only smooth wall in our library. There are many different brands of whiteboard paint to choose from. We used WriteyBoard paint for ours. I've heard good things about IdeaPaint as well.

Here's what you'll need:
• Sandpaper
• Painter's tape
• Primer (if needed)
• Regular Paint Roller & Brush (for primer)
• High density foam paint roller (like this one)
• 1-Part White Dry Erase Paint (enough for 50 square feet)

Cost: Ours was about $200 for paint and supplies. Price varies with size of wall and brand of paint.

Instructions

1. Prep the wall - The first step is to mark off the section of wall you will be painting with painter's tape. You can only do up to 50 square feet at a time. Once everything is marked off, sand down the wall really well. You want an ultra-smooth surface to paint on, as this will make it easier to write on with markers later.

2. Prime the wall - If your wall isn't already white, you'll want to prime it (unless you're using clear or black whiteboard paint). Use at least two coats of primer to get a nice, thick finish. It'll pay off when you paint with the whiteboard paint later. Allow primer to dry before next step (usually about 1 hour).

3. Paint using the Whiteboard Paint - After the primer dries, you can paint on the whiteboard paint. Make sure that you follow directions on the paint can carefully, as each brand and type varies. It usually consists of mixing two different containers together to make the paint. You have to mix for a set amount of time, and then you have an hour to paint everything before your paint starts to get too thick. I used a high density foam roller, which helped to create a really smooth surface.
Optional: Create a border - For our whiteboard wall, I decided to create a Chevron boarder at the top of the wall. To do this, I purchased Chevron Frog Tape (they make one in a Wave pattern and a Scallop pattern as well). I used a level, a ruler, and a pencil to lightly mark off where the bottom of the tape would go. Then I CAREFULLY peeled the tape and secured it just under the regular frog tape.

Once all the paint dried, I had to remove the chevron tape carefully so it didn’t mess up the edges. The end result was really nice and created an interesting design element in the space.

4. Allow Paint to Cure - The hardest part comes next - waiting three to seven days for the paint to cure (this brand was three, other brands can be up to seven). I painted it over a holiday weekend so that it wouldn't be as difficult on my impatient students.

5. Let the kids loose - This is the best part. Put out some dry-erase markers, let the kids loose, and watch the magic happen. Here’s some fun ideas to consider:
   • Polls & Surveys - Create a poll or survey where your students can express their opinions.
   • Collaborative Poetry - Start up a poem by writing one line, then create signage encouraging each student to add a new line
   • Art Gallery - Encourage your students to create art on the whiteboard wall. Take pictures and share their work on social media.
   • Project Brainstorming - Have students use the whiteboard wall to brainstorm their next project. It’s excellent for visual thinking.

Additional Resources:

• How to Create an Awesome Whiteboard Wall
  • http://tinyurl.com/awesomewhiteboardwall

• 3 Ways Whiteboard Can Make Your Space More Awesome - Post with explanation of how writable surfaces can be used in your space.
  • http://tinyurl.com/3wayswhiteboards

• Learning Space Design Resources
  • http://renovatedlearning.com/learning-space-design/

WORD OF WARNING: Make sure that you clean off the wall at least once a week with soapy water, or some designs might become stains. I only wash with chemical cleaner about once a year, as that takes away some of the finish.