



Designation: D5383 – 16 (Reapproved 2021)

Standard Practice for Visual Determination of the Lightfastness of Art Materials by Artists and Art Technologists¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D5383; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers a method for exposing specimens of colored art materials indoors to sunlight coming through a closed window. A card containing eight Blue Wool References² is exposed simultaneously. Blue Wool References² 3, 6, and 7, are used as controls in determining when to remove test specimens from exposure and rate them. Test specimens are rated by assigning each specimen the number of the Blue Wool Reference that shows the same amount of color change.

1.2 This practice may be used to indicate art materials that will change color within a few months or years in normal indoor exposure and those that will remain unchanged for a period of years. It is not rigorous enough to verify that materials will remain unchanged for more than fifty years in a home or office environment. A major consideration in developing this method was to keep it simple and short enough to be preformed without instrumentation in a comparatively short length of time.

1.3 This practice shall be used to evaluate the lightfastness of art materials only when it is not feasible to use Test Methods [D4303](#).

1.4 This practice is not suitable for evaluating materials with a high oil content such as artists' oil, resin oil or alkyd paints.

1.5 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.6 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.7 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*³

[D4303](#) Test Methods for Lightfastness of Colorants Used in Artists' Materials

[E284](#) Terminology of Appearance

2.2 *Other Standards:*

[ISO/R 105-B](#) Textiles Tests for Colour Fastness Part B: Colour Fastness to Light and Weathering⁴

[British Standard 1006](#) Group B Methods for Colour Fastness of Textiles and Leathers⁵

3. Terminology

3.1 The definitions included in Terminology [E284](#) are applicable to this practice.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *bloom, n*—a cloudy exudation on the surface of colored pencil due to wax migration.

3.2.2 *fugitive color, n*—colorant that changes color in a few days or weeks, or that bleaches white in less than 18 months, when exposed behind glass to sunlight.

3.2.3 *glazing, n*—the transparent glass or plastic sheet placed in front of a picture when it is framed.

3.2.4 *substrate, n*—the white, pH neutral (pH 6 to 8) paper or board on which the art materials are applied.

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D01](#) on Paint and Related Coatings, Materials, and Applications and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D01.57](#) on Artist Paints and Related Materials.

Current edition approved Nov. 1, 2021. Published November 2021. Originally approved in 1993. Last previous edition approved in 2016 as D5383 – 16. DOI: 10.1520/D5383-16R21.

² The Blue Wool Reference Card is available from Talas, Division Technical Library Service, 213 W. 35th St. New York, NY 10001-1992.

³ For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

⁴ International Organization for Standardization, ISO/R 105-B is available from the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, <http://www.ansi.org>.

⁵ British Standard 1006 can be obtained from British Standards Institute (BSI), 389 Chiswick High Rd., London W4 4AL, U.K., <http://www.bsi-global.com>.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 This practice uses as controls three of the eight ISO Blue Wool References developed for use with ISO/R 105-B and British Standard 1006 Group B.

4.2 Specimens are made from the colored materials to be tested and attached to a backing panel along with a card containing the eight Blue Wool References.

4.3 One half of each colored specimen and of the Blue Wool Reference are covered, shielding that half of the specimens and references from light. The test specimens and references are exposed to sunlight through a closed window.

4.4 When Blue Wool Reference 3 shows a color change, the colored specimens are examined visually and any that also show a color change are noted. The cover is replaced and exposure continued until the exposed and unexposed halves of Reference 3 reach a specified contrast and Reference 6 also shows a color change. Three observers rate each specimen by assigning it the number of the Blue Wool Reference that shows a similar color change. The three numbers assigned to a specimen are averaged and this average determines in which of four broad lightfastness categories the specimen belongs.

4.5 If it is necessary to determine which materials have excellent lightfastness, continue exposure until Reference 7 shows a color change. Remove the panel from exposure and examine only the specimens that had not changed color at the time Reference 6 faded. Those specimens that still show no color change are placed in the fifth and highest lightfastness category.

NOTE 1—Depending on the test location, the time of year, and the number of cloudy days, it will take from a few days to two months of exposure in a window facing south to reveal fugitive materials that will either bleach white or radically change color in a few years when displayed in a normal home environment. It will take from 4 to 18 months of exposure to determine materials that will show, under normal room conditions, various degrees of color change, and those that will remain unchanged, for a long period of time.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Artists have available to them a wide variety of art materials such as markers, colored pencils, pastels, colored inks and airbrush colors. Many of these materials are manufactured for temporary artwork and may contain pigments and dyes that fade in a relatively short time. Product labels and manufacturers' literature do not always supply the information necessary to distinguish products that are stable to light from those that are not. This practice makes it possible to check the general lightfastness of coloring materials to be used in works of art; however, Test Methods D4303 must be used if color measuring instruments and appropriate lightfastness testing apparatus are available. This practice may also be used to evaluate other types of colored materials for lightfastness.

6. Materials

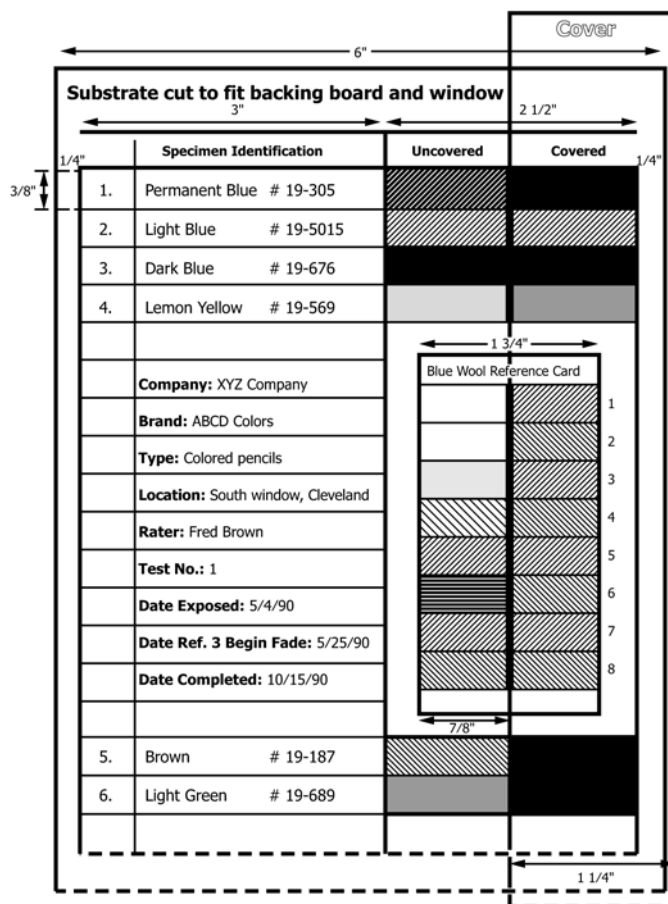
6.1 *Backing Panel*, that is resistant to warping when placed on its edge and exposed to light and heat passing through window glass. Foam board, corrugated plastic board, aluminum composite material (ACM), particle board, hardboard, and plywood are suitable.

6.2 *Substrate*, of white paper or museum board. To avoid substrate discoloration during the testing procedure, the substrate shall be 100% cotton, pH neutral, buffered, uncoated, and without optical brighteners. It is desirable for the surface of the substrate to be similar to that customarily used with the materials being tested; however, it must be possible to completely cover the substrate with an even coat of the colors. Rough watercolor paper is not suitable.

6.3 *Blue Wool Reference Card*,² contains bands of the eight Blue Wool References glued to a card 44.5 by 127 mm (1 3/4 by 5 in.). Each Blue Wool Reference from 1 to 8 takes approximately twice as long to fade as the reference immediately preceding it. The card must be kept in complete darkness until time for the test. It should be wrapped in an opaque covering and stored in a drawer at normal room temperature.

6.4 *Colored Art Materials*, to be tested.

6.5 *Specimen Cover*, made from stiff material such as heavy gage aluminum; stainless steel; stiff, opaque plastic; or wooden strips. The cover shall be at least 32-mm (1 1/4-in.) wide and as long as the backing panel. It is used to protect one half of each art material specimen and one half of the Blue Wool Reference Card from light (see Figs. 1 and 2). The side of the cover that touches the art material specimens should be chemically inert to prevent interaction with, or migration of substances onto the test specimens.



NOTE 1—25.4 mm = 1 in. (exact).

FIG. 1 Suggested Layout for Lightfastness Test Panel