

Type of medium	Variations	Color	Adhesive?	Uses/Best For
Gesso	Comes in bottles, tubes and jars, can be thin to very thick. Think with water Digital ground also available for printing. Basically a flat/matte primer.	White Black Clear	no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priming canvas or paper so Acrylics can be used on top. Adding “Tooth” Can be tinted.
Gel Mediums	Soft Gel Regular Gel Heavy Gel (AKA Impasto Gel) Gloss gel (gloss medium) Matte Gel (matte medium) Mod Podge	clear	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extends paint Increases flow (soft gel, gloss medium) Heavy gel slows for building thick “peaks” in the paint without diluting the color. Adhesive for collage (gloss & matte medium or soft gel)
Blending Mediums	Blending Gel Slow Dry Blending Medium Slow Drying Gel Screen-printing Medium Glazing medium	clear	no	Much like soft gel medium these are mixed with paint so the paint dries slower and you can get oil like properties.
Retarders & Extenders (Additives)	Flow Medium Acrylic Retarder (gloss or matte) Acrylic Extender (gloss or matte) Palette Wetting spray Glycerin (Add to mixing water)	clear	no	Usually you dilute these with water, if the extender is watery. Follow the directions on the bottle because using too much will weaken the paint film. *Use as directed.
Leveling & Pouring Mediums/Thinners	Clear Tar Gel Pouring Medium Self Leveling Medium Airbrush Medium	clear	no	
Iridescent Mediums	Iridescent Medium Interference medium *DIY with gel medium and mica powders	reflective	no	Mix with paint or use alone as a glaze for metallic effects.
Special Surfaces	Candle Medium Fabric/Textile Medium Digital ground	clear		This mediums allows the paint to stick and be durable on unusual surfaces. Sometimes you add it to the paint (textile

				medium) and sometimes you paint it on first (candle medium, digital ground)
Crackle Medium		clear	no	Apply a layer of crackle medium and let it get tacky then apply the color you wish to be cracked.
Texture Mediums	Light Molding Paste Embossing Paste Flexible Modeling Paste Texture Paste Glass Bead Gel (clear) Pumice gel Mortars and Sand mediums Homemade: Acrylic Latex *DIY caulking, heavy gel medium plus sand or sawdust etc.	Semi-transparent to opaque. *use heavy gel medium if you want clear	no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use to add interesting texture to your paintings. • Build thick reliefs • Can be carved when dry • Helps you conserve paint if you use the medium to build texture then paint over it.
Varnish	Available in matte, gloss and semi gloss. My favorite is Minwax Polycrylic although it is not an artist varnish. Some mediums can be used as varnish and will say so on the label BUT if you used it throughout the piece you may damage the art by removing the varnish.	clear	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a protective film on your painting • Evens out sheen • Can be removed in the future for cleaning if needed. • Oil based varnish can be used as a last layer on an acrylic painting.

FAQ

1. Can I just use water to thin my Acrylic paint? Yes and no, you can thin acrylic paint with up to 30% water without weakening the paint film on canvas. If you are painting on paper or another absorbent surface you can thin it more and it will be fine.
2. Can mediums be thinned with water? Yes but remember the 30% rule.
3. What is the difference between an additive and a medium? An additive does not contain acrylic polymer so if used in excess it can weaken the structure of the paint. Just read the label and you will be fine.
4. Can I use oil mediums with acrylics or acrylic mediums with oils? No, because of the “Fat Over Lean Rule” Oil mediums would dry slower and resist the acrylic paint BUT you can varnish an acrylic painting with oil based varnish (acrylic is lean, oil is fat so it can be on top) and you can use acrylic gesso and paints to prime and do an under-painting of an oil painting because acrylics are lean and they are on the bottom layer.