High-quality WHITEBOARDS from Playscapes near Madison, WI: teachers' comments on their durability and how to care for them. (2019 update. JJ)

PLAYSCAPES WHITEBOARDS: specifications, and ordering

Ideal for the Modeling Method of Instruction.
Allow students to present what they know and how they know it.
24" x 32" — large enough to fully explore and document thinking and findings.
Rounded corners and cutout handle make it easy to carry, transport, and hang.
High quality surface resists stains and ghosting.
Easily wiped clean with an eraser.
Sold six whiteboards per package.

Playscapes, Inc. 328 Moravian Valley Road, PO Box 339, Waunakee, WI 53597

http://playscapes.com/products/whiteboards.html
Order online. Simply add the product to your shopping cart and proceed to checkout. The website will walk you through the checkout process, and you can request to be invoiced or use a credit card. You can also reference a PO when checking out, or alternatively email your PO to orders@playscapes.com

Price in 2019: $92.50 for a package of six. A minimum of one package (six whiteboards) must be ordered. Only whole packages can be shipped. Shipping cost will be added to your order.

Toll-free: 800-248-7529, Fax 608-222-8100, Email info@playscapes.com

History: in 1997, the owner of Playscapes Inc. was the brother of a Madison, Wisconsin physics teacher in the NSF-funded Leadership Modeling Workshops. She convinced him to make & sell whiteboards, as a better, longer-lasting product than the marlite whiteboards that one can buy at Home Depot etc. In 2006, a package of 6 Playscapes whiteboards sold for about $78.

TEACHERS' TESTIMONIES IN 2006:
From: Anna and Jay Zimmerman, retired Modeling Workshop leaders in Wisconsin.

We've been using the Playscape whiteboards for at least 6 or 7 years, and we buy Playscape boards for our workshops and occasionally for the workshop participants. We also used them for the UW-River Falls summer physics programs. We like the 2" x 6" hole in the boards that makes a handy hole for hanging them from a hook or holding them in front of a group.

We've found the surface to be very durable, much better quality than the "shower board" sheets we originally bought from Menards or Home Depot. Before using them we like to put on a coating of a paste wax (Turtle Wax, etc.), and maybe once a semester we clean them
thoroughly with alcohol. Periodically (every 3-4 years), we'll buy another dozen or so and throw out those boards that don't clean up very well or that kids have scratched or used a permanent marker upon. We've been very pleased with Jim Barnard's whiteboards, and can recommend them without reservation.

--------------
From: Michael Crofton, Modeling Workshop leader in Minnesota.

Yes, we were each given a dozen of the boards to take with us in summer 1997. They are very high quality boards with nice handles in them. I still use them although they are getting many scratches. The boards themselves are fine. If I would have stored them vertically and kept them from rubbing against each other they would probably still be close to new-looking. I have never purchased more because of the cost. They are also very heavy so shipping is not cheap. I have over 50 boards in my room and can't afford that much.

--------------
From: Jon Fishwild, Madison, WI

I purchased whiteboards from Playscapes when I "graduated" from the first modeling session in 1997. I am still using the original boards to this day and they are largely in good condition.

I just have the kids erase them at the end of each hour and when kids are serving a detention, I have someone wipe them clean with Expo cleaning solution. I also wipe them down for the summer.

The upkeep is very low on these boards--I've been very impressed.

--------------
From: WILLIAM JAMESON, Madison, Wisconsin.

I use them, and I have some home-made whiteboards. The Playscapes whiteboards are definitely more durable and longer-lasting than the homemade ones. My boards are all 7-8 years old. The Playscapes boards have held up well; the others are just about trash.

--------------
From: Andy Edington, near Madison, Wisconsin.

I purchased my first set of six whiteboards from Playscapes in 1998. I purchased a second set of six in 1999. Depending on the year, I teach 4, 5, or 6 classes of physics. The boards are still in use. Some boards show some scratches and are beginning to require more effort to erase left-on marker.

I clean them occasionally (maybe twice each year) with a combo dilute ammonia-alcohol-water mild glass cleaner the custodians gave me. I also have some mini-whiteboards that I cut from a sheet of "Porcelanized Melamine" tileboard from a local lumberyard. Even the most worn Playscapes board is still easier to erase than new tileboard.

*I recommend that students purchase Expo brand markers.
*I do not let the students use Marks-a-lot markers.
*I use small pieces of felt as erasers. (Not all felt is the same; try a small piece before purchasing in quantity.)
*I never use 'whiteboard cleaner'...that just gums them up. The cleaner is designed to do that, so you have to use more cleaner! (I spent a summer working in the corporate chemical research division of a large, international corporation. You would be amazed at the number of products with that feature designed into them.)

--------------
From: Fran Poodry, Philadelphia (in 2019 at Vernier Software & Technology in Oregon)

I got 12 "Playscapes" boards at the UWRF workshop, and I still use them -- that's almost 10 years, right? They still look pretty good with a few scratches and dings...I was just thinking about doing new ones, actually, because of the scratches, and probably with the expansion of the district my colleague will take his Marlite ones with him when he goes to the new high school so I will need more anyway.

I never waxed the boards, but about twice a year I clean them with whiteboard cleaning fluid and the nasty, scratchy, hydrophobic paper towels that seem to be ubiquitous in schools around here. Probably they would be a little less scratchy if I would use rags instead for cleaning.

I do try to store the boards "like sides together" for fewer scratches, but with kids and how well they pay attention, that doesn't always happen.

-------------------

From: Eric Larson, Minnesota.

I have 12 I originally received in 2000 as part of my Modeling Workshop at UW-River Falls. They are still going strong, and, truth be told, I can't tell them apart from the others I have (bought in 2004). They do get grimy, so every once in a while I clean them with an alcohol and water solution (it may also have some soap). It is the EXPO brand whiteboard cleaner. My school has white boards rather than blackboards in the newer classrooms, so it is supplied for me.

----------------------

From: Dan Bearss.

I am a high school chemistry teacher in Milwaukee Public Schools. This is my second year of using Playscapes whiteboards. I became a modeler (and whiteboard user) after being enrolled in a modeling grant program at Marquette University here. The boards have held up very well, and get frequent use. I do several kinesthetic activities (races/relays) requiring the use of the board, and they do get banged around a bit. Except for a few frayed edges, they are in good shape.

In regards to cleaning, I can usually use just a wet cloth to get them clean. But I do have to use an alcohol-based cleaner every month or so to get them back to pristine condition. I have ten large (about 2ft x 32 inches) boards and 30 smaller (about 12" x 18") boards with grid lines. I used some money from the modeling grant to pay for them.