

When to use primer

A primer creates a surface for paint to adhere to.

While some higher quality paints such as Fenwick & Tilbrook are self-priming, it is often advisable to also use a separate primer first. This is particularly worthwhile if you are unsure what was previously painted onto the surface you are about to paint, or if the surface is unstable in some way.

A primer is always needed to paint shiny surfaces such as metal, plastic or tile. Without primer, the paint will not adhere to the glossy surface and it just peels off.

When painting on to porous surfaces such as new plaster, MDF or plasterboard, you will always need to prime first. See our Fact Sheets on painting new plaster and MDF for more detailed instructions.

If you are restoring an object and have stripped the paint off it, a primer is a good base for new paint.

When painting water-based paint on to a surface that has been previously painted in an oil-based paint, you must use a primer to keep the two products apart – oil and water do not mix.

Fenwick & Tilbrook Multi-surface Primer can help to achieve greater coverage with the top coat of paint, meaning you need to use less paint to achieve the perfect colour-rich result. Primers also help extend longevity of your paintwork and a good primer will enable you to paint virtually anything.