

There are several ways to apply what is commonly called a ‘mortar wash’. While the application can be achieved using a trowel, some old timers began using a piece of burlap bag to dab and spread the mortar into the desired areas, thus the term gabbing, or sacking, is now understood to be the process of applying a mortar wash.

The success of this particular application depends a great deal on the artistic ability of the mason. There is a lot of flexibility as to how much or how ‘heavy’ the mortar wash will be, and what areas will, and will not, receive mortar coverage.

To achieve a very light wash, the mason will need to cut off the mortar as he lays the brick, in the normal fashion. Intermittently, depending on how quickly the mortar is drying out, he then takes a bag, or small scrap of carpet, and pulls mortar from the joints between the layered brick, onto the face of the brick with a rubbing motion. The affect is a very light haze, with all of the architectural features of the brick still quite prominent and easily seen.

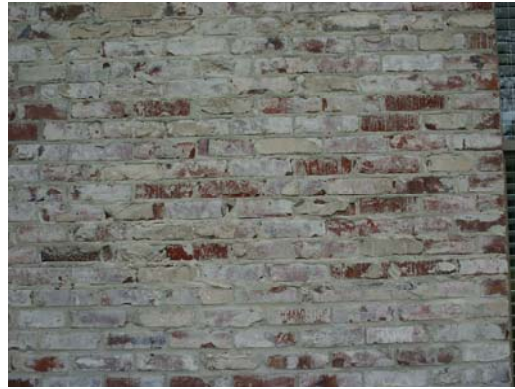




If a bit thicker application is desired, the mason will lay the brick, and cut the mortar as described above. While the mortar between the brick layed in the wall is still quite plastic, he will then dip the bag in the same mortar he has been using to lay the brick, and dab it onto the wall. Depending on the amount applied, with this application it is common for most of the features of the brick that receive mortar to be hidden by the wash. The head and bed joints are easily seen, however, so you still get the effect of brick veneer. (See Photos)







The heaviest application gives the impression of a brick veneer that has been stuccoed, with a minimal number of brick 'peeking' through the stucco, randomly around the home. To achieve this look, the mason does not cut the mortar as he lays the brick in the wall. After several courses have been laid, with the mortar still hanging from the head and bed joints, using his trowel, the mortar is pulled onto the brick, completely covering some areas of the veneer. In areas that he wants the brick to be seen, he merely cuts the mortar off. (See Photos)





This process does not call for any special tools or types of mortar. Since the brick are not tooled, applying the wash takes little or no extra time at all. This application is more often seen in warm coastal areas. Harsh winter temperatures could raise durability concerns, in that the mortar wash (not the brick) could be affected by freeze-thaw cycles.