

A Grade 3-5 ARTful Hour

"Teaching Drawing Skills"

January 2012 with Heidi Stoddart

"Drawing has more to do with seeing than it does with holding a pencil in your hand."
-Kathryn Temple

"Art does not reproduce what we see; rather, it makes us see."
-Paul Klee

"The most important thing an artist can do is pay attention."
-Kathryn Temple

"In order to learn to draw you must make two thousand mistakes,
so get making them."

-Advice from one of Robert Bateman's art teachers;
White, Marjorie E. (1989). *Robert Bateman*. Marhan: Fitzhenry & White., 1989, p. 20).

Supplies/Materials to get started:

- Paper (Sketchbooks OR portfolios for loose drawings)
- Pencils (eg. HB graphite; assortment of H, 2H, 2B, 4B...)
- Felt pens (fine-tipped, black, labelled non-toxic, e.g., Sharpie)
- Visual references, including objects with interesting textures



Teacher Tip:

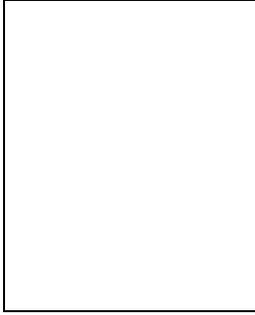
- ✓ HB = a standard graphite pencil, H is harder and creates lighter values, B is softer and creates darker values.

A Sampling of Drawing Exercises...

1. Draw a hand from memory (no peeking!)

This will be a 'benchmark' drawing done right at the start. Be sure to date this first attempt, and with time and practice, you should be able to look back at this first drawing and note your progress.

2. 'Scribble' Shape Drawings

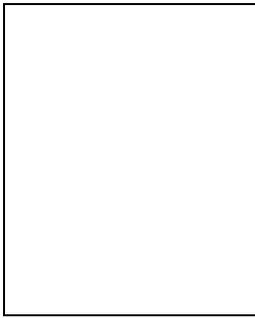


- A good warm-up exercise for drawing
- Practice and experiment with side-to-side and round-and-round scribbles
- Experiment with pressure, getting a sense of the weight of the pencil on the paper and notice your grip (gentle or tight)
- Choose an object you'd like to draw, then use the 'scribble' technique to capture/record the shape of the object (will look like a loose shadow or silhouette of the subject).

Teacher Tip:

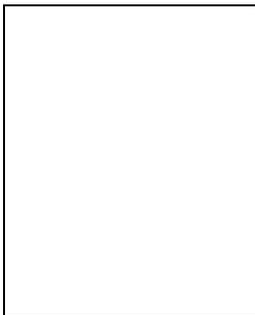
- ✓ Hold your pencil loosely, checking to see if your marks are light/grey or dark/black (usually indicates a too tight grip). For stability, steady your arm or wrist on the work surface. It may help to pretend the pencil is a tube of toothpaste and you don't want to hold too tight or 'squeeze' any toothpaste.

3. Negative Space 'Scribble' Drawings



- Instead of drawing the shape of the object, instead use the 'scribble' technique to draw/record all of the background space (negative space) around the object (positive space).

4. Using Basic, Geometric Shapes

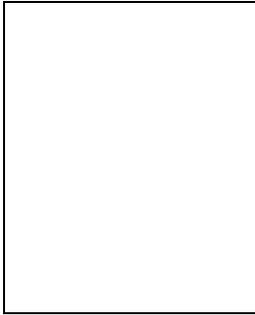


- Practice drawing the underlying shapes that make up a subject
- Choose an object, then use basic shapes to draw a simplified geometric version of the object (looks almost 'robotic')

Teacher Tip:

- ✓ Demonstrate how to look for the basic, geometric shapes that construct a subject by drawing the shapes onto an image on the Smartboard
- ✓ Students can practice this by placing a clear plastic sheet (eg. transparency) over a photograph and draw the shapes with a felt pen

5. Draw what you see... re-CREATE a Vertical Line



- Start by drawing a profile of a face (human, alien, monster...)
- Right-handed = draw down left side of page, facing in
- Left-handed = draw down right side of page, facing in
- Then, try to re-create the exact same face on the opposite side of the page, facing in
- Note your thoughts as you do this exercise

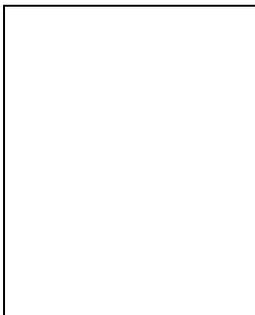
(eg. during first 'face', probably thinking with labels such as 'eye', 'nose', 'mouth...'; second face need to look, see, observe, record, scan, correct, check...)

Teacher Tip:

- ✓ Observational drawing requires patience. "Concentration can be affected by student's level of confidence, prior drawing experiences, development readiness, and external factors (noise level in the room, if they have eaten lunch...). Begin with short lessons, simple subjects, lots of encouragement, and offer advice gently!"

-Rhian Brynjolson, Teaching Art: A Complete Guide for the Classroom (2009), page 67.

6. Blind Contour Drawings

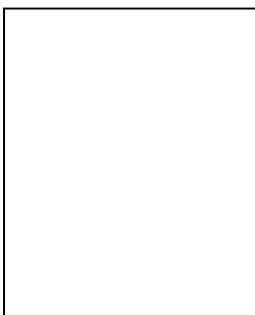


- Helps develop observational skills and fine-motor skills (hand-eye coordination) to record exactly what you see
- Look ONLY at the subject, NEVER at your page/drawing
- Because of this, blind contour drawings are not accurate representations but are an exercise in pure observation to notice and record detail
- Follow the outline or outer edges of the subject (contour)
- Work S-L-O-W-L-Y, moving your eye mm by mm, with your hand recording exactly what you see mm by mm.

Teacher Tip:

- ✓ Secure the paper with a couple pieces of masking tape so it stays steady as you work
- ✓ Position yourself to be turned away from your drawing so you aren't tempted to peek!
- ✓ Don't lift your pencil off the paper (can 'trace back' if needed)
- ✓ Start with short sessions (eg. 1-2 minutes), gradually building stamina and patience

7. Contour Drawings



- Use a continuous line to record the contour (outer edge and details) of a subject
- Can peek at your drawing to gauge size, position, proportion, etc., but MOST of your time is spent observing the subject.
- Follow the outline or outer edges of the subject (contour)
- Work S-L-O-W-L-Y, moving your eye mm by mm, with your hand recording exactly what you see mm by mm.

8. Working Upside-Down (encourages observation with unfamiliar view)

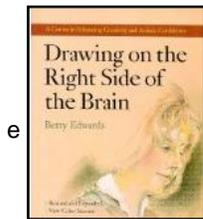


- Use a simple line drawing, upside-down, as the reference
- Guidelines can help gauge space; divide the page in half vertically, and in quarters horizontally
- Reveal only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the reference/subject, allowing time to draw/record everything you see
- Work your way through the next portion, and so on, until all of the subject is drawn

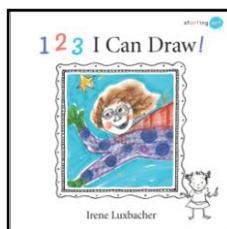
→ Could you tell right away that it was Einstein? Was there a split-second delay as you tried to interpret what you were looking at? It's more difficult to recognize subjects when viewed from an unfamiliar angle (eg. upside down). This helps stifle our instinct to draw quickly from memory, and encourages careful observation to record/draw exactly what you see.

Teacher Resources:

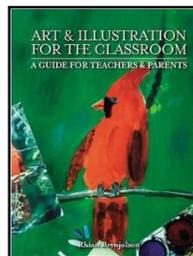
Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain
by Betty Edwards



Teaching Art: A Complete Guide for the Classroom
By Rhian Brynjolson



1 2 3 I Can Draw! By Irene Luxbacher



Art & Illustration for the Classroom: A Guide for Teachers and Parents by Rhian Brynjolson