

# Drawing

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[ART HISTORY ON DEMAND](#) > [Materials and Techniques](#) >

Drawing is an art form used to create an image or design. Drawings are made in many different ways for many different purposes. An artist might create a drawing to be a completed work of art. Or a drawing might be made as a plan for another type of art work, such as a painting or sculpture. Often an artist will quickly make sketches, or first drawings, with a pencil or charcoal to show the main idea or image. Later, these sketches can be used for more detailed and complete drawings. Sketching helps students and artists practice and develop skill in making lines and shapes.

## Drawing Materials

Artists can select from many types of materials to create their drawings. Images can be created with pencil, charcoal, pastel, ink, felt tip marker, or any combination of these materials. With the exception of charcoal, all are produced in a variety of colors. The dry mediums of charcoal, pencil, and pastel are available in a range of hardness, each of which produces a different effect. Pencils, pens, and brushes come in a variety of widths designed to make different kinds of lines.

Paper is the most commonly used surface to draw on, but almost any suitable material can be used. Prehistoric people drew on clay or on the stone walls of caves. Artists in the Middle Ages drew on parchment, made from the skin of sheep. Today, most drawing papers are manufactured from wood pulp and are available in an assortment of colors, weights, and sizes. Drawing papers vary in absorbency and texture. The paper will affect the way the sketch or drawing will look. Smooth papers highlight fine detail and delicate shading. Coarse papers are used when more texture is desired.

## Pencil

The pencil is the most common medium used to make drawings. The "lead" in a pencil is actually a synthetic material called graphite. Pencils with very hard leads are called H pencils and are graded by number according to the hardness of the lead. An 8H pencil would be harder than a 2H pencil. Pencils with very soft lead are called B pencils and are also graded by number, indicating the softness of the lead. An 8B pencil would have a softer lead than a 2B pencil. Artists choose pencils with varying degrees of hardness or softness to achieve desired effects. For example, a 3H pencil would make a thin, smooth line, while a 6B pencil would make a very dark, broad line.

The use of pencil allows the artist to make clear, continuous lines, called contours, when outlining shapes. These give the drawing a very calm appearance. When lines are broken into small pieces, or small rough marks are drawn (stippling), the picture seems to give off energy or suggest movement.

Pencils are particularly suitable for showing a solid, three-dimensional object on the flat surface of the paper. The artist uses shading (or graduated tones) to show how light falls on the object. Those areas that are closest to the source of light are made lighter. Those areas that are turned away from the light are made darker. This is called modeling. When the artist rubs the pencil point, or edge, on the paper, the tones are gradually changed by varying the amount of pressure applied. By rubbing the pencil tones with the finger or by partially erasing them, the artist can make additional tones.

Some masters of pencil drawing include Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973).

## **Charcoal**

The artist uses charcoal when vigorous, bold drawings are desired. The charcoal stick or pencil is an ideal medium for the beginning art student. The variety of lines and tones that can be created is endless. Another advantage of drawing with charcoal is that the drawing can be changed easily. A special eraser, called a kneaded eraser, can be used to rub off the charcoal.

Charcoal is manufactured in hard, medium, or soft sticks, as well as in pencil form. It is made from burnt sticks of willow wood that have turned into carbon. Charcoal is most effective in coarse-grained papers such as watercolor paper.

The artist can rub charcoal on large areas of the paper, making flat, medium to dark tones. These tones can be blended by smudging with the fingers. Different tones can also be created by crosshatching, the technique of making lines in one direction and crossing them at right angles with other lines.

A fixative should be sprayed on a completed charcoal drawing or sketch to prevent smearing. Famous drawings in charcoal were made by the artists Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) and Henri Matisse (1869-1954).

## **Pastels**

Pastels are powdered pigments of color mixed with gum or resin to form a stick. An artist uses pastels when an immediate effect is desired. That is, by simply applying the color stick to the paper, the artist achieves the full effect of the color immediately. With oil or other paints, the colors must dry before the artist can see the results.

Pastels are excellent for sketches on which to base future work in other mediums. The artists of the 1800's favored pastel drawings to make descriptive portraits. Pastels are used alone, as well as with other mediums, to achieve unusual and varied effects.

Pastels are manufactured in grades from soft to hard, but all are softer than pencil or chalk. When the pastel stick is rubbed on pastel paper, the pure color is released. Pastel paper is manufactured specially for pastel drawing and comes in a variety of colors.

Light, delicate tones can be achieved by crosshatching. Rubbing the pastel with a fingertip will also create various tones. The artist can twist the pastel stick to draw lines of different widths. Paper torchons, which are made of heavy rolled paper and look like pencils with pastels instead of lead, are used to apply the pastel when the artist wants to

create clear edges and lines. Torchons place the color down exactly where the artist wants it to go. The quality of a pastel drawing is often unique in tone and richness.

A fixative should be sprayed on a finished pastel drawing to prevent the soft color from smearing.

Masters of pastel drawing include Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and Odilon Redon (1840-1916).

## **Pen and Ink**

Pen and ink is a versatile medium offering the artist a number of ways to create line drawings. Clear precise lines, strong dark lines, and energetic lines can be made. Very detailed forms are characteristic of pen and ink drawings.

The steel pen point (nib) placed in a pen holder has become a popular drawing tool for the artist and student. The pen points come in many sizes, allowing a wide range of marks and textures. To make wider lines, an artist uses a brush and ink. Lines drawn at one angle, crosshatching, small dots of ink, and scribbles of ink are but a few techniques that change the character of the drawing.

Black waterproof India ink is commonly used, but other colors of ink are readily available. Smooth, hard papers are preferred for ink drawings so that the edges of the lines remain sharp. When ink is made into a wash (ink and water) and applied with a brush, softer lines and tones can be created.

Ink drawings have been very popular through the years because they are so rich in line texture and detail. Masters of pen and ink drawing include Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Michelangelo (1475-1564), Honoré Daumier (1808-1879), and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973).

## **Felt Tip Markers**

The felt tip marker has become a popular drawing medium. Felt tip markers are made of strips of felt soaked in waterbased colors and put into plastic casings, so that they look like ballpoint pens. The medium is favored by commercial artists and illustrators because the color is very strong. Felt tip pens are often used when quick sketches are needed. They are also useful to artists drawing outdoor landscapes, groups of people, or buildings. The student who carries a small pad, ready for the unexpected subject, can work quickly with a felt tip pen.

Felt tip pens are best for bold, strong qualities of color and line. Tones are more difficult to create. The felt tip pen is often used with other mediums.

## **Mixed Media**

A combination of several mediums is often used to create drawings. Such mixed-media drawings may utilize a variety of techniques as well. Because of the various effects created by using the different mediums, an artist can create exactly the result desired.

## **Learning to Draw**

Drawing in any medium is an activity that involves eye-hand responses. It is therefore referred to as a muscular activity requiring physical action. It requires a sharp eye, the ability to remember what is seen, and a sure hand.

Since drawing is the first step toward becoming an artist, most students choose to take special courses in drawing techniques. Artists continually practice the development of their drawing skills.

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### **Perspective in Drawing**

Perspective is the science of creating the appearance of depth on a flat surface. The paper that an artist uses has only two dimensions: height and width. To make a drawing appear to have the third dimension--depth--the artist uses perspective.

Some ancient peoples tried to capture the appearance of depth in their paintings. But nothing scientific was known about perspective until the 15th century. At that time an Italian architect-sculptor named Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) developed a set of rules that he taught to other Renaissance artists. Although Brunelleschi's rules have since been expanded, they are still the basis of the science of perspective.

Perspective is called a science because there is a specific body of rules for its use. The rules separate perspective into two types: linear and aerial. To create a good illusion of depth in a drawing, the artist must use both types of perspective.

In linear perspective, lines that are parallel seem to get closer to each other as they recede into space. If you have ever driven down a straight highway, you have probably noticed that the road appears to get narrower in the distance. Eventually the sides of the highway seem to meet. Linear perspective is also based on the idea that objects appear to grow smaller in the distance. If you watch a ship sailing away, the ship will appear smaller and smaller in the distance, until you can no longer see it. In nature, these illusions help us judge distances. Linear perspective is an imitation of these illusions.

Aerial perspective deals with atmosphere. Because of light and moisture in the air, colors appear to fade in the distance. Objects that are close to us seem crisp and clear. At a distance, the same objects look soft and pale. In drawing, the artist uses bright colors and sharp, clear lines to portray objects that appear nearer. The artist uses softer lines and pale colors to draw objects that appear to be far away.

### **Vision and Perspective**

Perspective is based on how we see objects in space. Our eyes allow us to see only a certain distance ahead and much less to either side. Many times our vision is blocked--by a wall, building, or other object. But if we go to the beach and look straight out at the ocean, we have the chance to see as far and wide as is humanly possible.

On a very wet day the ocean and the sky seem to blend into bluish gray mist in the distance. To imitate this effect, the artist would use aerial perspective. On a clear day we see a line where the sea and sky seem to meet. This line, called the horizon, is the point where our vision ends. If we were watching two parallel rows of battleships sailing over

the horizon, we would notice that the rows seem to sail closer to each other in the distance. Imitating this illusion in drawing requires the use of linear perspective.

The horizon is at eye level. The exact point on the horizon where parallel lines seem to meet is called the vanishing point. Linear perspective is based on the fact that receding parallel lines, if continued indefinitely, appear to meet at a vanishing point on the horizon.

In most drawings that use perspective, there are one or two vanishing points. In one-point linear perspective, all receding lines are drawn to meet at the vanishing point on the horizon line, usually near the center of human vision. In two-point perspective, the vanishing points are located at the widest spots on the horizon that the eye can perceive. Three-point linear perspective is used for objects that are not upright. Its use requires the artist to combine one- and two-point perspective.