# FREE-HAND DRAWING

"A MANUAL FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS"

By


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# PREFACE.

THIS book is intended for public school teachers, and for all teachers and students of elementary drawing. Its object is the presentation of artistic methods of studying free-hand drawing.

In order that this book may be inexpensive, and may meet the needs of the large number of teachers whose instruction includes outline drawing only, light and shade, which is of interest to many teachers, is made the subject of another book.

An outline drawing is the most conventional of all pictorial methods of expression. It must often be incomplete, unsatisfactory, and scientific, if not mechanical. There can be but one correct representation of a cube at any given distance, level and angle, and an artistic outline drawing of a geometric model is often difficult if not impossible to produce.

There are, however, artistic and inartistic ways of making an outline drawing of a cube, and if such a drawing cannot be artistic, one drawing may be less mechanical than another, and may prepare the pupil to make artistic drawings of subjects which are easier to treat in this way than the exact drawing model. Many teachers think it impossible to give lessons in drawing without the use of mechanical methods, such as copying and dictating; but in some places public school instruction is artistic. It has been shown that it is easy to start correctly

in the lower grades, and not impossible for the pupils of advanced grades to change from mechanical to artistic methods.

In order that this change may be made, it is not necessary that the teachers become artists, but that they give to the subject the time required to enable them to draw simple subjects correctly.

The methods presented have been tested in elementary and advanced schools, and, if followed, will give ability to draw correctly from nature in an artistic manner.

To secure satisfactory results it is necessary that those giving the most elementary instruction understand the requirements of more advanced work. For this reason the chapter on composition has been given, and no attempt has been made to arrange the book so that teachers may study simply the directions for their special grades.

ANSON K. CROSS.

# INTRODUCTION.

A DRAWING is the expression of an idea: art must come from within, and not from without. This fact has led some to assert that the study of nature is not essential to the student, and that careful training in the study of the representation of the actual appearance is mechanical and harmful. Such persons forget that all art ideas and sentiments must be based upon natural objects, and that a person who cannot represent truly what he sees will be entirely unable to express the simplest ideal conceptions so that others may appreciate them. Study of nature is, then, of the first and greatest importance to the art student.

A drawing may be made in outline, in light and shade, or in color. The value of the drawing artistically, does not depend upon the medium used, but upon the individuality of the draughtsman making it. The simplest pencil sketch may have much more merit than an elaborate colored drawing made by one who is unable to represent truly the facts of nature, or who sees, instead of the beauty and poetry, the ugliness and the imperfections of the subject.

The value depends as little upon the way the medium is used as upon the medium chosen, providing of course that the technique is not unduly prominent or offensive. Those who assert that they have found the only medium fit to be used or

the only satisfactory way of handling the medium, thus prove their ignorance of the subject which they attempt to teach.

The first question for the teacher is "Shall the pupil work in color, in light and shade, or in outline?" Color is, for the public schools at least, out of the question. Not only is it expensive, but impossible to teach. Until the students have been educated to see the actual colors of the spectrum, even the strongest artist, as teacher, would not be able to obtain satisfactory results, and for the public school teacher to attempt to teach form, light and shade, and color at first and at once is entirely beyond reason.

Choice of the drawing to be made lies between a light and shade and an outline drawing. For students outside the public schools, light and shade should be taken up as early as possible. After a few lessons in outline, a few in light and shade can be given, and the two lines of study may then be carried on together. In the public schools the study of light and shade at first or in the lower grades is unwise, and generally impossible to pursue with advantage to the pupils, for the reason that in the classroom it is almost impossible to get good light and shade upon objects placed so that they may be seen by the pupils. In the public schools the first instruction must then be in outline, and in the upper grades or the high schools, or whenever all the conditions are favorable, the study of light and shade may be begun.

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# FREE-HAND DRAWING.

## CHAPTER I.

### OUTLINE DRAWING.

An Outline Drawing may be made in many different ways. It may be drawn with the brush, charcoal, crayon, pen and ink, or pencil. The drawing is commonly made upon paper, although it may be made on other substances. The question for the teacher is "Which is the best medium for beginners to use?" The best medium is that which requires the least thought to handle and the least time to prepare and care for; it is that which allows the student to give all his attention to the comparison of his drawing with the object, and which admits most readily of changes. It is evident that the choice lies between charcoal and pencil, for the only value of the work is in the training and knowledge given by it. A charcoal drawing can be readily changed, but to provide this material for classes in the public schools would be very expensive, and the cause of very unclean schoolrooms. Crayon and colored chalk have no advantage over pencil: on the contrary they are more expensive, and a drawing made with them cannot be changed except with great difficulty. The pencil is not only cheaper and neater, but it requires less time to sharpen, and when rightly used the correct lines can be obtained without any erasing; so that this simple means is really the best for educational purposes.

When the crayon, red chalk, pen and ink, or the brush is used in the lower grades, the probabilities are that the aim of the instruction given is for something to exhibit, instead of for the best education.

The pencil will make a drawing with an amount of finish and effect, ranging from an outline of the simplest nature to a rendering of all the values of a complicated subject; and when it is understood

that the only worth of the drawing lies in the truthfulness with which it represents nature, we shall find childish attempts to handle difficult mediums less frequent than at present.

It is often said that there are no outlines in nature. In a way this is true, but it cannot be understood to mean that form is unnecessary or that it may be slighted. The student cannot learn to paint or to make pictures in any medium, without drawing the forms of the objects. The defining of the lights and shades and the various bits of color which are seen in nature is necessary to give solidity and character to a picture, and it is useless to think that anything can be accomplished with color or light and shade if approximate representations of form cannot be made.

Every object has definite form and size, and though it may not be outlined, it has boundaries. Although the representation of objects in outline is at best a conventional and imperfect means of expression, so far often as even form is concerned, the student can be taught to observe effects, and may often succeed in conveying a fair impression of the character of the object, and of varieties of surface and texture. He will find that the study of appearances, and their representation as fully as possible, even in so simple a way as outline drawing, will in a great measure prepare the way for work in light and shade and color. The whole question is simply one of seeing, and the student should not trouble himself over technique, as his only aim should be a true representation of nature, and it is of no consequence that such drawings by different people may be produced in different ways.

The most important points in free-hand drawing are freedom, directness, and accuracy. It is difficult to give directions which will produce these results, as individuality will prevent all from working in a uniform way. It is necessary, however, to give general directions for the work, and especially to advise the pupil not to follow the directions given in many books, written by those who are not artists or draughtsmen.

Chapter I. presents the general information required by art students and all teachers, even those of the most elementary work. Special directions are given in following chapters in order that the most important facts may be presented first.

## GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

First, the surface on which the drawing is made must be held so that it is at right angles to the direction in which it is seen. If the book or paper is placed upon the desk, and the pupil looks down obliquely at it, the drawing upon it must be foreshortened so that it is impossible for the student to see what he is doing.

If the drawing is upon a block or upon paper placed upon a board, it may be held at the proper angle by the left hand. If the drawing is made in a drawing book, the book must be fastened to a stiff piece of cardboard or a thin drawing board, so that it may be properly held.

Second, the paper or book should be held as far as possible from the eyes. The student should sit back in the chair, and holding the pencil very lightly, should suggest or indicate the position of the drawing upon the paper by light lines, drawn quickly with a movement of the entire arm from the shoulder. Before beginning to draw, the student should practise this free arm movement by drawing horizontal, vertical, and oblique lines. These lines should be drawn and redrawn, the arm passing rapidly along the paper, and the pencil point tracing line after line as near the first one as possible.

After the straight line movement, circular and elliptical movements should be practised in the same way. These exercises should be repeated by the students whenever they have a moment not occupied, until they can sweep in an approximate ellipse, or circle, or draw a straight line with one light, quick stroke of the arm.

The pencil should be long, of medium grade, and should be held by the thumb and first two fingers, with its unsharpened end directed toward the palm of the hand. It should be held in this way for all the first work upon any drawing, but in finishing or accenting a drawing whose lines have been thus sketched, more pressure will be required, and the pencil may be held nearer the point.

If the drawing is made upon a sheet of paper, it should be secured to the board by tacks, so that its edges are parallel to those of the board; if the edges are not quite straight, a horizontal line may be drawn near the lower edge, so that directions may be referred to this line.

If the drawing is made in a book, the directions, vertical and horizontal, will be obtained by comparison with the edges of the book.

## DRAWING FROM SINGLE OBJECTS.

We will suppose that the subject of our lesson is the box, Fig. 1.

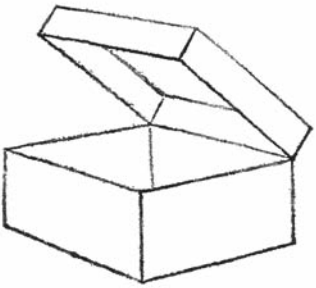


FIG. 1.

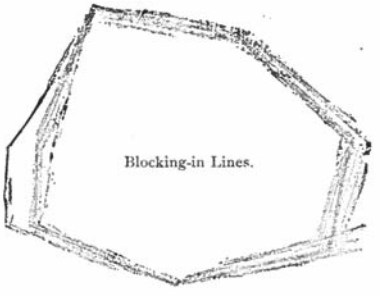



FIG. 2.

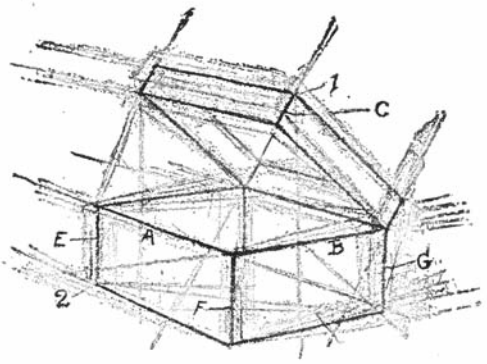



FIG. 3.

First, nearly close the eyes and try to see the box not as a solid, but as a silhouette. The pupils will understand what is desired if an object is held in front of a window, for they will then see the object as a mass of dark, whose outlines are very distinct, while the lines within the contour are almost, if not quite, invisible. Practice will enable one to look at all objects so as to think simply of the directions of their outer lines.

To realize the directions which the important lines appear to have, the pencil point may be moved back and forth in the air so

that it appears to cover the edges. In other words, the lines may be drawn in the air. While doing this care should be taken to keep the pencil point where it would be if it were held upon a pane of glass placed in front of the pupil, and at right angles to the direction in which the object is seen, and not to move the pencil away from the eyes, that is, in the actual direction of the edges. This test is the most valuable of all, because it is the simplest and easiest to apply. It is really the same as the use of the thread, explained on page 47, and nearly all other means of testing will at last be discarded in favor of this first and simplest.

After careful study of the mass, its outline may be lightly sketched, no measurements of proportion having been made. The aim is to train the eye to see correctly. In order to do this, the student must depend upon his eye, and put down its first impression, rather than the results of mechanical tests of proportions. He must first draw, and then test by measuring.

The suggesting of the mass of the drawing by light, quick lines, serves to place the drawing to the best advantage on the paper, and to introduce the draughtsman to the problem before him and to the means by which it is to be worked out. These lines are called blocking-in lines, and from such illustrations as Fig. 4, which is suggested by the cuts of a book on drawing, pupils are often led to think that a great deal of time must be spent on the lines, that they must be nicely drawn, and that every little indentation or change of form in the outline of the mass must be carefully given. Such ideas are productive of much harm. These lines should be put in lightly and freely, and should do no more than give the proportions of the drawing and its position upon the paper.

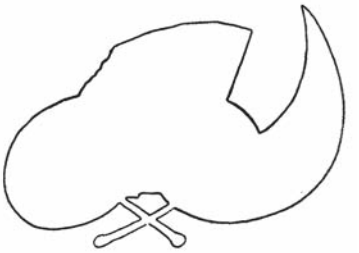


FIG. 4. Unsatisfactory Blocking-in Lines.

When the outline of the mass has been suggested, the inner lines may be indicated, and the result carefully studied to see that it agrees with the appearance. When no more can be done by eye alone, the drawing may be tested by measuring the proportions as

explained in Chapter V. If the sketch does not agree with these tests, it must be changed. All changes should be made, not by erasing, but by drawing new lines, and the drawing should be carried on in this way, until the correct lines are obtained.

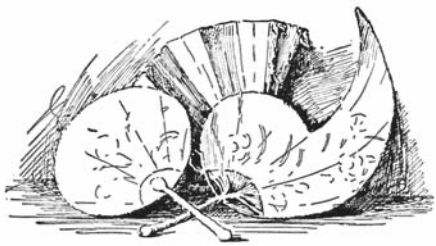


FIG. 5. The explanation of Fig. 4.

The first lines must be very light. As changes are made, the strength may be increased to distinguish them, until the correct line is secured. The drawing having been changed to agree with the measurements of the whole height and width, and tested by moving the pencil point to cover the edges, it will be well to test it by means of vertical and horizontal lines taken through the different angles of the box. Thus, drop the pencil point vertically from point 1, and see where it cuts the lower edge; carry the point horizontally from point 2, and note its intersection with the front edge. The pencil may now be made to continue the apparent directions of the edges *A*, *B*, *C*, etc., until the points where the continued lines appear to intersect the opposite outlines are noted. Such tests may also be applied by the pencil used as a straight edge, held horizontally, vertically, and to appear to coincide with the lines. These tests should be depended upon, and if carefully made, will produce a drawing which is practically correct. The first measurements of height and width should be very carefully taken. Distances which are nearly equal, as *EF* and *FG*, may also be compared; but as a rule, few measurements of proportion should be made, as short distances, or short with long distances, cannot be compared with sufficient accuracy to be of any value.

Instead of the pencil the thread may be used for testing, as explained on page 47. The thread appears a fine line, whose intersections with the edges may be easily placed, so that until the eye can be depended upon, the thread is preferable to the pencil.

It is most important that all changes be made not by erasing, but by drawing new lines. Erasing and keeping but one line from first to last will generally produce a hard and inaccurate drawing; and although it may finally be made to agree with all the tests, it will be lacking in spirit. It is difficult at first for most students to draw lightly enough to secure the correct lines without too great heaviness, but it is better, rather than to erase, to throw the drawing away and start anew, until the result can be secured without having lines so black that they cannot easily be erased.

The reason for working in this way is that we wish the student to depend, as far as possible, on his eyes. If he erases and has only one line from the start, unnecessary time is given to the drawing, and he will hesitate to change his lines. If light lines are drawn and not erased, but others drawn as soon as there is doubt about the first being rightly placed, the student is much more free to change as each suggestion occurs, and toward the last he has his choice of the various lines already drawn and can experiment freely.

This is by far the quickest and most accurate way, and prepares for rapid and truthful sketching. It is difficult at first for the student who has been taught the mechanical way of drawing one line at a time, but he will not have to draw very long in this way before he will be able to produce truthful sketches without drawing many unnecessary lines.

The student has simply to study the sketches and drawings made by the old masters, and also those by the artists and illustrators of the present day, to perceive that this is the way in which artists draw, and to see that with them, the first light touches generally remain and become part of the finished drawing.

Some artists are able to draw at first touch so as to give exact proportions to everything, but this power is due to long study resulting in thorough knowledge and ability to see correctly. This knowledge is easiest and best attained by the process of considering the subject as a whole, by suggesting all the parts at once, and then of bringing them into their proper relations as described.

In making an outline drawing pupils must erase all the first lines; and if they are not able to obtain the correct lines without getting the paper so black that it cannot be readily cleaned, there is no

reason why a hard pencil should not be used for the sketching. This outline work is simply educational, and certainly at first is not artistic. If a hard pencil is used very lightly, its marks may be removed without smooching, and the lines may be shifted a great many times without any injury to the paper. When the pupils draw more correctly, they will be able to draw the first suggestive lines with the soft pencil, which should be used in accenting the drawings.

When the correct outline has been found, it is necessary for the pupils to erase all unnecessary lines. The easiest way to do this and still retain the correct lines is to make them stronger than the others so that they will show faintly when the eraser has been passed over the paper, removing all but an indication of the desired result.

The drawing may then be accented. A soft pencil should be used, held more firmly and nearer the point. The lines should be drawn of their proper strength at one touch, and no attempt should be made to get them absolutely uniform. Much time is often wasted in such attempts, and the tendency is for too much importance to be put upon the character of the line, and too little upon the form expressed by the line. In the first work it is not necessary to think of the line, as the objects are geometric, and there is little chance for artistic effects. If the lines are put in at one touch, they will be much more satisfactory artistically than if the students are allowed to labor over them for any effect whatever.

Especially to be avoided is the smooth, even line which has the effect of having been drawn with the ruler. These lines are so inartistic that we often find labored attempts to avoid the mechanical effects due to their use. The "broad gray line," which ought from its name to be much better than the fine even line, is often more unsatisfactory, for certain valuable training results from the making of fine regular lines. No knowledge of drawing is necessary to make the "broad gray line"; yet some seem to think this quality of line the only attribute of a good drawing, and so important that it must be obtained even at the expense of drawing two lines and carefully filling in the space between them.

The width and character of the lines are unimportant as long as they are freely drawn and express the appearance of the object.