

"Drawing is the root of everything, and time spent on that is actually all profit." -Vincent van Gogh

AP Drawing Summer Assignments

1. **Artwork:** Complete an original drawing of one of the **Subject Options** from the list below in any 2-D art making materials you have available at home. Materials can be traditional or unconventional. Artwork should exhibit thought and careful planning.

Subject Options

- **Portrait with Chiaroscuro.** Draw a portrait of someone you know as a model with intense lighting called Chiaroscuro, sometimes referred to as "Rembrandt Lighting". Look at portraits created by Rembrandt for inspiration. Take several digital pictures of your model to work from. Experiment with lighting, hold a flashlight to create dramatic shading and great contrasts in light or dark.
- **Portrait with Social Commentary.** Draw a portrait with the intent of making a comment on society by including appropriate background or additional figures.
- **Self-Portrait Metamorphosis.** If you could be anything or anyone in the world, who or what would you be? List 10 things you would change into and the reasons for your choices. Select one and create a composition of yourself transforming, use digital images of yourself from various angles to develop the drawing.
- **Self-Portrait Vignette.** Draw 10 self-portraits in one artwork. Only start the faces, learn to "vignette" them as lost and found edges, but fill the page. Practice odd angle views, exaggerated foreshortening, and change in expression.
- **Study of Bottles and Containers.** Group several different sizes and heights of bottles and containers on a shelf or counter top. Draw them as if drawing a congregation of people, giving each one of them equal amounts of attention. Convey volume by using a complete range of tonal value

changes from deep-deep black up to the pure whiteness of the paper. Place one or two of them in front of the others to give a sense of space.

- **Study of Hands.** Draw hands engaged in activities doing yard work, cooking, throwing a baseball, holding the bicycle handlebars, with and without gloves on. Think of action verbs. Compose the hands on one surface, overlapping, diminishing, and exaggerate the foreshortening. Keep it detailed and shade consistently with a single light source.
- **Study of Flowers, Fruits, and Vegetables.** Organize a grouping of flowers, fruit and/or vegetables to draw from observation. Cut and slice them, personify, show the cross-section etc. to bring visual interest and a dynamic composition.
- **Study of Folds.** Create a still life of fabric draped or wrinkled. Is it draped over another object? To create a more visually interesting affect, pin it with a brooch, belt, or rope. Notice how the print or stripe of the fabric moves between folds. Does the fabric have texture?
- **Study of Reflections.** Choose five to seven objects, of which at least two of them have a highly polished/reflective surface. The relationship among objects should be a serious consideration in this drawing. The surface treatment of each object will appear stronger if the objects chosen have different surface textures.
- **Study of Tools and Hardware.** Render the tools and hardware arranged to create an engaging composition. Stress the mechanical and artificial qualities of the objects. Augment the lighting to create maximum contrast and high shine areas. Explore the smallest detail of each object.
- **Study of Vegetation.** Close investigation the structure of vegetation (trees, grouping of plants, foliage, flowering plants, etc) that exists in the landscape. Use various textures and values to create a sense of dimension.

1. **Photography:** Take a collection of original photographs during summer break to use as visual resources and to give insight into your aesthetic or interests. The collection can be digital or film and should include 10-20 photographs. You can include pictures of faces, figures, places, capture anything that sparks interest.

2. **Reading and Writing:**

- A. Read the attached article “How to Create an Excellent Observational Drawing”.
- B. Look over Betty Edwards’ book “The New Drawing From the Rightside of the Brain” , it is a great resource for improving drawing skill. Use this Google Drive link to view the PDF.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m5u4VyMmzk-8yLgxn-RbDpTziv_gZhWZ/view?usp=sharing

***How To Create an Excellent Observational Drawing:
11 Tips For High School Art Students***

Observational drawing is an integral component of many high school Art courses, including AP Level Art. Often, drawing is the core method of researching, investigating, developing and communicating ideas. While it is accepted that there are many wondrous types of drawings –and that non-representational drawing methods have an important role in student Art projects –it is usually advantageous to demonstrate competent, realistic observational drawing skills to the examiner (particularly in the early stages of a project).

What follows is a list of tips that have been written specifically for high school art students who are looking to improve the realism of their observational drawings.

Tip 1: Look at what you are drawing

Failing to look at what you are drawing is one of the most fundamental errors an Art student can make. This sounds obvious, but it is the most common error made by art students. Many students attempt to draw things the way that they think they should look, rather than the way they actually do look.

The only way to record shape, proportion and detail accurately is to look at the source of information. Human memory does not suffice. Forms, shadows and details are hard enough to replicate when they are right there in front of you; if you have to make them up, they

appear even less convincing. In order to produce an outstanding observational drawing, you must observe: your eyes must continually dance from the piece of paper to the object and back again. Not just once or twice, but constantly.

Note: even if you pursue a theme about mythical creatures, fairy tales or some other imaginary form, you should work as much as possible from observation. Piece your creatures together from fragments of life. Dress people up and then draw them or merge different parts of insects or creatures together (using artistic license as appropriate) rather than creating an entire form or scene from your head.

Tip 2: Draw from real objects whenever possible

The phrase "observational drawing" typically implies drawing from life. Ask any art teacher and they will list the benefits of drawing from objects that are sitting directly in front of you. You are provided with a wealth of visual information...changing light conditions; rich textures; views of the subject from alternate angles; as well as information from other senses...smells and noise from the surroundings etc. Transcribing from three-dimensions to two is ultimately much harder than drawing from a photograph, but it often results in drawings that are "richer" and more authentic.

This doesn't mean, however, that you should never draw from photographs. Students frequently traipse from home to school and back again: it can be impractical to carry and set up complex still life arrangements over and over again. Some subjects –such as landscapes and nude models –are also unavailable in most classroom settings. It can therefore be good practise to set up a still life arrangement in the flesh (or visit a location) and begin drawing directly from the subject, using photographs to complete the work at home).

Tip 3: Don't trace

Throughout history, great realist painters have traced from photographs or worked from projections blown up onto walls. But these painters are not high school art students; nor are they assessed on their ability to replicate form.

There is a place for tracing in AP Art (such as when tracing over something you have already drawn or creating a repeat pattern), but tracing from photographs and then simply applying color or tone is not acceptable. Such methods of "drawing" involve minimal skill, teach you little and run the risk of producing clunky, soul-less outlines. Don't do it.

Tip 4: Understand perspective

As objects get further away they appear smaller. The replication of this change of scale on paper (through the use of vanishing points) is called "perspective". The fundamentals of perspective are usually taught in junior high school; by year 10 at the latest. If you are a senior art student and have somehow missed this lesson, remedy this situation urgently. There are not many theoretical aspects of art that are essential to learn, but this is one of them.

Tip 5. Use grids, guidelines or rough forms to get the proportions right before you add details

Many students start with a tiny detail (the eye on a face, for example) and then gradually add in the rest of the image ending up with a drawing that is badly proportioned or doesn't fit on the page (or floats aimlessly in the middle of it). This can be avoided by approximating the basic forms before adding details or by using guidelines to ensure that proportions are correct.

If working from a photograph, using a grid can result in highly accurate work. It allows students to focus on one small segment of the image at a time and gives arbitrary lines from which distances can be gauged. This can be a helpful strategy when precise, detailed images are required and can itself become a celebrated component in an artwork. As gridding is methodical and involves meticulous plotting of lines, however, it is important to acknowledge that this approach runs the risk of producing tight and regimented drawings that lack in "spirit" and should thus be approached with care.

If working from life, roughly sketching outlines of the major forms will allow you to get the proportions right, before you add the details. While you do this, you should constantly check which points line up (i.e. edge of nostrils lining up with edge of eye) and the size of every object should be estimated in relation to the things that are beside it. You must get used to seeing things not in terms of absolute scale, but in terms of how one thing compares to another.

Tip 6: Be wary of ellipses

Ellipses –the oval shapes that are visible at the top of cylindrical objects such as bottles or jars –frequently "trip up" a weak drawer. They can send an immediate signal that a student is not looking at what they are drawing. All ellipses, no matter what angle they are viewed from, should be rounded (not pointed) at the ends.

Tip 7: Keep the outlines light

Note that there is not a single black outline within the work: edges are defined solely through variation in tone. As your drawing is fleshed out in more detail, with attention given to the subtle variations in shape and form, the natural inclination –especially of the novice drawer –is to want to darken in the outlines, to help ensure they are visible. Do not do this. Real objects do not have dark lines running around every edge. Edges should instead be defined by a change in tone and/or color.

If you are producing a line drawing, a cartoon or some other graphic image, outlines may be darkened, but in an observational drawing –especially one which you wish to be realistic –dark outlines are never advised.

Tip 8: Have a Good Range of Tone

When it comes to applying tone to your drawing, as with everything else, look at the object. Observe where the light and dark areas are and copy what you see. In almost all cases, your

drawing should have a full range of tones, from black, through a multitude of greys (or colored mid-tones) through to white.

Some students –having learned how to blend tone smoothly from dark to light –develop the unfortunate habit of randomly shading all surfaces from dark to light. Tone should never be invented and it should never be applied by guesswork. Even when a light material is depicted (as in the cloth shown underneath the fruit) shadows are deep and rich in tone.

Tip 9: Use mark-making to convey surface quality and texture

When producing an observational drawing, the mark-making used should help to convey the texture(s) of the subject matter. There are a multitude of different ways a pencil can strike paper –hatching / dashes / smudges / dots...think carefully before you decide which technique to use.

Tip 10: Include / omit detail as necessary

One area where students often become disheartened is in the depiction of incredibly complex subjects. When drawing trees, plants and bushes, it is not necessary to replicate every leaf or stick. When drawing a person, it is not necessary to depict every strand of hair. The artist is always in a position to pick and choose what goes in their artwork. As long as the decision is based on what is aesthetically best for the work (rather than wanting to leave out something that is hard to draw...which is often the driving force behind students wanting to eliminate certain aspects of their image) there is nothing wrong with omitting certain details from a drawing. In fact, often the composition is less cluttered and easy on the eye because of it. There are many approaches to this. Sometimes every single detail might be recorded with accuracy. Sometimes a certain area of a drawing is rendered in full, with other parts trailing away.

Tip 11: Insert your own soul

Most of the tips above are aimed at helping a student create more realistic observational drawings. This last tip is something different. It is a reminder that sometimes it is the difference between the real item and the drawing that matters.

Although observational drawings are usually expected to be realistic in nature, they do not need to be hyper-realistic (in other words, they don't have to look exactly like a photograph). Often, it is the unrealistic parts: the unexpected mark-making –the gap between the real object and what is drawn –where the soul sneaks in. It is the beauty in smudges and irregularities and artistic interpretation. An AP Art student is an artist. Embrace this!

Website: How To Create an Excellent Observational Drawing: 11 Tips For High School Art Students
Amiria GaleAmiria - <https://www.studentartguide.com/articles/realistic-observational-drawings>