

# How to Draw: An /ic/ Guide

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## A Drawing Guide for Beginners

Do you want to learn drawing? Whatever your current skill level is, you **can** learn to draw and paint.

Let's start our journey!

It doesn't matter if you can barely draw a stick figure. It doesn't matter whether you're 9 or 97 years old. You can be blind in one eye, be missing half of your fingers, or have just discovered your passion for art this early morning ... whoever you are, you can become the next master painter of our era. **If you work hard.**

*How do I use the sticky?*

Ask others to critique your work. Make a plan to stick at it for the long run, because learning to draw well takes years.

## Learning to Draw





*Bad and good portrait study example*

Put simply, you want to go from the image on the left to the image on the right.

The bad news: there are no shortcuts. You will have to practice till the bones in your hand crumble.

The good news: if you practice, you will improve. Each time you will be one drawing closer to the painting on the right.



*ic bad portrait study*

## For the Absolute Beginner



## Step One

There are various stages of being a beginner.

Does your work look like the example here (or worse)? Then you suffer from symbol drawing. This means you draw your idea of reality instead of what's actually there.

To cure your symbol drawing, you need a different view of the world around you. Instead of drawing what you know, start drawing values, shapes and shadows. For example, while before you might have drawn an eye, now draw this abstract combination of dark and light areas.

Learning to copy is the most basic skill an artist needs. This is the first step towards analyzing references and other art to improve your own work.

One of the most famous exercises is drawing Picasso's Igor Stravinsky upside down. Holding it upside down weakens the associations of the lines with the concepts. Why don't you try it right now? Grab a sheet of printer paper and a pencil.



*Picasso Stravinsky*





Here you go. Try to copy it to the best of your abilities and don't turn the paper until you are finished.

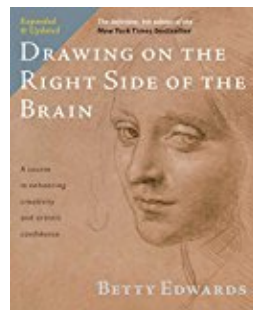
Other exercises include grid drawing, traced drawing and negative space drawing.

There are art books that focus on this type of exercise. Only the exercises in these books matter; any pseudoscience or rambling on the author's part can be ignored.

The most popular such books are:

- *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* by Betty Edwards
- *Keys to Drawing* by Bert Dodson

All you need to start is some cheap paper and a pencil. Go through one of these books and then start drawing objects from life frequently. If you don't want to get the books, draw photo studies and still lifes to train your eye to see curves and shapes objectively.



### Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain: The Definitive, 4th Edition

"Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain" is an excellent book to get you started. A minus point is that it is filled with pseudoscience blabbering by the author. Yet, the exercises work and you'll get results in a matter of days.

[Buy Now](#)



Loomis "Fun with a Pencil" screenshot example



Even after learning to see objectively, you might still suck at drawing from imagination.

Maybe you can copy photographs perfectly, creating photorealistic pencil drawings. Maybe you still struggle with symbol drawing. Maybe you start off great with your paintings, but never manage to draw symmetrical faces.

This when we move on to learning the fundamentals, like value, perspective and construction.

A lot of artists are interested in drawing humans.

### **You need Loomis.**

The starting point is *Fun with a Pencil* by Andrew Loomis. Now you learn the basics of construction, the skill you need when you want to draw or paint from imagination.

Remember that this book quickly touches on the basics; try to have fun with it. Don't be put off by the cartoons in the first chapter, they are a tool to teach you construction.

Good news: you can download Loomis's books for free right here:

<http://alexhays.com/loomis/>

Another, excellent resource is Proko: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ProkoTV>

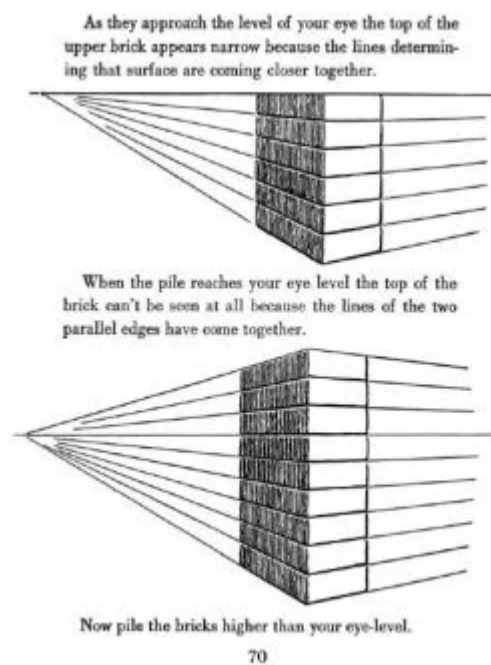
After Fun with a Pencil, Hampton's books are a fantastic resource. Get his book [Figure Drawing: Design and Invention](#).

Two common beginner mistakes:

1. Ignoring gesture. Gesture is more important than detailed muscle and bone knowledge.
2. Mastering the naked figure and being unable to draw even a simple pair of pants. Practice clothing alongside with practicing anatomy.

*If you do not want to draw humans, study perspective instead of Loomis and Hampton.*





*Norling screenshot perspective book example*

### Step Three

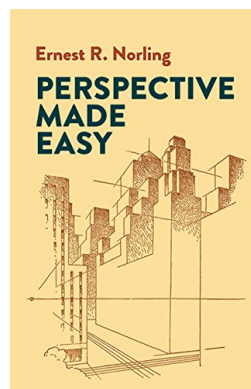
You will also benefit from going through perspective. Perspective is another fundamental skill, and sadly one that many ignore.

While it's of huge importance for vehicle designs, architecture and the likes, you will also need it for nature or figure drawings.

Any perspective book will do fine.

If you're still drawing on paper, you'll need to add a ruler to your toolkit now.

A free resource online is [drawabox.com](https://drawabox.com). Besides perspective, he teaches draftsmanship. Highly recommended resource, the structure is similar to the first weeks in a high-intensity artschool like FZD.



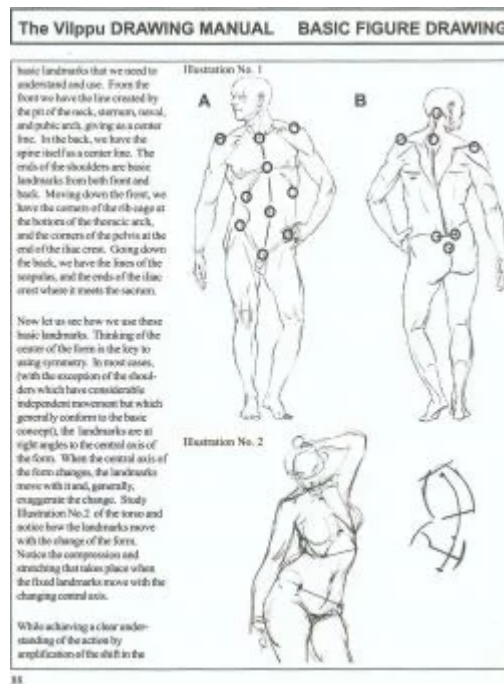
### Perspective Made Easy (Dover Art Instruction)

I recommend Perspective Made Easy by Ernest Norling, because of its low threshold. You'll go through the book with ease and it's filled with exercises to make sure you keep up with the author.



Buy Now





Vilppu drawing manual screenshot anatomy proportions landmarks

## For the Beginner

### Continue Your Journey

So, now you've got the very basics down:

- you are able to draw objects from life
- you are getting rid of symbol drawing
- you understand the importance of construction.

The rest of the journey is grinding.

Draw from life, draw from photo references, draw from imagination. Analyze everything, keep drawing, drawing, drawing. Expand your visual library.

And ... keep refining your knowledge.

For figure drawing, you could continue with Vilppu, Loomis and Hampton. Choosing between these is a matter of personal preference, but for best results, **study them all**, starting with the one that appeals to you the most.

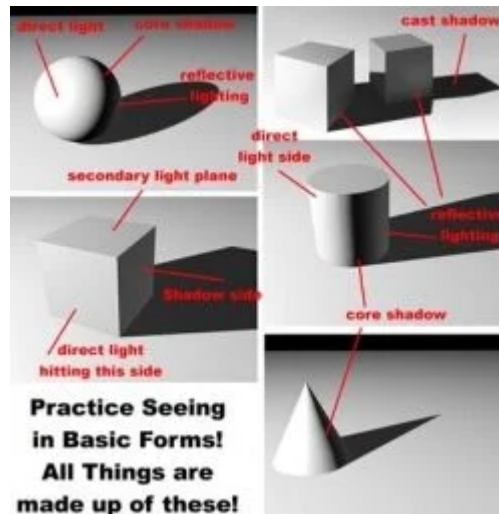
Vilppu is best known for his video lectures, but you could also go through his book *The Vilppu Drawing Manual*.

As for Loomis, after *Fun with a Pencil*, go to *Figure Drawing for All It's Worth* and *Drawing the Head and Hands*.

Then there is *Figure Drawing: Design and Invention* by Michael Hampton.

Focus on getting proportions right. All your artworks and studies should start with a solid construction base. Practicing gestures will keep your figures fluent and lively, whilst studying anatomy will make them look somewhat human.

Construction is useful for any subject. When studying from life or reference, you break the subject down into simple shapes. When drawing from imagination, you reverse this thinking process: you start with a basic structure to construct the whole.



*basic shapes guide summary appeal*

Solidify your grasp on basic shapes and lighting. You learn a large part of this by drawing from life: ping-pong balls, books, the tea kettle.

Keep analysing what you see instead of mindlessly copying. Break up large structures into basic shapes. Analyse shadows. What is the effect of reflected light? How do highlights behave on a wet surface?

The four basic shapes are:

- the sphere
- the cube
- the cone
- the cylinder

Keep in mind deformations, for example, the egg shape, which is a deformation of the sphere.

## Hardcore Grinding



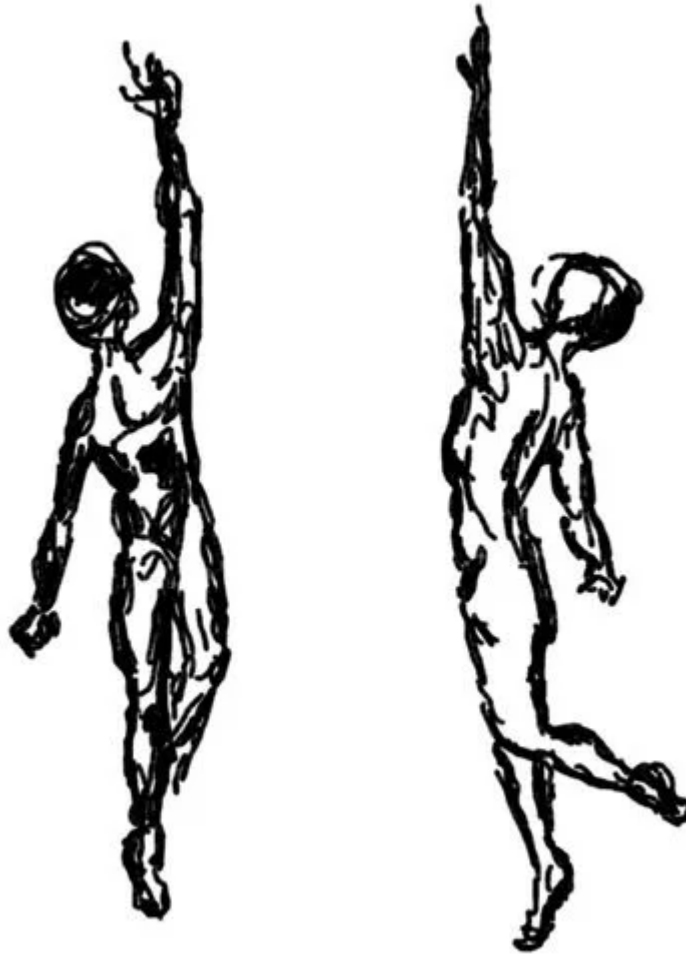
### How to Draw: drawing and sketching objects and environments from your imagination

Two books that focus on fundamental skills are "How to Draw" and "How to Render" and by Scott Robertson. The techniques and exercises are solid and will push your art several levels higher, but it's very tedious work. Scott Robertson has a very logical, mathematical approach. You have to buckle down for it. Are you ready to grind?

Buy Now







A typical beginner's mistake is the so-called chicken scratch, also known as a hairy line. This means drawing your lines with multiple short strokes instead of a long fluid stroke.

It's better to draw clean lines. Knowing where and how to draw your line is part of your basic drawing knowledge. Practice drawing long, steady lines with confidence. If unsure about your drawing, think about your next line placement instead of wildly guessing.





*redline sketch smooth lines*


Imagine how much worse this sketch would look if it was all chicken scratch and insecure scribbling.

Of course, the solid lines are drawn over an initial sketch (very important when doing line-art), but even the initial sketch should not suffer from chicken scratch. You can consider a sketch your art blueprint. You need clean lines for clarity.

## A List of Fundamentals

There is a lot to a finished artwork. Many of the components are related: light affects colour, construction is a tool to apply anatomy, and so on.

### Your Fundamentals:

- Basic shapes
-  Anatomy and construction
- Light and value



- Perspective
- Colour
- Composition

You can't learn these one by one. Rather, you start with "basic anatomy", "basic perspective," and so on, and work your way up to "advanced anatomy", "advanced perspective" ...

Here is one minor guideline, though. Put most importance on these:

- **Basic shapes.** Everything is built up from basic shapes, so get a good grasp on these.
- **Solid construction.** A fully rendered piece will look shitty if the starting construction was faulty.
- **Distinct values.** Values let the viewer "read" an image easily. Check this. Does the image still look good in greyscale? Is the thumbnail clear?



*cloth study mucha*

## Practice

Yes, it's still about practicing. These exercises continue forever, no matter how far you get on the road:

**1. Drawing from life.** This greatly increases your sense of depth and values. This can range from drawing a candle in your room to painting the largest building of the town.

Find model drawing classes in your area! And whenever you don't have classes, draw your friends or use a mirror to draw yourself. Why do you think artists draw so many self portraits?

**2. Gesture drawing and quick-pose drawings.** Practicing this will preserve the energy in your drawings.

Useful sites for both are:

[www.artists.pixelovely.com](http://www.artists.pixelovely.com)

 [www.posemaniacs.com](http://www.posemaniacs.com)



<http://reference.sketchdaily.net/en/>

One critique of gesture sites is that they showcase awkward/unnatural poses. You can also go to Youtube, get a video of people *doing stuff*, like a baseball match or an exercise how-to video and draw those poses. Highly recommended!

**3. Studying from reference.** This can be life drawing, but also drawing from photo references, or studying "master artworks" (artworks of high skill level). The importance here is to analyze your subject. When you fully understand it, you'll be able to recreate it later and use it in your art. Master studies are especially useful for studying drawing and painting techniques.

**4. Getting out of your comfort zone.** Is there something you don't like to draw? Then draw it so often you get good at it and enjoy drawing it. Settling means stagnation. Keep challenging yourself, keep improving. Push your boundaries.

## More Art Resources

So you've travelled from Betty Edwards to Vilppu. Good job! Here you go, more recommendations to keep you going:

### Books for Beginners:

Cecile Hardy, *Better Figure Drawing*

Francis Marshall, *Drawing the Female Figure*

Michael Hampton, *Figure Drawing: Design and Invention*

Ron Tiner, *Figure Drawing Without A Model*

Walt Stanchfield, *Gesture Drawing for Animation*

*Famous Artists Course*

*Charles Bague Drawing Course*

### More Advanced Books:

Books by Bridgeman, Hogarth, Bammes and Don Graham

Gary Faigin, *The Artist's Complete Guide To Facial Expression*

Giovanni Civardi, *Drawing Portraits: Faces And Figures*

Jack Hamm, *Drawing the Head and Figure*

Robert Beverly Hale, *Drawing Lessons From the Great Masters*

James Gurney, *Color and Light* (check out [his blog](#) too!)

### YouTube Channels

[Feng Zhu School of Design](#)

[CG Master Academy](#)

[Sycra](#)

[Proko](#)

[Robotpencil](#)





Shaddy Safadi

Sinix

Look also for lectures by Glenn Vilppu.



*digital painting study example*

## Digital Art

### Learning to Draw and Paint Using Computer Programs

If you're new to digital art, check out [www.ctrlpaint.com](http://www.ctrlpaint.com). Getting used to a new medium requires some practice, so give yourself a few weeks.

Start out with a hard round "brush," and worry about the other tools later on.

See also [www.enlighten.com](http://www.enlighten.com).

## Digital Art Programs for Drawing and Painting

Most widely used is Adobe Photoshop, which is pretty much industry standard. You'll find that most digital painting tutorials are aimed towards Photoshop users. Corel Painter is another program used by many professionals. Of course, these are the more expensive programs.

Many beginners start out with PaintTool SAI because of its low cost price, or **Krita** - which is completely free.

There are many more options: MyPaint, Artrage, even in-browser ones like deviantArt Muro. Find something you like. Knowing your fundamentals is more important than choosing exactly the right program to start out with.



*Big Cat sketches by Kent Hultgren*





## Drawing Animals

Ellenberg, Dittrich and Baum, *An Atlas Of Animal Anatomy For Artists*

Goldfinger, *Animal Anatomy for Artists*

Ken Hultgren, *The Art of Animal Drawing*

Vilppu, *Animal Drawing*



*watercolour landscape tree field*

## Drawing the Environment

David Bellamy, *Watercolour Landscape Course*

J.D Harding, *On Drawing Trees and Nature*

Jack Hamm, *Drawing Scenery Seascapes And Landscapes*

Stanley Maltzman, *Drawing Nature*

June and Alwyn Crawshaw, *Outdoor Painting Course*



*Stan Lee comic drawing book screenshot*



## Drawing Comics/Animations





Stan Lee, *How To Draw Comics The Marvel Way*

Eadweard Muybridge, *The Human Figure in Motion*

Jack Hamm, *Cartooning the Head and Figure*

Scott McCloud, *Making Comics*

Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*

Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art*

Richard Williams, *The Animator's Survival Kit*

Preston Blair, *Cartoon Animation*

Preston Blair, *Advanced Animation*



screenshot youtube eye drawing example

## Random Tutorials, Speedpaints, and Forums

Use any resource you can. If you want to use online tutorials and videos, go ahead!

You have one problem here: a lot of people who can't draw still try to teach others how to draw. And as a newbie, you often can't distinguish the good from the bad. Try to get references or recommendations for a teacher, but don't hold yourself back. Reading one bad tutorial won't do much harm long-term, as long as you keep reading good ones too.

You can learn a lot by participating in the following communities:

[www.4chan.org/ic](http://www.4chan.org/ic)

[www.ConceptArt.org](http://www.ConceptArt.org)

[Crimson Daggers](#)

[WiPnation](#)

No matter how harsh it sounds, critique is good for you and your art.

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