

Contour Line Lesson Plan

Objective: For students to study various forms of contour line and drawing through repeated study exercises. The final product will be a pencil drawing.

Supplies:

Sketch book

2B and 4B Pencils

8"x10" Plexiglas (to be used as a temporary template)

Washable overhead markers

11"x14" drawing paper

Definitions:

Blind Contour Line: Blind contour line drawings are done without looking at the paper. The eye is focused on the subject and follows the changing structural planes of the object while the hand follows with the pencil on paper. These drawings are intended as exercises for the eye, they are usually distorted and sometimes even unrecognizable.

Contour Line: Contour line is a single, clean, incisive line. Contour line defines edges. It is, however, unlike outlines, which states only the outside edge of an object. Contour delineates the edges of planes. The quickest way to understand the difference between contour line and outline is to look at the image provided. Outline makes the hand appear flat; it simply differentiates between positive and negative shape. The contour drawing emphasizes the hand's three-dimensional appearance. If you were drawing a pencil using contour line, you would draw a line at the edge of every shift in plane. The ridges along the length of the pencil, the juncture of the metal holder of the eraser and the wood, the insertion of the eraser into its metal shaft - all are planar changes that would be indicated by contour line.

Quick Contour Line: The quick contour line technique is a variation of the basic contour drawing. It is an exercise requiring less time for each drawing. You may look at your drawing more frequently than in a slow contour. The inspection of forms, however, is just as intense. A single, incisive line is the goal; all lines connect back to the main line. However, the movement of the line is faster, less determined. In quick contour you are trying to catch the essence of the subject.

Contour Line "with Help:" Drawing on a piece of Plexiglas placed between the artist and the subject of the drawing is a technique used to teach the artist how to transfer what he/she sees in three dimensions to a two dimensional format.

Structural Plane: The flat or curved surfaces on an object. Contour lines are drawn on the interior of an object where the structural plane changes direction or angle. Contour lines do not occur on the interior of a curved surface.

Format or Picture Plane: the relative length and width of the bounding edges of a surface, the shape of the drawing surface

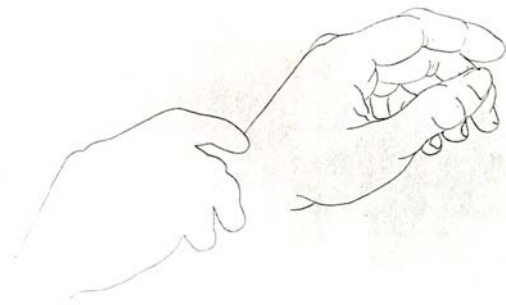
Composition: the way the components of a drawing are arranged by the artist within the format.

Assignments:

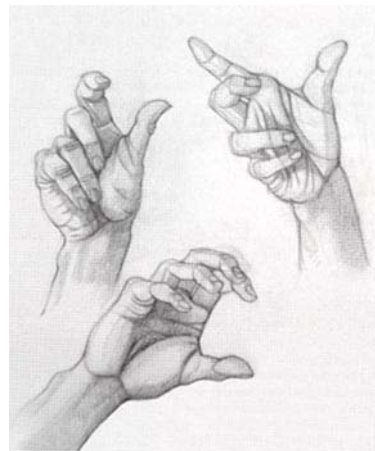
Blind Contour Line Exercise – 3 drawings: In the back of your sketchbook, use a sharpened 2B pencil to make a contour drawing of your hand. Do not look at your paper; keep your eyes on the subject you are drawing. Imagine that you actually are touching the subject with the point of your pencil. Do not let your eyes move more quickly than you can draw. You may begin at an outside edge, when you see a structural plane turn inward, follow that plane to its end. Do not draw shadows. Draw only where there is an actual structural plane shift. Do not enter the interior of a form unless there is a shift in the plane. Draw 3 different views, using a new page for each.

Quick Contour Line Exercise - 3 drawings: These 3 drawings follow the blind drawings in your sketchbook. Use a sharpened 4B pencil make a contour drawing of your hand. Spend most of your time looking at your hand; you may look at your paper to keep tabs on your progress. Work on a strong composition; enlarge your hand to fill the page. Again imagine that you are actually touching the subject with the point of your pencil. Do not let your eyes move more quickly than you can draw. **You may begin at an outside edge, when you see a plane turn inward; follow that plane to its end.** Do not draw shadows. Draw only where there is an actual structural plane shift. Do not enter the interior of a form unless there is a shift in the plane. Don't leave your hand floating, anchor the object to a surface or the edge of your format; you might draw the back edge of the table.

Contour Line “with Help” Exercise - 3 drawings: In each of three drawings, draw your hand in one position on the Plexiglas. Each time you complete a drawing, take your Plexiglas, your drawing paper and your pencil to the light table. Trace your drawn hand onto your drawing paper, keeping in mind that you will be drawing at least 3 hands on the paper. Note that to get a right hand (if you are always drawing your left hand) you simply need to turn the Plexiglas over when you trace it. Try overlapping for depth, touching tip-to-tip or edge-to-edge for dynamics. Dramatic angles and triangle always increase visual movement. Caution: don't lead your viewer off the page and remember to incorporate the negative spaces in your composition! Add interior shading to your hand contour drawings for volume and form clarification. Volume should correspond to a consistent light source.



Blind contour and quick contour



Contour with interior shading