

The Illusion of Space Study Guide

Objective: Student artists use a variety of perspective techniques to create the illusion of space.

Vocabulary:

Perspective: Creating the illusions of depth on a two-dimensional format

Foreground: the part of the picture plane that appears nearest to the viewer

Background: the part of the picture plane that appears farthest away from the viewer

Middle Ground: the area between the foreground and the background

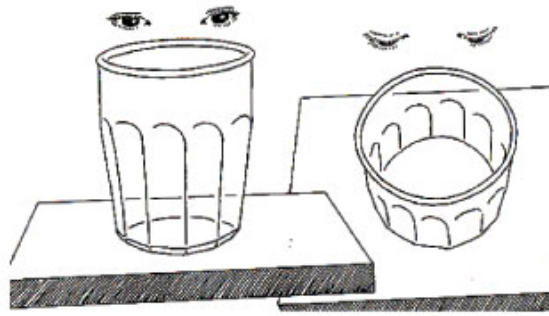
Perspective Techniques:

Using the following techniques will bring a convincing illusion of space and distance to your work

1. **Overlapping:** An object covering part of another object will appear to be closer to the viewer.
2. **Size:** Large objects appear to be closer to the viewer than small objects. The farther an object is from the viewer, the smaller it appears.
3. **Placement:** Objects that are placed either low or high on the picture plane give the impression of being closer to the viewer than objects placed closer to eye level. The most distant shapes are those appear to be at eye level.
4. **Detail:** Objects with clear, sharp edges and visible details look as if they are closer to you. Objects that lack detail and have hazy edges seem to be farther away.
5. **Color:** *Atmospheric perspective* is the visual change caused by the dust and moisture in the air around us; objects farther away from the viewer will appear faded. Brightly colored objects appear closer to the viewer than objects with light dull colors. In addition, warm colors appear to be close and cool colors appear to be far away.
6. **Converging Lines:** Linear perspective is a way of using lines to convey the illusion of distance and depth. As parallel lines move away from foreground, they appear to converge, moving closer together to a single point. This place is called the *vanishing point*.
 - In *one-point linear perspective*, all receding lines meet at a single point on the horizon line. One-point linear perspective is used when a flat side of an object is facing the viewer (parallel to the picture plane).
 - In *two-point linear perspective*, different sets of parallel lines meet at different points on the horizon line. Two-point linear perspective is used when the corner of an object is closest to the viewer.
 - In *three-point linear perspective*, a third vanishing point is added either at the top of the page or the bottom of the page depending on the location of the horizon line.
 - *Elliptical perspective* may be established within a linear perspective framework and will correspond to the same vanishing point(s) as the rest of the image.

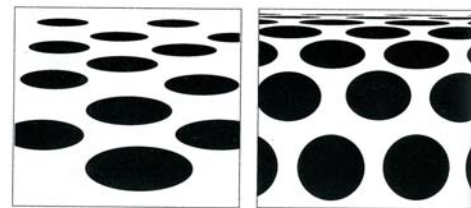
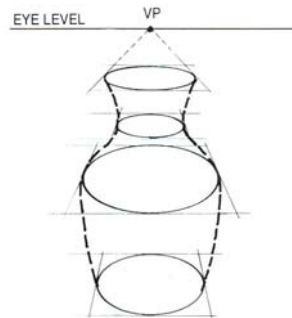
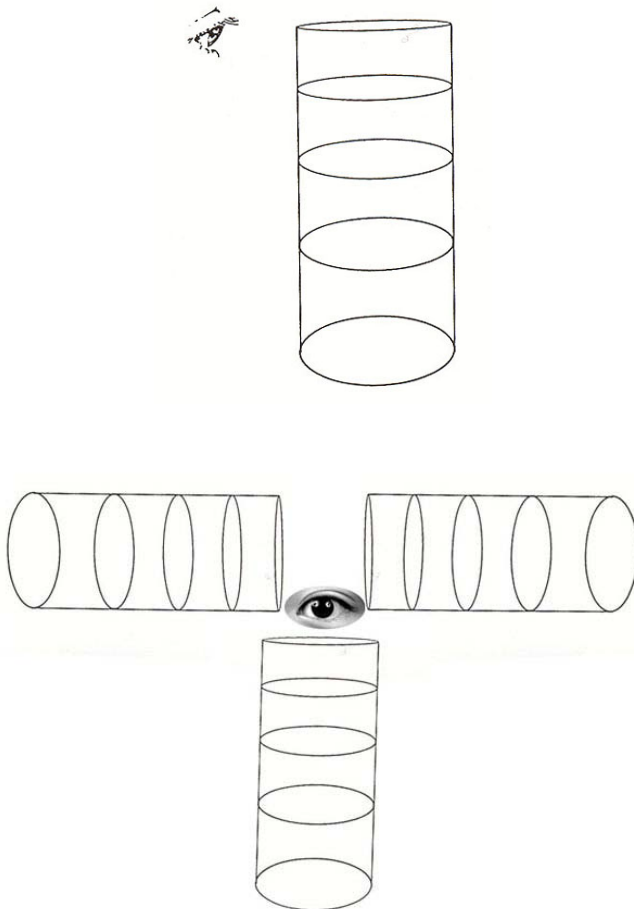
Elliptical Perspective

If you look at glass or jar from directly above, the opening will make a circle. If you were to look at the glass from the side, the opening appears to squish down in size, becoming an ellipse. Notice that the opening, elliptical shape, has curved outside edges, they are not the shape of a football which come to a point on the outside edges. If the opening of the glass were to be exactly level with eyes, the ellipse would narrow to look like a straight line. As you raise or lower the glass, above or below your eye level, the shape of the ellipse will get fatter the further above or below your eye level it travels.



Study the graphic of the transparent cylinder below.

The 4 sections of the cylinder are parallel to one another, yet the elliptical shapes that define each section become rounder the farther away they get from the viewer's eye level.



Where is the viewer?

How does the shape of a circle change your perception of space?

