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Drawing Skills - Start Drawing

Where to start?

To start at the beginning, you will need to get yourself a drawing kit. Then sharpen your pencil, unwrap your rubbers, layout your paper and prepare to draw.

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How to hold a pencil.

There are a number of ways to hold a pencil, depending on the marks you want to make on to paper. Here are two examples:



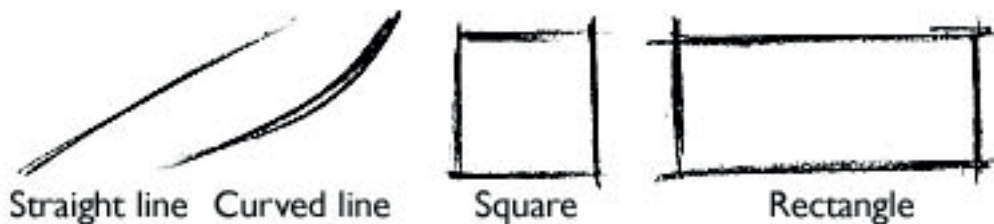
For drawing line, the pencil is held the same way used for writing. Remember to keep your pencil sharp.

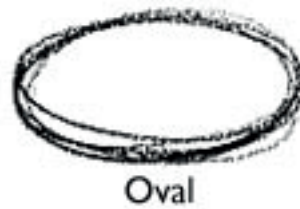
For drawing tone, the pencil is placed flat close to the drawing surface, so the side of the lead comes in contact with the paper.

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How to draw a line, square, rectangle, triangle, circle and oval.

These may be some of the most basic shapes to draw, however it is necessary to master them because they will come up again and again in the subjects that you draw.



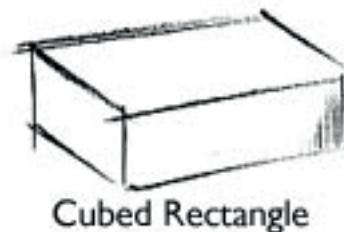


Notice that the drawing is loose and free. Draw lightly at first, so incorrect lines can be erased later.

1. Have an image in your mind of what you want to draw, a line or circle, its size and where to stop and start on the paper.
2. To draw a longer line or larger circle - lock your wrist and arm, then move your whole arm from the shoulder (for lines - from side to side like a pendulum, for ovals - in a circular motion), not from the wrist. Drawing from the wrist and elbow is fine for small shapes. It is better to move the whole arm to draw circles, ovals and straight lines. You will get a smooth and consistent result.
If you are working at a table, you may find that standing will help this process.
3. Draw in the air above the paper, check the size and shape of the object and also its position on the page.
4. Then lower your pencil on to the paper to draw the line or circle. Lightly at first, so if it isn't correct the line can be erased. If correct, gradually darken the line.
5. Remove your pencil and check that the objects shape and position, in relation to other shapes on the page.

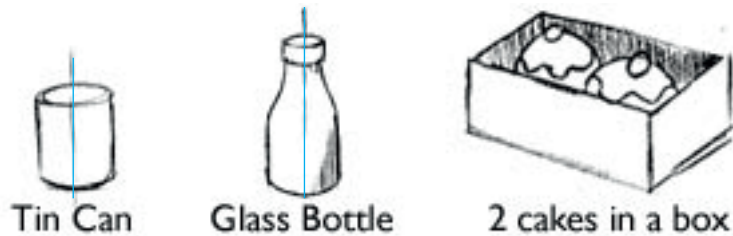
Putting the shapes together.

Now put the line, square, rectangle, triangle, circle and oval shapes together to make these 3 dimensional shapes - sphere, cube, cylinder, cone, pyramid, and cubed rectangle (or a box).



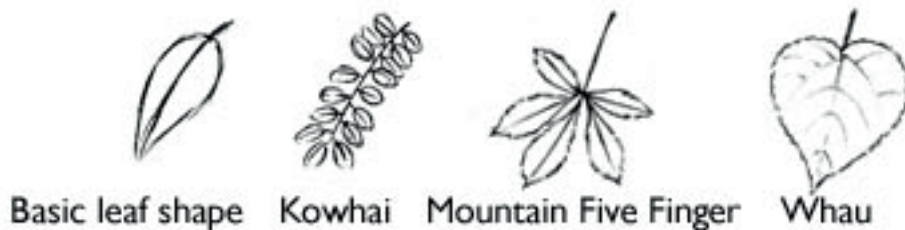
Look around your home for these shapes. How many different things can you find that are sphere shaped, cubed shaped and so on?

When you have found something, sit down and draw it. Look for the basic shapes in the object then use a centre line to help you position the shapes.



Note: you can draw a line down the centre of the tin can and glass bottle, this is called a centre line. It helps you get an object even both sides.

Now look outside for other objects, whether they be man made or natural objects. Here is an example of a basic leaf shape and 3 leaves of native New Zealand trees.



What about drawing shells, flowers, insects and other New Zealand wildlife?

Adding tone and texture to a drawing. You may wish to leave a drawing just as a line drawing.

Or you may want to add tone or shading and texture to a drawing. Before you add shading to a drawing, you need to study the subject.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Which direction is the light coming from?
Where does it strike the subject?
From the front, back, or side?
2. If there are shadows, where do they fall on the subject and on the ground?
This will depend on the level of light eg. bright sunlight, or dull light.
3. Is any light reflected on the subject, on the ground or on surrounding objects?
If your subject is lit by a strong light, the light will bounce back and forth, also off other objects and create a softer light, called reflected light.

Look at your subject and see how the shadows vary from light to dark. You will need to do the same in your drawing by varying your tone to match.

Layer the tone (to draw 2 - 3 layers of a light tone to achieve a mid tone), to build the mid tones and darks in your drawing.

Draw the tone and any texture in the same direction as the subjects surface, eg. bird's feathers. Look at what tones go next to what. Light next to dark, light next to mid, or mid next to dark.

Vary the edge variety for the subject, have for a mix of soft edges and hard edges. This will give the impression that your subject is coming forward yet still connected to the background.

To finish check that your drawing has a wide range of tones, from white to black and greys in between.

Then clean up any white areas with a kneadable eraser and spray your work with fixative.

For more drawing techniques see the book *Draw New Zealand Birds*.