

## Table of Contents

Introduction and how this book is organized 13

### **Section One: 15**

Drawing fundamentals for the new artist.	15
Some introductory words for the newbie artist or artist “wannabe.”	17
Choosing Drawing Materials	18
Let’s get started with drawing: Negative Space.	21
Your first drawing assignment:	23
Looking for an angle	27
Using the grid and negative space	28
“Coloring book” drawings vs. shaded drawings.	32
Fundamentals of Shading: Drawing and Shading the Sphere.	33
Drawing Techniques	37
Goofing off with crosshatching—practice is fun and important!	44
It’s okay to scribble	46

### **Section Two: 49**

Fundamentals of drawing the head	49
Drawing the Face: Basics of Head Structure and Alignment of Features.	50
Alignment of the features of the head	54
Using the width of the eye as a form of measurement.	57
Drawing the Profile	60
Drawing the eyes, nose, mouth, hair and ears.	68
The eyes	68
The pupil and the iris of the eye	70
Drawing the Nose	79
Drawing the mouth	86
Drawing Teeth	90
The ear, step-by-step	93
Drawing the Hair	94
The neck and shoulders	97
“Landmarks” of the head	101
Understanding Shading for Portraits	106
Step-by-Step portrait, front view.	117
Step-by-step portrait from a three-quarters view and using “soft edges.”	122

“Semi-realistic” pencil portrait.	130
Tips for capturing a likeness from a photograph:	135
Comparison between the male and female heads.	136
Differences in age and race	138
Drawing faces from your imagination	140
Advanced shading exercises for drawing from the imagination	142
Don't Do This!	149
Proportions of the body	151

**Section Three: 155**

The many facets of being a portrait artist—articles and essays.	155
Advice for the newbie artist	156
Attitudes and Self-esteem	166
Are you too old or too young?	167
Snobs and Cretins	169
We draw ourselves	171
Accept the Fact	172
Digital tools can be the artist's best friend.	176
What kind of computer to use for digital art?	179
Copyright issues and artists' rights	182
Art is worthwhile.	187
Parting Words	188
Additional drawings from various sketchbooks	189
About the author	200
Bibliography	203

## Welcome and Introduction

*Drawing Portraits: Fundamentals* has been written to be a companion book for my web site, [portrait-artist.org](http://portrait-artist.org). Some of its content is almost identical to what you will find on the web site, but many additional illustrations, clarifications, and extra chapters have also been added. Some portions of the site were excluded for a variety of reasons—for instance, tutorials regarding color were removed because this book is printed in black and white.

I created [portrait-artist.org](http://portrait-artist.org) with several thoughts in mind. My main priority was to help “newbie” (beginner) artists who are feeling a little uncertain about this “art thing,” especially with drawing faces. I remember very well when I first discovered that I wanted to draw portraits. I felt such frustration at times because I *knew* that there was so much more to learn but I didn’t know where to begin. All these years later, writing a portrait art tutorial has been cathartic—I figured that if I could help others avoid some of the mistakes I had made when I first started out, then maybe all my struggles back then would not have been in vain.

Another reason I wrote this book was to share my love for art and drawing. Art is something that can transform a person’s life and strengthen their feelings of self-worth and confidence. I believe that the more people who can be encouraged to nurture their interest in art, the more people who will feel this happiness and satisfaction.

### How this book is organized

It has been a challenge to decide how to organize the tutorials for this book. On the web site it wasn’t as much of a concern, because the visitor could read the site’s content in any order that they desired. The difference with a book is that it is conventionally read from start to finish. Therefore, the order in which things are placed is much more important.

The first few lessons in this book cover drawing fundamentals. These lessons have been included for those who have little drawing experience. While I’ve tried to cover the essential “basics” of drawing in these lessons, any student with little or no drawing experience is encouraged to read other beginning drawing books. (I recommend *The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, by Betty Edwards.)

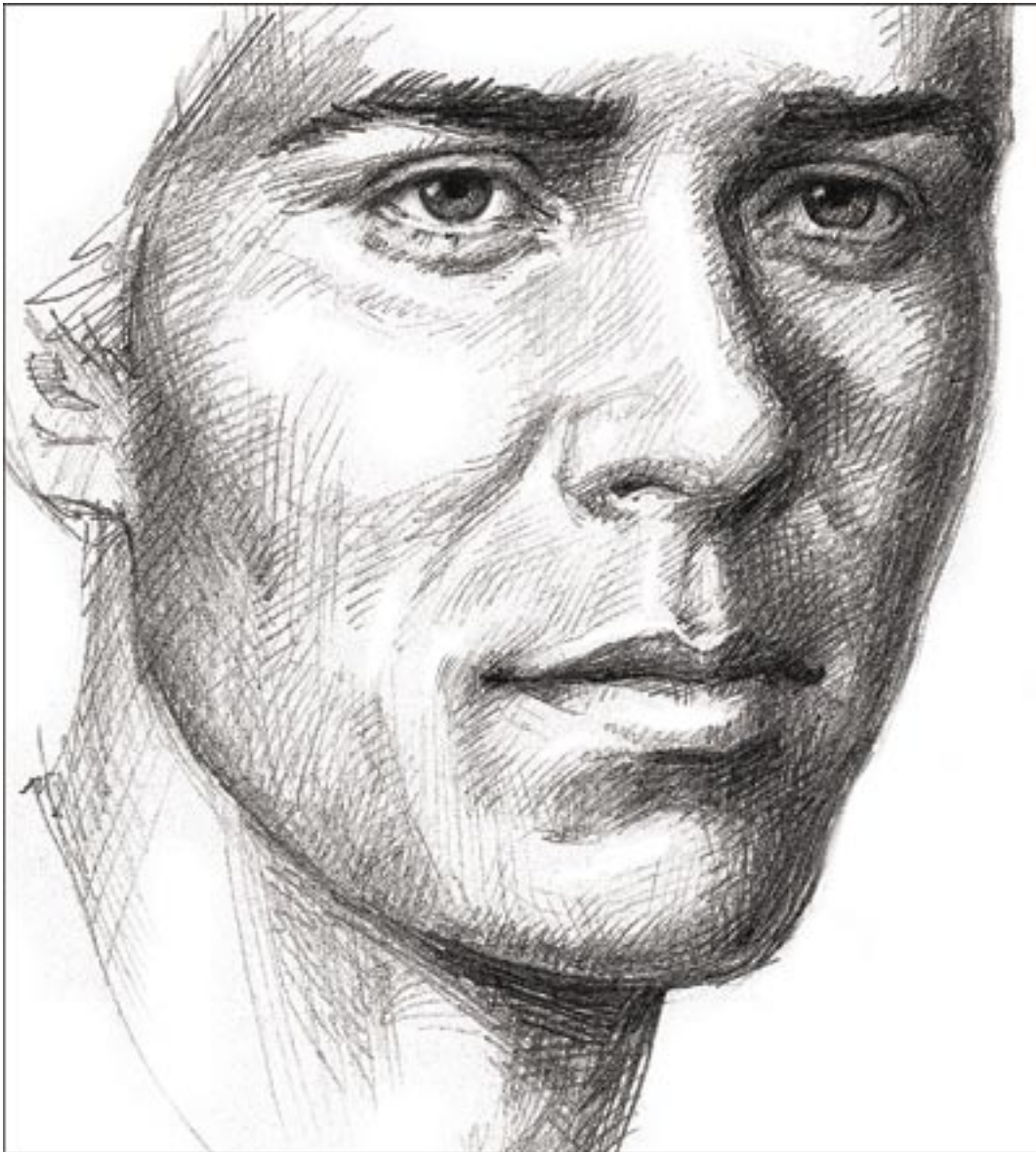
The middle part of this book contains the “meat” of the topic at hand: nuts-and-bolts tutorials and lessons covering the structure of the head, advanced shading techniques, and step-by-step lessons on drawing the face. I wrote these lessons in hopes of helping you understand how to draw faces better—whether you draw from life, from a photograph, or even draw from your imagination.

The third and last section contains mostly “essays” which discuss other issues and topics that artists must face, as well as some “arty philosophy.” While these essays are not mandatory reading for the artist who wants to learn how to draw portraits, I do hope that you will read them. There is more to an artist than learning how to make creative lines—we have to live in the real world too, and we face real world challenges!

It must be emphasized that even though this book does cover the simple fundamentals of drawing, the more drawing experience a person has, the more they will get out of the latter (and more advanced) lessons. However, if you the reader find it easier to skip around, by all means, do so! But please keep in mind that some of the more advanced lessons are written with the assumption that the reader is already familiar with the information covered in previous chapters.

## **Section One:**

### **Drawing fundamentals for the new artist.**



## Some introductory words for the newbie artist or artist “wannabe.”

One thing I want you to understand right away is this: *You can do this*. It doesn't matter if you feel “untalented”; you can do it if you want it hard enough. I hope by the end of this book that you will have received enough information and encouragement to feel confident that drawing is something that you can do.

Drawing is a skill that most people can learn. It is not reserved for those who are born with a “natural talent.” Talent is overrated. With education, knowledge, and practice, most anyone has the potential to accurately draw what they see.

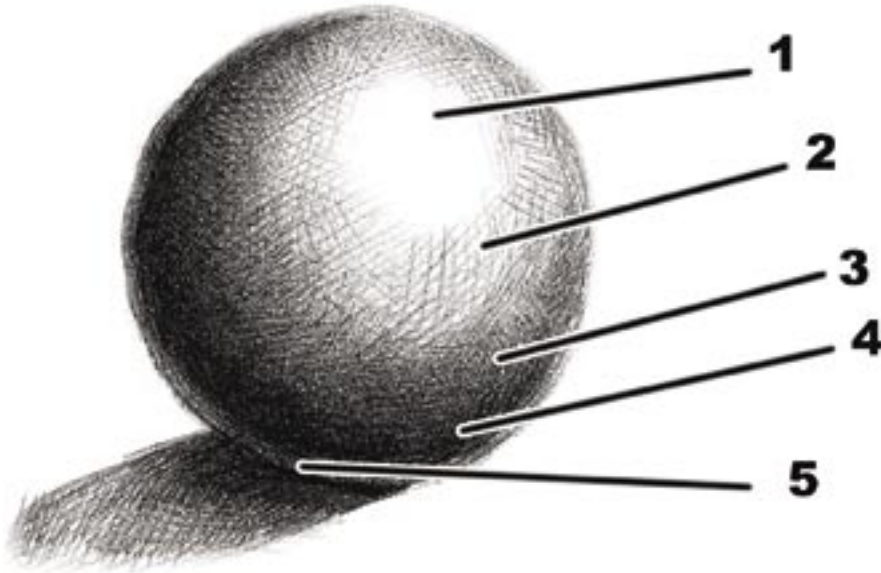
I am not saying that talent is not a great thing, nor am I claiming that the concept of talent doesn't exist or doesn't matter. I am simply telling you that a drawing is a skill, like handwriting. Like handwriting, it requires practice.

Don't worry if you think you are too old (or too young) to develop this skill. Don't let any concerns about your age hold you back. As long as you have the manual dexterity to write your own name and can hold pencil to paper, you are perfectly able to learn to draw.

Have patience with yourself and enjoy the process. It is especially important for you, as a new artist, to remember that there should be no deadlines—you should not pressure yourself or expect perfection right away. Don't push yourself to do “perfect” work. I give you permission to do “silly” or “abstract” drawings too. They are also important.

Even though the rest of this book is full of tutorials that are rather specific and structured (full of “rules”), don't let yourself get too uptight about always following the rules. It's not the end of the world if something you draw doesn't turn out the way it that was “supposed” to. Just do another drawing!

Most artists will tell you that throughout their artistic “careers” they have filled many sketchbooks with drawings—including *bad* drawings. Don't expect that you are going to be exempt from this same thing—you *will* create bad art sometimes. This is how it is for everyone, even for the artists that everybody assumes are born with a “gift.” I am not telling you this to discourage you—quite the opposite, in fact. I simply want you to understand that it is normal for all artists to produce some drawings that are not very pleasing to them.



The sphere illustration with the major gray tones identified:

1. The *highlight* area is usually white, or almost white. The highlight is always on the same side of the picture as the *light source*. The light source can be sunlight, lamplight, etc. Any side of an object that is facing the light source will have highlights on it. The side of an object that is facing away from the light source will be in shadow.
2. The *light gray* area surrounds the highlighted area and blends the white in with the darker tones.
3. The *middle gray* tone is the actual color of the sphere, without any highlighting or shadowing on it.
4. The *shadows* are dark grays and blacks.
5. The *reflected light* area is usually one tone lighter than the shadows. Take note of the reflected light. This is a slightly lighter “rim” that is often seen on the darkest shadowed part of an object (in this case, the sphere). It is there because some light bounces off of the lighter background, creating this little strip of lighter tone. (Most portraits will have this “reflected light” area as well.)

Just like an artist shades a sphere, an artist shades a portrait. The same principle applies. Practice shading spheres now, so that you will be more comfortable when you start to shade portraits later on.

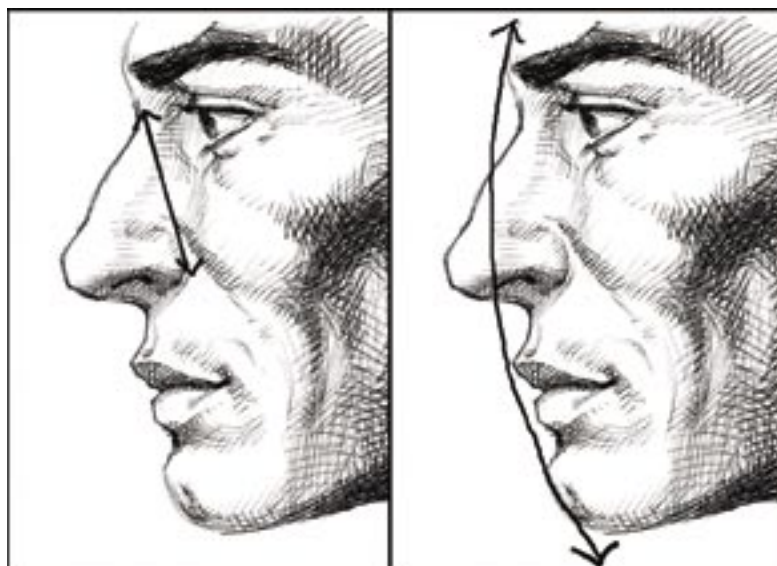
## Drawing the Profile

There's a different dynamic going on when you are drawing profiles. You look at the edges and contours of the face in a completely different way than when you do when you draw a front-view portrait.



Notice in this drawing the two vertical lines: one at the tip of the nose, and one that lines up with the outer edge of the mouth and the front of the eye. Look at the distance between these two lines—there's quite a distance, isn't there? Keep this distance in mind when drawing profiles. Too often new artists draw the profile too flat, so that the eyes are not recessed enough, and the nose does not stick out enough. Try to avoid this typical beginner pitfall!

See how the eye is not flush with the edge of the face. Notice how much room is given to the bridge of the nose. The eyes are set in, or recessed. Also notice that vertically, the front of the eye usually lines up with the outer edge of the mouth.



This illustration (of two profile drawings of a man) shows how the nose sticks out predominantly from the plane of the face. On this particular face, there is a general “curve”—it is not a straight up-and-down profile. Many people have some degree of a “curve” to their profiles, starting from the bottom of the chin and going up to the hairline. Of course, sometimes you will encounter a person with an almost straight “up-and-down” profile.

The lower lip doesn't come out as much as the upper lip. Notice that the chin and “muzzle” area (mouth and chin) recede, just a little. Even when the portrait is of someone with a strong chin and jaw, usually the chin and mouth area do not jut out as much as you might assume. They are gently receding in—just a *little* bit.

There will always be that occasional person who has a chin that juts out more noticeably, or a lower lip that comes out farther than the upper lip. That's the fascinating thing about faces—for every “rule” there's an exception. Because there are always going to be “exceptions” to the rules, you should be highly motivated to really *look* at your model to see how their individual features line up.

Note that the faces here don't have what would be considered to be an especially large nose. And yet, the nose does stick out to some degree.

## Drawing the eyes, nose, mouth, hair and ears.

Now that we've covered the general structure of the head and placement of the features, it is time to look at each feature in more detail.

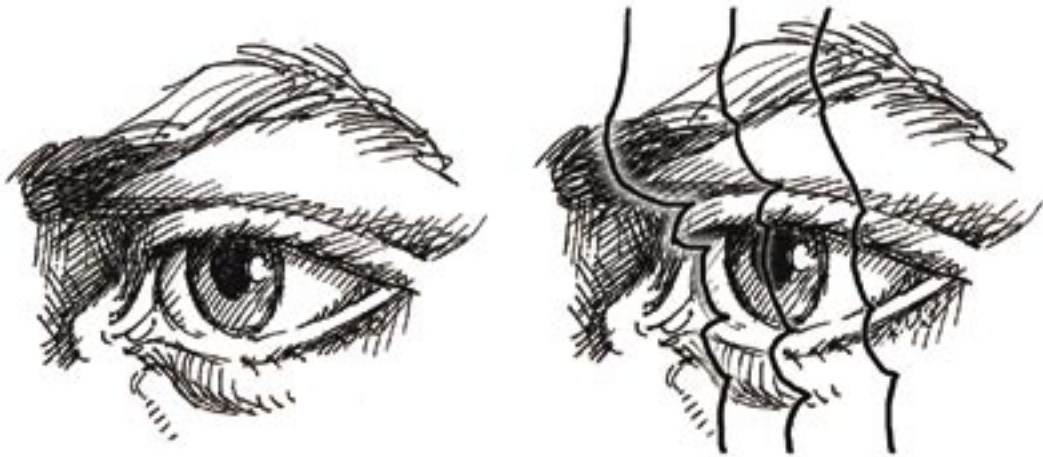
### The eyes

The eyes are a main focal point of the face. When you draw the eyes well (or if you make mistakes) they will be sure to be noticed right away.

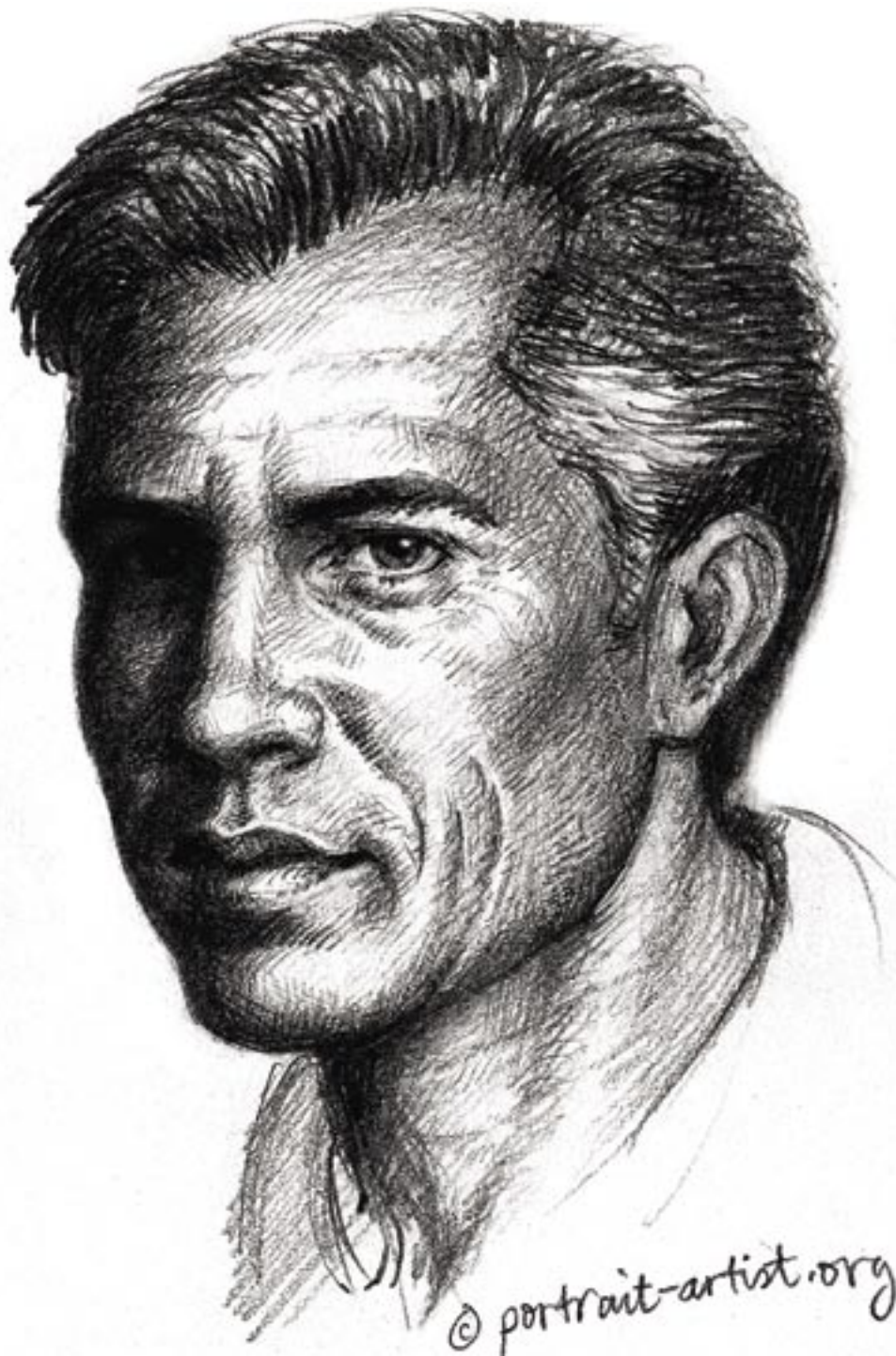


*A few examples of different kinds of eyes*

The human eye has a lot of variations, so close and careful observation is always needed to capture the specific characteristics. Here we're going to cover some generalities and a few "rules" about the eye.



Understanding the dimensions of the eye is important. In the illustration on the right, some "contour lines" have been drawn over the eyebrow, eyelid and eye.



*Middle-aged guy*—pencil drawing. Drawn from the imagination (no reference used).



“Bill”—pencil portrait, drawn from life.



*Sabine*—pencil drawing from my sketchbook. (This reproduction is approximately triple the size of the original art.) She was drawn from the imagination (not using a photo or live model for reference). Notice the hair on the top of her head—some of it had to be “drawn” in digitally, because I ran out of room on my sketch paper.