

Learn How to Draw Step-by-Step MULTIMEDIA Course

By Paul Wagner, Art Training International

Lesson 12 How to Draw People

Ever go to the park or mall or anywhere where people congregate and “people watch”? It’s quite fun if you can get away from your business or worries for just a while. You will discover a whole bunch about humans and how they behave...and you will find all kinds of stories moment by moment to inspire you if you are looking for them.

A mother tending a child, a person quietly reading a book in the corner, even a well-dressed gentleman sitting on a bench eavesdropping on a couple cuddling behind him. Stories pour from people all the time and many can be caught by your imagination.

The great thing about drawing is that you don’t really have to be limited by what you see. You can create stories even if they don’t exist. And that means you can create drawings out of nothing, out of pure imagination!

Many of the great artists in history would do just that—they would use models of people standing or sitting in just a certain way that they could use in their work—putting them in a different place, dressing them differently, all to express a story that was in their mind.

Why people are different (to draw 😊)

If you have been practicing the earlier lessons faithfully you are now ready to try your hand at drawing people. In fact, **this is where you are going to see how much you have learned**...and will likely surprise yourself if you apply it here.

We will not be drawing figures here as that is different and more complex. But drawing people from books or graphics or photos is like drawing anything else you have been drawing and you still will use the same tools and techniques.

Drawing people is a tad different from other things you have been drawing mostly because of 2 reasons:

1. Proportionately they are higher than they are wide, forcing you to pay close attention to proportions.

2. Since everyone intimately knows what people look like, you can't cheat on your lines (remember the lesson on flowers?)

But do remember that you *are* armed with all the right tools and you will do well if you employ them. You will still begin with the One Big Shape, then Secondary Shapes, then details. You will use your now-developed knowledge of measuring height vs. width, angles, triangles, midpoints, ellipses, and symmetry. And you can feel empowered because your eye is now learning how to relate points **faster and more accurately**, in the same way you learned how to read. See, it's no different! You are developing a skill, whether you have talent or not.

How long does a drawing take?

Since this is the longest exercise of all of them, I thought we should talk about your concern about how long should you spend on a drawing.

Earlier on I wanted you to focus on the basics, and not necessarily spend too much time on any one drawing. Now I want you to begin "settling down" into your drawings.

On this drawing however, be prepared to spend some time. It's going to take as long as it's going to take. If you are getting frustrated because you feel it should be going faster than relax, this is quite normal. Step away, use upside down and sideways, step back, and mostly BE PERSISTENT yet kind to yourself. If something feels wrong, study your drawing methodically and talk to yourself—WHAT is it exactly that can be improved? Keep observing, measuring and asking? You WILL spot what you need to correct.

Finally, don't fret about all the lines you cannot erase because they are too dark and you laid them down too hard too early. Just keep going. Over time and practice even these will be needed less and less.

And above all, RELAX and stay loose. Don't **be too hard on yourself** but DO be patient and persistent.

If you have been doing the exercises before this, this exercise will be truly rewarding!

Here's what you've been waiting for. It's the longest video in the series at 39 minutes, so play it when you have enough time to fit it in.

[Watch it here.](#)

And here's the picture you're going to draw as your exercise. It's called "[Eavesdropping](#)" by Normal Rockwell, one of my all-time favorite artists. Do other people drawings though, don't be content with just this one!

Last note: Notice how Norman Rockwell did the fur on the dog in the picture with his brush. You can mimic that same effect with your pencil.

OK, it's time to listen in!

To the creative artist within you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop on the 'P' and a long tail on the 'l'.

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