

# Learn How to Draw Step-by-Step MULTIMEDIA Lessons

By Paul Wagner, Art Training International

## Lesson 4 Preconceiving and Bias

The major difference between engineering and art is the left and right brains, respectively.

With engineering, the goal is accuracy and detail. Period. (OK, maybe some engineers are good artists; I'll bend a little here.)

With art, the goal is just about everything else. Every sense is used in art, and even your 6<sup>th</sup> sense comes into play. Art is about awakening the giant within (to coin Tony Robbins). It is about reaching into the life blood of the soul and pulling out amazing stories to tell.

When you are just beginning in art, there is a tendency to remove yourself from this because you are trying so hard to “get it right”. Working on the mechanics of your art can be challenging. Which is why there is a tendency to break the picture down into it's component objects and simply draw those objects—even one at a time on the paper; for example think back about the apple and the cup.

The down side to this procedure is that, although you are trying to draw what you see, your “engineering left brain” is taking you down its dark road, a place that good artists avoid going.

Here's what I mean.

## Preconceiving

### Preconceptions lock half your brain out.

We already touched on this a little bit in Lesson 2 where I was asking you to see the apple and the cup as unified entities, the One Big Shape. And then seeing you're your Secondary Shapes within that. (A *secondary shape* was an artificial shape, usually an oblong circle that you circle shapes that are not true objects, like the cup and apple without the handle). As soon as you want to discern the apple and the cup as separate items, you will be missing an important skill in learning how to draw.

The reason is simple. You will have a tendency of wanting to draw each separately rather than together. And more importantly, when you begin to draw them separately you will lose the ability keep the proportions correct.

Here's how the eye works. If you draw a very small triangle on a piece of paper, say about 1 inch or 1 cm high, it is fairly simple to duplicate the exact sized triangle next to it. But if you try to enlarge the triangle using the same proportions, or make another triangle much further away, say on a separate sheet of paper, you will find the exercise becomes more and more difficult. The eye simply has to move further and the imprint is now lost. You have to move back.

The only way around that is to move the eye back and forth between the drawing and your subject. Hint: look more at the Subject than your drawing when looking back and forth.

If you draw an apple and THEN the cup, you'll find this problem grows by leaps and bounds in trying to keep those proportions and points relating the two objects together uniform and "right".

But if you START WITH ONE BIG SHAPE as we did in Lesson 2 and find other relationship lines, your accuracy will vastly (and quickly) improve. The hands-on video will demonstrate this with a more unusual approach to what may be in your head about drawing.

As you get stuck in your preconceptions and things, there is even a bigger problem that will repress your skill-building.

## Bias

### The goal is to remove your bias and live in the NOW.

Let me explain. There is no getting away from your bias. That's the naked truth. The fact that you have ever seen one other drawing or one other painting in your life has already set up your Bias. And likely that bias became even further entrenched into you unconscious when you were looking at it with a dear friend and they said "wow that is great". Or, they said, "wow, what a piece of junk". And you were nodding in agreement.

Bingo.

You have now set the wheels of motion into gear—any other drawing or painting that reminded you consciously or unconsciously about that painting you had made a judgment upon—would now be projected into the same classification...and therefore your Bias.

I'm being severe here, I know, to make a point: you may or may not be that highly judgmental about someone else's drawing, but my exaggeration is intended to demonstrate how bias can be (and is) formed, even in the smallest nuances.

When bias (prejudice or favor) gets into your drawings, there is a tendency to get stuck. Why?

Conceptually, you'll find your compositions will start looking like someone else's drawings.

Technically, you'll find yourself saying "but I just *know* this line is right and so is this angle, but these two lines just don't intersect that way in the subject—why?".

Your answer may be in one object that should be bigger than the other and you've just not caught the condition—your **Preconception and your Bias have stopped you from seeing the whole of the drawing**. That's where you should begin, *from the whole*, working your way down to smaller relations (notice I did NOT say smaller objects).

**Preconceptions and Bias are so important in understanding that they can literally stop you from wanting to continue drawing.**

So that's why this exercise will be so important for you to complete.

[\(Watch the video here\)](#)

Below are the links to the 4 drawings that you are going to do (choose either color or black & white depending on your printer). These are different than just setting up arrangements. We're going to draw these UPSIDE DOWN. The reason for this is to **encourage Sensing** and **minimize Preconceptions and Bias**.

[Bagels, Honey & Jam \(Color\)](#)

[Bagels, Honey & Jam \(B&W\)](#)

[Fruit Bowl \(Color\)](#)

[Fruit Bowl \(B&W\)](#)

[Pasta & Tomato \(Color\)](#)

[Pasta & Tomato \(B&W\)](#)

[Vases & Candle \(Color\)](#)

[Vases & Candle \(B&W\)](#)

We'll of course **start with The One Big Shape**. Remember to keep your sketch loose and light and don't commit your lines...just erase those that you know aren't correct.

Feel the picture. Feel the lines, angles, relationship of points. Try squinting to make the picture blurry. Stay away from trying to "see" the individual objects you are drawing. That is important in this exercise.

Don't hurry, go easy and light, round and round you go (everything in life in a circular motion...)

After you do your One Big Shape, go ahead and find your Secondary Shapes—make artificial objects: Cut off the neck of that bottle, combine 2 objects to make one, cut through objects with your lines where you know they are, rather than stopping because you don't see them behind another object.

Then after you have worked your Secondary Shapes, begin working down to your Detail, always checking back with both One Big Shape and Secondary Shapes until you are certain you have them nailed down.

Then, after you think you've got a reasonable sketch, **ONLY THEN** turn both your paper and the picture upside down (right-side up ☺) to compare again. If you lightly squint, you'll find yourself blurring the picture—that will help you shut off the true objects and let you focus better on the One Big Shape and the Secondary Shapes. Your eye will catch things that you missed before and you'll find those simple changes you'll need to quickly fix so that the drawing will be much closer to your mark.

And watch the example [in the video](#).

Ultimately I'd like you to ultimately use the Left Engineering Brain as a tool but have it owned and used by the Right Artist Brain, not the other way around.

When that happens and your happily Sensing and drawing without Preconceptions and/or Bias, you will be drawing in a new way and will find a peculiar happiness that you may have been missing before.