

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

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## **Lesson 5 Comparing, Adjusting, and Improving**

If you are not yet comfortable drawing shapes, don't worry, just keep practicing. Set aside a firm time to draw, say 3 hours per week (Go on, calendar it!).

By drawing the apple and the cup multiple times, different ways to learn the One Big Shape, and secondary shapes, and by drawing the upside down pictures in Lesson 4 you now you likely now have a clear understanding of "ignoring" the objects in subject and a grasp of "un-object-ive" drawing—forcing your right brain to come on board instead of depending on Preconceptions and Bias. (we'll keep working on those).

In this lesson, I'm going to set up a slightly more complicated arrangement and introduce two tools to help you. Although it might seem trivial, 4 objects is actually an exercise that will introduce you to a common mistake. All artists fall prey to it until they can train their eyes to watch for it. I'm going to make that mistake in this exercise—and then show you a very simple tool for correcting it.

Below is the object that we are going to draw in the video.

In this exercise I don't want you to copy the photograph, it's already flat.

Instead, go to the kitchen or pantry or anywhere in the house and find 4 objects to draw. And even if they're not a "composition" together, that's ok for now; we're more interested in 3 small and one larger objects.



So following the One Big Shape, here is the concept of The Biggest Object (also known as the biggest adjustment)

Somewhat surprisingly, when you draw a group of objects, if there is a single large object (this exercise), it draws the eye more than any other object, and you will find that *that* object comes up in error more often than any other.

Why?

Because the farther your eye has to move from point to point, the more difficulty it has gauging the relationship distances. If you don't believe me, try this:

1. Draw a small simple squiggle
2. Copy it on the same sheet of paper. Easy, huh.
3. Now copy it larger and on another sheet of paper farther away from your original. Notice that now the same task becomes more difficult.
4. Don't get frustrated, because we'll talk about tools and techniques momentarily to help you.

Here are 6 strategies that will minimize your effort in overcoming this eye problem:

1. Always use only **one eye** to keep perspective. You'll have to view what you are drawing as a flat image, so you must turn off your other eye (and lose for the moment that wonderful stereoscopic vision of yours)
2. Keep your **drawings relatively small** on the paper (for now)

3. Keep the drawing **close to the subject** so your eye moves a minimum distance back and forth (if you followed the steps in Lesson 1, you are already on task for this). Balance this against number 1 above.
4. **Keep your head still** when looking at real objects like the apple and the cup (or a model!), move your head back into the same position in which you started (to maximize accuracy).
5. **Continually check point relationships** (which line crosses or aligns with another; what angle is that line or object; how high vs. how wide is that secondary shape; and so on.)
6. **Look at your subject MORE than your drawing.** Get into the habit of "watching" your subject as you draw, not your drawing. Go more with your gut instinct and try to keep your pencil on your paper.
7. Look for the smallest corrections last.

In this exercise I am going to make an arrangement with 4 objects arranged in a grouping, 3 small objects and 1 larger object to make my point. I will begin, of course, with The One Big Shape, followed by Secondary Shapes—always ignoring the actual objects in my mind until later.

As you draw, you may likely notice that the One Big Object, the teapot, is just not quite right. This is normal for students just starting out. The **largest** object or the **tallest** object, or the object **in the middle** seems to go askew first.

So it's time to introduce you to 4 techniques that you are now ready to incorporate into your practicing:

1. Eyeballing
2. Comparative Measurement
3. Stepping Back
4. Side-by-Side

## **Eyeballing**

This is a general approach to seeing relationships of objects. In short, Eyeballing is just about using a back-and-forth movement of your eyes looking at everything all at once (point relationships, angles, flows, proportions, height, width, midpoints and so on). Don't fret about all of these yet, I will introduce them to you at the appropriate times during this course. Suffice it to say that, for now, just think of Eyeballing as using common sense when comparing your drawing to the arrangement you are trying to draw.

## Comparative Measurement

Many good artists use this technique. You'll see them close one eye hold up their pencil to the open eye to "flatten" whatever it is they are drawing. Then they take 2 measurements of what they drawing: Height and Width, and use the same measurement to gauge the same proportions of the drawing on paper.

The only problem with this is your pencil may not be long enough!  
So you need a longer measuring stick. You can get them at your local office supply store but those are only 5 inches long. To get a much longer one, go down to Starbucks, order a coffee, and pick up some of their coffee stirrers (they're 7 inches long)

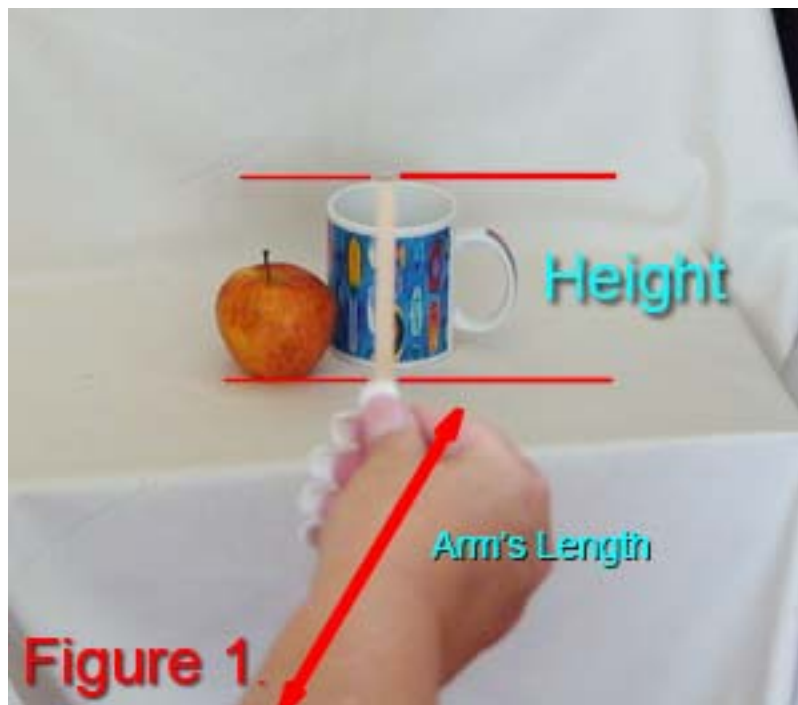
So how do you use it?

Let's start with the big picture...total width and total height

Sit down on your stool after you have drawn some small objects for practice.

Hold one end of the stick between your thumb and forefinger vertically (see Figure 1), turn the stick toward the drawing and extend your arm (yes, you can use your other arm to hold it steady if you need to).

Close one eye.

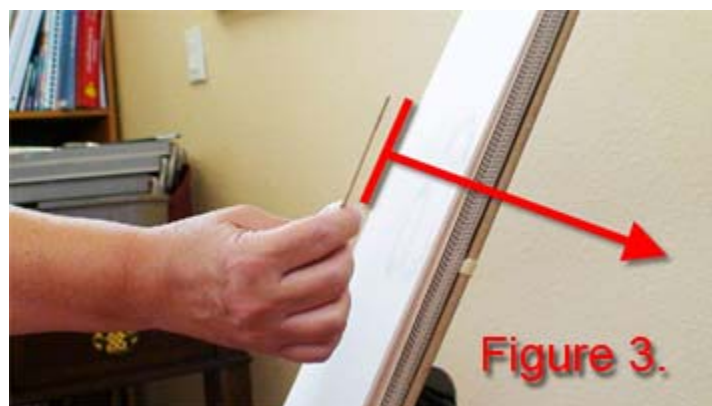


Move your pinched fingers up or down on the stick to gauge the height of all objects combined (total height). Open your eyes, and make a mark with your pencil at your thumbnail.

Next, (Figure 2) extend your arm again and this time we'll do the same exercise horizontally...only this time you won't need to mark the stick—your thumb is already on the width mark!



It's also important to notice that the stirrer measuring stick is not true vertical...it's perpendicular to the line of sight. (Figure 3)



Now, **get out of your seat**, walk behind it and face the easel. Close one eye again,

**extend your arm**, then physically move and lean your body forward or backward to get the height (marked) to match the height of the image (Figure 4)



Still keeping the arm extended, carefully twist the stick 90 degrees moving it down to horizontal. The image width should match the thumbnail mark (Figure 5).



If they don't fit the same dimensions (we're aiming for accuracy), then you can choose which one (width or length) to fix. Be careful to look over your drawing again and see WHICH object you will need to fix.

Also, if it wasn't obvious in the exercise, let me point out that if the objects you are drawing are *higher* than they are *wide* (Portrait vs. Landscape in printer terms) you can simply reverse your steps—simply do the longest width or height first to allow you to see your physical pencil mark and your thumbnail.

You'll catch on quickly enough with a little trial and error here.

One more thought. If you're really clever, you'll probably figure out that you can take the 4 steps above and turn them into 2 steps. Just try the above part first!

Here's how (one picture worth a thousand words).



## Stepping Back

After you have tried the measuring technique for Width and Height you may very well notice that because your drawing was sketched too big you simply can't use an arm's length to measure it.

In this case you'll have to get out of your seat and literally "step back" from your drawing until the longest measurement "fits" the drawing (still at arms length).

Just in case you want to know, measuring at arms length gives better reliability because your arm can't change distance when you move the stick from vertical to horizontal.

If you can't step back far enough, you can simply bend down to put your eye into the same position it was as if you were sitting.

## **Side by Side**

Here's another way to test your work. Without disturbing your display, take your paper pad off of the easel and place it next to your drawing, then sit back down in the same position, putting the eye in the exact position it was when you were drawing.

You'll almost instantly see improvements that you'll want to make.

Begin comparing again.

Start with Eyeballing your points and point relationships. Use your measuring stick and start looking for angle matches between the subject and drawing (last part of the video).

- Check the **overall** width and the height.
- Check the point relationships. That means checking the angles between points, both outside and inside the subject against the same angles on the drawing.
- Check **each object** width and height

OK, you're ready to go ahead by watching the video.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!!

[Watch the video here.](#)