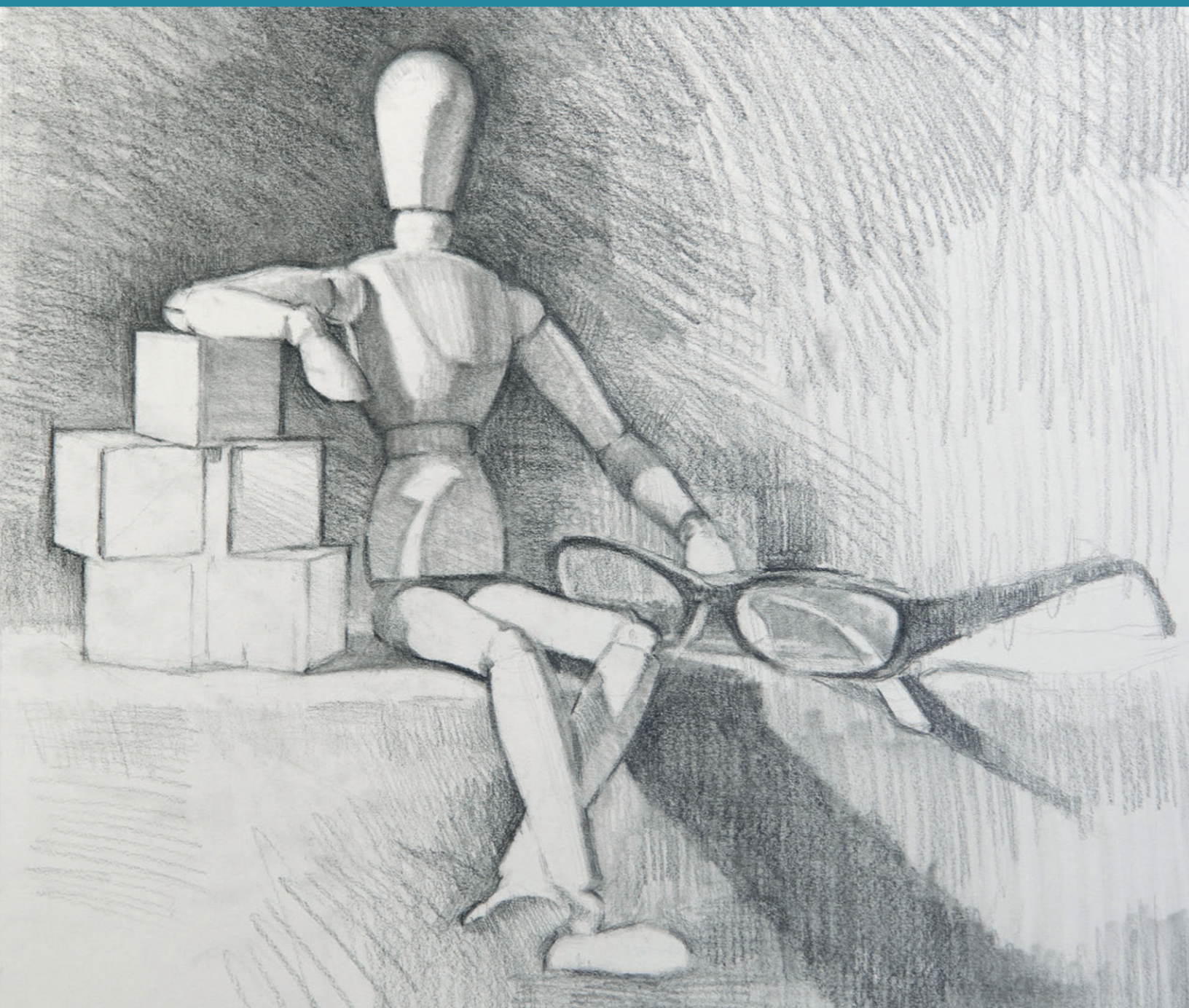


Beginning

DRAWING

A multidimensional approach to
learning the art of basic drawing

ALAIN PICARD



Beginning DRAWING

A multidimensional approach to learning the art of basic drawing



Walter Foster



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Introduction

Learning to draw is much like learning to talk. Anyone can do it, but it takes time to develop the ability to communicate. Drawing is the foundational practice of learning to communicate through a visual language.

Through drawing we develop the building blocks of this visual vocabulary, learning how to transcribe marks and techniques and gain confidence in our ability to communicate. Growth happens as we put aside what we “know” about things, and see the world anew through artists’ eyes. We discover that our powers of observation are often more trustworthy than our memory banks when describing the world around us.

If you are willing to open your eyes and your mind, then you can learn to draw. Through patient practice, your skill will develop. This happens one step at a time, often by learning one specific skill at a time. With persistent study, your drawings will begin to communicate with force and impact to the viewer. Like writers who arrange letters into words and form sentences, and musicians who hang notes on scales to release melodies and harmonies, the visual artist makes varying marks of line, tone, and color to create pictures.

Come along with me as we develop our visual vocabulary together by learning to draw. The journey is often very rewarding because practicing drawing is such great fun. I’m confident that your efforts will reap rewards and your creative voice will gain greater clarity and authority.

Now, let’s begin.



TOOLS
& *Materials*





What You'll Need

It only takes a few simple tools to begin drawing, and they can be carried with you anywhere. Some tools are a must; others are optional and can be acquired later as you build upon your drawing techniques. Here are some of the materials that will set you off on your journey of learning to draw.

GRAPHITE PENCILS: The most basic tool is the pencil. Made of lead encased in wood, pencils come in a variety of densities—from hard (H) to soft (B)—and varying thicknesses. I recommend a simple set of six shades: H, HB, 2B, 4B, 6B, 8B. The extra-hard varieties run the risk of tearing your paper when used with a heavy hand. I prefer a softer spectrum of tones beginning with HB and moving to 8B.

ARTIST'S ERASERS: Erasers are used for far more than removing unwanted mistakes. They also create highlights, lighten tone, and clean up lines. Kneaded erasers can be molded into any shape for lifting out fine details and are equally effective with graphite and charcoal. Gum erasers lighten tone and clean up unwanted lines without staining or damaging the paper. The stiffer, white, vinyl erasers erase pencil lines while keeping the paper clean.



Gum erasers



Kneaded erasers

SHARPENERS: Utility and X-Acto blades are tools for hand sharpening your pencils with a longer exposed lead that tapers slowly. I use a single-edge razor blade to sharpen my hard pastel sticks.



There are excellent electric pencil sharpeners available to save time, but I still love my little hand-held, German-made brass pencil sharpener. It's small and mobile—perfect for travel sketching. Be sure to purchase replacement blades to keep them working perfectly.

CHARCOAL: An excellent drawing tool for developing rich, velvety tones and soft edges, charcoal comes in many shapes, sizes, and densities. Vine charcoal sticks come in extra soft, soft, medium, and hard; in a variety of widths from thin to thick; and can be easily sharpened using a sandpaper block. Compressed charcoal is extremely hard and yields deep, rich blacks that are resistant to erasing. The square-shaped charcoal, called Nitram, is an excellent professional-quality stick that comes in extra soft, soft, medium, and hard.



Left to right: vine charcoal, compressed charcoal, and Nitram charcoal, with sandpaper block



White charcoal, pastel pencils, and black Conté pencil on toned paper

CHARCOAL AND PASTEL PENCILS:

Charcoal is also available in pencils for detail work. Conté pencils provide a wonderful deep black shade while white charcoal pencils are indispensable for rendering highlights on toned paper for your charcoal drawings. Additionally, you can use pastel pencils in a variety of colors and tones to add tints to your drawings.



SANGUINE PENCILS: Sanguine pencils bring warmth and softness to drawings, especially portrait sketches, because of their fleshy tint. Although sanguine tints can be acquired in Conté and pastel mediums, this oil-based pencil has a lovely way of holding its line and achieving subtle blending. Use it on cream-colored paper with white charcoal highlights for a very pleasing visual appeal.

CONTÉ AND HARD PASTELS: These square sticks come in a large variety of tints, tones, and shades, including the warm earth and flesh tones shown here. Hard pastel sticks are a degree softer than pastel pencils and considerably firmer than soft pastel sticks. Hard pastels and Conté crayons are excellent sketching tools for emphasizing tonal effects.



Hard pastels and Conté crayons

SOFT PASTELS: Soft pastels are available in a wide variety of colors, shapes, and lengths. These pastels are prone to richer application and greater smudging, giving them a painterly appearance. They are capable of yielding highly refined realism or loose impressionism. You'll want to gain proficiency and confidence with soft charcoal before moving on to soft pastel.

Soft pastels produce rich color and are well suited for blending and layering.



INK PENS: India ink pens are a convenient way to sketch with permanent ink without using a traditional pen-and-ink method. These acid-free ink pens come in a variety of pen nibs to achieve different stroke weights. They are an ideal choice when learning to develop linear techniques.



MARKERS: Markers are excellent tools for ink-based sketching. Some are dual-brush pens with a fine tip on one end and a brush tip on the other. Try ink pens that are water-based, blendable, and acid-free for use in sketching or more finished studies. Simple three-value marker drawings are an excellent way to test out design ideas.



COLORLED PENCILS: Colored pencils are wax or oil-based pigments encased in wood. Far less smudgy than pastel and charcoal pencils, they are a great option when you desire a clean color impression while retaining control of the stroke. Colored pencil can be layered and built up to create deeper, richer colors and tones.

