

Drawing Accurately by Measuring – session by Joyce Ono

Drawing accurately means you will need to measure what you are seeing and then transferring that measurement to create an appropriate scale on your drawing surface.

Warm up exercises:

1. Draw a line around half a foot long.
 - a. Divide that line in half and see how accurately you have done so by using the image of the ruler to measure your ratios.
 - b. Repeat this with lines that are of different lengths, or are horizontal if your first one was vertical.
2. Draw another line, length of your choice
 - a. Divide that line into equal thirds, see how accurately you have done so.
 - b. Repeat with lines that are of different lengths or are horizontal if your first one was vertical.
3. Repeat this until you are fairly accurate in approximating proportions.
4. Draw a square
 - a. Do this by first drawing a 45° diagonal first and then drawing a square around the diagonal.
 - b. Measure the sides of your resulting square to see how equal all the sides are.
 - c. Repeat until you are fairly accurate in drawing a square.

YouTube video on drawing accurately:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQgjZbGK8Yc>

Paul Priestly How to Draw a Still Life Accurately: Part 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zqi7S74ouqw>

Paul Priestly How to Draw Still Life Accurately: Part 2, using basic shapes. This goes too fast to do a step-by-step without stopping and starting the video.

Setting up to draw accurately:

1. Your drawing surface should not be flat on the table but upright and as much as possible, at the same angle as what you are drawing.
2. Use your pencil as a convenient measuring tool and hold it at arms length with your elbows locked straight and one eye closed. Measure from the flat end of your pencil, using your thumb to mark off the length of an object in your drawing field.
3. Select an object in your drawing field to serve as a **unit size** in your drawing. It is often best to start off with the tallest or widest object in your drawing field so you know you'll be able to fit what you are drawing on your paper. Mark off this starting object length on your paper.
4. Select another object in your drawing field and using your measuring pencil, determine what proportion it is to your first unit size, is it half the size, a third, etc.? Once you determine the relative size of the subject you are drawing to the object you selected as your unit size, now go to your drawing and determine what proportion it is to the line you drew as your unit size in your drawing. That will be the size of the second object you will draw on your paper. Note: this second object can also serve as a new unit size in your drawing.

5. Block in all the objects in your drawing by:
 - a. Measuring with your pencil, the proportion of that object relative to that which you used as a unit size.
 - i. This is a repetitive process between measuring objects in real life to measuring the objects you have marked off on your drawing.
 - ii. You use your unit size of the object you are viewing marked by your thumb on your pencil and you sight measure what another object is relative to that real object's size
 - iii. You then use that information and find the unit object in your drawing, determine what the new object's size is relative to your unit size in your drawing to then mark off the size of your new object.
 - b. Marking off all the objects lightly in your drawing by making these measurements so each object in your drawing is relative to the subject you are drawing. Use squares and rectangles or straight lines to create boxes that are proportional to the sizes of the real objects to mark off the sizes of the objects in your drawing.
6. What you select as your first unit of measure may change depending on what you are drawing, e.g., when drawing a person, you could start out using the head as a unit of measure to get the relative length of the figure and to mark off the length of the limbs, placement of the waist, etc. However, when working on the features of the face in that same drawing, you could use the eye as a unit of measure to identify the size and location of the nose, ears, mouth, etc.
7. **Don't be discouraged!** Like any skill, it takes practice and will become somewhat automatic as you train your eyes (actually your brain) to see size relationships accurately. You will work out strategies that work for you in getting proportions and angles that you see onto your drawings.
8. Drawing accurately is a form of problem-solving—very good for your brain!!
9. Other tools and approaches for drawing accurately:
 - a. Using a ruler rather than your pencil to make measurements.
 - b. Using a tool called a proportional divider to take painstaking measurements (I will have one to demonstrate). See page 3 for several inexpensive ones available at Amazon.com.
 - c. Using an angle measuring tool made by two strips of stiff material held together by a fastener (Judy Schroeder of Schroeder Gallery in Tustin makes these for students in her drawing/painting classes). This is useful for doing buildings and can replace having to find vanishing points, especially when you have multiple vanishing points and most of them are off your drawing paper. There is a commercial one available (see page 3).



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Quint Graphics 7" True Angle Ruler



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DESCRIPTION PRODUCT Q&A REVIEWS (0)

Quint Graphics 7" True Angle Ruler

Model Number: Q106

Define measure make lock and transfer any angle in seconds. Just rotate the blades and read the dial. This precision tool features a tolerance of 5/1000ths of an inch and a patented 360° fully adjustable protractor/bevel square. Lifetime warranty.

Product Dimensions:

- Outside Dimensions:
- Product Weight: 0.13 lbs.



Reference photo for the YouTube video by Paul Priestly. We will try to do this drawing together in class.