



Sketching to Learn: Contour Drawing

This activity fosters metacognition, heightens awareness of artistic decisions, and challenges students to look critically and carefully.

Grade Level: Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12, Grades K-2

Subject Area: Fine Arts, Visual Arts

Activity Type: Engagement Activity

CONTOUR DRAWING

A contour line is a continuous unbroken line that defines the outside shape of an object.

Challenge students to do the following:

Look carefully at the outside shape of an object, and follow it carefully with your eyes.

Now, without looking back down at your paper, draw the contour. Don't think about the object you are drawing; just allow your pencil to follow the same slow movement of your eyes as they focus on the contour. Your line should show every little bump, dip or turn. If your lines are smooth and straight, you are not going slowly enough!

Don't worry about what your drawing looks like; it may not be recognizable! That's okay. It should look a little funny!

Blind contour drawing improves hand-eye coordination, which is important for making many kinds of art.