



My Hand by Richard (age 12)

Give Yourself a Hand

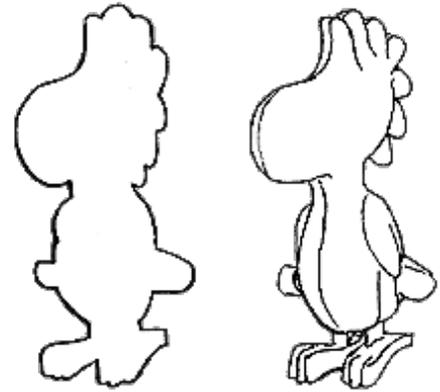
Drawing has a long history dating back to prehistoric times. Some of the earliest evidence we have of human activity is the marks and symbols left by our fore bearers on cave walls.

Drawing is one of the most important skills an artist learns how to do. Drawing allows the artist to show us his or her own special way of seeing the world. If two artists drew a picture of the same thing, each drawing would look different.

Learning to draw well requires lots of practice and concentration. When you draw, you will discover things that you usually don't see at first glance. Drawing helps your eyes to stand still and look intently. Learning how to draw then is really a matter of learning "learning how to look" closely at things. In this activity, you will get to practice your looking and drawing skills.

Materials You Need: 9 x 12 inch white paper (or a sketchbook); a pencil or thin black marker; and two pieces of masking tape.

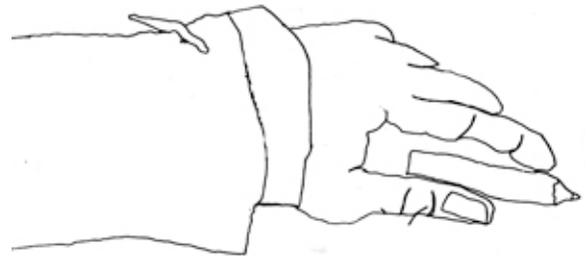
Getting Started: Find a table that you can work. Tape your paper down on the table in front of you. If you are using a pencil, make sure to sharpen it before you begin. The kind of drawing you will be doing in this activity, is called "contour line" drawing. Contour lines show both the outline and the inside edges of things (as in the drawing of Woodstock on the right below). When you do a contour line drawing, you need to show both the outside edge and the inside edges of your subject.



Outline on the left; Contour lines on the right

The Project: Let's begin by doing a contour drawing of your hand. Hold your free hand in a comfortable but interesting position in front of you (rest your elbow on the table). Look closely at the edge of your hand and place your pencil on the paper. When you feel that your eyes and your pencil are at the same point, begin drawing by slowly moving your eyes around the edge of your hand while your pencil follows along on the paper. When you come to the end of a line, pause and carefully pick up your pencil and find another edge on your hand to draw. Continue with the new line until you come to its end.

Don't forget to draw the inside edges and shapes in your hand too, like your knuckles and fingernails. Remember to always concentrate when you are drawing! Also, remember to keep looking back and forth between your subject and your paper while you draw. If you draw a line you're not happy with, you don't have to erase it. Just draw a new line over the top of it. You will probably finish your first hand drawing in a few minutes. When you do, sign and date your drawing. If you're not satisfied with your drawing, try doing another one and spend more time looking at your hand. You'll get better at it, the more you practice!



My Hand by Sergio (age 12)

Want To Do More? Fill a large sheet of paper (12 x 18 inches or larger) with drawings of your hand in different positions. Look around your house and choose other familiar objects to draw in contour line (e.g., your bicycle, gloves, plants, and so on). Try these visual push-ups if you're looking for other ways of practicing your drawing skills.