

# Art and maker class: Still-life drawing techniques for beginners



# Overview

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## About this class

Learn basic drawing techniques to create your own still-life drawing of an apple or similar shape fruit.

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## Materials

You will need these simple materials and tools to complete the project:

- 2 x pieces plain white A3 paper
  - 1 x lead pencil (HB or 2B)
  - 1 x eraser
  - 1 x Still life object like an apple or a similar shaped fruit, for example a tomato or orange
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## Alternate materials

- A4 copy paper, or any other matte paper
  - Biro, pen or marker
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## Set-up

- A comfortable place to sit
- A table or a board, book or hard surface to lean on to draw
- A surface for your still-life object to be placed so that you can easily see it, like the kitchen bench, shelf or table.

# Glossary

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## Art terms

### **Still-life drawing**

A drawing that focuses on still objects. The objects are not living and don't move, such as household objects, flowers or fruit.

### **Sketching**

A rough or unfinished drawing.

### **Hatching and cross hatching**

A shading effect by drawing closely spaced parallel lines. When lines are placed at an angle to one another, it is called cross-hatching.

### **Continuous line**

A line which is unbroken from the start to the end of the drawing.

### **Contour**

An outline of the shape of an object.

### **Three-dimensional**

A three-dimensional object is solid rather than flat.

### **Proportions**

Refers to the size relationships between objects.

### **Reference marks**

A temporary mark or line set at a specific distance, in a specific direction to permit accurate measurement.

### **Perspective**

Gives a three-dimensional feeling to a flat image such as a drawing.

### **Horizontal**

Left to right.

### **Vertical**

Up and down.

**Tone**

Tone refers to the degree of lightness or darkness of an area in your drawing.

**Dimension/s**

Is the length, depth, or height of an object.

**Form**

Is the shape of an object.

**Cast shadow**

A shadow cast by an object.

# Instructions

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## Step 1: Warm-up exercise

Warm-up by drawing circles using varying pencil pressure. This exercise is to help you understand the varying marks you can make using your pencil.

1. Start by drawing the lightest mark you can make – sketch lightly in a continuous motion until a circle appears.
2. Using this technique, draw two more continuous circles using medium and heavy pressure.

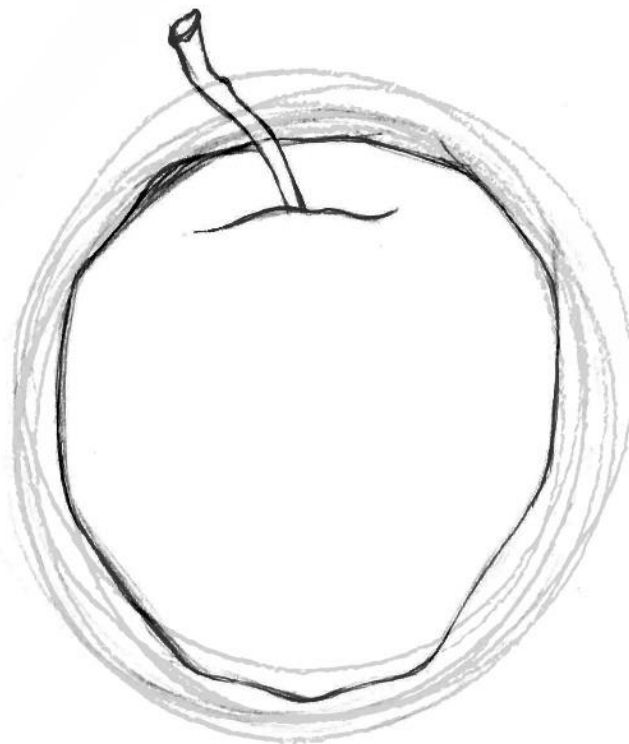


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## Step 2: Creating form



1. Place your apple above your drawing paper in front of you on your table. It is preferable to place the apple on a separate piece of white paper - this will emphasize the cast shadows.
2. Draw a continuous circle using light pressure. Aim to draw your circle as big as your apple or larger. Leave enough room for your apple's cast shadow and stem.
3. Once you have sketched in a light circle shape, imagine your apple within this circle. Lightly sketch its true shape as if you were carving away the inner edge of the circle.
4. Next, observe the shapes within the outer contour or outline of the apple. This includes the curved line of the hollow at the top of the apple, at the base of the stem, and the stem itself.
5. Think of your stem as a cylinder with an oval base and an oval or circular top depending on its position. Draw these two shapes in relation to each other and connect them by drawing the sides of your stem.
6. Once you're happy with your sketch, redraw your shape with medium pressure. See image below.



## Step 3: Light and shadow

Now that you have completed your line drawing, let's look at using light, shadow and tone to create the illusion of three-dimensions in your drawing. We want to express the height, width and depth of the apple.

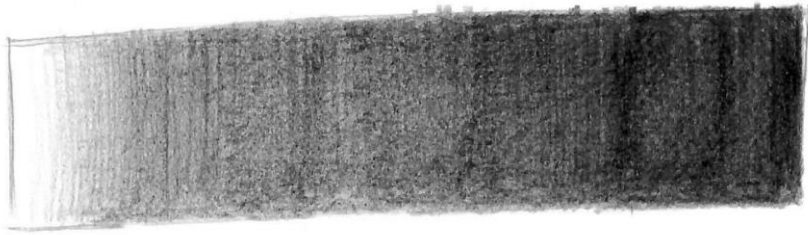
To help you understand tone, look at the example below using a ball of clay. Imagine the clay is the earth and the light source, like a lamp or a mobile phone torch, is the sun. The area that is closest to the sun is the lightest while the area that's furthest away from the sun is the darkest. You can use this principle to understand how to shade your apple to create the illusion of a solid shape.



Look at your apple and squint your eyes a little to see the tonal variations. You will see a combination of gradual tones with fuzzy edges. With gradual tones, you can't tell where each tone, or the different shades of light and dark, begin or end. There are also tones with hard edges, such as the shadow on the table.

Because the ball of clay is on a flat surface, it also casts a shadow away from the light. Sometimes there may be more than one light source which means there will be more tones on your object and more cast shadows.

## Step 4: Tone

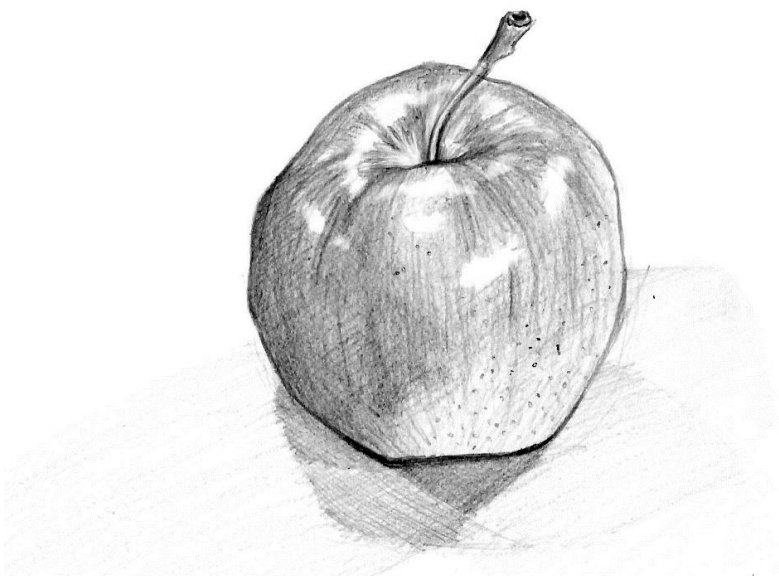


1. Create a tonal scale starting from light to dark. Using your pencil and light pressure, draw a long rectangle divided into five squares. Leave the first square as the white of your paper.
2. Start shading in the second box using the side of your pencil's tip with a light, even pressure. Shade the third box with a mid-tone using more pressure. Do the same for the fourth and fifth boxes, applying more pressure as you go. The fifth box should be the darkest tone.
3. Practice blending the tones so that you have an even tonal gradient ranging from lightest to darkest.

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## Step 5: Shading your apple

You are now going to use what you learned in the tonal exercise, to shade the apple and give it form and dimension. Notice the lines on your apple, radiating from the base of the stem around the curve of the apple to the base. These lines appear to be straight from a front-on perspective and then gradually curve outwards to the left or right. Shade your apple in these directions.



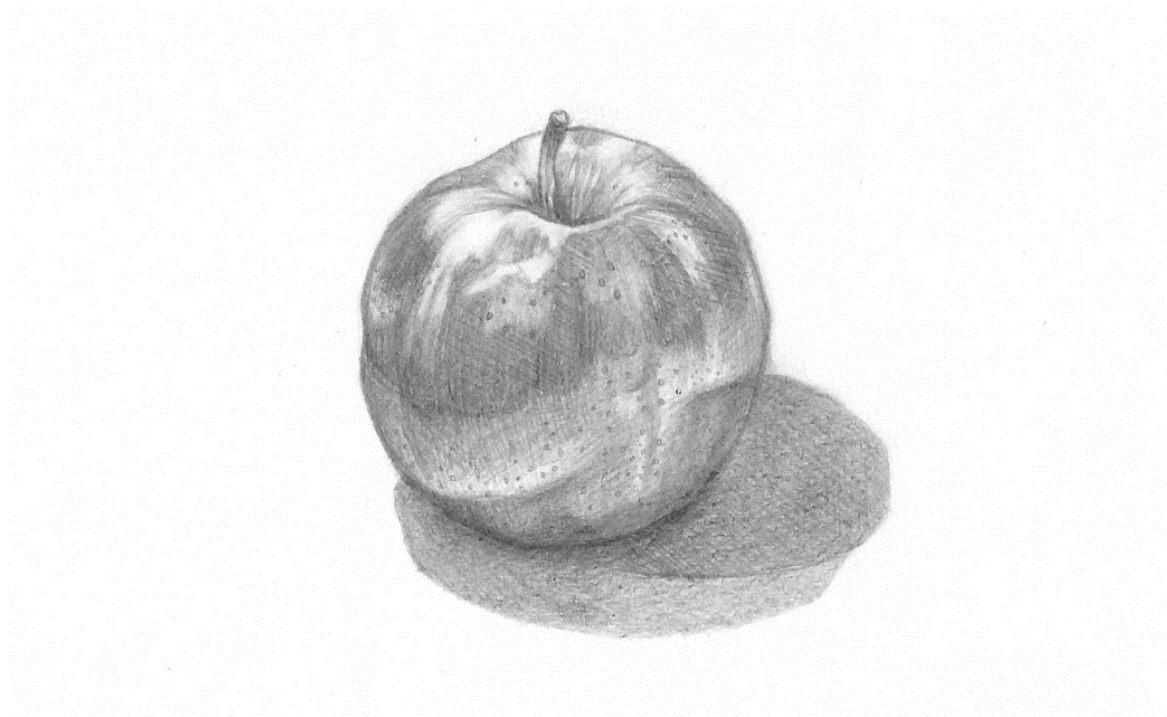


1. When shading, start with a light pressure no matter how dark or light your tones are.
2. Leave the brightest areas of the apple as the white of your paper. If you start off with the darkest shade, it's hard to go lighter.
3. Add areas of extra layers of shading for darker areas on your apple. If you can locate individual patches of tonal variations you can draw it very lightly as a shape before shading, just remember that shadows have soft edges.
4. Don't forget to add the shadows your apple is casting on the table. Sometimes shadows will also have tonal variations within them.

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## Step 6: Adding detail

Let's focus on the details of our apple - details are surface textures, patterns and fine lines.



1. Shade in the tonal variations of your stem.
2. The area where your apple touches the table and the base of the stem is the darkest. Add layers or shading here to increase the darkness of the shadows.
3. Tidy up any messy areas and bring out any highlights with your eraser. You can try using your eraser as a drawing tool in reverse. Use the sharp point or corner to remove pencil shading to create lighter areas as you would with the pencil tip.

## Finished result



Your final result may look a little different to this, but don't give up.

Here are some tips to help you improve your still-life drawing skills:

- Practice, practice, practice
- Try drawing some more unusual shapes using what you've learned today
- Try shading in coloured pencil

Happy drawing.

**Don't forget to check out our other City of Sydney Art and maker classes online at [whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/programs/city-of-sydney-art-and-maker-classes-online](https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/programs/city-of-sydney-art-and-maker-classes-online).**

