

BASICS: PENCIL TECHNIQUE

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An Art Skills Tutorial

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VALUE — SHADES OF GRAY

There is a life beyond the Number 2 pencil. It is worth getting some good quality drawing pencils at an arts and craft store.

The softer the pencil, the darker the value you will be able to achieve.

Ebony is a very satisfactory pencil to use. There is no number associated with this pencil, but it is approximately equivalent to a No. 5 pencil.

Look for pencils designated with 4B, 5B and 6B.

For a big difference from your everyday 2H pencil, start with the 6B pencil.

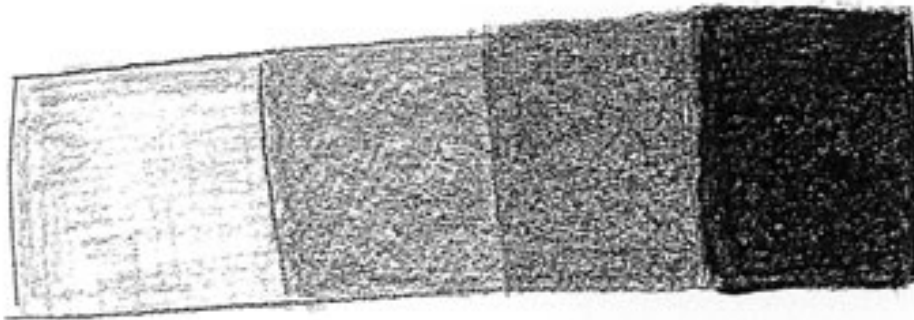
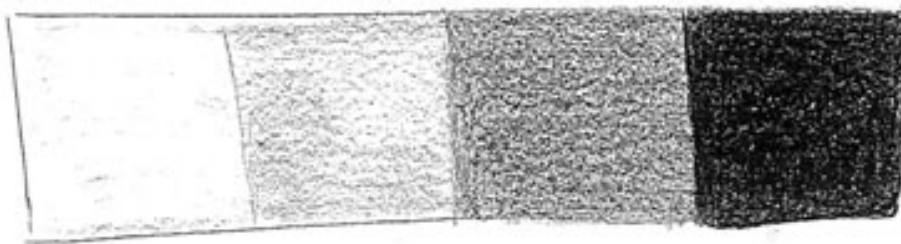
Experiment with the pencils.

VALUE EXERCISE

- *Make a rectangle and divide it into four squares.*
- *Create a rectangle for each different pencil you have.*
- *Shade the first square as lightly as you can.*

Holding the pencil in the middle and lightly will help you not to press.

- *Now shade the last square as dark as your pencil will allow. You will need to do layer over layer.*
- *Next, create two more values between the lightest and darkest.*

*6B**Ebony**HB2*

This will give you an idea of the range you have to work with. Most of us, before educated awareness, only work within a narrow range.

You will find that even the lowly 2H pencil will enable you to expand your horizons.

LINE EXERCISE

- *Draw one continuous line with one of your pencils. Start very lightly; continue with greater pressure, until your line is as dark as possible within the limitations of your tool. Repeat this with each of your pencils, noticing the potential of each.*
- *Draw the same straight line, but this time start with the point of the pencil at the light end of your new line. Slowly tip your pencil as you press continuously harder; by the time you reach the end of the line you will be using some of the side of the pencil for a broader and darker line.*
- *Try this again, making a wavy line this time. Try to create a wider line when you dip down and a thinner one when your pencil reaches the top of the wave.*



6B

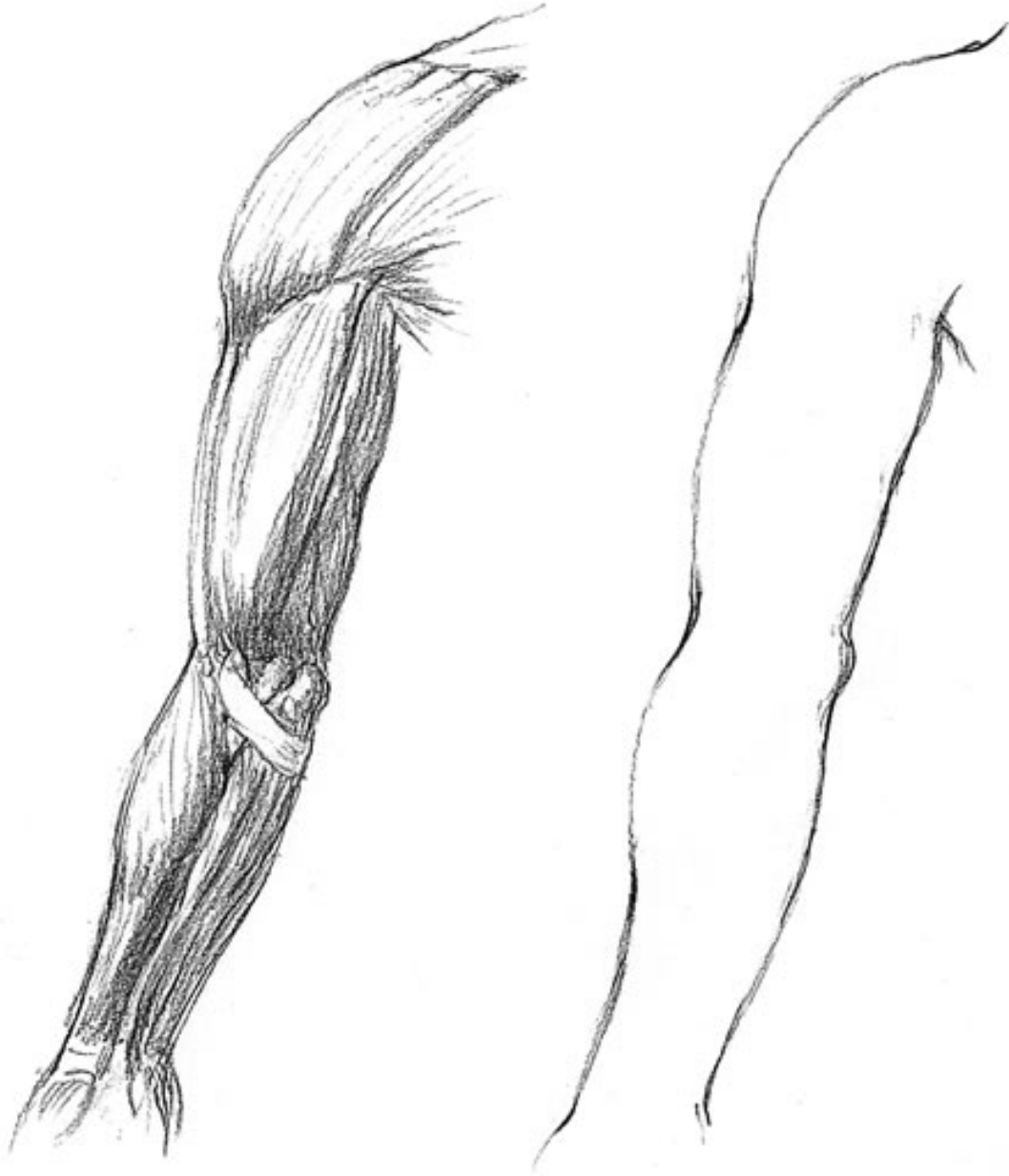


Ebony



HB2

Do this as many times as it takes to be able to do it smoothly.

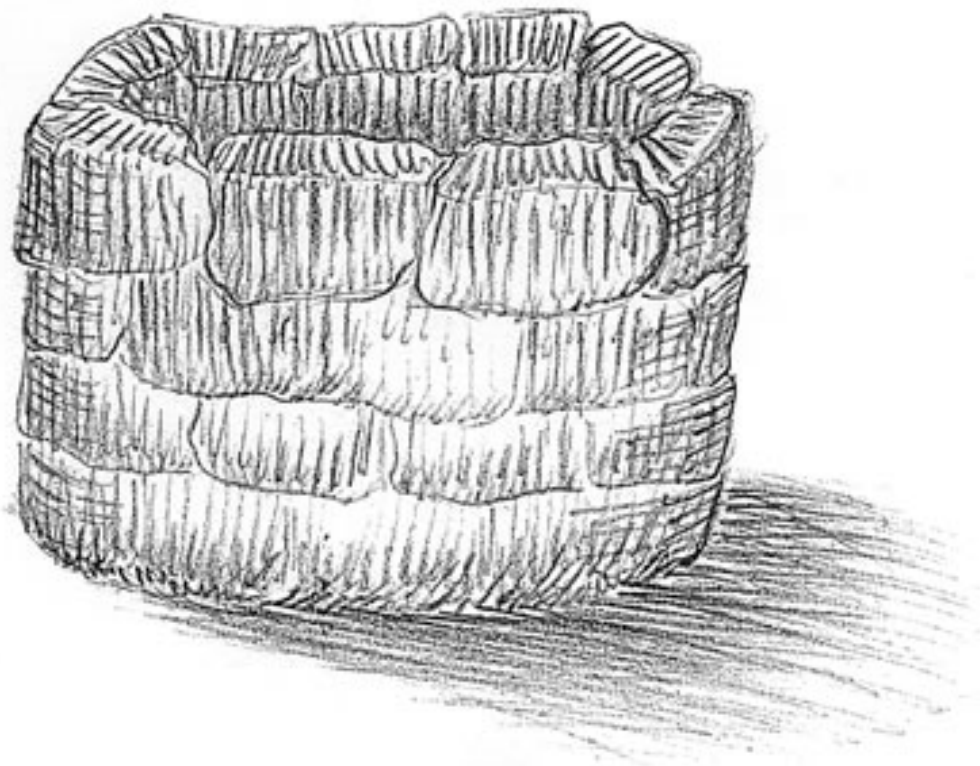


Thickness and density of line can be used to indicate indentations and overlapping.

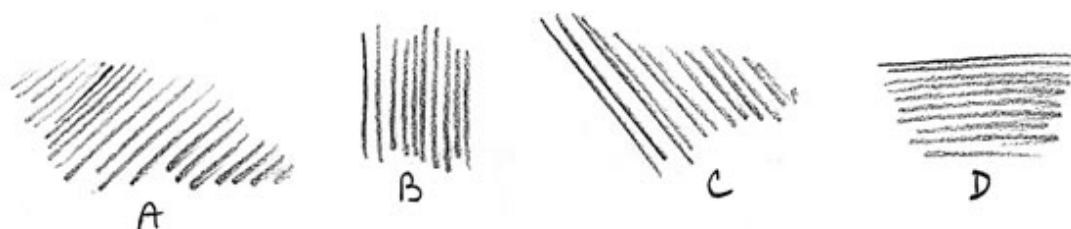
HATCHING AND CROSS-HATCHING

By making a series of lines placed closely next to one another you can create a value over a broad area. Directionality will be a choice that you will make when you use this technique in context.

To create a denser value you can overlap series of parallel lines.



HATCHING EXERCISE



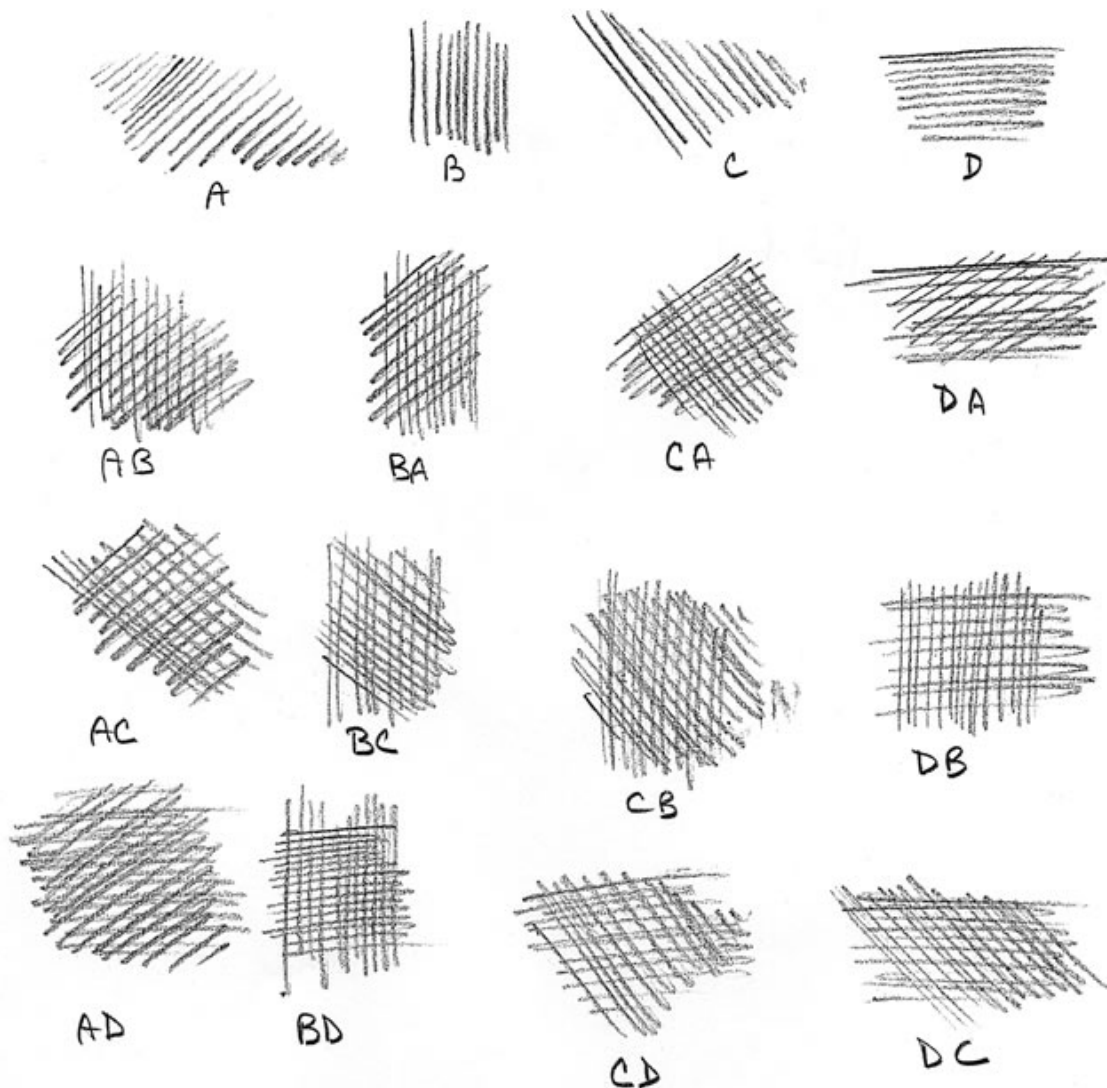
Try these out for yourself on a full sheet of paper. Give yourself some room to play.

Start with the four directions shown at the top of the page.

Copy each in a column three more times.

After you have done this, you will overlap on each hatching in the other three directions, ending up with a sheet full of various cross-hatchings.

THE COMBINATIONS

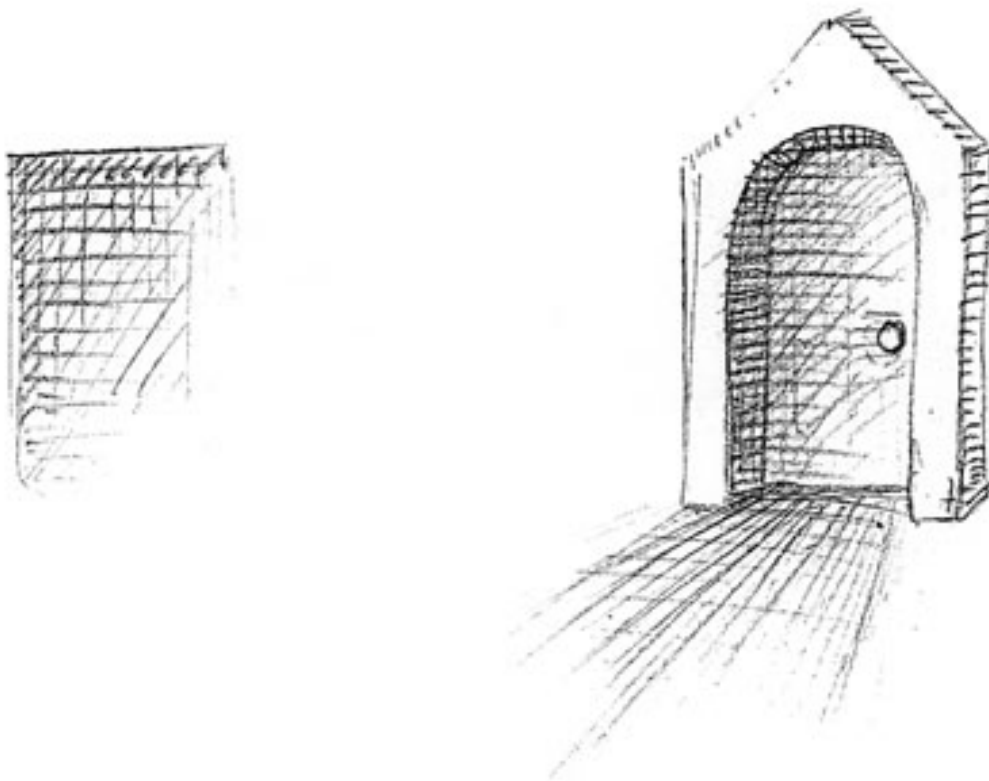


Lines have directionality. Use it to your advantage to suggest information about your subject.

NON-PARALLEL HATCHING

Hatching does not have to be parallel.

Try tapering off the density by letting up on the pencil for a lighter line.

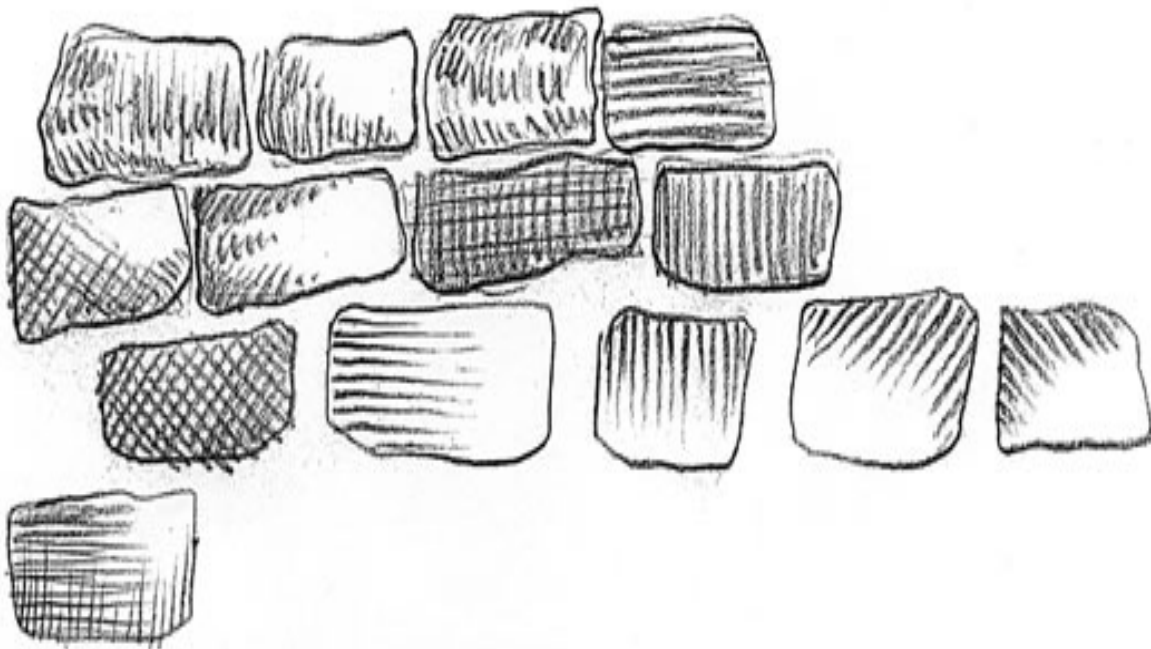




The value can be made lighter by making the lines farther apart.

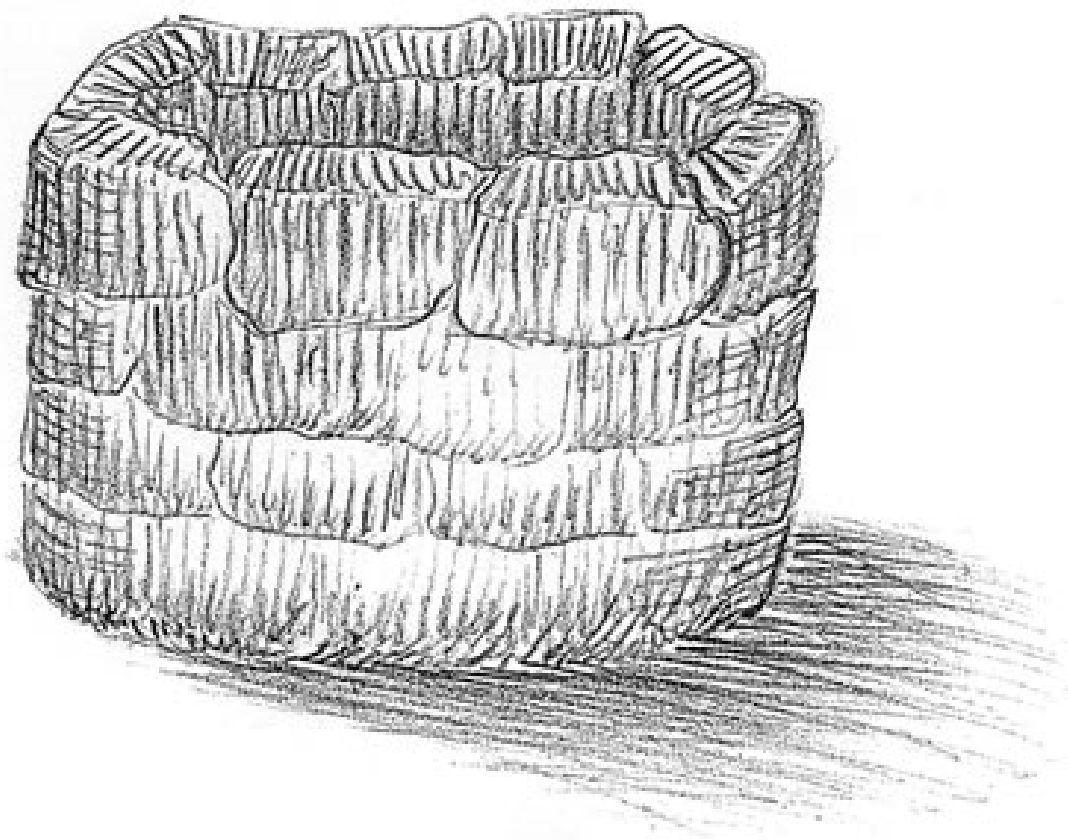
HATCHING FOR TEXTURES AND PLANES

Use variations of hatching to indicate various textures and planes.



The bricks can be made to appear flat or protruding, darker and lighter, recessed in one area more than another by using various combinations and concentrations of hatchings.

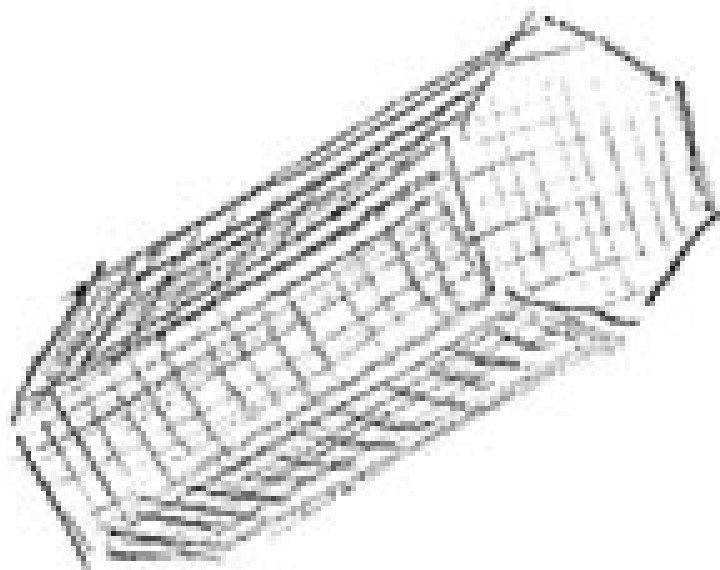
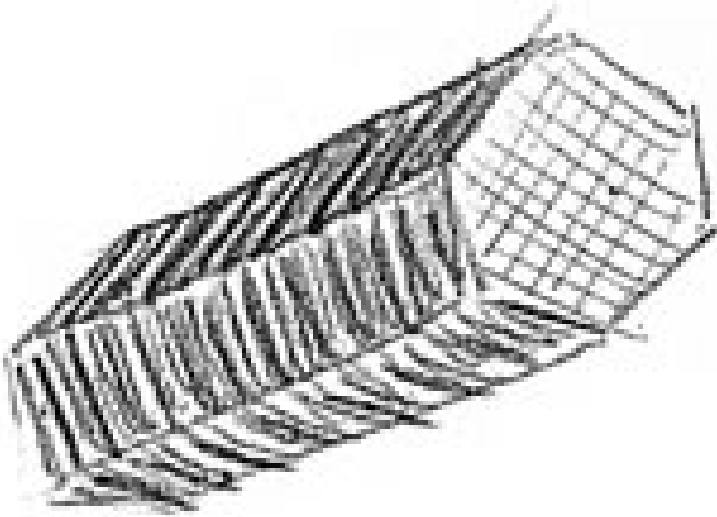
In the brick well notice the direction of the hatching for the top of the bricks, the surface of which is parallel to the ground.



The vertical lines in the bricks facing us indicate a vertical surface.

HATCHING FOR VOLUME

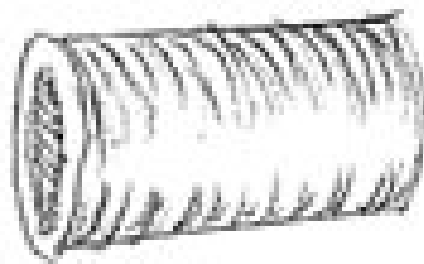
The two hexagonal prisms also show how hatching can be used to indicate volume.



CONTOUR HATCHING

Contour hatching is used for rounded figures. One of the ways to build up the illusion of roundedness is to hatch with parallel lines that “go around” the figure by curving.

See Volume lesson for more examples of contour hatchings on cylinders.

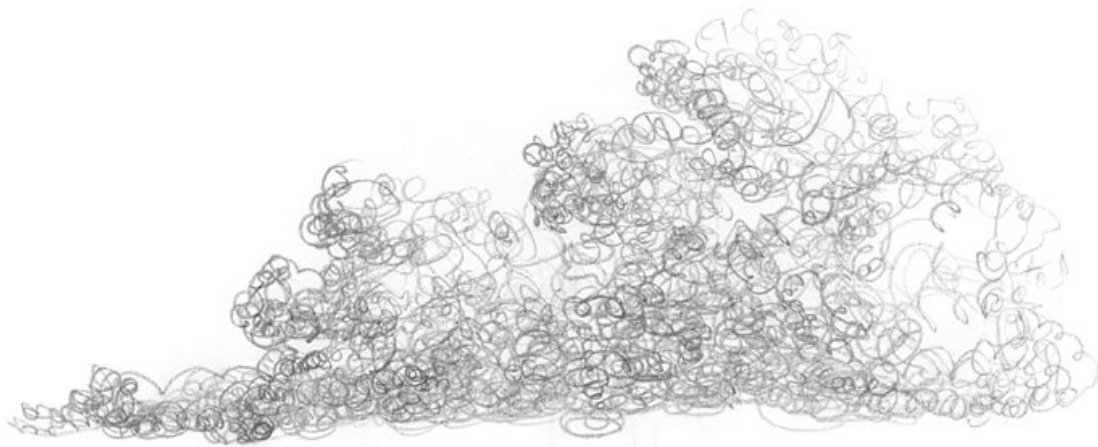


Vincent Van Gogh was a master at using pen and ink to sculpt his subjects. It is worth taking some time to look at his drawings.

They are almost schematic in nature.

SCUMBLING AND STIPPLING

Scumbling and stippling differ from hatching by their lack of directionality, which can be an advantage for certain subjects. This technique can be used when you wish to avoid sharp edges. Clouds, smoke, and bushes seen from a distance are some examples of subjects that would lend themselves to this technique.



Scumbling is the building up of tone with curlicues, around and around.

Stippling is the use of dots or small spots to build up tone.



Artists from late 19th century France, calling themselves Pointillists, are the most famous practitioners of this technique in painting.

Look up George Seurat and be sure to find a book that shows details of his paintings.

OTHER VARIATIONS OF STROKE

In time you will discover the use of new variations of stroke in response to what you see.

The next three pages have examples of trees, each with its own personality.

The goal was to capture the movement, texture and shapes created by the tree, both positive and negative.

These were done quickly and are a lot of fun to do.

Try some, blurring your eyes and looking.

You can never draw each leaf.

You always have choices of what you select to record.







DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT ... ROCKS



The nature of these rock specimens called for some directional strokes, for relatively smooth flat planes, as well as scumbling for the bumpy scraggly areas.

