

Exercise walk-through

3.7

Drawing the Figure and Portrait

AP Drawing

Composition and the picture plane

Composition is a **named** drawing skill

– and the **first thing a scorer sees**.

- what you **crop out** is as expressive as what you keep
- the **rule of thirds** beats dead centre
- design the **negative space** : the empty shapes are shapes you **drew**
- keep the **figure-ground** relationship **readable**

Test crops with a **viewfinder** (or a phone) **before** committing to the page.

Change the **viewpoint** : eye level is neutral – low or high angles make ordinary subjects **fresh**.

Drawing the figure and portrait

The figure combines **every** drawing skill at once: **proportion**, gesture, form and likeness.

The adult figure is about **7.5 heads** tall, and the body's halfway point is near the **hip**, not the waist.

Drawing the figure, and the head

start with gesture

and the **big masses** – ribcage, pelvis, skull

features come later

features and fingers come last, once the masses are placed and in proportion

why that order

a beautifully drawn eye in the wrong place cannot be rescued; a well-placed mass can always be refined

checking likeness

use **landmark distances**, not memorised rules alone – **every face bends the average**

hands and feet

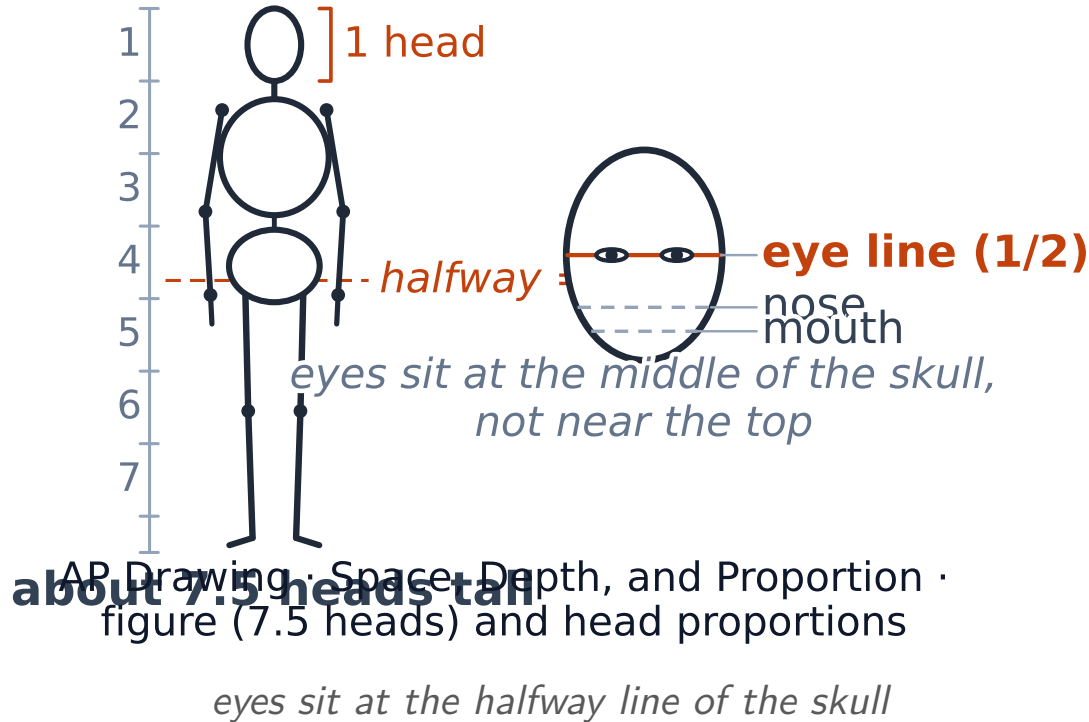
draw them as **simple geometric mittens and wedges first**, then divide into parts

the same logic

large shape first, subdivision second – exactly as with the box in perspective

“Big to small” is one habit applied everywhere in this unit: masses before features, mittens before fingers, boxes before objects.

Drawing the figure and portrait, in detail



The figure combines **every** drawing skill at once: **proportion**, gesture, form and likeness.

Worked example – checking a perspective drawing

Before you render, run this check

Every depth line must actually **aim at its vanishing point**. Lay a ruler along each one and follow it to the horizon. Perspective errors are the **easiest** mistakes for a scorer to spot – and the cheapest to fix, **before** you spend three hours shading.

Include one strong **observational space** – an interior, a stairwell, a street. It demonstrates the *space* skill **unmistakably**.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 The classic adult figure is about how many heads tall?

[1]

☐

A 5

B 7.5

C 10

D 6

2.2 Where do the eyes sit on the skull, and what is the common beginner error?

[2]

Exercises 2.1-2.2

2.1 The classic adult figure is about how many heads tall?

[1]

☐

A 5

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2.1 B

- about 7.5 heads

2.2 Where do the eyes sit on the skull, and what is the common beginner error?

[2]

2.2

- at the halfway line of the skull; beginners place them too high, near the top

Exercise 2.3

2.3 What should you draw before features and fingers?

[1]

3 Studio & portfolio tasks

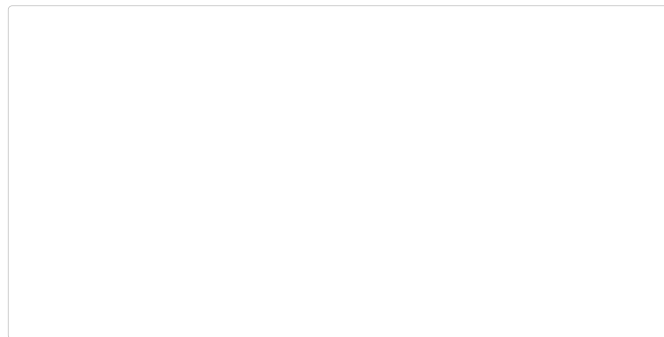
3.1 Make a **proportion study** of a figure and a head.

(a) Draw a standing figure ~7.5 heads tall, masses before detail.

[3]

(b) Draw a head with the eye-line at the halfway point.

[2]

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing. It occupies the central portion of the page below the instructions.

3.2

() Draw a hand or foot as a simple geometric shape first, then divide it.

[2]

Exercise 2.3

2.3 What should you draw before features and fingers?

[1]

3 Studio & portfolio tasks

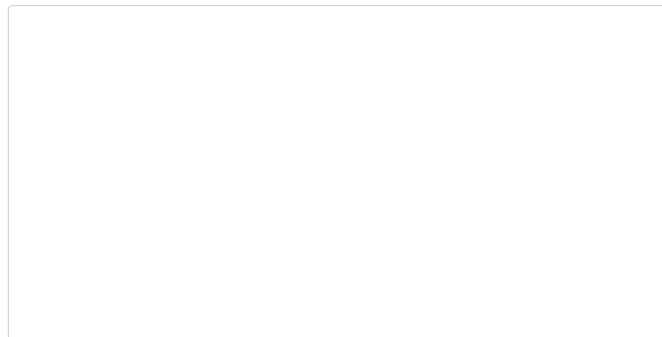
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2.3

- the gesture and big masses (ribcage, pelvis, skull)

3.1

- figure ~7.5 heads with hip at halfway; masses established first; head eye-line correct;

Full solution 2.3

2.3

- the gesture and big masses (ribcage, pelvis, skull)

3.1

- figure ~7.5 heads with hip at halfway; masses established first; head eye-line correct; features placed on the map, not floating

3.2

- a simple mitten/wedge base shape; divided into believable parts