Course Companion

AP Drawing

Every topic handout in one volume

全部专题讲义合集

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Line and Mark-Making

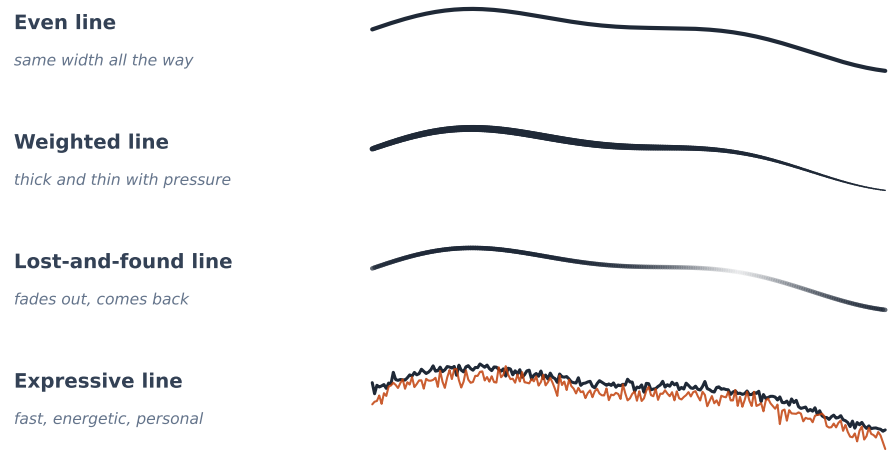
AP Drawing

Line Quality

Why it matters. Around 1654 Rembrandt drew a young woman asleep with a loaded brush and brown ink, in perhaps a dozen strokes. A single broad sweep makes her body; one dark flick is the shadow under her head; much of the figure is blank paper. The drawing is about 25 cm high and still convinces viewers that she is breathing. That is the power of a decided mark: each line does one job, and nothing is fussed over. This unit is about making marks that work that hard.

Line quality 线条质感 is how a line looks and feels. The AP Drawing rubric names **mark-making** 笔触 first in its list of drawing skills, and line is the most basic mark.

- A line can be thick or thin, dark or light, smooth or rough, fast or slow.
- A **weighted line** 轻重线条 changes thickness along its length. Press harder where a form turns away from the light or carries weight.
- **Lost-and-found lines** 虚实线条 fade out and come back. The viewer's eye completes the missing edge.
- Confident lines come from the shoulder and elbow, not only the fingers.



The same edge drawn four ways: an even line, a weighted line, a lost-and-found line, and a fast expressive line

Line direction carries feeling: horizontal lines feel calm, vertical lines feel firm, and diagonal lines feel active. Examiners read line quality instantly, so practise until your lines look decided, not timid.

Contour Drawing

A **contour line** 轮廓线 traces the edges of a form – the outer edge and the inner edges made by folds, creases, and overlaps. Contour drawing is slow, careful looking.

- Match the speed of your eye moving along the edge with the speed of your pencil.
- In **blind contour** 盲画轮廓 you draw without looking at the paper. It feels strange, but it trains pure observation.
- **Cross-contour lines** 横截轮廓线 travel across the surface of a form, like latitude lines on a globe. They describe volume, not edges.
- Overlapping contours create instant depth: one edge passing in front of another says "this is closer".

Contour studies make strong process pages for the Sustained Investigation because they show real observation skill.



Gesture and contour from a master study: line records form in one continuous look

Gesture Drawing

Gesture drawing 动态速写 captures the energy, movement, and weight of a subject in seconds – before any detail.

- A gesture drawing takes 30 seconds to 3 minutes. Draw the whole subject at once with big, loose lines.
- Look for the **line of action** 动势线 first: one curve that summarises the movement of the pose.
- Gesture asks *what the subject is doing*, not what it looks like.
- Long drawings usually start as a gesture: energy first, structure second, detail last.

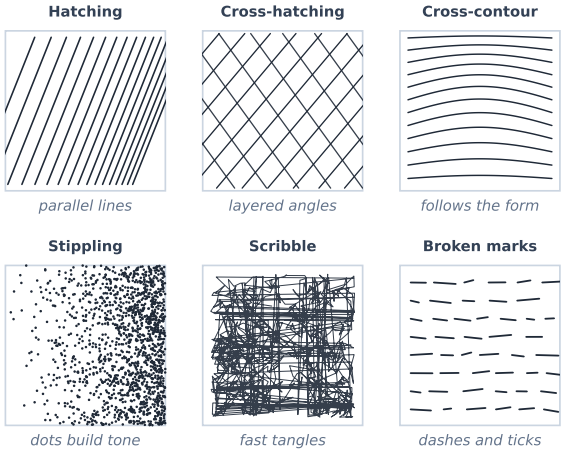
Daily gesture pages build speed and confidence, and they photograph well as evidence of practice.

Hatching and Cross-Hatching

Hatching 排线 builds tone with parallel lines. **Cross-hatching** 交叉排线 layers a second set of lines at a new angle on top.



Dürer built these hands from fine parallel hatching and cross-hatching; where the lines sit closer and cross, the tone darkens and the flat marks turn into rounded form



Six ways to build tone with marks; closer and denser marks read as darker value

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- Closer, darker lines read as darker **value** 明度; wider spacing reads as lighter value.
- Each cross-hatched layer deepens the tone step by step – build darkness gradually.
- Curve the lines around the form (cross-contour hatching) so the shading also describes volume.
- Keep one angle inside one plane; change the angle when the plane changes, and edges stay crisp.
- Pen-and-ink drawing depends on hatching, because ink has no grey: value comes only from line density.

Stippling, Scribbling, and Alternative Marks

Beyond hatching there is a whole vocabulary of marks – dots, tangles, dashes, smears – each with its own texture and speed.

- **Stippling** 点画 builds tone from dots: dense dots read dark, sparse dots read light. Slow, but very controllable.
- **Scribble** 乱线 marks are fast tangles of line – lively and good for fur, foliage, and energy.
- Dashes, ticks, and broken marks suggest texture without outlining every detail.
- Marks can be **additive** 加法 (putting material on) or **subtractive** 减法 (lifting material off with an eraser).
- A classic experimentation page: one subject rendered in four different mark systems.

Texture and Surface

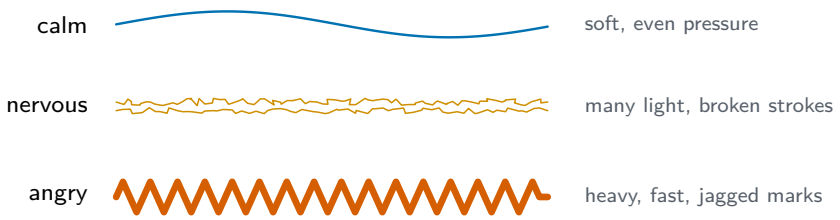
Surface 画面质感 is a named AP drawing skill: the physical texture of the drawing and the drawn illusion of texture work together.

- **Actual texture** 实际肌理 is the real surface of the work – rough paper, layered charcoal, collage. **Implied texture** 视觉肌理 is drawn illusion.
- **Frottage** 拓印法 (rubbing over a textured surface) transfers real texture into a drawing.
- Paper **tooth** 纸纹 changes every mark: the same pencil reads differently on smooth and rough paper.
- Contrast of textures – smooth skin against rough cloth – makes both read more strongly.
- Build texture with the logic of the material: short strokes for fur, long strokes for hair, broken marks for stone.

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Expressive Mark-Making

Marks carry emotion. The same subject drawn with angry, calm, or nervous marks tells three different stories.



The same line, three moods.

- **Expressive lines** 表现性线条 exaggerate speed, pressure, and direction to communicate feeling, not just to describe form.
- Käthe Kollwitz's heavy charcoal and Egon Schiele's tense contours show how the marks themselves carry the meaning.
- Choose the mark to match the idea: soft graphite for quiet subjects, aggressive ink for conflict.
- **Distortion** 变形 and exaggeration are legitimate drawing decisions when they serve your intent – "accurate" is not the only goal.
- A personal mark vocabulary is part of your artistic **voice** 个人风格. Examiners look for it across the whole portfolio.

Reading a master's marks. In 1888, in Arles, Vincent van Gogh made reed-pen drawings of fields and gardens in brown ink. Look closely and each zone of the landscape has its own mark: short dashes for stubble, dots for a distant field, curling strokes for trees, long parallel lines for sky. There is almost no shading in the usual sense - the **change of mark** separates near from far and one surface from another. When you write about your own mark-making, use the same habit: name the mark, where it is used, and what it describes ("tight stippling for the smooth stone, loose scribble for the moss").

Studio exercise. Divide a page into nine squares. Fill each with a different mark (dots, dashes, cross-hatching, scribble, contour lines, and so on) at three densities. Then draw a small landscape using **only** marks from the page - no blending.

Exam tips

- **Line quality is judged at a glance** – one page of confident, varied strokes tells a scorer more than an hour of timid rendering. Warm up before every serious drawing.

- **Show the systems, not just the results**: a portfolio image of hatching, stippling, and cross-contour studies is direct visual evidence of the *mark-making* skill the rubric names.
- **Photograph marks close up.** A detail shot of your best passage of marks proves a skill that a full view only suggests.
- **Blind contour and gesture pages belong in your process images** – they show observation and practice, exactly what the Sustained Investigation rubric asks to see.
- **Match marks to meaning in your written evidence**: one sentence like "scratchy graphite lines echo the anxiety of exam season" links technique to idea, which is what scorers reward.

Common mistakes.

- Drawing with short, hairy, repeated strokes ("chicken scratching") instead of one confident line.
- Using the same line weight everywhere, so nothing comes forward or turns away.
- Hatching in random directions that fight the form instead of following it.
- Outlining every shape first and then shading inside it - the outline stays visible and flattens the form.
- Smudging everything with a finger, which hides the marks that show skill.

Practice.

1. Explain how line weight can make the near edge of a cup look closer than the far edge.
2. A student's gesture drawings are slow and stiff. Give two changes to their method.
3. Describe how cross-contour lines can show the form of a curved surface.
4. Name three different marks and the texture each could suggest.
5. In Van Gogh's reed-pen landscapes, how is distance shown without shading?

Answers.

1. Make the near edge thicker and darker, and the far edge thinner and lighter; heavier lines read as closer.
2. Set a short time limit (30 seconds to 2 minutes), and draw from the shoulder with one continuous line following the line of action rather than outlines.
3. Lines drawn across the form follow its curve, like lines of latitude on a globe, so their bending shows how the surface turns.
4. Example: stippling for smooth stone or skin, short broken dashes for grass, long flowing curves for hair or water.
5. By changing the mark: bigger, bolder, more spaced marks in the foreground, and smaller, finer, closer marks in the distance.

Vocabulary card meanings

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line quality: How a stroke varies in weight, speed, and pressure. implied texture: A surface that looks rough or smooth but is only drawn, not built up.

Value, Light, and Form

AP Drawing

The Value Scale

Why it matters. In the 1880s Georges Seurat made drawings in black conté crayon on rough paper that contain **no outlines at all**. The crayon catches only the tops of the paper's grain, so the darks sparkle with white, and figures appear and dissolve purely through value - a dark back against a light wall, a pale face against shadow. If you can make a drawing work with value alone, you understand light. This unit gives you the tools.

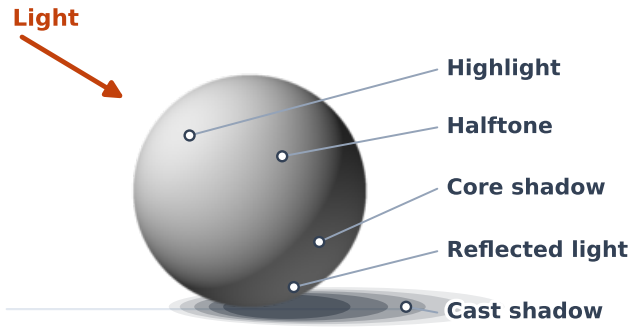
Value 明度 is lightness and darkness – the backbone of drawing, because we see form as light before we see colour.

- A **value scale** 明度阶 runs from white through greys to black. Drawing a smooth 9-step scale is the classic control exercise.
- Most beginners draw too light and use too narrow a range. Push the darks so the drawing uses the full scale.
- **High-key** 高调 drawings use mostly light values and feel airy; **low-key** 低调 drawings use mostly dark values and feel heavy or dramatic.
- **Local value** 固有明度 is how light the object's own surface is; lighting is how much light falls on it. Keep the two ideas separate.
- **Squint** 眯眼 at the subject: squinting removes detail and shows the big value shapes.

Light Logic: How Light Describes Form

One light source creates a predictable pattern of light and shadow. Learn the pattern, and any form becomes drawable.

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One light source, six zones: highlight, light, halftone, core shadow, reflected light, and cast shadow

- The six zones: **highlight** 高光, light, **halftone** 中间调, **core shadow** 明暗交界线, **reflected light** 反光, and **cast shadow** 投影.
- The core shadow is the darkest band on the form, where the surface turns fully away from the light.
- Reflected light bounces back into the shadow side – but it is always darker than any lit halftone.
- The cast shadow is darkest and sharpest where it meets the object, then softer and lighter further away.
- Shadow edges tell the story: hard edges mean a sharp turn or a cast shadow; soft edges mean a gradual turn.

> **Worked example (diagnosing a sphere).** A student's sphere looks flat. Reading it zone by zone finds two faults. First, the reflected light on the shadow side is as bright as the halftone, so the shadow side "glows" and the ball turns into a disc; darken the reflected light until it is clearly below every lit tone. Second, the cast shadow is one even grey with an outline; make it darkest and sharpest where it touches the ball, then lighter and softer toward its far end. With only these two changes, the form turns and the ball sits on the table.

Rendering Form

Rendering 塑造 means building smooth, believable volume – turning flat shapes into spheres, cylinders, and boxes.

- Every complex subject simplifies into **basic forms** 基本形体: sphere, cylinder, cube, cone. Render those first.

- Work dark-to-light or light-to-dark consistently; jumping around destroys the value structure.
- Blend with intention: a **blending stump** 擦笔 smooths values, but preserved marks often read stronger than over-blending.
- Keep the lit side and the shadow side clearly separated. Form collapses when halftones creep into the shadow.
- A drawing of white objects (eggs, cups, cloth) is the classic rendering test: all the value comes from light alone.

Chiaroscuro and High-Contrast Drawing

Chiaroscuro 明暗对照法 ("light-dark") uses strong value contrast for drama – the language of Caravaggio and Rembrandt.

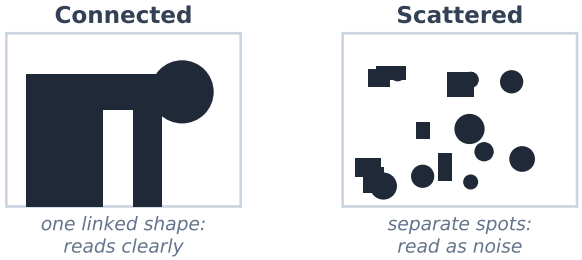


Seurat's conté-crayon portrait is built from soft tone alone, with almost no outline; the rough paper catches the crayon to give velvety greys

- A single strong light against deep shadow pushes the subject forward and sets the mood.
- **Tenebrism** 暗色调主义 is extreme chiaroscuro: most of the image sinks into darkness while one area blazes.
- Save the strongest contrast for the **focal point** 视觉焦点 – contrast attracts the eye first.
- Charcoal and ink wash suit chiaroscuro because they reach rich, deep darks quickly.
- Working on **toned paper** 有色纸 with black and white media makes the light logic explicit.

Tonal Composition and Notan

Notan 明暗构成 is the design of light and dark shapes. A drawing works or fails at thumbnail size, before any detail exists.



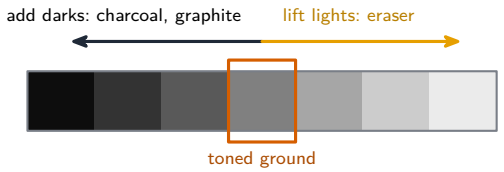
notan: light vs dark shapes before detail

Reduce the scene to two or three values: connected value shapes read clearly; scattered spots read as noise

- Reduce the scene to 2-3 flat values. If the pattern still reads clearly, the composition is strong.
- **Thumbnail sketches** 小稿 (5-8 cm) let you test several value plans in minutes.
- Group your values: many small lights scattered everywhere feel noisy; connected value shapes feel designed.
- Place the darkest dark against the lightest light at the focal point.
- A clear value hierarchy – one dominant value, one secondary, one accent – organises the whole page.

Toned Grounds and Subtractive Drawing

Starting from a **toned ground** 有色底 lets you draw in both directions: darker with media, lighter with an eraser.



Start in the middle: add darks, lift lights.

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- Cover the paper with an even charcoal or graphite tone, then **lift out** 提白 the lights with an eraser.
- **Subtractive drawing** 减法素描 treats the eraser as a drawing tool – pulling light out of dark.
- A **kneaded eraser** 可塑橡皮 moulds to any shape: dab for soft lights, drag for soft strokes; a hard eraser cuts crisp lights.
- Toned or grey paper gives a ready-made middle value: you add only the darks and the white highlights.
- The mid-tone start forces value decisions early – nothing can hide behind white paper.
- This process is visible **experimentation** 实验 with materials – exactly what the CED asks you to document.

The white-object study. Place an egg, a white cup and a crumpled sheet of white paper on a white cloth, lit by one lamp from the side. Because everything is the same local colour, every change of value you see comes from **light**, not from the object. Before shading, squint and find the five zones on the egg (highlight, light, core shadow, reflected light, cast shadow), then make a three-value notan thumbnail of the whole group. Only then render. Compare your finished drawing to the value scale: if the darkest dark is not near the bottom of the scale, push it.

Exam tips

- **Full value range is a score signal.** Scorers see weak, grey-on-grey drawings constantly; a confident black-to-white range stands out immediately.
- **Get the core shadow and reflected light right** – they are what separates students who understand light logic from students who copy photos.
- **Include one white-object study** in your practice images: value control with no local colour to hide behind is unmistakable visual evidence of the *light and shade* skill.
- **Photograph dark drawings carefully.** Charcoal darks crush to a black mush in bad light; recheck the value range on screen before submitting.
- **Keep your notan thumbnails** and submit a page of them as a process image – planning evidence directly supports the Sustained Investigation rubric.

Common mistakes.

- Stopping at a middle grey: no true blacks and no clean whites, so the drawing looks weak and flat.
- Making reflected light as bright as the lit side, so a sphere turns into a disc.
- Outlining the cast shadow and filling it with one even tone.
- Drawing two light sources by accident (copying a photo with a flash plus room light).
- Blending everything smooth, so every surface - metal, cloth, skin - looks the same.

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Practice.

1. List the five value zones on a lit sphere, in order from the light side.
2. Explain why a cast shadow is darkest and sharpest where it touches the object.
3. A student's portrait uses only three greys, all in the middle of the scale. Suggest two fixes.
4. Explain what a notan thumbnail is and why it is useful before a long drawing.
5. Describe how a drawing on toned paper uses the paper itself as a value.

Answers.

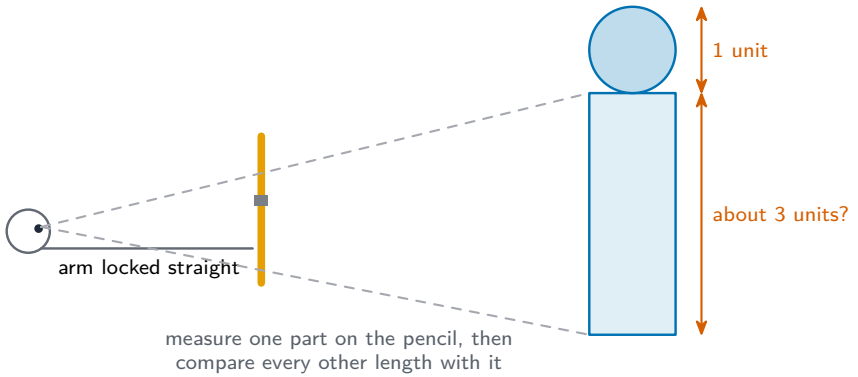
1. Highlight, light (halftone), core shadow, reflected light, cast shadow.
2. Very little light can reach the area right next to the contact point, so it is darkest; further away, light scattered from the room softens and lightens the shadow.
3. Add the darkest darks (in the hair, core shadows and eye sockets) and keep the paper white for the brightest highlights, widening the value range.
4. A small sketch using only two or three flat values (often black and white); it tests whether the composition reads clearly as big light and dark shapes before detail is added.
5. The paper acts as the middle value; the artist draws the darks with charcoal or conté and the lights with white chalk, so less of the surface needs to be covered.

Space, Depth, and Proportion

AP Drawing

Measuring and Sighting

Why it matters. In about 1415-20, the Florentine architect Filippo Brunelleschi painted a small panel of the Baptistery in Florence, drilled a hole through its vanishing point, and asked people to look through the hole from the back at a mirror held in front. Standing in the right place, they saw the painting line up with the real building behind it. It was one of the first demonstrations that a flat picture could match the world by rules. Linear perspective, measuring and sighting are those rules - tools that let you draw what you see instead of what you think you see.



Measure one unit, then compare every other length with it.

Sighting 目测 means measuring the subject with your pencil at arm's length – the survival skill of observational drawing.

- Hold the pencil at full arm's length with a locked elbow and one eye closed: now it is a ruler and a protractor.
- Pick one unit (often the head, or a cup's height) and measure everything in that unit – **comparative measurement** 比较测量.
- Check angles by rotating the pencil to match an edge, then carrying that angle to the paper.
- A **plumb line** 铅垂线 (an imagined vertical) shows which landmarks sit exactly above or below each other.
- Draw the **envelope** 外包形 first: the big simple shape that contains the whole subject, then divide it.

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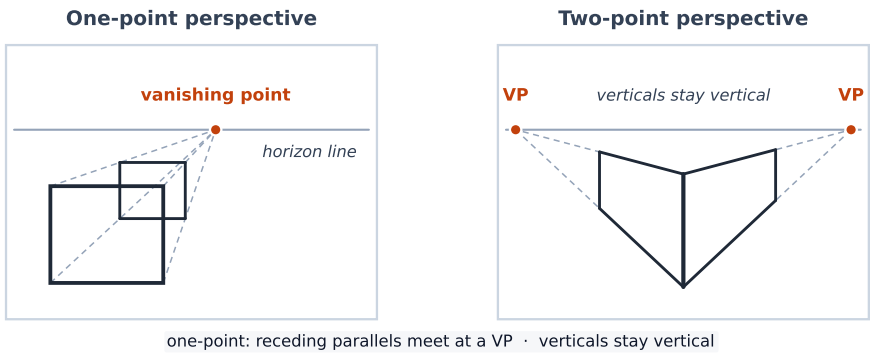
> **Worked example (sighting a standing figure).** At arm's length the model's head measures 2 cm on the pencil, and the whole figure, crown to heel, measures 15 cm: $15 \div 2 = 7.5$ heads tall. The paper allows a drawing 24 cm high, so choose a 3 cm head: $7.5 \times 3 = 22.5$ cm, with 1.5 cm to spare. Mark the crown and the heel first, then the landmarks in head units: chin at 1, nipples at about 2, navel at about 3, crotch at about 4. A plumb line from the pit of the neck lands on the ankle of the weight-bearing leg, so draw that ankle directly below it. The figure now cannot "grow" off the bottom of the page.

One-Point Perspective

Linear perspective 线性透视 treats the picture as a window. In one-point perspective, all lines going into the depth meet at a single point.



A straight desert road: its two edges appear to meet at a single vanishing point on the horizon, exactly the one-point perspective a drawing recreates to show depth



Left: one-point – depth lines meet at one vanishing point. Right: two-point – each set of edges meets its own point

- The **horizon line** 视平线 is the viewer's eye level. We look down on everything below it and up at everything above it.
- Lines parallel to the picture surface stay true; lines going *into* the scene converge to the **vanishing point** 灭点.
- Equal spaces look smaller as they recede. Use diagonals to divide receding space evenly.
- **One-point perspective** 一点透视 suits rooms, streets, and corridors seen straight-on.
- Perspective plus **overlap** 遮挡 is depth doubled: near edges cover far edges.

Two-Point and Three-Point Perspective

Turn the subject at an angle and you need **two-point perspective** 两点透视; look steeply up or down and you need a third point.

- In two-point, verticals stay vertical; the two sets of horizontal edges converge to a left and a right vanishing point on the horizon.
- Keep the two points far apart – often off the paper. Points placed too close create a fisheye distortion.
- **Three-point perspective** 三点透视 adds a vertical vanishing point: a skyscraper from below, or a street from a rooftop.
- Boxes drawn in perspective become scaffolding for everything: buildings, books, vehicles, even heads.
- Cast shadows and reflections obey the same perspective system as the objects that make them.

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Foreshortening

Foreshortening 透视缩短 is perspective applied to a single form pointing toward you – lengths compress dramatically.

- A pointing arm may appear one-third of its true length. Draw the *apparent* shape, not the length you know.
- Overlap is the key signal: the hand overlaps the forearm, the forearm overlaps the upper arm.
- Think in **cross-sections** 横截面: imagine rings around the form, like a wireframe, to feel how it turns toward you.
- Measure foreshortened lengths by sighting – memory lies, observation tells the truth.
- The classic practice piece: a figure lying down, drawn feet-first, like Mantegna's *Dead Christ*.

Atmospheric Perspective

Atmospheric perspective 空气透视 creates depth without any lines: distant things become lighter, cooler, softer, and less detailed.

- Air scatters light, so contrast fades with distance. The far mountain is a pale, flat shape.
- Foreground: darkest darks, sharpest edges, most texture. Background: a narrow value range and soft edges.
- Save full black and full white for the foreground; the distance lives in the middle greys.
- Detail density is a depth cue by itself: render the near leaf, suggest the far tree.
- Combine linear and atmospheric perspective for maximum depth in landscape drawing.



Layered mountain ridges fade with distance: atmospheric perspective cools and lightens far forms

Composition and the Picture Plane

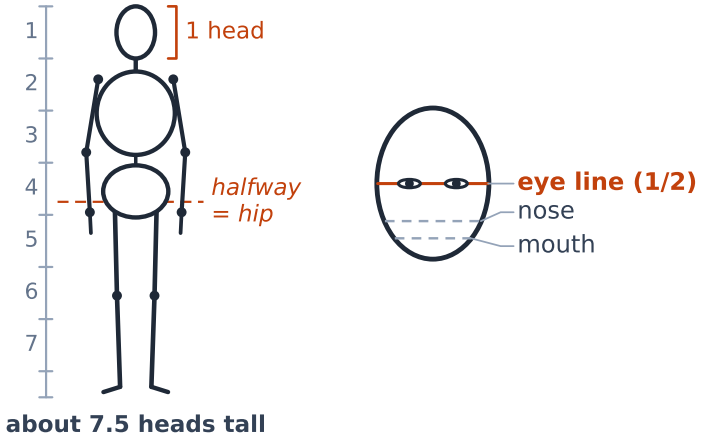
Composition 构图 – the arrangement of everything inside the picture's edges – is a named AP drawing skill and the first thing a scorer sees.

- The **picture plane** 画面 has edges: what you crop out is as expressive as what you keep in.
- The **rule of thirds** 三分法 places focal points on the third-lines – stronger than dead centre.
- Design the **negative space** 负空间: the empty shapes around the subject are shapes you drew, not leftovers.
- The **figure-ground relationship** 图底关系 must stay readable: the eye should always know what is subject and what is background.
- Lead the eye with paths – lines, value contrast, and detail act as arrows toward the focal point.
- Test crops with a **viewfinder** 取景框 (or a phone camera) before committing to the page. Change the **viewpoint** 视点: eye level is neutral; low or high angles make ordinary subjects fresh.

Drawing the Figure and Portrait

The human figure combines every drawing skill at once: **proportion** 比例, gesture, form, and likeness under one deadline.

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The classic adult figure is about 7.5 heads tall; in the head, the eyes sit at the halfway line

- The classic adult figure stands about **7.5 heads** tall; the halfway point of the body is near the hip, not the waist.
- In the head, the eyes sit at the **halfway line** 中线 of the skull – beginners always place them too high.
- Start with gesture and the big masses (ribcage, pelvis, skull); features and fingers come last.
- Check likeness with landmark distances, not memorised rules alone – every face bends the average.
- Draw hands and feet as simple geometric mittens and wedges first, then divide them into parts.

Checking a perspective drawing. Before you shade, run four checks: (1) Is there **one** horizon line, at the viewer's eye level, and do all receding lines of one set of parallel edges meet on it at one vanishing point? (2) Do vertical edges stay vertical (in one- and two-point perspective)? (3) Are the two vanishing points in two-point perspective far enough apart - usually off the page - so that the near corner is not sharper than 90 degrees? (4) Do ellipses get rounder the further they are from eye level? Most "wrong-looking" drawings fail one of these.

Exam tips

- **Perspective errors are the easiest mistakes for a scorer to spot** – check every depth line actually aims at its vanishing point before you render.
- **Include one strong observational space** (an interior, a stairwell, a street) in the portfolio: it demonstrates the *space* skill the rubric names, unmistakably.

- **Foreshortening is high-value evidence.** One convincing foreshortened limb or object tells scorers you draw what you see, not what you remember.
- **Crop like a designer.** Before starting, test three viewfinder crops and pick the one with the strongest negative space – composition is judged at first glance.
- **Use atmospheric perspective in graphite too**, not just paint: softening far edges with a kneaded eraser is quick and reads as skill.

Common mistakes.

- Drawing a box's receding edges to two different vanishing points for the same set of lines.
- Placing the vanishing points too close together, which makes a building look distorted.
- Drawing the top of a cylinder as a flat-ended ellipse with pointed corners; ellipses are always smooth curves.
- Measuring with a bent arm, so the measurements change as you draw.
- Making far objects smaller but just as dark and sharp as near ones, forgetting atmospheric perspective.

Practice.

1. A figure measures 6 head-lengths tall on your pencil. You want the drawing to be 24 cm tall. How tall should the head be?
2. Explain where the horizon line goes when you draw a room while sitting on the floor.
3. Describe what changes in an ellipse as a cup moves below eye level.
4. Give two signs of atmospheric perspective in a landscape drawing.
5. Explain what foreshortening is, with one example from figure drawing.

Answers.

1. $24 \div 6 = 4$ cm per head.
2. Low on the page, at your seated eye level; you see more of the ceiling and less of the floor.
3. The further the cup is below eye level, the rounder (more open) the ellipse becomes; at eye level it is a straight line.
4. Distant forms are lighter and have less contrast, and they show less detail and softer edges than near forms.
5. Foreshortening is the shortening of a form that points toward or away from the viewer; an arm pointing at you looks short, with the hand large and overlapping the upper arm.

Vocabulary card meanings

viewpoint: The place from which a scene is seen.

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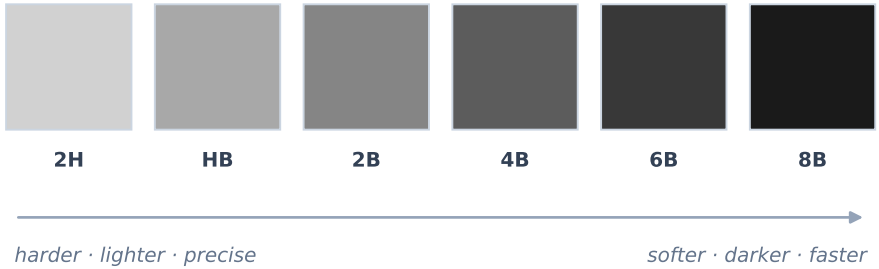
Drawing Media and Processes

AP Drawing

Graphite

Why it matters. Around 1510-11, while painting the Sistine Chapel ceiling, Michelangelo made a study for the *Libyan Sibyl* in red chalk. On one sheet he drew the whole twisting back, then the left hand again, the toes again and again, and the face several times. Red chalk let him model muscle softly and add sharp accents in the same stick. Each drawing medium has its own range of marks, values and speed, and choosing one is part of the idea. This unit compares the main dry and wet media you can use.

Graphite 石墨 is the everyday drawing medium – precise, erasable, and capable of a full (if silvery) value range.



Pencil grades: hard grades stay light and precise; soft grades reach rich darks fast

- Pencil **grades** 硬度等级 run hard to soft: 9H (palest, hardest) through HB to 9B (darkest, softest).
- Hard grades suit construction lines and fine detail; soft grades build rich darks fast.
- Heavy graphite turns shiny. For the deepest blacks, switch to charcoal or a **carbon pencil** 炭笔.
- Vary the grip: the writing grip for detail, the **overhand grip** 横握 for broad, light shading from the arm.
- Woodless graphite sticks and graphite powder cover big areas; erasers then carve the lights back out.
- A full-value graphite still life is the classic control test – worth one polished example in any portfolio.



Ingres's graphite portrait: precise hard-grade line and controlled value describe form cleanly

Charcoal and Conté

Charcoal 木炭 is fast, bold, and deeply black – the medium of gesture, chiaroscuro, and large-scale drawing.

- **Vine charcoal** 柳条木炭 is soft and dusts off easily, perfect for starts; **compressed charcoal** 压缩木炭 is dense and permanent.
- Charcoal loves toned and textured paper. Blend it with stumps, cloth, or the side of your hand.
- **Conté** 炭精条 crayons (sanguine, sepia, black, white) are waxier: crisper lines and the classic figure-drawing look.
- Work big – charcoal rewards shoulder-scale marks that graphite cannot make.
- **Fixative** 定画液 stops smudging. Spray lightly, in layers, and always with ventilation.
- White conté plus **sanguine** 血色红棕 and black on toned paper (the *trois crayons* look) is a proven portfolio classic.

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A charcoal still-life sketch: soft media build broad value shapes before detail

Ink: Pen, Brush, and Wash

Ink 墨水 commits – there is no erasing – and that is exactly why it builds decisiveness and mark confidence.

- Dip pens and fineliners build value by hatching and stippling; **nib** 笔尖 pressure varies the line's weight.
- **Brush and ink** 毛笔墨线 swings from hairline to broad stroke in one gesture – the most expressive line tool.
- **Ink wash** 淡彩 (diluted ink applied in layers) works like watercolour: light washes first, darks last.
- A waterproof line under wet washes keeps its edge; a water-soluble line bleeds – two different looks, both useful.
- East Asian **ink painting** 水墨画 treats the single loaded brushstroke as a whole discipline of control.
- Mistakes become decisions in ink: incorporate them or design around them – strong material for the process journal.

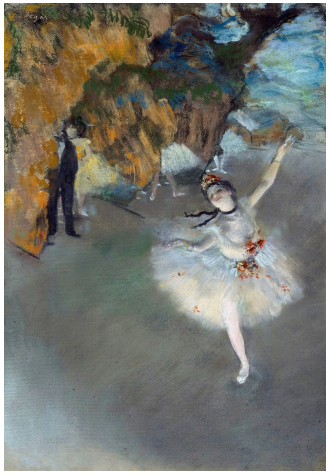


Rembrandt pen and brown ink with wash: committed line and layered tone without eraser

Colored Pencil and Pastel

Colour enters drawing through **dry colour media** 干性彩色媒介 – layered, luminous, and fully allowed in the AP Drawing portfolio.

- **Colored pencil** 彩色铅笔 builds colour in transparent layers; **burnishing** 压光 (a heavy final layer) fuses them into a glossy, solid surface.
- Grey a colour down by layering its **complement** 互补色 instead of reaching for black – the shadows stay alive.
- **Soft pastel** 软色粉 is almost pure pigment: paint-like colour applied with drawing gestures, blended or left in strokes.
- **Oil pastel** 油画棒 is creamy and smudge-resistant; layered, it can be scratched through – **sgraffito** 刮画法.
- Toned paper unifies pastel work: let the ground colour breathe between the strokes.
- Value still rules. Get the values right and almost any hue works; get them wrong and no hue can save the drawing.



Degas pastel: soft colour media build light and form with drawing gestures

Paint and Printmaking as Drawing

The AP Drawing portfolio welcomes **painting** 绘画 and printmaking – when mark-making and drawing skills lead the work.

- Monochrome painting (a **grisaille** 灰调单色画 in oil, acrylic, or watercolour) is drawing with a brush: value, edge, and gesture.
- Watercolour over a drawn line keeps the drawing visible – the line carries structure, the wash carries light.
- A **monotype** 独幅版画 (paint on a plate, printed once) gives painterly, unrepeatable drawing marks.
- **Relief prints** 凸版画 (linocut) and **intaglio** 凹版画 (drypoint, etching) are mark-making systems: every value is built from cut or scratched lines.
- Choose the process because it serves your inquiry – then say so in the written evidence.
- If the work's visual language is line, tone, and mark, it belongs in Drawing; if it is colour-shape design, the 2-D portfolio fits better.

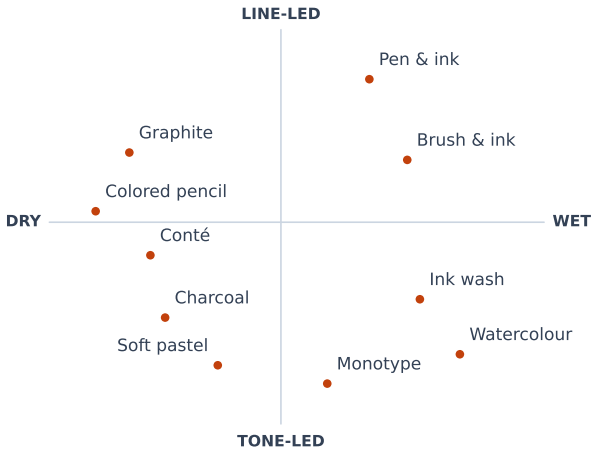
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Rembrandt etching: printmaking as drawing – every value built from scratched lines

Mixed Media and Experimental Surfaces

Combining media and preparing your own grounds turns the surface itself into a drawing decision.



Where the media live: dry to wet, line-led to tone-led – mixed media combines corners of this map

- Classic pairs: ink line over wash, charcoal over an acrylic ground, pastel over watercolour, collage under drawing.

- A **resist** 防染法 (wax, masking fluid) protects the lights; **gesso** 石膏底料 lets wet media sit on almost any support.
- Draw on non-white supports: kraft paper, old book pages, maps, fabric – the ground becomes part of the meaning.
- Test combinations on scraps first and glue the tests into your journal – perfect experimentation evidence.
- Keep layering stable enough to photograph well: heavy, glossy buildup can glare under lights.
- The CED's **synthesis** 综合 of materials, processes, and ideas is exactly this: media choices that embody the idea.

Sketchbooks and Daily Practice

The **sketchbook** 速写本 is the engine of the course: daily low-pressure drawing compounds into skill – and into portfolio evidence.

- Short daily sessions beat rare marathons. Twenty focused minutes a day transforms a year.
- Fill pages with studies: hands, cups, corners of rooms, colour tests, and copies of master drawings.
- Date every page and add one-line notes – a dated sketchbook *is* documentation of growth over time.
- A **master copy** 临摹 (Dürer, Rubens, Kollwitz, Hokusai) teaches a mark system from the inside; label it clearly as a study.
- Photograph strong sketchbook spreads properly: process images are legitimate Sustained Investigation images.
- Treat some pages as experiments you expect to fail – the CED rewards visible **practice** 练习, experimentation, and revision.

Testing a medium before committing. Make a one-page "media test sheet" for each new material: a value scale, three different marks, one blend, one erasure or lift, and how it behaves on two different papers. Label each test. The sheet takes twenty minutes, saves ruined drawings, and is itself good process evidence for the portfolio, because it shows you **experimented** with the material before using it.

Exam tips

- **Name materials precisely in written evidence** – "compressed charcoal and white conté on toned paper" reads as expertise; "pencil and stuff" reads as guesswork.
- **Show at least two media families** across the portfolio (for example graphite plus ink wash): range of material control is easy, visible evidence.

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- **One ink piece is worth including** – the medium's no-eraser honesty shows decisiveness that scorers recognise instantly.
- **Fix charcoal before photographing.** A smudged transit mark across a finished drawing is a silly way to lose the craft impression.
- **Sketchbook spreads photograph beautifully as process images** – pick spreads that show tests and notes, not just finished mini-drawings.

Common mistakes.

- Using only an HB pencil, so the darkest dark is a shiny mid-grey.
- Working charcoal on smooth paper that cannot hold it, or fixing it so heavily that the darks go flat.
- Blending coloured pencil with a finger instead of layering and burnishing.
- Adding ink wash without testing it first, so it buckles the paper or bleeds.
- Choosing a medium by habit, not by what the drawing needs to say.

Practice.

1. Explain the difference between a 6H and a 6B pencil and when you would use each.
2. Why do artists often draw on a mid-toned paper with charcoal and white chalk?
3. Describe how to build a rich dark in coloured pencil without using black.
4. Give one advantage and one risk of using ink wash.
5. Explain how a sketchbook can be evidence for the AP portfolio.

Answers.

1. 6H is hard and light, good for light guidelines and fine detail; 6B is soft and dark, good for deep shadows and expressive marks.
2. The paper supplies the middle value, so the artist adds only the darks (charcoal) and the lights (chalk), which is fast and makes form strong.
3. Layer complementary colours and a dark blue or brown, pressing lightly in many layers, then burnish to fill the paper's grain.
4. Advantage: fast, soft tones and gradients over large areas; risk: it cannot easily be erased and can buckle thin paper.
5. It records studies, tests, failures and ideas with dates, which shows practice, experimentation and revision over time.

Vocabulary card meanings

carbon pencil: A drawing stick of compressed carbon that makes a dark, smooth mark.
charcoal: A black drawing stick made from burnt wood.

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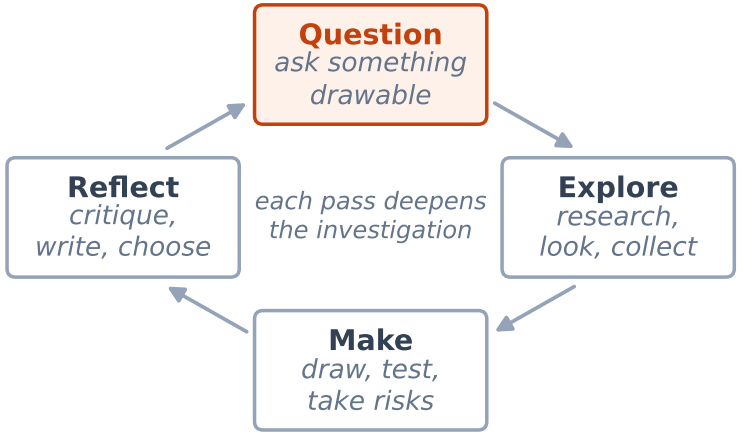
Investigate: Inquiry and the Artistic Process

AP Drawing

Inquiry and Asking Questions

Why it matters. Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks - several thousand pages survive - are full of questions written beside drawings: how does water swirl around an obstacle? Why does a distant mountain look blue? How does a bird's wing lift it? He drew in order to find out, and each answer led to a new question. The AP Drawing portfolio asks you to work the same way: start with a question, and let drawing be the way you investigate it.

Inquiry 探究 is the intentional process of questioning that guides exploration and discovery over time – the engine of CED Big Idea 1.



Investigation is a loop: each drawing answers a little and asks a little more

- A workable inquiry is open, personal, and visual – answerable *through drawing*, not through a paragraph.
- "How can line weight express my grandmother's hands aging?" beats "I will draw hands."
- Strong questions generate the next drawing: each work answers a little and asks a little more.
- Test a question by listing ten works it could produce. Fewer than five means it is too narrow.
- Questions may evolve mid-investigation – document the turn in your journal and written evidence.

- The **Sustained Investigation** 持续探究 is scored on how clearly the works relate to and develop the stated inquiry.

Worked example (testing an inquiry). Run the ten-works test on three drafts:

- *"I will draw my city."* A topic, not a question: it lists subjects but gives no reason to change from one drawing to the next.
- *"How does the light in the 6 a.m. bus window change my street?"* Only three or four works before every drawing repeats: too narrow.
- *"How can the marks of repair – patched walls, taped bags, mended shoes – show the care in my neighborhood?"* Ten come quickly (a sewn shoe in close-up, a patched wall in ink wash, a grandparent's mended coat in charcoal, a taped bag drawn at full size …) and each suggests a material choice. This one is ready to investigate.

Sources of Ideas and Experiences

Artists' **experiences** 经验 – surroundings, memory, culture, research – inform why, how, and what they draw. (CED 1.A)

- Ideas come from direct **observation** 观察, personal history, other school subjects, and other artists' work.
- Document experiences as they happen: photos, thumbnail sketches, notes, collected objects.
- Ordinary subjects carry authority: the kitchen table you know beats a fantasy castle you don't.
- Research feeds drawing – anatomy pages, historical costume, botanical structure all sharpen observation.
- Cultural sources (calligraphy, textiles, architecture) bring personal context into mark and composition choices.
- Keep a source wall or folder; when momentum dips, the collected material restarts it.

Materials, Processes, and Ideas

The CED names three working components: **materials** 材料 (physical substances), **processes** 过程 (actions), and **ideas** 想法 (concepts). Drawings happen where they meet.

- Every work is a decision triangle: *what* it is made of, *how* it is made, *why* it is made.
- Let one corner lead. An idea can demand a material (rust drawings about decay), or a material can spark an idea.
- Change one component at a time to see its effect – the fair-test habit works in the studio too.

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- Name all three in your written evidence: scorers look for the connection explicitly.
- Charcoal on torn paper and fineliner on smooth film are different *statements*, not just different looks.
- This vocabulary comes straight from the CED glossary – use the exact words in your writing.

Drawing in Context

Drawings mean more when you know when, where, and why they were made. **Context** 语境 is an investigation tool. (CED 1.C)

- Study **master drawings** 大师素描 as working documents: Leonardo's studies, Dürer's engravings, Rembrandt's ink landscapes.
- Every tradition has a drawing language – Chinese ink line, Persian miniature, Renaissance chiaroscuro, manga screentone.
- Ask of any drawing: what was it *for* – a study, a record, a plan, or a finished statement?
- Historical technique is free training: copying a hatching system teaches decisions no video can.
- Place your own work in context: which artists share your question, and how is your answer different?
- Contextual notes in the journal strengthen written evidence and show intellectual depth.



Dürer's Melencolia I: historical engravings model mark-making and context

Evaluating Drawings

Critique 评图 – of your own and others' work – is how an investigation steers. (CED 1.D/1.E)

- Use the four-step ladder: describe, analyse, interpret, judge. It keeps opinions grounded in what is visible.
- Speak the AP language: point to **visual evidence** 视觉证据 of skills, materials, processes, and ideas.
- Create distance for self-critique: turn the drawing upside down, view it in a mirror, or photograph it small.
- Ask one focused question per critique ("does the focal point read?") instead of "is it good?"
- Written reflections after critiques become drafts of your Sustained Investigation writing.
- **Revision** 修改 decisions born from critique are exactly the development the rubric wants to see.



Ingres portrait drawing: critique names visible visual evidence of line and tone

Documentation and the Process Journal

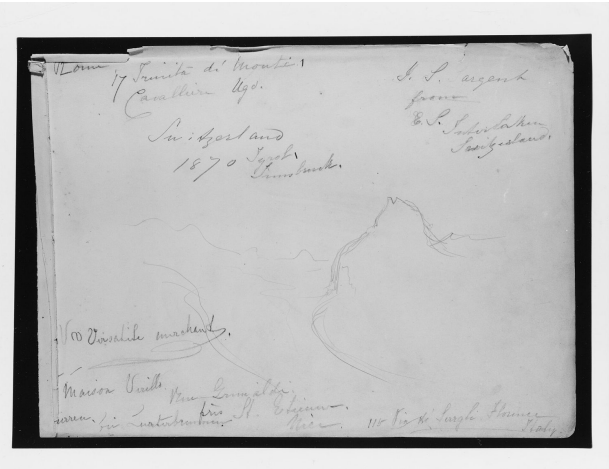
Investigation must be visible. **Documentation** 记录 captures questions, tests, failures, and turns as they happen. (CED 1.B)



Six reliable sources feed a drawing practice – collect from all of them in one journal

- Document with anything quick: phone photos, taped-in tests, dated notes, thumbnail storyboards.
- Record the *why* at decision points – two lines today saves reconstructing your thinking in April.
- Photograph work-in-progress stages; a before/after revision pair is gold for the portfolio.
- Keep material tests (paper swatches, media trials) physically in the **process journal** 创作过程日志 with outcomes noted.
- Process images may be submitted among the 15 Sustained Investigation images – label them clearly.
- A true journal (not a decorated diary) is the difference between *claiming* inquiry and *showing* it.

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An artist's sketchbook page: process journals record inquiry, sources, and small experiments

Studio exercise: three questions, three thumbnails. Write three possible inquiry questions about one subject you care about. For each, make three quick thumbnails that would answer it differently. The question that produces the most varied and exciting thumbnails is usually the one with enough room for fifteen works.

Exam tips

- **Write the inquiry as one clear sentence and pin it above your desk** – every scoring row of the Sustained Investigation asks how the work relates to it.
- **Scorers must SEE the investigation**: tests, failed starts, and revision pairs are evidence; a folder of unrelated finished drawings is not.
- **Date everything.** "Over time" is a scored idea – dated journal pages prove development without a word of explanation.
- **Use CED vocabulary in written evidence** (materials, processes, ideas, experimentation, revision) – it connects your claims to the rubric instantly.
- **Photograph journal spreads as you go**, not in April: process documentation shot in a rush looks like what it is.

Common mistakes.

- Choosing a subject ("my dog") instead of a question about it.
- Writing a question that a single drawing could fully answer.
- Collecting reference images from the internet instead of from your own life and observation.
- Evaluating work only by "do I like it?" instead of by evidence against the criteria.
- Keeping the process journal tidy and selective, leaving out the failures that show thinking.

Practice.

1. Turn the subject "old shoes" into an inquiry question that could guide 15 drawings.
2. Explain the difference between a source of ideas and a reference image.
3. Give one example of how a historical or cultural drawing could inform your inquiry.
4. Rewrite this evaluation using evidence: "My drawing is good because it looks real."
5. List three items a strong process-journal page might contain.

Answers.

1. Example: "How can worn objects show the life of the person who used them?"
2. A source of ideas is the experience or interest that starts the inquiry (a memory, a place, a question); a reference image is a specific picture used to check details while drawing.
3. Example: studying how Käthe Kollwitz used heavy, dark charcoal marks to show grief, then applying that mark-making to drawings of your grandparents' hands.
4. Example: "The full value range from white highlights to black core shadows makes the form turn, and the cross-contour hatching describes the curve of the shoe; the background is unresolved and could be simplified."
5. Thumbnails or studies, a written note explaining a decision or a failure, and a photograph of a work in progress (with dates).

Vocabulary card meanings

master drawings: Studies by highly skilled artists, used as examples to learn from.

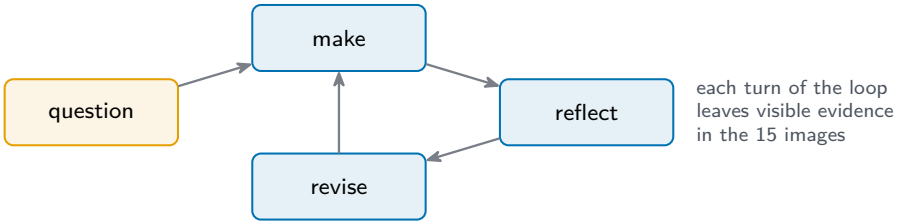
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Make: Practice, Experimentation, and Revision

AP Drawing

The Sustained Investigation

Why it matters. In 1964 the sculptor and painter Alberto Giacometti began a portrait of the writer James Lord, expecting it to take one afternoon. It took eighteen sittings. Day after day he built the head up, then wiped or painted it out and began again, because each version showed him something he had not yet seen. Lord later wrote a book about those sittings, and the record of revision became as famous as the portrait. A sustained investigation asks for the same thing on a smaller scale: a question, and visible changes as you answer it.



Inquiry is a loop, not a single finished piece.

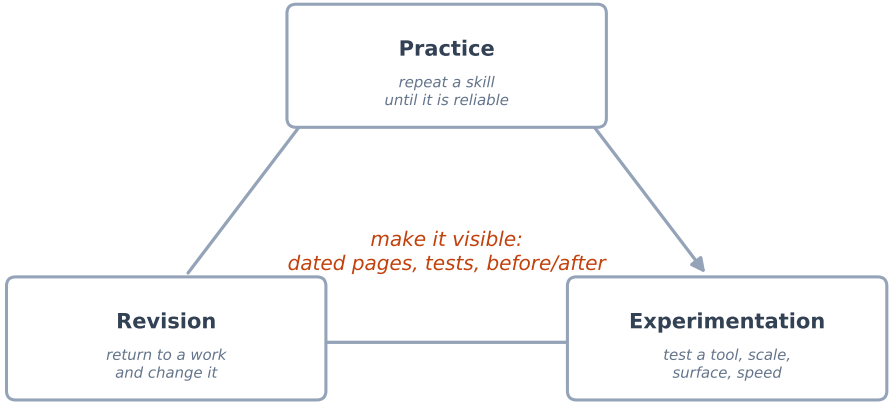
The **Sustained Investigation** 持续探究 is an inquiry-based, in-depth study of materials, processes, and ideas over time – CED Big Idea 2, and 60% of your AP score.

- It is a **body of work** 系列作品 – around 15 images – that grows from one stated question or idea.
- *Sustained* means over time: the works should show growth, not fifteen versions of the same afternoon.
- Plan a rhythm: make, document, reflect, revise, make again – every one or two weeks.
- The investigation is drawings *and* process: studies, tests, and revisions belong inside it.
- Depth beats breadth. One question pushed hard scores above ten unrelated good drawings.
- Start early in the year. A rushed investigation is visible at a glance.

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Practice, Experimentation, and Revision

The CED names three engines of making: **practice** 练习 (repeat), **experimentation** 实验 (test), and **revision** 修改 (modify and reimagine). (CED 2.A)



Three engines of making: repeat a skill, test something new, return and change

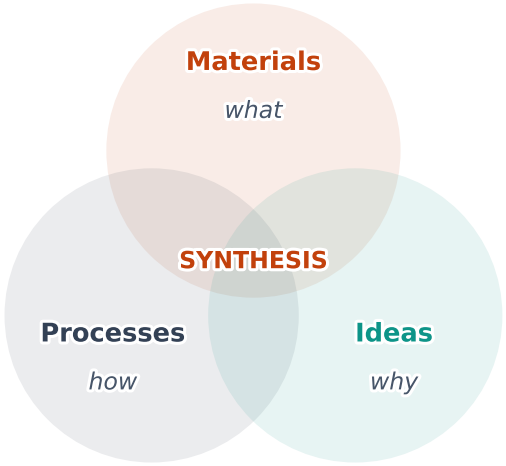
- Practice repeats a skill until it is reliable – the tenth ellipse, the fiftieth hand.
- Experimentation tests without needing success: a new tool, a new scale, a new surface, a new speed.
- Revision returns to a work and changes it on purpose: crop it, rework it, redraw it, or answer it with a new version.
- Show all three visibly across the portfolio – scorers must *see* them, not take your word.
- Keep the failures. An annotated failed experiment is stronger evidence than an unexplained success.
- A **revision pair** 修改前后对比 (first state and revised state, with one sentence on what changed) is classic AP evidence.



Michelangelo's figure study: practice and revision build drawing skill through repeated investigation

Synthesis of Materials, Processes, and Ideas

Synthesis 综合 means the three components fuse – the material and process choices *are* the idea. (CED 2.B)



When material, process, and idea explain each other, the rubric calls it synthesis

- Ask of each work: could this idea exist in any other medium? If yes, the synthesis can go deeper.

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- Charcoal drawings with burnt edges about wildfire; thread-stitched portraits about family ties – material as meaning.
- Process can carry meaning too: obsessive stippling for time passing, blind contour for the uncertainty of memory.
- Synthesis is the top row of the scoring guidelines – the discriminator between a 4 and a 5.
- It cannot be added at the end. It grows from experimenting early with materials that relate to the idea.
- One sentence of written evidence should name the link: "I used X because the idea needed Y."



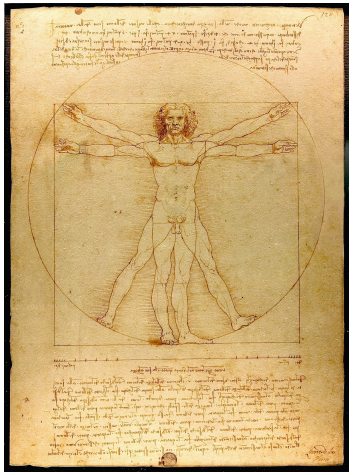
Cézanne still life: materials, processes, and ideas synthesise in composition and mark

Demonstrating Drawing Skills

The rubric names the **drawing skills** 绘画技能: mark-making, line, surface, space, light and shade, composition. (CED 2.C/2.D)

- Audit your portfolio against the six skills – every one should appear strongly somewhere.
- One work can carry several: a figure in a lit interior shows space, light and shade, and composition at once.
- "Good" portfolios show competent skills; a 5 shows *advanced* skills with **visual evidence** 视觉证据 everywhere.
- A skill only counts if it is visible in the submitted image – photograph well or the skill disappears.
- Weak areas are fixable with targeted practice blocks – that is what the craft topics of this course are for.

- In written evidence, name skills with the CED's own words, so the scorer connects claim to image instantly.



Vitruvian Man: proportion and figure construction as foundational drawing skills

Composition and Craft in Making

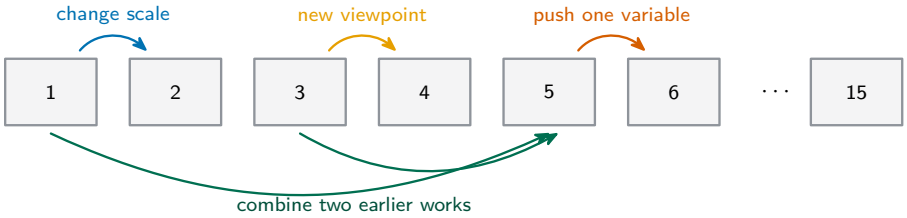
Finished works are judged as made objects: composition designed, edges considered, surface controlled.

- Plan with **thumbnail sketches** 小稿 and notan before committing – composition is decided before the first real mark.
- **Craft** 工艺 means physical care: clean margins where you intend them, controlled smudging, flat unwrinkled paper.
- Damaged or dirty work photographs badly. Protect drawings with cover sheets and fixative.
- Treat **scale** 尺度 as a decision: an intimate A5 and a commanding A1 are different statements of the same idea.
- Unresolved corners betray hurry. Finish them – or leave them raw *on purpose*, and let the writing own the choice.
- Craft is not fussiness: an expressive charcoal can be perfectly crafted expression.

Developing Ideas Over Time

Development 发展 – the furthering of an inquiry through in-depth exploration – is what "sustained" looks like in the images.

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Development moves make the growth readable.

- Sequence matters: arrange the works so the investigation's growth is readable from image 1 to image 15.
- Development moves: change scale, change viewpoint, combine two earlier works, push one **variable** 变量 to its extreme.
- Series thinking helps – variations on one **motif** 母题 show deliberate exploration, not repetition.
- Mid-course turns are healthy when documented: "the shadows became the subject" *is* development.
- Compare your newest work to your first. If nothing changed – skill, idea, or ambition – push a variable.
- Scorers explicitly look for works that show development, not fifteen isolated performances.

A plan for fifteen images. One workable outline:

Stage	Images	What they show
Opening	1-3	the question stated; observational studies and quick tests
Developing	4-10	new materials, compositions or ideas tried because of what earlier works showed; process images and revision pairs
Resolving	11-15	the strongest discoveries brought together in confident, finished drawings

The plan is a guide, not a cage: if the question turns at image 7, document why and follow it.

Exam tips

- **Build the portfolio as a story**: image 1 states the question, the middle images test and turn, the late images answer with authority. Scorers read the sequence.

- **Submit process images on purpose** – two or three journal spreads, tests, or revision pairs among the 15 make practice, experimentation, and revision undeniable.
- **The 5-portfolios show synthesis**: pick materials that mean something for your question, and say the link out loud in the written evidence.
- **Audit against the six drawing skills at mid-year**, not in April – the gaps you find write your practice plan while there is still time.
- **Never pad with lookalikes.** Fifteen near-identical drawings read as one idea repeated; variations must each move a variable.

Common mistakes.

- Making fifteen finished drawings and leaving out every study, test and failure.
- Keeping the same size, medium and composition throughout, so nothing seems to develop.
- Changing the question so many times that the works do not connect.
- Showing revision only in words; the reader must be able to **see** it in the images.
- Choosing a medium because it is easy rather than because it suits the idea.

Practice.

1. Give an example of practice, experimentation and revision for an investigation into the hands of older people.
2. Explain the difference between depth and breadth in a sustained investigation.
3. A student's images 1-15 show steady skill improvement but no new ideas. What is missing?
4. Describe how to show revision using two images.
5. Explain how a material choice can support an idea, with one example.

Answers.

1. Practice: repeated graphite studies of a grandparent's hands; experimentation: drawing the hands in ink on old letters; revision: cropping closer after noticing that the knuckles carried the story.
2. Depth means pushing one question hard and seeing it change; breadth means many unrelated subjects or ideas, which the investigation does not reward.
3. Experimentation and development of the inquiry: the ideas, compositions or materials should change as the question is explored, not only the skill.
4. Show the same drawing before and after a change (or a failed and a successful version) and explain the decision in the written evidence.
5. Example: drawing a family history in charcoal on brown paper bags from the family shop, so the surface itself connects to the subject.

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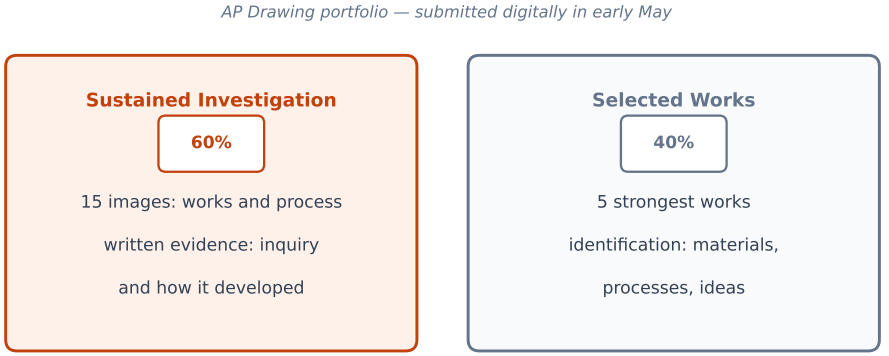
Present: Communication and the AP Drawing Portfolio

AP Drawing

The AP Drawing Portfolio

Why it matters. The people who score your portfolio never stand in front of your drawings. They see a set of photographs on a screen and read a few short statements, and they score what that evidence shows. A carefully made charcoal drawing, photographed at a slant with glare across the darks, looks like a weaker drawing; a vague statement hides a strong idea. This unit is about the last step: making sure the work you made is the work the readers see.

The AP exam is a **portfolio** 作品集, not a written test – two sections submitted digitally in early May. (CED Big Idea 3)



Two sections: the Sustained Investigation carries 60% of the score, the Selected Works 40%

- **Sustained Investigation**: 15 images of works and process, plus written evidence – 60% of the score.
- **Selected Works** 精选作品: 5 works demonstrating skilful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas – 40%.
- Selected Works may come from inside or outside the investigation. Choose your strongest five, wherever they came from.
- Everything uploads through the **AP Digital Portfolio** 数字作品集平台; your teacher reviews before final submission.
- Drawing, 2-D, and 3-D Art and Design are separate portfolios – submit work made for the Drawing skill set.

- Plan backwards from May: photography, writing, and selection all take real calendar time.

Sustained Investigation: Images and Written Evidence

The SI section pairs 15 images with short **written evidence** 书面证据 – the images show, the writing states. (CED 3.A/3.B)

- The writing answers two prompts: state the inquiry, and describe how the investigation developed – about 1,200 characters in total.
- Every image carries caption fields: **materials** 材料, **processes** 过程, dimensions, and citations where needed.
- Choose images that *prove* the writing: question stated, tests shown, development visible.
- Process images – journal spreads, in-progress states, detail shots – count among the 15. Use several.
- Order the images deliberately: scorers read them as a sequence, so build a narrative arc.
- Write plainly and concretely, naming skills and components in CED vocabulary.



Sustained Investigation rewards visible inquiry: studies, process shots, and development over time

Selected Works: Demonstrating Skills

The Selected Works are your five strongest statements – each judged on written evidence, drawing skills, and synthesis. (CED 3.C)

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- Pick for range *and* strength: together, the five should cover the whole drawing-skills list.
- Each work carries an **identification** 作品信息: materials, processes, ideas – about 100 characters per field, so make every word count.
- Quality beats concept here: flawless craft and a full value range are what a 5 looks like.
- Strong candidates: the observational tour de force, the chiaroscuro drama, the expressive figure, the synthesis piece.
- Details matter at scoring size. View each candidate as a small thumbnail and at full zoom before choosing.
- Ask three viewers to rank your top eight; the overlap usually finds the true five.



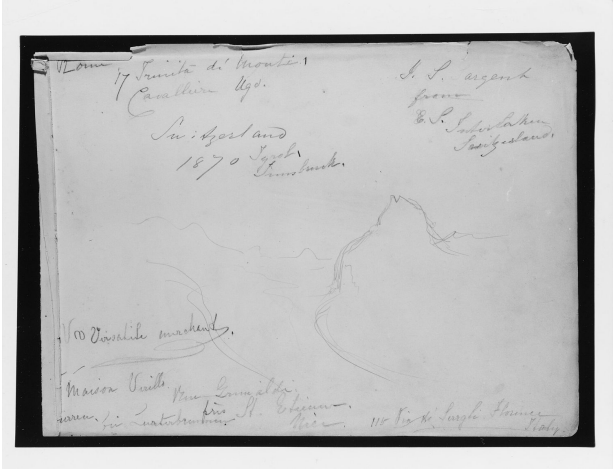
A finished drawing for Selected Works: craft, composition and skill must read clearly in the image

Writing About Your Work

The written evidence is short, factual, and load-bearing – it directs the scorer's attention. (CED 3.D/3.E)

- State the inquiry as a question or a clear statement in the first sentence.
- Use concrete nouns and verbs: "compressed charcoal on gessoed cardboard, lifted with erasers" beats "mixed media".
- Connect writing to *visible* things: if you claim experimentation, the images must show it.
- Writing completely unrelated to the works caps the Selected Works score – relevance is a rubric rule.
- Draft early and cut hard: character limits reward the specific and punish the vague.

- Have someone read the writing *while* viewing the images. Wherever they ask "where?", revise.



Written evidence starts in the journal: notes next to studies become portfolio text

Worked example (written evidence). A student's investigation follows one kitchen across a year of meals. Compare two answers to the first prompt, *identify the inquiry*:

- Weak: *"My work is about family and memory, and I explored many media to express my feelings."* Nothing here points at an image, so a scorer cannot check it.
- Strong: *"How can the marks left after a meal – crumbs, stains, pushed-back chairs – show who was at the table without drawing the people?"* It is a question, it names what the images will show, and it sets a limit the drawings can be judged against.

A strong answer to the second prompt, *how the work developed through practice, experimentation and revision*, then names each move and points at the image that shows it:

> *"I began with graphite studies of empty plates (images 1–3). The marks felt too neat, so I tested coffee washes and lifted charcoal on cardboard (4–6). The stains carried more time than line, so I kept them. In image 9 I tried adding figures and removed them: they answered the question instead of letting the viewer do it. The final drawings (12–15) combine a coffee ground with sharp charcoal for the objects left behind."*

Every sentence does one job – practice, an experiment, a reason, a revision – and every claim has an image number a scorer can open. Under 600 characters, it leaves room for detail without filler.

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Presentation and Image Quality

Scorers see **photographs** 照片, not originals – photography quality *is* portfolio quality. (CED 3.F)

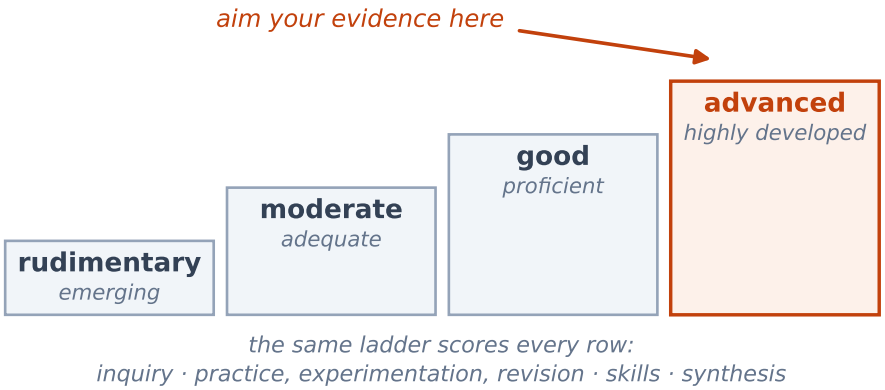
- Shoot in even, indirect daylight or a two-lamp setup. Avoid glare, shadows across the work, and **keystone distortion** 梯形畸变.
- Fill the frame, crop to the work's edges, and keep verticals vertical.
- Check values on screen: a washed-out photo erases the light-and-shade skill you spent weeks building.
- A **detail shot** 细节图 is allowed and powerful – a close-up of mark-making proves what a full view only suggests.
- Consistent, neutral backgrounds make a sequence read professionally.
- Photograph each work as it is finished, not all in April: fixative first, then shoot, then store flat.



A working studio: document process, process photos, and finished pieces carefully for the portfolio

Understanding the Scoring Guidelines

Both sections are scored against published **scoring guidelines** 评分标准 – knowing the rows lets you build toward them.



The rubric's language ladder: aim every piece of evidence at the top descriptors

- Sustained Investigation rows: inquiry evident; practice, experimentation, and revision; materials, processes, and ideas; drawing skills; synthesis.
- Selected Works criteria: written evidence identifies components; drawing skills; synthesis – scored 1-5 by **preponderance of evidence** 证据的总体倾向.
- The rubric's language ladder runs *rudimentary, moderate, good, advanced* – aim your evidence at the top descriptors.
- Score your own mock portfolio against the rubric each term; the gaps write your to-do list.
- Scores 1-5 arrive in July, and college credit policies vary – but the rubric habits are the real prize.
- Every rubric row asks for visual evidence. The recurring answer: show it, then name it.

Academic Integrity and Citing Sources

The portfolio must be your own work. Borrowed images and AI tools have strict rules.

- Working from someone else's photograph or artwork requires a **citation** 引用 in that image's materials/processes fields.
- Substantially copying another artist's work – even cited – cannot demonstrate *your* idea development.
- Draw from life and from your own reference photos wherever possible; it also simply teaches more.
- **Generative AI** 生成式人工智能 may not make your work: AP policy allows it only as a documented exploration tool, never as the artwork.

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- **Plagiarism** 抄袭 cancels scores. The College Board checks, and teachers must certify originality.
- Integrity is also artistic self-interest: your own seeing is the only truly unique material you have.

Exam tips

- **Photograph like it matters, because it does** – a 5-level drawing shot with glare and keystone reads as a 3. Reshoot anything you hesitate over.
- **Fill every caption field with specifics.** "Willow charcoal, subtractive erasing, on toned Ingres paper" does scoring work; empty or vague fields waste free marks.
- **Check the relevance rule**: if your written evidence could sit under someone else's portfolio unchanged, it is too generic – tie every sentence to your images.
- **Select the five with fresh eyes**: thumbnail-size printouts on a table, three trusted viewers, overlap wins.
- **Cite every reference photo you did not take** – one missing citation risks the whole portfolio; thirty seconds of typing removes the risk.

Common mistakes.

- Submitting photographs with glare, shadows, keystoning or background clutter.
- Writing statements that could describe any portfolio ("I explored my feelings").
- Placing the five best but unrelated drawings in the Sustained Investigation instead of in Selected Works.
- Not citing a reference photograph or another artist's work that you used.
- Forgetting the size of the work or naming materials vaguely ("pencil and stuff").

Practice.

1. Rewrite this materials statement to be specific: "Pencil drawing."
2. Explain why the Sustained Investigation is worth more of the score than Selected Works.
3. List three checks before uploading a photograph of a drawing.
4. A student used a friend's photograph as the reference for a portrait. What must they do?
5. Explain what "preponderance of evidence" means in scoring.

Answers.

1. Example: "Graphite (2H-8B) on Stonehenge paper; layered hatching and erasing for highlights."
2. It is 60% of the score because it shows the most important skills of the course - inquiry, practice, experimentation, revision and synthesis - over 15 images, while Selected Works (40%) shows 5 works.

3. Even, glare-free light; camera square to the work with no keystoning; cropped to the edges with accurate value and focus.
4. Get permission, transform the image beyond copying (composition, medium or meaning), and cite the photographer as the source.
5. The score reflects where most of the evidence falls on the rubric, not the single best or worst work.

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