

# Make Your Mark

Sketching in the galleries of the Metropolitan Museum

## EXPLORE ART IN THE MUSEUM THROUGH SKETCHING!

As your pencil creates marks on the paper, let your eyes look carefully and you will find something that you didn't notice before. Invite a friend or family member to sketch with you.

## WHAT IS A SKETCH?

A sketch is a simple drawing. It doesn't have to be perfect or even have many details. In fact, artists create sketches just to work out an idea or get warmed up. As you sketch in the Museum, experiment—try a few techniques and see what works best for you!



Leonardo da Vinci ([Florentine] Italian 1452–1519); *A Bear Walking*, ca. 1490; Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.369)

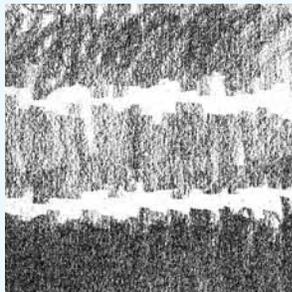
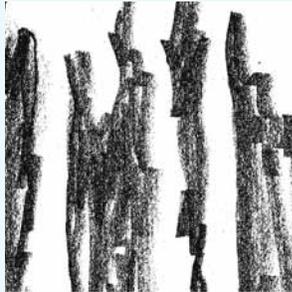
Leonardo da Vinci recorded what he saw around him in countless drawings and notebooks. In this sketch of a bear, you can see that he probably looked very closely as he drew—and redrew—its paw to show what the animal really looked like.

## PENCIL POINTS

- Different pencils make different marks. If you can, use a regular “No. 2” pencil for sketching in this guide.
- Hold the pencil in different ways. Which way feels best? Can you make different marks when you hold the pencil in a new way?

Use this guide to learn more about three important elements in art and in sketching: **LINE, SHAPE, and VALUE.**

Look at the works of art around you. Can you find anything that looks like:



What kinds of marks do these artists use?  
How would you describe them?

**Add to this list:**

1. squiggly
2. thin
3. soft
4. jagged

5.

6.

7.

8.

## WARM UP!

- How many different kinds of marks can you make in this space?
- Can you make marks that show movement? Stillness?
- Can you create marks that look soft and squiggly? Sharp and pointed?
- Repeat the same mark to create a pattern.

A **line** can be a long mark. Artists use lines in different ways—to outline a figure, to sketch a landscape, or to create something from their imagination. You use line everyday without even thinking about it—when you write!

Write three words to describe yourself:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What types of lines did you use? Are they:

*Curved?*

**BLOCKY?**

**thick** or thin?

*connected* or s e p a r a t e ?

Look closely at the art near you. Can you find thick lines? Thin lines? Rough or smooth lines?

- In this space, explore one work of art by sketching it with lines. You may even want to choose part of the object to sketch.
- Look at your sketch. Tell a friend or family member what kinds of lines you used.

A **shape** doesn't have to be a circle, triangle, or square. Look around at the sculptures in the African Art galleries. Can you find shapes that don't have a name? How would you describe these shapes?

## BONUS

What shapes do the empty spaces make?

Artists sometimes call the solid parts of the sculpture **positive space** and the carved-out areas **negative space**.



Right: *Stool*, 19th–20th century; Buli Master; Democratic Republic of Congo; Luba; wood, metal studs, H. 24 in.; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Purchase, Buckeye Trust and Charles B. Benenson Gifts, Rogers Fund and funds from various donors, 1979 (1979.290)

## THINK BIG, THEN SMALL

- Choose an African sculpture to sketch.
- Sketch the larger shapes first, then the smaller ones.
- Think about the shapes you see, and how they fit together.
- Don't forget that empty spaces are important shapes to sketch, too!
- Fill in the empty spaces in your sketches. How does this change them?

Let's go to the Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court. From the African Art galleries head back toward the Modern and Contemporary Art galleries, but instead turn right. Walk straight ahead, past a small shop on the right. Look for a huge gallery with a glass ceiling and a view of the park, where you will find large European sculptures.

In sketching, **value** is the amount of light or darkness. Notice the light in this gallery. Can you find any shadows that the sculptures and people create? Look at one of the sculptures near you. Where are the darkest shadows? Where are the lightest areas?



Right: Jacques Sarrazin (French, 1592–1660), *Leda and the Swan* (detail), ca. 1694–50; white marble, H. 62 in.; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Purchase, C. Michael Paul Gift, and Bequest of Mary Cushing Fosburgh and Gift of Irwin Untermyer, by exchange, 1980 (1980.5)

## LET'S CREATE A VALUE SCALE



Lightest

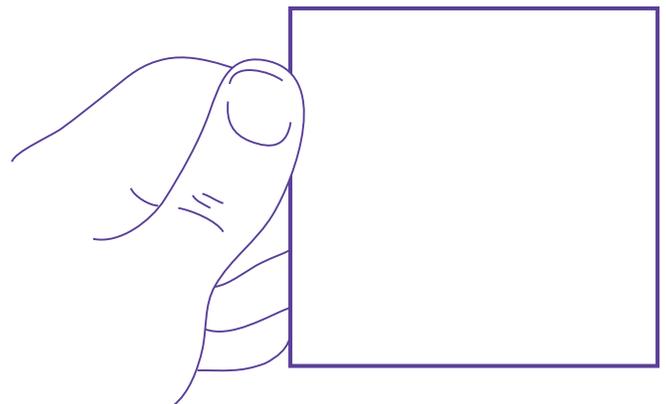
Medium

Darkest

- A value scale is a chart that shows how value changes from light to dark.
- The far left of the scale above is completely light, and the far right is completely dark. In the middle is a value between these two.
- Use your pencil to fill in the rest so the scale gets darker toward the right, and lighter toward the left.
- Now that you've practiced, use different values in your sketches!

## THUMBNAIL SKETCH

Look at one sculpture. Find an area that has different values—**dark**, **medium**, and **light**. Make a small sketch below. Sometimes artists call this a thumbnail sketch. (Can you guess why?)



- Choose one work of art (or part of one) and sketch the outline of what you see. What kind of **line** will you use?
- Think about the **shapes** you are creating.
- Last, add **value** to your sketch.
- Look at your sketch and enjoy your work! Which is your favorite part? Would you change areas?
- While you were sketching, did you notice something about the art that you didn't see at first?



**KEEP SKETCHING!** The Museum is a great place to sketch and learn from the art that you see. You can also sketch in the park, at home—anywhere!

