

FREE



# Graphite

## Tips & Techniques



• Susan van Zyl •



PRACTICAL TIPS. BEAUTIFUL RESULTS.  
TAKE YOUR GRAPHITE DRAWINGS FURTHER.



## LESSON 7

Good drawings are built, line by line, with patience and purpose.



# CROSS HATCHING

## BUILD TONE, VALUE & DEPTH ONE LINE AT A TIME

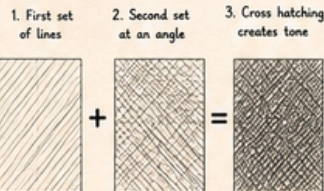
Two sets of lines. Infinite possibilities.



### 1 WHAT IS CROSS HATCHING?

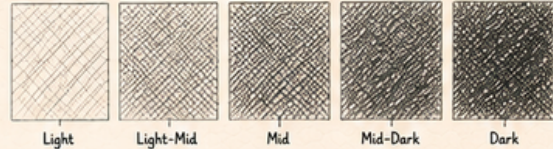
Cross hatching is a shading technique created by drawing lines in one direction, then adding another set of lines over them at an angle.

Where the lines cross, the tone becomes darker.



### 2 HOW CROSS HATCHING BUILDS TONE

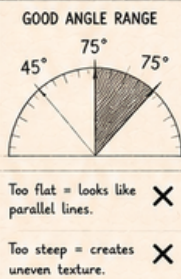
The closer the lines, the darker the value.



Control the spacing and direction to control the value.

### 3 THE BASIC RULES

- ✓ Keep your lines consistent in length and direction.
- ✓ Try to maintain even spacing.
- ✓ Keep your second set of lines at a consistent angle (usually between 45° and 75°).
- ✓ Build tone gradually – don't rush.
- ✓ Use light pressure. You can always add more lines, but you can't take them away!



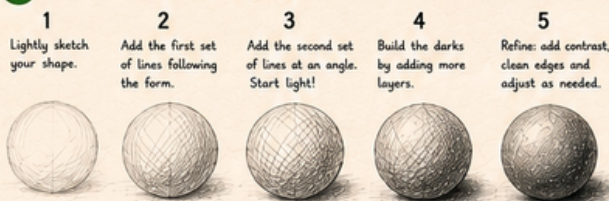
### 4 CROSS HATCHING DIRECTIONS

Changing the direction of your second set of lines changes the feel of your drawing.



Experiment! There is no one "right" direction.

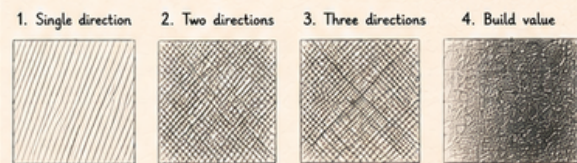
### 5 STEP-BY-STEP: SHADING A SPHERE



Layer patiently. Cross hatching is about building, not pressing.

### 6 CROSS HATCHING PRACTICE SQUARES

Practice these exercises to improve control and confidence.



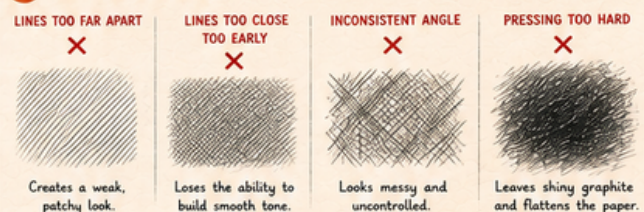
Use a ruler at first if it helps. Control comes with practice.

### 7 WHERE TO USE CROSS HATCHING



It works beautifully for form, texture, shadows and atmosphere.

### 8 COMMON MISTAKES



Solution: Light pressure + patience + consistent angles.

### 9 ART4HEART STUDIO TIP

Draw like a whisper, not a hammer.

Light pressure creates beauty. Your pencil should glide over the paper, not dig into it.

If you enjoy the process, your drawing will show it.



### THE COFFEE CUP TEST

Imagine holding a full cup of coffee while you cross hatch.

If your grip or pressure is too strong, the coffee will spill!

Relax your hand. Beautiful results.



### 10 PRACTICE CHALLENGE

Draw a still life object using ONLY cross hatching.



- ✓ Use at least 3 different values.
- ✓ Keep your lines consistent.
- ✓ Build gradually.
- ✓ Add a background if you're ready!
- ✓ Enjoy the process!



## LESSON 8

Good drawing is not about how hard you press, but how well you observe.



# CONTOUR SHADING

FOLLOW THE FORM. CREATE REALISM.

Contour shading helps your drawing look three-dimensional and believable.



### 1 WHAT IS CONTOUR SHADING?

Contour shading means following the shape of your subject. You shade with the curves, not across them.

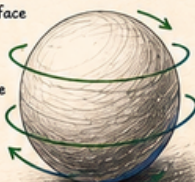
It shows form, roundness and three-dimensional believability.



### 2 WHY CONTOUR SHADING WORKS

It follows the surface of the form.

This tricks the eye into seeing depth.



### 3 THE CONTOUR SHADING ROADMAP

Think of your value pattern in 5 simple zones.



Blend each zone smoothly into the next.

### 4 FOLLOW THE CURVES

**GOOD: FOLLOW THE FORM**

Lines curve around the object. The shading looks natural and smooth.



**NOT GOOD: ACROSS THE FORM**

Lines go across the object. The shading looks flat and two-dimensional.



**BETTER: MIX BOTH**

Use contour shading as the base, then adjust with cross hatching if needed.



When in doubt... follow the form.

### 5 STEP-BY-STEP: SPHERE

Shading with the contour.



1. Lightly draw contour lines following the form.



2. Add a light layer of shading with a light pencil (H or HB).



3. Gradually build the midtones following the contour lines.



4. Deepen the shadows and core shadow area. Keep following the form.



5. Refine, smooth transitions and add the cast shadow. Use your lightest touch.

### 6 CONTOUR SHADING IN ACTION

Works on all kinds of forms.



Sphere



Cylinder



Cone



Egg

Follow the curves. Respect the form.

### 7 PRESSURE GUIDE FOR CONTOUR SHADING

LIGHTER  
↑  
↓  
DARKER

Feather touch (very light)



Light pressure



Medium pressure



Firm pressure



Very firm (use with care)



Build slowly. Layer gently. Smooth transitions are the key.

### 8 COMMON MISTAKES

**PRESSING TOO HARD TOO EARLY**



Flattens the paper and makes blending difficult.

**IGNORING THE FORM**



Shading across the form kills the illusion of depth.

**SKIPPING MIDTONES**



Creates harsh lines and looks unnatural.

**RUSHING THE BLEND**



Blending takes time and patience.

Slow down. Observe. Build. That's the secret.

### 9 ART4HEART STUDIO TIP

Imagine wrapping the shading around the form like a ribbon.

Keep your pencil moving with the curve.

Lift and adjust your pressure.

Use the side of the lead for smooth layers.

Step back and check the form often.

Patience + observation = realism.



### 10 PRACTICE CHALLENGE

Draw this sphere using ONLY contour shading. No cross hatching.

- ✓ Use at least 5 values.
- ✓ Keep your lines smooth and consistent.
- ✓ Build gradually.
- ✓ Create a realistic cast shadow.
- ✓ Make it look 3D!



### THE COFFEE CUP TEST



Imagine holding a full cup of coffee while you draw.

If your grip or pressure is too strong, the coffee will spill!

Relax your hand. Let the pencil glide. Smooth contour shading loves a relaxed hand.

### EXTRA NOTES

★ Contour shading is the foundation of realistic drawing.

★ It works beautifully on portraits, still life, landscapes and everything in between.

★ The more you practice, the more natural it becomes.

★ Great drawings are built, one gentle line at a time.



Art4Heart  
Art from the Heart



Know your tools.  
Love your art.  
Create from the heart.

## LESSON 9B

Great art has many roads.  
Scribble your way to beautiful shading.

# SQUIGGLES & SCRIBBLING

Loose lines. Happy shading.

Not every artist likes rules.  
Not every drawing needs perfect circles.



### 1 WHAT IS SQUIGGLE / SCRIBBLE SHADING?

Instead of controlled lines or circles, you shade using free, loose, expressive marks.

- ♥ Fast
- ♥ Expressive
- ♥ Fun
- ♥ Full of character

Squiggles create texture, mood and depth in a natural, artistic way.



### 2 WHY USE SQUIGGLES?

- ✓ Great for mood and emotion
- ✓ Adds life and energy
- ✓ Perfect for texture
- ✓ Helps you loosen up and enjoy drawing



Loose marks can look more natural than over-controlled shading.

### 3 THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MARKS

Tight squiggles  
(for smooth values)



Loose squiggles  
(for texture)



Long squiggles  
(for flow)



Zig-zag scribbles



Looping scribbles



Wavy scribbles



Mix and match! There is no "right" way.

### 4 HOW TO SCRIBBLE EFFECTIVELY

- ♥ Keep your hand relaxed.
- ♥ Move from your wrist and arm.
- ♥ Use the side of the lead for softer marks.
- ♥ Layer gradually - light to dark.
- ♥ Follow the form when possible.
- ♥ Let some marks overlap and some fade away.

#### ART4HEART TIP

Draw patiently and with care as if building secret layers nobody can find.



### 5 BUILD VALUES WITH SCRIBBLES



The magic is in the layers. Let the scribbles do the work.

### 6 COMMON BEGINNER MISTAKES

- ✗ Pressing too hard
- ✗ Random chaos (no direction)
- ✗ Trying to finish in one layer
- ✗ Only small scribbles
- ✗ Overworking one area
- ✓ Use lighter pressure
- ✓ Follow the form
- ✓ Build with many layers
- ✓ Vary your marks
- ✓ Step back & check often

Freedom with purpose creates beautiful work.

### 7 SCRIBBLING + PENCIL GRADES

| PENCIL GRADE | BEST FOR                            | TIP                      |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2H           | Initial light layers & construction | Use very light squiggles |
| HB           | General values                      | Great all-round pencil   |
| 2B           | Midtones & texture                  | Adds richness and depth  |
| 4B           | Shadows & dimension                 | Build darkness slowly    |
| 6B           | Strong darks & contrast             | Deep accents and drama   |
| 8B           | Final touches & intensity           | Use sparingly for impact |

#### ART4HEART TIP

Build the drawing with your pencil grades, not your pressure.

### 8 WHERE TO USE SCRIBBLES



If you can feel it, you can scribble it.

### 9 SQUIGGLE EXERCISES

Practise these to build confidence and control.

- 1 Fill the square using only tight squiggles.
- 2 Create a value scale from light to dark.
- 3 Draw a sphere using squiggles.
- 4 Create texture using different marks.

Play. Explore. Enjoy the process!

### THE 10-SECOND TEST

Hold your drawing at arm's length.

VISIBLE STROKES



If you see the scribbles before you see the form... keep layering.

SMOOTH VALUE



If the form appears before the strokes... you're on the right track.

### BLEND... OR DON'T?

SCRIBBLES ONLY



SCRIBBLES + TISSUE



SCRIBBLES + STUMP



You don't need tools for great drawings. Use them only when they improve your result.

### THE MAGNIFYING GLASS TEST



Inside the magnifier: you see the scribbles.

Outside the magnifier: you see the form.

Tiny marks create one beautiful value.

### ARTIST SECRET

The smoother you want your shading to look, the less each individual pencil mark should stand out.

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Know your tools.  
Love your art.  
Create from the heart.

# LESSON 11

Every beautiful drawing is simply thousands of good decisions, made one layer at a time.

# LAYERING GRAPHITE

Build depth, not pressure.

DIFFICULTY:

● = Foundation ● = Building Skill ● = Refinement ● = Mastery

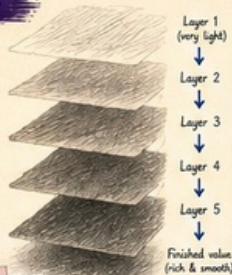
## 1 WHAT IS LAYERING?

Layering is the process of building beautiful values with many light applications of graphite.

- Every layer adds richness.
- Every layer adds control.
- Every layer protects your paper.

### ART4HEART LAYER RULE

Never ask one layer to do the work of five.



Art

## 2 ONE HEAVY LAYER vs MANY LIGHT LAYERS

### ONE HEAVY LAYER



- Shiny graphite
- Flattened paper tooth
- Difficult corrections
- Rough transitions

### TEN LIGHT LAYERS



- Rich depth
- Smooth transitions
- Healthy paper
- Beautiful realism

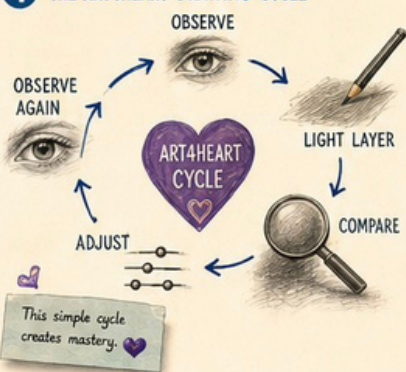
Darkness comes from patience... not pressure.

## 3 THE LAYER LADDER



Don't skip rungs.

## 4 THE ART4HEART DRAWING CYCLE



This simple cycle creates mastery.

## 5 CHOOSING THE NEXT PENCIL



Every pencil has a purpose.

## 6 PROTECT THE PAPER TOOTH



Paper tooth is your storage space. It holds graphite and creates beautiful texture. Protect it until the drawing is finished.

Think of paper tooth as tiny valleys waiting to be filled slowly.

## 7 COMMON MISTAKES



Good drawings are built, not forced.

## 8 ART4HEART STUDIO TIP

Build whispers before shouting.



Like morning mist... appearing so gradually that suddenly, everything is there.

## 9 PRACTICE CHALLENGE



Draw one apple.

- Use at least five pencil grades.
- Build a minimum of ten layers.
- Never press harder than medium pressure.
- Compare after every two layers.
- Save your darkest accents for last.

Stand back and ask yourself:  
Can you see smooth transitions?  
Can you still see the paper tooth?  
Can you tell where one layer ends and the next begins?

If not... you've layered well.

### ARTIST SECRET

The best layer is often the one nobody notices. When people admire realism, they're seeing the result... not the hundreds of quiet decisions underneath.

### KNOW WHEN TO STOP



Sometimes the next layer improves your drawing. Sometimes it hides it. Learn to recognise the difference.

### THE ART4HEART LAYER RULE

OBSERVE.  
LAYER.  
COMPARE.  
ADJUST.  
REPEAT.

### REMEMBER

- Patience builds depth.
- Layers create realism.
- Control creates freedom.
- Practice creates confidence.
- You've got this!

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Art from the Heart



ART4HEART ACADEMY • COURSE 1 • LESSON 11



Know your tools.  
Love your art.  
Create from the heart.

## LESSON 12

Smoothness  
is not about pressure.  
It's about patience  
and polishing the  
layers you've built.

# BURNISHING WITH GRAPHITE

Polish your values. Create smooth, rich, luminous tones.

DIFFICULTY:

● = Foundation ● = Building Skill ● = Refinement ● = Mastery

### 1 WHAT IS BURNISHING?

Burnishing is the process of polishing your graphite layers to create a smooth, uniform surface.

It compresses the graphite into the paper, reducing tooth visibility and increasing richness.

UNBURNISHED  
(toothy)

LIGHTLY  
BURNISHED

FULLY  
BURNISHED  
(polished)

#### ART4HEART TIP

Always build your layers first. Burnish after the value is strong enough. Never burnish too soon.



### 2 WHY BURNISH?

BEFORE BURNISHING



- ✗ Visible paper tooth
- ✗ Looks dusty
- ✗ Less depth
- ✗ Uneven surface

AFTER BURNISHING



- ✓ Smooth, rich tone
- ✓ Richer blacks
- ✓ More contrast
- ✓ Professional finish

Burnishing turns good values into beautiful values.

### 3 HOW TO BURNISH

- 1 Build your layers.
- 2 Make sure the value is even.
- 3 Use a tool (see #4) to polish in small, overlapping circles or long, even strokes.
- 4 Burnish gently. Let the layers do the work.
- 5 Stop when the surface looks even and the tooth is reduced.

Gentle, consistent movements create beautiful polish.

### 4 TOOLS FOR BURNISHING

You can burnish with many tools. Choose what feels good in your hand.



Keep your tools clean for the best results.

### 5 THE BURNISHING PROCESS

LAYERED  
(toothy)



LIGHT  
BURNISH



MEDIUM  
BURNISH



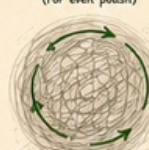
HEAVY  
BURNISH



- ♥ You are compressing the graphite into the paper.
- ♥ The tooth disappears gradually.
- ♥ Shine appears when you burnish too much.
- ♥ Stop when the surface looks smooth, not shiny.

### 6 DIRECTION & MOVEMENT

CIRCULAR MOVEMENT  
(For even polish)



LINEAR MOVEMENT  
(For large areas)



Use light-medium pressure. Let the tool glide. Don't push.

### 7 WHEN TO BURNISH

GOOD TIMES TO BURNISH

- ✓ After building your values
- ✓ When you want smooth transitions
- ✓ For realistic skin, metal, glass, stones, still life
- ✓ When you want deep, rich darks

NOT GOOD TIMES

- ✗ When layers are still too light
- ✗ If your graphite is uneven
- ✗ If you want a textured look
- ✗ If the paper is thin or weak

Burnish late. Burnish lightly. Burnish wisely.

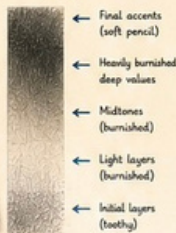
### 8 BURNISHING + PENCIL GRADES

BEST APPROACH

- ✓ Build with a range of graphite grades.
- ✓ Burnish with a clean tool.
- ✓ Add final accents with softer pencils (4B-8B).

Burnish first... Accentuate last.

EFFECT



### 9 COMMON MISTAKES

BURNISHING TOO EARLY



Makes the value patchy & uneven.

PRESSING TOO HARD



Creates shine & flattens the paper.

DIRTY OR GREASY TOOL



Leaves streaks & dark patches.

OVER BURNISHING



Looks shiny & artificial.

USING THE WRONG TOOL



Can scratch or remove graphite.

Light pressure. Clean tools. Patience. That's the secret.

### 10 KNOW WHEN TO STOP

JUST RIGHT



Smooth, even, rich tone with soft glow.

If it shines, you've gone too far.

TOO MUCH



Too shiny, lifeless, highlights are gone.

### 11 PRACTICE CHALLENGE

Draw a smooth stone.

- ♥ Build your value with layers.
- ♥ Burnish gently in small circles.
- ♥ Create a silky, even surface.
- ♥ Add final accents with 4B or 6B.
- ♥ Stand back and admire!

What changed after you burnished?  
Does it look more realistic?  
Does the value look richer?

### BONUS: WHERE BURNISHING SHINES

PORTRAITS  
(Soft skin)



STILL LIFE  
(Metal, glass)



NATURE  
(Leaves, stones)



ABSTRACT  
(Smooth tones)



Burnishing is your secret weapon for realism.

### ARTIST SECRET

Burnishing is not just a technique... It's the art of revealing the beauty inside your layers.

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Art from the Heart



Build Beautiful Values



Know your tools. Love your art. Create from the heart.

# LESSON 13

Light isn't always added. Sometimes it's carefully lifted back.

# LIFTING HIGHLIGHTS

Reveal the light. Create contrast. Bring your drawing to life.

DIFFICULTY: ● ● ●

● = Foundation ● = Building Skill ● = Refinement



## 1 WHAT IS LIFTING?

Lifting is the process of removing some graphite to create highlights and bring light back into your drawing.

It creates contrast, shape, form and life.



### ART4HEART TIP

You can't create true highlights with graphite alone. You need to lift the light back out.

## 2 WHY LIFT HIGHLIGHTS?

- ✓ Creates realistic shine and glow
- ✓ Adds dimension and form
- ✓ Strengthens contrast
- ✓ Directs the viewer's eye
- ✓ Makes your drawing come alive



Highlights are the sparkle in your drawing.

## 3 WHERE TO LIFT

Look for natural light areas:



Don't lift everywhere—only where the light would naturally be.

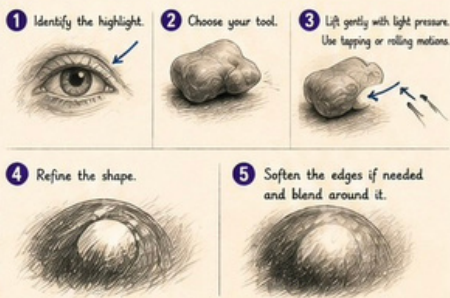
## 4 TOOLS FOR LIFTING

Different tools give different results.



Always keep your tools clean and slightly shaped.

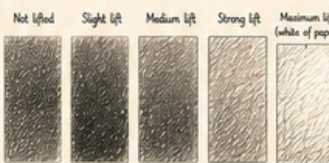
## 5 HOW TO LIFT HIGHLIGHTS (STEP-BY-STEP)



Work slowly. Lift a little. Then decide if you need more.

## 6 LIFTING VALUES: HOW MUCH?

The more graphite you lift, the brighter the highlight.



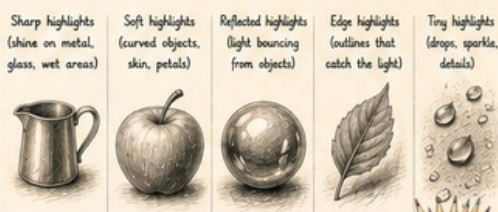
You can always lift more. You can't put it back.

Think: Reveal, don't erase.

## 7 COMMON MISTAKES



## 8 TYPES OF HIGHLIGHTS YOU CAN LIFT



Each type adds realism and beauty.

## 9 PRACTICE CHALLENGE

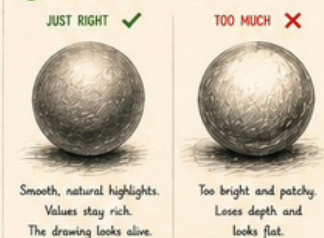
Draw one object (apple, mug, spoon, etc.)

- ♥ Identify where the light hits.
- ♥ Build your values.
- ♥ Lift the highlights.
- ♥ Refine the edges.
- ♥ Stand back and admire!



Was the highlight lifted or forced? Does it look natural and soft? Does it bring the subject to life?

## 10 KNOW WHEN TO STOP



Balance is the secret.

### ARTIST SECRET

The white of the paper is your brightest tool. Lifting simply reveals what's already there.

### BONUS: CREATE GLOW

Lift a soft halo around your highlight to create glow and atmosphere.



### REAL LIFE EXAMPLES

Light is everywhere. Train your eye.



### THE ART4HEART HIGHLIGHT RULE

Observe the light. Build the value. Lift the light. Refine the edges. Bring your drawing to life.

Art4Heart  
Art from the Heart



Know your tools. Love your art. Create from the heart.

## LESSON 14

Depth is not born from pressure, but from patience and layers.

# CREATING DEEP BLACKS

True black is rich, controlled and full of life.

Art

DIFFICULTY:



● = Foundation ● = Building Skill ● = Refinement ● = Mastery



### 1 WHAT IS A DEEP BLACK?

A deep black is the darkest value possible on your paper. It creates drama, contrast and realism.

It is not flat. It has depth, subtle texture and richness.



#### ART4HEART TIP

The goal is not to make the paper black. The goal is to make the paper disappear.

### 2 THE SECRET: LAYERS, NOT PRESSURE

PRESS HARDER



- ✗ Shiny graphite
- ✗ Flattens the tooth
- ✗ Looks harsh
- ✗ Difficult to control

BUILD MORE LAYERS

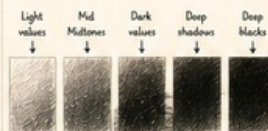


- ✓ Rich and velvety
- ✓ Keeps paper texture
- ✓ Smooth transitions
- ✓ Easy to control

The darkest blacks are built with the lightest pressure.

### 3 THE LAYERING PROCESS

Build your black in stages.

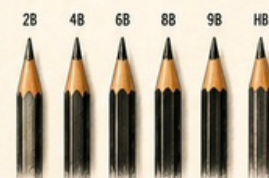


Each layer should be slightly darker than the one before.

Take your time. Let the layers do the work.

### 4 THE BEST PENCILS FOR DEEP BLACKS

Softer pencils lay down more graphite with less pressure.



Use HB or 2B first to build your base. Save the softest grades for the final layers.

### 5 HOW TO BUILD A DEEP BLACK (STEP-BY-STEP)

- 1 Start with a midtone. Cover the area evenly.
- 2 Add another layer in a different direction.
- 3 Keep cross-hatching gently.
- 4 Continue layering. The tone will deepen.
- 5 Refine with your softest pencil.
- 6 Add final accents with controlled strokes.
- 7 Stop when the black is rich, not shiny.



Patience creates velvet. Pressure creates shine.

### 6 CROSS-HATCH FOR RICH DEPTH

Cross-hatching builds graphite faster and creates beautiful depth.



Single direction = Flat  
Two directions = Better  
Three directions = Deep & rich

Change direction often. Keep pressure light.

### 7 WHAT A TRUE BLACK LOOKS LIKE

NOT DEEP ENOUGH



- ✗ Grey looking
- ✗ Lacks contrast
- ✗ Looks weak

TRUE DEEP BLACK



- ✓ Rich and deep
- ✓ Strong contrast
- ✓ Full of life

Stand back. Squint your eyes. Does it hold its own?

### 8 COMMON MISTAKES

PRESSING TOO HARD

✗



Creates shine and flattens the paper.

NOT ENOUGH LAYERS

✗



Looks grey and weak.

USING ONLY ONE PENCIL

✗



Limits depth and richness.

RUSHING THE DARKS

✗



Leads to loss of control.

IGNORING COMPARISON

✗



You can't judge values up close.

Slow down. Compare often. Let the layers build the black.

### 9 ADDING MICRO-TEXTURE

After your black is deep, add subtle texture to keep it interesting.



Texture gives life to your blacks. Don't leave them flat.

### 10 CHECK YOUR BLACK

Step away from your drawing.

- ✓ Squint your eyes.
- ✓ Does the black look black from a distance?
- ✓ Does it create strong contrast?
- ✓ Does it make the lights look brighter?
- ✓ If not, add another layer.



Contrast is what makes your drawing come alive.

### 11 PRACTICE CHALLENGE

Draw a black object (coffee mug, shoe, stone, etc.).

- ✓ Build it slowly.
- ✓ Use at least three soft pencil grades.
- ✓ Create rich texture.
- ✓ Make it as dark as your paper allows.
- ✓ Stop before you lose the tooth.



The black you create will transform your entire drawing.

### KNOW WHEN TO STOP

JUST RIGHT

✓



Rich, velvety, full of life. The paper still has tooth.

TOO MUCH

✗



Shiny, flat, lifeless. Details start to disappear.

The next layer doesn't always improve it. Sometimes it destroys it.

### BONUS: WHERE DEEP BLACKS SHINE

PORTRAITS

(Hair, eyes, clothing)



NATURE

(Trees, rocks, night skies)



STILL LIFE

(Metal, leather, ceramics)



ABSTRACT

(Strong contrast, mood & drama)



Use deep blacks with purpose. They are powerful.

### ARTIST SECRET

Deep blacks are like jewels in your drawing. Use them sparingly. Place them wisely. They will make everything else shine.

Art4Heart  
Art from the Heart



Know your tools. Love your art. Create from the heart.

# LESSON 15

Mistakes are not failures. They are teachers that bring your drawing to the next level.

# COMMON GRAPHITE MISTAKES

Avoid them. Learn from them. Draw with confidence.



DIFFICULTY:



● = Foundation ● = Building Skill ● = Refinement ● = Mastery



## 1 PRESSING TOO HARD

The most common mistake!

### ✗ MISTAKE

Pressing hard from the start.

- ✗ Shiny graphite
- ✗ Flattened paper tooth
- ✗ Hard to blend
- ✗ Difficult to erase

### ✓ INSTEAD

Use light pressure and build gradually.



Build depth, not pressure.

## 2 USING ONLY ONE PENCIL

Relying on just one grade.

### ✗ MISTAKE

Creates limited values and flat drawings.



### ✓ INSTEAD

Use a range of grades to create depth and beautiful transitions.



More grades = more control.

## 3 SKIPPING PENCIL GRADES

Jumping from hard to very soft.

### ✗ MISTAKE

Creates harsh jumps and muddy tones.



### ✓ INSTEAD

Use steps in between for smoother transitions.



Small steps create smooth results.

## 4 RUSHING THE DARKS

Going too dark too early.

### ✗ MISTAKE

Leaves no room for growth.



### ✓ INSTEAD

Build your darks slowly and with intention.



Patience creates realism.

## 5 BLENDING EVERY LAYER

Blending too soon and too often.

### ✗ MISTAKE

Destroys texture and creates muddy tones.



### ✓ INSTEAD

Blend only when needed and at the right stage.



Texture first, polish later.

## 6 IGNORING VALUES

Focusing on details instead of light and dark.

### ✗ MISTAKE

Looks busy but lacks depth.



### ✓ INSTEAD

Squint your eyes. See the big values first.

Value is the foundation.

## 7 POOR REFERENCE HABITS

Not studying your reference.

### ✗ MISTAKE

Misplaced proportions, wrong values.



### ✓ INSTEAD

Observe carefully. Measure. Compare. Train your eye.

Good seeing = good drawing.

## 8 OVERWORKING THE DRAWING

Adding too many layers without purpose.

### ✗ MISTAKE

Muddy, lifeless results. Loss of highlights and contrast.



### ✓ INSTEAD

Know when to stop. Protect your highlights and contrasts.

Sometimes less is more.

## 9 WRONG ERASER USE

Using the wrong eraser or too much force.

### ✗ MISTAKE

Damages the paper and leaves marks.



### ✓ INSTEAD

Use the right eraser gently and with control.

Erase with care.

## 10 DIRTY TOOLS & SMUDGING

Dirty hands, pencils or smudging.

### ✗ MISTAKE

Smears, fingerprints and unwanted marks.



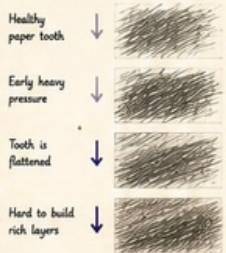
### ✓ INSTEAD

Keep tools and hands clean. Work lightly. Use a paper guard.

Clean tools, clean results.

## 11 IGNORING THE PAPER TOOTH

Filling the tooth too early.



Protect the tooth. It's your storage space.

## 12 COMPARING TOO MUCH

Constantly comparing your drawing to others.

### ✗ MISTAKE

You lose the ability to build beautiful layers.

### ✓ INSTEAD

Protect the tooth with light layers and proper pressure.



### ✗ MISTAKE

Kills confidence and joy.

### ✓ INSTEAD

Focus on your progress, not someone else's journey.

Your journey is unique and valuable.

## ART4HEART STUDIO TIP

Mistakes are feedback, not defeat.

Every artist makes them. The difference is... we learn faster and grow stronger.

## QUICK CHECKLIST

Before you continue, ask yourself:

- ✓ Am I using light pressure?
- ✓ Am I building layers?
- ✓ Am I comparing values?
- ✓ Am I using the right pencil?
- ✓ Am I keeping my tools clean?
- ✓ Am I working with purpose?
- ✓ Am I enjoying the process?

## ARTIST SECRET

Mistakes are proof that you are trying, learning and growing. Embrace them. They make you better.

## TURN MISTAKES INTO MASTERY



This is the Art4Heart way.

## REMEMBER

- ♥ Slow down.
- ♥ Observe more.
- ♥ Build layers.
- ♥ Trust the process.
- ♥ You've got this!

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ART4HEART ACADEMY • COURSE 1 • LESSON 15



Know your tools. Love your art. Create from the heart.

## LESSON 24

Protecting highlights is the secret to dramatic, realistic charcoal art.

# PROTECTING HIGHLIGHTS

Keep the light. Make it shine.

Highlights bring life, dimension and focus to your drawing. Protect them while you work – or they may be lost forever.



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### 1 WHY PROTECT HIGHLIGHTS?



- ♥ Highlights create focal points and attract the eye.
- ♥ They add contrast and depth.
- ♥ They give your drawing life and realism.
- ♥ Once lost, they are hard (or impossible) to get back.

### 2 WHERE ARE HIGHLIGHTS FOUND?

#### ON THE FACE



Forehead, nose bridge, cheekbones, under eye, lips, chin, tear ducts.

#### ON OBJECTS



Shiny areas, reflections, edges, curves and small spots of light.

#### ON FABRIC



Top folds, edges that catch the light, and smooth surfaces.

#### IN LANDSCAPES



Water reflections, bright skies, light on rocks, paths, leaves.

#### ON HAIR



Strands where light hits, separations, shine.

♥ Think light first. Plan where your highlights will be before you start. 😊

### 3 WAYS TO PROTECT HIGHLIGHTS

#### 1. PLAN AHEAD



Identify your highlights first. Keep them clean from the start.

#### 2. LEAVE WHITE PAPER



The simplest and most effective method. Don't draw or shade over the area.

#### 3. USE MASKING TOOLS



Apply masking tape or liquid frisket to cover important highlights.

#### 4. DRAW AROUND THE LIGHT



Shade up to the edge of the highlight. Work around it, not over it.

#### 5. USE A LIFTING TOOL



Lift carefully with a kneaded eraser, precision eraser or putty to restore light.

♥ It's easier to protect a highlight than to try and rescue it later. 😊

### 4 TOOLS THAT HELP



**Kneaded Eraser**  
Lift and shape highlights gently.



**Precision Eraser**  
Create sharp clean highlights.



**Putty Eraser**  
Lift larger areas without damaging surroundings.



**Frisket Pen**  
Protect highlights before you shade.



**Tissue or Blending Paper**  
Protect your hand from smudging while you draw.

#### ART4HEART TIP

Keep your tools clean and your hands off the highlight areas. Oil and smudges can dull the light.

### 5 STEP-BY-STEP: PROTECTING A HIGHLIGHT

1 Sketch lightly and plan your highlights.



2 Identify the brightest areas.



3 Shade around the highlights. Leave them untouched.



4 Build your tones carefully around the light.



5 Refine details. Keep edges clean.



6 Final drawing with bright, protected highlights.



♥ Patience + protection = powerful highlights. 😊

### 6 WHAT NOT TO DO

- ✗ Don't cover highlights early with charcoal.
- ✗ Don't smudge over highlight areas.
- ✗ Don't press too hard near highlights.
- ✗ Don't use dirty tools or hands.
- ✗ Don't forget your plan!

#### LOST HIGHLIGHT



#### PROTECTED HIGHLIGHT



♥ Once the light is gone, it's very hard to get back. 😞

### 7 EXTRA TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ♥ Work from light to dark.
- ♥ Step back often and check your values.
- ♥ Use soft brushes to dust away charcoal around highlights.
- ♥ Keep your drawing surface clean.
- ♥ Practice seeing the light in real life.



### 8 QUICK REFERENCE

#### PROTECTING HIGHLIGHTS CHECKLIST

- ✓ Plan your highlights first.
- ✓ Leave the paper white or mask it.
- ✓ Shade around, not over.
- ✓ Use lifting tools with care.
- ✓ Keep tools and hands clean.
- ✓ Take your time.
- ✓ Let the light shine!

### 9 PRACTICE CHALLENGE

Draw a simple subject (e.g. apple, metal spoon or glass).

Focus on protecting at least 3 key highlights.

Compare your results and see the difference light makes!



## LESSON 25

Fixative is the invisible shield that protects your charcoal art.



# FIXATIVE BEFORE & AFTER

Protect your work. Preserve your art.

Fixative protects charcoal from smudging, seals it in place, and keeps your artwork beautiful for years to come.

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You can spray a workable fixative on your charcoal at any stage – especially if you take your time, or if the drawing needs to be stored or transported for a short while.

### 1 WHAT IS FIXATIVE?



- ♥ A clear spray that creates a protective layer over charcoal without changing the look of your drawing.
- ♥ Prevents smudging and rubbing off
- ♥ Seals loose particles
- ♥ Protects from dust and handling
- ♥ Helps your art last for generations

**ART4HEART TIP**  
Always test your fixative on a scrap first!



### 2 BEFORE & AFTER – SEE THE DIFFERENCE

#### BEFORE FIXATIVE

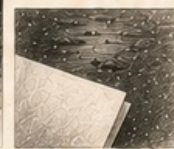
Vulnerable and easily smudged



VS.

#### AFTER FIXATIVE

Protected and smudge-resistant



Resists smudging and fingerprints

Stays put – clean and protected

Fixative locks in your hard work so your art stays beautiful.

### 3 WHEN TO APPLY FIXATIVE



- ♥ You do not have to wait for charcoal to dry – charcoal is a dry medium.
- ♥ Apply fixative at any stage if you are taking your time, or if the artwork needs to be stored or transported for a short while.
- ♥ Apply again after major changes or when the drawing is complete.

### 4 HOW TO SPRAY FIXATIVE – THE RIGHT WAY

#### 1 PREPARE

Work in a well-ventilated area (outdoors is best). Protect surrounding surfaces.



#### 2 SHAKE

Shake the can well for at least 1 minute.



#### 3 START OFF THE PAPER

Start spraying OFF the paper to the side.



#### 4 SPRAY IN SMOOTH LEFT/RIGHT MOVEMENTS

Use smooth, even, left/right movements.



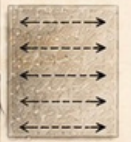
#### 5 END OFF THE PAPER

End spraying OFF the paper on the other side.



#### 6 OVERLAP LIGHTLY

Overlap each pass slightly to ensure even coverage and no stripes.



Keep the can 12–18 inches (30–45 cm) away from your work.  
Use light, even coats. Several light coats are better than one heavy coat.

### 5 HOW TO APPLY – QUICK GUIDE

- 1 Work in a well-ventilated area.
- 2 Shake the can well.
- 3 Start spraying off the paper.
- 4 Spray in smooth left/right movements.
- 5 End off the paper.
- 6 Overlap lightly.
- 7 Let the final coat dry completely.

**ART4HEART TIP**  
Light coats are key! Heavy coats can cause uneven sheen or darker spots.



### 6 TYPES OF FIXATIVE

#### WORKABLE FIXATIVE (Recommended)

Use during the process to protect completed areas. Lets you continue working.



#### FINAL FIXATIVE

Use when your drawing is complete. Seals and protects.



#### MATTE FIXATIVE

Reduces glare. Perfect for photographs of your art.



#### GLOSS FIXATIVE

Adds slight sheen and depth. Use only if desired.



Choose the fixative that suits your style and finish.

### 7 IMPORTANT TIPS

- ♥ Always test on a scrap.
- ♥ Don't spray too close.
- ♥ Use light coats.
- ♥ Avoid windy or dusty days.
- ♥ Store fixative in a cool, dry place.
- ♥ Keep away from heat and open flames.



### 8 BEFORE & AFTER – LONG TERM RESULTS

#### WITHOUT FIXATIVE

Over time...



- ✗ Smudges
- ✗ Fades
- ✗ Collects dust
- ✗ Loses detail

VS.

#### WITH FIXATIVE

Over time...



- ✓ Stays clean
- ✓ Detail remains
- ✓ Protected
- ✓ Lasts for years

A few light sprays today = forever protection.

### 9 REMEMBER



Fixative is your artwork's best friend.

- ♥ Protect your highlights.
- ♥ Preserve your hard work.
- ♥ Pass your art on for generations.

Spray. Protect. Preserve.



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PROTECT TODAY. ENJOY FOREVER.

## LESSON 26

Dark backgrounds create depth, drama and contrast. They make your subject stand out with power.



# BUILDING DARK BACKGROUNDS

DEPTH. CONTRAST. IMPACT.

A strong dark background doesn't mean flat or heavy. It's built with layers, value control and texture that support your subject and tell a story.

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A dark background should enhance, not overpower your subject. Build it with intention, control and patience – one layer at a time.



### BEST USED FOR

- ♥ Portraits & dramatic lighting
- ♥ Still life & product photography reference
- ♥ Low key compositions
- ♥ Creating mood and focus
- ♥ Making light pop

### 1 WHY BUILD DARK BACKGROUNDS?

- ♥ Adds drama and focus
- ♥ Strengthens contrast
- ♥ Makes highlights pop
- ♥ Creates depth and space
- ♥ Sets the mood
- ♥ Supports your story

#### ART4HEART TIP

Plan your lights first. You can only make dark darker – not lighter!



### 2 HOW TO BUILD A DARK BACKGROUND - STEP BY STEP

#### 1 PREPARE

Decide where your light is coming from. Protect your subject from smudges.



#### 2 LAY FIRST TONE

Use a side of charcoal or a soft pencil (2B-6B). Cover the area with light pressure evenly.



#### 3 BUILD IN LAYERS

Add more layers with slightly more pressure. Work in one direction or small circles.



#### 4 DEEPEN THE DARKS

Use stronger pressure in the darkest areas (4B-8B or charcoal). Keep edges soft.



#### 5 REFINE & UNIFY

Check your values. Add depth near edges and behind the subject. Smooth if needed.



♥ Build slowly. Stop often. Step back. Compare. Adjust.

### 3 CHOOSING YOUR TOOL

**CHARCOAL**  
Rich, matte blacks. Easy to blend.



**SOFT PENCILS** (4B-8B)  
Great control and detail.



**GRAPHITE STICK**  
Smooth, deep tone with broad coverage.



**SOFT PASTEL**  
Velvety, bold darks with beautiful texture.



♥ Use what feels right – or combine for the best result.

### 4 BUILDING TECHNIQUES

**SIDE STROKE**  
Use the side of your tool for large, smooth areas.



**CIRCULAR MOTION**  
Small circles create an even, rich tone.



**LAYER & BURNISH**  
Layer, then burnish with a tissue or stumps for smoother depth.



**STIPPLE TEXTURE**  
Tap lightly for a textured background (leave subtle variation).



♥ Vary your technique to avoid flat, lifeless blacks.

### 5 CONTROL YOUR EDGES

**HARD EDGE**  
Sharp edge adds graphic impact.



**SOFT EDGE**  
Blended edge creates depth and realism.



**LOST EDGE**  
Let the edge disappear into the darkness for mood.



♥ Edges guide the eye. Use them with purpose.

### 6 VALUE GUIDE (EXAMPLE)

The full range of dark – not just black!



♥ Don't jump to black. Build through the middle values for a rich, believable background.

### 7 COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Pressing too hard too soon
- ✗ Making it flat and even
- ✗ Forgetting light bounce (reflected light)
- ✗ Over-blending and losing texture
- ✗ Letting the background compete with the subject

♥ Patience and control create professional results.

### 8 KEEP IT INTERESTING

Add subtle variation:

- ♥ Slight textures
- ♥ Soft gradients
- ♥ Hints of shapes
- ♥ Vignette (darker around edges)

♥ A hint is enough – the subject is the star!



### 9 PRACTICE IDEAS

- ♥ Practice smooth gradients from light to dark.
- ♥ Fill a page with different dark textures.
- ♥ Draw an object on toned paper and build a dark background.
- ♥ Try low-key lighting studies.



### 10 BEFORE & AFTER

(Dull & Flat)



VS.

AFTER

(Rich & Dramatic)



### REMEMBER

Dark backgrounds don't happen by accident – they're built layer by layer with intention and care. Control the darkness, and you control the mood.



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BUILD THE DARK. PROTECT THE LIGHT. THAT'S WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS.

