

Lesson 2: The Line

To the teacher

I consider the line the very most basic building block in art. All art begins with a point. When that point is extended it becomes a line. When the ends of the line are brought together it forms a shape. Some lines are jagged giving the sense of texture. Some lines drawn closely together giving the perception of value. Make sure your students understand that mastery of the line is the first step in understanding the elements of art.

Lesson Objective:

- Students will understand the importance of the line by analyzing other artists work
- Students will begin to consciously use line well in their work by completing an art activity

Materials:

- Prepared power point, overheads, or printouts of other artist's work
- Markers, pencil crayons, and pencils for student use
- 2 Sheets of drawing paper (one for practice, one for the actual drawing)

Key Terms:

- Parallel, perpendicular, vertical and diagonal lines
- Contour lines
- Gesture drawing
- Scribble drawing

Lesson Activity

- Remind the students that we had mentioned in the last class that we will be exploring the line this week.
- The line is the most fundamental building block of all the art elements
 - Ask: Why/ What is the big deal with the line? Isn't the use of the line limited in art? (After getting a response, ask students to list the ways they can think of that line could be used in art.)
 - Line is very important in art. It is more likely that we simply miss the significant ways line is used in art. To understand this idea, let's take a look at some of the ways other artist have incorporated the line into their artwork.
- Show and discuss the following pieces of art:
 - Ask: What types of lines do you see?
 - Where do you see the following: diagonal, vertical, horizontal, parallel or perpendicular lines?
 - Look closely at the lines. Are they,
 - solid, serious, organized, planned OR
 - silly, energetic, dynamic, in motion, chaotic. Why?
 - The tracks are parallel, and the buildings are created using perpendicular lines. These lines give the feeling of option 1.



Charles Sheeler
Classic Landscape, 1932

- Ask: Why types of line do you see?
 - Where do you see the following: parallel, diagonal, perpendicular and diagonal lines?
 - Look closely at the lines. Are they,
 - Busy, topsy-turvy, active, OR
 - Serious, calm, quiet.
- Notice how the use of curved and zigzag lines give the perception of option 2



Joan Miro
The Farm

- Ask: Can you find the hidden lines in this painting?
 - Lead students to notice the diagonal lines in this painting.
 - Artists use diagonals to show energy and movement. Try to imagine the boat without the diagonals, sitting flat on the water with the mast going straight up. Would the boat be moving, or sitting still without the diagonals?
- Now, compare this boating scene to the next picture.



Winslow Homer
Breezing Up

- Ask: Is this boat moving fast or slow? Why do you think so?
 - Does the water seem to be calm or churning?
 - Are there any diagonal lines in this painting (very few)
- There are mostly straight lines here. Without diagonal lines, the the artists created a quiet, calm, scene.



Fitz Henry Lane
Lumber Schooners at Penobscot Bay

- Clearly, artist are able to use lines to convey very different feelings and messages in their artwork.
 - In general straight perpendicular, parallel, or horizontal lines give a sense of order and seriousness to a piece of artwork.
 - Curved or zigzag lines give a sense of chaos, perhaps even silliness. Thickness of lines comes in here too: thin lines are precise and formal. Thick lines are wonky and informal.
 - Diagonal lines are important to giving a sense of movement in a painting
- So, let's practice learning to use lines the right way.