

A Word About These Tutorials:

“Drawing is a kind of Universal Language, understood by all Nations. A Man may often express his Ideas, even to his own Country- men, more clearly with a Lead Pencil, or Bit of Chalk, than with his Tongue. And many can understand a Figure that do not comprehend a Description in Words... All Boys¹ have an early Inclination to this Improvement, and begin to make Figures of Animals, Ships, Machines, &c. as soon as they can use a Pen: But for want of a little Instruction at that Time, generally are discouraged, and quit the Pursuit.” -Ben Franklin

It appears the problems of learning to draw are as classic then as they still are.

Art is a very fluid world-both simple and complexly intricate. While we’re young, we love art, but as we age, we sometimes lose our passion, as what we see on our paper does not match what we see or imagine within our minds.

Yet art is a skill, not something you are born with or not. For centuries, artists were trained master to apprentice, teaching their students how to see the world in such a way you could translate it to the canvas. These are the semi-fabled “tricks of the trade.” Yet they’re not tricks, just rules and techniques.

Betty Edwards, the author of long-running drawing program and book, “Drawing on the Right Side of Your Brain”, notes that Franklin’s observations still occur. A young child loves to draw, and draws freely. Their ability to draw lines, loops, circles and the human figure are noted developmental steps in the preschool years. Then, just before puberty, most children want to draw “realistically”. Because art education has been more about “drawing how you feel” or “expressing yourself” for close to a century, (thank you Abstract Art!) rather than learning the techniques for realism that were once common knowledge, these techniques died out. Being told to “look more closely” or “draw what you see” without having these techniques of drawing, means that children (or, let’s be honest, adults too) get frustrated, and believe they just can’t draw. Many give up.

It doesn’t help that occasionally, a few stumble on the techniques of art accidentally, leading to the belief that some people are “talented” and some aren’t, and therefore, if you can’t draw, you simply weren’t born with the ability.

Classical Conversation’s Drawing section teaches a variation on some of the tools and techniques of drawing (OiLS), how to trick the brain into seeing objects as OiLS (Mirror Image and Upside Down), how to play with OiLS without representing reality (Abstract Art), and how to draw things that look three-dimensional and in deep space (“Perspective”). Because some of these techniques are different from what you may or may not read elsewhere, it’s difficult to write a “tell-all” script, especially when you need to keep a minimum of 15-20 minutes for the

¹ Of course, today we’d substitute “children” but this is the 18th century.

students to actually work. (Preferably longer. I tried to keep the teaching portion 8 minutes or less, but I might talk fast!)

If you've ever read about drawing techniques, you'll discover there are other variations on building blocks for art. For example, when creating an observational drawing from life, many artists use a variation of OiLS, but when composing an imaginary scene, some artists build with a combination of spheres, cubes, columns, and cones. Mirror Image and Upside Down exercises are classic ways to awaken your spatial reasoning, and ability to break images down to OiLS, but once you naturally can see OiLS within an image, most artists dispense with those exercises. Abstract Art is absolutely open to LOTS of interpretations! And Perspective...that one is the hardest one to write. It can cover everything from breaking down Cubes, Spheres, Cones and Columns into their OiLS and building them back up again. It can also mean using those objects to "build" a more complex object, or using Zero/informal perspective, or one point perspective. It can even go all the way through to six-point perspective (which might make you dizzy to draw. I know it did me!).

So, I tried, as much as possible, to create a "simpler" and "more information" form of the tutorials. If you are tutoring a newer chapter (like I am) and this is the first or second time you've been through the Drawing section, or you are tutoring the Abecedarian and Apprentice levels, you may prefer the simpler section. If you tutor the older class, or a class who has been through drawing several times (or who ask lots of questions!) you might prefer the "more information" tutorials. Several patterns are included in each tutorial pair, some tied to the history sentence of the week this cycle, a few tied to Linneaus, an artist we will study later this cycle, and a few extras. You are more than welcome to find other things that you think your class would prefer.

Week 5's Perspective will (likely) be different from the other weeks. Because "Perspective" is such a large field, it will probably be broken down into mini-lessons. So, you will have to be the judge of your class's experience and select accordingly. As of this writing, it is still under development.

I included quotes about art, especially since I see how Classical Education itself tries to connect the various disciplines to each other and through time. These quotes come from different artists, but also the President of Pixar/Disney Animation, art historians, architects, and others. You don't have to use them, they are there if you want.

Not all the quotes are from professing Christians, just so you are aware. Some are Christians. Some have not made their religious beliefs public knowledge. Some are not Christians at all.

So why include non-Christians?

I believe it is for the same reason that we read books by non-Christians, study ancient religions (and contemporary religions) as well as study logic, and philosophy.

Sometimes, especially from a Christian perspective, we can better see Truth, when contrasted with Other. I've had well-meaning people question why I would read Greek myths to my children, or even teach them the names of the Greco-Roman pantheon. But understanding what

the ancient Classical Civilizations believed has allowed God's character to shine more brightly to my kids because they can see the contrast

But also, as an artist, I've dealt with the creative community at various times, many of whom are not Christian. As a Christian, I need to work with them, and if possible, witness to them. I can only do that if I try to understand their point of view, while recognizing that understanding doesn't mean blind, universal acceptance. God has also used non-Christians to teach me about Himself, whether it was through an anti-example, or someone seeing God's Truth, even if they were not yet to the point of accepting Him. The Art World desperately needs to re-embrace God.

So, use the quotes if you choose, or don't, if you choose. I chose quotes which reflect the reality of art and life from my own personal experience, and I am a practicing Christian and artist.

Why are we bothering to teach how to draw? There are many reasons, but I think this one sums it up: *Drawing not only develops hand-eye coordination, it teaches one to really observe, to see, as nothing else ever will.* -Nancy Marculewicz, printmaker and artist

If you have any questions, or suggestions for improvements next year, or feedback from your classes, please, *please*, PLEASE let me know so I can learn from you! You can find me on the Tutors and Subs Page on Facebook, the "Classical Conversations *official* feed, (name: Rebekah Greenhoe Hughes) or my new art website Drawing Demystified (drawingdemystified.com), or email me at becky@drawingdemystified.com

About Me:

I was born and raised in Michigan, spending every spare moment reading and drawing. While I wanted to be an artist, I was encouraged by well-meaning adults to pursue "more practical" training, I entered Taylor University as a Secondary Education Biology Science major. Two and a half years later, I switched to an Art degree with emphasis on Art History and Metal Arts. The mixed training in science and art has given me a unique view on both worlds.

After earning my degree, I moved with my husband to Wisconsin, training as an Apprentice Jeweler under Master Goldsmith William Howard. We moved to Muskegon Michigan, where I worked as a museum exhibit designer and archivist/curator for the USS Silversides Submarine Museum.² Some of my work adorns the Main Exhibit Hall.

Moving back to Indiana, we eventually had three children who we now homeschool. In addition to schooling, I research history, blog about WWII submarines at ussflierproject.com, write, draw, and illustrate children's books (while avoiding housework as much as I can).

This (2016-2017) is my second year tutoring Classical Conversations, as well as my second year involved in CC. You can find my books, *Surviving the Flier* (author) and *Catherine's Pascha* (illustrator) on Amazon.com and Barnes and Nobles

² You can sleep aboard the Silversides, a WWII sub. It's a fantastic field trip, if I do say so myself!