

Art 213 Drawing vocabulary
from Artforms, 7th ed. By Preble, Preble, and Frank. This book is on reserve (under Art 101) in the Stiern Library.

Also, The Natural Way to Draw by Kimon Nicolades.

A Guide to Drawing by Mendelowitz and Wakeman

Contour line – line that delineates the edges of forms, separating each volume or area from neighboring ones.

Gestural line – line that shows the movement inherent in the object or figure, usually very fluid looking.

Value (or tone) – transition from light to dark across the surface of the artwork. White is the lightest value, black is the darkest. The value halfway between the two is called middle gray.

Chiaroscuro – Italian word meaning *light/dark*. The gradations of light and dark values in a two dimensional imagery; especially the illusion of rounded, 3-dimensional forms created through gradations of light and shade rather than line.

High key - exclusive use of light or pale values in a work.

Low key – exclusive use of darkest values in a work.

Full range – use of values from lightest to darkest in a work.

Core of a shadow – the darkest part of the shadow

Highlight – where the light hits the object portrayed.
It will be white of the paper.

Reflected light – light that bounces up from surrounding surfaces and on to the object in areas that are in shadow.

Cast shadow

Hatching – lines are placed in parallel series to darken the value of an area.

Cross hatching – drawing one set of hatchings over another in a different direction so that the lines cross.

Cross contour

Crop – cut off

Figure/ground relationship (or positive/negative shapes) figure or positive shape refers to the subject or dominant shapes. The ground or negative shape refers to background areas.

Proportion – size relationships of parts to a whole within the composition.

Emphasis – used to draw our attention to an area or areas.

Position, contrast, size can be used to create this.

Subordination – neutral areas of lesser interest in a composition that keep us from being distracted from the area of emphasis.

Contrast – juxtaposition of strongly dissimilar elements.

Unity/variety – unity provides oneness. Variety shows diversity

Balance – the achievement of equilibrium. The condition in which acting influences are held in check by opposing forces.

Symmetry (formal) or bilateral symmetry – Near or exact matching of left and right sides of a composition.

Asymmetry (informal) – two sides are not the same but still balance each other.

Perspective – a means for showing the illusion of 3-dimensional depth on a 2-dimensional surface.

Linear perspective – based on the fact that parallel lines or edges appear to converge and objects appear smaller as the distance between them and the viewer increases.

One point perspective –

Two point perspective –

Atmospheric or aerial perspective – creates the illusion of distance by reducing color saturation, value contrast, and detail to imply the hazy effect of atmosphere between the viewer and distant objects. Things appear paler, more blue-gray, less distinct as they approach the horizon.

Representational, objective, figurative (naturalistic) – refers to art in which the artist presents again (re-presents) a particular subject, something you recognize: a tree, a person, a house, etc.

Abstract – departs significantly from natural appearances. Forms are simplified, distorted, exaggerated to emphasize certain qualities. Also, used to describe nonrepresentational art.

Nonrepresentational, nonobjective, nonfigurative – refers to nothing outside itself, without recognizable objects.

Wash – a thin transparent layer of ink, watercolor, acrylic, oil paint.

Picture plane – the flat picture surface.

Foreshortening – the representation of forms on a 2-dimensional surface by shortening the length in such a way that the long axis appears to project toward or recede away from the viewer.

Contrapposto – Italian for *counterpose*. When weight is placed on one foot causing the hip and shoulder lines to counterbalance each other – often in a graceful S-curve.