



# Gesture Drawing: An Introduction to Figure Drawing

**Lesson Description:** Teach students the basics of figure drawing by introducing gesture drawing and basic anatomy proportions. Have them practice with either pictures of models engaging in various activities or, to make the activity more fun, have students take turns posing for the class to draw. Sometimes, students wear fun hats and costumes which makes drawing them so much more fun and the kids always have a great time!

**Lesson Objective:** Students should familiarize themselves with the concept of gesture drawing and the element of "shape" or "form": as in, using simple shapes to construct complicated figures. While they most likely won't master body proportions and figure drawing just from this lesson, they should become more comfortable with it and develop a basic understanding which can be used as a basis for more complex figure drawing skills.

**Art History/Theory Relation:** Figure drawing is of utmost importance to art. Look at any famous painting with people in it! Drawing people is an important skill for artists to have since they're among the most complex and interesting subjects and historically have featured heavily as subjects in multiple prominent art movements and eras (for example, the majority of paintings from the Italian Renaissance starting from 1350 had multiple human figures in them). Gesture drawing is a loose form of figure drawing which attempts to capture the general movement and basic form of a subject. It's a lot less rigid than traditional figure drawing and a great introduction to figure drawing itself, so I love starting with it first when teaching kids! It's very laid back and super fun, especially when kids pose for each other.

## Materials Needed:

NOTE: All for Art lesson plans are always flexible with materials and students can use whatever they have on hand! We always strive to make art available to everyone,



no matter how limited the resources available to them are. Thus, the following list is simply an ideation of possible materials for the above project.

1. Paper
2. Pens/pencils
3. Crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.
  - a. Adding in color and other fun materials really spices up this activity and gives students so much more variety and availability of options!
4. Pictures of people for students to draw (if not using live posing)
  - a. This website provides a great alternative to using live models! You can specify what types of pictures/models you'd like to see and how much time you want the pictures to be displayed for. Since gesture drawing has a prominent focus on quick and loose sketching, the time limits force students to adjust to that requirement: [SketchDaily Reference Site](#)

### **Step-by-Step Procedure:**

1. Introduce students to figure/gesture drawing and how to approach drawing models.
  - a. This video gives some basic tips and guidelines for getting started with gesture drawing: [▶ The 7 Ls of Gesture Drawing](#)
  - b. Show students some live examples of gesture drawing to really get a feel for the process with this video:  
[▶ Timed Model Drawing Session 1 // Instructor: Glenn Vilppu](#)
  - c. Here are two examples of gesture drawings by famous artists:



Rembrandt, Gesture Drawing



Michelangelo, Gesture Drawing

2. Give them the materials and, if doing live modeling, set up a place for the student modeling to stand so that the rest of the class will be able to see and draw them properly (a circular setup in which the model stands in the middle and desks/chairs of students surround him/her is ideal).
3. Have the students draw! I recommend 30-50 second long poses so that students have to draw fast and loose and can't start crawling into details.
  - a. NOTE: Don't have your students focus too much on accuracy! The point of this lesson is for them to familiarize themselves with anatomy and they most likely won't be able to master proportions until much later.

### **What Students Should Aim to Accomplish with their Final Piece:**

For this project, students won't have one "final" piece, per se, since they'll have created multiple gesture drawings which should all be loose and unrefined.



However, through these drawings, they should show an improved understanding of anatomy and an attempt to capture general motion and form of the model, not precise details.