



Facial Proportions

? What are we covering today?

Yesterday, we learned about the grid technique. We learned that this technique is useful when accuracy is important when drawing directly from a photo reference. We also saw that the grid technique isn't perfect. It requires some prep work and can leave traces of a grid behind.

Today, we'll shift gears a bit and discuss the basics of facial proportions. Understanding the relative size and positioning of the facial features helps us when drawing a portrait from observation, but also from imagination.

Today, we'll draw a face from imagination, but the concepts that we cover can be applied to drawing a face from observation as well. However, I'd like to remind you that every face is different and drawing an accurate portrait requires close observation. There isn't a formula that can be used for every face that you encounter.

We'll use a formulaic approach to drawing our face from imagination. The formula that we'll use is a hybrid of the Loomis method and an approach that was taught to me years ago.

There are several different formulas that exist for drawing the face and head. These have been developed by artists and teachers throughout the years. Each formula is slightly different and one is not better than the other.

That being said, some of us will prefer a more complex approach, while others of us are better suited with a simple one. As I mentioned before, the approach that we'll be using borrows ideas from the complicated Loomis method and combines them with a more simplified approach.

! Today's Mindset

Today's mindset is...

"We can use a formulaic approach to drawing the basic proportions and features of the face, but we must understand that using a formula will only give us the general locations of the features."

Today's Drawing Exercise

For today's drawing exercise, we'll draw a face from imagination. As we go, we'll discuss the approximate locations and proportions of the facial features.

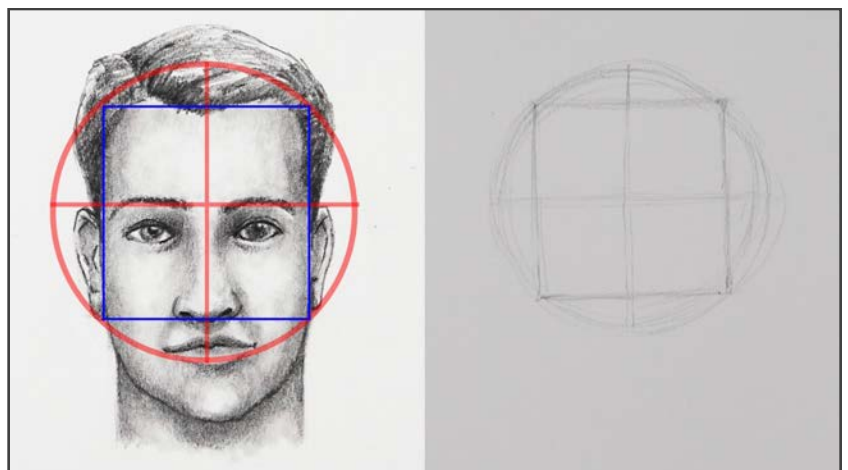
We'll begin by drawing a circle. We can draw loosely, using our entire arm. Place the circle towards the upper middle of your drawing paper so that the entire head will fit on the surface.



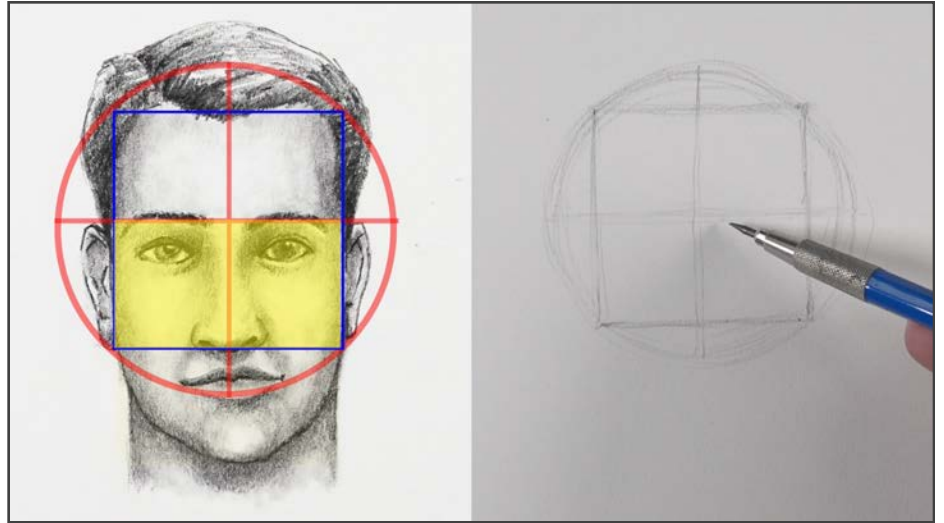
Next, we'll draw two intersecting lines along the vertical and horizontal axis of the circle.



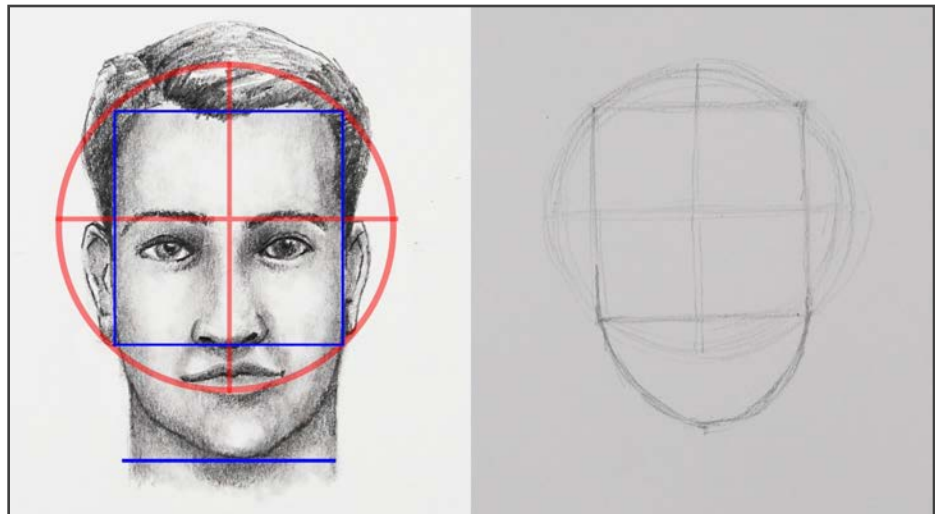
Now we'll draw a square inside of the circle. Be sure that the square's four corners touch the circle. The sides of our square mark the boundaries of the sides of the head. The top of the square will become the hair line. The middle line (from our cross) will become the brow line. The bottom of the square will become the nose line.



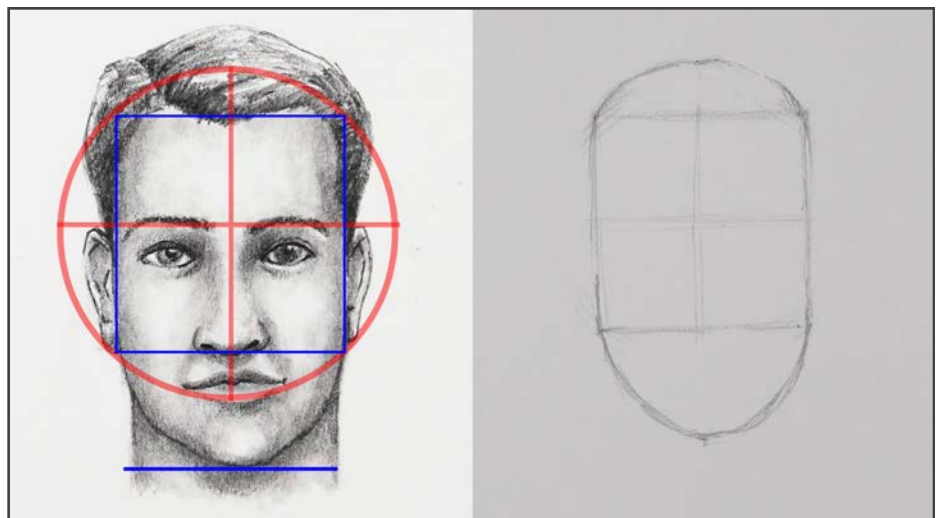
We'll find the location of the bottom of the chin. We'll simply use the measurement from the bottom of the square to the middle line of the cross and add this length to the bottom line of the square.



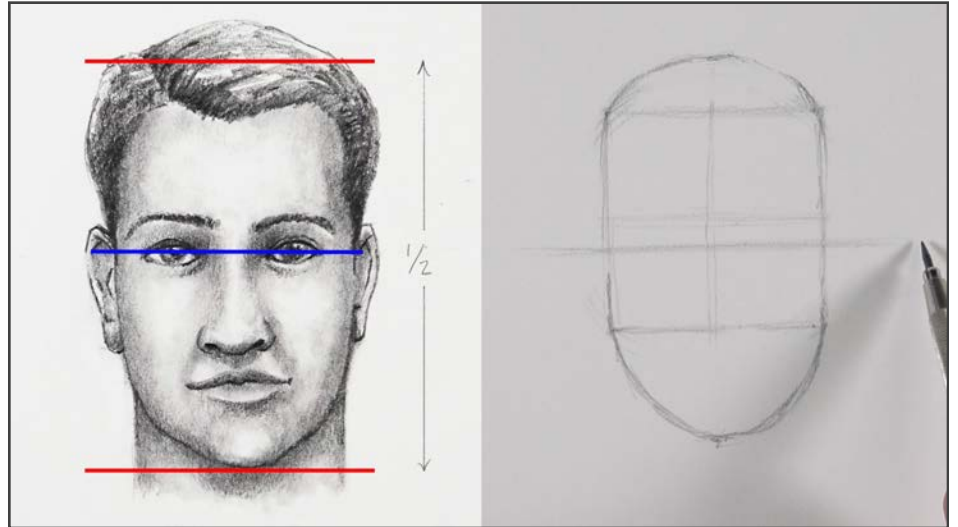
We can mark this position and draw lines for the jaw and the chin. Masculine faces may feature a more angular line while feminine faces may have a softer curved line.



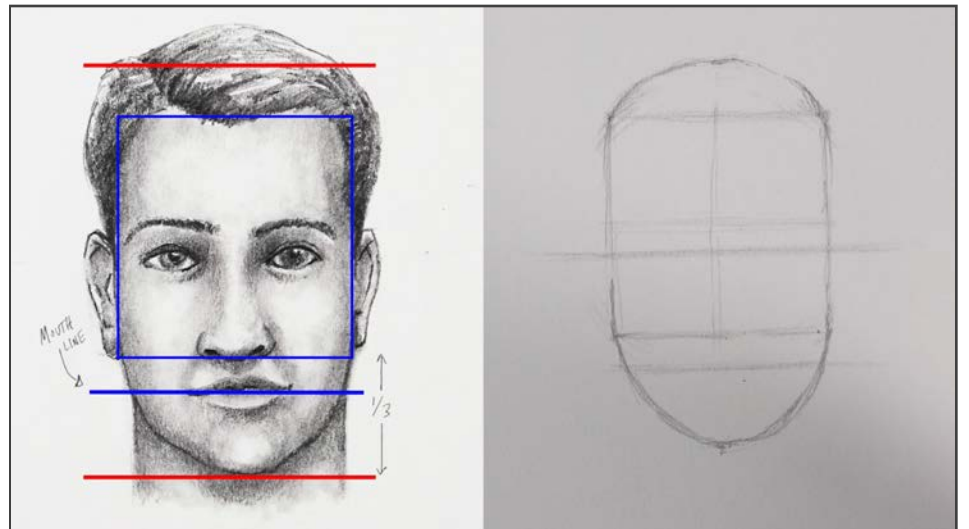
We can then reinforce the curved line at the top of the head and erase the lines for the circle. We are left with the shape of the head. Notice how the shape is unique. It is not an egg shape or a simple oval.



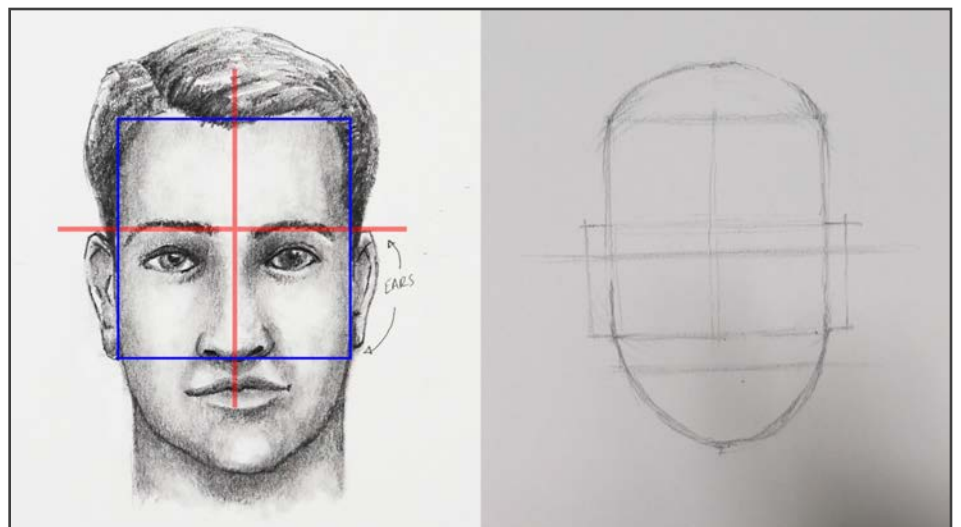
Next, we'll find the location of the eyes. The eyes are located directly in the center, measuring from the top of the head to the bottom of the chin. We can mark the location with a line that extends across the shape of the face.



Now we can find the location of the mouth. The mouth line is found one-third of the way down between the nose line and the bottom of the chin. We'll mark the mouth line with a horizontal line.



We'll go ahead and mark the locations of the ears at this stage. The top of the ears align with the brow line while the bottom of the ears align with the nose line.



Next, we'll mark the locations and size of the eyes. We'll start by drawing five ovals across the eye line from each edge of the ears. If you can fit five ovals of the same size across this line, then the size of the eyes are accurate.



With the shapes and locations of the eyes in place, we can find the width of the nose. For most faces, the edges of the nose will align with the inside corners of the eyes. We'll draw two light lines extending down from the corners of the eyes to the nose line and mark the width.

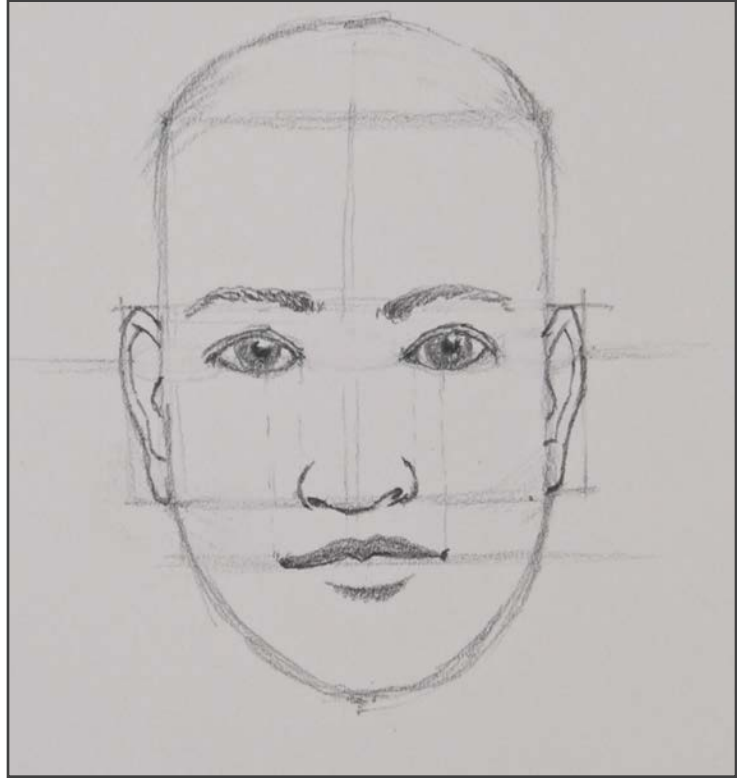


We'll quickly and loosely add the pupil and iris to the eyes since we'll use their locations to find the width of the mouth.

Extending down from either the inside corner of the pupil or iris (depending on the subject), we'll draw two light lines down to the mouth line. This measurement marks the width of the mouth.



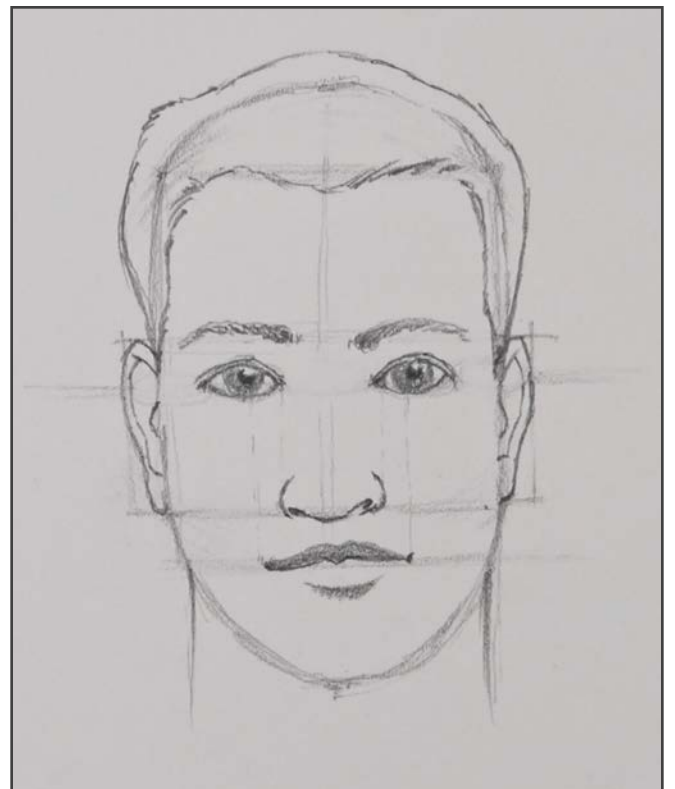
With the locations and sizes of the facial features planned, we can quickly draw the details of each the features.



We'll add the shape for the hair using the top line of our square as a guide for the hair line. Keep in mind that most hair styles will extend off of the top and sides of the head.



We'll use the bottom of the ears as a guide to draw the lines for the neck. For a more feminine look, bring the lines in slightly. For a more masculine appearance, the lines can extend straight down from the bottom of the ears. A common mistake is making the neck too narrow.



We'll consider the light source and add some shading to define the form. In this case, we'll assume that the light originates from above. This means that areas that recede are darker in value while locations that protrude receive more light and are lighter in value.



We'll also add some tone and texture to the hair. We'll think of the hair in terms of shapes of value instead of individual strands.



To create contrast in texture between the hair and the skin, we'll use a blending stump to blend the applications on the face. We can go back and forth with a kneaded eraser and the blending stump to manipulate the tone.



Today we learned that we can use a formulaic approach to drawing the face and head to find the general locations and proportions of the features. We can use this approach to draw a face from imagination, but it also helps when drawing from observation. We must remember that although a formula is helpful in understanding the basic locations of facial features, it must be used with close observation when the likeness of the subject is important.

Tomorrow, we'll take a look at the basics of figure drawing. We'll create a few gesture drawings and learn a formulaic approach to understanding the basic proportions of the figure.

