



## FOUND OBJECT DRAWING

At some point each day we are outdoors, whether it's for an hour walk or the minute it takes us to get from the front door to the car. Take a moment to look around you and pick up a leaf, twig, stone, or any other natural element you pass by and don't really give attention to. This activity is called "blind contour" drawing, and it's an exercise in "seeing."

**Materials needed:** One sheet of drawing paper, 2-3 sheets of copy paper, letter size. A number 2 pencil.

### Procedure:

1. We will do this exercise in several stages. First, place your natural object where you can see it well, and study it closely. Turn it around so that you can see all possible sides. Notice all of its tiny details and complexity. Do this for 5 minutes.
2. Next, place a piece of copy paper in front of you, and put your object in the upper left corner of the paper. This will allow you to see it while you draw. Take your pencil in hand, and WITHOUT LOOKING at what your pencil is doing, keep your eyes on the object, and slowly move the pencil, following the contours of your object, pressing lightly and firmly, making contact with the paper while your eyes look only at the object. It is best to keep your pencil always in contact with the paper. Don't worry about the finished product. This is simply an exercise in "seeing." Do this for 5-10 minutes.
3. Now, take a new sheet of copy paper and do a "blind contour" drawing again, using the knowledge you have gained about your object, to make another drawing. Keep your eyes only on the object, following its hills and valleys, and notice places of high contrast, and other places where the edge of the object seems to disappear. In the high contrast areas, press down more firmly with your pencil, and in this way you will be responding to what you are seeing. The important thing is to draw what you "see," as opposed to what you think it should look like. This should take 10 minutes.
4. Now you can look at your drawing as you work. Take your piece of drawing paper, and place your object in the left corner again. Decide where on the page you would like to draw the object, and with your finger, lightly "draw" it in, in the actual size. It's important to map out where your drawing will fit on the paper.
5. While looking from the object to your drawing, lightly begin to sketch what you see in front of you, feeling the movement of the object as your hand moves on the paper. Press harder in areas that stand out in sharp contrast, and lighter in the less distinct areas. Try squinting your eyes while you look at the object to distinguish areas of high and low contrast. The lines of your drawing will begin to create shape and volume, without doing any shading at all. Work on this drawing until you feel it's complete. Work without judging the perfection of your drawing. This is not the point! If you have learned to see a little better than before, then the exercise has been a success!

### Possible learning areas:

Two-dimensional art making, observation skills, hand-eye coordination, composition, contrast, variety