

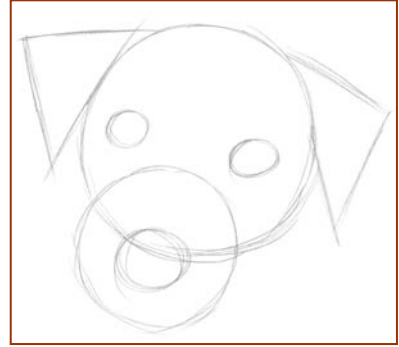
SEEING SHAPES

IN A PHOTO OF A DOG'S HEAD

Brenda Hoddinott

B08 BEGINNER: LEARN TO SEE

In this lesson, an illustrated discussion surrounding a photo of a dog's head focuses on the process of breaking down a seemingly complex subject into simple shapes. At the same time, you follow along with numerous illustrations to render a proportionately correct sketch of Isaac.



This lesson is divided into the following two sections:

- ☀ **INTRODUCTION:** A simple method of rendering accurate proportions is to visually break the object down into simple shapes. The process of drawing any subject becomes less intimidating when you understand how to draw the fundamental shapes of the various parts in their correct places.
- ☀ **SEVEN STEPS TO SPOTTING AND SKETCHING THE SHAPES OF A DOG'S FACE:** In this section, a series of photos demonstrates the various shapes of the dog's head. Each shape is outlined in black directly on the photo. Gather your drawing supplies and draw each shape in sequence to gain a better understanding of the overall process of sketching proportions from a photo.

Suggested supplies include: paper, HB and 2B pencils, kneaded and vinyl erasers, and a pencil sharpener.

8 PAGES – 24 ILLUSTRATIONS

This lesson is recommended for artists with very limited drawing skills, as well as students of home schooling, academic and recreational fine art educators.



INTRODUCTION

Seeing and sketching precise proportions is the foundation of drawing. To accurately render proportions, artists need to study their subjects very carefully. A simple method of rendering accurate proportions is to visually break the object down into simple shapes.

This lesson takes you step-by-step through the process of establishing the accurate proportions of a dog's head, by examining the shapes of its individual parts.

The subject of this exercise is a Jack Russell Terrier named Isaac, who was much more interested in licking the camera than having his picture taken. Hence, I asked his owner to hold him still while I attempted to take a close-up photo of the excited pup's face. You can see the resulting photo in Figure 801.

While the features are clear, the dog looks like someone is holding his head (Duuhhh). Hence, I decided to tilt his head slightly to the right for a somewhat more natural pose (Figure 802).

I used Photoshop to lighten the photo, so I can better show you the shapes I see.

SEVEN STEPS TO SPOTTING AND SKETCHING THE SHAPES OF A DOG'S FACE

In this section, a series of photos demonstrates the various shapes of the dog's head. Each shape is outlined in black.

Gather your drawing supplies and draw each shape in sequence to gain a better understanding of the overall process of sketching proportions from a photo.

STEP 1

ARTSPEAK

Proportion is the relationship in size of each of the various parts of a drawing when compared to others.

Shape refers to the outward outline of a form. Basic shapes include circles, ovals, squares, rectangles, and triangles.

FIGURE 801



FIGURE 802



From this front on viewpoint, the head is a circular shape (Figure 803). Sketch a circle leaving plenty of room all around to later add the ears and snout (Figure 804).



FIGURE 803



FIGURE 804

STEP 2

The snout is a smaller circular shape that cuts into the large circular shape (Figure 805). Also note that the snout is not directly under the head; remember that the photo is rotated.

If you were looking at the actual dog, you'd know that the snout is closer to you than the head; very obvious if a long wet tongue begins to lick your nose.

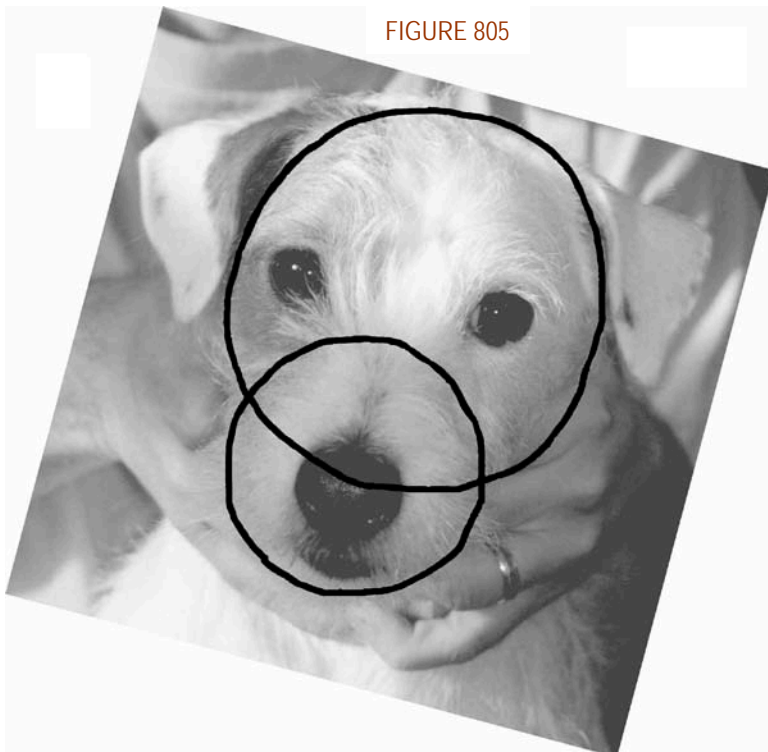


FIGURE 805

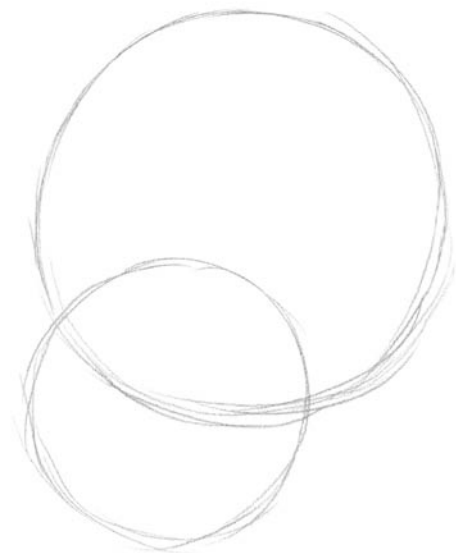


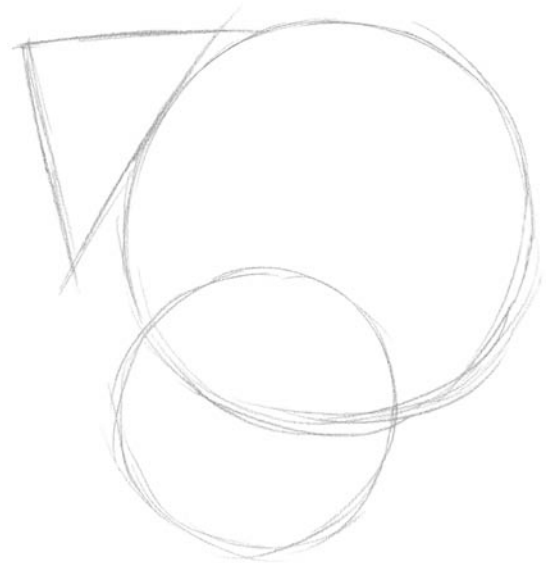
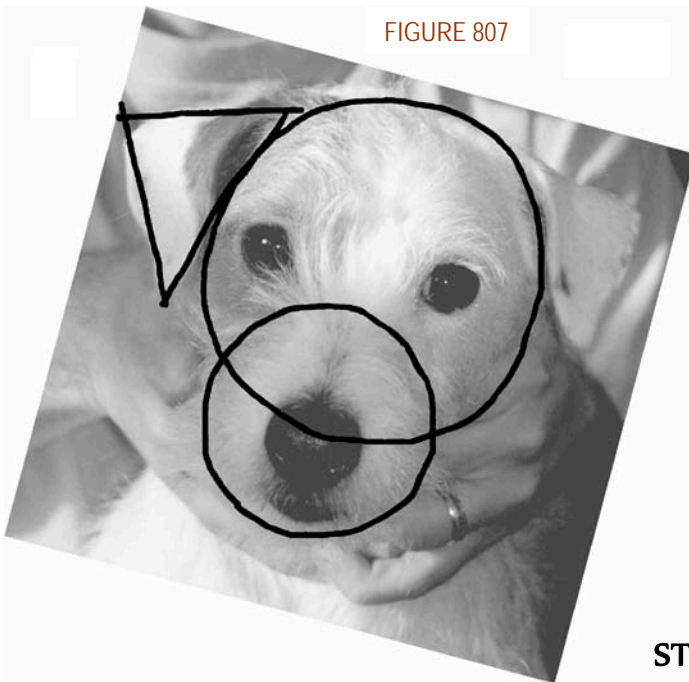
FIGURE 806

Sketch the snout (Figure 806).

TIP With lots of practice, you can see shapes in your drawing subjects very quickly – almost instantly. However, beginners need to take a few minutes to closely examine all parts of their subject before ever touching pencil to paper.

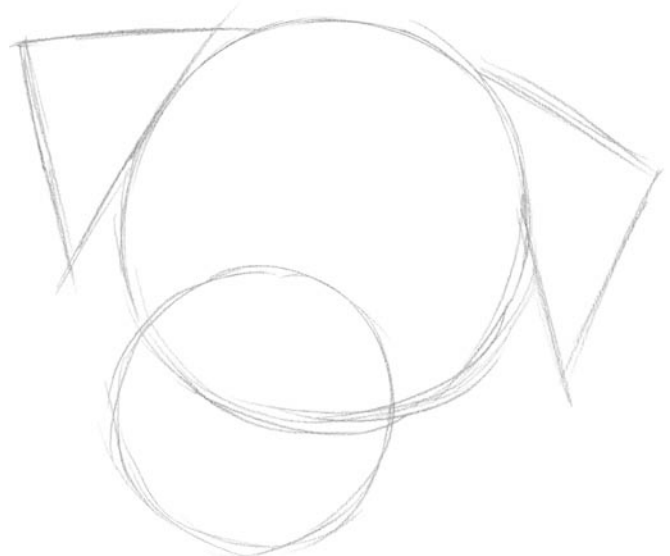
STEP 3

Both ears are triangular (Figure 807). Sketch the shape of the ear on the left (Figure 808).



STEP 4

Sketch the shape of the ear on the left (Figures 809 and 810).



STEP 5

The nose is a circular shape (Figure 811). Sketch the nose (Figure 812).



FIGURE 811

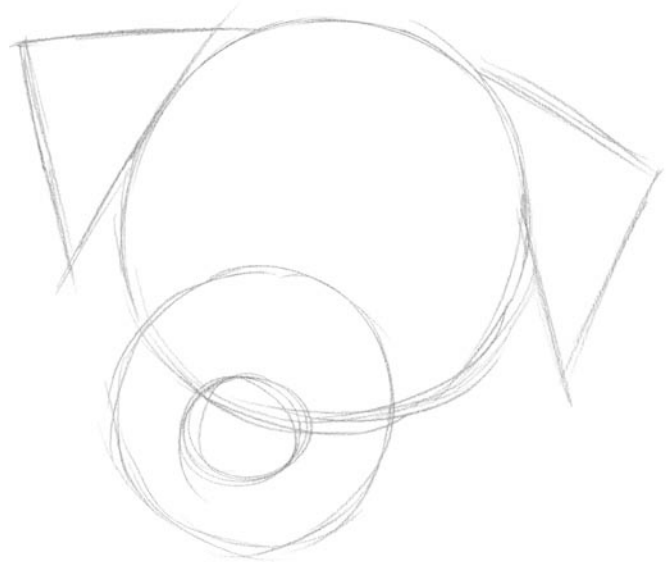


FIGURE 812

STEP 6

The eyes are circular shapes (Figure 813). The eye on the left is higher and closer to the outline of the head than the other. Sketch the eye on the left (Figure 814).

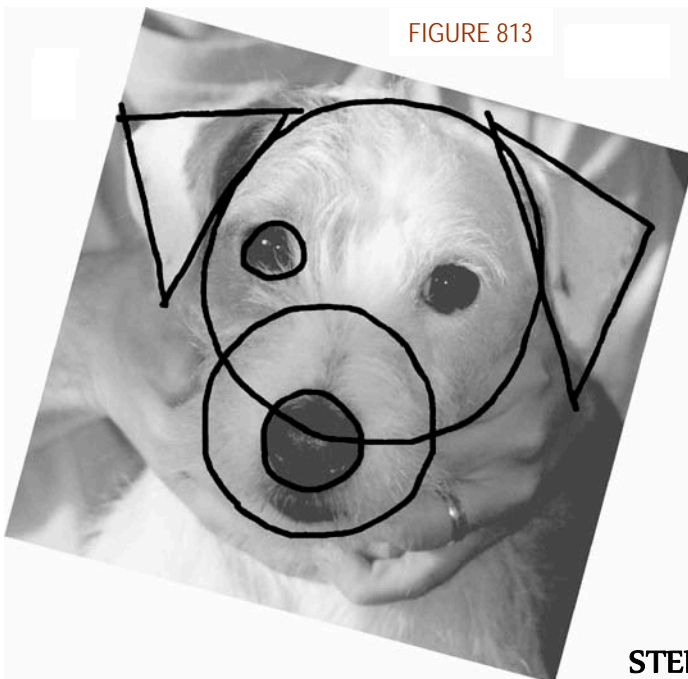


FIGURE 813

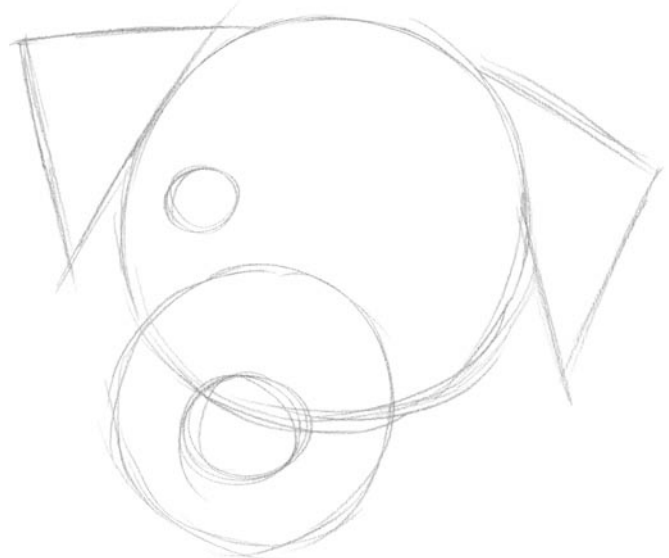
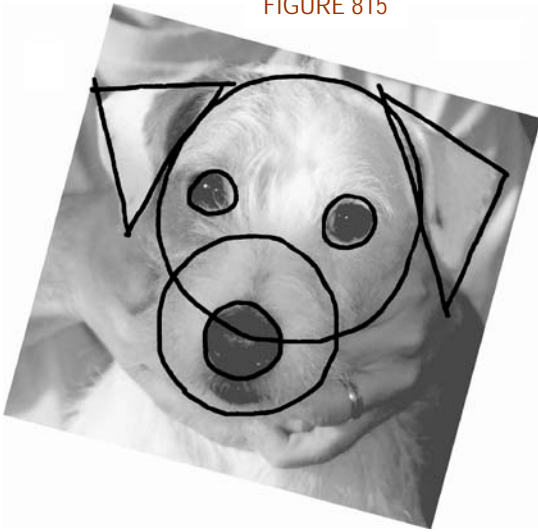


FIGURE 814

STEP 7

The eye on the right is lower and farther away from the outline of the head than the other (Figure 815). Sketch the eye on the right (Figure 816).

FIGURE 815



The proportions of the dog's head are realistic, and you now have a solid foundation on which to begin a drawing.

CHALLENGE

Challenge yourself to draw a more precise outline of the dog's face by using your sketch as a guideline.

Use your kneaded eraser to gently pat your sketch until the lines are very faint.

Then, follow along with Figures 817 to 824.

FIGURE 816

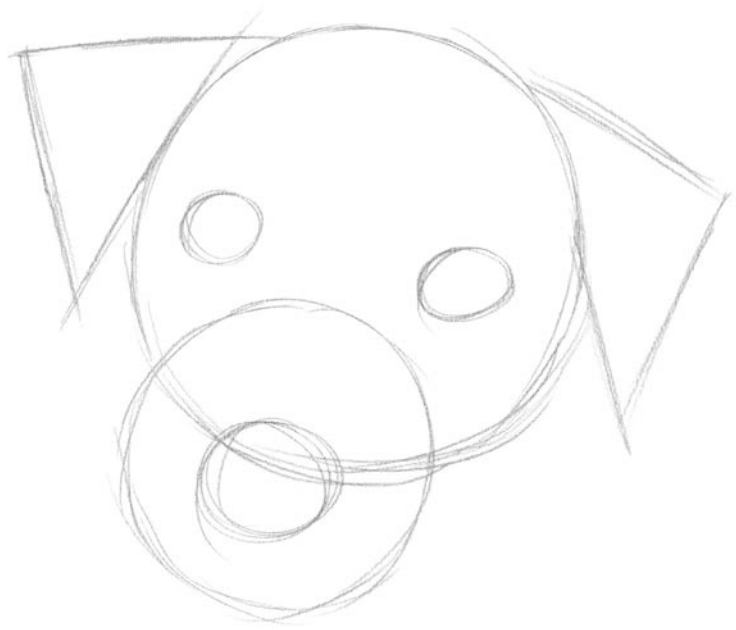


FIGURE 817

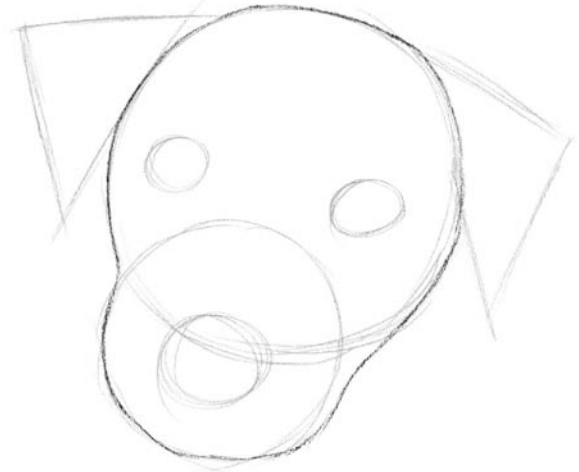


FIGURE 818

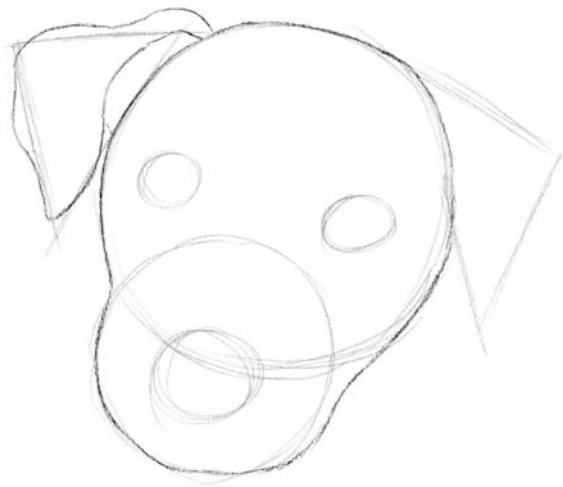


FIGURE 819



FIGURE 820



FIGURE 821



FIGURE 822



FIGURE 823



FIGURE 824



In Figure 823 the sketch lines have been erased leaving a neat outline of a dog's head.

Remember, seeing is the most important aspect of drawing. Always examine the shapes of the individual parts of your subject before you begin sketching.

As your skills improve, consider trying a very advanced version of this dog's head from the same photo (Figure 824). Check out the advanced lesson *T05 Isaac*, in the section titled *Diverse Animals*.

BRENDA HODDINOTT - BIOGRAPHY

As a self-educated teacher, visual artist, portraitist, forensic artist, and illustrator, Brenda Hoddinott utilizes diverse art media including graphite, technical pen, colored pencil, chalk pastel, charcoal, conté crayon, and oil paints.

My philosophy on teaching art is to focus primarily on the enjoyment aspects while gently introducing the technical and academic. Hence, in creating a passion for the subject matter, the quest for knowledge also becomes enjoyable.

>Brenda Hoddinott<

Born in St. John's, Newfoundland, Brenda grew up in the small town of Corner Brook. She developed strong technical competencies with a personal commitment to self directed learning, and the aid of assorted "Learn to Draw" books. During Brenda's twenty-five year career as a self-educated civilian forensic artist, numerous criminal investigation departments have employed Brenda's skills, including Royal Canadian Mounted Police and municipal police departments. In 1992, Brenda was honored with a commendation from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in 1994, she was awarded a Certificate of Membership from "Forensic Artists International".

Her home-based art career included graphic design, and teaching recreational drawing and painting classes. As supervisor of her community's recreational art department, Brenda hired and trained teachers, and designed curriculum for several children's art programs. In 1998, Brenda chose to end her eighteen-year career as an art educator in order to devote more time to writing, drawing, painting, and developing her websites.

Drawspace <http://www.drawspace.com> incorporates her unique style and innovative approach to curriculum development. This site offers downloadable and printable drawing classes for students of all abilities from the age of eight through adult. Students of all ages, levels and abilities have praised the simple step-by-step instructional approach. This site is respected as a resource for fine art educators, home schooling programs, and educational facilities throughout the world.

LEARN-TO-DRAW BOOKS BY BRENDA HODDINOTT

- ☀ **Drawing for Dummies:** Wiley Publishing, Inc., New, York, NY, this 336 page book is available on various websites and in major bookstores internationally.
- ☀ **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Drawing People:** Winner of the Alpha-Penguin Book of the Year Award 2004, Alpha - Pearson Education – Macmillan, Indianapolis, IN, this 360 page book is available on various websites and in major bookstores internationally.