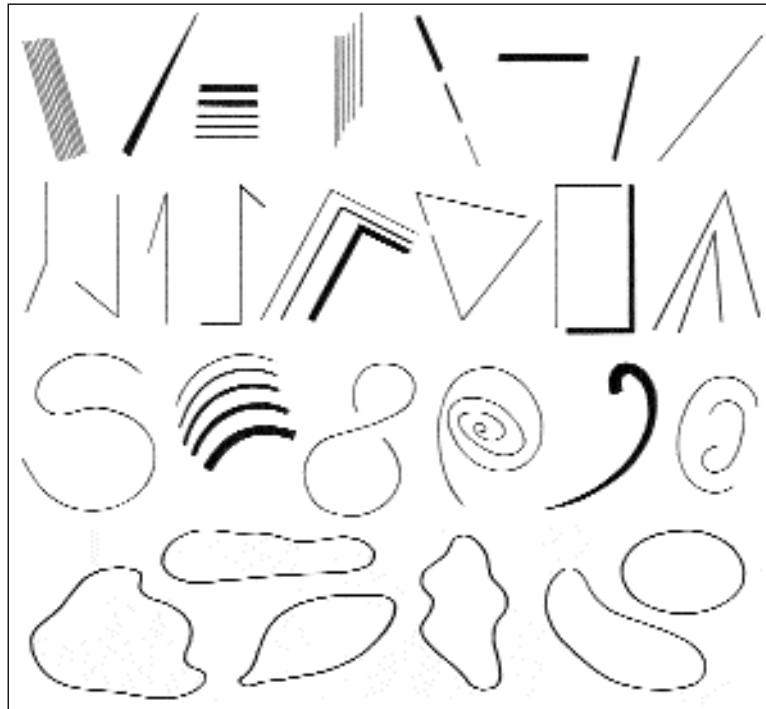


In This Chapter

- ◆ Getting to know the families of lines
- ◆ The ultimate drawing tool: your left brain and right brain working together
- ◆ Positive and negative spaces
- ◆ An exercise in switching sides of your brain
- ◆ Putting your face on paper



Chapter 3

An Eye for Lines and Spaces

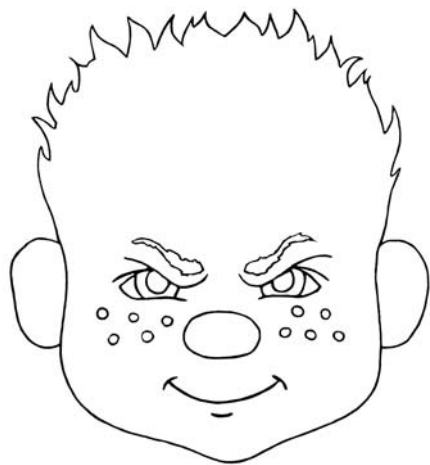
The humble line is the primary building block for constructing drawings. You can use lines to illustrate everything you can see in the world around you, as well as all the stuff floating around inside your imagination.

In this chapter, you discover how to identify each family of lines. I tell you a little about the artistic merits of each side of your brain, and how they work together or separately, to help you see and draw lines. In simple step-by-step exercises, you use lines to create an optical illusion and draw an outline of your own face.

Welcome to the World of Lines

Lines can visually separate the forms of the various parts of a person's body and face. Contour drawings (also called line drawings) are made up of lines, which outline the contours of a subject's forms and parts. Lines can create an infinite array of simple or highly detailed contour drawings. In the next drawing, a few simple lines tell you a lot about the little boy, such as his facial expression and hair style.

26 Part I: Beginning with the Basics



This expressive contour drawing of a boy is made up of simple lines.

Several lines can be grouped to make a set. Sets of lines come together to create shading, which helps you add realistic, three-dimensional depth to your drawings. (Refer to the chapters in Part 2 to discover how to render shading.) Compare the next drawing, with shading, to the previous contour drawing of the same boy.



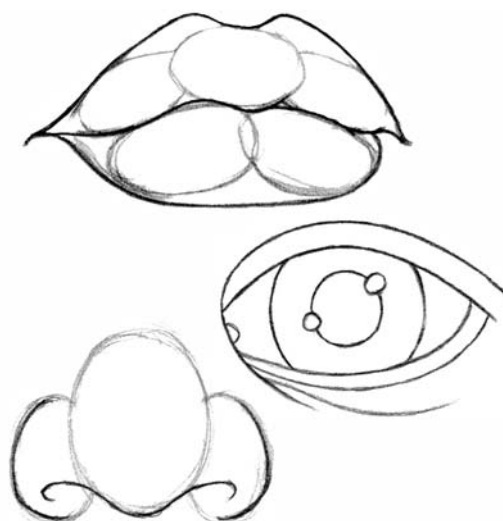
Sets of shading lines create the three-dimensional forms of this boy's face and hair.

Three “families” of lines (straight, angle, and curved) can be combined to make line drawings. Each family includes an endless range of different lines from thick, dark, and bold, to thin, light, and delicate.

Encircling People with Curved Lines

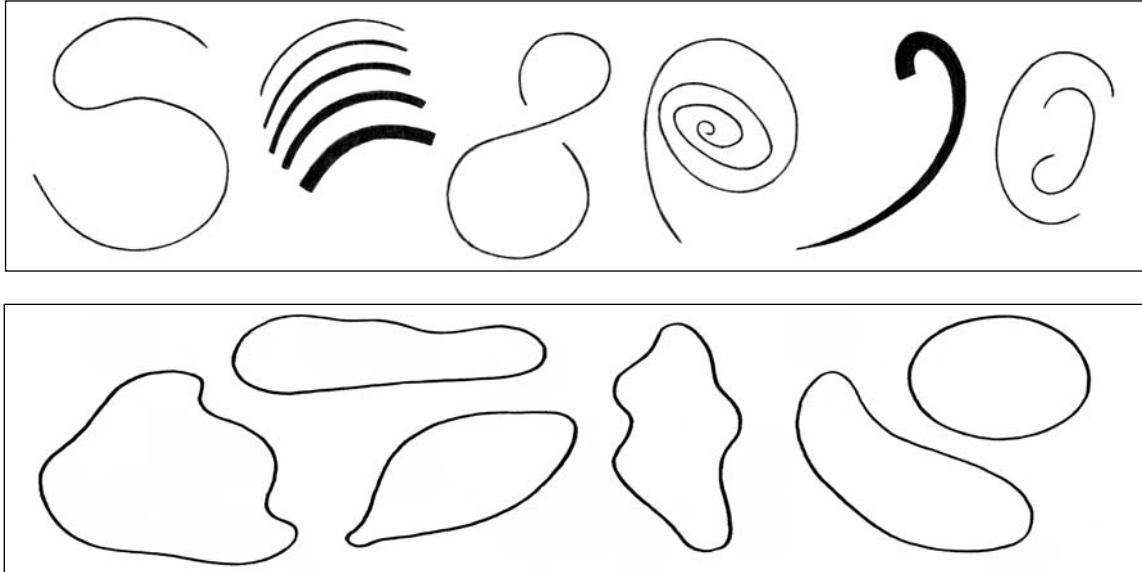
Curved lines are by far the most common lines used for drawing people. When a straight line curves or bends (as in the letters “C” and “U”), a curved line is born. A compound curve is created when a curved line changes direction (think of the letter “S”). A curved line becomes a circular shape (as in the letter “O”) when its ends meet.

Circular shapes are the primary ingredient for drawing the numerous and varied forms of the human face and body. Examine the rounded shapes in the next drawing that come together to create a mouth, eye, and nose.



These facial features are rendered with curved lines and rounded shapes.

Examine the next two drawings. In the first, you see various curved and compound curved lines. All the shapes in the second drawing are made up of curved lines. Take a moment, look at objects around you, and see how many curved lines you can see. Try drawing some different curved lines and circular shapes in your sketchbook.



When different types of curved lines meet, diverse rounded shapes are created.

Lining Up Straight and Angle Lines

Straight and angle lines also have a place in drawing people. They are fundamental for rendering many types of shading.



Warm Fuzzy

Don't worry if your first few tries at drawing straight lines freehand end up curvy. With practice you will get better. In the meantime, it's perfectly okay to use a ruler when you need to draw precise straight lines, such as those needed for drawing a grid.

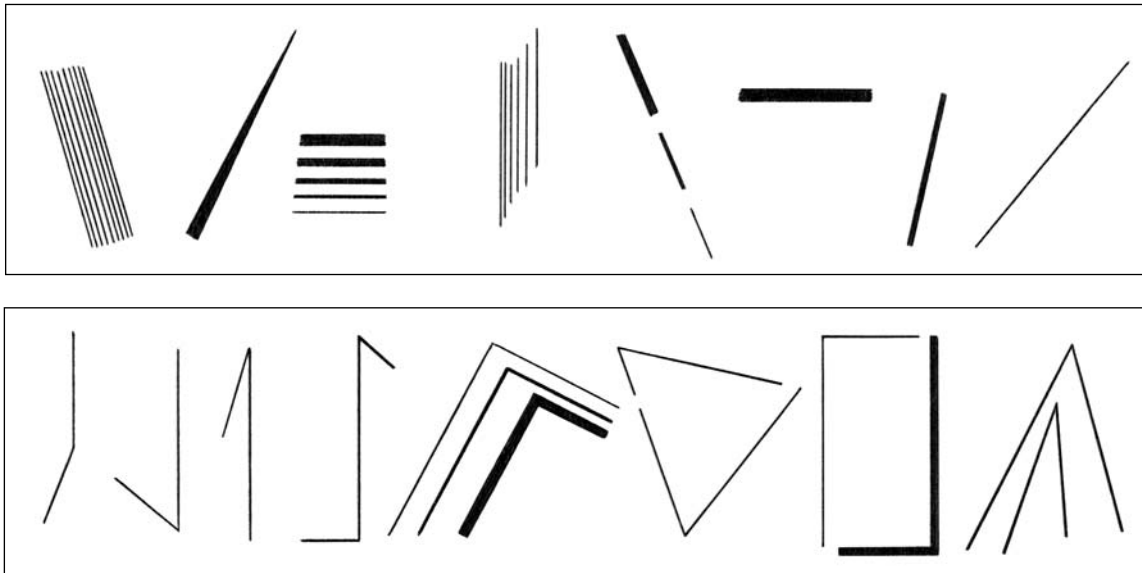
Straight lines can be thick or thin, long or short, and they can be drawn in any direction. Each falls into one of these three categories:

- ◆ Horizontal lines are level and at a right angle to vertical lines.
- ◆ Vertical lines are straight up and down and at a right angle to horizontal lines.
- ◆ Diagonal lines slant or slope at an angle.

Angle lines occur when two straight lines meet (or join together). Angle lines are used to draw straight sided shapes, such as squares, rectangles, and triangles.

The first drawing (in the set of two on the next page) has examples of the three types of straight lines. The second shows several variations on angle lines. Practice drawing various types of straight and angle lines in your sketchbook.

28 Part I: Beginning with the Basics



Try your eye at identifying horizontal, vertical, diagonal, and angle lines.

Picking Your Brain Apart

Many drawing tools, such as pencils and paper, are integral to creating drawings. However, the most important drawing tool of all is your brain. Your brain collaborates with your vision to identify lines, which are critical components of drawing people.



Info Tidbit

Both sides of the brain don't always work together in harmony. Many artists have noticed that they can't talk coherently and draw well at the same time. Talking is considered a left-brain function, and many aspects of drawing are processed by the right brain.

Every aspect of your artistic development is enhanced with a basic understanding of how your brain works. Your brain has two sides, the right hemisphere (right brain) and the left hemisphere (left brain). Left-brain thinking is analytical and verbal. Right-brain functions are

visual and perceptive. My philosophy is that both sides of your brain play an equally important role in drawing.

Your Logical Left Brain

The very nature of academic education tends to enhance left-brain functions. The left brain controls most mathematical and verbal skills. As a result, many persons are left-brain dominant. Your left brain helps you draw by ...

- ◆ Using mathematical logic to establish proportions, such as examining measurements of lines and spaces, and drawing grid lines.
- ◆ Naming the individual parts of the person you are drawing.
- ◆ Analyzing the numerical and verbal sequences of step-by-step instructions.
- ◆ Keeping track of time frames when needed, by constantly referring to a watch, clock, or computer as you draw. This is especially important if you have scheduled appointments, meetings, or personal commitments.

Your Creative Right Brain

Many of the perceptive skills needed for drawing are processed by the right brain. Your creative and insightful right brain plays various roles in drawing, such as ...

- ◆ Seeing abstract connections between lines, shapes, and spaces.
- ◆ Helping with the process of drawing in a non-narrative context by instinctively seeing proportions.
- ◆ Combining the varied visual components of your drawing subject to form a whole image.
- ◆ Planning instinctive compositions.
- ◆ Allowing you to better concentrate on drawing by blocking distractions and losing track of time.

Seeing Lines, Spaces, and Shapes

Contour lines can outline a complete person, as well as the many small sections and intricate details of his or her face and body. Contour lines exist wherever the shared edges of the shapes of two spaces meet—on your face, in your home, at the coffee shop, and everywhere else! You simply need to train your eyes and brain to work together to see them.

Simply stated, positive space is the space occupied by an object or person and/or its various parts. Negative space is the background around and/or behind the positive space. Both positive and negative spaces assume distinctive shapes, sort of like pieces of a puzzle. Being able to see the shapes of positive and negative spaces allows you to find and subsequently draw lines. Try this exercise to practice seeing positive and negative spaces:

1. Think of the shape in the first drawing (in the next illustration) as a piece of a puzzle.
2. Use your imagination to visually lift the shape out of the first drawing and place it into the white space inside the negative space (the second drawing).



Visually lift out the positive space (left) and put it inside the negative space (right).

3. Find the lines where the two types of spaces meet.



This outline of a boy's head is found between positive and negative spaces.

You can simplify your mental image of any person into simple lines, spaces, and shapes. Practice looking at people and visually identifying them as positive spaces. Identify their surroundings as negative spaces. You can find their outlines where the two spaces meet.

30 Part I: Beginning with the Basics

Switching the Sides of Your Brain

Exercising some dormant abilities of your right brain helps you draw better. The right brain sees lines differently than the left brain. It focuses on the way the lines curve, and how they create shapes and spaces.

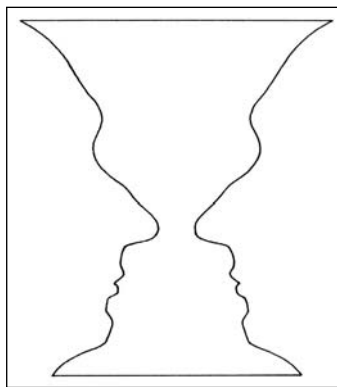


Helpful Hint

The next time you go outside on a cloudy day, sit or lie down, relax, and examine the clouds. Your left brain sees only clouds. However, your right brain eventually allows you to see other things in clouds, such as objects, animals, or faces.

Sometimes when you look at a picture for an extended period of time, each side of your brain registers a completely different image. The following exercise, sometimes referred to as an optical illusion, helps you notice when your brain switches sides.

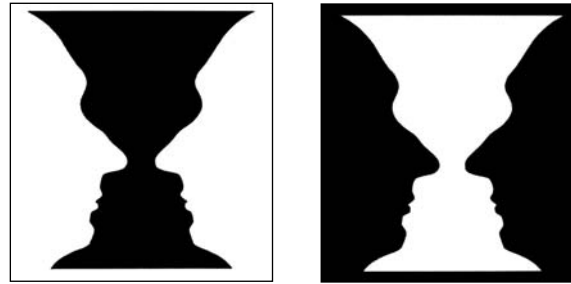
Take a look at the next drawing. What do you see? Do you see a vase? Can you see two faces?



Stare at this drawing until you can see two different images, a vase and two faces in profile.

If you could see both the vase and the two faces, you just experienced a switch of your

right- and left-brain functions. If you had difficulty seeing both, the next two drawings may help. In the first one the vase is black. In the second, the profiles of two faces are black.



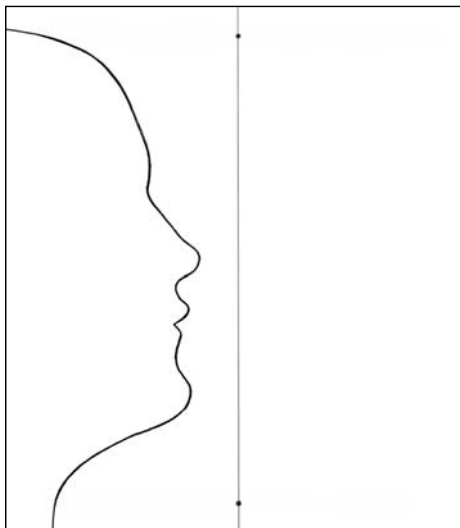
These two silhouette drawings solve the mystery of the vase and two faces!

Creating Magic with Faces and a Vase

Symmetry in drawing is a balanced arrangement (sometimes referred to as a mirror image) of lines and shapes, on opposite sides of an often-imaginary center line. Now it's time to create your own optical illusion using the magic of symmetry!

You'll need a ruler, pencils, and an eraser. Read carefully through all the instructions for the entire project before you begin, refer to the first drawing on the next page, and then follow these steps:

1. Use your ruler to measure the horizontal midpoint of your paper and very lightly draw a vertical line down the center. This line serves as a reference to help keep both sides of your drawing symmetrical.
2. Draw a facial profile (facing the right) on the left side of your paper. (If you are left-handed, draw the profile facing the left on the right side of your paper.) As you draw each part of the face, think about its name: forehead, nose, lips, chin, and neck. This is a very left-brain exercise. By the way, the farther your facial profile is from the center line of symmetry, the wider your vase will be. For a narrow vase, draw the face closer to the center line.



This facial profile completes one side of the vase.

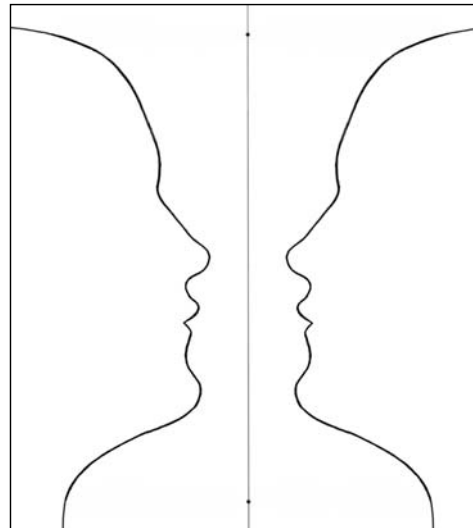
3. Draw a second facial profile facing the first. I prefer to turn my paper upside down or sideways to draw the second face. As you draw, *don't* think about naming the parts of the face. Constantly refer to your first drawing on the opposite side of your paper. Imagine you are drawing its reflection in a mirror. Think about the shapes of the spaces in between the two profiles. Concentrate on the lines and the directions in which they curve, their angles, and the lengths of the lines as compared with your first drawing.



Info Tidbit

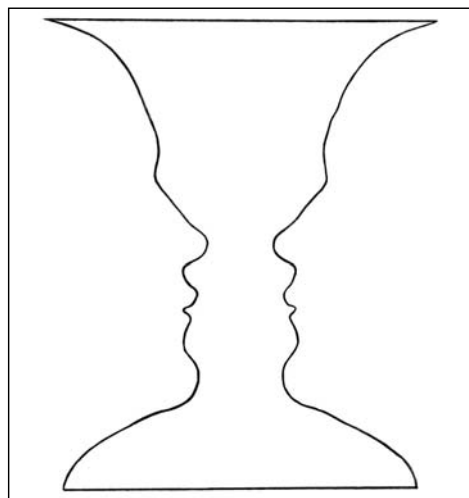
Drawing upside down or sideways exercises your right brain by confusing your left brain. When the left brain can no longer identify and name the individual parts of a face, it gives up. Your right brain jumps in and takes over.

You may notice that you are drawing somewhat differently for this second profile. Your right brain is now in charge!



With the addition of a second facial profile, both sides of the vase are complete.

4. With a ruler, draw two horizontal lines. The first runs across the top of your paper and the second along the bottom. These lines don't have to be the same length. However, the points, where the ends of these lines meet the facial profiles, should be the same distance from the center line of symmetry. Adjust your drawing accordingly.
5. Erase the line of symmetry and any extra facial lines outside the perimeter of the vase.



The magical illusion of faces and a vase is complete.

32 Part I: Beginning with the Basics

Sharing the Magic

You can have lots of fun creating and sharing a personalized collection of faces and vase drawings. Think about drawing original and unique gifts for your family and friends with this amusing illusion. Consider the following options:

- ◆ Dig into your imagination and make up a unique facial profile.
- ◆ Have a friend or family member pose sideways and make a contour drawing of his or her profile.
- ◆ Take a photo of someone's facial profile and use it as a reference for drawing.

When you have an outline of the side of a face, you can follow the instructions in the previous section to create a totally original optical illusion.



This photo was the inspiration for my optical illusion.

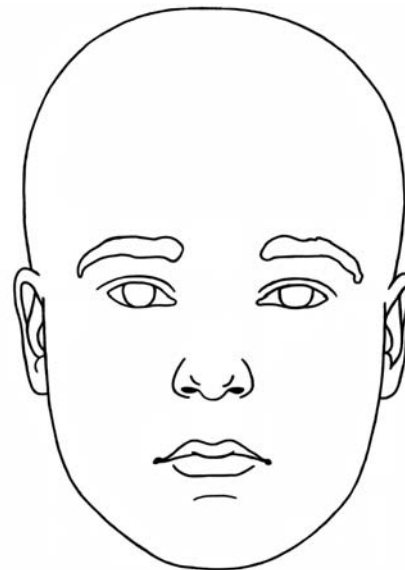
Drawing a Self-Portrait with Lines

In addition to separating the shape of a human head from the background, lines can outline individual facial features. The goal of this exercise

is to identify, and then draw, the contour lines of an actual, real-life face and its features.

All you need is your drawing supplies and your reflection in a mirror! Step-by-step drawings can't really help since I don't know what you look like. However, I guide you through the whole process with simple instructions. Before you begin to draw your own self-portrait, examine the next contour drawing of a real-life person, and visually locate the lines that separate the following:

- ◆ His eyebrows from his forehead
- ◆ His eyes, nose, and mouth from his face
- ◆ The irises of his eyes from the eyes
- ◆ The forms of his ears from his head
- ◆ His upper lip from the lower lip



Simple lines identify the sizes, shapes, and locations of this young man's facial features.



Info Tidbit

Very few faces are truly symmetrical. However, frontal views of faces look more realistic when drawn proportionately similar on both sides.

Locating Lines, Shapes, and Spaces

In the following exercise, you examine your reflection in a mirror to become familiar with your own face from an artistic perspective. The only drawing tools you need are your brain and vision.

1. Visually explore the shape of your face and look for lines (and I don't mean laugh lines). Size up the edges along your cheekbones, jaw, and chin. Take note of the directions in which curved lines bend.
2. Locate curved lines that change directions to make compound curves, such as in the letter "S."
3. Identify circular shapes. Examine your eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth, and ears.
4. Visually measure the distances between lines and shapes that appear to be the same length or height. For example, compare the width of your nose to the width of each eye and the space between your eyes.
5. Take note of the sizes of the spaces between individual shapes on your face. Size up the vertical distance from the bottom of your nose to your upper lip, and compare it to the space between your lower lip and the bottom edge of your chin.

Continue looking at your face until you can see numerous lines, shapes, and spaces.

Putting Your Face on Paper

Drawing a frontal view of your face is easier than drawing it from an angle. Find your drawing supplies and set yourself up in a location where you can comfortably see your reflection in a mirror. Use whichever pencils you prefer.

1. Examine your face (see the previous section) and identify the lines, and the sizes and shapes of the various spaces.
2. Look at your drawing paper and imagine your face on the paper.

3. Decide where on the paper your face is to be positioned.
4. Use loose sketch lines to draw the basic outline of your head. Continuously refer to your reflection in the mirror.
5. Lightly sketch the outlines of the shapes of your ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and hair. Continue visually measuring the vertical and horizontal distances to help you put everything in the right place.
6. While constantly referring to your reflection, adjust the various lines in your sketch.
7. When you're happy with your sketch, you can darken and refine your lines.



Helpful Hint

When drawing a frontal view of a face, draw a line of symmetry on your paper before you begin. This line serves as a guideline for visually measuring horizontal distances so the head and face don't end up lopsided.

The Least You Need to Know

- ◆ Lines are the main ingredient for all aspects of drawing, including shading.
- ◆ When you can see and draw the shapes of positive and negative spaces, your line drawings will become more proportionately correct.
- ◆ When you draw, you employ valuable resources and abilities from each side of your brain.
- ◆ You can enhance your artistic development by practicing mental and visual exercises, such as optical illusions.