

Continuous Line Drawing Exercise

Continuous line drawings provide an excellent way to help children develop hand eye coordination. Continuous line drawings are made by keeping the pen or pencil in contact with the paper for the duration of the exercise, and by matching speed of looking with speed of drawing.

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What is the Continuous Line Drawing Exercise, and When to Use it.

- The Continuous Line Drawing Exercise is a perfect exercise to use with all ages of children, from 5 years and upwards.
- This exercise helps children slow down their looking and then helps them coordinate drawing with seeing. It develops observational drawing skills, and also helps children settle and focus.
- It can take as little as 5 to 10 minutes.
- The drawings will have a particular "look" - each a record of how much the child has seen.
- Use it before another art project as a "transition" exercise, or use it on a regular basis to improve drawing skills.

You Will Need:

- Sheet of paper for each child.
- A handwriting pen or sharp pencil.
- An object to draw near each child, such as a shell, feather, leaf etc.

Summary of the Exercise:

- Invite the children to stay quiet and concentrate.
- Ask them to look slowly at the object, letting their eye travel along its surfaces.
- As they look, invite them to move their pencil or pen at the same speed, making a drawing in one continuous line.
- Ask the children to keep looking/drawing until you say time is up.

Control is the essence of a continuous line drawing, with the speed of looking and speed of drawing being slowed down to an almost meditative pace. At this slow speed, children can observe detail carefully, and as the pen or pencil moves at the same speed as the eye looks, mark making becomes intentional and precise.

Using continuous line drawing as a warm-up exercise has many benefits. It provides an effective way to help children transition from the rest of their day into a drawing session, as it is a very calm and focused activity. Try to encourage the children to be quiet during the exercise, so they can concentrate. After the first few minutes, the quiet will be effortless. With regular use the exercise helps matching speed of looking with speed of drawing effortless and encourages curious observation and thoughtful and inventive mark making.

Continuous Line Drawing Tips:

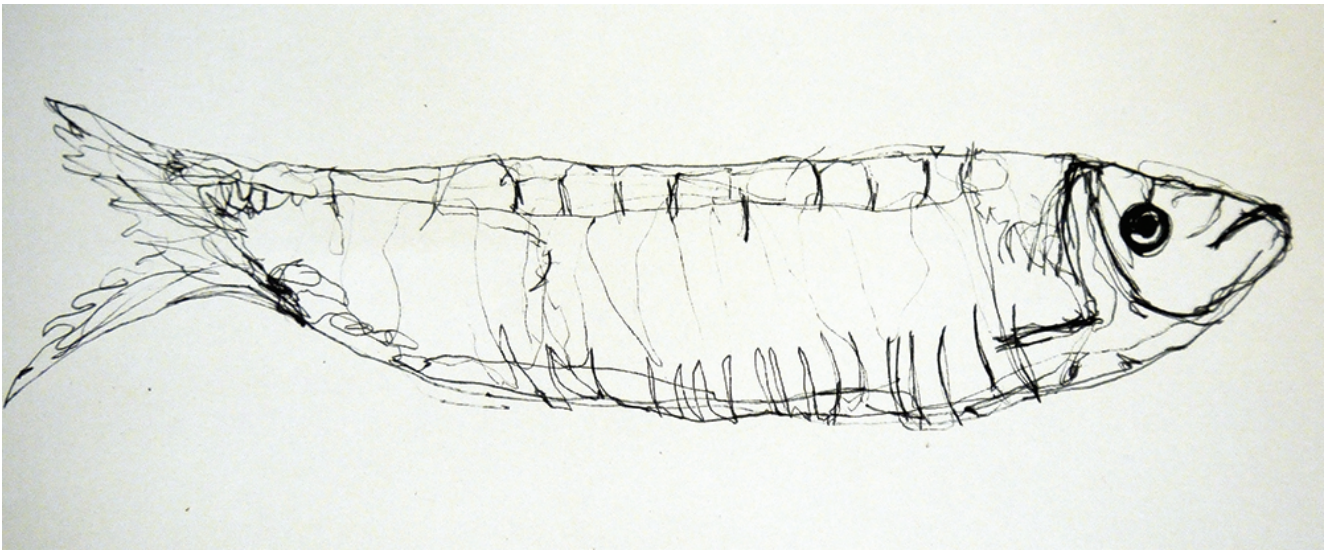
- Try using a handwriting pen, rather than a pencil. The handwriting pen has less friction against the paper and so the pen can “scoot” easily across the paper as the eye observes.
- Choose small objects as subject matter and have them close at hand so the children can easily observe detail. Keys, cutlery, tools, feathers, and coins all make excellent subject matter.
- Ask the children to make a drawing without taking their

pen off the paper for the duration of the exercise. Their eye should follow details and contours on the subject matter, and their hand draw these details simultaneously. The hand wanders wherever the eye sees. If they would like to draw detail in the “middle” of the object, then they should travel the pen across the page to that area of the drawing. Vary the pressure of the line, and if they need a rest, make sure their line carries on from where it left off. The drawing becomes a literal record of where the eye has travelled and what the eye has seen.

- At first encourage children to try a “blind continuous line drawing” in which case they should ONLY look at the subject matter. Cardboard squares can be made with a hole in them that are slotted over the pencil – effectively covering the paper and stopping the child from peeking at the drawing. Alternatively you can just request the children do not “cheat”. Blind continuous line drawings really help children to focus on observation skills, and also get them used to matching speed of mark making with speed of looking. The finished drawings will be curious in nature, with the lines and elements within the drawing not registering correctly. Children actually find this fun and liberating, and it helps take away preconceptions as to who is “good” at drawing.
- Once children are used to the action, allow them to progress to “looking at the subject matter, looking at the drawing” – flitting between the two every few seconds. Children will need reminding to look at the subject matter – they will naturally want to spend more time looking at their drawing.
- Continuous line drawings are only finished when the facilitator says time is up! Warn the children beforehand how long you expect them to draw for (choose from between 5 and 10 minutes depending upon their ability to concentration). If a child says they have finished their

drawing, ask that they keep looking and keep drawing, even if it means revisiting their subject and seeing the same areas again and again. Continuous line drawings are about the process, not the end result (though the end result drawings are often very intriguing). Keep pushing the children to “see further”. This gets easier, like any skill, as the exercise is repeated and practice grows.

- Keep reminding the children to slow down.



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