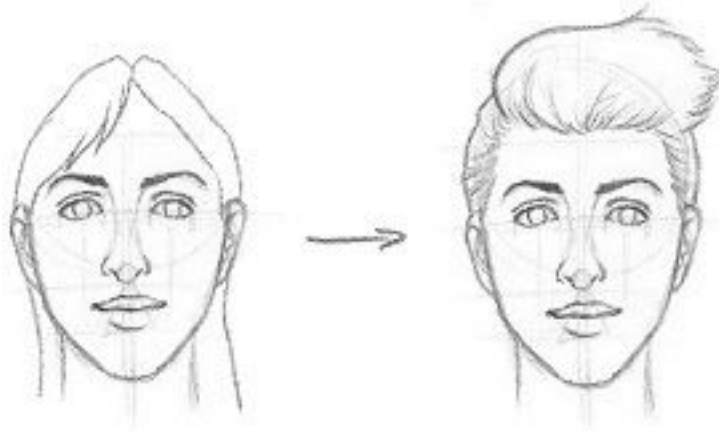


Lesson 5: Common Drawing Mistakes and How to Fix Them

By Darlene Nguyen - May 25, 2017



This is a short lesson on the importance of paying close attention to what you're drawing and how to avoid common mistakes.

The format of this lesson is: question, answer and solutions. Try your best to guess what is wrong with each of the examples below. These examples are based on a few common mistakes I see over and over again. They are meant to make you think more critically about your own work.

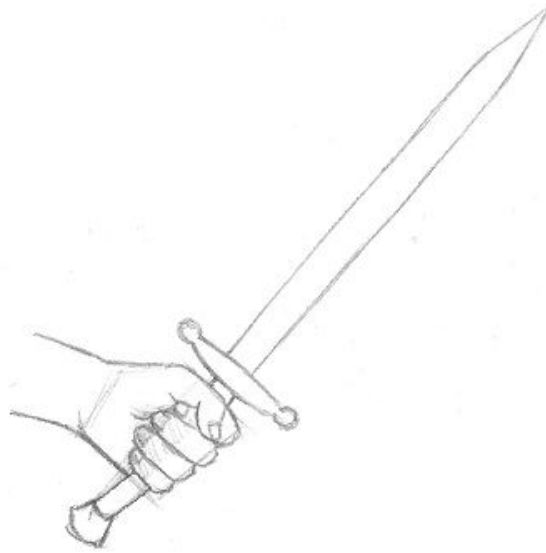
Note: Scroll down slowly so you don't accidentally reveal the answers.

Continuity

A big mistake that beginners make is not paying enough attention to the flow of lines in their artwork. Can you spot the mistakes with the examples below?

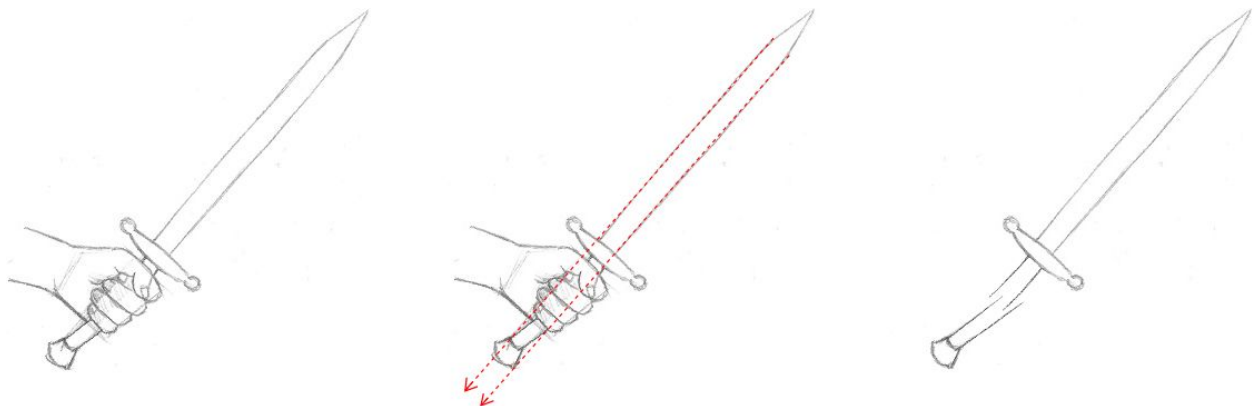
Example #1:

What's wrong with this drawing?



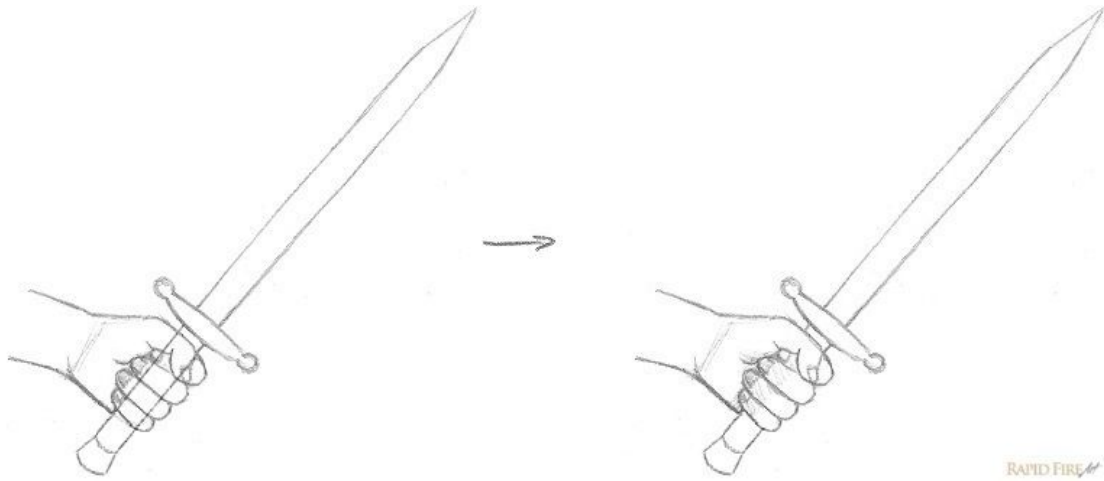
Answer:

The sword's handle or hilt is not straight. If you put a ruler up against the side or the middle of the blade, you'll notice that the hilt is not aligned with the blade. It's crooked.



Solution:

When drawing an object being held in a hand, draw the entire object as if the drawing were an x-ray. Then erase the lines you don't need.



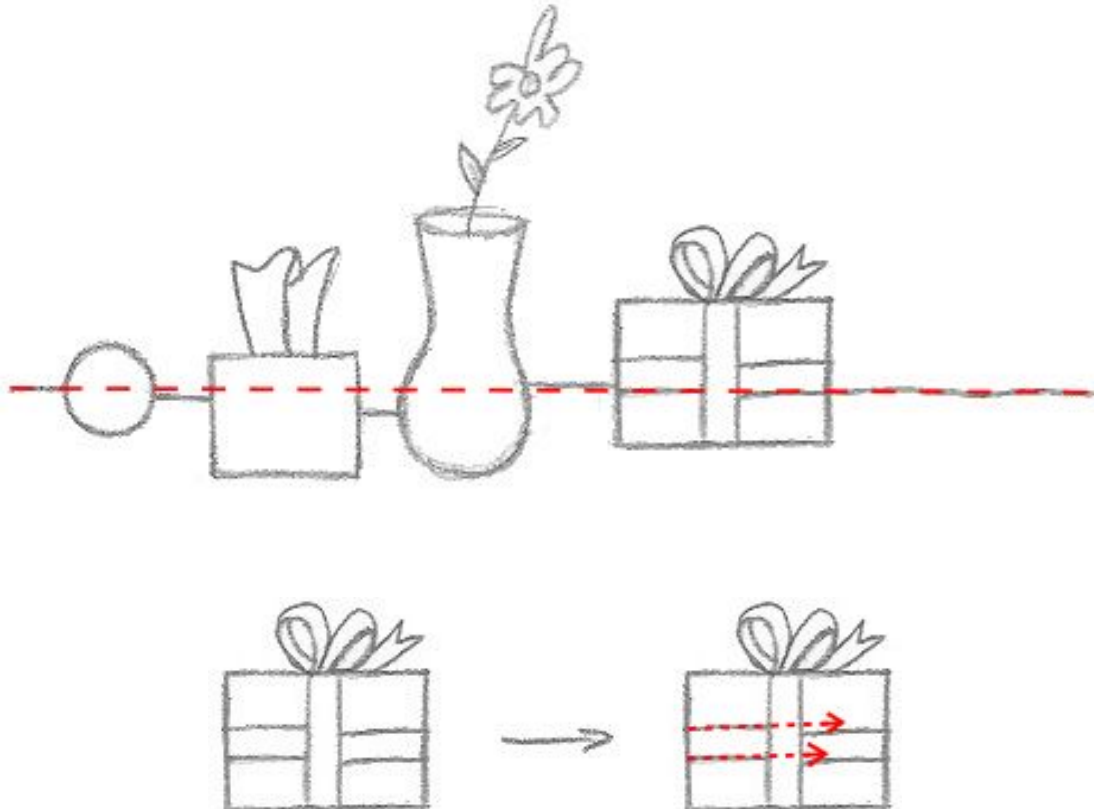
Example #2:

What's wrong with this scene?



Answer:

The surface of the table and the horizontal ribbon are not straight. Again, if you use a ruler to check the alignment, you'll notice that they're very crooked.

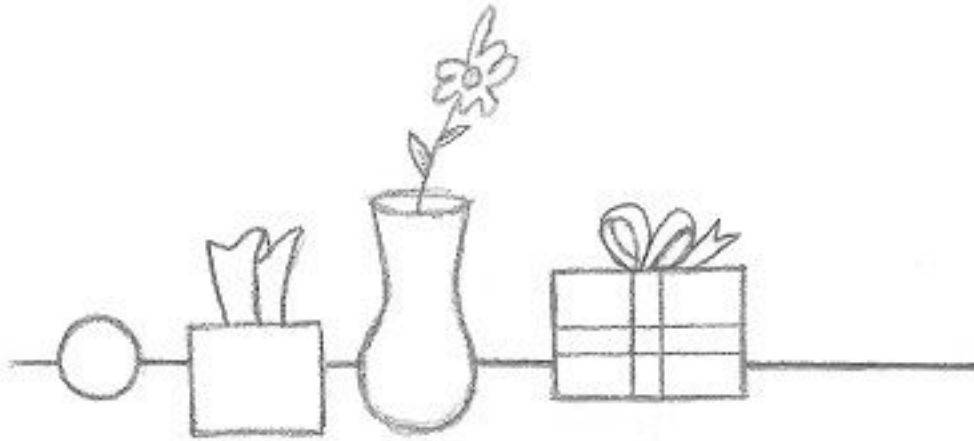


Solution:

Lightly draw the table first and then the objects.

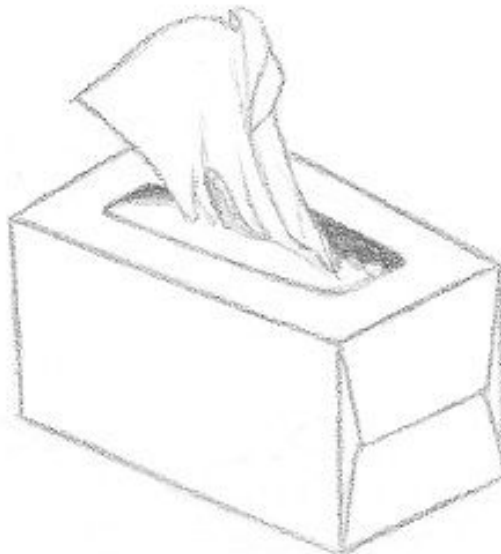
For the gift, draw both ribbons in their entirety without thinking about which one is on the top or bottom. Then erase the lines you don't need.

Another solution is to use a ruler so you don't have to draw a continuous line through all of the objects on the table.



Example #3:

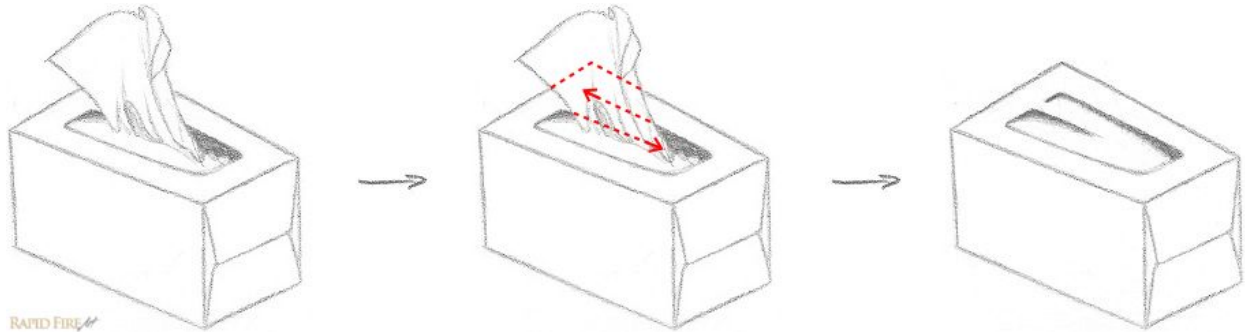
Find anything wrong with this tissue box? Hint: there are two.



Answer:

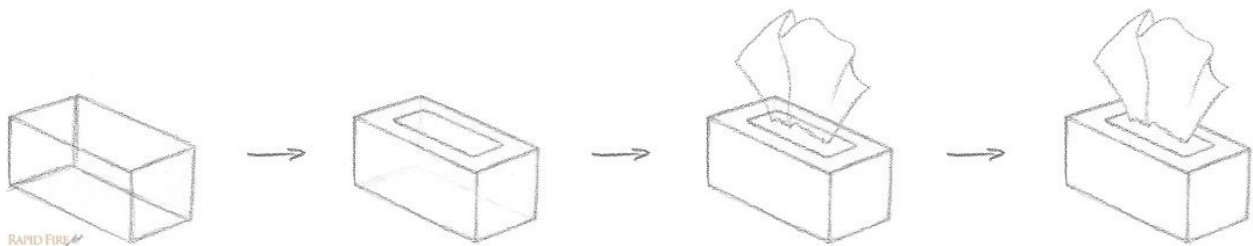
The opening of the tissue box is not forming a proper rectangle because its sides do not exhibit the same width.

The furthest corner of the box hiding behind the tissue makes the tissue box look stretched out, forming a skewed rectangle.



Solution:

Draw the box first to make sure you have a solid shape, then draw the tissue.



Consider The Underlying Structure

This is where I see most people make mistakes. I'm a victim of it too...

Example #4:

Can you spot what's wrong with this portrait?



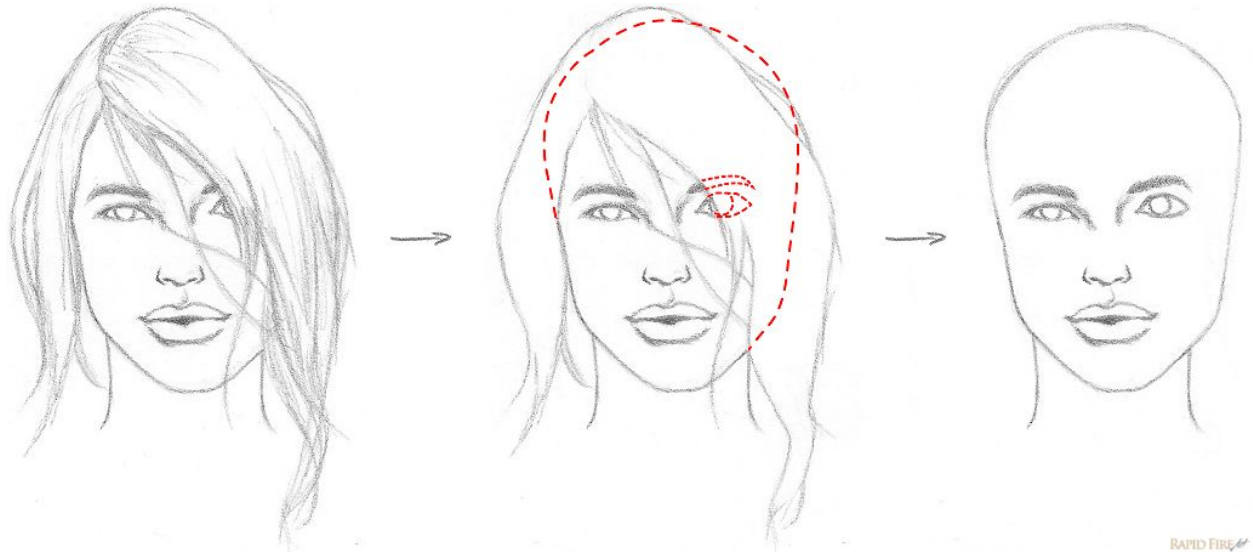
Answer:

There's not enough hair in the upper right, which makes it look like she has a cone-shaped head. This is a common result of drawing the hair first.

The right eye is much larger than the left eye. A common result when an eye is partially hidden behind hair.

The right jaw has a wider angle compared to the left. This is a common mistake when the rest of the jaw is hidden behind hair.

Etc...



Solution:

When drawing people, think about the skeletal structure. You can draw light guidelines before you start drawing in order to understand more of what you're seeing.

Hair is not a tool to hide things. Whenever you're drawing a face with features that are only partially visible, always think about what you don't see and how your drawing will look if the full face were to be drawn. You can even go ahead and draw it lightly to see if the visible features make sense afterward. If not, make the appropriate corrections before you start shading and adding details.

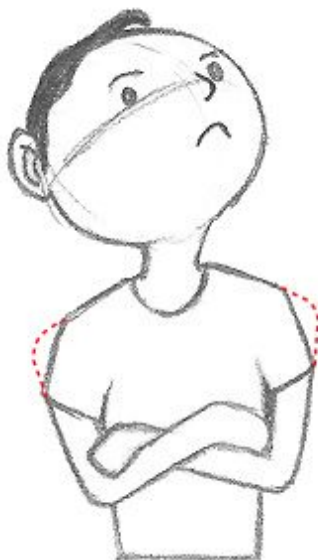
Example #5:

See anything wrong with this boy?



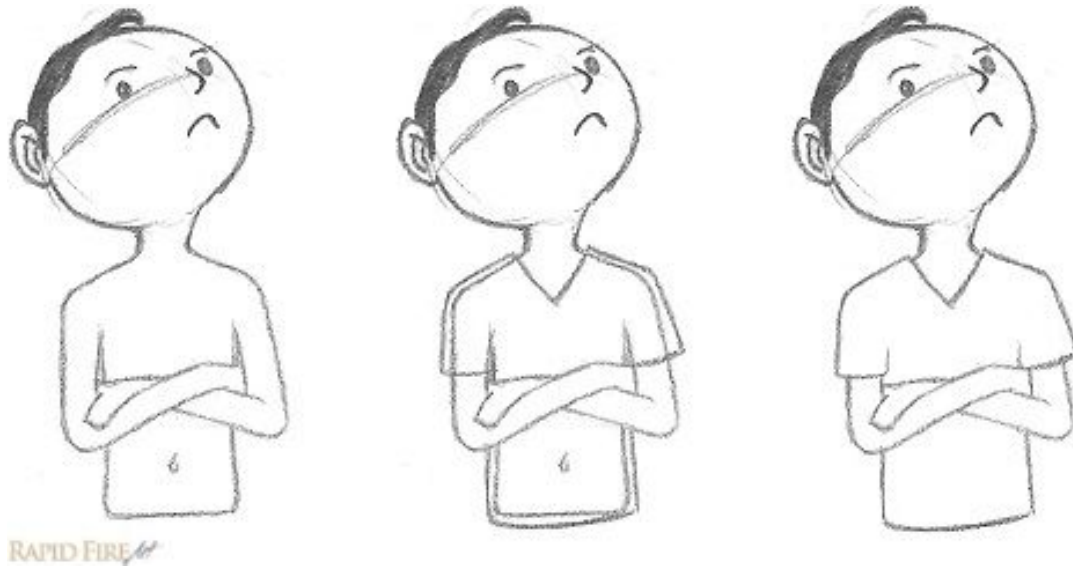
Answer:

For some reason, he has additional joints in his arms. It's a common result when drawing a character's clothes before drawing the body.



Solution:

Draw the body first, then draw the clothes last.



Example #6:

What's wrong with this car?



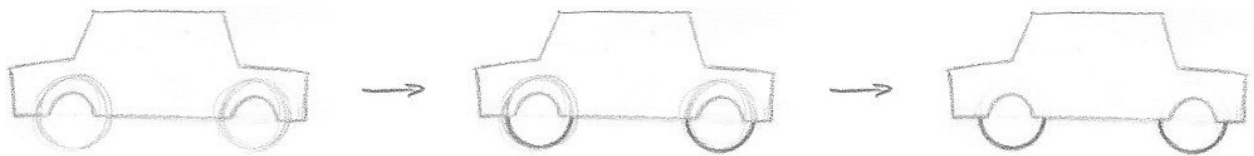
Answer:

The wheels are too big. Draw a full circle the same size as each tire and see what happens. The dotted red lines show that the wheels would need much more room to fit inside the car's body.



Solution:

Draw the full shape for each wheel to determine the maximum size the car's structure allows and then erase the parts you don't need.



Bonus Example #7:

Last one! I'm not going to give you the answers though. Let me know what you think the answers and solutions are in the comments below.



Conclusion

All the examples above have one purpose... to get you to observe your artwork critically. Whether you're drawing animals, people or things, you can apply the same observations to correct mistakes which may not have been apparent to you before.

I find it also helps to ask questions while I draw. Questions such as:

- How is the vertical/horizontal alignment of _____ ?
- Does my drawing make sense mechanically?
- Does it look right? Why not?
- Is it symmetrical?
- Is it still symmetrical when I look at it in a mirror?
- Etc...

Constantly ask yourself questions as you draw so you can make sense of what you're doing and be aware of the choices that you're making. Attention to detail is very important if you want to draw realistic art.

Homework Assignment

Up until now, you must have a lot of drawings from each homework assignment. Look back at your work and analyze each and every person, object or scene you've drawn. Did you find any apparent mistakes that you didn't see before? Share your findings with me on [facebook](#). Any brave person who posts their mistakes and a fixed version of the drawing(s) will be featured below along with a link to their facebook page.

If you'd like me to pick apart your previous work and share my corrections with other RFA readers on facebook, let me know in the comments below or send me a message on [facebook](#).

Happy drawing!

Read more:

<http://rapidfireart.com/2017/05/25/lesson-5-common-drawing-mistakes-and-how-to-fix-them/>